

大 葉 大 學
Da Yeh University

WRITING YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY



BRADLEY STEPHENS

International Language Center

ADVANCED LESSON

WRITING YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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<http://www.dyu.edu.tw/6100.php>

What Exactly IS an Autobiography?

The main reason for writing an autobiography is to tell the reader about yourself in a positive way. You are advertising yourself. Your autobiography can be used as a tool to promote yourself and open doors to your future. Worried you won't be able to express yourself well? Not to worry, the following pages will make the writing of an autobiography a simple task.

Why am I writing this now?

The autobiography is an important assignment that will make up 10% of your final grade. Your autobiography will be uploaded to the website of the school which people will be able to see. You will be able to use your autobiography in the future when applying for a job. You will be taught how to continually update your autobiography to keep it fresh.

I Don't Know What To Write About. Sure you do, you just need to start asking yourself what makes you an important or interesting person. What makes you stand out. You can write the autobiography in a way that reflects your personality. Be true to yourself and the writing will be easier. Every autobiography is different because people are different. Make your autobiography special.

One person can have many different autobiographies that serve different functions. The reasons will guide its content. For this assignment you need to determine what goal the autobiography is supposed to serve. Perhaps you thought this: *I want people to know more about me.* Well, it's a start but it's not specific enough. Here is some help.

You are a student of Da Yeh University in your senior year about to graduate. Therefore the goal for this autobiography assignment is to write an autobiography that describes the excellence of your academic career telling the reader all you have accomplished at Da Yeh University.

Contents should include your:

- Life philosophy with quotation
- Life goals and why
- Experiences
- Major and how it relates to your future plans
- Likes and Dislikes
- Campus social life
- Awards, Special Tests, Proficiency Tests, Certifications, Research Papers
- Special Knowledge and how it was acquired (reference a mentor or special teacher)
- What you want to happen next in life.

Let's decide our Audience.

The person reading it will be the audience. It's important to list the people who you want to read your autobiography in your mind while you're writing. Your audience can be more than one person, company or school. Imagine them in front of you. It should read as if you are speaking directly to them. If you want different people to know different things then more than one autobiography is needed. Write down now who you want to read your autobiography.

Who:

Let's gather some information.

Information Gathering—Question Yourself About Your Life. Pick the information that will persuade the reader to give you what you want. The reader should know important information about you. You want the audience to think of you positively. Answer the following questions.

