

## Example Essay

*Question: Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.*

Entering my freshman year, I was introduced to the Ivy League Project (ILP), a program designed to encourage economically disadvantaged students to apply to the most prestigious universities in America. The program selects the most talented and promising sophomore and junior grade students and takes them to visit the Ivy League universities on the East Coast. Despite the fact that I was not yet eligible to attend the East Coast trip, I felt that it would be beneficial to attend the monthly meetings.

The ILP enabled me to extend my network and have a thorough understanding of the college application process. Guest speakers, such as retired admissions officers of Ivy League universities, ILP alumni, and college students, were at every meeting offering us their time and knowledge. They reviewed previous application prompts, provided us guidelines, and a better idea of what type of questions to expect.

Furthermore, the meetings improved my public speaking skills through the introduction of the “Mares Method” in working a room. The frequent short presentations or sharing of thoughts made it more comfortable to talk in front of strangers.

The most remarkable aspects of the ILP were reinforcing confidence and the academically intelligent and fun environment. The students participating in the program had similar goals and aspirations in life as I. It was a place where it felt “okay” to be smart and you would not be considered an outcast. In those moments of self-doubt, Mr. Mares and the fellow ILP members reminded me that if there is a will, there is a way. It inspired me that I was more than capable and qualified to attend a prestigious university.