Dear Prospective High Scholars Student:

Please complete the following diagnostic writing assignment and e-mail it to Mari Fredericks at mfredericks@belhaven.edu. Your essay will be evaluated as part of your admission to, and placement in, the High Scholars Program. Pay careful attention to all directions; your ability to follow these directions will also be considered in regard to your admission and placement.

**Directions**

1. Type and double-space the entire essay with 1-inch margins all around.
2. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, type the following information: your first and last name, your email address, “High Scholars Diagnostic Essay,” and the date that you wrote the essay.
3. Type the title of your essay in title capitals, centered.
4. Write an essay that is at least 5 paragraphs long (including an introduction and conclusion) and is a minimum of 400 words.
5. We suggest allowing at least 15 minutes for proofreading your essay.
6. Do not receive input from anyone else regarding any part of your essay, e.g., organization, content, correctness, etc.

**Essay Assignment**

For this essay, your job is to introduce yourself as a writer to the members of your High Scholars class, both students and teacher. They are interested in knowing about the writing and reading experiences that you bring with you and about your strengths and weaknesses as a developing writer.

You might answer some or all of the following questions in your essay:

- What are you proudest of as a writer?
- What difficulties have you had as a writer in the past?
- What experiences have shaped your writing for better or worse?
- What kinds of instruction have been the most, or least, helpful to you as a developing writer? Why?
- What books and writers have influenced your writing style and interests?
- What do you still need to learn most as a writer?
- What can you contribute as a writer to your High Scholars classes?
- What do you look forward to as a High Scholars student and writer? What are you concerned about?
Some helpful hints

Think about what a representative collection of your past writing would look like and then talk about those pieces. Do not try to discuss everything you have ever read or written; instead, discuss those experiences that best illustrate your main idea and main points. Make some sense out of your experiences—help your reader understand the significance of your experiences. It is okay if you do not love to read or write—that is part of your story too, but be sure to tell your reader why you feel the way you do.