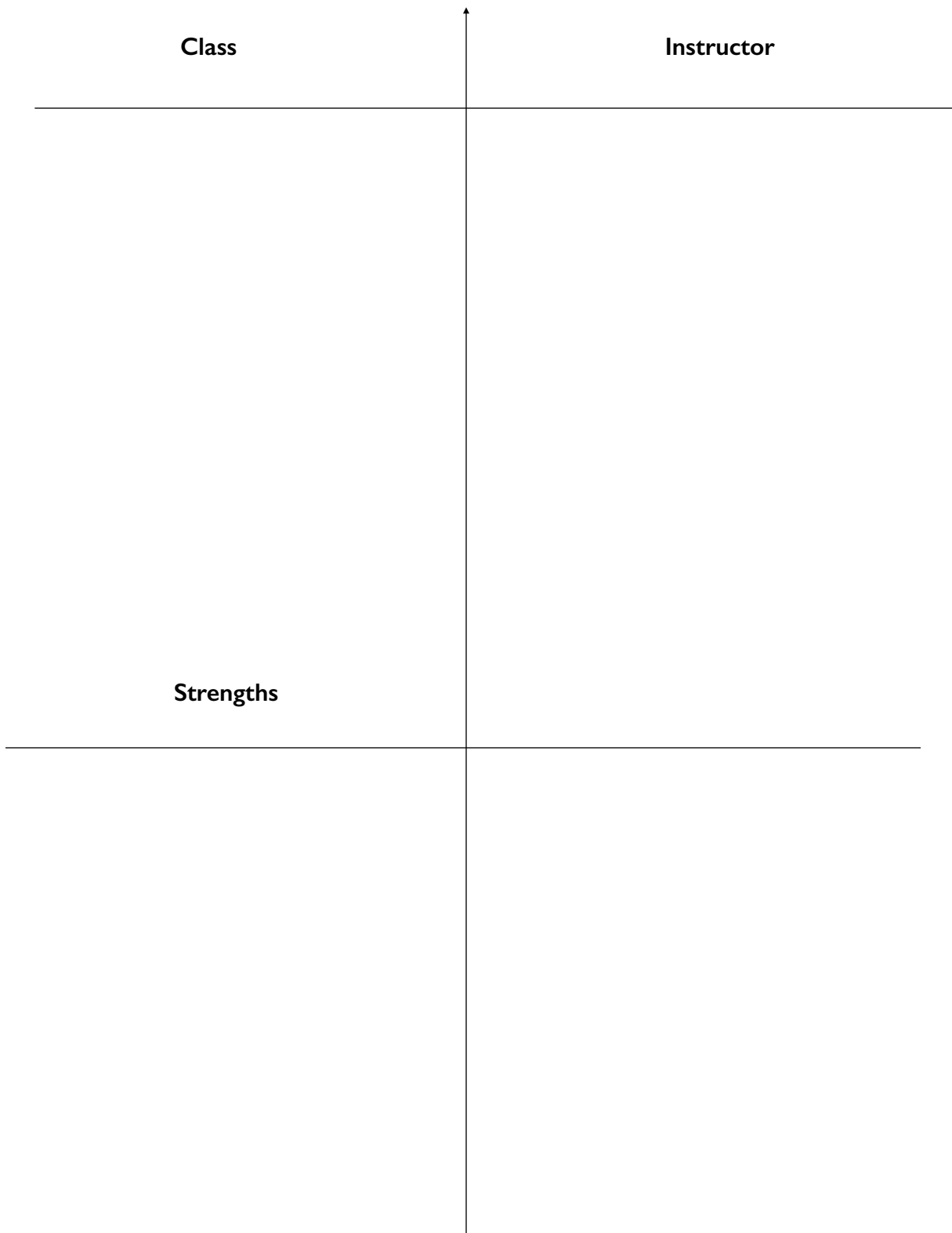
Create a reason for writing. Is it to get a job, to make a positive impression, to gain admission to future study? Write down your reason:

Reason:

List Your Classes.

In column one, write down the classes in your major. The paper will be in English so the class names will be in English, translate them now. Check the translation! Next, in column two, list the teachers you have had. Most important are the teachers that you have had for more than one class. Put a star next to any faculty member that could be used as a reference. Finally, look at the classes you did well in. Write down three strengths you have.

ex. If you list three maths classes = the strength is : good in math.



Personality. Look at the words below. Cross out the words that are negative. You want to use only positive words when describing yourself.



Pick words that best describe yourself. Find the definitions for the words you don't know on the list and choose 5 words that best describe you. Stay away from negative words.

adaptable
adventurous
affable
affectionate
agreeable
ambitious
amiable
amicable
amusing
brave
bright
broad-minded
calm
careful
charming
communicative
compassionate
conscientious
considerate
convivial
courageous
courteous
creative
decisive
determined
diligent
diplomatic
discreet
dynamic
easygoing
emotional
energetic
enthusiastic

exuberant
fair-minded
faithful
fearless
forceful
frank
friendly
funny
generous
gentle
good
gregarious
hard-working
helpful
honest
humorous
imaginative
impartial
independent
intellectual
intelligent
intuitive
inventive
kind
loving
loyal
modest
neat
nice
optimistic
passionate
patient
persistent

pioneering
philosophical
placid
plucky
polite
powerful
practical
pro-active
quick-witted
quiet
rational
reliable
reserved
resourceful
romantic
self-confident
self-disciplined
sensible
sensitive
shy
sincere
sociable
straightforward
sympathetic
thoughtful
tidy
tough
unassuming
understanding
versatile
warmhearted
willing
witty

Hobbies. What are your hobbies? What activities do you like to do in your free time?

