**Sample College Application Essay 1**

From the time I was able to realize what a university was, all I heard from my mother's side of the family was about the University of Michigan and the great heritage it has. Many a Saturday afternoon my grandfather would devote to me, by sitting me down in front of the television and reminiscing about the University of Michigan while halftime occurred during a Michigan Wolverines football game. Later, as I grew older and universities took on greater meaning, my mother and uncle, both alumni of the University of Michigan, took me to see their old stamping grounds. From first sight, the university looked frightening because of its size, but with such a large school comes diversity of people and of academic and non-academic events.

In Springfield High School, non-academic clubs such as the Future Physicians and the Pylon, both of which I have belonged to for two years, give me an opportunity to see both the business world and the medical world. These two clubs have given me a greater sense of what these careers may be like. In Future Physicians, I participated in field trips to children's hospitals and also participated in two blood banks.

Currently I hold a job at Maas Brothers. This lets me interact with people outside my own immediate environment. I meet different kinds of people, in diffrent moods, with different attitudes, and with different values. This job teaches me to be patient with people, to have responsibility, and to appreciate people for what they are.

In the community I am active in my church Youth Group. As a high school sophomore, I was our church's representative to the Diocesan Youth Fellowship. I helped organize youth group events, the largest being "The Bishop's Ball," a state-wide event for 300 young people. I also played high school junior varsity soccer for two years. As a senior I will be playing varsity soccer, but in the off-season. As a junior I coached a girls' soccer team for the town. This gave me a great deal of responsibility because the care of twenty-four girls was put into my custody. It felt very satisfying to pass on the knowledge of soccer to another generation. The girls played teams from other parts of Florida. Though their record was 3-8, the girls enjoyed their season. This is what I taught them was the greatest joy of soccer.

The past three years of my life have given me greater visions of my future. I see the University of Michigan as holding a large book with many unread chapters and myself as an eager child who has just learned to read. I intend to read and probe into all the chapters. The University of Michigan offers me more than the great reputation of this fine school, but a large student body with diverse likes and dislikes, and many activities, both academic and non-academic, to participate in. With the help of the University of Michigan, I will be successful after college and be able to make a name and place for myself in our society.

**Sample College Application Essay 2**

The Essay

My most important experience sought me out. It happened to me; I didn't cause it.

My preferred companions are books or music or pen and paper. I have only a small circle of close friends, few of whom get along together. They could easily be counted "misfits." To be plain, I found it quite easy to doubt my ability to have any sort of "close relationship."

After the closing festivities of Andover Summer School this past summer, on the night before we were scheduled to leave, a girl I had met during the program's course approached me. She came to my room and sat down on my bed and announced that she was debating with herself whether she wanted me to become her boyfriend. She wanted my reaction, my opinion.

I was startled, to say the least, and frightened. I instantly said, "No." I told her I on no account wanted this and that I would reject any gestures she made towards starting a relationship. I would ignore her entirely, if need be. I explained that I was a coward. I wanted nothing whatsoever to do with a relationship. I talked a lot and very fast.

To my surprise, she did not leave instantly. Instead, she hugged her knees and rocked back and forth on my bed. I watched her from across the room. She rocked, and I watched. Doubts crept up on me. Opportunity had knocked and the door was still locked. It might soon depart.

"I lied," I said. "I was afraid of what might happen if we became involved. But it's better to take the chance than to be afraid."

She told me she knew I had lied. I had made her realize, though, how much she actually wanted me to be her boyfriend. We decided to keep up a relationship after Andover.

Even then, I was not sure which had been the lie. Now I think that everything I said may have been true when I said it. But I'm still not sure.

I learned, that night, that I could be close to someone. I also realize, now, that it doesn't matter whether or not that person is a misfit; the only important thing is the feeling, the closeness, the connection. As long as there is something between two people — friendship, love, shared interests, whatever else — it is a sign that there can be some reconciliation with fear, some "fit" for misfits. And it shows that fear need not always win, that we can grow and change, and even have second chances.

I am still seeing her.

**Personal Essay 3**

Benjamin V. Bajaj '14 Simsbury High School, Simsbury, Conn.

The phone buzzed, the number distantly familiar. I instinctively held my breath and took the call. “Ben,” he said… “It’s John, Ben.”

