

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®



JULY



College Essay Writing & Letters of Recommendation

Sunday, July 25, 2021
4:00-5:30 pm EST

Link to register:

<https://capessaywritingandlettersofrecommendation.eventbrite.com>

Students who register and attend will be entered into a drawing for a special giveaway.



Scan the QR code to register



A #CAPSM Signature Program Chapter Collaboration Presented by:
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®

Psi Psi Omega Lambda Omega Gamma Gamma Omega Nu Rho Omega Gamma Delta Omega Phi Nu Omega Xi Psi Omega
Lambda Omega Omega Nu Zeta Omega Alpha Phi Omega Omicron Kappa Omega Delta Omicron Omega

Welcome



Essay Writing and Letters of Recommendation Webinar



- ❖ Thank you for joining this webinar.
- ❖ This webinar will be recorded for future use.
- ❖ Photos may be taken for reporting purposes.
- ❖ All lines will be muted until the Q&A at the end of the webinar.
- ❖ Use the chat function to post comments or questions.
- ❖ Questions will be shared and answered during the Q&A session at the end of the virtual webinar.
- ❖ Have paper and pencil available to capture your reflections.

Webinar Objectives

The main objectives of the webinar are to:

- ❖ Equip students and parents with valuable college admissions and scholarship information on writing essays and obtaining letters of recommendation.
- ❖ Share relevant college information due to COVID-19.



Interactive Discussion!

Use the chat function to post comments or questions.



Webinar Hosted By: Collaborating AKA Chapters (12)



- ❖ Alpha Phi Omega (Danville, VA)
- ❖ Delta Omicron Omega (Orlando, FL)
- ❖ Gamma Delta Omega (Portsmouth, VA)
- ❖ Gamma Gamma Omega (Asheville, NC)
- ❖ Lambda Omega (Newport News, VA)
- ❖ Lambda Omega Omega (Monmouth & Ocean Counties, NJ)
- ❖ Nu Rho Omega (Hinesville, GA)
- ❖ Nu Zeta Omega (Waldorf, MD)
- ❖ Omicron Kappa Omega (Lakeland, FL)
- ❖ Phi Nu Omega (Alexandria, VA)
- ❖ Psi Psi Omega (Stafford and Fauquier Counties, VA)
- ❖ Xi Psi Omega (Anchorage, AK)

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®



- ❖ International Greek-letter non-profit service organization.
- ❖ Founded January 15, 1908 on the campus of Howard University.
- ❖ Over 300,000 members world-wide.
- ❖ Program theme: ***Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service.***
- ❖ We address community needs through five target program initiatives:
 - ❖ **Target 1: HBCU 4 Life: A Call to Action and #CAP**
 - ❖ Target 2: Women's Healthcare and Wellness
 - ❖ **Target 3: Building Economic Legacy**
 - ❖ Target 4: The Arts!
 - ❖ Target 5: Global Impact

Webinar

Target Program Initiatives



Target 1: Signature Program, College Admissions Process (#CAPSM)

Assist high school juniors and seniors through the college admissions process.



Target 3: Building Economic Legacy

Emphasize financial planning, asset accumulation, and wealth.

We Invite You to Join A Local Chapter's #CAP Program (free) High School Students Welcome!

Participate in a local AKA chapter's 2021-2022 #CAP program.

Students will receive personalized support and attend special events on:

- ❖ Completing college applications
 - ❖ SAT/ACT registration & prep
 - ❖ Writing essays
 - ❖ Obtaining letters of recommendation
 - ❖ Understanding financial aid
 - ❖ Researching and applying for scholarships
- ...and more



#CAP Application:

