

Samples of Edited Essays by José N. Ireta, Private College Counselor

FIRST ROUGH DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (UNEDITED) - #1

A birthmark that covers about a quarter of your face can be quite unappealing . Hence, I received the nickname Two-Face in middle school. I received the name how we look matters a lot, and for someone who isn't considered good-looking like me,, I experience a lot of challenges to this day. My looks made me introverted, highly sensitive , and reserved. I have found it difficult to communicate with others because I am afraid of people judging me when they look at me. Every time I go out and talk with others, I just want to run back to my room and cower in the corner where no one could see my face. This hurts immensely. I am unable to collaborate with others, ask questions during class, and make friends with confidence OR without doubt OR without insecurity. My grades my freshman and sophomore year weren't as good as they should've been because of my fear of interacting with others and seeking help from my teachers.

However, after my sophomore year, I knew I needed to change. I couldn't let my insecurities affect my academic potential my junior year . Yet, I was reluctant to talk about any problems with others for fear of being judged and seen as weak; so I handled my issues alone. That's when I chose to accept who I was and be the best I can be in other qualities, such as kindness and intellect in order to make more friends. I hoped that being seen as smart and caring I would become more social and liked by others. I even began to work out to make the rest of my body appear appealing.

I'm still very self-conscious about my overall image. However, I'm not as hesitant to talk with people and I work harder to be smarter and kinder in every way possible. Working out has also made me feel good about my body; I am also stronger. This change in mentality has helped me be less concerned about being judged and thus more likely to seek assistance from teachers. I also now collaborate with my classmates with a positive self-image. ,

As one who will hopefully study biology, I have realized that my birthmark is a genetic mutation, and while it can be superficially covered up, it will always be there. I've learned that some things can't be changed and must be accepted. In this manner, we can improve in things that matter more and also become better people.

FINAL DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (EDITED) - #1

I received the nickname Two-Face in middle school because of the birthmark on my face, which made me introverted and reserved. I found it difficult to communicate with others because of my fear of being judged. Every time I went out and talked with others, I'd become overwhelmed with anxiety; I would want to run back to my room and cower in the corner where no one could see my face. At school, I was reluctant to ask questions, collaborate, and study with others, limiting my academic potential.

However, after the tenth grade, when my GPA was at its lowest, I decided I couldn't let my insecurities affect my academics. I was reluctant to discuss my problems with others, so I handled my issues alone. I was the kind of person who didn't want to talk with others to avoid being vulnerable, judged, and seen as weak. That's when I chose to accept who I was and strengthen traits like kindness and intellect. I hoped that if people saw me as smart and caring, I'd be liked by others, helping me become more social. I even began to work out and bike more to make me fitter and healthier so I could feel much better about myself.

The conquering of my fears and anxiety allowed me to engage with teachers and classmates and improve my grades, ultimately raising my GPA my junior year. Working out and biking have boosted my self-esteem as I feel stronger and prouder of my body. I am no longer self-conscious of my image, I love working with others and trying new things, and I strive towards excellence. Most importantly, I've learned to care about myself while caring for others.

Though my birthmark can be covered up in the future, it will always be an important factor in defining who I am today. I've learned that it's better not to change some features, but rather embrace them. In doing so, I have improved my personality and work habits, and I look forward to continuing to become a more complete person.

FIRST ROUGH DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (UNEDITED) - #2

During the summer following my sophomore year, I asked to be the primary caretaker for my grandfather, who suffered from Type 1 diabetes, for about a month. I had never been close with my grandfather so by caring for him, I hoped to would spend time with him and deepen our relationship. My relatives also believed that if an adolescent cared for an elder, they would lead a prosperous life. My daily responsibilities included administering insulin into my grandfather daily and ensuring my grandfather maintained a healthy diet, exercised, and remained stress-free. As his caretaker, I learned more about the biology behind diabetes and how to care for patients with this disease, which stimulated my passion for biology and health science, and defining unknowingly setting a course for my future.

Though my grandfather passed away, my time with him led me to seek out more purposeful opportunities; I found Aspiring Scholars Directed Research Program (ASDRP), a nonprofit, private research organization, where I was matched with Dr. Kavita Gandhi, a specialist in endocrinology. I felt so lucky. We focused on developing therapies with translational impact, from bench to clinic, for diabetics. I felt extremely lucky to find this perfect match. .

We extracted and synthesized the hypoglycemic agents, charantin and alpha-momorcharin, found in *Momordica Charantia*, aka bitter melon, and examined and compared the efficacies of the extracts, synthesized molecules, and diabetic drugs on the lifespan of *C. elegans* (roundworms) through *in vivo* testing.

My objective was to find an extraction method to optimize the amount of compound we extracted from the fruits' seeds and to design a synthesis method to create our hypoglycemic agents. After weeks of scrutinizing papers and fruitless attempts to contact authors, I finally compiled a procedure for extraction and synthesis. Despite the weeks of frustration and exhaustion, I was able to successfully execute the extraction and synthesis and successfully and enjoyably gain valuable research experience.

