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Jan. 17th: Martin Luther King. *The Man & The Message*

More than 40 years ago, in August 1963, Martin Luther King electrified America with his momentous **'I Have A Dream'** speech, dramatically delivered from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

- His soaring rhetoric demanding racial justice and an integrated society became a mantra for the black community and is as familiar to subsequent generations of Americans as the US Declaration of Independence. His words proved to be a touchstone for understanding the social and political upheaval of the time and gave the nation a vocabulary to

Brief Biography:

In 1954, Martin Luther King became pastor of the Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Always a strong worker for civil rights for members of his race, King was, by this time, a member of the executive committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the leading organization of its kind in the

express what was happening.

The key message in the speech is that all people are created equal and, although not the case in America at the time, King felt it must be the case for the future. He argued passionately and powerfully.

Certainly King's speech was well researched. In preparation he studied the Bible, The Gettysburg Address and the US Declaration of Independence and he alludes to all three in his

address.

Stylistically the speech has been described as a political treatise, a work of poetry, and a masterfully delivered and improvised sermon, bursting with biblical language and imagery. injustice.



IMPORTANT DATES

- Jan 13-at the High School Financial Aid Night
- January 17th. Is MLK Day. School closed.
- Jan 25-28 Midyear & Regents Exams.

nation. He was ready, then, early in December, 1955, to accept the leadership of the first great Negro nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States, the bus boycott . The boycott lasted 382 days. On December 21, 1956, after the Supreme Court of the United States had declared unconstitu-

tional the laws requiring segregation on buses, Negroes and whites rode the buses as equals. During these days of boycott, King was arrested, his home was bombed, he was subjected to personal abuse, but at the same time he emerged as a Negro leader of the first rank.

6 TIPS FOR WRITING THE COMMON ESSAY

THE FIRST STEP TO WRITING A STELLAR personal essay on your college application is to understand your options. Below is a discussion of the six essay options from the Common Application.

Option #1. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you. Note the key word here: evaluate. You aren't just describing something; the best essays will explore the complexity of the issue. When you examine the "impact on you," you need to show the depth of your critical thinking abilities. Introspection, self-awareness and self-analysis are all important here. And be careful with essays about the winning touchdown or tie-breaking goal. These sometimes have an off-putting "look how great I am" tone and very little self-evaluation.

Option #2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you. Be careful to keep the "importance to you" at the heart of your essay. It's easy to get off track with this essay topic and start ranting about global warming. The admissions folks want to discover your character, passions and abilities in the essay; they want more than a political lecture.

Option #3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and analyze that influence. And handle a "hero" essay with care. You have probably seen a lot of essays talking about what a great role model Mom or Dad or Sis is.

Also realize that the "influence" of this person doesn't need to be positive.



Option #4. Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence. What makes it so powerful and influential?

DON'T EQUATE "TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE" WITH A LICENSE TO WRITE A COMEDY

Option #5. A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in

a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you. Realize that this question defines "diversity" in broad terms. It's not specifically about race or ethnicity (although it can be). Ideally, the admissions folks want every student they admit to contribute to the richness and breadth of the campus community. How do you contribute?

Option #6. Topic of your choice. Sometimes you have a story to share that doesn't quite fit into any of the options above. However, the first five topics are broad with a lot of flexibility, so make sure your topic really can't be identified with one of them. Also, don't equate "topic of your choice" with a license to write a comedy routine or poem (you can submit such things via the "Additional Info" option). Essays written for this prompt still need to have substance and tell your reader something about you.

One Man's Tough Choices...

Last week, Keith Fitzhugh had a choice. He could get a job playing for the New York Jets—or, he could keep his job as a train conductor for the Norfolk Southern Railroad.

Fitzhugh surprised everyone. He chose to stick with the railroad.

The Jets called Fitzhugh on Monday. Both starting safeties on the team had been injured, so the team wanted to hire him as a replacement for the rest of the season.

Fitzhugh played briefly for New York as well as the Baltimore Ravens. But he never quite worked out as an NFL player. Still, he played well enough to remain on the team's list of replacements that the Jets call when there's an emergency.

The former football player supports his aging parents in Georgia with the money he earns from Norfolk Southern. The Jets position would not likely have lasted longer than two months.

When the Jets did call, Fitzhugh had to make a fast decision. Fearing he would lose his Norfolk Southern job, he said no.

Since then, Fitzhugh found that the railroad would have allowed him to take time off to play in the NFL. But he said he has no regrets about his choice. He genuinely loves working with trains. He also feels that taking care of his parents is his main job, so he wants a steady job to make sure he can support them.



FORMER NEW YORK JETS PLAYER DECIDES TO STICK WITH HIS STEADY JOB AND SUPPORT HIS FAMILY RATHER THAN REJOIN THE TEAM

People say I may have had a chance to play in the Super Bowl," Fitzhugh said. "And I tell them—hey, you only got one mom and dad!"

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Deferred? What Next?

Steps to Take if Your College Admissions Application is Deferred

Many students who applied to college Early Decision or Early Action are finding that they've been neither accepted nor rejected, but deferred. If you find yourself in this limbo, here are some guidelines for how to proceed.

1. Don't Panic

Most likely, if you've been deferred your credentials are in the ballpark for getting accepted. If they weren't, you'd be rejected. However, your application wasn't so far above average that the college wanted to give up a spot in the entering class until they could compare you to the full applicant pool.

2. Find Out Why You Were Deferred

Unless the college asks you not to do so, give the admissions office a call and try to find out why you were deferred. Be polite and positive when making this call. Try to convey your enthusiasm for the college, and see if there were particular weaknesses in your application that you might be able to address.

3. Update Your Information

Chances are the college will ask for your midyear grades. If you were deferred because of a marginal GPA, the college will want to see that your grades are on an upward trend. Also, think about other information that might be worth sending:

- **New and improved SAT or ACT scores**
- **Membership in a new extracurricular activity**
- **A new leadership position in a group or team**
- **A new honor or award**

4. Send a New Letter of Recommendation

Is there someone who knows you well who can really promote you effectively? If so, an additional letter of recommendation might be a good idea. Ideally, this letter should talk about the specific personal qualities that make you an ideal match for the particular college that has deferred you.

5. Send Supplemental Materials

Many applications, including the Common Application, provide the opportunity for sending in supplemental

materials. You don't want to overwhelm the admissions office, but you should feel free to send in materials that will show the full breadth of what you can contribute to the campus community.

6. Be Polite

As you try to get out of deferral limbo, you're likely to correspond with the admissions office several times. Try to keep your frustration, disappointment and anger in check. Be polite & positive. Admissions officers are remarkably busy this time of year, and their time is limited. Thank them for any time they give you. Also, make sure your correspondence doesn't become pesky or harassing.

7. Have a Back-Up

While many deferred students do get accepted during regular admissions, many do not. You should do all you can to get into your top choice school, but you should also be realistic. Make sure you have applied to a range of reach, match and safety colleges so that you will have other options should you get a rejection letter from your first choice.