Collecting

Figures
Antiques
Autograph Collecting
Car Collecting
Coin Collecting
Comic Books

Concert Posters
Fine Art Collecting
Hot Wheel and Matchbox Cars
Manga
Movie Memorabilia
Music Memorabilia
Spoon Collecting

Sports Collectibles
Sports Trading Cards
Stamp Collecting
Vinyl Records
Watch Collecting
Gun and Pistols

Arts & Crafts

Animation
Architecture
Calligraphy
Candle Making
Crochet
Film Making
Gardening
Jewelry Making

Origami
Photography
Sewing
Sculpting
Ceramics / Pottery
Fashion Design
Floristry
Graffiti

Knitting
Paper Airplanes
Painting and Drawing
Quilting
Scrapbooking
Woodworking
Tattoo

Model & Electronic

Ham Radio
RC Boats
RC Cars
RC Helicopters

RC Planes
Robotics
Scale Models
Model Cars

Model Airplanes
Model Railroading
Model Rockets
Model Ship / Boat Kits

Performing Arts

Dancing
Ballet
Break Dancing
Line Dancing
Salsa

Swing
Tango
Waltz
Acting

Juggling
Magic Tricks
Puppetry
Stand Up Comedy

Music

Banjo
Bass Guitar
Cello
Clarinet
Drum Set
French Horn

Guitar
Harmonica
Oboe
Piano / Keyboard
Trumpet
Trombone

Violin
Viola
Rapping
Singing
Start A Band

Food & Drink

Bartending
Beer Tasting
Cigar Smoking
Cheese Tasting
Coffee Roasting
Competitive Eating

Cooking
Liquor Distillation
Hookah Smoking
Spirits / Liquor Tasting
Sushi Making
Tea Drinking

Wine Making
Wine Tasting
Sake Tasting
Grilling

Games

Arcade Games
Ball and Jacks
Billiards / Pool
Board Games
Bridge
Card Games

Card Tricks
Chess
Dominoes
Foosball
Geocaching
Jigsaw Puzzles

Kite Flying / Making
Mah Jong
Pinball Machines
Poker
Table Tennis - Ping Pong
Video Games

Individual Sports

Archery
Acrobatics
Badminton
Bodybuilding
Bowling
Boxing
Croquet

Cycling
Diving
Golf
Gymnastics
Fencing
Horseback Riding
Ice Skating
Inline Skating

Pilates
Running
Swimming
Squash
Tai Chi
Tennis
Weight Training
Yoga

Team Sports

basketball
baseball
football

cricket
volleyball

soccer
water polo

Martial Arts

Aikido
Jiu Jitsu

Judo
Karate

Kung Fu
Taekwondo

Outdoor Activities

Birdwatching
Camping
Fishing
Hiking
Hunting

Kayak and Canoe
Mountain Biking
Mountain climbing
Paintball
River Rafting

Rock Climbing
Sailing
Scuba Diving
Fly Fishing
Backpacking

Board Sports

Kitesurfing
Skateboarding

Skiing
Snowboarding

Surfing
Windsurfing

Motor Sports

Autoracing
Go Karts
Motocross

Motorcycle - Touring
Motorcycle Stunts

Off Road Driving
Snowmobiling

After Graduation. What do you want to do after graduation? Name any life goals. Is there anywhere to where you want to travel? What is the job you want to get? Do you want to work for any particular company after leaving school? For example, do any of these appeal to you?

Ride in a Hot Air Balloon
See “The Northern Lights”/ Aurora Borealis
Swim with the Dolphins
Go on a Safari
Go on a Helicopter Ride
Make a difference in someone’s life
Do Sky Diving
See New Years Eve at Paulista Avenue, San Paulo
Learn a Foreign Language (or 2 or more!)
See Amazon Rainforest
Donate Blood
Travel Abroad
See the Mona Lisa
Do a Bungee Jump
See an Iceberg

Go to the Olympic Games
Eat at a 5 Star Restaurant
Get my Driver’s License (Car)
Go to the Opera
Do Paint Balling
Pass an Economics Class
Go on a Safari
Start My Own Business
Go on a Cruise
Be an Extra in a Movie
Learn How to Surf
Get a University Degree
Ride a Mechanical Bull
Do a Marathon
Go Spelunking
Make a Million Dollars

What else do you want to do?

Write down all the tests you have taken where you received a score or certification. These include any proficiency tests. Under the finished tests write down any tests you haven't taken yet BUT plan on taking in the near future or any tests not listed.