The research project increased my passion and love for biology and has led me to pursue a major in biology. to this point to apply as a biology major. It's intriguing to me that no cures exist for a multitude of diseases, and since many people have been impacted by these diseases, like my grandfather, I hope to continue to conduct research at a UC campus to help find cures and more successful treatments, preparing me for and prepare myself for a medical careerthe medical field.

FINAL DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (EDITED) - #2

When my grandfather passed away from diabetes, I was a sophomore enrolled in AP Biology. His passing made me ponder the lack of cures for diseases like diabetes as I read about the endocrine system. Therefore, I sought out purposeful opportunities to research these diseases, learn more about the fascinating human body, and satisfy my curiosity for science. I applied and was selected as a research student for ASDRP, Aspiring Scholars Directed Research Program. There, I worked with Dr. Gandhi, a specialist in internal medicine, and led a team of eight students for the 12-week program. I felt fortunate to have had an advisor from whom I could glean knowledge, especially about diabetes.

Our purpose was to test the effects of natural agents from bitter melon on diabetic roundworms. My objectives were to find methods to retrieve and create our compounds. I was initially overwhelmed as I lacked research experience; nevertheless, I conscientiously scrutinized numerous research papers. After three weeks, I compiled our procedures for extraction and synthesis by piecing together information from the research papers. However, our experiment didn't work out as expected. Though discouraged, I refused to quit until we successfully obtained sufficient agents for testing. I troubleshot with my colleagues, and we were able to acquire the necessary amount of agents for testing through the new methods we created together.

After weeks of frustration and exhaustion, I was elated with the completion of our project. I gained a fondness and appreciation for research. My failures taught me new traits, such as persevering through mental barriers and not letting my feelings dictate my actions, which will help me tackle rigorous college coursework. Had it not been for my grandfather, I may have never conducted this research project that increased my love for biology. I also tutor students in the subject, and I received a perfect score on the SAT Biology exam, leading me to apply as a biology major and potentially attend medical school. I long to conduct biological research at a UC campus to continue studying the subject that fascinates me.

FIRST ROUGH DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (UNEDITED) - #3

For me, learning to embrace my heritage took a long time. It is one of the most profound and beloved thing in my life, but there have been many struggles along the way. When I was in elementary school, it was as if the world around me was telling me not to love myself or my culture. When I looked in the mirror, my skin was too dark. When someone asked me what my name was, it was too hard to pronounce. When someone asked me what I did that weekend, I didn't have the courage to tell them I went to the temple. I lied and said that I went to the park.

My mother enrolled me in Hinduism classes when I was in the fifth grade. I refused to go but when my mother pushed me along, all I could do was pretend it did not exist; my eyes were bloodshot from the tears I cried after each class for weeks.

Yet, even through my sadness, I was captivated by the stories, which was and still is the only thing I can sit through any time of the day, no matter for how long. Lucky for me, Hinduism is filled with stories; stories that teach values, morals, and history. Throughout the years, Hinduism spun a web into my life. It helped me with my story.

Hinduism is now an important factor in my life that I long to give back to it. I donate at temples and holy days. Yet my most important role is that of an instructor at Chinmaya Mission, the organization that taught me to understand and cherish Hinduism.

As an instructor at the organization, I teach 7 to 9 year olds, with the help of another teacher. There are 30 children in the classroom, but show a variety of culture in a classroom that is meant to teach one religion.

Though diverse linguistically, all of my students have a commonality. They are Westernized, and don't always understand the variances of Eastern culture. It's my job, as someone who understands these children's minds more than any adult, to bridge the values of the East with the culture they have grown up with in the West. These children are the future of my culture and religion, so I want them to learn in the most comprehensive and charming method possible. I create games and activities, to encourage these kids to return to class each week. Every week, I spend 3 to 4 hours building a lesson plan of activities that relate to the day's story. I pour my soul into it, as I want them to enjoy it as much as possible.

It is interesting that my students help me learn more about my culture than the teachers who taught me. The questions they ask, and how they apply it to their world today amazes me. These children trust us, as their teachers, but never choose to follow the Hindu stories and values blindly.

From the beginning, Chinmaya Mission has taught me to embrace my culture but after I began to teach at the organization, I learned to be proud of my culture.

FINAL DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (EDITED) - #3

It took time to embrace my heritage. It is one of the most profound and beloved aspects of my life, but there have been many struggles along the way. In elementary school, when I looked at myself in the mirror, I felt that my skin was too dark, my name was hard to pronounce, and my religion was something that was abnormal. I often felt as if I couldn't love myself or my culture. My mother enrolled me in Hinduism classes when I was in the fifth grade. I refused to go, but when my mother pushed me along, all I could do was pretend it did not exist; my eyes were bloodshot from the tears I cried after each class for weeks.

