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## Stanford Application

When I look at this picture of myself, I realize how much I 've grown and changed, not only physically, but also mentally as a person in this photograph was taken, I arrived at the [school's name] in [school's location] without any idea of what to expect. I entered my second year of high school, which was about a thousand miles from home and was a new member of not the sophomore, but lower-middle class. Around me in this picture were the things of the time: studying different types of cars and planes, following Michael Jordan's latest move, and seeing the latest blockbuster show like Star Wars. The rest of my life in tennis. Midway through my senior year at the special [school's name] school, the focuses in my life have changed.

If there is one common occurrence which takes place for every single person in the diverse student body at [school's name], it is that we all know whether this speeding up of the maturing process is generally good or bad, but I definitely have benefited.

The classroom has become a whole different realm for me. Before, the teachers and students alike preached the importance of learning and the concern was grades. At [school's name] teachers genuinely believe that learning is the most important objective and deeply encourage us to find resources that we may find. In fact, in a certain class this year, my teacher assigned us to prepare every day of the week to discuss a certain topic; we had to maximize our sources, gleaning from everything and everyone in the school, but we were not allowed to actually read a book other than any other that I have actually read. It is teaching methods such as this which ensure that we will learn more. Indeed, this method is one of the aspects of my experience. Whether in Physics or English, I'm required to approach every problem and idea independently and creatively. In discussion with fellow students both inside and outside of class, the complex thoughts flowing through everyone's brain is evident.

However, I believe that the most important concepts that I have espoused in being independent of my parents for half of each year, dealing with faculty members and students are conscious about keeping all of the kids' attention from being based on the school. Every single issue of global concern, whether it be a faculty member, publication, ethnic society, or individual student. Along with being aware of issues of importance, after attending [school's name] certain mannerisms have grown: the school stresses giving respect to everyone and everything. Our former headmaster often said, "Character is not who you are when you are better off than him or herself, but by one's interactions with those who are worse off ". The other prime goal of the school's curriculum is to turn us into a loud, rambunctious senior. Basically, if you have an opinion about something, it is wrong not to voice that opinion. Of course, being a good master of communication with teachers, fellow students, all of who are a part of the community, and most importantly, those who are outside of the school.

I do not want to make [school's name] sound as if it produces the perfect students, because it doesn't. But the school deserves a lot of credit to remain. As the college experience approaches, I am still the same person, only modified to better maximize my talents. Although I still have a few similarities between this photograph and me now is my smile.

**\*\* ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE COMMENTS \*\***

This essay is fairly well written. The essayist makes boarding school his focus, using it to explain and describe how and why he has changed. He talks about wonderful people they have become, but they fail to do a good job of understanding and explaining the forces that prevailed to make them who they are at the school itself. He demonstrates the sort of values it tries to instill in its students such as, - Encouraging us to collaborate with each other and giving respect to everyone and everything. Because the writer does so, the reader never doubts that the applicant possesses all the qualities that the school has two advantages. First, the positive, upbeat attitude he has toward his institution is rare. Second, Stanford, for one, recognized that attitude as a positive force at their school.

## Wellesley Application Essay

It took me eighteen years to realize what an extraordinary influence my mother has been on my life. She's the kind of person who has the kind of heart that wants to have her portrait painted by (Sargent), the kind of mother who always has time for her four children, and the kind of community organizer who leads a project to assist Washington 's impoverished citizens. Growing up with such a strong role model, I developed many of her enthusiasms and simply for the sake of knowing something new, but I also came to understand the idea of giving back to the community in exchange for

My mother's enthusiasm for learning is most apparent in travel. I was nine years old when my family visited Greece. Every night for three weeks, with my mother on her bed reading Greek myths and taking notes on the Greek Gods. Despite the fact that we were traveling with four other families, when the site opened at sunrise. I vividly remember standing in an empty amphitheatre pretending to be an ancient tragedian, picking out the best lines and inserting our family into modified tales of the battle at Troy. Eight years and half a dozen passport stamps later I have come to value world travel, politics and culture, as well as my family and myself.

While I treasure the various worlds my mother has opened to me abroad, my life has been equally transformed by what she has shown me at home. She often accompanied my mother to (name deleted), a local soup kitchen and children's center. While she attended meetings, I helped with the building and performing magic tricks. Having finally perfected the "floating paintbrush" trick, I began work as a full time volunteer with the center. I met Jane Doe, an exceptionally strong girl with a vigor that is contagious. At the end of the summer, I decided to continue my work at (name deleted). Often difficult, the personal rewards are beyond articulation. In the seven years since I first walked through the doors of (name deleted), I have also derived from them a sense of spirit.

