

Creative Nonfiction: Writing college application essays



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Lesson #1: Introduction to essay questions and the Common Application and Idea Workshop

Length: 58 minutes

Grade Level: 11th

Teacher: Jennifer Colby

Subject Area: IB English

Objective of Lesson:

Students should understand the purpose, requirements, and review process of the college application essay as work of creative nonfiction in order to draft an original, creative, and authentic 250-word essay on a college essay prompt chosen from a list of provided prompts.

Standards Addressed for Lesson:

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/commoncorecrosswalk>

Common Core Standards for English Language AASL 21st Century Learner Standards

	1.1.6 Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.
CC.11-12.SL.1.a Comprehension and Collaboration: Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.	1.1.5 Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness to needs, importance, and social and cultural context. 3.2.2 Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas during group discussions.
CC.11-12.W.3 Text Types and Purposes: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	

Pre-lesson:

- Students will have read “New college application questions encourage creative thinking” by Larry Gordon
- Create Google presentation “[Lesson #1: Introduction to essay questions and the Common Application and Idea Workshop](#)”

- Create [Lesson #1 Application Essay Assignment: Essay Prompts to Choose From](#)

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Computer with Internet connection, dongle, projector, and whiteboard (instructor)
- Instructional area with seating for students
- Laptops with internet connection for all students
- Printed lesson plan
- Google presentation: “Introduction to the Common Application and the College Application Essay”
- 21 copies of assignment: “Lesson #1 Application Essay Assignment: Essay Prompts to Choose From”

Anticipatory Set:

SLIDE #1:

Raise your hand if you have already decided what your first choice college is.

Ok- this is not how to write a college admissions essay for that college...

“How Not to Write a College Admissions Essay”

<http://www.howcast.com/videos/28730-How-Not-to-Write-a-College-Admissions-Essay>

Input:

SLIDE #2: Goals for today

1. Introduce students to the Common Application
2. Explain the concept of the essay being an example of creative nonfiction
3. Share tips and common mistakes regarding the college application essay
4. Discuss the essay review process with a focus on the different stages of review
5. Conduct idea workshop
6. Describe essay assignment

Model:

SLIDE #3: Why do you have to write an essay to get into college?

- Insight into who you really are = creative nonfiction

SLIDE #4: The Common Application- What is it?

- Open link “Member Colleges and Institutions-All Members”

SLIDE #5: The IB Advantage

SLIDE #6: Common Application Essay Questions

SLIDE #7: Know Your Audience: Who reads your application?

SLIDE #8: A memorable essay

SLIDE #9: What is Creative Nonfiction?

-Structure of essay

Creation of scenes that fit together to tell your story

Checking for Understanding:

SLIDE #10: Your College Application Essay

-What details do you notice in the “specific” example?

SLIDE #11: Do’s and Don’ts

Guided Practice:

Introductory Peer Editing Workshop

SLIDE #12: Getting from Here to There- A Pre-essay Writing Workshop: Part 1 of 4

-Brainstorming exercise using TitanPad <http://titanpad.com/PEjMazZVhc>

SLIDE #13: Getting from Here to There- A Pre-essay Writing Workshop: Part 2 of 4

-Writing letter

Think about your structure... how are you going to tell the story?

SLIDE #14: Getting from Here to There- A Pre-essay Writing Workshop: Part 3 of 4

-Peer review

SLIDE #15: Getting from Here to There- A Pre-essay Writing Workshop: Part 4 of 4

-Revision/elaboration

Independent Practice:

SLIDE #16: Your turn

“Application Essay Assignment”

Remember to:

- Brainstorm
- Develop structure
- Write
- Revise

Closure:

SLIDE #17: Find out more...

