

The College Essay/Personal Statement

1. REMEMBER: *The College is looking at your ability to write as well as learn a little about you that is not on the application.*
2. Get Started. Your transcript and activity resume show what you have done so far. What else do you want an admissions committee to consider? What do you like to do? What **do** you do?
3. Read some sample college essays to get a feel for what it's all about. Some excellent examples of college essays can be found at: www.teenink.com/college_guide/college_essays/.
4. Some helpful hints:
 - Make sure you answer the essay question, and follow all instructions.
 - Make sure you have a strong opening paragraph.
 - Use correct grammar and punctuation.
 - Have a viewpoint and stick to it.
 - Check your facts.
 - Pay attention to the length.
 - Make sure it is neatly typed.
 - Be original.
 - Avoid clichés.
 - Avoid the gimmick essay.
 - Don't tell the admissions committee how wonderful their school is.
 - If there is something specific about the college that makes the college a good fit for you, i.e., design your own major, opportunities for research, you can make reference to such.
 - Conclusions are critical. If your essay is short, you do not need to summarize. Avoid stock phrases like, in summary, in conclusion, to conclude. Consider linking your conclusion to your introduction to round it out.
5. Suggested topics:
 - Do you have hobbies or outside pursuits that engage your heart and mind?
 - Is there a social cause that is important to you?
 - Has an event had a profound influence on you?
 - Is there an academic subject that you find fascinating?
 - Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. Have any of these had a profound influence on you?
 - How have you overcome obstacles or responded to failure?
 - What distinguishes you from everyone else?
 - Who were your role models?

6. Don't repeat things in your essay found elsewhere on the application.
7. The essay demonstrates your writing ability. Proofread and edit. Humor can be risky, be careful with it.
8. For selective colleges, the essay helps admissions committees draw distinctions and make choices among applicants.
9. You have a lot to gain by putting in the time and effort to write a good essay.
10. After writing your essay, let it cool. Come back to it in a few days and read it again. Do you make your point clearly? Do you prove your point with specifics? Is it easy to read?
11. Let others read it and offer suggestions.
12. Revise, revise, and revise.