



# TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

**1. GET A HEAD START.**

The earlier you begin preparing your first draft, the more time you have to write, and the less stressful writing the essay will be.

**2. BE YOURSELF.**

Use your own voice and your own words. Write sincerely in your best natural style. Writing your own individualized essay will help you stand out from other applicants.

**3. ALWAYS WRITE YOUR OWN ESSAY.**

Although you may seek help from your counselor, teacher, or parents in selecting a topic or in editing, you must first do the writing. College Admission Committees are not easily fooled.

**4. KEEP IT “SHORT AND SWEET”.**

Most college applications have minimum and maximum word requirements (for example, The Common Application limits are 250-650 words). Admissions Officers review many essays and enjoy a well-written, concise essay. Don't ask to submit an essay that exceeds the maximum word requirement. If it doesn't fit, edit it until it does.

**5. BE HONEST.**

Do not over exaggerate experiences. It is okay if you were a member and not the president of a club/organization. Be proud of your personal accomplishments in and out of the classroom.

**6. PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAY.**

You should be sure to write a draft; edit, revise, and finally have someone help you proofread your essay for misspellings and grammatical errors before you submit it.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD *NOT* DO:

**1. DON'T WRITE ABOUT WHAT IS ALREADY DISCUSSED IN YOUR APPLICATION OR RESUME.**

Avoid merely listing again your activities in your essay. Use the essay to tell the Admissions Committee something they don't know about you.

**2. DON'T BE OVERLY RISKY OR CONTROVERSIAL.**

You are encouraged to share your opinions, but remember to be careful to not offend your reader. Avoid being flippant, expressing yourself in poor taste, or using ornate, pretentious language.

**3. DON'T JUST TALK ABOUT IT -- *BE* ABOUT IT!**

For example, don't just say "I like to surround myself with people from different interests and backgrounds." Tell the reader about a situation where you were surrounded by various types of people and what you took away from that experience.

**4. DON'T TRY TO GUESS WHAT THE COLLEGE WANTS YOU TO SAY.**

There are no "right" answers to the essay questions.