

ENG IV: The College Application Essay-“First Lines” Activity

Purpose:

Mentor texts often inspire us to think about our own writing in new ways. By thinking about the choices another writer takes, we often find inspiration for our own compositions. These “First Lines” will hopefully ignite some great first lines of our own as we start our personal essay writing!

Objective:

Students will imagine the anecdotes that pair with these mentor “first lines” and then pair these stories with an appropriate Common App Essay Question and matching metaphor.

Steps:

1. **Read** all of the “First Lines” and **select 2** that really pique your curiosity.
2. For each “First Line,” **imagine a possible story** that you could make from that line.
3. **Select which Common App Essay Question** would be a good fit for this anecdote (note that several questions may apply, but you pick the one that you like the best)
4. **Create and record the metaphor** that would then be a good “answer” for the question you chose.

*****Please note that you are NOT writing the whole story NOR the essay body (just a brief summary of what MIGHT be in the anecdote and its matching life metaphor)!*****

Example (“The Blueberry Essay” discussed in class is the inspiration):

First Line:

The steady drone of the midges in my ears matched my mood: annoyed, frustrated, and ready to give up.

Possible Anecdote (You must use your imagination: What might the rest of the story be):

A girl is struggling to find enough blueberries to fill her quota on a hot and humid day at her summer job. She can't see any more blueberries on the bush she's picking and is ready to give up. However, taking a step to the other side of the bush, she realizes that she just needed to move a bit to find all the berries hidden from her first position.

Possible Common App Essay Question (note that key words are highlighted here):

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

Possible Connecting Metaphor (Life Lesson) that answers the essay question:

The writer composed an essay that connected her movement to the other side of the bush and then finding more blueberries to how she learned that in life, when faced with obstacles, a change in perspective often allows you to discover new solutions.

1.) First Line (transcribe here):

- Possible Anecdote (use your imagination to **create the story**):

This is a story about/that tells:

- Possible Common App Essay Question (**circle or underline** the key words):

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- Possible Connecting Metaphor (*Life Lesson*) that **answers the essay question**:

2.) First Line (transcribe here):

- Possible Anecdote (use your imagination to **create the story**):

This is a story about/that tells:

- Possible Common App Essay Question (**circle or underline** the key words):

- Possible Connecting Metaphor (*Life Lesson*) that **answers the essay question**:
