

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How do I begin to write my essay?**

A: My favorite exercises are the Essence Objects and Values Exercises, which you can Google.

**Q: How long should my essay be?**

A: It depends. Your main essay can be up to 650 words; your supplemental essays will vary.

**Q: How many essays will I need to write?**

A: Around 10-15 essays is average and these include the Common App main statement, plus supplemental essays. Some essay topics, however, may be re-used for multiple prompts, which can save time.

**Q: What are college admissions officers looking for?**

A: I believe they're looking for the answers to these three questions:

- 1.) Who is this person?
- 2.) Will this person contribute something of value to our campus?
- 3.) Can this person write?

**Q: How do college admissions officers evaluate my essay?**

A: Each school has its own criteria and different readers will prefer different elements. Michael Gulotta, Associate Director of Admissions at the Univ. of Southern California, for example, has told me he most looks to the essay to assess a student's writing ability. But Rick Diaz (Regional Director of Undergraduate Admission at SMU) is less interested in writing ability and more interested in a student's story.

**Q: So which is more important: your story or your writing skill?**

A: Both are important. "A good story, well told." That's your goal.

**Q: What should my essay be about?**

A: In a word, you.

**Q: How do I structure my essay?**

A: I teach students two structures, Montage Structure and Narrative Structure, both of which may be Googled, and which will likely be covered in your workshop.

**Q: How much do essays matter?**

A: It depends on the college, but generally between 10%-30%. Essays tend to matter more for small schools, or schools that look at applications holistically. Essays matter most when it comes to differentiating you from students with similar academic profiles (grades, test scores, extracurriculars).

**Q: If my grades are bad, can I get into Harvard with a great essay?**

A: Nope. But there are lots of other great schools besides Harvard. For a list of Colleges That Change Lives, Google "Colleges That Change Lives College Essay Guy Podcast."

**Q: Can a bad college essay negatively affect my application?**

A: Yes.

# COMMON APP PROMPTS

For most private schools in 2020-2021. Choose one prompt. 650 words, strict limit

1. 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.
2. 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?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. 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?
7. 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.

# Essence Objects Exercise

- Excerpted from College Essay Essentials: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Successful College Admissions Essay



To listen to the College Essay Guy guide you through this exercise, go here:

[www.collegeessayguy.com/guide-objects-exercise](http://www.collegeessayguy.com/guide-objects-exercise)

# The Values Exercise

- Excerpted from College Essay Essentials: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Successful College Admissions Essay

