

Writing Workshop Syllabus

Workshop 1: Essay Topics. What should you write about? Here's the short answer: Don't write about "who you are." My *Bullseye Method* provides an easy three-step process to select a compelling essay topic. (Time: 12 min.)

Workshop 2: Researching Topics. One of the most common college essay mistakes? Students don't do research. You must. This will help you write with specificity and demonstrate command. You're going to write a lot of essays. Don't rely on your memory: You'll write about irrelevant childhood stories that highlight secondary personal qualities like every other applicant.

You're applying to work with Nobel Laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, published authors—that is, *college professors*. So why wouldn't you write about what they write about? I cover nine exceptional sources where you can find intellectual material to work with in your essays so you write like the scholars you're applying to work with. (Time: 25 min.)

Workshop 3: Three Compelling Personal Essays. This is what compelling essays look like. I walk through three full essays, explain how they work, and why they're compelling. Each essay showcases a different structure you can use to intellectualize a personal experience, passion, or activity. (Time: 37 min.)

Workshop 4: Ten Compelling Moves. But you can't just write a research paper. So how do you integrate intellectual ideas with personal experiences? How do you write about an activity in a smart, interesting, and compelling way to stand out? I teach you *Ten Moves* to turn any topic—from SPAM, to bikinis, to basketball—into a compelling piece of writing glowing with intellectual vitality and texture. (Time: 47 min.)

Workshop 5: Ten Tactics. Make every word tell. I provide sentence-level advice for your opening, middle, and closing. We track a fourth compelling personal essay and one of my favorites: *The Bob Dylan Essay*. We look at examples of common writing to avoid, compelling writing to emulate, and professional writing to strive for. (Yes, you can end your sentences with prepositions, start them with conjunctions, and using contractions is an easy way to convey confidence, authenticity, and make your writing more readable.) (Time: 57 min.)

Workshop 6: Supplemental Applications. But what about all those other essays you need to write? Should you write about new topics for every essay? I teach you my capstone strategy: *Admissions Alter Ego*. Then we walk through how to apply this concept in a full Common Application and Stanford Supplemental Application (nine essays total).

Next, we cover your major supplemental essays: The Why Our College Essay; The Why Your Major Essay; The World You Come From Essay; The Extracurricular Essay. We talk strategy and I provide at least four compelling essay examples for every category.

Finally, we end with the short popcorn questions (50 words or less) that schools like Stanford, Princeton, and Yale ask. These are crucial: it's your second easiest way to stand out (your Activity Page is the first; see Masterclass 5). (Time: 1 hour, 24 min.)

