

Finding Your Anecdotes (page 1)

Use the prompts below to brainstorm specific anecdotes and story elements for your essays:

Problem (Flaw and Obstacle)

What problems, mistakes, or flaws have you recovered from, **growing** in the process?

What **situations** have threatened to hold you back, but you overcame them?

What **obstacles** do others (*parents, friends, community*) say you have honorably overcome? *Ask them.*

Personal Achievements

What goals have you set and achieved that involved **sacrifice**?

What are things that you are proud of that others haven't achieved?

What do others (*parents, friends, community*) say that you have achieved, or done well? *Ask them.*

Anecdotes

What other situations or events caused you to make **sacrifices** and **grow** in a meaningful way? List 4 of them here with a short explanation why each could make for a good essay anecdote.

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

Inspiration

What teacher has made a major difference in your academic and personal **growth**?

What coach/mentor has made a major difference in your personal **growth**?

What mentor has made **sacrifices** to make a difference in your life? *Ask some.*

My Future

How would you like to eventually see your academic success benefit others?

What character traits or moral values are important to you? What **sacrifices** must be made to retain them?

When/How have you already begun living out your future in the past/present? List specific moments:

Others

What specific sports, clubs, or hobbies have made a difference in forming who you are today?

What aspects of this sport/club are most valuable to you, and how could you share them with others?

How did this sport/club cause you to start making **sacrifices** and **grow** into the person you are today?



Finding Your Anecdotes (page 2)

Identify specific areas of your life – YOUR STORY – where these storytelling elements happened.

Goals

Identify the most important **goals** in your life. Consider categorizing them:

Academic:

Social:

Personal:

Spiritual / Other:

In each category, circle 1 goal. For now, this will be the 1 you focus on. If you use too many, your story won't be focused and will confuse your reader.

Problem

Identify 2—3 Obstacles you've overcome, including at least one personal Flaw in your character. *Do not simply write mistakes you've made.* Connect mistakes to deeper truths about who you are and what you value. An example could be:

"I broke a golf club during a match." -----> "I struggle with perfectionism, and have learned that I need self-discipline."

Do not directly identify your character flaws directly in your essays. But you must know them in order to communicate the message of your **growth**. You may need to ask for help in this area!

Choices

Identify specific **choices** you've made to overcome your **flaws** and pursue your **goals**. Try to identify the specific time/place/moment of the choice, as this makes for the best storytelling material.

Sacrifice

Identify what you, and others, have had to **sacrifice** in order for your **goals** to be attainable. Be as specific as possible. Common things that we sacrifice are: Time, Comfort, Money, Our Own Goals, Relationships.

Growth

In short, succinct phrases, try to summarize how you've grown, using the following structure. Write at least 3.

"I used to be _____, but now I'm _____."

"I used to be _____, but now I'm _____."

"I used to be _____, but now I'm _____."



Finding YOUR Anecdote (page 3)

Print as many of these as you need!!!

It's time to identify your ideal anecdotes. Keep in mind – these will need to be adjusted depending on the scholarship requirements, the awarding body, and the prompt.

All 5 storytelling elements need to work in harmony:

You have a **GOAL:** _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

that is blocked by your **OBSTACLE/FLAW:** _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

So you (or your mentor) makes a **CHOICE:** _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

and you make **SACRIFICES:** _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

resulting in your **GROWTH / CHANGE:** _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

Supporting Detail: _____

All of this has to tell a focused, powerful story that satisfies the prompt – AND the reader!

Use this chart to plan your "Perfect Anecdotes," identifying the main "plot points" (Goal, Problem, Choice, Sacrifice, Growth/Change) with supporting details. These supporting details will add texture and flavor to the essay. You will not use all of the details you write here – these are just to help you create an "idea bank" to write from.