<http://www.staffordaka.com/target-1--hbcu-for-life--a-call-to-action.html>

****Indicate your interest in the survey at the end of the webinar****

Or email: christiemurrayaka@gmail.com

AGENDA

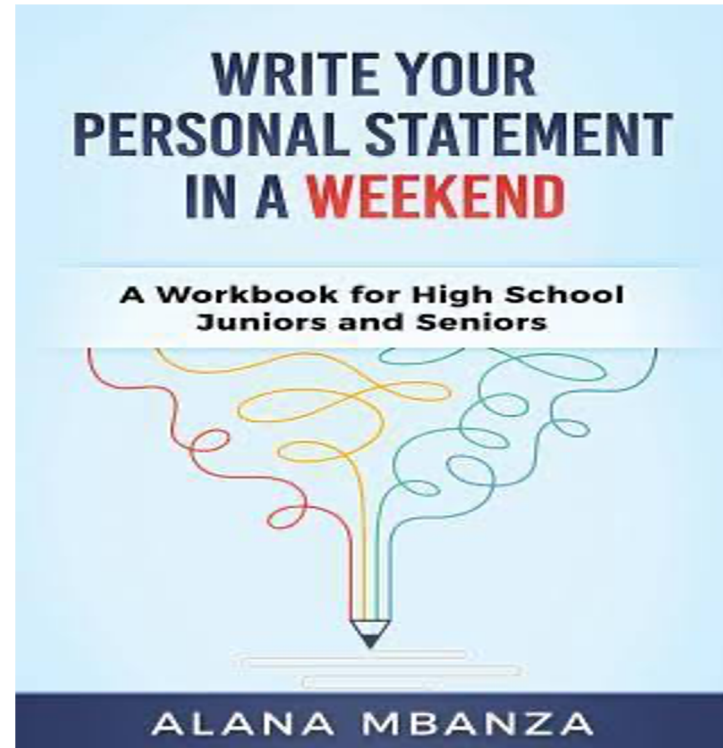


- ❖ *Speaker Introduction*
- ❖ *Essay Writing & Letter of Recommendation Presentation*
- ❖ *Closing Remarks*
- ❖ *Survey Evaluation*
- ❖ *Grand Prize Giveaway*
- ❖ *Q&A*

Speaker Introduction



Alana Mbanza
Author, Entrepreneur
Dreamland LLC

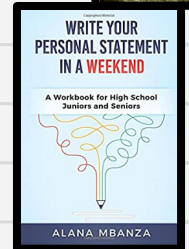
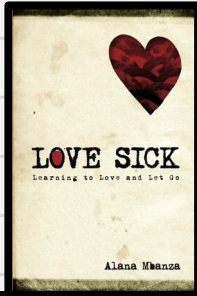
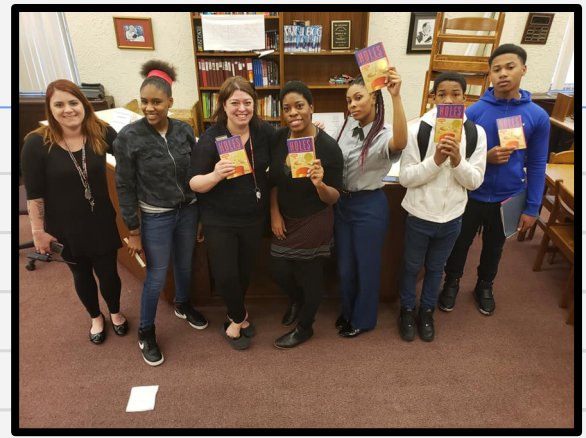
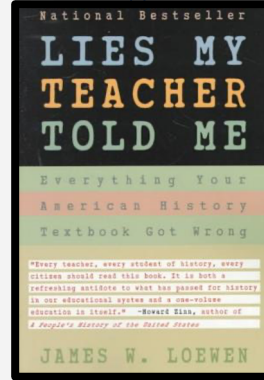
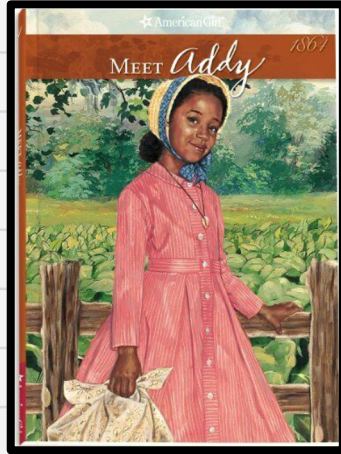




What's Your Story?

Creative Writing Workshop for College Essays

My Story



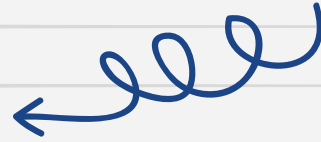
Community Agreements

Show up.

