

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## College Essay Grading Rubric

“A strong college essay should essentially do three things: 1) show that you are likable, sincere, self-reflective person who can help make up a college community; 2) show some arc of development so that the reader knows you better by the time he or she has finished reading your essay; 3) show that you are a proficient writer.” – Alan Gelb, *Conquering the College Essay*, p. 28

Criteria	Strong	Proficient	Developing	Not Yet
<p><b>Purpose and Audience:</b> The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>captures the essence of the writer’s personality and values;</li> <li>reveals what makes the writer tick, or respond emotionally;</li> <li>narrative makes a direct connection with the reader and is honest and engaging</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Command of Content:</b> The narrative contains Gelb’s suggested elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the “Once” (basic problem in one particular situation);</li> <li>extraordinary vs. ordinary (something unusual happens within a seemingly ordinary experience);</li> <li>tension and conflict (presents a struggle between opposing forces and clear resolution);</li> <li>the point (the “reason to be,” or response to the conflict, such as a personal turnaround or growth);</li> <li>concrete action is balanced with reflection.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Organizational Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>essay begins in medias res and sets up a conflict;</li> <li>middle paragraph(s) plays out the conflict;</li> <li>ending finishes the action and resolves the conflict</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Grammar, Mechanics, and Usage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sentence constructions are in active voice, and sentence variety creates a natural, interesting cadence;</li> <li>if used, dialogue is succinct and conveys a critical element of the larger point;</li> <li>pronoun-antecedent agreement clarifies references;</li> <li>the essay avoids commonly confused words and misspelled terms; punctuation is used correctly.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Voice and Style</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>writer’s voice is authentic and expresses individuality; does not quote external sources or figures;</li> <li>avoids apologetic, sarcastic, maudlin, smarmy, overdramatic, or “been there/done that” remarks (p. 95);</li> <li>writer uses accessible diction and strong verbs; tone is consistent and mindful of audience; description avoids clichés, mixed metaphors, word repetition, and jargon.</li> </ul>				

**Teacher Comments:**