

I. Getting Students Started

- A. Overcoming shyness
- B. Personal essays

II. College Admissions Essays-Beginner

- A. Effective starters
- B. Talents/gifts/expectations

III. Possible Prompts

- A. Who are you?
- B. "Putting your best foot forward" isn't always best
- C. "PC" essays

IV. Advanced Admissions Essays

- A. Thesis statements
- B. Analyzing experiences
- C. Parallel structure
- D. Transitions

PERSONAL ESSAY PROMPTS

1. If you were president of the United States, what would you change, and why?
2. If you could talk to someone from history, who would it be; and what would you ask them? Why?
3. When you are eighty years old and looking back on your life, what do you want to remember about yourself, and why?
4. Write about what you expect to be doing either ten or twenty years from now. Also, include what you hope to be like.
5. What is your first clear memory from childhood?
6. Write about something that you want, or are saving for, and tell why you want it and what you will do with it.
7. Tell about someone in your life, either in your past or now, who has influenced you in a positive way. Write about what they did or said to you, and how it has affected you.
8. If there was one thing you could change about the world, what would it be? Why would you change it, and what do you think the effect would be?
9. Write about a challenge in your life that you have overcome. Describe the change that this made in you, and how it affected you.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Composition Title: _____

PERSONAL ESSAY CHECKLIST

Name, date, title on paper (2 pts) _____
Correct spelling (4 pts) _____
Correct grammar (no fragmented/awkward/run-on sentences) (4 pts) _____
Correct punctuation & capitalization (4 pts) _____

Attention-getter (3 pts) _____
Background (history or related information) (3 pts) _____
Subject of essay made clear to reader (3 pts) _____
Reason stated (why you chose *what* or *who*) (5 pts) _____
At least **four openers** used (and indicated in margin) (4 pts) _____
Dress-ups used (**one** of each **underlined**) (4 pts) _____
Details support topic sentence (4 pts) _____
Title taken from final clincher (2 pts) _____

Content (8 pts) _____

SUBTOTAL: _____

Check for banned words (2 points deducted for each if used) - _____

Possible Points: 50 Your Score: _____

From the Heart

I have been playing the piano since I was five-years-old, but it wasn't until three years ago, at age 17, that I gave my first, and last, public performance. My teacher had told me that she would be honored to have me play in a student recital at a nearby retirement home. She had said "play" but I had heard "perform."

When the day came, I sauntered into the big hall of the retirement home and took my seat among the other performers, facing the audience. I was last on the program so I had plenty of time to study the critics in front of me. I would show them how well I could perform. It would be perfect. I had practiced for weeks and they would hear no mistakes from me. So when my turn came, I confidently approached the mirrored, black instrument with the words "perfect, no mistakes" in my mind. I sat down on the bench with the cold stiff keys in front of me. Above the keys I could see my reflection in the instrument. I could see my crisp, white shirt, my bow tie; I looked like a performer. Above that I could see one of *them* — a pink skirt, a long blue blouse. She was waiting for me to perform. I raised my weapons of attack and struck the opening keys. I continued, concentrating solely on the notes, the word "perfect" ringing in my head.

Then, in the middle of the ninth measure, my so concentrated, so focused mind went blank. My perfect performance was no more. The next seven seconds were some of the longest I can remember. I felt as if I had just been dowsed with ice water. I could just imagine the face that belonged to that pink shirt and powder blue blouse looking at me in disgust. I had failed.

But when I looked at that face, I observed the pail lips and deep wrinkles forming a warm smile. Her eyes did not show disgust; instead, they seemed to say, "Thank you. Thank you for playing for me." It was then that I realized that these people were not critics listening for a perfect performance. They were people who had come to enjoy listening to me play. I repositioned my hands and played.

I learned a great deal about life that day. I am happy to say that I no longer perform for anyone. I *play* for them. I make music with my heart, not my hands. After each of the many times I have played for the public, I have received numerous comments. Not, "You performed perfectly," or "I didn't hear any mistakes." But rather, "I could feel how you felt," and "Thank you for sharing yourself with us." And I have never had to stop in the middle of a piece again.

Putting heart -- not just mind -- into something is often the key to success. I learned this lesson the hard way, but I learned it well.

-Chris Verstegen

Composition Checklist- Group C, Day III

- Composition is double spaced.
- Dress-ups are marked with an underline (one of each).
- Sentence numbers are marked in margin.
- Topic & Clincher** sentences repeat or reflect the same key words (highlighted).
- Title repeats key words of final sentence.

DRESS-UP (middle)

"ly" word		
who/which		
strong verb (<i>dual verbs</i>)		
quality adjective (<i>dual adjectives</i>)		
when, while, where, since, as, if, although		

OPENERS (first word)

1. Subject		
2. Prepositional		
3. "ly" - adverb		
4. "ing" ,		
5. Clausal ,		
6. V.S.S.		

A Unique Asset

Aimee Dominick

April 28, 2003

6
4
3
2
5

I am unique. I am the person that I am today because Jesus destined it to be so from the beginning of time. From the moment of my conception, God placed inside of me all of my gifts and talents, and each year as I grow older, I begin to find, distinguish and use these gifts. Being an extreme and intense perfectionist, as my mother would say, I have developed a love for learning, particularly a passion for anatomy and the study of the human body. Gradually, as each year passes into another, this fascination intensifies, along with a love for art and a cherishing of the simple moments in life. At the same time, Jesus has given my hands a gift, or in other words, a main portion of my gifting lies in my hands, and flows out through sign language and any other motion I use them with. While pondering the question "What do you have to give to a college or university?", I have but one answer. I can give myself- my personality, my talents, gifts, and yes, even my quirks and hope that because of this, lives will be changed and hearts will be touched. Yet while I am pouring my heart and soul into an institution, I expect to receive the same from fellow students and likewise, the teachers themselves. Furthermore, I wish to obtain knowledge that will compliment my talents and gifts and ultimately, my character. In short, because there is no person exactly like me, I believe that I would be an asset to any college or academy; because I am unique.