**How it works:** Place a check mark beside your Top 10 values.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> community            | <input type="checkbox"/> self expression    | <input type="checkbox"/> beauty                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inspiration          | <input type="checkbox"/> stability          | <input type="checkbox"/> ecological awareness  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> money                | <input type="checkbox"/> art                | <input type="checkbox"/> quality relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> intellectual         | <input type="checkbox"/> autonomy           | <input type="checkbox"/> travel                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> status               | <input type="checkbox"/> risk               | <input type="checkbox"/> decisiveness          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> financial gain       | <input type="checkbox"/> balance            | <input type="checkbox"/> curiosity             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> laughter             | <input type="checkbox"/> self-discipline    | <input type="checkbox"/> spirituality          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> serenity             | <input type="checkbox"/> courage            | <input type="checkbox"/> loyalty               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> physical challenge   | <input type="checkbox"/> family             | <input type="checkbox"/> honesty               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> responsibility       | <input type="checkbox"/> empathy            | <input type="checkbox"/> independence          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> competition          | <input type="checkbox"/> working alone      | <input type="checkbox"/> supervising others    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> career               | <input type="checkbox"/> humility           | <input type="checkbox"/> recognition           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fame                 | <input type="checkbox"/> efficiency         | <input type="checkbox"/> accountability        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with others  | <input type="checkbox"/> intensity          | <input type="checkbox"/> democracy             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> freedom              | <input type="checkbox"/> health and fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> close relationships   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> security             | <input type="checkbox"/> meaningful work    | <input type="checkbox"/> religion              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> strength             | <input type="checkbox"/> my country         | <input type="checkbox"/> respect               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-control         | <input type="checkbox"/> music              | <input type="checkbox"/> bravery               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hunger               | <input type="checkbox"/> truth              | <input type="checkbox"/> communication         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> personal development | <input type="checkbox"/> resourcefulness    | <input type="checkbox"/> change and variety    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trust                | <input type="checkbox"/> challenges         | <input type="checkbox"/> compassion            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> faith                | <input type="checkbox"/> commitment         | <input type="checkbox"/> nature                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> involvement          | <input type="checkbox"/> leadership         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adventure            | <input type="checkbox"/> helping others     | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> vulnerability        | <input type="checkbox"/> influence          | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adaptability         | <input type="checkbox"/> wit                | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> friendship           | <input type="checkbox"/> success            | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellence           | <input type="checkbox"/> patience           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> job tranquility      | <input type="checkbox"/> listening          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> power                | <input type="checkbox"/> diversity          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> passion              | <input type="checkbox"/> love               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cooperation          | <input type="checkbox"/> fast-paced work    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> affection            | <input type="checkbox"/> nutrition          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wisdom               | <input type="checkbox"/> competence         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge            | <input type="checkbox"/> practicality       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> growth               | <input type="checkbox"/> creativity         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> expertise            | <input type="checkbox"/> excitement         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> order                | <input type="checkbox"/> collaboration      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> privacy              | <input type="checkbox"/> social change      |  |

# The Feelings and Needs Exercise

Adapted from an exercise created by Nonviolent Communication Expert LaShelle Lowe-Chardé (<http://www.wiseheartpdx.org>).

When I saw/heard/experienced... \_\_\_\_\_  
(What event, positive or negative, did you experience?)

I felt... \_\_\_\_\_  
(Choose 2-3 emotions from the list below)

Because I needed... \_\_\_\_\_  
(Choose 2-3 needs from the list below)

## FEELINGS

### Delighted

Joyful  
Happy  
Amused  
Adventurous  
Blissful  
Elated

### Thankful

Appreciative  
Moved  
Touched  
Tender  
Expansive  
Grateful

### Excited

Enthusiastic  
Overjoyed  
Fervent  
Giddy  
Eager  
Ecstatic  
Thrilled

### Satisfied

Fulfilled  
Gratified

### Interested

Curious  
Absorbed

### Healthy

Empowered  
Alive  
Robust

### Relaxed

Relieved  
Rested  
Mellow  
At ease  
Light

### Content

Cheerful  
Glad  
Comfortable  
Pleased

### Friendly

Affectionate  
Loving  
Passionate

### Energetic

Exhilarated  
Exuberant  
Vigorous

### Alert

Focused  
Awake  
Clearheaded

### Peaceful

Tranquil  
Serene  
Calm

### Confident

Secure  
Safe  
Hopeful

### Scared

Apprehensive  
Dread  
Worried  
Panicky  
Frightened  
Vulnerable

### Nervous

Jittery  
Anxious  
Restless  
Vulnerable

### Tense

Cranky  
Stiff  
Stressed  
Overwhelmed  
Agitated  
Aggravated

### Hurt

Pain  
Agony  
Anguish  
Heartbroken  
Lonely

### Depressed

Disconnected  
Detached  
Despondent  
Dejected  
Bored

### Tired

Burnt Out  
Exhausted  
Lethargic

### Angry

Furious  
Rage  
Irate  
Resentful  
Irritated

### Frustrated

Disappointed  
Discouraged  
Disheartened  
Impatient

### Shocked

Disturbed  
Stunned  
Alarmed  
Appalled  
Concerned  
Horried

### Sad

Grief  
Despair  
Gloomy  
Sullen  
Downhearted  
Hopeless

### Torn

Ambivalent  
Confused  
Puzzled

### Jealous

Envious  
Bitter

### Embarrassed

Ashamed  
Contrite  
Guilty

## NEEDS

### Intimacy

Empathy  
Connection  
Affection  
Warmth  
Love  
Understanding  
Acceptance  
Caring  
Bonding  
Compassion  
Communion  
Divine Union  
Sexuality

