

### **Application Essay Example (Common App): Dyslexia**

When I was in fifth grade I was diagnosed with dyslexia. I did not understand what being dyslexic meant or what that would mean for me. I was not sure how it would ultimately affect my future education and how it would shape me into the person I am today.

Recently, my mom asked if I ever realized I was learning differently than others while I was growing up. Honestly, I did not, because I had no one to compare myself to since I was homeschooled. My mom then shared a story that took place when I was in first grade and still struggling to consistently recognize and remember numbers. She bought me a big inflatable “6” when I turned six, hoping it would help me remember that number since it was my “new” age. The whole day she would repeat it with me and then point to the number, asking me what it was. Despite the visual aid and repetition, I still could not remember.

When reading, I could not understand punctuation, so I would read through those marks. When not understanding a certain word, I would replace it with a synonym without even thinking about it. Fortunately, since I was homeschooled, I was able to learn at my own pace and progress, because I was surrounded by supportive parents and used a literature-based curriculum. This improvement not only came from an ability to read smoothly but also demonstrated how much I love to read!

I set high standards for myself when I began attending public schools in seventh grade; however, once I reached high school, it was very challenging to maintain my goals. Because of my dyslexia, I knew I had to study, practice, and perform twice as hard just to keep up with my peers. It might take me four days to study for a test, whereas someone in the very same class might cram the night before and receive the same grade. I began comparing myself to

classmates who seemed to understand things that I did not. Knowing that I was dyslexic made the comparisons seem even more daunting.

Life is not always about what is easy, but what we do when the hard things come our way. Looking back on my last three years of high school I have come to see how essential it is to seek help. I am so fortunate to be surrounded by teachers who have responded to my requests and willingly spent time assisting me.

Being dyslexic has taught me the value of hard work, whether it is in school, sports, relationships, or developing plans for future goals. As a result, I do my best to maximize my time. I know I need to push myself to ensure I stay on track to accomplish my goals.

Most importantly, I have come to realize that being dyslexic is not some kind of mistake. I am made exactly how God wants me to be, dyslexia and all! I am dyslexic; that will never change. It is something that will always play a part in my life but will never ultimately define every aspect of who I am. Honestly, I am not sure I would have my work ethic without dyslexia, and for that I am very grateful.

College admissions is not a guarantee of college success; it is just the beginning. College is filled with challenges that will require a higher standard of work ethic that most students have never been required to reach before. Ironically, because I have learned to succeed with dyslexia, I believe I have learned to work harder at more demanding levels than many of my peers. More importantly, I trust in God to give me strength to persevere and enjoy the opportunities college will offer as I head into the next phase of my life.