A Natural Leader

By Isaac Dominick

5/04/03

③ As the oldest in a family of ten, I am a natural leader. Day in and day out, I must
① make choices that will either make or break a sibling. They look up to me as an example,
④ as one to follow. Obviously, this is not to be taken lightly. Next to that, I hold the same
responsibility when it comes to schooling. People look at how my work is done, and then
follow, which is why I must set an example worthy of following. Additionally, my
spiritual walk is eyed, and I must portray Jesus and his likeness. I can give of myself with
the gift I have, which is why this college needs me. I can be an asset to you. I will help
the lives of those around me to the best of my ability, I will lead when a leader is needed,
and by God's grace make a difference. Furthermore, I hope to gain a better understanding
of the world around me, and fully accomplish the goals that I had set out to achieve. With
your help, I will leave a greatly matured person. I want to be able to face anything, and
② expect you to play your role in developing me into who I am meant to be. Without a
doubt, I will be an advantage to you, and to the lives of those around me. In short, this
college needs a natural leader like me.

I hereby state that the information contained in this application is correct, and that it is my intention to attend a military academy if appointed. I am a U.S. citizen and a legal resident of the State of California.

SIGNATURE _____
DATE _____

I am seeking this nomination and would like to be commissioned at Westpoint because I feel I belong there. After attending an informational session sponsore by the Admissions Field Representative for the area, Richard W. Myers, Colonel USAR, I felt that I finally knew what I wanted to do after high school. The time since has not dulled my interest in the least; rather, it has sharpened it to the point where I can't wait to attend. Because of my hard work ethic and undying optimism, I believe that I would excel in the environment that Westpoint offers. The fact that Westpoint developes its students physically and mentally, stresssing personal integrity and developing outstanding character, make Westpointt that much more desirable. My integrity and respect mirror that of the student body, which I would fit into completely, in character and purpose. Westpoint's goal is to produce the best leaders possible; my goal is to become the best person possible. That is why I want to attend Westpoint.



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996-5000

March 5, 1999

Paul

Sonora, California 95370

Dear Paul:

On behalf of the President and the Secretary of the Army, I am pleased to announce that the United States Military Academy has accepted you for admission, contingent upon continuation of your excellent record and your medical and dental qualification at the time of enrollment.

Congratulations! Your appointment to the Class of 2003 is an admirable accomplishment in itself. In gaining admission, you have demonstrated an exceptional potential for future service to your country and fellow citizens. West Point's education and training programs will give you the opportunity to develop that potential fully.

Before you enter West Point, I encourage you to consider the following:

- West Point requires cadets with determination, integrity, self-discipline, strength of character, endurance, and a willingness to work hard.
- West Point exists to provide *leaders of character* for our Army who are inspired to *careers as commissioned officers* and lifetime service to the nation. Because West Point offers education and training at public expense, West Pointers, both as cadets and officers, are obligated to give in return the best of themselves and to serve on Active duty as Army officers for at least five years after graduation.
- During your years at West Point, you will participate in the Cadet Leader Development Program, which is a rigorous program of academics, military education and training, and athletics. The program is designed to help you develop the discipline, toughness, and self-reliance required of a leader; it will be demanding and difficult, and you will be expected to perform effectively under these pressures.

Finally, we hope that you will enter West Point only because YOU want to – not because of pressure from parents, counselors, coaches, or peers. Recognize that West Point's mission is to develop top quality leaders for the United States Army.

If, having considered these factors, you resolve to become a part of the "Long Gray Line" – an admired part of America's history since 1802 – I applaud your decision and wish you the very best success. We look forward enthusiastically to welcoming you to West Point's Class of 2003! I am confident you will find the four-year experience the most rewarding of your life. *GO ARMY!*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Christman".

Daniel W. Christman
Lieutenant General, US Army
Superintendent

Grace Sampo
Personal Statement
Question A

I have a gift. My mother calls it “ the gift of gab,” but I think of it ultimately as a talent for expressing myself. As a child I was always the first to volunteer to give oral book reports, science project presentations, or anything that required me to stand up in front of people and speak my piece. It is just when others shy away from class discussions that I become alive. Without hesitation, I say what everyone else is too embarrassed to, or doesn't want to, and truly enjoy it! Being able to relay my ideas, opinions, and random thoughts to others distinctly, and with eloquence has made me the person that I am today. Baffled by the question that appears before me, “ What can YOU contribute to the University of California?”, I have but one answer. I can offer my gift.

What is the significance of such a gift, you ask? Well, let me try to explain the importance of a good public speaker. First and foremost, addressing large crowds is not something that most people do willingly. Next to dental visits and DMV lines, public speaking appears to be the epitome of odious and vile things. Therefore, when someone comes along who actually enjoys the “deadly humiliation” of the all-encompassing delivery, she is almost always respected. Why do you think everyone respects politicians? They can formally address a crowd without batting an eye. As a rare individual who embodies the concept of expression through language, I would contribute to the diversity that the University of California wants for it's entering class. In short, U.C. needs me, because I have a gift, I speak my mind.

Conquering the Golden Toad

A Winning College Application Essay

From my perch atop the Golden Toad, I had a breathtaking view of towering Mt. Ritter and the Minarets stepping down to meet California's Sierra Nevada, with the San Joaquin thundering out of the mountains' base and winding westward in the valley below. I had only one remaining challenge before I could call this experience, which at one time had been in great jeopardy, a success. With a nod from an instructor, I began the rappel down the ground floor 210 feet below.

This large rock outcropping, which turns gold in the last of the sun's fading rays, was the final stop on a 21-day wilderness course I participated in this past summer. By reaching this point, I proved to myself that not only could I stride through the mountains with a pack weighing more than 70 pounds, but also, the sudden injury before my departure had not been enough to stop, or even slow me down. This trip gave me the understanding that high aspirations are still achievable under difficult situations, and a determined attitude will often fulfill them.

Two nights before embarking, I broke my pinky, ring, and middle fingers on my left hand in a freak Ultimate Frisbee collision. I distinctly remember the discussion I had the next evening with the expedition staff once I discovered the seriousness of the injury. The previous year, I was forced to postpone the trip when, after running and wrestling on school teams all year to get in shape, I received a debilitating back injury. This was still fresh in my mind and I feared another delay, but their response was indecisive and left the decision of participation entirely up to me. I had a pair of hiking boots, well broken in as a result of my conditioning, sitting in front of me as I contemplated missing the opportunity again—possibly for good. After several hours of deliberation that night, I opted to catch the plane the next morning, and overcome whatever challenges this course could throw me.

With this attitude, I couldn't allow the broken hand to hinder me. Once I accepted the blunt club I had for an appendage, seven working fingers were perfectly sufficient and I gave it no more thought. During periods of rock climbing, I became so adept at using my elbow as a prop and the

thumb and pointer for balance that I outdid many of my companions both in number of routes and in speed.