### Autonomy

Choice  
Freedom  
Spontaneity  
Independence  
Respect  
Honor

### Security

Predictability  
Consistency  
Stability  
Trust  
Reassurance

### Partnership

Mutuality  
Friendship  
Companionship  
Support  
Collaboration  
Belonging  
Community  
Consideration  
Seen/heard  
Appreciation

### Purpose

Competence  
Contribution  
Efficiency  
Growth  
Learning  
Challenge  
Discovery

### Order

Structure  
Clarity  
Focus  
Information

### Celebration

Mourning  
Aliveness  
Humor  
Beauty  
Play  
Creativity  
Joy

### Honesty

Integrity  
Authenticity  
Wholeness  
Fairness

### Peace

Groundedness  
Hope

# Four Types of College Essays

<b>A</b> Student <b>has</b> faced significant challenges and <b>knows</b> what s/he wants to study.	<b>B</b> Student <b>has not</b> faced significant challenges, but <b>does know</b> what s/he wants to study.
<b>C</b> Student <b>has</b> faced significant challenges, but <b>does not know</b> what s/he wants to study.	<b>D</b> Student <b>has not</b> faced significant challenges and <b>does not know</b> what s/he wants to study.

## Narrative Structure

Here's the structure that most American films use. Learning this may change the way you watch films (it did for me). It's a structure as old as time and storytellers have been using it for thousands of years. Joseph Campbell called it the monomyth or Hero's Journey. I'll refer to as narrative structure. Its basic elements are:

1. **Status Quo**
2. **Inciting Incident / Status Quo Change**
3. **Raise the stakes**
4. **Moment of Truth**
5. **Outcome / New Status Quo**

## Montage Structure

### What is a montage?

Montage is a technique that involves creating a new whole from separate fragments (pictures, words, music, etc.). In filmmaking, the montage effect is used to condense space and time so that information can be delivered in a more efficient way. A few images tell the whole story. And you can use this technique for your essay. But which essences should you choose? That's up to you. (It's art, remember, not science.)

### Find a Focusing Lens

You can't discuss every single aspect of your life, but you can show us a few important points through a single lens or metaphor. What type of focusing lens might you use to write your essay? A sport? A place? An art form? A hobby? Ask yourself: what's something I know really well?

# WITH DEBATE (TYPE A)

Written for the Common App using the Narrative Structure

by a student who **did** face significant challenges and **did know** what she wanted to study.

The clock was remarkably slow as I sat, legs tightly crossed, squirming at my desk. “Just raise your hand,” my mind pleaded, “ask.” But despite my urgent need to visit the restroom, I remained seated, begging time to move faster. You see, I was that type of kid to eat French Fries dry because I couldn’t confront the McDonalds cashier for some Heinz packets. I was also the type to sit crying in front of school instead of asking the office if it could check on my late ride. Essentially, I chose to struggle through a problem if the solution involved speaking out against it.

My diffidence was frustrating. My parents relied on me, the only one able to speak English, to guide them, and always anticipated the best from me. However, as calls for help grew, the more defunct I became. I felt that every move I made, it was a gamble between success and failure. For me, the fear of failure and disappointment far outweighed the possibility of triumph, so I took no action and chose to silently suffer under pressure.

Near meltdown, I knew something needed to be done. Mustering up the little courage I had, I sought ways to break out of my shell—without luck. Recreational art classes ended in three boring months. I gave up Self Defense after embarrassing myself in class. After-school band, library volunteering, and book clubs ended similarly. Continued effort yielded nothing.

Disillusioned and wrung dry of ideas, I followed my mom’s advice and joined a debate club. As expected, the club only reaffirmed my self-doubt. Eye contact? Greater volume? No thanks.

