**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:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_