TOEIC

GEPT

Microsoft Office Specialist

TBSA

Chinese Cuisine Cooking Certification

Hotel and Restaurant Service

Bar tending Certification

Class C Certified Technician

Accounting Certification

LCCI

AMC

Have you ever received an award or prize for an accomplishment while studying at the university? Write it down.

GREAT! You've completed the first step! The rest of the steps for writing an autobiography are:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| Step 1 Gather Information | ✓ Finished |
| Step 2 Write Draft | Start |
| Step 3 Proofread | |
| Step 4 Rewrite Draft | |
| Step 5 Have someone check your draft | |
| Step 6 Write Final Draft, if necessary | |

Punctuation and Grammar Notes.

Indent paragraphs.

Use quotes for quotations. "..."

Write short sentences.

Use simple past for items using dates.

Ex. I took the test last year.

Use present perfect for items with no dates.

Ex. I have taken the XXX test.

General Structure

Paragraph 1

Introduce yourself and your belief system. It should be very positive. Write about your belief system in a way where the reader immediately thinks WOW! GREAT!

Paragraph 2

Continue the positive flow by introducing your school. Talk about what you studied and HOW MUCH YOU ENJOYED IT! Make it sound like your academic time was special and explain why. Always explain why. Be specific. Write about the details of your academic career so the reader will know what knowledge you gained from your time at university.

Paragraph 3

You think you're smart. Of course you do but you need to prove it to others. Write in a way that proves you're smart. Talk about your scores: GPA, TOEIC, AMC Exam, LCCI, TBSA, etc.

Paragraph 4

Start winding down. Now that you've proved yourself you can talk about something lighter. Tell more about the person behind the good grades. Talk about your likes and dislikes, hobbies and activities. What do you do in your free time for fun? Write about what you do in a way that the reader will still think WOW! Remember to be positive.

More Paragraphs

Do you want to write more? GREAT! More. More. More. Do you want to write about something not listed here? As long as it makes you look good you may add more information. Have a friend or mentor read it to see if it reads as good to them as it does to you.

Final Paragraph

Wrap it up. You are closing a life chapter and starting another. This is a good time to talk about the next step in your life plan. What's next for you? Go into the future a little bit then come back to the present. You can summarize this special time you have had at the university. If the autobiography is formal you may thank the reader for their attention. If less formal you may end with a catchy phrase. "I'll never forget Da Yeh" for example.

Watch Out For Traps!

Stay away from negative sounding words or sentences.

NO

I am not very good at English.

YES

I enjoy practicing English as I would like to improve my ability.

Why? Don't say you're not good at something. Say you like practicing and want to get better.

NO

I like to play games with my friends in my free time.

YES

I enjoy spending time with other people strategizing how to solve problems.

Why? Playing games sounds lazy, working on problems socially sounds better.

NO

I am a shy person so I spend a lot of time reading books and studying for classes.

YES

I feel I can never have enough knowledge so I spend a lot of time reading and studying for classes.

Why? Shy is a negative sounding word. Delete it. Don't give out too much information.

What might sound good to you might not sound good to others.

NO

I spend a lot of time playing with my friends.

YES

I like spending time with people. At school I was involved in many team projects.

Why? Shows you can get along with other people

NO

I like to play computer games in my free time.

YES

I enjoy working on my computer in my free time.

Why? Don't let others think you will only play on computers.

NO

I desire a comfortable life. It's almost impossible for me to go after fame or wealth.

YES

I desire a stable work environment where I can support my boss.

Why? Comfortable, no desire for wealth: sounds lazy.

Too Little Information

Badminton is fun.

AND???????

Too Much Information

I think badminton is fun and good exercise so I joined the badminton team. I like it because I get to be part of a team and spend time with my friends. I think I am good though I am not the best player on the team. That is my friend Katie. She is really good. We played against many different schools and had a lot of fun meeting students from other universities. I really hoped that we would win the championship but we did not. We just came in third. I still think third is a good. I am proud of our accomplishment.

Why? WHO CARES! The subject is you. Stay on the subject.

Don't make run-on sentences

It is easy when writing a good deal of information about the same subject to make your sentences too long.

NO

I took the TOEIC test six months ago and got a score of 840 for listening and reading but I have also taken the TOEIC speaking and writing and got a score of 400 plus I have taken the IELTS exam with a score of 7 in addition to possessing the Microsoft Office Specialist Certification and also the TBSA Certificate of Business Planning Proficiency, from Taiwan Business Strategy Association.

