

## 8th Grade Lesson Plan

### I. Objective

The student will compose a well-written essay by drafting, editing, and revising the writing to produce a sample college essay as well as learn the importance of a college essay/personal statement.

### II. Lesson Plan

Students are expected to: (A) plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea; (B) develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (C) revise drafts to ensure precise word choice and vivid images; consistent point of view; use of simple, compound, and complex sentences; Internal and external coherence; and the use of effective transitions after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed; (D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; and (E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher.

### III. Materials

College 101 for Middle School PowerPoint  
Brainstorming Worksheet  
Outline Worksheet  
Revising Personal Essay Worksheet

### IV. Procedure

*Warm-up Activity:*

Begin by talking about admissions to college. Identify the importance of writing well to express details about yourself via a prompt through a college essay.

*Optional: Review College 101 for Middle School PowerPoint*

### Activity A

My First College Essay

Identify the importance of a personal essay with students. Activity can be modified to time constraints, or spread out over several class periods.

- I. Brainstorm Worksheet
- II. Outline Worksheet
- III. Writing Draft of Personal essay
- IV. Revising Personal Essay
- V. Final Draft

### V. Check for Comprehension

Again reiterate why the personal essay is important.

- Why would it be important to brainstorm?
- Why is it important to ask others to check your work? What insight did you gain by asking others to check your work?
- Why would you use your personal essay?

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

**Destination College**  
**Part I: Essay Brainstorming Worksheet**

One of the best methods of brainstorming is to begin with a list of potential topics. Use the worksheet to create a list of important people, events, accomplishments, and activities in your life. Then, you can separate the good ideas from the bad.

**1. If you were writing your autobiography right now, what would be five to ten events or things that would have to be included?**

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

**2. If you asked a few friends or family members to pick three adjectives or personality traits that characterize you, what would they be?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. List five accomplishments you have made over the last five years.**

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

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

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|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

**5. What are your most important extracurricular or community activities?**

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|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

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

6. List five people whom you respect and admire. They can be real or fictional, dead or alive.

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|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ |          |

7. What is your favorite movie or book? \_\_\_\_\_

Who is your favorite musician? \_\_\_\_\_

8. List two times in life when you failed miserably and two times when you were a fantastic success.

Miserable failures

Fantastic Successes

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ |

9. What are three events in your life that your parents ALWAYS talk about? Or stories they ALWAYS tell?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

10. List three of your favorite things and three of your least favorite things. These can include activities, places, objects, virtues, food, etc.

Favorite Things

Least Favorite Things

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 1. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 3. _____ |

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

# Destination College

## Part II: Essay Outline

### I. Introduction:

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### II. Body

#### A. Paragraph 1

##### 1. Supporting Point #1

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##### 2. Evidence for Supporting Point #1

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#### B. Paragraph 2

##### 1. Supporting Point #2

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##### 2. Evidence for Supporting Point #2

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

### C. Paragraph 3

#### 1. Supporting Point #3

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#### 2. Evidence for Supporting Point #3

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### III. Conclusion

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

## Destination College: College Essay Checklist

**Directions:** Use this checklist as a guide. Check off each item when you are sure the essay has satisfied the criteria. Use the space for notes.

**Prompt:**

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- Does the essay fully and clearly address the prompt?
- Has the writer used the prompt to come up with ideas that are unique and interesting?
- As a whole, does the essay “work”? Does it keep the reader’s interest throughout?
- Does the essay take any creative risks?
- What is the overarching main idea, theme or thesis statement?
- Does each paragraph have a main idea that further develops the overall theme?
- Are all main ideas supported by details that are concrete, lively and interesting?
- Does the writer stay on task and avoid unnecessary tangents?
- Does the essay reveal something about the writer?
- Does the essay have a definite beginning, middle and conclusion?
- Are transitions in place between sentences and paragraphs, making for a smooth read?
- Do all sentences “pull their weight”?
- Is the essay free of grammatical, spelling and mechanical errors?
- Does the essay communicate that the writer is a strong candidate for admission?

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

## Destination College: College Essay Rubric

**Directions:** Rank each part of the college application essay on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 as the best. In the space below each number you assign, explain your reasoning. At the bottom, circle your admissions recommendation, based on the essay alone.

**Organization and Focus** (clear main ideas and supporting details, stays on topic)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Explanation:*

**Originality** (vivid details, fresh word choice, creativity, risk-taking )

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Explanation:*

**Writer's Voice** (consistent throughout, engaging, conveys individual personality)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Explanation:*

**Freedom from Error** (spelling, grammar, punctuation, usage)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Explanation:*

**Overall success** (interesting topic clearly developed; "works")

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*Explanation:*

**Admission (circle one):**                      **Accept**                      **Reject**                      **Wait-list**