

## METAPHOR IS EVERYTHING

When the essay prompt asks you about your world, and it provides basic examples, such as family, community and school, it is up to you to read between the lines. You must understand what they are really asking, which is for you to define your world.

A way for you to stand out among the crowd is to not answer the question literally, but figuratively.

We pack a much bigger punch when we use metaphor. Through metaphor we cannot only capture the true essence of our world, but we can deeply affect the sensibilities of the readers so that we are memorable.

### EXAMPLES OF OPENERS:

I. My family is not my world, as I left home at a very early age. My community is not my world, for I have been a transient. My school is not my world because I have changed schools so many times. My world is my heart. I live inside the sanguine rivers of the superior vena cava and the throbbing right atrium. My world is the heart that I bring with me everywhere. It is the sum of all my experiences and of the love I still feel despite everything. My world is my heart, and I aim to expand my world.

II. I live as though on the tip of a pencil, always at risk, either tottering off into oblivion or venturing wildly over the page, gleefully like a surfer rides a wave. I was meant to write. My world is this pencil that I grip for dearest life. My world is the lead that gives bloody birth to my ever innocent thoughts. My world is the hope that resides within every stroke – the willful desire that I'll write something that matters. To whom, I cannot say, but to even the tiniest particle would be sufficient.

III. My world is the place between breaths – between swim strokes – between kicks of the feet. My world is the sweat that emanates but then escapes into the grasp of the water – sweat that melts into nothingness like the cheers of the crowd into the wash of my chlorine-soaked ears. When I am submerged, all I can hear is my heaving – steady, certain and determined, slightly more than yesterday, to win against my prior self.

IV. My world is a song – not the chorus but the bridge.

V. My world is an elephant – not the trunk but the memory. Throughout my life I have been told that I have the memory of an elephant. I don't know if that is such a good thing, because there are a few things I would like to forget. Like the time I kicked that girl who called me "platypus feet" in the third grade.

VI. My world is my imagination. I live inside my head. I cherish the place because within it I am always safe. Even if monsters or dragons or witches or mean guys named Ted follow me there, I am far from any real harm.

I learned to escape into my imagination at a very early age. I think I remember the exact date, in fact. (And even if I don't remember it, I can divine it, because that is what is so cool about having an imagination!)

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These are just examples of how you can open with a metaphor, which helps to set the scene and establish a tone. You would then ground your composition with a more literal description of your interests and purpose, but you would finally, in closing, return to the metaphoric milieu so as to let the magic reverberate in the receptors of the readers.

The readers of your essay want two things: to get to know you and to be transported. Don't disappoint them.