

Rice University

- Accepted College Essay -

What can you bring to the Rice community, in past experience, background, etc.?

Now I was at the front of the classroom, using what little artistic coordination I had to draw a great big figure on the board: yes, those had to be eyes, an L-shaped nose, wrinkled eyebrows, a gaping "O" for a mouth. I added little stress lines on either corner of the cheeks, just to show how intent my hastily composed figure was on examining this "Sylvan historian, who canst thus express a flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme."

I sat down tentatively. "Kate," my English teacher said, "I asked that the class draw the images Keats evoked inside the Grecian Urn."

I examined the board carefully. Figures of centaurs and trees and altars and young lovers in the heat of the chase were contained within the vessel she'd sketched a few minutes earlier. My figure loomed to the right of the urn, eyes open, sort of worried-looking now that I thought about it.

The class was silent. I'd done it again. I had gotten...too creative.

"Well, Ms. Erskine," I started hesitantly, "how could this urn mean so much if no one was there to observe it, to remember the history behind the 'marble men and maidens overwrought,' to imagine the 'burning forehead,' the ' parching tongue'? Who would be there to feel the woe, the 'old age that shall this generation waste'?"

Silence, still. On top of being too creative, I'd gotten all passionate about it. My honors English class was looking at me as if I had an urn tattooed on my forehead. I prepared myself to live through it this time, just like the other times I'd gone out on a limb and fallen flat on my face, while the teacher looked at me as blankly as the students.

But suddenly, Ms. Erskine beamed. "I was hoping someone would say that! The point of this poem is to measure not just art, but time and our own humanity...."

I had gotten lucky that day—my teacher understood me.

I have to agree with Keats that "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." My ideas are often considered unconventional; because of that I have learned to be brave, and to stand up for the way I see things. I can usually make my case, whether anyone else gets it or not. I have a commanding voice and I ask to be taken seriously. And while it is sometimes hard to risk the pride I've gathered over seventeen years for a single opinion, I get a rush when I put myself out there.

I'm always up for a challenge—be it taking an AP Biology class to a semester abroad in England, to working hands-on with a cadaver at a university summer school. It's not that I don't get scared, but being afraid motivates me to accomplish my goals. I value passion, dedication, and the quest for knowledge. My perspective is international; I find the glass ceiling of language and culture barriers easily broken, especially if you refuse to see them. Perhaps my attitude can be attributed to growing up in the most diverse city in the country; but I think it has more to do with having an open heart and big eyes.

So, if I dare to put myself in a nutshell:

I am in a "mad pursuit" to understand life and education and humanity in the world, believing that "beauty is truth, truth beauty." If you are loyal to one, you'll find both. Let me add that to the Rice community. Let me grab the moment, taste the adventure, and immerse myself in the environment of a university renowned with a love of knowledge and the pursuit of truth. I'll take on whatever burdens are necessary to keep this spark alive.

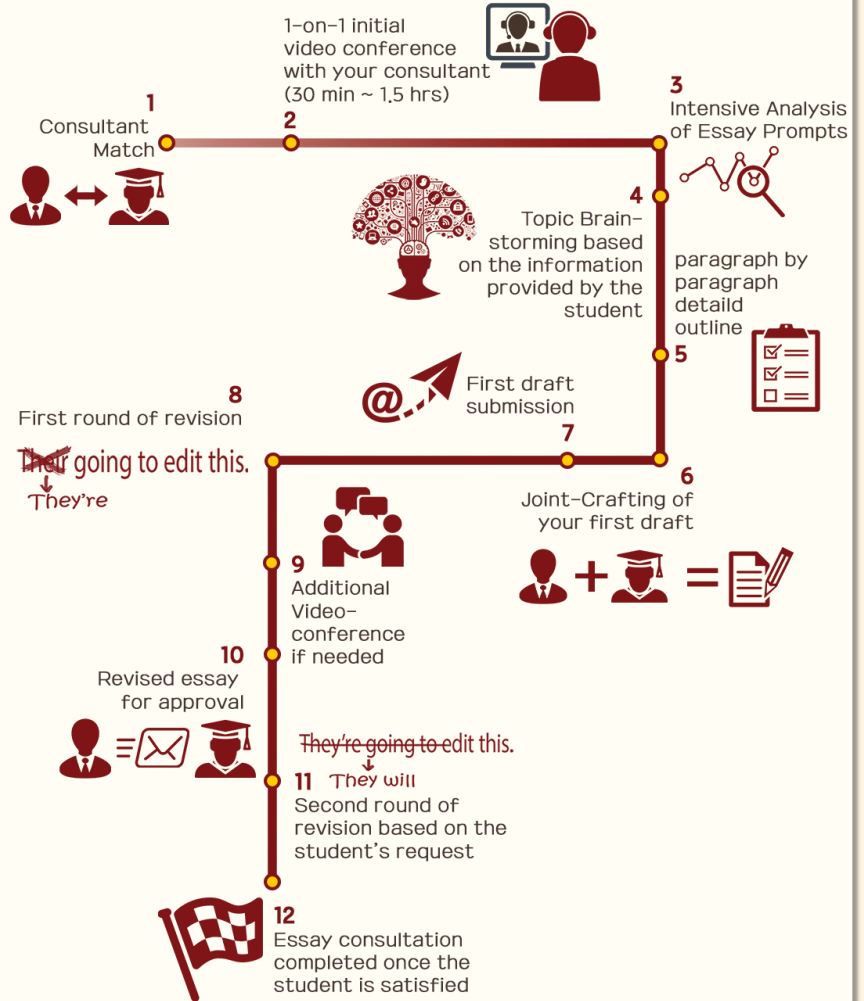
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