

## **Senior Summer Reading Assignment**

**Text: *Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps*  
by Alan Gelb**

**Assignment Parts: (1) Read Gelb's book, (2) essay graphic organizer (3) rough draft of essay submitted by first day of school (4) summative test during English class**

**Due Date: September 2, 2025**

**(Regardless of when you have English, EVERYONE will submit their essay to TurnItIn by this date!)**

1. Purchase/rent/download etc. and read the book *Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps* by Alan Gelb, Ten Speed Press: (ISBN 978-0-399-57869-4); either edition of the book is acceptable.
2. Take notes in each of the chapters of the book. Focus on the MAIN IDEAS and important details from each chapter. One of your first Senior English *summative* assignments will be an OPEN NOTE TEST on this book (this is for **all cadets – CP, Honors, and Dual Enrollment and AP**). ***The end-of-chapter summaries are a great help. This is your book, so make this resource your own!***
3. Look at the list of Common App Essay Prompts in your packet. The answer to the prompt you choose should be the framework for the personal narrative essay you will write that "tells your story". Before you start writing, watch this video so that your essay doesn't fall into this category! (<https://youtu.be/qsIWYyKmalQ>) PS. She's brutally honest but gives GREAT advice and knows what she's talking about.
4. You can fill out the graphic organizer outline that is provided in your packet as a basic scaffold to your essay; This does not need to be submitted with your essay.
5. Compose a DRAFT of your college essay on the computer. ***Be sure to save the document*** so you can go back to it during 'College Application Week'.
6. Your essay should not be less than 250 or more than 650 words when it is finalized.
7. Your essay should be written in the following: 'basic' APA format; Times New Roman or Calibri font; 1-inch margins; consistently double-spaced; 3 or 5-paragraph set-up. Use the included 'Structure of a Personal Narrative' template to help format your draft. Format and structure are part of your *formative* grade.
8. ALL essays are due into *TurnItIn* no later than the first day of school using the submission code below. You DO NOT have to wait to submit your essay. Everyone should already have a *TurnItIn* account. If you no longer have an account from a previous year or your old account is no longer active, you can create one using your DMA email or any other existing email account.

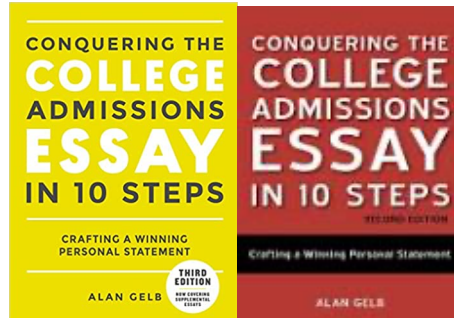
**TurnItIn Registration Information**

Class ID: 48836414

Enrollment Key: Perron

**REMEMBER: This is a MANDATORY ASSIGNMENT for ALL Senior cadets, no matter what your future plans are (college, military, career, etc.). You have time to get this done, but DO NOT wait until the last minute. It is not the kind of assignment you should put off to the end. Any questions, please contact Ms. Perron at: [erica.perron@dma.k12.de.us](mailto:erica.perron@dma.k12.de.us).**

## **Conquering the College Essay Summer** **Assignment: Scoring Rubric**



This is a 50 pt. Formative Assignment. Based on the criterion from page 1, and the summer reading you have done from the book, your essay will be scored using the following point-percentage breakdown:

- 1.) Efficiency and accountability- Turning your essay in on time to the identified TurnItIn link: *15%*
- 2.) The essay is written in proper 3 or 5-paragraph structure, of 250-650 words; It is a student-written narrative essay told in the 1<sup>st</sup> person; Answers one of the required prompt choices presented by the CommonApp: *25%*
- 3.) Correctly set up in *basic* APA format with double-spacing; 1-inch margins, and 12' Times New Roman or Calibri font: *10%*

Total: *50% pts.*

-The final grade is based on completion to these structural requirements of the instructor and the CommonApp.

-Students can then reach out on an individual basis to work with Ms. Perron to review and edit the essays for syntax, semantics, and readability using the TurnItIn grammatical suggestions in preparation for 'College Application Week'.

## Common Application Essay Prompts

The Common Application has announced that they will be once again keeping the prompts the same for the upcoming application year. This decision was based in research and feedback they compiled, and they believe these prompts are still in the best interest of students in the 2024-2025 application year. For assistance with the upcoming process and frequently asked questions, you can visit the following address:

<https://appsupport.commonapp.org/applicantsupport/s/>

### 2025-2026 Common Application Essay Prompts

The Common App Essay Prompts are as follows:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

**TRY NOT TO USE THIS ONE...** 7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

"The prompts as they exist today offer a broad range of approaches, accommodating students with a diverse set of experiences and ideas about the world to respond in a thoughtful and illuminating manner," said Ian Watson, Associate Director of College Counseling at The Rivers School (Weston, MA).

### Outlining Your Narrative

*Try applying this structure to your own writing; write sentences for the corresponding elements of your introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion in the spaces provided below. REMEMBER: This is just a suggested draft framework.*

#### Introduction: Paragraph Number One

Begin your paper with a “hook” that catches the reader’s attention and sets the scene. Where is the event? What time of the year? How old were you when this happened?	
State your thesis: What you learned or how the event is significant to you	

**Body paragraph: Paragraph Number Two- Write three significant moments from the beginning, middle, and end of the event “Show, don’t tell”**

<b>Beginning action</b>	<b>Topic sentence:</b>
<b>Middle action</b>	<b>Transition:</b>
<b>End action</b>	<b>Transition:</b>

#### Conclusion: Paragraph Number Three

Analyze and reflect on the action of the story, including how the events are significant to you (relate this back to the prompt you chose.)	
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**Writing Strategies to Consider:**

**-First Vs. Third Person Narratives** are a mode of writing in which writers often use first person perspective ("I saw", "I did").

**-Verb Tense: Reporting vs. Reflecting-** The events of most narratives are told in the past. Use present tense when reflecting on the events: "Now I know how unprepared I was."