

The Common Application Essay



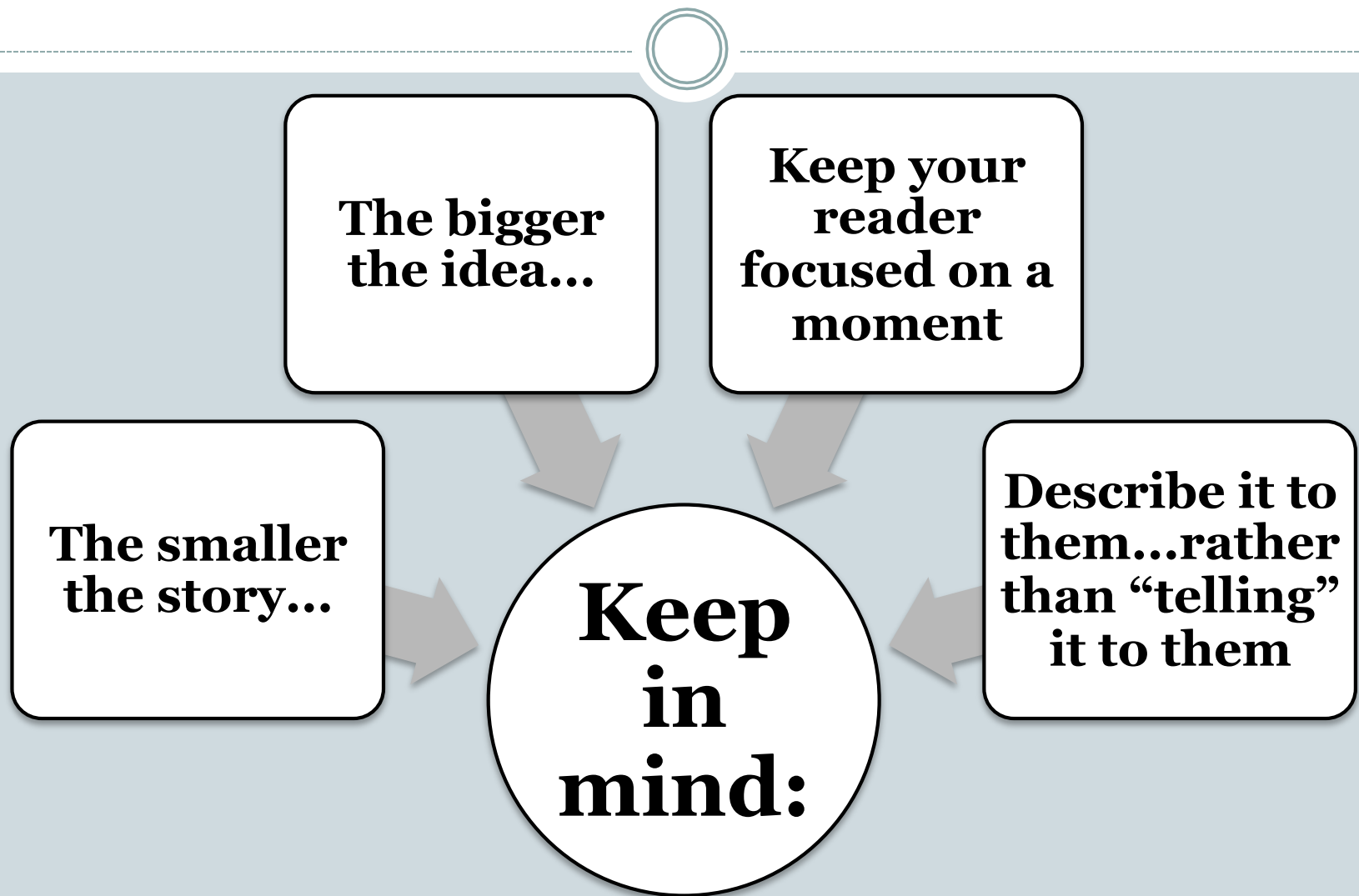
- These essay prompts represent what your personal statement should be.
- Your personal statement is not simply a story.
- It is not a summary of your accomplishments.
- It is not a resume.
- It is not just something clever that you want to say.
- It is not a listing of your “strengths”