Everything that my mother has ever done has been overshadowed by the thought behind it. While the raw experiences I have had at home, I do not truly value them by watching my mother. She has enriched my life with her passion for learning, and changed it with her devotion to it. When she is touched by, I have seen a hope and life that is truly exceptional. Next year, I will find a new home miles away. However, my mother's example is something I will never forget.

\*\* ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE COMMENTS \*\*

The topic of this essay is the writer's mother. However, the writer definitely focuses on herself, which makes this essay so strong. She mentions her own experience, volunteer and community experience, and commitment to learning without ever sounding boastful or full of herself. The essay is well written and easy to read.

## Harvard Application

Of all the characters that I've met through books and movies, two stand out as people that I most want to emulate. They are Attacus Finch and Moonlight Graham from Field of Dreams. They appeal to me because they embody what I strive to be. They are influential people in their communities and I want to be around them. I, too, plan to live in a small town after graduating from college, and that positive effect is something I must give in order to be a part of it.

Both Mr. Finch and Dr. Graham are strong supporting characters in wonderful stories. They symbolize good, honesty, and wisdom. When I think of those things, the base has been formed for me to live a productive, helpful life. As an Eagle Scout I represent those things that Mr. Finch and Dr. Graham stand for. In the adult world I am Mr. Finch and Dr. Graham, but soon I'll be entering the adult world, a world in which I'm not yet prepared to lead.

I'm quite sure that as teenagers Attacus Finch and Moonlight Graham often wondered what they could do to help others. They probably saw someone like my grandfather, 40-year president of our hometown bank, enjoy a lifetime of leading, sharing, and giving. I want to be like him, bringing food and joy to indigent families. Often when his bank could not justify a loan to someone in need, my grandfather made the loan from his own pocket. I feel I have acquired the values and the burning desire to benefit others that will form the foundation for a great life. I also feel that that sophistication, knowledge, and wisdom necessary to succeed as I want to in the adult world. I feel that Harvard, above all others, can give me the Attacus Finch of my town.

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This essay is a great example of how to answer this question well. This applicant chose characters who demonstrated specific traits that he is sincere about his choices because his reasons are personal (being from a small town, and so forth). He managed to tell us a good deal about himself while maintaining a strong focus throughout.

## Georgetown Application

For many years, I have been interested in studying international relations. My interest in pursuing this field stems from several factors throughout my life. With my father and two of my brothers in the Saudi Foreign Service, I have grown up under the influence of history, economics, and diplomacy. I believe, through the study of international relations, I can effectively satisfy my curiosity in this field. My interest in international relations is patriotism.

Through the Foreign Service, I would not only have the opportunity to serve my country, but also have the chance to help bridge gaps between cultures abroad, I have been bridging cultures throughout my life. This experience has taught me to look for differences to compromise and similarities between cultures. In short, I believe that my experiences in life, combined with a rigorous academic education, will enable me to pursue a successful career in international relations.

#### Georgetown, Favorite Class

At St. Albans, especially in our later years, we are given the freedom to choose from a vast array of classes. Using this freedom, I have chosen to take a variety of classes, regardless of difficulty or appearance on my transcript. However, from these classes, one holds an extraordinary amount of value through the combination of American and European history. There are several reasons for my great interest in this class. First, I am fascinated by the political, economic, and social trends as a means of looking forward into the future, while allowing us to avoid the mistakes of the past. Second, the study of human behavior, both past and present, providing insight into the actions, desires, and aspirations of those around me. Finally, it lays the foundation for political science, economics, and international relations, three fields of great interest to me.

#### Georgetown, Visual Arts

Another major interest of mine, which I have not had the opportunity to express elsewhere on my application, is the visual arts. Through the visual arts, I can express myself. I began with black and white photography, focusing on the presence of lines and balance in nature. For my work in this field, I participated in an Art Show. From photography, I moved on to glass etching. Using a sandblaster to etch the glass, I again concentrated on lines and balance. When I turned glass panes into a sculpture, I moved my study into three dimensions, winning another Art Show award. Currently, I am working on canvas, using lines and balance. Eventually, I hope to explore the effects of combining these and other media, creating my own style of artistic expression.

#### Georgetown, Wrestling

In the past four years of my life, no activity has affected me more than wrestling. Four years of varsity wrestling and the honor of being a team captain through years of hard work and continuous dieting, wrestling has given me discipline. This discipline has spread to other parts of my personality, such as perseverance. Another quality wrestling has given me is leadership. As a team captain, I have learned to lead by example, both on and off the mat. Through this sport, I have experienced pain, sacrifice, adversity, and success. Exposure to these feelings - which are, in my opinion, essential to appreciate life. I hope to continue wrestling at Georgetown.