But soon, the club moved on from “how to make a speech” lessons to the exploration of argumentation. We were taught to speak the language of Persuasion, and play the game of Debate. Eventually, I fell in love with it all.

By high school, I joined the school debate team, began socializing, and was even elected to head several clubs. I developed critical and analytical thinking skills, and learned how to think and speak spontaneously.

I became proud and confident. Moreover, I became eager to play my role in the family, and family relations strengthened. In fact, nowadays, my parents are interested in my school’s newest gossip.

Four years with debate, and now I’m the kid up at the white board; the kid leading discussions; and the kid standing up for her beliefs.

More importantly, I now confront issues instead of avoiding them. It is exciting to discover solutions to problems that affect others, as I was able to do as part of the 1st Place team for the 2010 United Nations Global Debates Program on climate change and poverty. I take a natural interest in global issues, and plan to become a foreign affairs analyst or diplomat by studying international affairs with a focus on national identity.

In particular, I am interested in the North-South Korean tension. What irreconcilable differences have prompted a civilization to separate? Policy implications remain vague, and sovereignty theories have their limits—how do we determine what compromises are to be made? And on a personal level, why did my grandfather have to flee from his destroyed North Korean hometown--and why does it matter?

I see a reflection of myself in the divide at the 38th parallel because I see one part isolating itself in defense to outside threats, and another part coming out to face the world as one of the fastest-developing nations. Just as my shy persona before debate and extroverted character after debate are both part of who I am, the Korean civilization is also one. And just as my parents expect much from me, the first of my family to attend college, I have grand expectations for this field of study.

# ENDODONTICS (TYPE B)

Written for the Common App using the Montage Structure

by a student who **did not** face significant challenges and **did know** what he wanted to study.

As a kid I was always curious. I was unafraid to ask questions and didn't worry how dumb they would make me sound. In second grade I enrolled in a summer science program and built a solar-powered oven that baked real cookies. I remember obsessing over the smallest details: Should I paint the oven black to absorb more heat? What about its shape? A spherical shape would allow for more volume, but would it trap heat as well as conventional rectangular ovens? Even then I was obsessed with the details of design.

And it didn't stop in second grade.

A few years later I designed my first pair of shoes, working for hours to perfect each detail, including whether the laces should be mineral white or diamond white. Even then I sensed that minor differences in tonality could make a huge impact and that different colors could evoke different responses.

In high school I moved on to more advanced projects, teaching myself how to take apart, repair, and customize cell phones. Whether I was adjusting the flex cords that connect the IPS LCD to the iPhone motherboard, or replacing the vibrator motor, I loved discovering the many engineering feats Apple overcame in its efforts to combine form with function.

And once I obtained my driver's license, I began working on cars. Many nights you'll find me in the garage replacing standard chrome trim with an elegant piano black finish or changing the threads on the stitching of the seats to add a personal touch, as I believe a few small changes can transform a generic product into a personalized work of art.

My love of details applies to my schoolwork too.

I'm the math geek who marvels at the fundamental theorems of Calculus, or who sees beauty in  $A = (s(s-a)(s-b)(s-c))^{1/2}$ . Again, it's in the details: one bracket off or one digit missing and the whole equation collapses. And details are more than details, they can mean the difference between negative and positive infinity, an impossible range of solutions.

I also love sharing this appreciation with others and have taken it upon myself to personally eradicate mathophobia, my Calculus teacher's term for "extreme fear of Math." A small group of other students and I have devoted our after-school time to tutoring our peers in everything from Pre-Algebra to AP Calculus B/C and I believe my fluency in Hebrew and Farsi has helped me connect with some of my school's Israeli and Iranian students. There's nothing better than seeing a student solve a difficult problem without me saying anything.

You probably think I want to be a designer. Or perhaps an engineer?

Wrong. Well, kind of.