Break it up into small sentences. If the information is really long make a table. Don't make a numbered list as it may look sloppy.

YES

Six months ago I took the TOEIC Test. I scored 840 for listening and reading. I also took the TOEIC Speaking and Writing Test. I scored 400. I have taken the IELTS exam. I scored a 7. I plan on taking the test again in three months. I possess the Microsoft Office Specialist Certification. I also was awarded the TBSA Certificate of Business Planning Proficiency given by the Taiwan Business Strategy Association.

OR

I have taken many tests during my four years of university. My test names and scores are as follows:

Tests

TOEIC Listening and Reading	840
TOEIC Speaking and Writing	400
IELTS	7

Awards

Microsoft Office Specialist (Formerly MOS), from Microsoft Certiport

TBSA Certificate of Business Planning Proficiency, from Taiwan Business Strategy Association

GET A FRIEND TO CHECK YOUR WORK FOR MISTAKES!

You can sound very positive but a messy paper full of mistakes will make you look bad.

Fix the Draft. Read the following paper written by a student who didn't follow the guidelines. Go through each paragraph and write down on a separate piece of paper what is wrong with the autobiography. **Fix any spelling or grammar mistakes** you find in the autobiography. Make suggestions how it could be improved. **What rules did the writer not follow? How can sentences be changed? What can be added?** Prepare to discuss your answers with the class.

My name is David. I have on mother and one father. I have two older brother. We are happy family. We live in Taichung where my father woks as a doctor in the hospital. My father like medicine. He say I must be a doctor so that is why I am studying at the university I am not good at study but I try to hard work. It makes my head hurt but I still try. I believe I must keep trying or my father will punish me.

I study at Da Yeh. It is good school. My major is biological. I think is it is much difficult. I have many class with lot of homework. Sometimes I need to ask for extra time to complete assignment because I want get it right. I think learning is very much more important than finish on time. Through my study I have been able to learn many things like how body works. My science courses was the most interesting but the my favorite class was physical education because it is easy and fun. My favorite teacher was Mr. Wang because he didn't give so very much homework.

My GPA was 80 percent right now but I will trying to improve it. I am not good at tests but I keep to try until I get a good grade with the test. The school made us take the GEPT where I got a score of 300. The school say it is too low so I have to take it again in a few months. I got a perfect attendance award at my English class. I liked my English class even though I am shy and doesn't like to talk to the teacher. Mr. Lin, one of my science teacher, suggested I will do my senior project on a chemistry experimental since he say I can review some of the material and practice much more.

I am not good at team sport so I don't belong to any clubs such as badminton and basketball. I like to ride my scooter to the street sellers with my friends and eat some delicious local food. We can do that for many hours. Sometimes we take food home and stay up all night to dawn to watch movies. I like science fiction and horror movie. I looking for a job working at a movie theater when I was in college but the movie theater in town didn't have any job opening. I was hoping to watch some movies for free since I doesn't have much money. Luckily, I got my computer so I can just download movies I can't afford to see. Maybe some day I want to write a screenplay and make my own movies.

After graduation I have to go to do more studying. I am not sure where yet. I will research it after I graduated. I am too busy now and do not have the times. In five years, I am probably still be in school. It seems like I will be in school forever. I don't think I am ever forget how busy I was in university. That stay with me forever. Anyway, this is my autobiography.

Write Draft. It's time for the next step. Now that you've prepared to write. Take your information sheet and start writing. The important thing is to get the information on the page. Fix any major mistakes while writing but don't proofread yet. You can fix the small mistakes later.

Autobiography Example, fill in the blanks. Here is a simple example of an autobiography. You may fill in the blanks with your own information. Look on the following pages to see what goes in the blanks.

My name is 1 and I am studying at 2. I am a 3 person. I believe that 4. "5." I enjoy 6. My inspiration in life comes from 7. This has given me the motivation and will power to excel in my studies.

I study at Da Yeh university because 8. My major is 9. I have learned many things through years of intense study which will allow me to 10. My favorite classes were 11. I found 12 especially useful. I learned 13. My favorite teacher was 14 because 15.

