



TJ SIS Essay Prep 7-8 Syllabus

Course Goals

1 Standardized Exam Preparation

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

2 TJ Prep and Personal Statements

Students learn the specifics of the TJ exam essays and what TJ is looking for in their essays. Students spend significant time practicing personal statements and writing about their interest in math, science, technology, and TJ.

Course Topics

1 Test Overview

Students learn the requirements for the TJ SIS exam essays.

2 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.

3 Essay Types

Students review different types of essays that could be written and how to convey ideas properly in each of those.

4 Personal Statements

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

5 Formulaic Writing

Students learn about the benefits of writing with a formula and apply it to an SIS Essay.

6 SIS Statement Planning

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

7 Essay Structure

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

8 Sentence Variety

Students work on varying their sentences to improve the quality of the essay. Students also work on improving diction, or 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

Diagnostic Pre-Test

Students take a full 2-hour, 4-prompt practice test to get an understanding of TJ's SIS + Essay which this class prepares them for. Allows the instructor to get an understanding of where the students are in their preparation and readiness to set clear goals for the course.

Course Introduction

Students familiarize themselves with the course and learn about the goals and intentions of the course along with the basic layout of TJ's SIS + Essay.

TJ Introduction

Students consider what they already know and still need to learn about Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

SIS Introduction

Students learn more about the specifics of the SIS + Essay.

Review Activity

Students review their progress so far.

Day 2

Daily Warm-up Activity

Students respond to writing prompts which introduce them to the day's activities and lessons.

Seeing Yourself at TJ

Students begin preparing for personal questions by learning about the advantages of a TJ education and considering what it would be like to be a student there.

TJ Research and Collaborative Thinking

Students explore TJ's unique educational approach, and research course offerings, clubs, and activities to find common interests.

Daily Writing Activity

Students respond to prompts that reinforce the day's lessons while replicating what they may see on the SIS + Essay. They will also receive individual feedback on the previous day's writing at this time.

Day 3

Writing About Yourself

Students learn about the challenges of writing about themselves and work on some strategies to best highlight their interests.

Day 4

Writing to Show Your Strengths

Students learn more about what TJ's admissions officers look for in responses and practice some strategies to highlight their strengths and interests.

Day 5

Analyzing Hypotheticals

Students begin preparing for "wild card" questions by learning how to analyze hypothetical scenarios to determine what the question intends to evaluate.

Day 6

Considering the "Why"

Students consider the impact of their decisions and explanations when responding to hypothetical scenarios.

Day 7

Using Examples

Students learn the strengths of using detailed examples in their responses, and practice using examples for all types of prompts. Students will also strategize a plan for specific examples to include in their SIS + Essay responses.

Day 8

Writing with a Formula

Students develop a formulaic strategy for answering the mathematical problem-solving essays, learning the strengths of a WHAT-HOW-WHY(-WHAT) response.

Day 9

Illuminate Your Reasoning

Students receive more detailed instruction on the advantages of a formulaic response to the problem-solving essay, and practice detailing their reasoning to give the TJ admissions officers a better understanding of their thought process.

Day 10

Post-Test

Students complete another full 2-hour, 4-prompt test on the last day to get a full practice run using their newly developed strategies and to gauge their progress throughout the course.

Final Review

Students get a final chance to ask their instructor any lingering questions, and have an opportunity to review what they've learned throughout the course.

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