Camera must be on to qualify for giveaways!

Be prepared.

Bring your tools (pen, paper, or something else to write on).

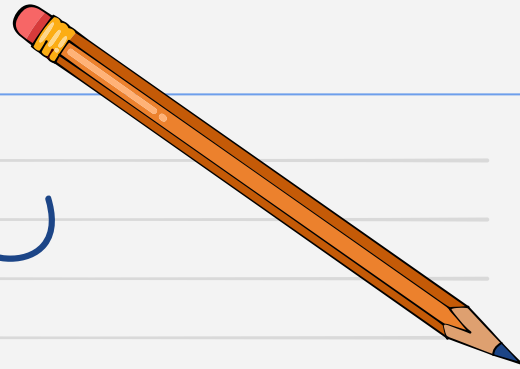


Be present.

Pay attention and participate in the activities.

Talk back.

Respond when asked a question and add to the conversation.





What are the
qualities of a really
good story?





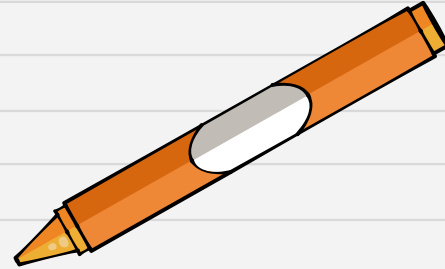
Raffle Prize



College Application



What do I need to apply
to college?



Elements of a College Application

Transcripts

A record of all high school grades and grade point average (GPA)

Test Scores

SAT and ACT, any additional subject area tests

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

Personal Essay

Introduction to student's background, interests, and goals.

Letters of Recommendation

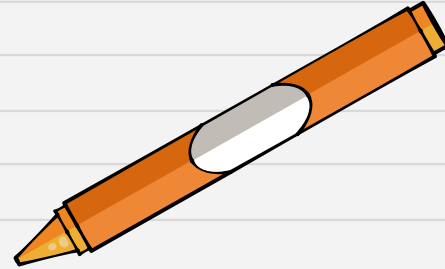
A reference from a teacher, employer, coach or community member.



Letters of Recommendation



Asking for Strong LORs



Who to Ask

- Think about adults who know you well who can **say positive things** about your talents, abilities, and potential.
- Each letter should speak to **different aspect of you** (academic, volunteer, athletic, professional, etc.)
- Identify your main recommenders + **alternates**.

How to Ask

- Ask for a letter of recommendation **at least** three weeks before the deadline.
- **Make it easy** for your recommender to write about you (resume, brag sheet)
- Follow up with **friendly** reminders.
- Write the letter yourself!



What should go in a brag sheet?

1. Name and contact information.
2. GPA and relevant classes.
3. Majors and career interests.
4. Standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, PSAT, etc.)
5. Extracurricular Activities you have participated in + dates
6. Work experience + dates
7. Any academic or athletic awards you've won
8. Adjectives/Attributes to describe yourself + examples

Student Brag Sheet

Student Name _____

A. Looking At Myself: The Student

1. As a student, I would describe myself as: _____

2. My favorite subject areas are: _____

3. Majors I am interested in: _____

4. Careers I am interested in: _____

5. If you have worked throughout high school, please list the type of jobs you have had, what your responsibilities were, and when you did these jobs? _____

B. Looking At Myself: The Person

1. Five adjectives that describe me: 1.) _____; 2.) _____;
3.) _____; 4.) _____; 5.) _____
2. The most important of these adjectives is: _____ because: _____

3. My hobbies, passions, areas of interest: _____

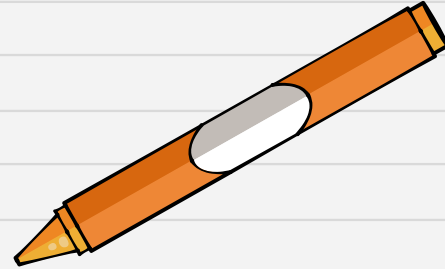
4. What do you consider your greatest personal strengths and weaknesses? _____

5. I'm fluent in the following language(s): _____



College Essay Writing Tips

Dos and Don'ts



Dos for Writing Your Personal Story





- Read the prompt and answer it completely.
 - Follow the format: **What? So What? Now What?**
- Try different methods of capturing your story (free write, timed writing exercises, interview format, voice memos, etc.)
- Stay within the word limit.
- Be clear and concise.
- Be creative. Bring the reader in using description and emotion.
- Have several other people (including at least one English teacher) proofread your statement before submitting.

