

Essay Brainstorming

Listed below is a series of adjectives. Quickly select those words you feel are true about you most of the time.

able	determined	independent	original	respectful
accepting	direct	ingenious	overconfident	responsible
active	diplomatic	innovative	passive	retentive
adaptable	disciplined	inspiring	paternal	scientific
aggressive	doer	intelligent	perceptive	self-reliant
ambitious	driver	introverted	perfectionist	sensible
analytical	efficient	intuitive	persuasive	sensitive
articulate	energetic	jovial	playful	sentimental
assertive	enterprising	kind	pleasant	serious
aware	enthusiastic	knowledgeable	powerful	sincere
brave	extroverted	lazy	practical	skillful
calm	fair	leader	precise	sociable
carefree	flexible	liberal	principled	sophisticated
caring	follower	lively	progressive	spontaneous
cheerful	frank	logical	protective	stable
clever	free	loving	proud	strong
competent	friendly	loyal	punctual	supportive
competitive	genial	maternal	questioning	sympathetic
confident	gentle	mature	quiet	tactful
conforming	giving	merry	radical	thoughtful
conscientious	gregarious	modest	rational	tolerant
cooperative	gullible	methodical	realistic	tough

courageous	happy	naive	reasonable	trustworthy
creative	helpful	negative	reassuring	understanding
critical	honest	nervous	reflective	useful
decisive	honorable	objective	relaxed	vulnerable
demanding	humorous	observant	reliable	wise
dependable	idealistic	optimistic	religious	witty
dependent	imaginative	organized	reserved	workaholic

Which three words describe you the best? List them here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Think about some activities, achievements, failures, and/or experiences in your life that might best illustrate these adjectives. For instance, if the word “caring” describes you well, when was that quality particularly evident? Perhaps you can illustrate your caring qualities by describing your feelings when you helped your friend out of a troublesome situation or the reasons you have a menagerie of stray animals at home. Don’t hesitate to think about the negative qualities listed above as well.

It is not enough to simply claim to possess certain qualities; your writing must demonstrate these qualities to your reader. In other words, when the reader is finished with the essay, he or she should be thinking, “What a caring person!” without you ever having to mention the word “caring.”

Again, it’s your turn. Choose one of the three qualities you listed, and provide a brief illustration of how that quality describes you:

Here's another brainstorming exercise. Complete the following open-ended sentences:

1. People describe me as . . .

2. During my high school days, I have succeeded at . . .

3. During my high school days, I have failed at . . .

4. The thing most often misunderstood about me is . . .

5. An important decision I made in high school was to . . .

*Do any of your answers to the above open-ended questions suggest any other potential essay topics?
If so, list them below:*