Sitting on the Toad, watching as one by one my companions hooked into the line and descended over the edge, I felt nervous but not scared. In this way, I spent more than an hour on top in the cold, whipping wind, hardly moving or saying a word, just thinking back on the experience and how it had improved my self-esteem and determination. Although I have no great fear of heights, I couldn't help but feel queasy when it was my turn to walk backward over the precipice. The first fifteen feet of my descent was the only uncomfortable section as I tried to get a feel for the movement and control my body's actions. After this point, the face cut in and I was left suspended without even the superficial reassurance of my feet on the rock. I sat in this position for several minutes, looking out at the snow-capped peaks I had visited, then down to the hawk's nest at my feet, and at my comrades far below. This moment for contemplation and reflection calmed every nerve in my body and I completed the remainder surrounded by the butterflies that had escaped from my stomach.

After the conclusion of this trip, but before I had admitted to myself that it was over and left base camp, my parents asked an instructor if my broken hand had been a handicap. His reply was, "Once he decided not to see it as one, it wasn't." Although it was only a hand and not necessary for travel, had I allowed, it could have quickly become something that limited my participation.

Sir Martin Conway once said, "A man does not climb a mountain without bringing some of it away with him and leaving something of himself upon it." I feel that I left personal insecurities and doubt on that mountaintop in California. What I found was the capacity to view troubling, or demanding tasks not as problems, but as opportunities to prove to myself my ability and resolve. This insight was not easily found, but since discovered, has become an integral part of my outlook. ♥

John Eldon, the homeschooled son of Doug and Dorrie Eldon of Lyrical Learning, wrote the above essay as part of his application to Stanford University, where he is now a freshman.

Sample Questions

Cornell

We hope you'll use your essay to help us understand your thoughts and feelings about something that's important to you. Pick one of the following topics, and write a one-page essay. We're interested in which topic you choose, how you develop your idea, and how well you express yourself.

1. Choose and discuss a quotation or personal motto that reflects your values and beliefs and tells us something about the kind of person you are.
2. Define success.
3. Ask, and then answer, an important question you would have liked us to ask.

Please also submit an analytic paper you have written that you think shows your greatest strengths as both a scholar and a writer. The paper must include your teacher's comments and grades; please indicate if it is a revised edition.

MIT

Essay (500 word limit)

Provide your response to either Essay A or B.

4. Life brings many disappointments as well as satisfactions. Throughout this application, you have had the chance to discuss your successes. We feel that living through painful times and coping with adversity can showcase different sorts of strengths. Could you tell us about a time in your life when you had experienced disappointment, or faced difficulty or trying circumstances? How did you react?
5. Make up a question that is relevant to you, state it clearly and answer it. Feel free to use your imagination, recognizing that those who read it will not mind being entertained.

Washington State University

Please respond to any or all of the following essay questions (one page for each question). We will evaluate your essays based on content, organization, clarity, and accuracy of grammar and spelling.

6. Washington State University strives to promote diversity. As a student, how will you/do you contribute to diversity efforts?
7. The "pass it on" principle suggests that you get the most for yourself when you learn to share what you receive with others. How do you envision combining your educational experiences and volunteer activities to benefit your community or society at large? How have your previous experiences and activities led to your development as a leader?
8. Describe your educational and professional goals and explain why receiving a scholarship will make a difference.

PERSONAL ESSAY WRITING - page 2 of 5

From The Common Application:

(The Common Application is used by approximately several hundred well known colleges and universities. It can be found at: www.commonapplication.com)

This personal statement helps us become acquainted with you in ways different from courses, grades, test scores and other objective data. It will demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. We are looking for an essay that will help us know you better as a person and as a student. Please write an essay (250-500 words) on a topic of your choice, or on one of the options listed below. You may attach your essay on separate sheets (same size, please).

9. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
10. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
11. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, describe that influence.
12. Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.

Christendom College (& Thomas Aquinas College)

Write three short essays (of at least 100 words each) on the topics below. The essays will be judged on grammar and content. Please proofread.

13. Describe your life within your family. (For example: do you have brothers and sisters? What interests do you share with the other members of your family?) Have you discussed your plans for college with your family? If so, what do they think?
14. Choose a book that you have liked or thought profound and write about some aspect of it; or describe some person or experience who/which has had a deep impact on your life. Explain its value to you.
15. Christendom College is a Catholic college, although one need not be a Catholic to attend. What role do you think the Catholic Faith should play in the academic and community life of the College? (If you are not a Catholic, please answer from your own religious perspective.)

Emerson College - Honors Program

16. Wallace Bacon, a retired professor of Performance Studies at Northwestern University and recipient of an honorary doctorate from Emerson in 1975, wrote that the liberal arts, or humanities "are concerned with the question of what makes life worth living. And that question concerns not simply oneself but others. The humanities must help us learn who we are; they must help us learn the otherness of others." In this light, describe an encounter with someone or something different--an "other" which revealed to you your sense of self and relation to humanity. This encounter may involve a person, place, culture or text (book, speech, film, play, etc.). (maximum of 500 words)

Miscellaneous Application Essay Questions from:
<http://www.essayedge.com>
(Many sample essays can be viewed at this web site.)

17. How do you think the world will be different during the new millennium?
18. Describe the qualities and accomplishments you would bring to the undergraduate student body at the University of California.
19. What are your career goals (immediately after graduation, 5 years out, 10 years out?) Be your own career counselor. What aspects of your personality or background do you believe present the greatest obstacles to achieving those goals? What is your strategy for overcoming these obstacles?
20. Tell us about an opinion have you had to defend. How has this affected your belief system?
21. Describe your intellectual interests, their evolution, and what makes them exciting to you.
22. Tell us what appeals to you about our university. How will you utilize its academic programs to further explore your intended major or field of interest (or general academic interests if you're undecided)?

STANFORD ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON AN ESSAY RECEIVED:

This essay is fairly well written. The essayist makes boarding school his focus, using it to explain and describe how and why he has changed over the years. A lot of students write about what wonderful people they have become, but they fail to do a good job of understanding and explaining the forces that prevailed to make them change. This writer focuses on the strengths of the school itself. He demonstrates the sort of values it tries to instill in its students such as, "Encouraging us to collaborate with each other and make use of all resources that we may find," and "Giving respect to everyone and everything." Because the writer does so, the reader never doubts that the applicant possesses all the qualities that he credits to the school. Using this method has two advantages. First, the positive, upbeat attitude he has toward his institution is rare. Second, Stanford, for one, recognized that this would reflect well on his ability to adapt to and be a positive force at their school.

