

## **College Application Essay Brainstorming Worksheet**

*Courtesy of USC MESA and essayedge.com, adapted by Jodi Walder-Biesanz*

One of the best methods of brainstorming is to begin with a grand list of potential topics and slowly let the best rise to the top. In order to generate a laundry list of important people, events, accomplishments and activities in your life, fill in the worksheet below.

1. If you were writing your autobiography right now, what would be five to ten events or things that would have to be included? It will be easiest to think over your life chronologically.
2. Quickly write down three words that best describe you. Ask your parents, siblings and best friends to write down three words to describe you. (Don't tell them what yours were.) List your own words and the others including the person, their relationship to you and the words or phrases:
3. List five accomplishments you have made since the summer before high school. Do not limit yourself to accomplishments for which you have been formally recognized since the most interesting essays are often based on accomplishments that may have seemed insignificant at the time but become crucial when placed in the context of your life.
4. List three to five things on which you consider yourself very knowledgeable
5. What are your most important extracurricular or community activities?
6. List five people whom you respect and admire. They can be real or fictional, dead or alive. Explain why they are on your list.
7. List two times in life when you failed miserably and two times when you were a fantastic success.
8. Ask your parents for five events in your life that they will always remember
9. List four of your favorite things and four of your least favorite. These can include activities, places, objects, virtues, etc.