

Activities 3 & 4 from *CSU Expository* “WHAT’S NEXT? THINKING ABOUT LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL”

Exploring Key Concepts/ Adjectives that describe you

Words are more than lists to memorize for a test; they are concepts, the ideas that allow us to distinguish ourselves from one another. Some of us feel “courageous,” others feel “cautious,” and yet others may feel “indifferent” or “unconcerned.” The task here is (1) to find the words that best match ideas about who you think you are at this stage of your life; and (2) to begin to unpack these words for the information they provide about your attitudes and assumptions, skills and abilities, plans and goals. The more language you have to describe yourself and what you are bringing to the next stage of your life, the more opportunities you have to represent yourself accurately.

What follows is a rather brief list of words, certainly not a comprehensive list, that will help you find words that name the values and abilities you are bringing to the next stage of your life.

Directions:

- 1. Look through the list, and choose 20 words that best fit your sense of self. Write them down on a separate sheet of paper.**
- 2. Now rank your 20 words from most important to least important in describing who you are right now.**

absent-minded
self-aware
inarticulate
light hearted
active
self-promoter
indispensible
low self esteem
adventurous
self-reliant
influential
mindful
analytical
self-starter
inquisitive
motivated
angry
selfish
intellectual
optimistic
appreciative
serious
kind

organized
artistic
social person
outgoing
book smart
shy person
street smart
passionate
complicated
small steps
stressed
patient
cool
curious
dependable
determined
developed
devoted
disciplined
respectful
responsible
scientific
enterprising

enthusiastic
family person
fearful
goal-setter
habitual
happy
helpful
hungry
impatient
talkative
trustworthy
truthful
underachiever
valiant
warrior
wishful
worrier
leader
persuasive
pessimistic
positive self-esteem
procrastinator
realistic

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*****Turn paper over for next step*****

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Making Predictions and Asking Questions:

After gathering vocabulary, take some time to write about your word choices. This activity should help you consider the significance of the words you chose by asking questions about them as key concepts and then making predictions about what you will need to do to best represent yourself in your letter of introduction or your application essay:

- Why did you rank them as you did?
- What do your words tell you about your opinion of yourself in terms of readiness for work or college?
- What would someone who knows you well think of the words you chose?
- Based on your analysis of your key concepts, predict what you will need to learn more about to achieve your goals.
- Predict how well your key concepts will work for you as you move into the next stage of your life. For example, if one of your words is “stubborn,” write about how that concept may work for you or against you as you consider your future. The more you reflect on the significance of the words you choose to identify yourself, the more information you will have as you build your final portfolio.

On your own:

After school, discuss your words with someone you trust, and ask them about the words you have chosen. As they talk about your words, take note of their comments by letting them talk for a while and then writing down the gist of what they say. So if someone says that your selection of “trustworthy” as a key word is good, but that there are times that you may not be so trustworthy, don’t argue—just listen. Then write down the gist of their point—what they are saying, not what you are thinking.

Your job is to try to capture their thinking and extend your understanding of the word you have selected as representing your values, beliefs, or goals. This information may become a useful chunk of writing for your final letter or essay.

Remember: It is difficult to represent yourself well if you don’t have a fairly solid sense of who you are or what you believe about yourself.

Capture at least three reactions from what someone else said about your words, and bring them next class.

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