

Lifestyles

Writing a college essay presents an opportunity for reflection

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'Tis the season of agonizing stress, wearisome paperwork and dreaded deadlines.

No, it's not time to do your taxes. The college application process is in full swing for us high school seniors, and the pressure is immense.

While reporting every grade you earned from freshman year on and sending your ACT scores to each college you apply to is tedious work, for many, the most dreaded aspect of the application is the essay. We are pressed to make this the best essay of our writing careers, and since the common application has changed its length requirement to be less than 500 words, we must be more diligent than ever before.

But how are we supposed to express who we are, who we were, and who we want to be in two double-spaced pages? Some prompts include evaluating our hobbies and interests, elaborating on volunteer or work experience, describing awards and honors, or focusing on attributes that make us strong candidates for particular schools.

I think I'll take a crack at it.

I'm the girl everyone wants to hold hands with — among the 6-year-olds in Vacation Bible School each summer at Holy Spirit Parish. In addition, I probably hold the record for most water balloons to the face during game time. That's dedication!

I've been known to buy fake mustaches and wear them around in public. Sure, that's not a great



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achievement per se, but I'm convinced it says something about my character.

I won the award of "Best Flamboyant Mickey Mouse Pirate" for my performance as a messenger in the Lourdes High School theater department's production of "Much Ado About Nothing" last fall. Hey, not everyone can pull off burgundy parachute pants.

Qualitatively, I've found that I have a stronger stomach than I thought. While watching a hip replacement surgery during my honors anatomy and physiology class, I didn't even look away. Actually, it was pretty cool.

Am I going to use any of this in my essay? Probably not. But, this was a good exercise to call to mind what I've done and how that can influence what I do in the future.

So while this can be a time of overwhelming stress for us seniors, we should also let it be a time of reflection. Go ahead and reminisce on your childhood, middle school and high school years, and maybe even find a way to tie in some of your favorite memories into an awesome essay that gets you into a great school. Just don't miss your deadline.

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