

## 黄教授 2016 年指导的大学申请作文之一

每年，我会依据学生的背景指导他 / 她们撰写大学申请作文。我和学生及家长一起讨论，出主意，并帮助他 / 她们修改，直到我满意为止。由于我不断的启发，鼓励，和引导及毫不留情的否定和砍杀，学生们在过程中可能会有挫折感，但他 / 她们的作文最终会取得原本不可能的提升，最终得以进入他 / 她们的梦校。2017 年的结果（其中有些学生被交叉录取）：

8 个学生被加州大学伯克利录取

4 个学生被哈佛大学录取

3 个学生被耶鲁大学录取

3 个学生被麻省理工学院录取

3 个学生被杜克大学录取

2 个学生被斯坦福大学录取

2 个学生被普林斯顿大学录取

2 个学生被哥伦比亚大学录取

1 个学生被芝加哥大学录取

1 个学生被加州理工学院录取

( [还有更多.....](#) )

下面的这篇作文是 2016 年我辅导过的最棒的 Common App 作文之一。这个孩子来自湖南，是体制内高中的学生。换句话说，他是该准备高考的。学校里没有 AP 课。大家在学习上竞争激烈。在这种环境里长大，不知这个学生是如何培养出来那么大的爱心。他自愿把笔记给别的孩子分享，三个月内自学 7 门 AP 课，后来全考到 4 分或 5 分，获得 AP Scholar Distinguished 奖。他喜欢看德国足球赛，但不喜欢中国的体育解说员的解说。为了看懂德国电视台的解说，他自学德语，居然学到能基本听懂。一个偶然的时机，他的妈妈读到我写的文章《[美国名校申请：一个培养与准备的过程](#)》，认准了不可能由别人来帮他的儿子申请大学。当老师的都惜才。我看到了孩子是一块璞玉，有一天一定会闪闪发光，所以我爽快地答应了，尽管他的 SAT 成绩不是最好，尽管他的英文写作能力真的不敢恭维。下面的这篇 Common App essay 写的是孩子一个极其独特而且卓有成就的社区服务的经历。征得作者同意，我在此给大家分享。先请看我辅导的大概过程。

这是第一稿。他自己的主意。我没有参与头脑风暴 (brainstorm) 。

It was a lazy morning of Sunday and I was planning to relax the whole day after week long running to school, tuition, piano learning, etc. While I was on my study table posing to study my subject but relax was the feel that was overlapping on study efforts. While I was struggling to decide if I should relax or study, the previous day scene of an unexpected question that was asked by Head Teacher crossed. He had asked whether I would want to take the College Entrance Examination and study in China or pursue my study in USA.

I could see the hope in the eyes of my head teacher that he believes I could easily get into top universities in China and bring honor to my high school. Cramming education, however, has never been on the list even then without batting my eye lid I replied 'USA'. My head teacher eyed popped out in surprise on my so quick reply because he knows that I not that so quick decision maker.

While looking at my head teacher, I went into flash back and I recalled it was in a soccer league going on and my team was trailing. As the coach, I wanted substitution. I was looking around and then I saw Lee, a benchwarmer, waved his hand. He had been on the bench for almost half a year now and certainly looking for a chance. For the team, he would be my last choice. For him, however, this would be an amazing opportunity. I took the latter option and lost the game. Then comes the other episode of PE.

Last month in a PE class, I was leading a long distance running as the coach assistant. There came down the smog, a bad time for outdoor activity. Since PE teacher was not in the field, I took a call and advised my class to stay in. But I paid heavily for this decision since I received revocation of coach assistant position.

These incidents forced me to introspect on my rationale of decision making. I wonder who it is endows me with the authority to make decisions. I wonder if I am using it properly. I wonder whether I am making the right decision.

Algebra, for a lot of times, advises me on it. Known conditions are introduced into the formula, helping me reach the result and get to the X factor. Meanwhile, statistics and probability theory are applied to evaluate my results. It could be hard to say whether a decision is right or wrong. Probability theory, fortunately, calculates the expected utility and helps me be rational.

In boiling water, carrot chooses to give in and gets softer while egg takes a different option, it dances to the beat of water and is built stronger and harder. Coffee figures out the third way, it blends in, diffuses with water and creates

something new. In life we are facing different choices as well. What matters is answering to our own decisions and getting wiser each time.

我问孩子：“你把这叫作文吗？”孩子愣愣地看着我。我知道他心里在流泪。我说：“宁愿你的作文给我枪毙掉，也不要你的申请给大学枪毙掉。”

这篇作文我连一个字都没有动。于是我们开始找主意。他提起了他处理医疗垃圾的活动。“什么？”我眼睛一下就亮了。我们长谈。他写出了下面的第二稿。

第二稿。为了大家阅读方便，我把我的修改都还原了，只剩下我的评语。

“Boom...” there goes an explosion.

