

Sample Essay #1

Superman

As do many children, early in life I set out for myself a general career path. Realizing, however, that a career as Superman might be fulfilling but not very lucrative, I resolved myself to becoming a doctor. My mother's job at the Texas Heart Institute had exposed me to the advancing field of medical research at an early age. My interest in science was already fairly well-rooted at the time (one of the first books I read was *Our Universe*). Exposure to such an interesting and modern field of science is probably what led me to appreciate the biological sciences.

In my high school years, however, an innovative mathematics teacher caused me to realize the beauty of mathematics using the abstract logic of geometry. Previously I despised number-crunching despite my proficiency. I came to the decision that viewing a heart surgery was a far lighter task than performing one. My new interest in mathematics would influence me into considering engineering as a desirable alternative even though biology and medicine were my first loves. That math teacher realized my devotion to both the biological and mathematical sciences and proposed I consider the field of biomedical engineering. I always wanted to be involved in the areas of research and development in medicine and technology. Now I knew the name of the field that produced the artificial heart and the discipline of the famous men who inspired me - such as Robert Jarvik.

This is the point at which college begins to fit into the picture. College is the place where I hope to focus my studies so I might find my niche in the world of biomedical engineering. I plan to earn a Master's degree through an advanced five-year program. This program is available at most of the schools to which I have applied and been accepted and I can begin my doctoral studies as soon as possible. I will be provided the challenge I demand from my higher education and the program offers a more attractive financial option to extended graduate studies. This financial issue let me to apply for the BHISD scholarship, as my single parent's current state of employment is one which does not easily support sending a child through two to three years of graduate school.

Eventually I hope to spend my life as a practicing engineer working in a teaching hospital or at a large research university. I could provide instruction while performing research and earning my professorship. At that point I would be contributing my energies back to the world in the most challenging and fulfilling manner possible. Eat your heart out, Superman!

SAMPLE ESSAY #2

My Personal Philosophy of Responsibility and Leadership

In my sophomore year, I studied Harry Truman for a research presentation on National History Day. In addition to bringing home the bronze medal from competition, my new understanding of Truman's leadership revolutionized the way I served my high school and the surrounding community. I learned from his presidency that leadership consists of commitment, integrity, and credibility. With those three elements in mind, I have radically reformed my effectiveness as a leader and member of society.

Few presidents have faced obstacles so daunting as those which assailed Truman. Receiving the mantle from a beloved predecessor and finding himself comparatively labeled "first-rate example of a second-rate man," he doggedly pursued the duties of the office for the sake of enacting his principles. In the process, he taught that the determination of man to fulfill his dreams can overcome the most entrenched opposition. I carry that lesson with me, insisting on goals in whose value I believe, even when their feasibility seemed poor.

During an interview with an official from the Truman White House, I asked what made the President integrate the armed services. He replied that "Harry knew it was just. Nothing else mattered." I took that statement to heart and developed a renewed standard of ethical decision-making which simplifies every choice. I had not spent adequate time on moral philosophy before Truman, but exposure to him taught me to believe in and work for justice.

The final element of Truman's character combines and transcends the first two. Credibility in leadership revolves around protecting the best interest of a constituent group. In the case of President Truman, this belief was exemplified by his attack on isolationism. As a result of his unpopular fight to keep America involved in the world, we have known fifty years of relative peace. In my career of service, this example motivated me to fight for the best solutions despite constituent opposition.

I entered my research on Truman to understand the principles of our history in an age of sweeping world change. I left that research with a new understanding of the elements of leadership that make change possible. The impact of Truman's politics and diplomacy will remain debatable, but I know without doubt that the example of his commitment, integrity, and credibility transformed my own values in service and leadership. My life changed because of a man I never met.