HARVARD COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON AN ESSAY RECEIVED:

This essay is a great example of how to answer this question well. This applicant chose characters who demonstrated specific traits that reflect on his own personality. We believe that he is sincere about his choices because his reasons are personal (being from a small town, and so forth). He managed to tell us a good deal about himself, his values, and his goals while maintaining a strong focus throughout.

Tips for writing the Application Essay - BATES COLLEGE

What's the purpose of this essay?

One purpose, obviously, is to give us a sample of your writing. Liberal arts colleges place a premium on strong writing skills. We look for a mastery of the mechanics of writing (grammar, syntax, and organization) as well as for fluency and originality.

Your essay gives us a taste of the maturity of your thinking and writing, and of your readiness for a competitive liberal arts program.

A second purpose is to enable you to share something of yourself that may not be reflected in your academic record or in your recommendations.

1. Offer us some insight. This is the time to recount a powerful experience or significant relationship (such as tutoring a handicapped child or discovering a passion for medieval art) that has changed your perspective or challenged your beliefs. Instead of merely giving us a chronology of your bicycle trip through France, you might explain how your responses to the culture altered your perceptions of your own country and yourself.

One applicant shared his urban upbringing by taking us with him on a daybreak run through the city streets. Another sent a journal she kept while she was living as an exchange student with a Greek family. Yet another applicant wrote about how playing a varsity sport helped him appreciate the value of teamwork in an otherwise individually competitive high school environment.

2. Be careful of the obvious. For instance, "How my trip to France taught me independence" is a bit too easy. But, if reflective, anything - travel, a significant personal struggle, a family experience - can be an impressive subject.

3. Social and political topics should be tied to previous interests or experiences. An essay that ponders the effects of poverty as perceived while volunteering to build a house in Appalachia could work. An essay on devotion to environmentalism as an abstract idea carries little weight.

4. Demonstrate your intellectual interests. Consider writing about your response to works of a particular author, research in certain areas, or ways in which you as a student have reached beyond your curriculum. In fact, we encourage you to submit additional writing samples (perhaps a copy of a term or research paper, poems, or even an in-class essay) that reveal an ability to organize thoughts and defend ideas under the pressure of time.

5. Write and rewrite! The essay is the closest possible model to a principal form of college writing, the term paper, so treat it as an example of your college readiness.

6. Keep an eye on presentation. The essay should be neat, readable, handwritten or word processed.

Personal Essay Assignment

Topic: Choose any of the above from this list:
#1, #4, #9, #12, #18 or #20

Length: Minimum: one page (standard font & spacing, etc.)
Maximum: 500 words

Checklist:

Name, Date, Title	_____ (2)
Perfect Spelling	_____ (4)
Perfect Grammar	_____ (4)
Perfect Punctuation & Capitalization	_____ (4)
Attention-getter (Decoration, Anecdote, etc.)	_____ (6)
Variety of Openers; Sentence Types	_____ (4)
Paragraph Structure (Intro, topic/clincher, Conclusion)	_____ (6)
Content	_____ (10)

Total: 40 points possible

Speak from your heart and with conviction.
Be real. Give proof of your thoughtfulness, intelligence, sensitivity, objectivity, maturity.
Do this as if it actually were a College or University Application Essay.

Note: Don't force any of the checklist techniques. The writing should be stylish and varied, but not contrived or mechanical. Use freely what you've learned to say what you think and feel.

DON'T JUST TELL--SHOW

Good narrative writing includes...

*plenty of description that involves several of the FIVE SENSES to help the reader experience the scenes

* strong ACTION VERBS rather than state of being (passive voice) verbs

* THOUGHTS and FEELINGS of characters and how they are manifested

The goals of all these things are to help paint a vivid picture for the reader and help them feel as though they know the characters. These things make a story more interesting.

Notice the differences between the two versions of the Irish dancer

My main competitor was from the studio across town. She was on stage. Her hair was blonde and curled perfectly. Her dress was blue with gold sequins. Her feet were quick and agile and didn't miss a step. I was worried.

On stage my main competitor, the pride of the prestigious studio across town, captured everyone's attention. Her perfect blonde curls bounced as she danced. The gold sequins on her sky blue dress glistened. Her agile feet moved like lightning and didn't miss a step. As I watched, my stomach turned in somersaults and I found it difficult to smile. I could not even pay attention to the encouragement my friends were attempting to give me. I could concentrate on nothing but hoping she would make a mistake—any mistake—to take the pressure off of me.

And, for the boys, the difference between these two versions of what happens to a fighter pilot:

I knew I had been hit. I was scared and just tried to get control of the aircraft.

Suddenly there was a deafening bang. I could smell smoke and the jet began to tremble violently. As I looked down, the ground was getting closer and closer. Frantically I pushed, pulled, and yanked everything in sight to try to regain control of the aircraft.

CONCRETE PERSONAL EXAMPLES

The most common weakness in personal essays is that they tend to be filled with vague generalities. Concrete, personal examples will give your reader something he can picture and/or relate to, and hence, make your essay more interesting. Below are some general statements. Note how I added personal, concrete examples. Do they make a difference?

(tennis) Whenever I loose, I pick out the things that brought me down and work on them to improve for the next game. * Tennis brings out the competitiveness in me.

In one match I double faulted 12 times. That week I spent three hours every evening serving to an empty court. I concentrated on placing the ball in one particular spot and didn't choose another until I had hit it 10 times in a row. I slammed hundreds of balls over and over again until I was convinced that serving would not be a problem again.

(football) Unfortunately my whole summer was sacrificed to training in the blistering sun.

We began each practice by running, not jogging, around the field eight times. That was immediately followed by a variety of calisthenics—100 jumping jacks, 50 push-ups, 60 sit-ups... I thought I would drop, but that would only mean additional laps, so I made myself do it.

(drama) After weeks of rehearsals, I finally was ready for the big production. * Theater has given me self confidence.

That evening the show was flawless. Even the lines I had stumbled over many times at rehearsals flowed out smoothly and easily. The audience loved the show and gave us a standing ovation.