Yet, even through my sadness, I was captivated by the stories, which was and still is the only thing I can sit through any time of the day, no matter for how long. Hinduism is filled with stories; stories that teach values, morals, and history, my story. Hinduism is now an important factor in my life that I long to give back to it. I donate at temples and holy days. Yet my most important role is that of an instructor. I teach 7 to 9 year olds. My students are Westernized, and don't always understand the variances of Eastern culture. It's my job, as someone who understands these kids' minds more than any adult, to bridge the values of the East with their knowledge of the West.

I want the future generation of my culture to learn significantly, so I develop games and projects. I spend 3 to 4 hours weekly creating activities to relate to stories. I put as much effort as I can so that the following week, they'll ask their parents to return. My students help me learn about my culture. The questions they ask, and how they apply to the world today, amazes me. These children trust me, but never choose to follow the Hindu stories blindly. Hinduism taught me to embrace my culture, but after I began to teach, it taught me to be proud of my culture.

FIRST ROUGH DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (UNEDITED) - #4

"Oh no! You're sick!" I would yell as I take off my plastic stethoscope and jab my toy syringe into my mom's arm. After visiting our family doctor, I would repeat the procedures on my parents, inspiring me to become a doctor in the future.

Though I've wanted to be a doctor for most of my life, I never knew the reality of a doctor's life in the hospital, that is until I shadowed a doctor. . While I visited my grandparents in India for two months, my grandparents' doctor, Dr. Krishna Hari, allowed me to shadow him at Padma Medical. After two weeks, I gained insight into the true nature of a pediatrician.

I was unable to shadow back home due to age restrictions so I knew I had to take advantage of this opportunity. It proved to be extremely invaluable and strengthened my passion to pursue a medical career. While shadowing Dr. Hari, I observed how he communicated with patients, while he was diagnosing and treating them., I immediately noticed his flawless bedside manner, especially his way of making patients feel welcomed and exuding trust and care. t. **From this, I understood that clear communication and exemplary behavior** are crucial in fostering healthy doctor-patient relationships.

Along with the bedside etiquette, I studied, watched, observed, how efficiently and effortlessly Dr. Hari evaluated, diagnosed, and treated patients. He also conducted tests, and examined imaging with the same fervor/passion. To maximize the use of my time, I also shadowed his staff at the hospital while he filled out paperwork. Additionally, at the end of each day I asked a myriad of questions on how to prepare myself for medical school as an undergraduate.

I aspire to pursue a medical career and help restore patient's health so they can maintain their normal lives. I know I can begin now by shedding my introversion. By seizing the opportunity to shadow Dr. Hari, I acquired beneficial knowledge **on the journey and life of a doctor**, strengthening my decision to enter the medical field.

FINAL DRAFT OF A STUDENT'S ESSAY (EDITED) - #4

It wasn't until I fixed my first 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle that I found my love for puzzles. I found them to be relaxing and demanding at the same time, forcing me to think and focus. Though the journey of fixing a puzzle is difficult, the result is always extraordinary. The puzzles that I find the most fascinating, however, are medical ones: piecing together symptoms as a doctor to formulate the diagnosis, the finished puzzle. I've longed to be a doctor my entire life, but I never knew the reality of a doctor's life in the hospital until I shadowed one. While visiting my grandparents in India, their doctor, Dr. Hari, allowed me to shadow him at Padma Medical, a small neighborhood clinic. I knew I had to take advantage of this opportunity, and it proved to be extremely invaluable and strengthened my passion to pursue a medical career.

While shadowing Dr. Hari, I noticed his flawless bedside manner, which led me to understand that clear communication and exemplary behavior are crucial in fostering healthy doctor-patient relationships. Additionally, I watched how efficiently and effortlessly Dr. Hari evaluated, diagnosed, and treated patients. At the end of each day, I asked a myriad questions on how to prepare myself for medical school and what to expect as a doctor; I learned that the journey to becoming a doctor was arduous but rewarding and fulfilling. I was also tasked with keeping patients' company while they waited to receive their medication. As an introvert, I was extremely nervous and speechless at first, but through those conversations, I improved as a conversationalist and learned that some things cannot be taught; you can only learn by doing and seeing, including how to be a doctor.

Towards the end, Dr. Hari allowed me to use a stethoscope to listen to patients' internal organs and use a penlight to assess pupil response and look into patients' mouths and throats. I've always found the human body to be a puzzle that can never be fixed, and it was breathtaking to observe and learn about the pieces of the human body while carrying out simple tests to evaluate patients.

The shadowing experience ended up being extremely rewarding, and I was proud to have taken advantage of this educational opportunity. Not only did I learn what it's like to be a doctor, I learned more about anatomy and physiology and improved my conversational skills. By attending a UC, I hope to major in biology to learn more about the puzzling human body and pursue a medical career.