



TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

1. GET A HEAD START.

The earlier you begin preparing your first draft, the more time you have to write, and the less stressful writing the essay will be.

2. BE YOURSELF.

Use your own voice and your own words. Write sincerely in your best natural style. Writing your own individualized essay will help you stand out from other applicants.

3. ALWAYS WRITE YOUR OWN ESSAY.

Although you may seek help from your counselor, teacher, or parents in selecting a topic or in editing, you must first do the writing. College Admission Committees are not easily fooled.

4. KEEP IT "SHORT AND SWEET".

Most college applications have minimum and maximum word requirements (for example, The Common Application limits are 250-650 words). Admissions Officers review many essays and enjoy a well-written, concise essay. Don't ask to submit an essay that exceeds the maximum word requirement. If it doesn't fit, edit it until it does.

5. BE HONEST.

Do not over exaggerate experiences. It is okay if you were a member and not the president of a club/organization. Be proud of your personal accomplishments in and out of the classroom.

6. PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAY.

You should be sure to write a draft; edit, revise, and finally have someone help you proofread your essay for misspellings and grammatical errors before you submit it.

WHAT YOU SHOULD *NOT* DO:

1. DON'T WRITE ABOUT WHAT IS ALREADY DISCUSSED IN YOUR APPLICATION OR RESUME.

Avoid merely listing again your activities in your essay. Use the essay to tell the Admissions Committee something they don't know about you.

2. DON'T BE OVERLY RISKY OR CONTROVERSIAL.

You are encouraged to share your opinions, but remember to be careful to not offend your reader. Avoid being flippant, expressing yourself in poor taste, or using ornate, pretentious language.

3. DON'T JUST TALK ABOUT IT -- *BE* ABOUT IT!

For example, don't just say "I like to surround myself with people from different interests and backgrounds." Tell the reader about a situation where you were surrounded by various types of people and what you took away from that experience.

4. DON'T TRY TO GUESS WHAT THE COLLEGE WANTS YOU TO SAY.

There are no "right" answers to the essay questions.