

EducationUSA Canada Essay Writing Exercise #1

Brainstorming

Environment:

- Quiet space by yourself, consider going outside away from where you do academic work
- Make sure you have at least an hour available to you so that you are not rushed
- Handwrite your brainstorm. Use poster paper, colored pens, a whiteboard or any tool to help you access the creative side of your brain and memories.
- Consider drawing diagrams, pictures, charts, or timelines
- Feel free to bring a scrapbook to trigger important events or memories but refrain from bringing a phone or other digital distractions
- Whatever you write during this time is private, so write all ideas, good and bad with no judgment. Sometimes an idea you know isn't great will trigger a better idea.

Brainstorming:

Answer as many of the following questions as you can. You can write bullet points rather than full sentences. It is worthwhile to jot down several ideas for a question, rather than starting to deeply explore one idea. Feel free to write elsewhere (as described above).

- What are some positive adjectives that your friends would use to describe you?
- What is an interesting thing about you that you don't tell many people?
- What is something you "nerd out" on? Put another way, if you are browsing YouTube, where are you most likely to go down a rabbit hole?
- What do you care about?
- What do you believe are the most important things about you?
- How would you describe your identity?
- What some interesting facts/observations about where you are from?
- What would you like to study and what would be your dream career?

- What are your guilty pleasures?
- If you could do anything this weekend (cost is not an issue) what would you do?
- What books, tv, podcasts, or other specific media has made a huge impact on how you see the world?
- What are you most proud of?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you have encountered in your life?
- What are objects or possessions that carry important meaning for you? Why?
- Who is someone who has made a positive impact in your life and how?
- When was a time that you truly felt successful?
- When was a time you helped someone and what was the outcome?
- What is a story from your life that you tell over and over?
- Who is someone you are grateful for in your life and how have they impacted you?