



TJ Personal Statements 7-8 Syllabus

Course Goals

1 TJ Admissions Process

Students learn about the details and deadlines for each component of the admissions process.

2 Personal Statements

Students invest significant time practicing personal statements and writing about their interest and experience in math, science, technology, engineering, and TJ.

3 Timed Essay-Exam Preparation

Students learn how to efficiently work under time constraints and write organized, grammatical, informative essays.

4 Life at TJ

Students learn about what it's like to be a student at TJ, including detailed information about opportunities, school culture, extracurriculars, and any other topic of interest.

Course Topics

1 Holistic Review Overview

Students learn about the evaluative criteria assessed by the TJ Admissions process.

2 Essay Types

Students review different types of essays that they could be called to write, and how to convey ideas properly in each type.

3 Writing Prompt Analysis

Students learn how to narrow down the topic of a prompt to an idea that can be explained in the time they are given.

4 SPS Response Planning

Students learn about what TJ is looking for in personal statements and plan how they will respond to particular types of prompts.

5 Personal Statements

Students strategize how to write effective and flattering personal statements, and learn about what topics they may be asked to write about.

6 Essay Structure

Students work on developing an engaging introduction, persuasive supporting paragraphs, and a strong conclusion.

7 Formulaic Writing

Students learn about the benefits of writing with a formula and apply it to their personal statements.

8 Sentence Variety

Students work on varying their sentences to improve the quality of their essays. Students also work on improving diction and effective word choice.

9 Revision

Students learn how to look back over their writing to find mistakes and correct them efficiently.

Course Schedule

Day 1

SPS Diagnostic Pre-Test

Students will take a preliminary diagnostic to check strengths and weaknesses before instruction begins.

Course Introduction

Students are introduced to the course and align their expectations with the course goals and aims.

Icebreaker

Students get to know each other by comparing their expectations for TJ and gaining valuable insights from their instructor.

TJ Introduction

Students are introduced to the mission, aims, opportunities, and culture of TJ.

Admissions Process Introduction

Students are introduced to the "Holistic Admissions Process" and gain more insight to the requirements and purpose of the Student Portrait Sheet + Problem-Solver Essay.

Diagnostic Roundtable

Students discuss together the different prompts of the diagnostic and consider their responses to each.

Day 1 Review

Students reflect on the plethora of information they've learned on the first day of class, and look ahead to the rest of the course.

Day 2

Seeing Yourself at TJ

Students think critically about the appeal of TJ, conducting research into the school and its opportunities, and aligning what they find with their own interests.

Day 3

Writing About Yourself

Students think critically about their own strengths that they would like to present to TJ before developing a strategy to confidently present their strengths and interests to a variety of prompts.

Problem-Solver Essay Practice

Students are provided with Problem-Solver Essay prompts and some simple strategies for completing them before they try to answer them on their own.

Day 4

Parsing Through Prompts

Students develop their ability to interpret challenging, complex prompts and apply that to a number of Problem-Solver Essay examples.

Parsing Personal Writing Practice

Students develop their personal writing through a series of practice prompts.

Day 5

Analyzing Hypotheticals

Students learn about the types of hypothetical questions that are likely to appear on the SPS and learn how to analyze what is being asked and sought for in them.

Mid-Session Complete SPS+PSE Progress Test

Students put what they've learned to this point into practice by completing a timed simulation of the SPS+Essay.

Day 6

Writing to Show Your Strengths

Students learn how to incorporate personal details into narrative writing to make their responses more engaging to readers while meeting their goals of writing a "portrait in words" on the Student Portrait Sheet.

Mid-Session Progress Test Review

Students collaboratively review their responses to the prompts on the Mid-Session Complete SPS + Essay Progress Test.

Day 7

Writing with a Formula

Students learn the benefits of a formulaic approach to the Problem-Solver Essay.

Illuminate Your Reasoning

Students learn how to strengthen their formulaic responses to PSE prompts.

Day 8

Considering the Why

Students learn and practice the art of weighing outcomes and repercussions before making and explaining their decisions through challenging hypothetical prompts.

Peer Evaluations

Students evaluate each other's personal question and hypothetical responses using provided rubrics, gaining insight into ways their classmates respond differently and ways they can improve.

Day 9

Using Examples

Students learn the value of grounding their responses in reality through the use of examples.

SPS Strategizing Session

Students review and solidify strategies for SPS question types in a group activity.

SPS Practice Prompts

Students get some final practice before the post-test with a variety of prompts.

Day 10

Complete SPS + PSE Post-Test

Students put what they've learned into practice by completing a timed simulation of the SPS+Essay.

End-Session Review

Students have a final opportunity to discuss the SPS + Essay and address any lingering notes, questions, comments, or concerns.

©2021 Fairfax Collegiate School, LLC. All rights reserved.

Updated on 7/30/2021