Common Application Essay

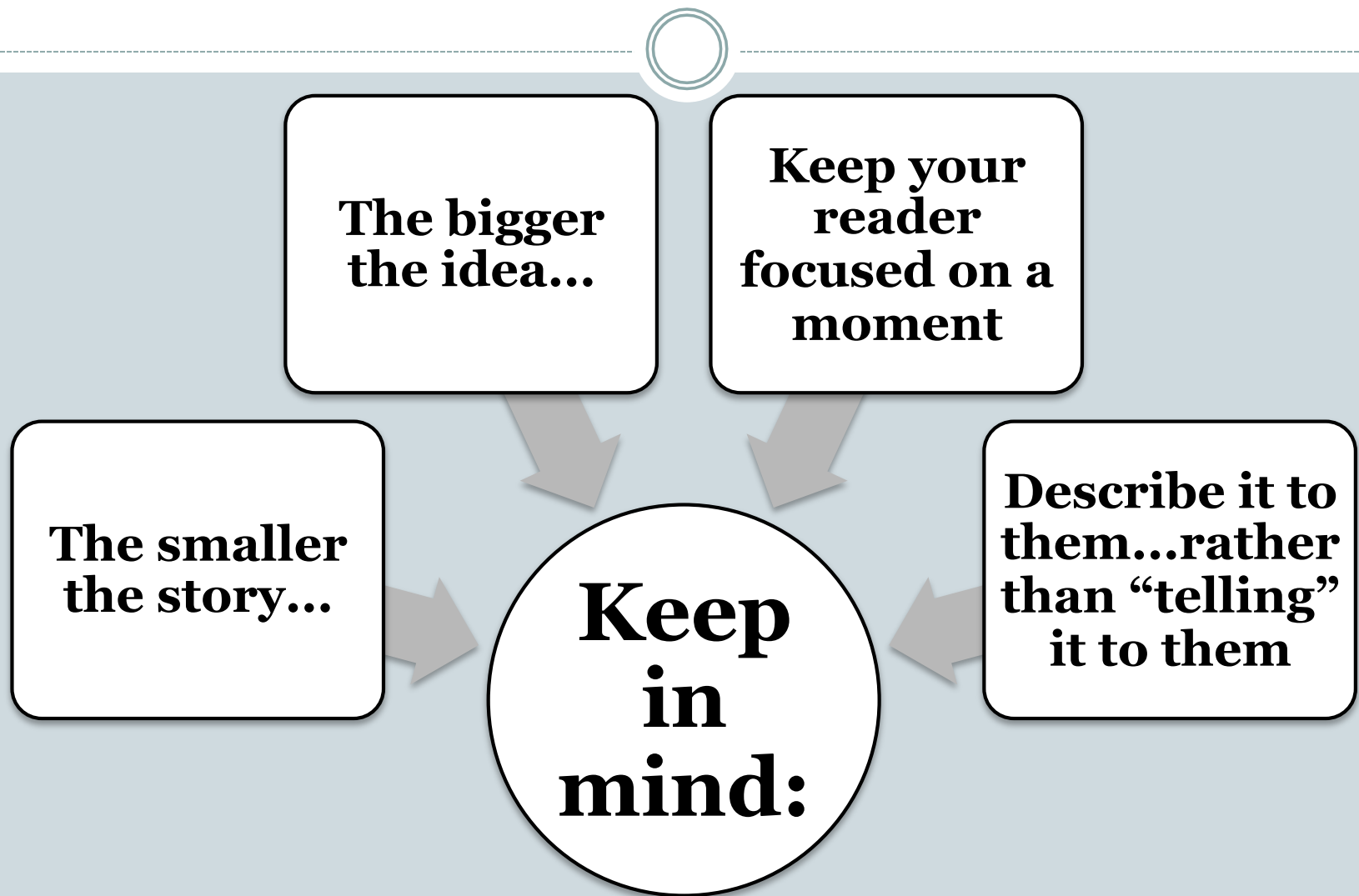


- Your essay should be about information that the admissions committee ***cannot gain*** from the other facets of your application, like...
- Grades
- Activities
- Accomplishments
- Sports
- AP/SAT/SAT II scores...

Common Application Essay: General Suggestions



Common Application Essay: General Suggestions



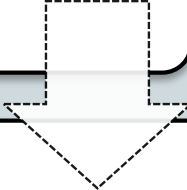
Organizing your essay:



Step 1: “*In Media Res*” place your reader in the middle of your story. Put them “with you”, in the “scene.” Think of it as if you were scripting a scene in a movie.