I met John in the fourth grade, and ever since we have been like brothers. A year younger than me, he acted old for his age even when we were both very young. In many ways, we were opposites and maybe that’s what fueled our relationship. I wanted the freedom he had and he wanted the security I took for granted. He watched R-rated films at the age of eleven and played M-rated games throughout fifth grade. I, on the other hand, had Legos, Kumon Math, and, “The Logical Journey of the Zoombinis” (educational software for ages eight and up). My parents kept a close eye on me. Spending time with John just made them worry, especially my mother.

With high school, John’s freedom increased and he got into far worse things than “Saving Private Ryan” at the age of thirteen. It wasn’t long before he started smoking pot and with that came the urge to steal small items from convenience stores. He was constantly in trouble, yet he always knew how to handle himself. He had the confidence and the guts I wanted. Unlike him, I couldn’t lie easily, and I certainly couldn’t stay calm when being addressed by an adult when I was in trouble. He was good at playing the innocent, and he knew how to avoid getting caught. I’d say he was street smart but that implies city living. John was “cul-de-sac” smart, he knew how to manipulate the suburban culture of unlocked doors, sleepovers, wooded trails, and the perks of being the son of divorced parents.

Sophomore and junior year brought police, more drugs, and a growing dependency on cigarettes, and the start of a separation between the two of us. As we grew older, we became more distant from one another – as brothers tend to do when peer groups and polar interests reign over family ties. But still, John’s growing indifference to me, the “younger” brother, hurt. Writing this now, I realize he was protecting me. Health classes always teach you to say no, to prepare for the day when you are offered drugs. John never put me in the position of having to say “no.” He kept me out of trouble as he dove in.

By junior year, John was taken out of school and put into rehab. It was like a member of my family was taken away in the night, without discussion.

In his absence, I was able to put our relationship in perspective.

He helped me grow up. I was and still am somewhat of an uptight person, but he helped me leave my bubble and embrace the world around me. I did things with him that I would not have done on my own – air soft gunfights, midnight bike rides, fireworks in the woods, jumping off roofs into pools, crazy things. Thanks to John, I learned how to let go. I was truly the apprentice to the master of “going with the flow.” He taught me not to judge, to be confident, and to relax sometimes and just let the randomness take me away.

Ever since I met him, I have tried harder to find the good in people. When others saw John, they saw a rebellious teen and a bad influence. But bias and nerves, I realize, often cloud first impressions. Today, I reach out more and make friends easier. There is a student in my high school named Matt. When I first saw him in tenth-grade Art class, he was one of the quietest and strangest kids I’d ever met. Luckily for me, about a week into Art, I decided to talk to him, and, after a semester of talking, we became good friends. Granted I still think he is one of the strangest kids ever, but he is also one of the easiest to get along with and possibly the funniest. If it weren’t for my relationship with John, I don’t know if I would have gotten beyond my “first impression” of Matt to initiate a conversation with him.

Knowing John has had a huge impact on my life. For more than a year now, he has disappeared from view – rehab having evolved into an out-of-state school for troubled teens. Until a late afternoon this December, a part of me thought he might be dead.

"It's me Ben, John,” the voice said on the other end of the phone. "John,” I exhaled, “…I don’t know what to say, I’m just so happy you called.”

**Sample College Essay #4 submitted for Admission to a University**

**University of Washington Question:** “Tell us a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it”

The definition of yoga is yoking together of the mind, body, and spirit. This is what was written on the board the first day of Beginning Yoga at Clark College. At the time, I didn’t understand or even bother think about the significance of this statement. It took weeks before I could fully realize the meaning of this and many other life changing ideas presented in the class. Being involved in yoga helped me shape my character and become who I am today. I developed my compassion, awareness, and interest in global problems. I also learned how to live in the moment and appreciate every day.

Coming into the class I had many misconceptions about the concept and purpose of yoga. I thought all you had to do was stretch and relax. It seemed so simple, but I couldn’t have been more wrong. The poses are merely the vehicle on the journey to becoming aware of yourself and the world around you. The process of connecting the mind, body, and soul through meditating and developing my focus has truly benefited the way I live. I can accept and understand new and different ideas much easier than before. Increasing and strengthening my meta-position has been an essential part of becoming who I am.

My experience in the class made me think about things that I never would have considered otherwise. One of my favorite parts of the class was when we discussed compassion. I never realized how much more I could be doing to make a change. Each quarter there is a different fundraising project organized by the teacher. All of the students are encouraged to contribute and donate. We raised $200 for an organization that provides medicine and support for children suffering from AIDS in Africa. I now have a newly found passion for gaining knowledge about our world and what I can do to help. It’s made a huge impact on me and has inspired me to become more interested and involved in making a difference. I’m doing my senior project on the benefits of organic food on the environment and body. I’ve been working in the gardens at my school and learning about the damaging effects of conventional growing methods. I’m also a part of the environmental club where we recently started a recycling program at our school. Another club I have become active in is the genocide awareness group called STAND. It’s still a work in progress, but in the future we hope to have a variety of fundraisers to raise money and awareness for the genocide in Sudan.

I have also loved learning about all of the physical aspects in yoga. I discovered new edges and I have learned a lot about my body and its limits. I feel much more aware of my plaice in the field and I have really benefited from the challenge of trying new things. I have enjoyed being able to improve my balance, flexibility, and all around physical strength. While I have been enrolled in the class I’ve lost at least 10 pounds. It’s a great feeling.

It may be hard to believe that a simple yoga class can have such a drastic effect on someone, but I honestly believe it has changed me, and the way I live my life. My focus, awareness, understanding, strength, compassion, and interest in world problems have all been enhanced from being in this class. I feel like I finally understand how to yoke together my mind, body, and spirit. I was terrified to take a college course but I’m so glad I had the courage to try something new.

**Sample College Essay #5 submitted for Admission to a University**

**University of Washington Question:** “Tell us a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it”

I turn up the dial on the portable heater and pull down the curtain separating the living room from the hallway in hopes that the always-frigid temperature of the room will rise. The trailer we live in is so decrepit that if we turn on the heat, the bill will be close to three hundred dollars for the month, which is one third of our monthly income. The conditions of living in a condemned trailer tend to be less than appealing, to say the least; we have mold that is visible on the ceilings, holes in the walls where the icy air comes through at night, and when it rains the water comes in and soaks the floor two feet into the doorways. However, we haven’t always lived in such harsh conditions.

It was at the age of eight that my life was torn apart and I was first introduced to the horrific power of addiction. Drugs worked as a virus that took over my father and turned him into a different man. One day he put my mother and me on a Greyhound bus and calmly waved goodbye as we were no longer what he “needed” in life. Not only did I leave behind a very large part of my heart that day, but I also said goodbye to the comfortable lifestyle that I had grown up in. With my father no longer there to support us, my mom and I were introduced to the ways of government assistance; we were no longer people, just a case file number. Life became very hard as my mom struggled to get us through each month. On welfare, we only pulled in per month what most households make in about two weeks. The government didn’t take into account that people needed luxuries such as heat and electricity.

The transition of moving across the country from everything I knew and loved was very hard on me. I withdrew from the world and I was no longer able to connect with anyone. My mom was the only comfort I had; I knew that everything she did was for me so that I could have a better life.

Then in the summer after sixth grade, I returned to Alabama to visit my family. Once I arrived, it was like things had never changed. I was seeing my family and I was happy again. The summer didn’t last nearly long enough as time sped by at warp speed. The night before I was due back in Washington with my mom, I realized that I did not want to leave. Looking back on this now, I realize that my father was very irresponsible and wrong for saying that I could stay. However, hearing it that night, I was the happiest girl in the world because it meant that he was finally ready to fight for me again. The situation quickly escalated when I did not get off the plane as scheduled and my mom soon got a lawyer and the custody battle was on. After a few months, I saw less and less of my father. While he continued to fight for me in the courts, he began to frequently leave me at my aunt’s house for weeks at a time and rarely came to visit. What I found most frustrating during this time was how he could act like everything was perfect on those few occasions he would come by to see me.

I had always been mature for my age and by this time doubts were beginning to creep in as I really thought about what my life would be like if I lived there, what it would be like without the one person I knew cared for me most and who I cared for in return. That is why when the day finally came for me to tell the judge whom I wanted to live with, I did what was best for me and I broke my father’s heart.

When I returned to Washington, I was secretly filled with shame due to my very childish actions. However, I have come to realize that that experience led to the most critical decision of my life. I decided that I wanted more than my father could have ever given me. His life was filled with drugs, fines, court dates, and it was an altogether bad environment. I wanted a better life; I still do. For now I might live in a condemned trailer, but I won’t forever. I don't want to have to worry about whether or not bills will get paid. My exposure to that life without the security net of my mother lit a spark in my soul that will never be put out. I will make life better for the two of us.