



# Washington University St. Louis

- Accepted College Essay -

**In your own words, describe your personal characteristics, accomplishments, primary interests, plans, and goals. What sets you apart?**

I won my school's Pickleball tournament in tenth grade. How many National Merit Semi-Finalists can say that?

What? That's not enough to set me apart in the massive pile of applications? Well, maybe I hold the world record for most snow cones eaten in the summer of 2004, or the record for most piggy back rides given as a camp counselor. I'll have to double check on those. Academically, I'm valedictorian of my class. My sixth grade graduating class, that is. I gave a speech and everything.

Well, perhaps my work with autistic children would set me apart. Has anyone else mentioned being stabbed in the eye with a plastic zebra? (Fear not, my eyesight fully recovered a few minutes later.) Aside from that incident, the experience I had volunteering in a special education classroom has motivated me to pursue autism studies at a graduate and post-graduate level. I want to solve autism's puzzles. I want to research, to discover, and to cure. I want to make my mark in one of science's most fascinating and mysterious fields.

I only failed my driving test once.

I've won awards for placing seventh nationally in the Grand Concours National French Exam, but I'm also building my Spanish vocabulary by watching soap operas on Telemundo. "¿Como puedes llegarme, Consuelo?" See? That's academic initiative.

How about wanting to change the world? I've been active in my school's chapter of Amnesty International, I petitioned local government to support amendment of the Fair Labor Standards Act to protect youth workers, and my peers know never to challenge me in a debate over gay rights.

Also, two of my best friends have webbed toes. I don't know whether or not that means I get along best with people who are part duck, but it's an interesting coincidence.

Maybe, in order to stand out, I should focus on awards and other honors. I won the Brown University Book Award, and I also won the "Streaker" award for a particularly unattractive tan line at a recent camp. Plus, I was inducted into the National Honor Society around the time someone titled me the "least aggravating person in the world."

In the end, I could describe dozens of things that would suggest unique motivation, interests, or personality traits. However, I think the best representation of myself cannot be restricted to five hundred typed words. Perhaps I've scribbled in more correct bubbles on my standardized tests than some, but I think my biggest accomplishment is the confidence I've built in my entire person. I haven't spent my entire life trying to be a student at an elite university, I've spent it trying to be the best, most well-rounded person I can be. I hope, in the long run, that this is what will truly set me apart.

# Envision High

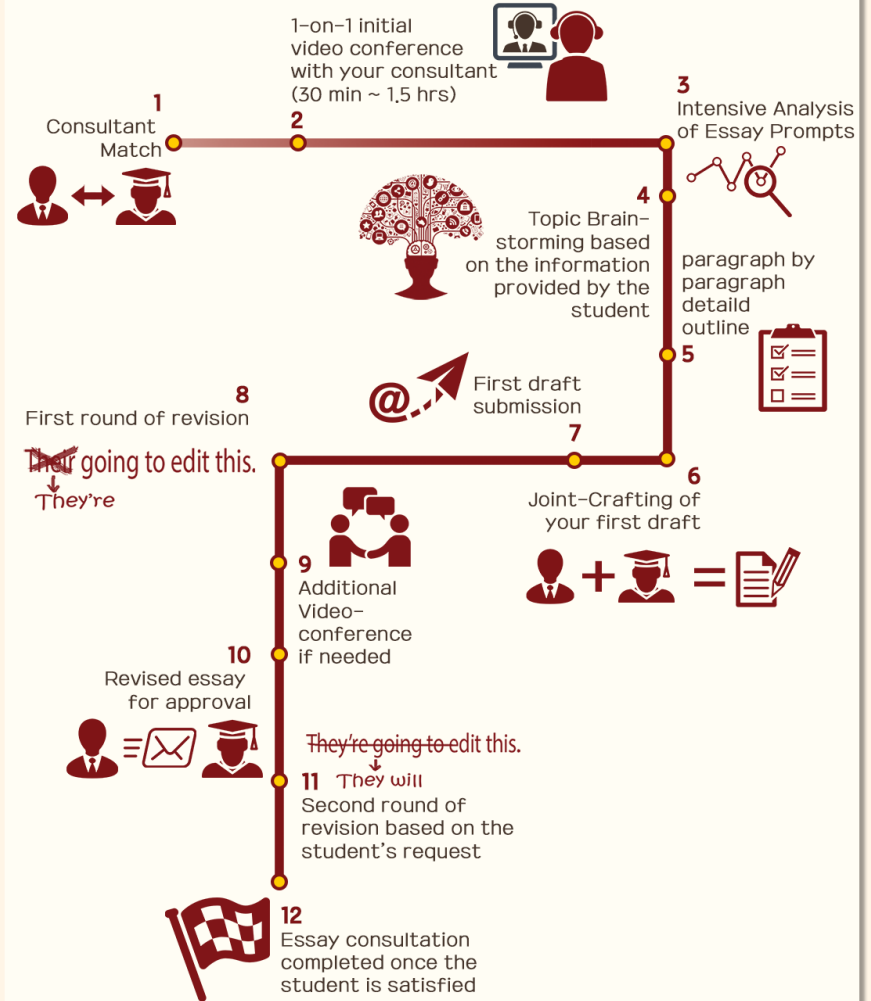
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