**Sample 1:**

149 days down, 58 more days to go.  After another night of staying up late, excessively drinking coffee, and keeping my nose in a book (or two), I will be one day closer to the completion of my Advancement Placements courses and exams. These past months have consisted of not only an overwhelming amount of work but also an endless amount of effort put into preparation for my four Advanced Placement exams.  If I did not acknowledge the failure I encountered during the first month of school, I would not have realized my potential for growth and success in such demanding classes.
               With poise, I willingly took the challenge of taking four AP classes in one school year.  I believed that I could easily manage the classes and somehow succeed in doing so.  Well, I was wrong. I overestimated my ability to handle due dates and assignments.
                Upon returning to school in the fall, I was instructed to prepare for summer work examinations, unit tests, and a countless of other assignments.  One test was given right after another, on the same day, forweeks straight. I was not able to keep up with all of the information that was thrown at me.  This is because I did not know how to handle the amount of work I signed up for.  When grades were given back, I scored less than satisfactory on not one exam, but multiple. It was like a cycle; I studied for a test, failed, studied for another test, and failed that one, too. I was disappointed, confused, puzzled but most importantly, a failure.  I was failing my exams and unacceptably settled for 70s because I did not see a way to improve. Unfortunately, I was ready to give up. I felt that I had no choice but to drop one or even two of my AP classes.
 Rather than escaping my failure by dropping the classes, I was ready to defeat the challenge instead of having the challenge defeat me. Though my study habits worked in previous years, I realized that they needed to be altered. I changed the way I tooknotes, the way I reviewed for exams, and the way I managed my time. Also, for the first time, I welcomed additional help from not only teachers who were willing to stay after school, but also from students who understood concepts better than I had. Just within weeks, my grades were noticeably improving. I was finally receiving scores that could be categorized under my high expectations as a “good grade”. Although I first had to face failures in order to realize my potential, I learned that success is not something that can simply be handed to me; it is something that requires hard work and dedication. This setback enabled me to realize that I am going to face obstacles that will be beyond the difficulty level that I am accustomed to however, they are conquerable if I continue to strive.
*495 words* **What is effective about this college essay? Ineffective? See rubric on reverse**