Personal Growth Leads The Way

BlueStars ADMISSIONS CONSULTING

College Planning Foundations Workbook

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Table of Contents

Introduction **3**
- Step 1: An Exercise in Getting Grounded 3
- Step 2: Writing a Personal Essay 3
- Step 3: An Exercise in Branching Out and Exploring Your Interests 4
- Step 4: A Goal-Setting Exercise to Help You Activate Your Interests 4
- Step 5: A Timeline to Help You Put It All Together 4
- Extra Resources For You! 4

Step 1: Identifying Key Personality Traits Important to Top Colleges **5**
- Your Seven Key Traits 6

Step 2: Your First Hero's Journey Narrative **10**
- Essay Revision Rubric 15

Step 3: Exploring Skills and Interests **16**
- Skills & Interests Grid Examples 20
- Your Skills & Interests Grid 21

Step 4: Goal-Setting to Help Activate Your Interests **22**
- Setting SMART Goals 24
- SMART Goals Example 25

Step 5: Your College Prep Timeline **26**
- College Prep Timeline Example 26
- Your College Prep Timeline 27
- Suggested College Prep Timeline 32

In Conclusion... **38**

Extra Resources For You! **39**
- Our Favorite Mindfulness Tools 39
- Our Favorite Time-Management Tools and Tips 39
- Resources for Brainstorming Jobs, Community Service and Volunteering Opportunities 39
- Aptitude and Interest Exploration Tools 39
- Articles About Teen Experiences 40

Introduction

***Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.* - Oscar Wilde**

You won't believe it, but high school goes by really fast! The next thing you know, you're a stressed-out senior trying to figure out whether you like bioinformatics or bioengineering, which schools might be best for the plan you haven't yet defined, and how to write a personal essay without a clear vision of your goals and aspirations. Overwhelming!

But there's another way – one in which you start early, set foundations, and tackle things step-by-step. We know that planning for college while also dealing with the challenges of high school is a big job. Most teens need help with it. That's why we created these worksheets for you.

Avoid becoming that stressed-out senior! To do so, we recommend that you start the process of exploring and organizing as early as possible (ideally in 9th grade). Knowledge about your future will become your personal superpower.

Try to take an hour or two a week to focus on your unique college path. Doing a little bit over a longer period of time will make it all feel *so much less stressful*. Consider it a form of teen self-care!

How can you present your best self to colleges so that admitting you is a no-brainer? Start with Step 1.

Step 1: An Exercise in Getting Grounded

What do top colleges look for? Hint: It's not "being a hard worker." This exercise will introduce you to seven key personality traits top schools consider most important. You probably already possess some (if not all) of them!

Step 2: Writing a Personal Essay

If you learn how to write a personal narrative ahead of time – in ninth or tenth grade – you'll find yourself feeling very comfortable expressing yourself in your college applications. By the

time you finish this step-by-step worksheet on the "hero's journey," you'll have drafted your first personal essay. It's actually easier than you think!

Step 3: An Exercise in Branching Out and Exploring Your Interests

Contrary to popular belief, colleges don't look for well-rounded students. Instead, they want to create a well-rounded class. This means that colleges are less interested in cookie-cutter applicants (sport, instrument, some volunteering) than students with 3-4 well-defined interests. This worksheet will help you think "outside the box" about your unique interests and activities.

Step 4: A Goal-Setting Exercise to Help You Activate Your Interests

Now that you've defined your interests, how do you narrow them down to just a few and then make cool plans connected to them? How do you include new things into your already busy schedule? Once you see your life in terms of concrete goals, you will feel much more calm and organized. Try it and see!

Step 5: A Timeline to Help You Put It All Together

Colleges like students who get things done. How can you meet all (or most – no one is perfect!) of the goals you've set up for yourself? Just like an architect or engineer, you've got to map things out in advance. This monthly timeline will snap things into place for you!

Extra Resources For You!

How can you follow up on all the plans you've mapped out in this workbook? To give you extra support, we've gathered our favorite resources in time-management, career and interest exploration, mindfulness, and college life. We hope they help make your college planning journey a time of great personal growth.