



TIPS FOR WRITING AN  
EFFECTIVE  
APPLICATION ESSAY

**CHOOSE A TOPIC THAT WILL  
HIGHLIGHT YOU**

DON'T focus on a particular college

DO share your personal story

DO be yourself

DO start early

**KEEP YOUR FOCUS NARROW &  
PERSONAL**

DON'T try to cover too many topics

DO focus on one aspect of yourself

## SHOW, DON'T TELL

DON'T simply state a fact

DO include specific details

WHAT were you doing?

WHOM did you talk with?

WHAT did you take away from the experience?

## USE YOUR OWN VOICE

DON'T rely on phrases or ideas that people have used many times before

AVOID overly formal or business-like language

DON'T use unnecessary words

DO write in your own voice

NOTE: Admission officers WILL be able to tell if your essay was edited by an adult

**ASK A TEACHER OR PARENT TO  
PROOFREAD**

DON'T turn your essay in without proofreading it

DON'T rely only on your computer's spell check to catch mistakes

DO ask a teacher or parent to proofread your essay

## ADVICE FROM OTHER STUDENTS

I think that letting the readers get to know you on a personal level is something everyone should strive for in writing an admission essay. Reveal your true self.

—Michelle, high school senior

I began by searching Google to find ways to format a college essay. Over time, I found helpful blogs that eased my anxiety. I started to jot notes down and formed an outline with my answers, and from there, I transitioned those thoughts into my college essay.

—Bianca, college senior

Do not let the thought of college application essays scare you. Some of the topics, in my opinion, have been fun ones to tackle. ... Some of the questions asked me to write about my hobbies. Because the questions were personal and related to what I enjoy, it made the process fairly painless.

—Alexander, high school senior

Write your college essays as though you are talking to a new friend about who you are and what your goals are.

—Jose, high school senior

When I met with an admission counselor at the University of Maryland, the thing she most emphasized was to be creative and different. She said that they too often get the same essays over and over again, so the creative ones that come by really stand out.

—Jen, high school senior

**8 TIPS FOR CRAFTING YOUR BEST  
COLLEGE ESSAY**

**BRAINSTORM**

**WRITE A FIRST DRAFT**

**DEVELOP YOUR ESSAY**

**BE SPECIFIC**

**FIND A CREATIVE ANGLE**

**BE HONEST**

**GET FEEDBACK**

**PROOFREAD AND MAKE CORRECTIONS**

