

Personal quality: Criteria for coding by human raters	Fictionalized example essay with relevant phrases in italics
Altruism Helping others, wanting to help others, consideration of the benefits to others, mention of reasons for helping others, or reflection on how enjoyable or rewarding it is to help others	Every summer for the last three years, <i>I worked as camp counselor at a camp for young children from underprivileged families. Helping children realize their hidden talents is one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had. I've been so fulfilled by watching these children develop confidence in their abilities. This experience has been so important to me,</i> and it showed me that a career in education is where I belong.
Leadership Serving in a leadership role, commenting on what he or she did in his or her capacity as a leader, or discuss the value, meaning, or importance of leadership	I was chosen to be cheerleading <i>captain</i> during my senior year. My freshman year captain had a huge impact on my life, and I felt like it was my time to pay it forward. <i>I am so proud of everything I did for the girls: creating a mentorship system, organizing events and fundraisers, and encouraging everyone to work as hard as they could.</i> At the end of the year, a few girls thanked me. I was completely overcome with emotion. I've never felt so gratified in my life.
Learning Improving, learning, or developing knowledge, skills, or abilities	I played softball in high school. When I started, <i>I was not a very strong player.</i> When I finally made the varsity team my senior year, I was determined to have a better season. <i>I worked constantly to improve my game – during practice and on my own time. My skills grew so much.</i> Because of my hard work, I finished the year with the best record on my team!
Goal pursuit Having a goal and/or a plan	I have been playing soccer since I was six years old. Unfortunately, last year I injured my knee, and it has been a struggle to get back to the level I was playing at before my injury. It has been really challenging, but <i>I've been doing physical therapy and practicing everyday so that I can be a varsity starter this year.</i>
Intrinsic motivation Describing the activity as enjoyable or interesting. Liking the activity or identifying with it.	<i>Running track is so much more than a sport to me.</i> It's a challenge and an adventure, and I put everything I have into it. <i>I love every aspect of it, even the afternoons I spend drenched in sweat in the scorching heat.</i>
Teamwork Working with or learning from others. Valuing what fellow participants bring to the activity.	I've been on my school's debate team since my freshman year, and was elected co-captain <i>because of my commitment to the team's success. My fellow co-captains and I worked together to get our team ready for competitions. We knew that a strong team performance was more important than the successes of a few individuals. We stressed teamwork and cooperation between our teammates.</i> Because we focused on team effort, we earned first place at the state meet.
Perseverance Persisting in the face of challenge	I've learned to become a gracious victor and to <i>grow from defeat.</i> Track has <i>helped me overcome my fear of losing,</i> and even helped me put my life in perspective. I've learned to <i>keep working and fighting even when the odds seem impossible to beat. There were many times that I found myself lagging, but I pulled ahead at the end because I never gave up.</i> The most important thing I've learned is to <i>never let anything stand in my way.</i>