**Assignment: “Employability” Personal Essay**

Grade 12 English

One of the most important forms you will have to write in the real world is a personal essay. Personal essays come in all shapes and sizes, and can be written on basically any topic. The two things all personal essays have in common are: 1) They are written from YOUR point of view, so you are allowed to use personal references (“I,” “Me,”“We,” etc.), and 2) They highlight specific experiences and reflect what you’ve learned or gained from these experiences.

You’ve probably already written a narrative personal essay before (a popular topic is “what I did over the summer”), but you probably haven’t written a personal essay that seeks “to inform.” There are 3 purposes for writing a personal essay:

1. **To Inform**
2. To Entertain
3. To Support or Oppose

For this assignment, you will be writing a personal essay that seeks to **inform** a scholarship donor or future employer of your qualifications for the particular scholarship they are offering. You will do this by considering your past involvement in positive experiences within your home, school, and rural community and reflecting on the skills and attributes you have gained because of this involvement.

**Length:** 250 words (min.) – 750 words (max.)

* One of your main objectives is to keep this thing short. The people who will be reading your essay are also reading a lot of other peoples’ essays. If yours is too long, they may not even bother to read it.

**Format:** Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced

**Content:** Response to 1 of 10 topics (see page 2 of handout) based on the article read in class. Include:

* Experiences, and the useful skills and abilities you’ve gained from them
* Example experiences: volunteer, extra-curricular, athletic, travel, work, etc.
* Example skills: leadership, teamwork, public relations, organizational, critical thinking, etc.
* EVERYTHING you include must DIRECTLY answer the topic you choose

**Language Use:** Other than the use of “I,” keep it formal

* Scholarship donors/employers are, generally, quite intelligent
* They expect you to be, too

**Organization:** Typical essay organization

* Introduction, body, conclusion
* 3-5 paragraphs (depending how many you include in the body)

**Mechanics:** Proofread once, then proofread again, then get a peer to proofread

* Don’t do weird things, like put exclamation points at the end of your sentences (you should appear enthusiastic, but there is a fine line between enthusiasm and a lack of professionalism)

**Personal Essay Topics**

Based off Liz Ryan’s *12 Qualities Employers Look For When They’re Hiring*

1. **Have an Understanding of Your Own Path** – Identify and describe a passion or interest of yours. Explain what steps you’ve taken to follow this passion or interest throughout your life so far, and how you plan to follow it in the future.
2. **Know What You Want** – Identify the specific career goal you are interested in pursuing. Explain why this career interests you, as well as the steps you have taken, and will continue to take, towards achieving this career goal in the future.
3. **Be Goal-Oriented** – Identify a goal you set for yourself, and achieved. Explain what steps you took to achieve the goal, and how achieving the goal benefitted you.
4. **Reflect on Successes** – Identify and describe a time when you felt successful. Explain what steps you believe led to your success, and how you will apply what you’ve learned in the future.
5. **Know Your Strengths** – Identify and describe your greatest strength. Explain what steps you’ve taken to develop this strength, and how you could apply this strength in the future.
6. **Think Independently** – Identify and describe an issue you have a firm opinion about. Explain your stance on the issue, as well as why you feel strongly about it.
7. **Be Able to Problem-Solve** – Identify and describe a problem you’ve solved. Explain what steps you took to solve the problem, and what happened as a result.
8. **Have Ambition/Be Willing to Learn New Things** – Identify and describe something you’ve worked hard to learn. Explain what steps you took to learn the information/skill and how you have benefitted from it.
9. **Be A Team Player** – Identify a time when you were part of a team. Explain what steps you took in order to work with the other team members to achieve a mutual goal.
10. **Be Responsible** – Identify and describe a situation in which you were held responsible for yourself and/or other people. Explain any challenges you experienced, how you overcame these challenges, and how this situation helped you to become even more responsible.

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