Tips for Working on College Application Essays During the Summer

Find out who you are
✓ Ten things nobody knows about you
✓ Ten things you are good at / Ten things you are not good at
✓ Ten adjectives that describe yourself
  • Explain with an example why these characteristics describe you
  • Use this list of adjectives as a reference when looking at topics to make sure you reveal the characteristics you want to about yourself

Brainstorm
✓ Consider what you want to study in college or a field you are interested in pursuing.
✓ What are your major accomplishments, and why do you consider them accomplishments?
✓ What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities? What made you continue to contribute to them?
✓ What is your strongest, most unwavering personality trait? How would your friends characterize you? What would they write about you if they were writing the essay for you?
✓ If you could change anything about yourself, what would it be? Why?
✓ Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
✓ What would you most like to be doing right now? Where would you most like to be?
✓ Have you ever experienced a moment of epiphany, as if your eyes were opened to something to which you were previously blind?
✓ Have you ever struggled mightily for something and succeeded? What made you successful?
✓ Have you ever struggled mightily for something and failed? How did you respond?
✓ What are your dreams of the future? When you look back on your life in thirty years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful? What people, things, and accomplishments do you need?

Research & Write
✓ Research specific schools to determine if they have released their essay prompts
✓ Start drafts for multiple topics and then pursue the one you like the best
✓ Work on the Common App essays if you are applying to any schools that use it
✓ Read your essay out loud, ask others for input, revamp, revise
✓ Be prepared to get feedback from teachers and tutors at the Writing Center in September