(youth group/ relationship with God) I know God is in control. Knowing that, I was able to encourage my family and give them support during that time.

I shared with them the passages of Scripture that assure us of our home in heaven. We talked about how happy we would be to see him there one day. We cried together and prayed together and God gave us the "peace that passes all understanding."

(volleyball) After five years of volleyball, I have become a very competitive person who loves to be aggressive and hog the ball.

I have trouble staying in my position. If I see the ball dropping, I have to dive for it, even if it means sliding across the entire court on my side. When the ball is overhead, I can't resist slamming it down across the net with a hard, well-placed spike.

THESIS STATEMENTS

A thesis statement expresses the main point of an essay by making a precise, specific assertion about the subject. A thesis statement should be carefully constructed as it is the heart of the essay, its controlling idea. Whether or not you state it in your essay, formulating it will help you know what you must demonstrate and/or support.

GUIDELINES for PERSONAL ESSAYS

* **Clearly state only ONE main idea** in a declarative sentence. In a personal essay, it should demonstrate your ability to **think analytically and/or reflect upon a particular event or aspect of your life.**

* In a standard essay, the thesis statement is placed at the end of the introduction and reaffirmed in the conclusion. In a personal essay, **the thesis may or may not be stated in the intro, but it should be clear in the conclusion.**

* **Avoid generalizations and all-inclusive words** such as *everyone, all, a lot, no one, always, and never.*

* **Be specific and clear.** The most common weakness in thesis statements is vague generalization.

Vague: *Boy Scouts helped me mature.*

Specific: *The meticulous requirements of attaining Eagle Scout forced me to set priorities and manage my time wisely.*

* **Avoid common adjectives** that are vague/ boring (*good, bad, interesting*).

Vague: *My father was a good influence on me.*

Specific: *My father was a strong Christian role model who taught me to share my faith by my actions.*

* **Avoid stating a problem without offering a solution.**

Poor: *There is too much immorality and violence on T.V*

Better: *Because there is so much immorality and violence on television, my family and I led a campaign to encourage Christian families not to subscribe to cable T.V.*

* **Do not state the obvious.**

Poor: *Toastmasters developed my speaking abilities.*

Better: *Because I have prepared and delivered numerous speeches, I no longer fear public speaking but, instead, enjoy sharing my opinions and ideas.*

COMMENTS: THESIS STATEMENTS

***Remember the purpose of the essay is to reveal you.** Generic statements such as “teaches me responsibility (or discipline or skills)” are not only vague and boring, but they do not reveal your personality or what makes you unique. The same job/activity would probably teach the same to anyone.

***Focus on what about the activity draws you to it or why you like it. How does your participation in it reveal your personality?** Many of you can find good thesis material in your brainstorming notes. Here are some notes that should have been considered good material for thesis statement starters:

(surfing) I enjoy activities in which I can push myself as opposed to having a coach who pushed me.

(Leadership Council) want to make a difference in my school; want to affect change; want to set an example

(Cosmetology) need to be out-going and caring for others; clients need to talk, I need to show compassion...counsel,,, help....

(Speaker's Club) from shy to outgoing; able to “think on my feet”

(Dance) built strong will; made me push myself to the limit; helped me feel free to express myself

***As you revise your thesis statement and formulate supporting points, keep in mind that by your conclusion you will want to be able to show the broader implications of your thesis.**

You will want to be able to demonstrate that whatever you have learned, developed, or demonstrated by participating in the activity will impact other areas of your life. In other words, being a great surfer or dancer is nice, but how does that make you an asset to the college the way being able to push yourself, express yourself, or have a strong resolve would? How would learning “skills” (not specified) make you desirable to a college as opposed to being the kind of person who wants to make a difference in their school and/or affect change? Even when your thesis is very specific to one activity, you should still find ways to broaden the implications. For example, the two parts of a thesis statement specific to surfing suggest the following about the surfer:

“the exhilaration of dropping into a wave” suggests someone who likes a challenge (definitely an advantage at college)

“generating my own speed” suggests independence, also an asset

TO ADD INTEREST or SIGNIFICANCE TO THESIS STATEMENTS (IN ANY TYPE OF ESSAY)

These tips come from *Writing with a Point*, p. 29.

- Make a significant point that is not common knowledge. **How?**
- Challenge a stereotype.
- Take a bold stand on a controversial issue
- Find a new way to define the familiar
- Make an unusual comparison or analogy
- Propose an original solution to an old problem
- Claim an unexpected cause—effect relationship

Don't leave your reader asking, "So what?"

Look at these thesis statements (some from *Writing with a Point* and *The Admissions Essay*). Which technique did each use to add interest or significance?

1. (*speaking of juggling*) The goal of the hobby, trying to keep several objects in the air at one time, struck me as analogous to what I've been trying to do in my life: be an active member of society both by participating in many and varied activities and interests and by trying to get other people, all very different from each other, to do the same.
2. Because I was home schooled, I had many more opportunities for meaningful extracurricular activities and "socialization" than did my public school friends.
3. Graffiti is more than just writing on empty wall space: it is a distinctive, vibrant, and sometimes angry means of expression.
4. My early exposure to different and sometimes inconsistent ideas encouraged me to develop an open mind.

Essay Based on Outline

It took me eighteen years to realize what an extraordinary influence my mother has been on my life. She's the kind of person who has thoughtful discussions about which artist she would most want to have her portrait painted by (Sargent), the kind of mother who always has time for her four children, and the kind of community leader who has a seat on the board of every major project to assist Washington's impoverished citizens. Growing up with such a strong role model, I developed many of her enthusiasms. I not only came to love the excitement of learning simply for the sake of knowing something new, but I also came to understand the idea of giving back to the community in exchange for a new sense of life, love, and spirit.

My mother's enthusiasm for learning is most apparent in travel. I was nine years old when my family visited Greece. Every night for three weeks before the trip, my older brother Peter and I sat with my mother on her bed reading Greek myths and taking notes on the Greek Gods. Despite the fact that we were traveling with fourteen-month-old twins, we managed to be at each ruin when the site opened at sunrise. I vividly remember standing in an empty amphitheatre pretending to be an ancient tragedian, picking out my favorite sculpture in the Acropolis museum, and inserting our family into modified tales of the battle at Troy. Eight years and half a dozen passport stamps later I have come to value what I have learned on these journeys about global history, politics and culture, as well as my family and myself.

