

Mind Mapping

- **Draw a Circle in the Center of Your Page**

In this circle put an activity, talent, volunteer, job, or extra-curricular experience, a future goal, a passion, interest, or unique skill, strength, hobby, etc. There is no wrong answer. It's about you!

- **Ask Questions About What You Placed in Your Center Circle**

- *Do you volunteer with this? If so, how long? Tell me more about that.*
- *Why is it important to you?*
- *When did this start?*
- *Did someone influence this in your life?*
- *Tell more about the time you spend thinking, doing, teaching, learning about your center circle.*
- *Does this idea play any role in your future goals, study, plans?*
- *What would your family, friends, teachers, others say about you in relation to this theme?*
- *What have you learned about yourself from this experience, talent, hobby, skill...?*
- *Have you studied, practiced, worked at becoming better at something?*
- *Where would you be found doing this?*
- *What adjectives describe anything about how this makes you feel?*

- **Your Mind Map May Take Any Form**

And ideas can lead to other ideas. After you have played with your map for a bit take a look at it. What ideas stand out to you as interesting, unique, part of your story? Are there words or a story that catch your attention? Highlight these and try writing a first paragraph for your personal statement from one of these ideas. Use the mind map to build your supporting paragraphs. Have fun with this.

- **You May Need to Try Several Mind Maps**

Put them away for a few days and then come back to them. Which one has stayed with you as being interesting and compelling? Work on developing these ideas into a full essay draft, using descriptive, engaging language to tell the reader a "slice" of a story about who you are, what you care about, how you address challenges, find joy, interact with others, and plan for your future. This is your story and your voice! You are the expert. Enjoy the process.