“Mum, um... I am sorry, we might need a new tub.”

Every once in a while, my bathroom needs refurbishment. With an array of bottles, containers and instruments, my bathroom is my mini lab where I experiment on electromagnetism, chemical elements and reactions. I am being very careful certainly but sometimes I can't hold the urge of wanting to see what might happen when things done differently.

“Be careful!” That's my mum. Every time she heard my friends and I giggled in our lab – the bathroom, she knew something unconventional was cooked up and something was about to happen. What followed were usually cleaning-ups and, till now, two tubs.

“Position 1, ready. Position 2, ready. Position 3...”

“Boom...” the whole team's excitements turned into ashes in the air.

It's another noteworthy explosion in my life when I was testing an incinerator. It was a Medical Waste Solution Program I have been doing since the summer of 2014. The whole idea of this program started with the time I noticed pupils in Liuyang County (Hunan Province, China) were playing with medical waste. It was a startling but common practice in this county. My team traced back to the source and found that medical wastes there, without any further treatment, were mostly put in the open air where kids had access to. While some, were buried together with domestic waste, having the potential risk of contaminating groundwater. That whole summer my team reached 55 villages and talked to around 1130 people to collect views and information of local clinics and health posts. After many interviews, we learned that it was mostly ignorance and some cases seen as non-concerned with such practices on its consequences. Moreover, they refused to introduce professional treatment and recycling facility for its high price.

The idea of designing an effective incinerator with low-budget was developed. After the summer, I touched on engineering drawing and passed my design on to a manufacturer. There were certainly tons of modifications and test running back and forth. In test, we had setbacks all the time, even an explosion when experimenting with different combustion improver (as I mentioned earlier). Fortunately we didn't suffer any injury but it also prompted me to dig deeper into Chemistry and model designing. I adjusted the size of combustion improver house to keep it within a safe

Comment [EH1]: Do you think all readers can understand what's going on?

Comment [EH2]: Incinerator?

Comment [EH3]: Doing a program?

Comment [EH4]: My team???

Comment [EH5]: Describe precisely what is the problem.

Comment [EH6]: This sentence must be logically connected to the last sentence. What is the effort for?

Comment [EH7]: Please express yourself precisely.

Comment [EH8]: What does this idea have anything to do with you?

Comment [EH9]: Any story in the process?

Comment [EH10]: We?

volume while considering the air supply at the same time. For the furnace shell, I chose steel for the surface, thermal insulation material in the middle layer to reduce heat loss and high temperature refractory material inside. Compared with former equipment in big size, this incinerator did cut down the cost with no compromise in sufficient burning. However, fume pollutant is a problem I am still working on. I hope to find a substance that reacts with and decompose dioxin into something harmless. Using ionization to purify the waste could also be a way. The unanswered question motivates me to obtain more in-depth knowledge through a quality undergraduate science program.

Comment [EH11]: Is it necessary to explain?

Comment [EH12]: ???

Comment [EH13]: What exactly is the problem?

Comment [EH14]: ???

This program also shaped my understanding on addressing environmental problems, which I now believe should be aiming at depressed areas rather than developed ones, hence, the urgent need of developing inexpensive equipment and facilities targeting at those areas. It is fair to say that there is higher possibility for people there to refuse technology that is beneficiary to environment and health but costly to use. With people continuously making such choices, however, global environment suffer as a whole and brings in more health problems, which in turn making the area poorer and more reluctant to spend money on effective but pricy facilities. Solution could lie in adopting appropriate new materials, hence my idea for this project and my choice of study area.

Comment [EH15]: necessary?

Comment [EH16]: ???

Comment [EH17]: ??

Comment [EH18]: ???

With this determination, I set up a science club in campus to experiment ideas and theories since grade 10<sup>th</sup>. Electric resistance of magnets, the safe size of sodium in reaction with water... as strange as it might sound, I delved into those experiments. It is not always exciting or dramatic but the mundanity and failures encountered made me even more determined. Meanwhile, being involved into quality communications with students who have same interest, my Medical Waste Solution Program welcomed more newcomers as a result.

Comment [EH19]: wrong time???

Comment [EH20]: What is the relation of this fragment with the main clause?

Comment [EH21]: ???

Comment [EH22]: Don't introduce any new information at the end of an essay.

Comment [EH23]: ???

Comment [EH24]: about you?????

The values of things I have learned and values I could create are what motivate me forward adventurously.