While I treasure the various worlds my mother has opened to me abroad, my life has been equally transformed by what she has shown me just two miles from my house. As a ten year old, I often accompanied my mother to (name deleted), a local soup kitchen and children's center. While she attended meetings, I helped with the Summer Program by chasing children around the building and performing magic tricks. Having finally perfected the "floating paintbrush" trick, I began work as a full time volunteer with the five and six year old children last June. It is here that I met Jane Doe, an exceptionally strong girl with a vigor that is contagious. At the end of the summer, I decided to continue my work at (name deleted) as Jane's tutor. Although the position is often difficult, the personal rewards are beyond articulation. In the seven years since I first walked through the doors of (name deleted), I have learned not only the idea of giving to others, but also of deriving from them a sense of spirit.

Everything that my mother has ever done has been overshadowed by the thought behind it. While the raw experiences I have had at home and abroad have been spectacular, I have learned to truly value them by watching my mother. She has enriched my life with her passion for learning, and changed it with her devotion to humanity. In her endless love of everything and everyone she is touched by, I have seen a hope and life that is truly exceptional. Next year, I will find a new home miles away. However, my mother will always be by my side.

WB

I. Introduction

Mother extraordinary influence

***THESIS STATEMENT:** Growing up w/ such a strong role model, I developed many other enthusiasms.

TOPICS (support for thesis): love excitement, learning
joy giving back to community

ii. Transition words: enthusiasm, learning (circle in essay)

TOPIC A: Enthusiasm, learning, apparent, travel

Evidence for TOPIC A with PERSONAL examples:

- 9 yrs, trip, Greece - prep 3 wks
- read myths, notes gods
- ruins by sunrise - amphitheatre, Acropolis, sculpture

CLINCHER A: value, learned, ^{global} journeys

iii. Transition words: worlds, abroad

TOPIC B: transformed, mom, showed, home

Evidence for TOPIC B with PERSONAL examples

- soup kitchen
- children's program: chasing, magic
- Jane Doe - tutor

CLINCHER B learned, giving, deriving spirit

iv. Transition words: everything my mother has done - home & abroad

CONCLUSION

Restate topics: enriched life - passion for learning
changed devotion to humanity

Thesis statement / broader implications:
(Reflect opening if possible)

seen hope, life, exceptional
always be at me

Note detail for trip

Note details, examples

I. Introduction

either way O.K.



***THESIS STATEMENT:** _____

TOPICS (*support for thesis*): _____

II. Transition words:

TOPIC A:

Evidence for TOPIC A with PERSONAL examples:

CLINCHER A:

III. Transition words:

TOPIC B:

Evidence for TOPIC B with PERSONAL examples

CLINCHER B

IV. Transition words:

CONCLUSION

Restate topics

Thesis statement / broader implications (Reflect opening if possible):

PERSONAL ESSAY OPENERS

There are many types of introductions, but all must begin by grabbing the reader's attention. In a personal essay this means beginning with action, imagery, or something with an emotional appeal from your personal experiences or observations.

In an essay describing the trauma of his brother's illness, an applicant made the mistake of beginning with an impersonal, sweeping statement:

"Throughout the twentieth century virtually every aspect of modern medicine has reaped the rewards of technological advancements."

Admissions officers want to know about you, not about modern medicine or technology. The writer should have begun with the most gripping, personal sentence in his essay:

"Five years ago a brain tumor destroyed my brother's pituitary gland."

Here are some samples of types of leads that will work well

(Most come from essayedge.com):

Standard Lead Standard leads are the most common leads used. A typical standard lead answers one or more of the six basic questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. They give the reader an idea of what to expect. A summary lead is a standard lead that answers most of these questions in one sentence. Perhaps the most standard of all standard leads is the one that simply rephrases the question asked. The problem with this kind of lead is that, although it is a logical beginning, it can be dull. The advantage is that it sets your reader up for a focused and well-structured essay. If you live up to that expectation, the impact of your points is heightened. Standard leads are also useful for short essays when you need to get to the point quickly.

Of all the characters that I've "met" through books and movies, two stand out as people that I most want to emulate.

Creative Lead This lead attempts to add interest by being obtuse or funny. It can leave you wondering what the essay will be about or make you smile.

If you like storms that clear a path of change and arcs that bridge communication gaps, slide down my rainbow into the whirlwind of my life

Action Lead This lead takes the reader into the middle of a piece of action. It is perfect for short essays where space needs to be conserved or for narrative essays that begin with a story.

Struck with sudden panic, I hastily flipped through the many papers in my travel folder until I spotted the ticket.

Reluctantly smearing sunblock over every exposed inch of my fifty-three pound body, I prepared mentally for the arduous task that lay ahead of me.

Personal or Revealing Lead This lead reveals something about the writer. It is always in the first person and usually takes an informal, conversational tone.

Ever since I was little, I've had this overwhelming desire to travel the world.

Quotation Lead This type of lead can be a direct quotation or a paraphrase. It is most effective when the quote you choose is unusual, funny, or obscure and it should not be too long. Choose a quote with a meaning you plan to reveal to the reader as the essay progresses. Some admissions officers caution against using this kind of lead because it can seem like you are trying to impress them or sound smart. Do not use a proverb or cliché, and do not interpret the quote in your essay. The admissions committee is more interested in how you respond to it and what that response says about you.

Dialogue Lead This lead takes the reader into a conversation. It can take the form of an actual dialogue between two people or can simply be a snippet of personal thought.

"Je deteste des Americains," said the old Swiss woman sitting across from me.

Descriptive/ Emotional Lead (Essay in *Admissions Essay*, p. 155)

"I will never forget the sound of the skull hitting the pavement, or the sight of the bleeding, unconscious man lying in the middle of the street."

Personal Anecdote When you are not writing a narrative essay, try beginning with a short narrative (anecdote) about a personal experience that will demonstrate your thesis or transition into your essay. (The following is from *Admissions Essays*, p. 128)

A question circled around the campfire as an eager eleven-year-old contemplated his answer.

"Matt, what is your goal in scouting?" came the voice from across the flames.

"I want to make Eagle," I solemnly replied, being full of self-confidence.

I knew very little of the goal of the goal for which I was striving, ...

CONCLUSIONS

Admissions essays are typically short, so the conclusion must be brief and to the point. Do not try to summarize the information you put in the body, simply draw the natural conclusion. What was your point (thesis) in sharing the information?

Remember, the purpose of the admissions essay is to reveal yourself and your ability to think analytically. Don't just relate the facts of your experience--reflect upon it. How did you react? How has it affected you? Has your thinking or your life changed as a result of it? What did you learn?

While you can do this throughout the essay, it should be most evident in the conclusion. **In your conclusion you must interpret and draw the natural conclusion of the details of your body. This is where to make the thesis of your essay clear.**

Read the following essay from *The Admissions Essay*, pp. 94-95. Note the abundance of reflection. Note especially the conclusion. What is the thesis?

I never believed that a person drowning would really look like the actors in the Red Cross Training films that all lifeguards endured before certification. How or why anyone would float underwater waving their arms up and down without kicking or attempting to breathe was beyond my comprehension. Then again, maybe the Red Cross did know what they were talking about because the child in the diving tank closely resembled a textbook case of drowning. I pulled out the "sinker"—my first drowning person ever—without even thinking about it. "Pullout"—rescues—never occur routinely but often enough to take most of the shock value out of a rescue (at least for the guards, not the victims). All the training paid off; I simply dove in, grabbed him, towed him to the side, and the child left the pool a few pounds heavier with swallowed water but no worse off because of the accident. The child climbed from the pool under his own power, and I returned to my perch above the crowd until another guard in rotation relieved me.

Later in the evening, I realized what had happened, or rather, almost happened, and my thoughts turned back to the rescue. I always believed that "pull outs" were part of the job that I was paid to do although I seldom had to actually enter the water to rescue anyone. That night, however, the gravity of the

incident began to unfold to me. The wide-eyed child had spent nearly twenty seconds in thirteen feet of water inhaling things for which he had no use. When I grabbed his squirming body, he had been DYING!

Now, I had been to funerals and wakes and had “encountered” death—but not like this. In all of my previous encounters death was a state of existence; I had never seen death as an action occurring in the present tense. This death was real to me. And it was scary because it was not peaceful and quiet like a body in a casket; it was frantic and screaming, and it punched me in the jaw just trying to save itself. I felt proud because I had, quite literally, saved someone’s life. On the other hand, I felt the weight of responsibility descend upon my shoulders. I could no longer just sit over the pool, soak up the sun, and watch girls. If in a “moment of truth” I failed in some way, someone’s body could wind up on the bottom of the pool. Success and failure never held such importance in my life. I could make a real difference in someone’s life or lack thereof. The fact that individuals could make a profound impact on the world or the people in it—not just as a lifeguard—snuck up on me while I was confused and defenseless.

It was my first rescue of the summer, and there were more to come. The handful of rescues made me nervous, but they also left me happy and committed to the belief that my actions mattered. I can not be content with letting things just happen because I might be what stands between a child with a real chance for a good life and a little paragraph in the obituaries.

--Greg Downey

Name: _____ Date: _____

Composition Title: _____

PERSONAL ESSAY CHECKLIST

Name, date, title on paper (2 pts) _____
Correct spelling (4 pts) _____
Correct grammar (no fragmented/awkward/run-on sentences) (4 pts) _____
Correct punctuation & capitalization (4 pts) _____

Attention-getter (3 pts) _____
Background (history or related information) (3 pts) _____
Subject of essay made clear to reader (3 pts) _____
Reason stated (why you chose *what* or *who*) (5 pts) _____
At least **four openers** used (and indicated in margin) (4 pts) _____
Dress-ups used (**one** of each **underlined**) (4 pts) _____
Details support topic sentence (4 pts) _____
Title taken from final clincher (2 pts) _____

Content (8 pts) _____

SUBTOTAL: _____

Check for banned words (2 points deducted for each if used) - _____

Possible Points: 50 Your Score: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Composition Title: _____

PERSONAL ADMISSIONS ESSAY CHECKLIST I

Name, date, title on paper (4 pts) _____
Correct spelling (8 pts) _____
Correct grammar (no fragmented/awkward/run-on sentences) (8 pts) _____
Correct punctuation & capitalization (8 pts) _____

Attention-getter (Anecdote or very short story from your past) (12 pts) _____
At least **four openers** used (and indicated in margin) (8 pts) _____
Dress-ups used (**one** of each **underlined**) (8 pts) _____
What **you** have to **offer** the institution (8 pts) _____
What **you** hope to **gain** from college/univ./academy (8 pts) _____
Final clincher **repeating** part of or **relating to** anecdote (12 pts) _____

CONTENT -This is the subjective part of your essay. Up until now you have been graded solely on the structure and style of your writing. This part of your grade will be based on what you have to say about yourself. Speak from your heart with conviction and purpose.

Content (16 pts) _____

SUBTOTAL: _____

Check for banned words (2 points deducted for each if used) - _____

Possible Points: 100 **Your Score:** _____

Personal Essay Assignment

Topic: Choose any of the above from this list:
#1, #4, #9, #12, #18 or #20

Length: Minimum: one page (standard font & spacing, etc.)
Maximum: 500 words

Checklist:

Name, Date, Title	_____ (2)
Perfect Spelling	_____ (4)
Perfect Grammar	_____ (4)
Perfect Punctuation & Capitalization	_____ (4)
Attention-getter (Decoration, Anecdote, etc.)	_____ (6)
Variety of Openers; Sentence Types	_____ (4)
Paragraph Structure (Intro, topic/clincher, Conclusion)	_____ (6)
Content	_____ (10)

Total: 40 points possible

Speak from your heart and with conviction.
Be real. Give proof of your thoughtfulness, intelligence, sensitivity, objectivity, maturity.
Do this as if it actually were a College or University Application Essay.

