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Essay Brainstorming

One of the best methods of brainstorming is to begin with a list of possible topics and after exploring each, see which have the most potential in terms of what and how much you can write about them. Answering the questions below can help you jumpstart some possibilities. Don't worry about grammar or editing. Just write what comes to mind. Use as much space as you want.

1. If you were writing your autobiography right now, what would be five to ten events or things that you would include? These can be in any order, but thinning chronologically might help jog your memory.

2. Quickly write down three words that best describe you. Ask your parents, siblings and best friends to write down three words to describe you. (Don't tell them what yours were.) List your own words and the others including the person, their relationship to you and the words or phrases.

3. What are five accomplishments you have made since the summer before high school? These do not have to be limited to accomplishments for which you have been

formally recognized. The most interesting essays are often based on accomplishments that may have seemed insignificant at the time, but are important when placed in the context of your life.

4. List three to five things on which you consider yourself very knowledgeable.

5. What extracurricular or community activities are most important to you?

6. List five people whom you respect and admire. They can be real or fictional, dead or alive. Explain why they are on your list.

7. List two times in life when you failed and two times when you succeeded with details.

8. Ask your parents or other close family members for five events in your life that they will always remember.

9. What are four of your favorite things and four of your least favorite things? These can include activities, places, objects, etc.

10. Do you have any family traditions?

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