Actually, I want to study Endodontics, which is (I'll save you the Wikipedia look-up) a branch of dentistry that deals with the tooth pulp and the tissues surrounding the root of a tooth. As an Endodontist, I'll be working to repair damaged teeth by performing precision root canals and implementing dental crowns. Sound exciting? It is to me.

The fact is, it's not unlike the work I've been doing repairing cellphone circuits and modifying cars, though there is one small difference. In the future I'll still be working to repair machines, but this machine is one of the most sophisticated machines ever created: the human body. Here, my obsession with details will be as crucial as ever. A one millimeter difference can mean the difference between a successful root canal and a lawsuit.

The question is: will the toothbrushes I hand out be mineral white or diamond white?



# BREAKING UP WITH MOM (TYPE C)

Written for the Common App using the **Narrative Structure**  
by a student who **did** face significant challenges and **did not know** what she wanted to study

I stare into my cappuccino to try to avoid looking at my teary eyed mom, who had just found a hole in her favorite bright pink floral print scarf.

“I’m your mother, Katyush,” she says in her heavy Russian accent.

A tiny bird of a woman with clipped wings.

I remember white walls, bottles upon bottles of acrylic paint, and a mortgage on a two-bedroom apartment in Lomita, California: my mother’s dream. Together, we unpacked the painting box and started a mural on my new bedroom wall. “Let it Be”, my new wall read, with an array of squares and swirls in every shade of blue imaginable. We proudly took a step back, then unpacked the Jasmine Fancy tea leaves and floral teapot.

Her trembling hands reach for her coffee.

“You’re supposed to take care of me. That’s what family does. I don’t have anyone else.”

Her mom in Moscow, her ex-husband remarried, and her oldest son avoiding her at all costs. Unemployed and unwilling.

“I’ll get my pills eventually, but family has responsibilities.”

Her depression plummeting, her sanity dwindling, her only lifeline dying for freedom from her confines.

I flash back to the terror in her eyes as she noticed a chip on the teapot’s spout- a spark of fear that transformed into a thunderstorm. How she crumpled in the old kitchen chair across from me. From that moment on, life became a broken record. I walked her to bed, kissed her goodnight, reminded her that I had school the next day. Asleep by 3 am. Late to class. Come home stressed. Start homework. Take care of mom. Finish homework. 3 am.

My mother was in a state of stagnation, and she had a hold on me like quicksand.

Though living with my dad and stepmom was its own ticking timebomb, for the most part I was left alone long enough to do schoolwork and get to class on time-but every moment away from my mom felt like I was tying a noose around her neck. Nothing I did could bring her the peace she wanted from me.

When I was fifteen years old I broke up with my mother. We could still be friends, I told her, but I needed my space, and she couldn’t give me that.

For the first time in my life, I had taken action. I was never again going to passively let life happen to me.

During four long months of separation, I filled the space that my mom previously dominated with learning: everything and anything. I began teaching myself rudimentary French through an online program, learned basic HTML coding and website design, and began editing my drawings on Photoshop so that I could sell them online. When my dad lost his job, I learned to sew my own clothing, and applied my new knowledge to costume design within the Drama department.

On stage, I learned to stand up and say things that mattered. Backstage, I worked with teams of dedicated students who wanted each other to succeed. In our improv group, I gained the confidence to act on my instincts. In the classroom, my Drama teacher emulated the person I wanted to be. She gave me hugs on days that wouldn’t end, insisted that taking care of myself was not the same thing as being selfish, and most importantly, taught me how to ask for help.

A year later, it all culminated in One Bad Apple--a full length musical that I produced with my best friend. Managing the budget, scheduling rehearsals, and working with a cast and crew of students was easily the most difficult thing I have ever done- but it was my choice. The challenge, and the reward, belonged to me.

On my sixteenth birthday, I picked up the phone and dialed my mom. I waited through three agonizingly long pauses between rings.

“Katyush?”

“Hi mom, it’s me.”

