

3 Brainstorming Challenges FOR the Brainstorming Challenged

We know—you've probably never brainstormed for a college admissions essay before, but these three Brainstorming Challenges will help ease you into the process. Set aside the time you need to complete them by marking them in your calendar or, better yet, setting alerts on your phone! (Feel free to add heart eyed emojis.) The best part is, you can do these exercises in any order you want.

MORNING BRAINSTORM The Morning Routine Brainstorm



Ideal alert time: Weekday, 6 am - 9 am; Weekend, 6 am - 12 pm

Timing: As long as it takes to get through your typical routines or favorite activities

What to do: This is a variation of the Full Body Brainstorm we mentioned in the video so, take a deep breath and open your receptors. Then...engage in your normal daily routines and activities! But keep something to write with on hand (notebook, phone, dictaphone, computer strapped around your neck, etc.). Take pauses to log what you do and what order you do it in; if you don't have time to write, snap a photo or record a quick video. A great strategy is to set an alarm to go off every hour or two so you remember to check in with yourself and jot down a few notes. To avoid having your alarm go off during class, you can also do this over the weekend and take yourself on a long walk, or drive around, or do something you really love. Just pay attention to all the little habits and moments that fill your day.

AFTERNOON BRAINSTORM List the Things You Love

Ideal alert time: Weekday, 12 pm - 5 pm (study hall, anyone?); Weekend, 12 pm - 3 pm (we know you have plans)

Timing: 20 minutes

What to do: This one is pretty self-explanatory. Think about all the things that make you happy, set your timer, and go! Write down everything you can think of. What do you love? What do you hate? (And why do you love or hate these things?) If you don't feel like



writing for 20 minutes at a stretch, you can split this brainstorm into two 10-minute sessions and take an ice cream break in between. Or, if talking is easier, you can record yourself on a phone or computer.

EVENING/WEEKEND BRAINSTORM

Go Hunting for Milestones

Ideal alert time: Weekday, your normal homework time; Weekend, make a day of it!

Timing: Unlimited! (30 minutes minimum)

What to do: Take as much time as you need for this one because we want you to dig deep. Go through old photo albums (or your Instagram feed) and brainstorm using pictures as your triggers. Look around your bedroom—what items jump out to you as particularly meaningful? Have a drawer or box you have been meaning to clean out? Now's the time! (Added bonus: your family will thank you.) Haven't visited grandma in a while? Maybe this is the perfect time for a jaunt down memory lane. Try and jog your memory for the most meaningful events in your life thus far.

Bonus: You can do this one in as many ways and in as many places as you can think of. Where do you spend a lot of time? The locker room? The school bus? The library? Your best friend's house? Your favorite ice cream shop? Think about birthdays and anniversaries, special visits from long lost friends, competitions you won (or lost). Up to this point in your life, what have been your most cherished memories and why?

