



The College Essay/Personal Statement

Giving Colleges a Sense of
Who you are

Why do colleges want an essay?

- To distinguish the individual student from the standardized test score
- To discover why the student wants to be a contributor to the specific university community
- To get a glimpse of the student's personal qualities
- To gain insight into the student's personal life and experiences
- To evaluate the student's writing
- To assist in providing distinction within an already competitive applicant pool
- To explain a difficult period in one's life that may have affected academic and/or social performance

The college essay or personal statement

The essay or personal statement is only one component of the college application. The weight given to the essay(s) varies by college or university, but if required, is always used in the holistic application review process.

How do I begin?

- Before you read the prompts, take time to think about what you want to say
 - Qualities that describe you
 - Family members and their influence on you
 - People outside the family and their influence
 - Famous people that have influenced you
 - Internet sites that you like
 - Things you like to do with your friends
 - Foods you like or dislike and why
 - Places you have visited (local and distant)
 - Opportunities that you have had
 - Meaningful events in your life
 - Books ,movies, music (titles, quotes) that you enjoy
 - How your friends describe you

What is the next step?

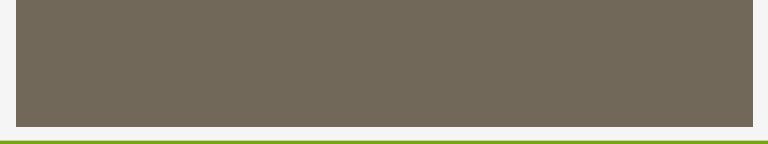
- Read the all of the prompts
- Select one where you tell something personal about yourself
- Take ample time to organize your thoughts
- Show a positive energy, capture the reader
- Develop multiple drafts
- SAVE your documents
- Be grammatically accurate
- Have multiple people proofread and assist you with revising the draft

Content Tips

- Tell your story, not someone else's
- Use your own voice
- If you are naturally funny, use it
- Use concrete examples to illustrate your qualities, accomplishments, opinions
- Speak from the heart
- Be honest
- Show the college that you are a "normal" kid
- Leave the reader with the impression that you will be a positive contributor to the community
- Be confident to speak as who you are not what you think the college wants to hear
- Follow the directions
- Pay attention to word limits.

Things to avoid in the essay

- Don't write what you think the college wants to read
- Don't go off track, stay on topic without rambling
- Avoid stereotypes of all kinds along with the desire to criticize those who may differ from you
- Don't use the essay as a tool to personally and verbally criticize others
- Don't use the essay as a forum to discuss how badly life has treated you
- Don't use the essay as an "excuse platform"
- Steer clear of controversial topics including religion, abortion, political affiliation, diversity, relationships, etc.



Use the essay as your own personal conversation between you and the admissions committee.

THIS IS THE TIME TO TELL **YOUR** STORY