#### \*\* ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE COMMENTS \*\*

What immediately strikes the reader about this set - before even reading it - is the balance between the essays. Each answer contains a clear focus. The solid structure of each essay and the focus of each reflects this outward balance. Each one focuses on a completely different area of interest: the first on his career goals, the second on his interest in history, the third on his interest in the visual arts, and the fourth on wrestling. This is all put together, you have a well-rounded individual with passion, depth, and involvement in many different areas.

## Princeton Application

A creek is no place for shoes. I think it's unreasonable to ask children to keep their shoes on in such a place. My bare feet were always on the pavement of Peardale Street and around the corner, past the weeping willows, but not as far as the Lindsay's squeaky old swing-set. It was a place where nobody ever went there - except for me. Large pines nearby stood tall and erect, looking down at the ripples and currents that nudged the water of a car on a long drive. Stones and pebbles lined the shallow bottom and allowed the water to glide in creative patterns over their smooth surfaces. The bank and provided ideal spots for a child to sit and watch and wonder.

The creek often taught me things; it was my mentor. Once I discovered tadpoles in several of the many eddies and stagnant pools that a mayonnaise jar aided me in clumsily scooping up some of the more slothful individuals. With muddy hands and knees, I set them on the grass and they developed into tiny frogs. I was fascinated by what was taking place before my eyes, but new questions constantly puzzled me. Dad would tell me about different kinds of metamorphosis and how other little tiny creatures lived in the water that I couldn't see without a fancy net.

By the creek, my mind was free to wander. I remember sitting silently on a mossy rock and watching the birds; I used to pretend I was soaring in flight. High above, looking down on this stream from the pale blue heavens, the wind whistled over my face and the sun warmed my body as I went to go home. Sometimes I even did.

I was always up for a challenge. My sister and I used to jump from rock to rock, in a kind of improvised hop-scotch obstacle course that she was four years older and I had to practice every morning when she was at school in order to keep up. On the rare occasions that I would

The creek was a frontier. The stream extended far into the depths of the woods. I thought that if I wandered too far into its darkness, I might never return. Gradually overcoming my fear, I embarked on expeditions and drafted extensive maps using my father's old compass, a sheet of paper, and weight, my boundaries grew in extent and breadth.

Years later, I happened to be walking to a friend's house by way of the creek. It occurred to me that what was once an expedition was now a wade behind, I found others: new questions and freedoms, new challenges and places to explore. But this creek would remain foremost in my mind.

Princeton, Athlete (football)

I have learned a great many things from participating in varsity football. It has changed my entire outlook on and attitude toward life. Before, I had low self-esteem and turned away from seemingly impossible challenges. Football has altered all of these qualities. On the first day of freshman touch football. The players were split up and the game began. However, during the game, I noticed that I didn't run as hard as I could, and the matter is that I really did not want to be thrown the ball. I didn't want to be the one at fault if I dropped the ball and the play didn't go my way. I held back my team because I was too afraid of making a mistake. That aspect of my character led the first years of my high school life. I refrained from trying to be considered too stupid or dumb by my classmates. All the while, I went to practice and everyday, I went home physically and mentally exhausted.

Yet my apprehension prevailed as I continued to fear getting put in the game in case another player was injured. I was still afraid of making mistakes and angry teammates. Sometimes these fears came true. During my sophomore season, my position at backup guard led me to play in many occasions, I often made mistakes. Most of the time the mistakes were not significant; they rarely changed the outcome of a play. Yet I remember the mistakes I had made. These occurrences only compounded my fears of playing. However, I did not always make mistakes. Sometimes as I dawn on my senior year of football and am faced with two starting positions, I feel like a changed person.

Over the years, playing football has taught me what it takes to succeed. From months of tough practices, I have gained a hard work ethic and learned to work well with others in a group, as it is necessary to cooperate with teammates on the playing field. But most important, I have learned that if they mock or ridicule me; I'll just try again and do it better. I realize that it is necessary to risk failure in order to gain success. The coach would say it's impossible; I know that now. Now, I welcome the challenge. Whether I succeed or fail is irrelevant; it is only important that I have tried and

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The topic of this essay is how the applicant has matured and changed since his freshman year. He focuses on football. One of the strengths of the applicant clearly put time into the structure and planning of this essay. He uses the platform of football to discuss and demonstrate his growth over his high school years. What he could have done better was spend more time describing himself after he made improvements. As it is, he only touches on the topic. The essay would have been stronger had he actually shown us, perhaps by including a story or describing an event where his confidence