

EIGHTH GRADE SUMMER JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT 2008

The following is a list of writing prompts recently used on preparatory school applications. While specific topics vary over the years, essentially the schools try to get a better idea of you and what you are.

They always ask that you write HONESTLY and often they want it in your own handwriting.

To better prepare you for this task of self-examination, we are asking you to begin thinking and writing about these topics early.

During the summer you will keep a journal in which you are to write a Type One response to at least 10 of these prompts. You will receive full credit for doing it thoughtfully and thoroughly. This assignment will carry the value of a major test **worth 100 points.**

Remember. **Type One responses are for gathering ideas.** It's what you've been doing in your reading journals all year. Do NOT worry about spelling and grammar. Let the ideas flow freely. In the fall you will be asked to polish one or more of these into a formal essay.

1. USE A **COMPOSITION NOTEBOOK** FOR THIS JOURNAL.
2. RESPOND TO THESE PROMPTS IN **ANY ORDER**, BUT ALWAYS LABEL THE RESPONSE WITH ITS NUMBER.
3. RESPOND TO ANY PROMPT **MORE THAN ONCE** IF YOU WISH ESPECIALLY IF NEW IDEAS COME TO YOU AS TIME PASSES.
4. RESPOND TO **AT LEAST 10 DIFFERENT PROMPTS.**
5. SKIP LINES. WRITE ON **EVERY OTHER LINE** LEAVING ROOM FOR CHANGES LATER.
6. **LENGTH:** A GOOD RESPONSE SHOULD BE AT LEAST **2 SIDES LONG, BUT LONGER IS EVEN BETTER.**

1. Please write about your family and the circumstances of your upbringing.
2. Please write about an important experience you've had that, in your opinion, has helped shape your life.
3. Please describe the personal goals you have set for yourself. Discuss how you plan to achieve them.
4. Please write about something that matters to you.
5. Please tell us what you did during the past few summers. What did you learn from these experiences?
6. You have the opportunity to speak with any person living, dead, or fictional. Who would it be and why?
7. Pretend you are overhearing the admission committee discussing your application. What does the conversation sound like?
8. Filmmaker Steven Spielberg recommended no one under the age of 16 see his movie *Saving Private Ryan*. In addition, our society has seen a growing interest in controlling what young people see at the movies, on television, and on the internet. Comment on this sort of censorship and who should or should not determine what you, as a young adult, may or may not see or have access to.

9. Please complete the unfinished statements below.(one or more sentences, more is better)
- My proudest accomplishment is
 - In a friend, I look most for
 - I perform best for the teacher who
 - On weekends I like to
 - The three people I most admire are
 - My greatest strength is
 - My greatest weakness is
10. Describe a specific challenge or obstacle you have encountered in your life and explain what you learned from this experience.
11. Describe how you have recently met or are currently meeting a significant challenge of an academic nature.
12. The mission of _____(named school) is to advance the development in spirit, mind, and body of boys and girls drawn from diverse cultural and social backgrounds and to inspire in them a commitment to the best self and common good. What does this statement mean to you?
- OR
- Contribution to a school community comes in many forms: involvement with sports, music, drama, community service, student government etc. Please explain how you see yourself contributing to _____(named school).
13. Choose three adjectives a close friend would use to describe you. Explain your choices.
14. Select a current social or international issue that concerns you. Discuss your feelings about it.
15. Who has been your greatest influence? Why has this person been influential?
16. Imagine you could magically acquire one new talent. What would it be and why?
- OR
- What one thing would you like to do that you do not now have time for?
17. Briefly describe a book you have read recently. What was one of the main themes of the book? What lessons did the main character learn?
- OR
- Write about a character from literature whom you admire, and explain why you have chosen him or her.

The following short answers are not required for your summer journal, but you might want to think about them. Most schools ask for them.

- List any academic honors you have received.
- List any extracurricular activities you've participated in.
- List hobbies, recreational activities etc.
- List books and magazine you've been reading.
- Which academic subjects do you enjoy most?
- What contributions have you made to your school?
- Which singer or music group is your favorite?