



## Find Your Core Values

Your values guide how you make choices, build relationships, and set goals. Use this handout to discover what matters most to you.

### Step 1: Circle or Highlight the Values That Mean Something to You

Tip: You can highlight or bold your top choices in this document!

Value	Definition
Achievement	Doing your best and accomplishing goals you set for yourself.
Adventure	Seeking new experiences, challenges, and excitement.
Authenticity	Being true to yourself and your beliefs.
Balance	Having time for school, family, friends, and self-care.
Caring	Showing kindness and concern for others.
Community	Feeling connected and contributing to a group or place.
Compassion	Understanding and helping others who are struggling.
Confidence	Believing in your own abilities and decisions.
Creativity	Expressing yourself and thinking in new, original ways.
Determination	Staying focused and not giving up when things are tough.
Education	Valuing learning, knowledge, and growth.
Empathy	Seeing and understanding the feelings of others.
Equality	Believing everyone deserves fairness and opportunity.
Family	Caring for and being supported by your loved ones.
Faith/Spirituality	Finding meaning or connection through spiritual or personal beliefs.
Friendship	Building and maintaining strong, trusting relationships.
Generosity	Giving time, help, or resources to others.
Gratitude	Appreciating what and who you have in your life.
Growth	Becoming a better version of yourself over time.
Honesty	Telling the truth and acting with integrity.
Independence	Thinking and acting on your own choices.
Justice	Standing up for what's right and fair.
Kindness	Treating others with respect and care.
Leadership	Inspiring and guiding others toward a goal.
Loyalty	Standing by people, places, or causes you believe in.
Open-Mindedness	Listening to and respecting different opinions.
Perseverance	Pushing through challenges and not giving up.
Respect	Treating yourself and others with dignity.
Responsibility	Owning your actions and following through on commitments.
Service	Helping your community and making a difference.
Success	Reaching goals that matter to you.
Teamwork	Working well and fairly with others.
Trust	Believing in others and being someone others can rely on.



Understanding	Taking time to listen, learn, and consider others' perspectives.
Uniqueness	Valuing individuality and what makes each person different.
Unity	Working together toward shared goals; building connection.
Vision	Having clear goals and a sense of direction for your future.
Vitality	Living with energy, enthusiasm, and a love for life.
Wellness	Caring for your physical, emotional, and mental health.
Wisdom	Using knowledge and experience to make thoughtful decisions.
Wonder	Staying curious and amazed by the world around you.
Work Ethic	Taking pride in doing your best and following through on tasks.
Zeal	Showing excitement, energy, and passion for what you care about.

### Step 2: Narrow It Down

Now, look at the values you highlighted and choose your top 5. The ones that feel most true to you.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

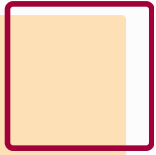
### Step 3: Find Your Core 2–3 Values

From your top 5, pick the 2 or 3 values that best describe who you are and what you stand for. These are your core values — the ones that guide your decisions every day.

- ★ 1.
- ★ 2.
- ★ 3.

### Reflection

- Why are these values important to you?
- How do they show up in your choices, goals, or relationships?
- What's one way you can live out one of your core values this week?



# BRAINSTORMING & TOPIC SELECTION



**Values list:** list 8–10 values (e.g. creativity, justice, curiosity, resilience). Then pick experiences that reflect those values.



**“Essence object” or metaphor:** pick an object or image or moment that connects to your identity.



**Significant moments:** small turning points, challenges, conflicts, decisions.



**21 Details exercise:** list 21 distinct details from an experience you might want to write about, then cluster or map themes.



**“What I Want Scholarship Readers to Know” list:** make a free-writing list of what you wish they knew about you beyond grades/test scores.



**Story Seeds:** Jot down 2 potential story seeds (one safe and one vulnerable).

# STRONG STATEMENTS

Each one reveals a moment, a value, and personal growth — the hallmarks of a compelling essay.

01

“When I translated at the clinic for my parents, I learned that language is more than words, it’s a bridge of trust.”

02

“The night the lights went out, I discovered that creativity often begins in the dark.”

03

“I stopped chasing perfection the day I realized growth lives in the messy middle.”