I have worked hard to improve my knowledge. Upon graduation my GPA will be 16. I have taken the 17. My score was 18. I have also taken... (continue). As I am a natural learner and I like to study. I plan to take the 19 in the future. Through my hard work I earned the 20 award because 21. Part of my student life involved research and I focused on 22.

I have been very active during my academic career. I have taken part in 23. I am by nature a 24 person. At school I have been a valuable member in 25. I am naturally motivated to learn. I worked hard at school to do extra activities to improve my 26. I 27.

After graduation I plan on 28. My five year plan is 29. I think the most important thing to know about my university experience is 30. I will never forget 31. Thank you for your attention.

Blanks

1. Name
2. School Name and Department
3. Describe your personality
 - a. I am an energetic, hard working person
 - b. I am an honest and reliable person
4. Find a way to put your life philosophy into one sentence
 - a. I believe that success only comes through hard work
 - b. I believe that time is precious so I don't waste a minute.
5. Try to think of a quote to illustrate your philosophy. You must use quotes. If it is a famous quote also include the author's name.
 - a. "By helping others you help yourself"
 - b. "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do." Mark Twain
6. Describe simple "likes"
 - a. I enjoy doing social activities and playing team sports.
 - b. I enjoy trying new things and learning from new experiences.
7. Who or what inspires you?
 - a. From my father/mother/brother/sister/teacher/mentor
 - b. From the book XXX that taught me one person can make a difference.
 - c. From myself because...
8. Why did you come to university?
 - a. ...it has given me the foundation for future success in subject
 - b. ...they have a really good business program which has allowed me to prepare for working in the real world.
9. State major and other important information
10. What will a degree allow you to do?
 - a. ...get a job as a research analyst.
 - b. ...enter the world of international business
11. Don't just name your favorite classes, name the most important classes that is useful for the reader to know. Goal: introduce specific subjects of study and say you liked to study them (even if it is not true).
12. Name the most important class for your goal: statistics, business negotiation, translation, etc.
13. How is your important class useful for your future?
 - a. I learned complex formulas that can be used for future research.
 - b. I learned the foundations for dealing with people from different cultures in business.
14. Name a mentor. It shows you can form relationships with superiors.
15. What did your mentor teach you?
 - a. ...through patience she allowed me to improve.
 - b. ...he taught me never to give up.
16. What is your estimated GPA? Make an approximation.
 - a. Or you may say: My current GPA is XXX.
17. Name a test.
18. State your score.

19. Do you have more tests/certifications? It shows you have future goals.
20. Name of award
21. What did you do to earn the award?
22. Did you do a senior research paper or senior project? Name it.
23. Name any contests,
 - a. English contests, Drama contests, etc.
24. Type of person that relates to the campus activity in the next sentence.
 - a. Social
 - b. Creative
 - c. Athletic
25. Name any sports teams or clubs that you joined. (if you got together with friends to do an activity, use that and call it a club but not "sitting around watching movies and eating food club"—sounds lazy)
 - a. Track team and swimming club.
 - b. Badminton team
 - c. Drama Club
 - d. Graphic Design club
26. Name some skills you worked to improve
 - a. English ability
 - b. Drawing skills
 - c. Business Knowledge
27. What did you do to improve them.
 - a. Took extra classes to improve my English ability. Spent time talking to my foreign teachers.
 - b. Helped my professor with research so I could practice my research skills.
 - c. Volunteered for the Future Business Leaders Club and served as secretary. Did an internship at Name of Company.
28. What is your next step? Future study? Get a job?
29. What do you see yourself doing in five years?
 - a. To be on the way to a ph.d.
 - b. To be a manager in an international company.
 - c. To have a stable job with the possibility of promotion at name of company.
30. Summarize your experience.
 - a. I studied hard so I can also work hard.
 - b. I learned how to be a leader.
31. What about Da Yeh will you remember forever?
 - a. ...the relationships I've made.
 - b. ...the foundations of knowledge my teachers gave me.

Proofread. When you are finished look for mistakes and fix them. Then, give it to a friend to proofread. Ask them to fix any mistakes. Write your final copy. Make it Clear and Neat. It should be Easy To Read. Hand it in to the teacher.