

Writing a College Admissions Essay

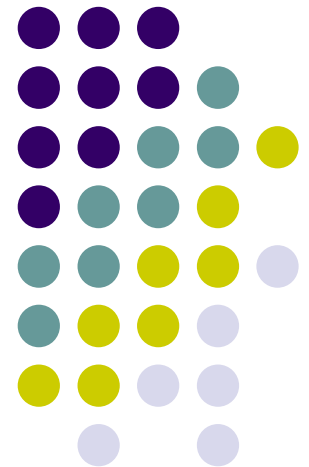
(updated 2014)

As you know by now, the essay portion of your college application is probably the most important part. This is the spot where admissions reviewers get to see what you are like and what you want out of life.

The essay is the “interesting part of the application for admissions officers, so it needs to be well written and personal.

Writing the essay will be the most time consuming part of the application process.

Make sure you tailor an essay to answer the specific question asked by the institution you are applying to.



Most Common Topics for Essays



- Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.
- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national or international concern and its importance to you.
- Indicate a person who has had significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain the influence.
- State your favorite quotation and how it relates to you.
- What do you think has been the most important social or political event of the last 100 years? Do you share a personal identification with this cause?
- What group of people or organization do you admire and why?
- Recall an occasion when you took a risk that you now know was the right thing to do.
- If you could travel to any time, past or future, when would it be and why?

Essay Hints (Insider Tips)



- Neatness and good grammar are crucial when it comes to essays. Use spell and grammar check frequently.
- Have teachers, parents, friends or anyone with a knack for sentences to go over the essay with you to uncover any structural, grammatical or logical problems.
- Revise.
- Be resourceful. Re-purpose essays that you have already written for class or other applications, and tweak them to fit.
- The KEY is to write something that will stand out in the mind of the reader.
- You should use vocabulary with which you are familiar, not complex words taken from a nearby thesaurus that end up sounding uneven and stiff.

Essay Hints Continues:



- Use present tense if at all possible.
- Keep it short. No more than 2 pages. Doubled-spaced, in 12-point Times Roman. Some have a word limit.
- Show don't tell. Try to evoke your personality and character without actually stating your specific attributes.
- Write a story. Avoid listing all your brag sheet activities. Colleges want to hear a personal story about a moment that was meaningful to you. How did it change you? What did you learn?
- It is always a good idea to have a catchy first sentence. If it grabs the reader's attention, the reader will be encouraged to read on.

(K. Cohen 2002)

The 5 Paragraph Essay



- Pick a theme and make an outline
- First paragraph is your introduction-state the theme and three main ideas to supporting it
- Three paragraphs-your three ideas, one in each paragraph. The support of your theme and the statement of your point.
- Closing-your conclusion, and chance to drive the theme home. Avoid restating points already made, fuse them together instead. Gather in one paragraph the ideas you developed in the essay's body.



- The structure and organization will keep you from rambling or veering off course. Everything in the essay should serve the theme.
- If it is a personal essay you're writing, it should be a living document of your life at this point. It should list your hopes, heroes, accomplishments et cetera, it should give a solid plan for the future, and clear examples and lessons from the past.
- If it is a topical essay, be sure to use concrete examples, making them relevant to yourself, the essay and the scholarship foundation.
- Again, check for grammar and spelling. Have others take a look at it. Others may find what you've missed and provide ideas to shore up the essay.
- Use double space.
- DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE.
- GOOD LUCK!!!!!!

Help Writing Scholarship Application Essays



Scholarships often require a short essay for consideration. The quality of your essay can mean the difference between getting and not getting a scholarship. These sites offer advice in writing a good application essay, as well as other advice on financial aid, scholarship searches, and more.

- ❖ Supercollege.com
- ❖ Thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com
- ❖ Admissionsessays.com
- ❖ Gocollege.com
- ❖ Collegeapps.about.com
- ❖ Quintcareers.com