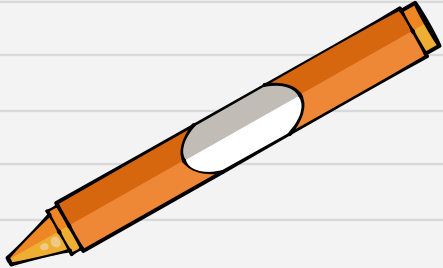

Don'ts for Writing Your Personal Story



- Use big words to sound “smart.”
- Lie or exaggerate your story.
- Forget to show you’ve done your college research.
- Edit your essay before it’s ready.
- Delete anything you’ve written.
 - Keep a separate document for ideas, sentences, paragraphs you might need later.



Types of Essays Questions



Common Application
Prompts



Open Ended

Some students have a **background, identity, interest,** or **talent** that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Share an essay on any **topic of your choice**. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.





Overcoming Obstacles

The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a **challenge, setback, or failure**. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a **belief or idea**. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?





Positive Reflections

Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you **happy or thankful in a surprising way**. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

Discuss an **accomplishment, event, or realization** that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

Describe a **topic, idea, or concept** you find so **engaging** that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?





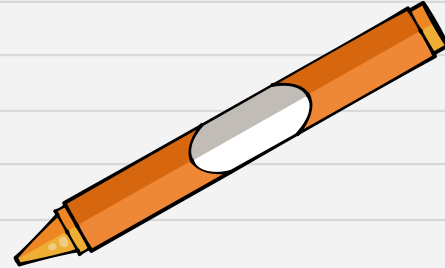
Raffle Prize



Dreamland University



Admissions Committee
Activity



My father's words stumbled through his mouth and past his lips like a stream of water sloshing over upturned, jagged rocks. I felt his discomfort in my bones. Our new neighbor's openly judgmental expression angered me and I felt myself turn red. Twenty years my father spent carefully learning a language that somehow still betrayed him. Twenty years, and my father was still an outsider.

My story is the same as most first generation Americans: my parents are from a completely different culture, and so I was raised multi-culturally. I didn't quite fit in with my classmates, but I couldn't really relate to my parents either. I was stuck in the middle between two entirely different worlds. As a child, of course, I chose the one I was living in. My parents' native tongue was slowly becoming my heritage language. In other words, my first language was becoming my second language.

One day in particular stands out in my memory. My father had just come home from work; he had just started his residency program. Dark circles and wrinkles surrounded his honey-brown eyes and made them seem passionless, lost, and sad. My aging father slumped down on the couch and sighed heavily. Despite his exhaustion, he attempted to make conversation and asked how my day was in our native language. I was twelve—you know, the age where you start thinking you know better than your parents. Ignoring his question, I told him he should speak in English since we were in the U.S.

When my dad's medical practice expanded, we moved to a better part of town to a beautiful huge house. The first encounter with our new neighbor changed everything. His name was Bill and he was a retired banker. My father greeted him graciously, despite the fact that he was on our property uninvited. Upon hearing his accent, his demeanor changed. "So, how long have you been living in America?" he asked. My father paused, as if he knew where the conversation was headed. It was probably a conversation he had had many, many times before. "Twenty years," he responded, with his head down.

That's when I realized how wrong I'd been. I regret staying silent during our encounter with Bill, but after that moment, I never spoke English with my parents again. I stopped scoffing at the cultural traditions they practiced every year. And whenever Bill came over unexpectedly, I made sure I was the one to talk to him.

I figured that at the very least, my parents should feel at home in their own home. Seventeen years I wasted being ashamed of my background, my heritage, my family. I'm eighteen now, but I still cringe when I think about the self-absorbed person I once was. I still feel the shame and guilt of having realized something I should have known a long time ago: my parents aren't the ones who are broken.



