

College Essay Writing: Tips



Not only is the college essay a place to showcase writing skills, but it's also one of the only parts of a college application **where a student's voice can shine through**.

Unlike test scores and transcripts, the college admissions **essay offers students a chance to showcase their personality**.

"The essays are important in part because this is a student's chance to really speak directly to the admissions office," says Adam Sapp, assistant vice president and director of admissions at Pomona College in California.

Prospective college students want their essay- sometimes called a personal statement- to make a good impression and boost their chances of being accepted, but they have only several hundred words to make that happen.

This can feel like a lot of pressure. 

Here are some steps to get you started:

1. Brainstorm a topic: ['Some of the More Mundane Moments in Life Make Great Essays'](#) 
2. Join the [Writing Center's 'Brainstorm for College Essay' Session](#) (Fall and Spring semesters)
3. **Identify important themes from your own experiences:** Once you have a strong grasp on what colleges are looking for in these essays, start focusing on themes in your life. A few significant experiences have probably already come to mind as you've moved through other parts of the application process.
4. Now it's time to **narrow those down**. What aspects of your personality – or activities you're passionate about – have you thought about the most?
5. **Make sure your ideas give a full picture of who you are:** You've nailed down the prompts and your talking points. Now make sure your topic can successfully portray a genuine view of who you are – arguably the most important aspect of your application.
6. **Anatomy/ Structure of the Essay:** According to AP Guru- 
It's worth reiterating that there are no rules for college admissions essays. Students have been known to submit recipes, scripts, lists, stories featuring dialogue, interviews, etc. However, by getting familiar with some of the common elements in the college application essay, it will help you, even if you choose a more freestyle form, to make sure you're still hitting the main points. Most essays include a beginning, middle and end and are between 500-650 words.

"Even opening your essay with a brief anecdote gives a great, deep, personal glimpse into who you are as an individual. It hooks the reader, pulls them in, keeps them reading," says Kiehn, founder of Winning Applications and AdmissionsCheckUp.

7. **READ EXAMPLES!** US News college essay tips and sample essays: 
8. **Revise, revise, and edit-** "The best writing is rewriting," Sapp says. "You should never be giving me your first draft." When reviewing a first essay draft, students should make sure their writing is showing, not telling, Doe says. This means students should show their readers examples that prove they embody certain traits or beliefs, as opposed to just stating that they do.

More Resources to Help You:

- Tips for writing the essay from the College Board: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>
- Tips from Princeton Review: <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/application-essay-topics>
- Some free resources from the College Essay Guy: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-write-a-college-essay#A>
- Resources from College Wise: <https://collegewise.com/resources>
- Podcast from the College Essay Guy:

[Improve Your Personal Statement in 20 Minutes \(Full Episode\) | The College Essay Guy Podcast - YouTube](#)

- Podcast from Inside the Admissions Office: [Inside the Admissions Office: Advice from Former Admissions Officers: Personal Statement Prep: Start Practicing Reflective Writing Early on Apple Podcasts](#)
- Podcast from Getting In, start at 19:30: <https://www.voiceamerica.com/episode/124652/common-app-essay-tuition-payment-plans-strengths-coaching>

[Common App Essay; Tuition Payment Plans; Strengths Coaching Thursday, July 30, 2020 \(voiceamerica.com\)](#)

- Video from US News: <https://youtu.be/ufK2Stdstrw>

And when you are ready, sign up for an appointment in the Writing Center where you can get feedback from experienced peer tutors!

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Other Sessions hosted by the Writing Center that would help your College Essay Writing

Writing with Style and Voice

Create a sense of 'flow' with transitions

Edit Yourself

Conclusions

Help from the Common App:

