**Personal Essay Rubric**

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| CATEGORY  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |
| Focus on Topic (Content)  | There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information.  | Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general.  | Main idea is somewhat clear but there is a need for more supporting information.  | The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information.  |
| Flow & Rhythm (Sentence Fluency)  | All sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud. Each sentence is clear and has an obvious emphasis.  | Almost all sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud, but 1 or 2 are stiff and awkward or difficult to understand.  | Most sentences sound natural and are easy-on-the-ear when read aloud, but several are stiff and awkward or are difficult to understand.  | The sentences are difficult to read aloud because they sound awkward, are distractingly repetitive, or difficult to understand.  |
| Sentence Structure (Sentence Fluency)  | All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure.  | Most sentences are well-constructed with varied structure.  | Most sentences are well-constructed but have a similar structure.  | Sentences lack structure and appear incomplete or rambling.  |
| Word Choice  | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced.  | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone.  | Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair.  | Writer uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Jargon or cliches may be present and detract from the meaning.  |
| Sequencing (Organization)  | Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader.  | Details are placed in a logical order, but the way in which they are presented/introduced sometimes makes the writing less interesting.  | Some details are not in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.  | Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized.  |
| Transitions (Organization)  | A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected.  | Transitions clearly show how ideas are connected, but there is little variety.  | Some transitions work well; but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.  | The transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistant.  |
| Pacing (Organization)  | The pacing is well-controlled. The writer knows when to slow down and elaborate, and when to pick up the pace and move on.  | The pacing is generally well-controlled but the writer occasionally does not elaborate enough.  | The pacing is generally well-controlled but the writer sometimes repeats the same point over and over, or spends too much time on details that don't matter.  | The pacing often feels awkward to the reader. The writer elaborates when there is little need, and then leaves out necessary supporting information.  |
| Commitment (Voice)  | The writer successfully uses several reasons/appeals to try to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic.  | The writer successfully uses one or two reasons/appeals to try to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic.  | The writer attempts to make the reader care about the topic, but is not really successful.  | The writer made no attempt to make the reader care about the topic.  |
| Adding Personality (Voice)  | The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience. The author has taken the ideas and made them "his own."  | The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but there is some lack of ownership of the topic.  | The writer relates some of his own knowledge or experience, but it adds nothing to the discussion of the topic.  | The writer has not tried to transform the information in a personal way. The ideas and the way they are expressed seem to belong to someone else.  |
| Recognition of Reader (Voice)  | The reader's questions are anticipated and answered thoroughly and completely.  | The reader's questions are anticipated and answered to some extent.  | The reader is left with one or two questions. More information is needed to "fill in the blanks".  | The reader is left with several questions.  |
| Support for Topic (Content)  | Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.  | Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion of the storyline is unsupported.  | Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.  | Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.  |
| Grammar & Spelling (Conventions)  | Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.  | Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.  | Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.  | Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.  |
| Reflection  | The writer demonstrates a clear change, without overtly or awkwardly inserting it.  | The writer's change is somewhat clear, not overt or awkward.  | The writer's change is slightly unclear, or worded overtly and awkwardly.  | The writer does not demonstrate a change.  |

Score: \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_