Personal Statement Rubric

Organization and Focus

This essay is organized and has a clearly written and engaging introduction, body and conclusion.

Did the introduction make you want to keep reading? Why or why not?

Originality

This essay is creative, interesting, and provides vivid details.

What words or phrases really stood out to you? Why?



Personal Statement Rubric

Reflection and Self Awareness


This essay describes the student's life experiences, lessons they've learned, and how they've grown from each experience.

What is one lesson this student reflects on in this essay?

Student Voice

This essay highlights the student's individual voice and personality and sets them apart from other candidates.

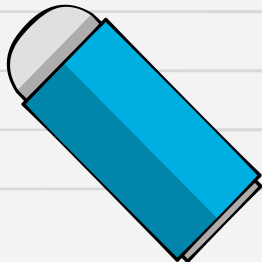
How does this student show their personality?



**Will we admit
this student to
Dreamland
University?**

Discussion Debrief

What were some of the things you considered when making your admissions decision?



$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

What did you learn from looking at a personal statement through the eyes of an admissions counselor?



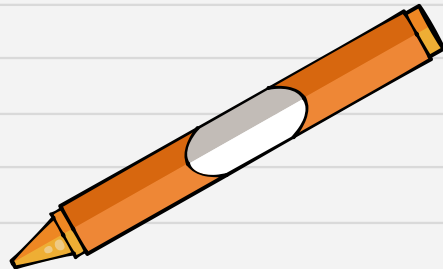
Raffle Prize



Starting Your Story

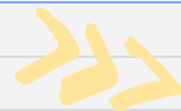


Timed Writing Exercises





Writing Prompt: People



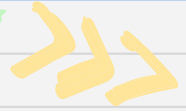
Write about 5 people who have impacted your life.

- Coaches
- Mentors
- Employers
- Coworkers
- Strangers
- Friends and Family





Writing Prompt: Events



Write about 5 events that have shaped you.

- Achievements and “failures”
- New beginnings or endings
- Celebrations
- Family Traditions
- Mistakes or lessons learned



03:00

Writing Prompt: Places



Write about 5 places you are drawn to or that are meaningful to you.

Physical or Symbolic Places

- Library or used book store
 - Surrounded by old books
- In the kitchen
 - At the dinner table
- In the bathroom???





Raffle Prize

Upcoming Events



Bootcamp Part II: SAT Prep Webinar

Date: August 8, 2021; Time: 2-6 pm

Register at: <https://capsatprep.eventbrite.com>



Virtual Youth College Excellence Summit

Date: August 14-15, 2021; Time: 9:30 am - 3 pm ET:

Register at:

www.YouthCollegeExcellenceSummit.com

Bootcamp Part III: ACT Prep Webinar

Date: August 29, 2021; Time: 2-6 pm ET:

Register at: <https://capactprep.eventbrite.com>



Complete the Evaluation Survey

We appreciate your feedback!



- ❖ Survey Monkey evaluation: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XRY55QP>
- ❖ Click the survey link in the chat function or scan the QR code.
- ❖ Tell us about your needs or future topics
- ❖ Email will be sent to participants with the:
 - ❖ Evaluation Survey Monkey link
 - ❖ Student slides
 - ❖ Future webinar dates/registration



Book Give-a-ways

College Planning Books (2)



Dr. Christie Murray

Published Author, National Speaker

Invest N Others LLC: <https://www.investNothers.com>

Grand Prize

Essay Editing Services with Alana Mbanza



- **Drafting**
- **Two rounds of edit and revision**

Past Webinar Recordings and Videos

Subscribe to YouTube Channel...Invest N Others



- Top Strategies for Taking the SAT/ACT: <https://youtu.be/U2x9hIJngao>
- Writing Essays & Letters of Recommendation: <https://youtu.be/KIJ9SvbMVyo>
- General College Information & HBCUs: <https://youtu.be/EzR-Vk9pRKI>
- College Planning Made Easy: <https://youtu.be/RTfeZNL-BvA>
- College Funding and Financial Literacy: <https://youtu.be/FFavH7H5m88>
- College Admissions Panel: <https://youtu.be/-VWJZw6eBVU>



Questions?



Do you have any questions?

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Thank You!



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