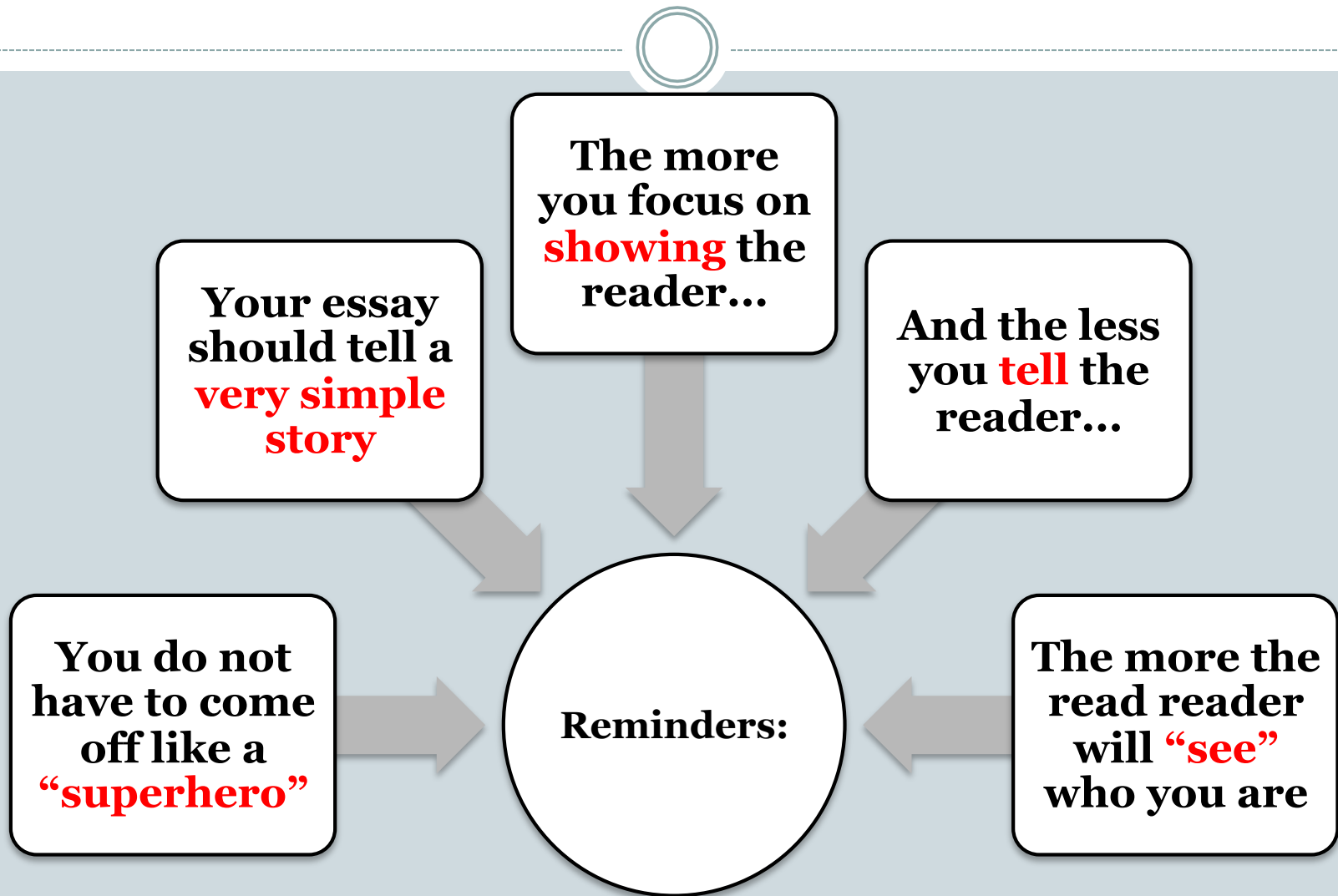


Step 2: “Backstory” How did you “get here”? What information does the reader need to know to understand how you got to “this point”?



Step 3: The Takeaway: here is where you have to be sure that your reader gains the message, the key information about you: what do they learn?

