

**OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/IB/TOPS/MACS/HOMEWORK 22****NAME (FIRST AND LAST):**\_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE:**\_\_\_\_\_**CREATING YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE**

Read the following personal statement that was part of a college application. Underline words and phrases that would be useful for your own personal essay writing. Pay attention to its structure. What does each paragraph accomplish? What are its strengths and areas that need improvement?

Early in my high school years I discovered a personal truth, that I have no limitations other than those I choose to impose upon myself. Everyone brings to the world unique talents, gifts, and abilities, and some of mine include my strong will and my determination to be able to give something back to the communities in which I was raised. My plans are to not only use education as a tool to prepare me for a vocation, but also to help me become a self-sufficient individual who is fully prepared for life.

No one is exempt from turmoil during their lives, and I can honestly say that I am thankful for the adversities and challenges which have crossed my path because they have strengthened my character and brought forth certain virtues I might otherwise never have known. There are various personal issues with which I have struggled and I have no doubt as to where their foundations lie. Because my parents divorced when I was two, I did not grow up with a secure sense of home. I was juggled around between different family members, each taking part in raising me with their own set of standards and values. I had different customs at each home and had to learn how to be "politically correct" according to who I was with. For example, with my father's family, I went to a Catholic church and studied the New Testament and, while with my mother's family, who is Jewish, I attended synagogue, studied the Torah and learned to pray in Hebrew.

One of the greatest challenges I have faced was growing up multi-ethnic in a bilingual and multi-cultural environment. Even though the society in which I live insists on categorizing me into one racial category, I consider myself to be multi-ethnic. My mother's ethnic make-up is French, Polish and Ukrainian and my father's is Brazilian, Native American, and African. Some of the conflicts that I dealt with while growing up concerned issues surrounding physical appearance, self-esteem, and questions such as "where do I fit in?" and "to whom do I belong?" Fortunately, I have since learned that being part of more than one ethnic group is an advantage, not a detriment, and I am proud to claim and take part in my diverse heritage. Everyone and everything in my past has been my teacher, and I feel that my history has inevitably led me to my major field of study, Ethnic Studies, about which I am immensely passionate. It has been a wonderful rite of passage for me to learn to accept all the parts of myself.

I am currently involved in various community activities and am particularly proud of my involvement with the Shanti Project, a San Francisco based organization

dedicated to helping people who are HIV positive. I also devote a great deal of my time to music, a tremendously important part of my life. In addition to performing at local fund raisers, I spend time practicing and recording. I have on occasion found myself challenged to the maximum of my capabilities because of my high academic standards, my volunteer work, my music, and my part-time jobs. But my strong belief that I have no limitations and my will to succeed has kept me going.

My goals are to work with children, helping them to maintain their sense of self. I would like to do this through being a children's counselor or teacher. I would like the opportunity to be able to pass along the information I have learned, that no one person other than oneself can keep one from achieving one's goals and that everyone has the potential to share with the world their unique talents, gifts, and abilities. While one may find motivation in one's hopes for the future, one must not devalue the steps one takes to get there, because it is through one's past joys and hardships that one comes to be who one is in the future. As Ursula le Guin so aptly stated, "It is good to have an end to journey towards, but is the journey that matters in the end."

## REFLECTION

Discuss three words or phrases in the piece above that would be useful for your own personal essay writing. Explain why they may be useful for your purposes.

Word/Phrase	The word/phrase is useful because...
1.	
2.	
3.	

What does each paragraph accomplish? In other words, what is the focus of each paragraph?

The first paragraph focuses on \_\_\_\_\_.

Paragraph 2 focuses on \_\_\_\_\_.

Paragraph 3 focuses on \_\_\_\_\_.

Paragraph 4 focuses on \_\_\_\_\_.

The last paragraph focuses on \_\_\_\_\_.

What is (are) the strength(s) of the essay? If you were a member in the admission committee, why would you admit this student into your program?

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The essay contains 689 words. If you have a word limit of 500 words, what will you write about in your personal essay? How would you structure and organize your writing? Use the space of page 4 to plan your writing.

## BRAINSTORM/PLAN

Write the first draft of your personal essay. Use the rubrics on page 7 to guide your writing.

[illegible]

[illegible]

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Structure and organization</b>	The essay as a whole is (somewhat) disorganized.	The essay needs more organization at certain parts.  At least one paragraph lacks focus.	The essay is organized.  Each paragraph focuses on developing an idea.	The essay is well organized.  Each paragraph focuses on developing an important idea.
<b>Word choice</b>	There are many errors in idiom.	There may be lapses in formality.  There may be a few idiomatic errors/awkward expressions.	The word choice is good.  Idiom errors are minor.	The word choice is sophisticated/mature for J/I level.  There are no errors in idiom.
<b>Grammar</b>	There are severe grammar errors that block comprehension.	There are a few grammar errors that block comprehension at times.	Grammar errors are minor.	There are almost no grammar errors.

**THE END**