

TOWNSEND HARRIS ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS 2024-2025

Preface: All students at Townsend Harris High School swear “The Ephebic Oath.” The below assessment asks you to explore and analyze different aspects of it. Below is the full text of the Oath:

THE EPHEBIC OATH

I shall never bring disgrace to my city, nor shall I ever desert my comrades in the ranks; but I, both alone and with my many comrades, shall fight for the ideals and sacred things of the city. I shall willingly pay heed to whoever renders judgment with wisdom and shall obey both the laws already established and whatever laws the people in their wisdom shall establish. I, alone and with my comrades, shall resist anyone who destroys the laws or disobeys them. I shall not leave my city any less but rather greater than I found it.

Part 1: Video

Please submit a 2 minute (maximum time) video that includes ALL of the following:

1. An introduction to you
2. An answer to the questions below:

We believe that every student has a special and unique artistic, intellectual and personal talent, interest, ability and/or gift that can enrich our school community. Our Ephebic Oath states that we promise to “leave our city greater than we found it.” Identify two talents, interests, abilities or gifts you possess that would enrich our school community and how you would “leave it greater than you found it.”

Part 2: Humanities Writing

Please respond to the below prompt. Your response should be between 250-500 words (approximately 1200-2500 characters).

The Prompt:

The most famous line from the Ephebic Oath is “I shall not leave my city any less but rather greater than I found it.” In keeping with this oath, Townsend Harris students are required to serve a minimum of 40 hours of community service each year.

George Bernard Shaw in his play [Man and Superman](#) writes, “This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy” [He also stated](#), “I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for a moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to the future generations.”

Considering George Bernard Shaw’s statements on the nature of serving the community, should Townsend Harris students swear an oath to their community and be *required* to “volunteer”?

Develop and support a perspective on the above question. Use the two resources below to help you develop your response.

The Resources:

Resource 1: [“Should You Have to Do Community Service?”](#) by Kathy Wilmore

Resource 2: “How volunteering can benefit mental health” [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#) by NBC News

IMPORTANT: Please ensure that your essay and video are submitted in an acceptable file format. You can find information on acceptable file types in the MySchools application. For our school

- **.PDF and .DOC (NOT Google Doc)** files are preferred for essays
- **.MOV and .MP4** files are preferred for videos

There are many tutorials and free tools online to help you save your files in the correct formats. Doing this will help us ensure that we have access to reading and viewing all of the wonderful materials that you will submit. Thank you in advance for your help!