
Writing College Admission Essays

When you apply for admission to college, you usually submit an essay as part of the application process. The purpose of this essay is twofold:

- to give you an opportunity to tell important things about yourself that may not be apparent in your application or academic records, and
- to give the college admission committee an additional impetus to decide which applicants to accept and often which applicants to award scholarships.

Some colleges ask you to pick a topic, but others choose your topic for you. The following examples of topics were taken from actual college applications:

- Describe the qualities and accomplishments you would bring to the student body.
- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence.
- Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.
- Describe a successful student

Regardless of whether you choose your topic or whether you must choose from topics selected by the college, your goal is to help the admission committee distinguish you from among all of its applicants who have nearly identical grades, test scores, extra-curricular activities and teacher recommendations. To do that you must be sure your essay tells the committee the following:

- who you are and what have been your experiences
- your unique accomplishments at school and in the community
- what interests and motivates you
- what you think is your intended field of study and what are your career goals
- whether or not you are mature and self-disciplined enough to achieve academic success and graduate from college
- whether you demonstrate the thinking and writing skills required to pursue a college degree

Begin at the Beginning

1. **Get to know the college.** Call or write for an information packet, visit the campus. Discuss the college with an admission representative at a local college fair or schedule an office appointment with an admission counselor.
 2. **Get to know yourself.** Create a personal inventory of likes and dislikes, special talents, hobbies, academic strengths and areas for improvement, leadership skills, personality traits etc. Be sure to ask others what they might say about you.
 3. **Select your topic early** or be sure to read the question on the application carefully and then begin to select things from your personal inventory that you want the committee to know.
 4. **Begin writing your first draft.** Set up a template in your word processing software that complies with the format (margins, font size, spacing etc.) requested by the college. When writing your first draft, remember these tips:
 - a. Don't over-write or under-write. If you are given a word count, do your best to write and edit to stick to the recommended word count.
 - b. Summarize stories you tell so that you can tell what you realized from the event or how it changed you. Let your values, priorities and character shine through so that the readers become acquainted with your authentic voice.
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- c. **Get personal, but not too personal.** Avoid super sensitive and private matters. The admission essay is not the place to reveal your deepest secrets. Do not give emphasis to your failures by not bringing them full circle to “what you learned” and how you use what you learned to restructure for success.
- d. **Don't try to be cute** and do not do a humorous essay that an adult on your admission committee may not find funny.
- e. **Don't try to make the essay for one college fit the question from another** college unless the questions are truly the same.
- f. **Show, don't tell.** Use adjectives and adverbs to create descriptive sentences that paint an interesting unforgettable picture for your reader.
- g. **Stick to the point of your essay.** Be cautious not to stray from your main topic.
- h. **Write, rewrite, rewrite, edit and write again!** Leave no room for error. When your essay is completed, read it aloud, listening for inconsistencies and problems with tense and word usage. Share your essay with individuals who will provide you with constructive comments.
- i. **Make it interesting and engaging to hold your readers' attention.**

Write it Right!

Every essay has a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning orients the reader to your topic, the middle gives details, develops your ideas and proves your point and the end reminds the reader where you started from and summarizes your essay into a predictable conclusion. Use your dictionary, thesaurus and grammar/punctuation handbook. Double check your spelling even if you use a spell checker on your computer. Watch your sentence structure, and vary your sentence types and length. Do not use passive voice, avoid slang unless you explain it and it is appropriate in support of your point.

Self Help

Instant College Admission Essay Kit – How to Write a Personal Statement Essay That Will Get You In (Revised Edition)
Paperback by Shaun Fawcett

Acing the College Application: How to Maximize Your Chances for Admission to the College of Your Choice by Michele Hernandez

On Writing the College Application Essay: The Key to Acceptance and the College of Your Choice by Harry Bauld

www.Essayed.com On-line essay editing service.