SLIDE #18: Resources

For the next lesson, please bring in your completed assignments and we are going to play “Admissions Panel” by peer editing each other’s essays

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Lesson #2: Peer Editing Workshop and Panel Presentation

Length: 58 minutes

Grade Level: 11th

Teacher: Jennifer Colby

Subject Area: IB English

Goal of Lesson:

In panels, students will peer review the 250-word college essay drafts in consideration of the appropriate audience, thought organization, personal expression, and writing skills. Panels will present their findings to the class and the class will reflect on the success of selected essays based on understanding of Lesson #1.

Standards Addressed for Lesson:

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/commoncorecrosswalk>

Common Core Standards for English Language AASL 21st Century Learner Standards

CC.11-12.R.I.5 Craft and Structure: Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.	4.1.3 Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.
	3.2.2 Show social responsibility by participating actively with others in learning situations and by contributing questions and ideas

	during group discussions.
CC.11-12.SL.1.b Comprehension and Collaboration: Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.	<p>2.1.5 Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.</p> <p>3.1.2 Participate and collaborate as members of a social and intellectual network of learners.</p> <p>3.2.3 Demonstrate teamwork by working productively with others.</p>
CC.11-12.SL.4 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range or formal and informal tasks.	<p>3.1.3 Use writing and speaking skills to communicate new understandings effectively.</p> <p>3.2.1 Demonstrate leadership and confidence by presenting ideas to others in both formal and informal situations.</p>

Pre-lesson:

- Create Google presentation [Lesson #2: Peer Editing of College Application Essay](#)

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Computer with Internet connection, dongle, projector, and whiteboard (instructor)
- Instructional area with seating for students
- Laptops with internet connection for all students
- Printed lesson plan
- Google presentation: “Peer Editing of College Application Essay”

Anticipatory Set:

SLIDE #1: Play first 37 seconds of “Admission” trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2W7TaF9l6s>

Input:

SLIDE #2

1. Purpose: To share your writing with other students for constructive feedback and then use this feedback to revise and improve your work.
2. During the process of peer editing students will:
 - Read their own work
 - Offer productive feedback
 - Accept constructive criticism
 - Begin to revise their work
3. Remember:
 - Revision is as important as creating.

Model and Checking for Understanding:

SLIDE #3: Ms. Colby's letter to her college roommate

Let's practice peer editing

SLIDE #4: *What did I do wrong???*

Have students identify mistakes I made in my letter.

Guided Practice:

SLIDE #5:

Find a partner and begins the process of peer editing essay assignment

Closure:

SLIDE #6

Remind students of DHS Counseling meeting on applying for college

SLIDE #7: Resources

Resources for Unit:

Gordon, Larry. "New college application questions encourage creative thinking." *Los Angeles Times* 19 December 2012. Electronic.

Gutkind, Lee. "What is creative nonfiction?" *Creative Nonfiction*. 2012. Web. 17 April 2013.

<https://www.creativenonfiction.org/what-is-creative-nonfiction>

Hoover, Eric. "Two, three essays? More can mean less." *New York Times*. 12 April 2013. Web. 17 April 2013.

"How not to write a college admissions essay." *Howcast*. Web. 12 April 2013.

<http://www.howcast.com/videos/28730-How-Not-to-Write-a-College-Admissions-Essay>

Hyman, Jeremy S. and Jacobs, Lynn F., "10 tips for writing a college application essay." *U.S. News and World Reports*. 15 Sep. 2010. Web. 10 April 2013.

<http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2010/09/15/10-tips-for-writing-the-college-application-essay>

Merrill, Martha C. "Tip sheet: an admissions dean offers advice on writing a college essay."

The New York Times. 23 June 2009. Web. 12 April 2013.

<http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/23/tip-sheet-essay/>

Peterson, Chris. "How to write a college essay." *MIT Admissions- Blogs*. 30 July 2012. Web. 10 April 2013. <http://mitadmissions.org/blogs/c/miscellaneous>

Wells, Jennifer "'It sounds like me': using creative nonfiction to teach college admissions essays." *English Journal* 98.1(2008): 47–52.

"The Common Application." *The Common Application*. 2012. Web. 10 April 2013.

<https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/Default.aspx>