



## College Essay Checklist

You wrote your essay – now what? It's time to revise – rethink, reduce, rearrange, and reword. To help with this, ask yourself these questions. And afterwards? Just because your essay is finished doesn't mean you should submit it right away. Be sure to let your essay sit and marinate for at least a week before you submit it.

### **Topic:**

- Has the essay prompt been addressed and/or the essential question answered?
- Does the first sentence grab the reader's attention? Do I avoid generalizations?
- Is the subject different and memorable without being bizarre, embarrassing, or too raw and personal?
- Is my essay one I would be proud to share with my friends and family?
- Do I illustrate my strengths and values by telling a story, unique only to me?
- Does my topic add to what I have already included on my application?
- Do I think the admissions reader would want to meet me after reading my essay?

### **Style and Word Choice:**

- Is my tone appropriately formal? Too formal and stilted? Overly casual? Does it sound like me when I read it out loud?
- Is every sentence clear and easy to understand?
- Do I employ mostly strong action verbs or do I rely too much on weak "be" verbs?
- Is my writing economical and concise or do I waste words? Which sentences can I shorten to make more effective?
- Is there variety in the length of my sentences? Do I vary the structure of my sentences?
- Do I say something new and important in each sentence, or do I repeat myself?
- In every sentence, do I say what I intend to say or do I settle for something close?
- Am I aware of the connotations of the words I use?
- Do I avoid technical jargon and slang that might be unfamiliar to my reader?
- Do I avoid clichés and bland, overused expressions?
- Am I certain that I did not plagiarize any part (word choice, structure, ideas) of my essay?

### **Mechanics:**

- Is the word count correct?
- Are the paragraph breaks correct?
- Are grammar and punctuation flawless?
- Is my verb tense consistent throughout the essay?
- Do all my verbs agree with their subjects?