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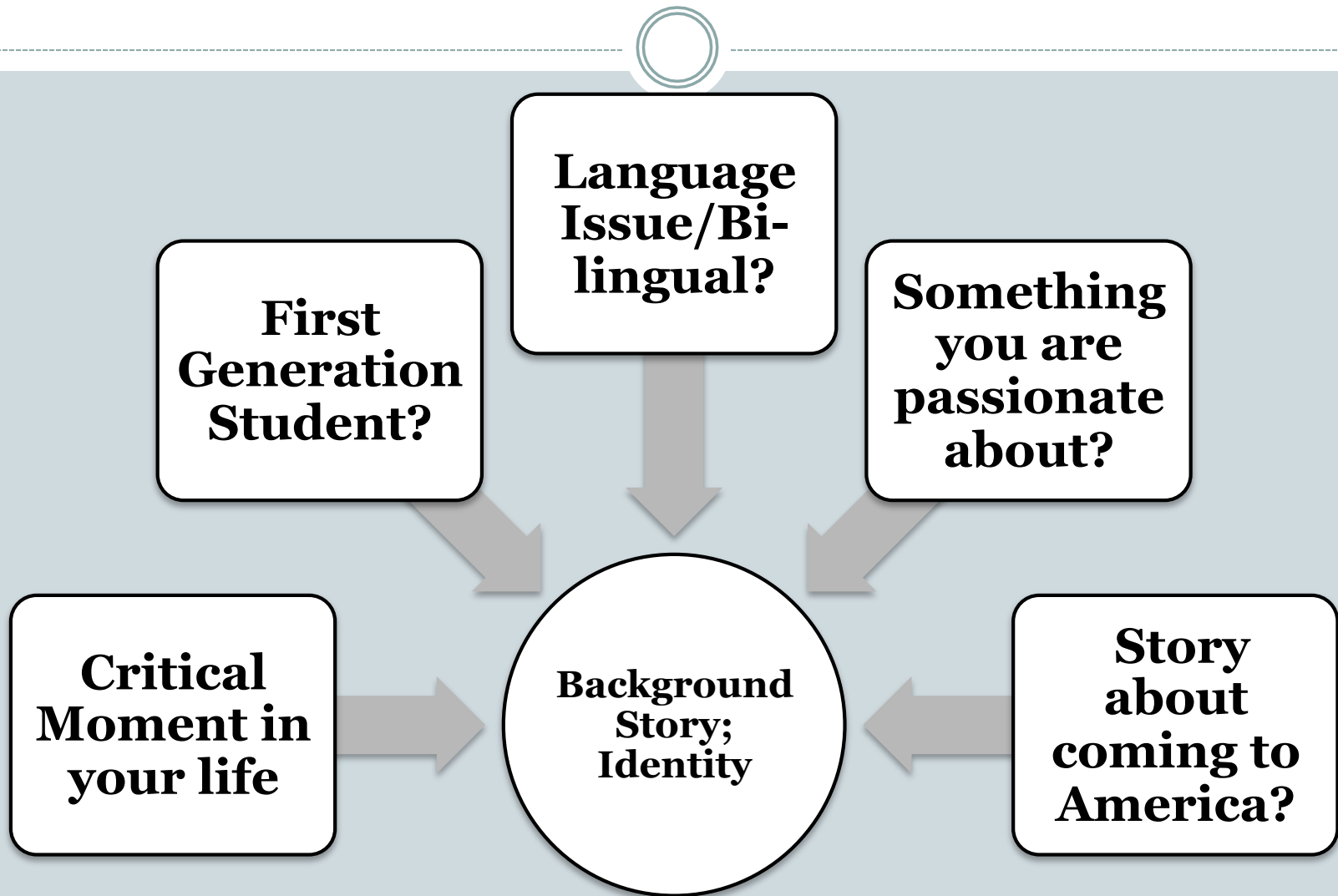


Common Application Essay Choice #1



- “Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.”
- I ***highly suggest*** this essay.
- It provides you with a great deal of freedom.
- This is a great opening to that part of you, your story, that is not represented in the rest of your application packet.

