

## TIPS ON WRITING YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

- Find two people to read your essay. If you don't, your essay will have mistakes. Guaranteed.
- Speak to experiences that made you want to go into teaching. What did you learn? What skills did you develop? How do they relate to good teaching? That you are an avid runner or enjoy spending time with your friends is not relevant.
- Related to #2: Reference positive experiences. This is not the context to bash a teacher you had in elementary school no matter how awful he/she might have been.
  - (FYI: Don't end sentences with a helping verb.)
- The reader will not love your use of "love" by its third or fourth mention in a paragraph. Vary your word choice.
- A separate title page is a waste of time and paper. Put your name and title at the top of the first page of the essay. There is no need to state your name within your essay. Remember, your essay is part of a packet that includes pages of background info. By the time we get to your essay, we already know a lot about you, name and major at the top of the list.
- An essay consisting of a single paragraph is a draft, and an early one at that.
  - The comma after "draft" is grammatically incorrect. I used it for effect. Stick to grammatically correct in your essay.
- All non-fiction writing is argumentative. With that in mind, your body paragraphs should consist of a main idea (stated in a topic sentence) supported by evidence (see #2) and explanation (again, #2). At least 50% of each paragraph should consist of you explaining or elaborating on how the evidence supports the main idea. Keep simple narration to a minimum.
- Liberal use of adverbs and adjectives do not good writing make. When it comes to language, less is more. Writing is about nouns and verbs. Also, use active voice: *I taught the students*; not passive voice: *The students were taught by me*.
- Writing is also about sentence structure. They should be varied, and correct. Nothing derails a reader's attention like a run on or fragmented sentence.
- Do not use exclamation points!
- Be sure to weave the following thoughts into your autobiography:
  - Why you decided to become a teacher
  - Your passion for children, teaching, and learning
  - Your philosophy of education - your goals and beliefs as a teacher
  - Significant educational experiences
  - Your experiences working with children
- This is your chance to tell your story. It is a way to personally introduce who you are to the administration and cooperating teachers. Sell yourself to them. Make them want you as a teacher in their schools.