

The College Application Essay

- Some public universities and most private colleges and universities require a one or two page typed essay.
- Go to the college's website to look at essay prompt(s). Begin the rough draft over the summer. Don't wait until the last minute.
- Put your rough draft aside for 24 hours, then reread, rewrite, and edit for sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Write in first person.
- Ask several people to read and evaluate your paper; your English teacher is an ideal person to give you some pointers.
- Type your final draft. Be sure to proofread and correct the final copy.
- Save a copy of your essay on your computer and make a copy for your own files.
- Follow instructions for mailing your essay. Be early or at the very latest – on time!

Essay Suggestions

Colleges and universities want to be able to answer the question, "What do we know about this individual?" in making decisions about admission. Your essay will answer this question. Revealing the quality of your character is the most important component of your essay.

It is important to include any of the following personal characteristics in your essay that may pertain to you: creativity, intellectual curiosity and achievement, exceptional recognition, ability to overcome hardship, initiative, motivation, leadership, persistence, service to others, special spark, substantial experience with other racial or cultural groups, and rare talent.

Think of what is distinct about you such as a hobby, talent or unique passion and tie that in to some of your activities, school interests, or organization you belong to. Be as original or creative as your writing talents allow.

Remember, that many of your activities, school interests, classes, etc. may be very similar to many other students; therefore, it is a good idea that your approach to these subjects be as creative/original as possible. What makes you unique?

Subjects for college essays that should be avoided or treated with great delicacy are sex, use of alcohol or drugs, personal struggles with eating disorders, suicide, or mental illness; your family's dysfunction; negative attitudes.

Subjects about which admissions people feel burnt out: Boring travelogues; the catch, hit, or basket that won the game; a trite essay about wanting to save the world; anything about Harry Potter, Catcher in the Rye or The Great Gatsby.

Listing activities, honors, likes and dislikes is not a good strategy.

Avoid attempts at complimenting the college on its offerings, reputation, location, size, etc.

Avoid writing how hard you intend to work and how this will help you succeed in college.

REMEMBER: Reveal who you are and be original!