# FIVE FAMILIES (TYPE D)

Written for the Common App using the Montage Structure

by a student who **did not** face challenges and **did not know** what he wanted to study.

When I was 16, I lived with the Watkins family in Wichita, Kansas. Mrs. Watkins was the coordinator of the foreign exchange student program I was enrolled in. She had a nine-year-old son named Cody. I would babysit Cody every day after school for at least two to three hours. We would play Scrabble or he would read to me from *Charlotte's Web* or *The Ugly Duckling*. He would talk a lot about his friends and school life, and I would listen to him and ask him the meanings of certain words. He was my first friend in the New World.

My second family was the Martinez family, who were friends of the Watkins's. The host dad Michael was a high school English teacher and the host mom Jennifer (who had me call her "Jen") taught elementary school. She had recently delivered a baby, so she was still in the hospital when I moved into their house. The Martinez family did almost everything together. We made pizza together, watched Shrek on their cozy couch together, and went fishing on Sunday together. On rainy days, Michael, Jen and I would sit on the porch and listen to the rain, talking about our dreams and thoughts. Within two months I was calling them mom and dad.

After I finished the exchange student program, I had the option of returning to Korea but I decided to stay in America. I wanted to see new places and meet different people. Since I wasn't an exchange student anymore, I had the freedom--and burden--of finding a new school and host family on my own. After a few days of thorough investigation, I found the Struiksma family in California. They were a unique group.

The host mom Shellie was a single mom who had two of her own sons and two Russian daughters that she had adopted. The kids always had something warm to eat, and were always on their best behavior at home and in school. It would be fair to say that this was all due to Shellie's upbringing. My room was on the first floor, right in front of Shellie's hair salon, a small business that she ran out of her home. In the living room were six or seven huge amplifiers and a gigantic chandelier hung from the high ceiling. The kitchen had a bar. At first, the non-stop visits from strangers made me nervous, but soon I got used to them. I remember one night, a couple barged into my room while I was sleeping. It was awkward.

After a few months I realized we weren't the best fit. In the nicest way possible, I told them I had to leave. They understood.

The Ortiz family was my fourth family. Kimberly, the host mom, treated me the same way she treated her own son. She made me do chores: I fixed dinner, fed their two dogs Sassy and Lady, and once a week I cleaned the bathroom. I also had to follow some rules: No food in my room, no using the family computer, no lights on after midnight, and no ride unless it was an emergency. The first couple of months were really hard to get used to, but eventually I adjusted.

I lived with the Ortiz family for seven months like a monk in the deep forest. However, the host dad Greg's asthma got worse after winter, so he wanted to move to the countryside. It was unexpected and I only had a week to find a new host family. I asked my friend Danielle if I could live with her until I found a new home. That's how I met the Dirksen family, my fifth family.

The Dirksen family had three kids. They were all different. Danielle liked bitter black coffee, Christian liked energy drinks, and Becca liked sweet lemon tea. Dawn, the host mom didn't like winter, and Mark, the host dad, didn't like summer. After dinner, we would all play Wii Sports together. I was the king of bowling, and Dawn was the queen of tennis. I don't remember a single time that they argued about the games. Afterward, we would gather in the living room and Danielle would play the piano while the rest of us sang hymns.

Of course, those 28 months were too short to fully understand all five families, but I learned from and was shaped by each of them. By teaching me English, nine year-old Cody taught me the importance of being able to learn from anyone; the Martinez family showed me the value of spending time together as a family; the Struiksma family taught me to reserve judgment about divorced women and adopted children; Mrs. Ortiz taught me the value of discipline and the Dirksen family taught me the importance of appreciating one another's different qualities.

Getting along with other people is necessary for anyone and living with five families has made me more sensitive to others' needs: I have learned how to recognize when someone needs to talk, when I should give advice and when to simply listen, and when someone needs to be left alone; in the process, I have become much more adaptable. I'm ready to change, learn, and be shaped by my future families.

# THE "FEELINGS AND NEEDS" WORKSHEET