

College Entrance Essay Tips

Yikes, I need to write an essay for my Admissions Application or Scholarship Application!

1. Don't panic.
2. Look at what the application asks for and highlight the important points. Most application essays want to know about your goals and future plans.
 - For example, the TEACH application for the CDA/AA scholarship asks: *What are **your professional goals** in early childhood education? Describe **how a CDA or AA degree will help you achieve these goals**. Be sure to include **your long-term career goals**.*
 - *The language of the TEACH application expects that you will address these **THREE** key points in your essay.*
3. WRITE DOWN your answers to these questions.
 - Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or full sentences- just get your ideas out of your head.
 - What you would say to someone who asks you these questions in person – write EXACTLY what you would say.
4. Answer these questions the same way (WRITE DOWN what you would say):
 - Why did you become an ECE teacher?
 - What do you LOVE the most about teaching?
 - Do you have children?
 - If so, what has being a parent taught you about being a teacher?
 - Has being a teacher impacted your children's lives?
 - Do you hope to set an example for your children by continuing your own education?
 - If you don't have children talk about your hopes for your future children or for the children you teach.
 - Think about the families you help to support.
 - Do you try to set an example for them?
 - If so, talk about how you do that in your daily work and how increasing your education can help you to better support them.
5. Now put your answers to those questions in a safe place and return to them later, with a fresh perspective.
6. Circle all the statements you feel PASSIONATE about and begin to organize those ideas.
7. A format you may want to use :
 - A thesis sentence detailing your long-term goals: "I hope to own a small child care center."
 - Next, write a sentence or two about what you do now and why you love it: "In my Head Start classroom, I teach children to respect one another and to always try their best. I love being a teacher because I have the opportunity every day to shape the future of my community."
 - Follow that up with a little bit of your story – 3 or 4 sentences is okay: "I started teaching 4 years ago when my daughter was in Head Start. I volunteered in her classroom and found out I could work part-time as a Teacher Assistant. At the time, I didn't think this could become a career for me. Now I want to go to college so I can become a Lead Teacher."
 - Now make sure you've covered the highlighted statements from the application questions.
 - Using the TEACH example from above, have you mentioned:
 - **your professional goals** (Own a center, Become a Lead Teacher)
 - **how a CDA or AA degree will help** (I mentioned going to college, but I should be more specific)
 - **your long-term career goals** (Own a center)

(Over)

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- Look back at the circled statements you wrote – is there something else you want them to know?
 - “As a parent, I want to set an example for my daughter. I’m worried about being away from her at night, but I want her to understand that you never stop learning. I want to inspire her to work hard at her goals.”
 - Last but not least, wrap it up by going back to your thesis statement and tying it into your goals and personal life.
 - “The Associate Degree I hope to earn will just be a starting point for me. I want to continue my education for as long as I can. When my daughter is grown, I hope to teach her children in the center I own with my Bachelor’s degree framed on the wall.”
 - Now pull all these sentences together and read it to make sure it makes sense, you might need to do some rearranging. Notice the paragraph below has all the same sentences from above, but in a different order.
 - I love being a teacher because I have the opportunity every day to shape the future of my community. In my Head Start classroom, I teach children to respect one another and to always try their best. I started teaching 4 years ago when my daughter was in Head Start. I volunteered in her classroom and found out I could work part-time as a Teacher Assistant. At the time, I didn’t think this could become a career for me. Now I want to go to college so I can become a Lead Teacher. As a parent, I want to set an example for my daughter. I’m worried about being away from her at night, but I want her to understand that you never stop learning. I want to inspire her to work hard at her goals. One day, I hope to own a small child care center. The Associate Degree I hope to earn will just be a starting point for me. I want to continue my education for as long as I can. When my daughter is grown, I hope to teach her children in the center I own with my Bachelor’s degree framed on the wall.
8. Have someone else check your work.
- Show them the question and your final draft – Do they think your essay answers the questions?
 - Does the essay make sense?
 - If it isn’t clear to your reader, you may need to revise a sentence or two.
 - Explain what you meant to say and ask your reader for advice to rewrite.
9. Type your essay on a computer (or ask someone else to), then save it to disk or flash drive.
- If you need to write an essay again, you can recycle some or all of what you wrote.
 - If you’re not computer-savvy, print several copies and keep a CLEAN original, UNFOLDED, in a safe, clean, dry place – use it to make copies later.