Note: Don't force any of the checklist techniques. The writing should be stylish and varied, but not contrived or mechanical. Use freely what you've learned to say what you think and feel.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Composition Title: _____

PERSONAL ADMISSIONS ESSAY CHECKLIST II

Can you state your main point in ONE clear thesis statement? (10 pts) _____
If it appears in your essay, underline it; if not, write it here:

Anecdote or very short story from personal experience (10 pts) _____

Paragraphs approximately equal in length & support thesis (5 pts) _____

Specific, concrete, personal examples support your points and use sensory words (highlighted) Don't just tell - SHOW. (10 pts) _____

The question/prompt has been fully answered or addressed and accurately represents you - don't be insincere. (10 pts) _____

The conclusion draws naturally from the previous paragraphs but does not try to "summarize". (5 pts) _____

Final clincher reflects the anecdote/experience &/or thesis (5 pts) _____

Title from final clincher (5 pts) _____

Four openers used in each paragraph & indicated in margin (5 pts) _____

Dress-ups used **one** of each in each paragraph & **underlined** (5 pts) _____

Two different **decorations** used (indicate in right margin) (5 pts) _____

Transitions and **transitional** clinchers used where needed (10 pts) _____

No spelling/grammar/punctuation/capitalization errors (15 pts) _____

Possible Points: 100

Your Score: _____

Name: Dan DeMattei Date: 3-11-04

Composition Title: Hard Determination

PERSONAL ADMISSIONS ESSAY CHECKLIST I

- Name, date, title on paper (4 pts) _____
- Correct spelling (8 pts) _____
- Correct grammar (no fragmented/awkward/run-on sentences) (8 pts) _____
- Correct punctuation & capitalization (8 pts) _____

-
- Attention-getter (Anecdote or very short story from your past) (12 pts) _____
 - At least **four openers** used (and indicated in margin) (8 pts) _____
 - Dress-ups used (**one** of each **underlined**) (8 pts) _____
 - What **you** have to **offer** the institution (8 pts) _____
 - What **you** hope to **gain** from college/univ./academy (8 pts) _____
 - Final clincher **repeating** part of or **relating to** anecdote (12 pts) _____

CONTENT -This is the subjective part of your essay. Up until now you have been graded solely on the structure and style of your writing. This part of your grade will be based on what you have to say about yourself. Speak from your heart with conviction and purpose.

Content (16 pts) _____

SUBTOTAL: _____

Check for **banned words** (2 points deducted for each if used) - _____

Possible Points: 100 Your Score: _____

Dan DeMattei

March 14, 2004

Hard Determination

2 Before my freshman year, I was the kind of student who waited until the last minute to do my work. It wasn't until I was placed into Mr. deGennaro's honors English class that this habit was broken. The first assignment that my new teacher gave us was a poetry anthology. We had 1 fourteen different types of poetry to turn in and fifteen class times left until it was due. We could only turn in one piece of poetry per class time. This taught me how to be a responsible student and to forge ahead to get my work done on time. This talent also helped me to get through the rest of the difficult school year. It made even the toughest class easy. SA

5 If this university accepts me, I will continue to do my best in all areas of my schooling. I SV want to take this new skill that I have learned and show other students that collage life can be simple if you take it one step at a time. Being generally an A student, I'm sure I will be a good y CL example of what your collage looks for in students. Also, through this collage, I hope to achieve many goals. I want to be able to say that I am doing something worthwhile with my life. I want to be able to take part in a conversation no matter what the topic is. I know with my hard determination and responsibility, this will be possible.

Name: Heather Sparks

Date: 5-18-04

Composition Title: a Positive Influence

PERSONAL ADMISSIONS ESSAY CHECKLIST II

Can you state your main point in ONE clear thesis statement? (10 pts) _____
If it appears in your essay, underline it; if not, write it here:

Anecdote or very short story from personal experience (10 pts) _____

Paragraphs approximately equal in length & support thesis (5 pts) _____

Specific, concrete, personal examples support your points and use sensory words (highlighted) Don't just tell - SHOW. (10 pts) _____

The question/prompt has been fully answered or addressed and accurately represents you - don't be insincere. (10 pts) _____

The conclusion draws naturally from the previous paragraphs but does not try to "summarize". (5 pts) _____

Final clincher reflects the anecdote/experience &/or thesis (5 pts) _____

Title from final clincher (5 pts) _____

Four openers used in each paragraph & indicated in margin (5 pts) _____

Dress-ups used **one** of each in each paragraph & **underlined** (5 pts) _____

Two different **decorations** used (indicate in right margin) (5 pts) _____

Transitions and **transitional** clinchers used where needed (10 pts) _____

No spelling/grammar/punctuation/capitalization errors (15 pts) _____

Possible Points: 100 **Your Score:** _____

Heather Sparks
May 8, 2004
Writing

A Positive Influence

- ⑥ ② Have you ever known someone who has influenced you? I have. In fact, there are *w/w* many people who have shaped my personality, sometimes positively, sometimes *s.u. ly*
- ④ negatively. One such positive influence is Shawn McCamey, my youth pastor. Having long been involved with young adults, Shawn can definitely be described as fun loving. *cl*
- ① For one thing, he's great at laughing and making others laugh! He accomplishes this in various ways. In particular, he often finds the funny side in simple mistakes (usually made by him). It appears that he enjoys finding the humorous things in life's quirks and *q.a.* ironies. Or he'll do outlandish things like sit on someone's lap to brighten him or her up.
- ③ Naturally, this laughter makes Wednesday night Youth Group fun and I always hate to miss it. Youth group is a time I look forward to in my week. But more importantly, I believe that atmosphere has helped me better appreciate the power of laughter. A chuckle or two and I can feel my cares briefly melt away. Plus, laughing is just plain fun and it helps put things in perspective. When laughing, I'll find that the "calamity" I'm
- ⑧ facing isn't such a major problem. Although he is serious too, Shawn likes to laugh loud *Dec. alif.* and long and now so do I.
- ⑤② While Shawn makes people laugh, he also teaches about more serious things. To illustrate, he lovingly tells us what God's Word says about different issues. When I write, "lovingly," I don't mean warm fuzzies or sentimental mush, I'm referring to a deep *q.a.*
- ① ③⑥ concern he has for us. He doesn't want us getting hurt. Equally important, if not more so, Shawn McCamey has encouraged others and me to strengthen our walk with God.

For example, before I started going to youth group, I didn't have much interest in the Bible. But once I realized that the Bible isn't boring and obsolete, it became more than a book, it became God's personal love letter to me! So, even though he has a fun side, Shawn cares about us and shares with us. Needless to say, Shawn McCamey has been a valuable influence on me, although I'm still far from perfect. "Pastor McCamey" is no superhero either but God has definitely used him to draw me closer to my Lord. In addition, his stories and comments can make you bust a gut laughing or bring hot tears to your eyes. Basically, Shawn is one of my spiritual leaders and friends. Looking back over the past two years, I have realized that Shawn McCamey has been and still is someone who positively influences me.

cl

ly

S.O.

w/w

④