



The writing styles are different; yet, both essays effectively show us positive traits in the authors' characters.

The strength of this author's essay is that she conveys a specific event with a lively narrative pace and snappy dialogue then ultimately creates a broader conclusion that helps us understand how this specific incident illustrates that she has "learned to adapt, to keep [her] focus, and to solve problems with little or no resources." Though the overall tone of her essay may seem to focus on annoyance and anger at her brother, ultimately she demonstrates her resilience and her capacity for forgiveness in noting, "despite the craziness Santa's gift brings, Jason's continuous surprises provide laughter to my life." Her comment that she preferred her new hairstyle further demonstrates how she turns difficult situations into advantageous opportunities. "Thanks, Santa" is a catchy way to end the essay. It can be tempting to end with a long "summary" sentence, but she shows how even two words can make for a memorable and satisfying ending.

### **"Lessons from the Immigration Spectrum"**

---

**Anonymous**  
**MIT**

MY FAMILY HAS TAKEN LIVING IN the big city as a reason for why we should never give up. Here in Los Angeles there are countless individuals and families along all points on the immigration spectrum from recent arrivals to recent citizenship. Residing in this great city has provided me with diversity, opportunity, acceptance, and an abundance of role models to follow through all troubles- big and small.

I always thought that I had it the worst out of all my family members because I was never allowed to get anything lower than what my brother or a cousin had gotten in a class. My parents figured if they could do it, so could I, and if not on my own then with a little of their help. It was not until recently that I realized the truth in this. In my short life I have seen my father go from speaking no English, to excelling in it. I have heard countless stories about migrant farmers such as Cesar Chavez and my grandfather who had nearly nothing, yet persisted and succeeded.

Growing up hearing these stories of great injustices and misfortunes has truly influenced my long term goals. I am going to go far because there is no excuse for not doing my best, given all I have been blessed



with. When I had trouble speaking Spanish and felt like abandoning my native tongue I remembered my mother and how when she came to the United States she was forced to wash her mouth out with soap and endure beatings with a ruler by the nuns at her school for speaking it. When I couldn't figure out tangents, sines, and cosines I thought about my father and how it took him nearly a year to learn long division because he was forced to teach it to himself after dropping out and starting to work in the 4th grade. And when I wanted to quit swimming because I was tired I remembered my grandfather and how no matter how his muscles ached if he stopped digging, or picking fruit, or plowing he risked not having enough food to feed his family. Pursuing technical fields such as math and engineering first seemed like work for men to me, but the times have changed. All these people, just from my family have been strong role models for me.

I feel that being labeled "underprivileged" does not mean that I am limited in what I can do. There is no reason for me to fail or give up, and like my parents and grandparents have done, I've been able to pull through a great deal. My environment has made me determined, hard working, and high aiming. I would not like it any other way. This is how my Hispanic heritage, family upbringing, and role models have influenced my academic and personal long term goals.

---

### ANALYSIS

This essay, like "All Worth It," (Chapter 7), describes the lessons the author has learned from growing up in an "underprivileged" community of immigrants in LA. The author of "All Worth It" learned from growing up in Brooklyn to "just do it," never accepting failure as an option. This essay similarly shows how the author came to believe that "we should never give up." Both essays are compelling because they provide specific examples from their personal lives to give us a sense of the unique circumstances in which they grew up. However, the author of this essay focuses on the positive elements of her environment: "diversity, opportunity, acceptance, and an abundance of role models." Reading these two essays in conjunction shows that there is no rule for how to write about coming from a disadvantaged background. While "All Worth It" notes more of the negative aspects of the neighborhood and "Lessons from the Immigration Spectrum" focuses on positive lessons, both authors are able to give us a strong sense of their perseverance and strength.