这篇作文错误百出，惨不忍睹，好多地方让我丈二和尚摸不着头脑，而且文章大大超出字数限制。好在文章表现的东西很难得。于是我帮孩子一稿一稿修改，毕竟英文不是他的强项。我都怀疑我哪来的那么好耐心。爱才心切啊。孩子也契而不舍地与我配合。我们合作得非常愉快。



A group of boys happily squirted water out of their “water pistols” when I was passing a nearby rural area. The scene made my hair stand on end as those used syringes were harmful medical wastes. In my city, I had never played with such a “toy.”

I looked around to trace the source of those syringes. In the backyard of a local clinic, I spotted such syringes and more medical wastes scattered around. Hundreds of flies were humming on syringes and blood-soaked gauzes. I felt as if countless virus and bacteria were creeping into the boys. I saw firsthand the mishandling of these medical wastes and could not pretend that I did not see.

I was not sure if this clinic’s situation was incidental. My further investigation of 10 clinics in five counties showed prevalent irresponsible handling of medical wastes. Although the government required that such wastes be burned, the cost was prohibitive to the clinics. With their total annual budget of ¥ 10,000 (roughly \$1,500), clinics could not afford the transportation of medical wastes to their nearby disposal centers. I was deeply worried. I knew that, in recent years, the spread of lethal diseases such as SARS, H1N1, and Ebola had killed many people. These medical wastes became the sources of diseases in these areas. I felt an urge to do something to minimize such disease sources.

I asked myself, if I were a rural doctor, what I would do, and what if I were a policy maker. I reasoned that, since the major composition of medical wastes in the villages could be burned and disposed locally, coming up with a low-cost incinerator would be a good solution. So I decided to find out how to make one.

One day, on my way home from school, I saw a corn-roasting case in front of my favorite restaurant. I suddenly had a “Moment of Zen.” The incinerator that I would design could look like this, I thought. I started gathering information on the Internet to find out how to design and make an incinerator. It took me some time to complete a design like Louis Pasteur’s Bottle Swan neck duct. I was on my way to realize my design.

After two months of hard work in our garage, I burned in my incinerator prototype plastic bottles and rags as if they were medical wastes. Burning resulted in a mess of ashes and smokes as these wastes were not burned completely. I almost ran out of my brain juice. I concluded that I needed external help, so I posted my project titled “(the name is not disclosed in order to protect the student’s privacy)” on multiple social networking sites, trying to find collaborators. This strategy attracted more than enough students. I picked six from three middle schools into this plan, with additional assistance from two engineers and their factory. I played multiple roles, including organizer, designer, cost controller, external contact, and promoter.

We modified many parts, increased the height, and provided more ventilation from bottom for air-flow. The new incinerator was manufactured and named (device name). The test run was successful in burning plastic bottles and waste rags. When the light blue smoke rose slowly, fiery sparks and black ashes dropping on the base plate (meaning completely burned) made us smile. The first successful model was completed this summer, and it cost only ¥ 380 (\$57), which is affordable for most clinics in rural areas.

To promote this invention, the team designed a website (There was a Web site link here. It is deleted to protect the student’s privacy.) to share our (device name). I also wrote to 31 clinics and organizations in China, U.S.A, U.K., and India. A clinic in Hunan province received our complementary (device name) and has been using it routinely to dispose its medical wastes. Gopalapura Organization, a British NGO, is planning to provide funding for Indians to manufacture our incinerator, whose design is on our Website, for their local clinics.

I saw, I took action, and I achieved, because I cared.

*The author will join University of California, Berkeley in 2017.*

毕加索说过：“Good artists copy; great artists steal.”

凯撒大帝(Julius Caesar)说过：“I came; I saw; I conquered.”

你喜欢那个“偷来”的结尾吗？😎

孩子的努力在 2017 年二月迎来了让他最开心的时刻。他的焚烧炉设计由英国的一家非政府组织 Gopalapura Organization 出资，生产出来给印度的乡村诊所建造使用以解决同样的医疗垃圾问题。英国组织给他的电子邮件展示了他设计的焚烧炉在印度诊所里使用的照片。孩子马上给各个大学追加材料。孩子被十几所优秀的大学录取。他甚至拿到迈阿密大学提供的\$96,000 奖学金。孩子最后选择去伯克利加州大学（全世界获诺贝尔奖最多的排名第四的大学）学习环境科学。这是我在 2016-2017 年度通过大学申请指导创造的将不可能变成可能的三个奇迹之一。这个难得的机会会积极地影响孩子一辈子的成长。孩子目前正在加紧提高英文水平。祝孩子在伯克利加州大学学有所成。

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