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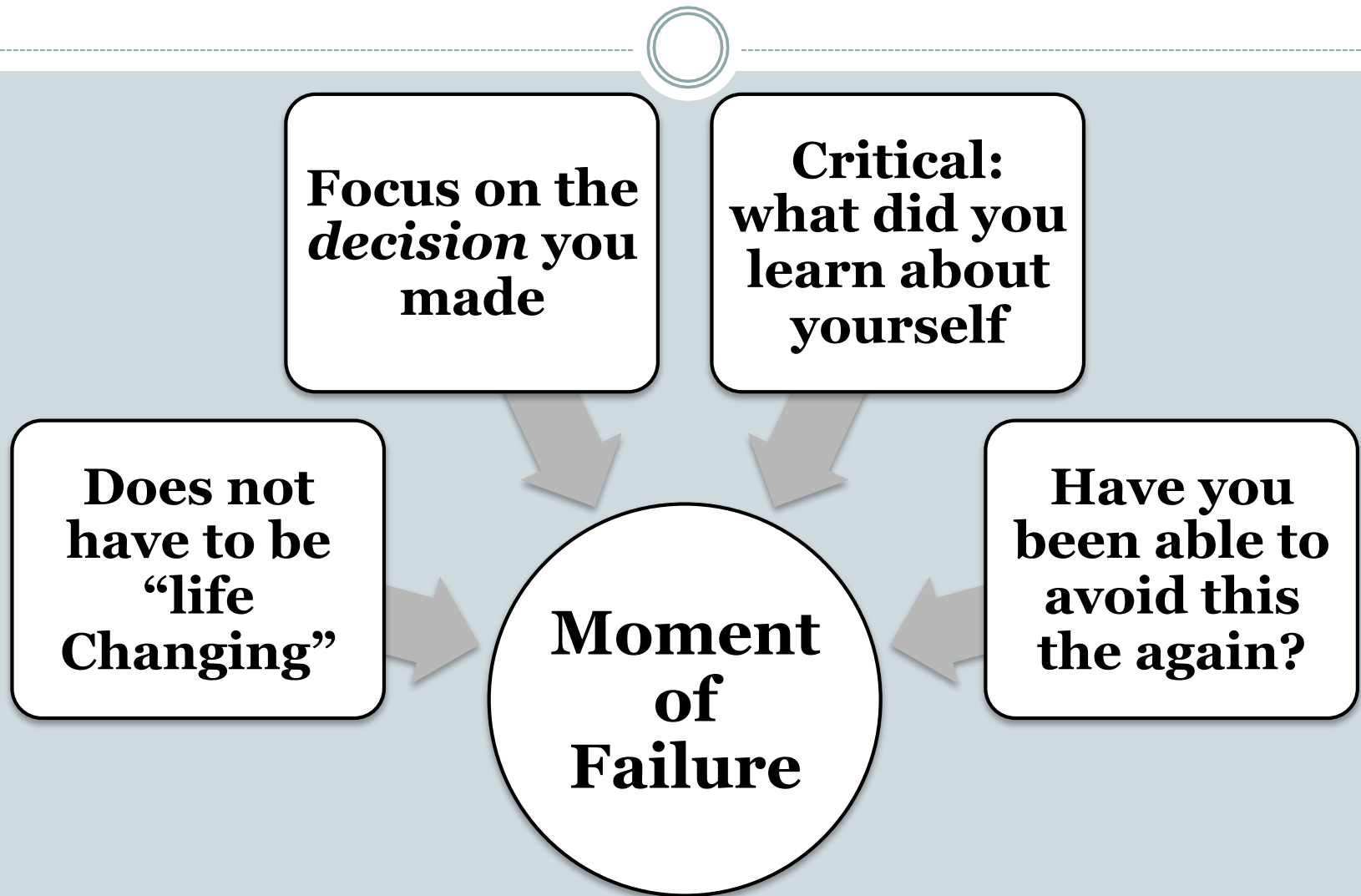


Essay Choice #2



- “Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?”
- This does not have to be an earth shattering event in your life.
- You really need to focus on the importance of keeping your story focused and simple.
- Don’t get too carried away with the “I was so stupid to do this”, and be sure that you show the reader clearly how you learned from this moment.

Common Application Essay #2.

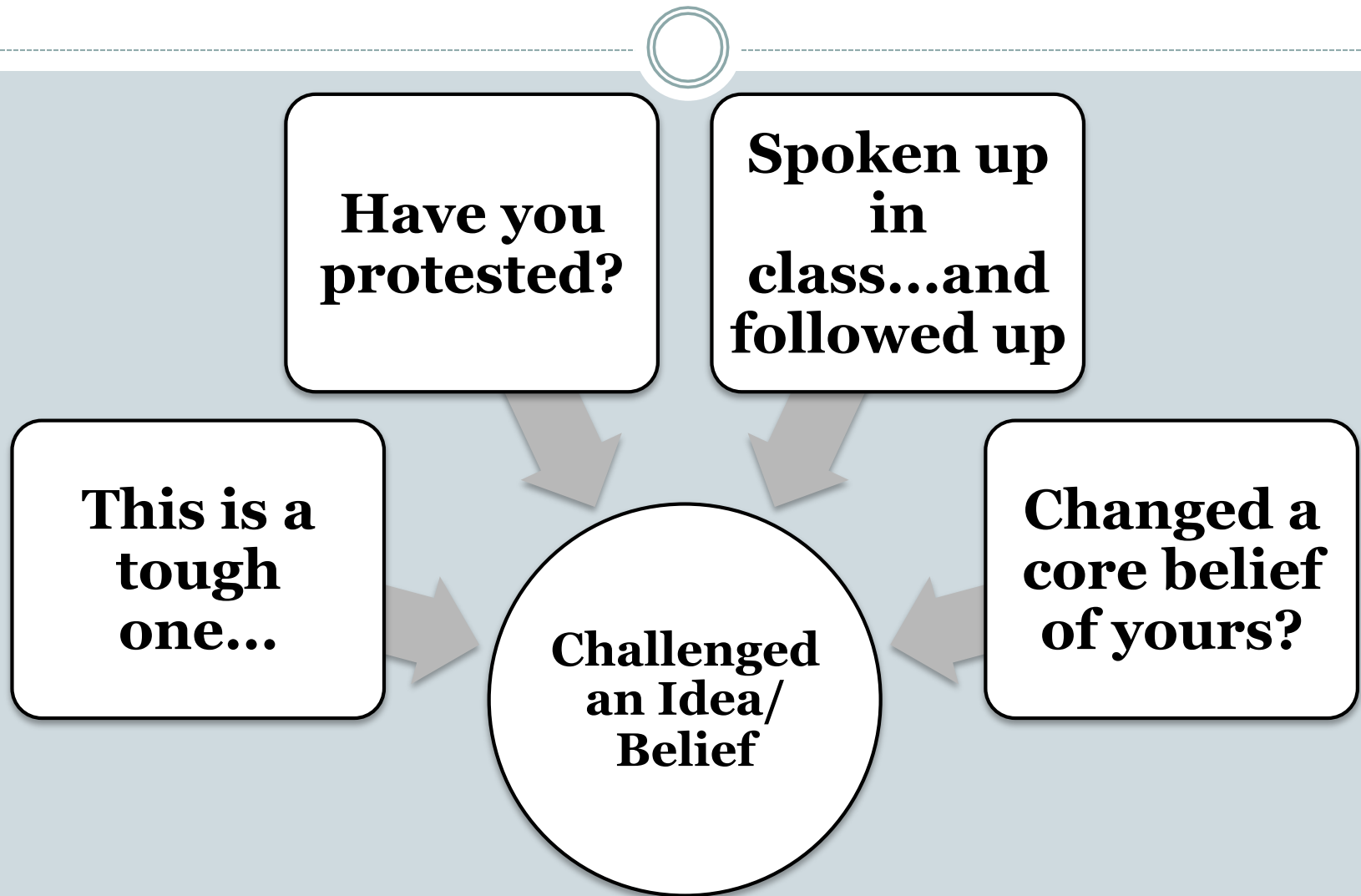


Essay Choice #3



- “Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?”
- This one can be a bit more challenging...
- You have to be sure that the actions you describe really fit the qualifications of the question.
- Your challenge does not have to be a “life and death” moment.
- This could be a reading for class, a policy you disagree with
- Be sure you reflect about whether you would do so again.

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Essay Choice #4



- 4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma-anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
- This is a tough one as well...Be sure you want to tackle this one.
- Don't go down the path of "World Hunger" "Racism" or "Equality" – too big and you will get lost...
- If you have acted on a local level – that is the way to go.

Common Application Essay



Be careful if you
go “big”

If chose, be sure
to stay on topic,
and be specific

Have you taken
stand?
Addressed and
issue

I would stay
neighborhood,
rather than go
National or
Global

**Problem –
You have
taken action,
or you would
like to...**

Essay Choice #5



- “Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.”
- This can be a very wise choice.
- They are looking for family/cultural markers or ceremonies that lead you to a place where you are an adult.
- This is a perfect one to tell a very simple story with a very powerful message.

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