Write a College Application Essay

Junior Meeting fun with Dr. H
College Admissions Considers . . .

Quantitative

- GPA
- Test Scores
- Difficulty of Classes

Qualitative

- Letters of Recommendation
- Extra Curricular Involvement
- Application Essay
Application Essays Are

- The most important qualitative component of your university application
- A source of stress for students
- Just . . . around . . . the corner
- This summer -- November 1st

Watch out kids! Those essays can sneak up on you.
Essay Prompts: Demonstrate Growth

- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

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Demonstrate Growth

- You are learning, growing, changing!
- You have perseverance, grit, courage!
- Describe the situation/event that shaped you.
- Describe WHAT you learned.
- Describe HOW you changed.
Essay Prompts: Demonstrate Passion

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

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Demonstrate Passion

- You are more than just a student!
- You have interests you’re passionate about.

- Show how you are curious and engaged with the world around you.
- Show how you pursue knowledge and interests independently.

Passionate about the beach? Passionate about the sunset?
Details

- Make sure you address the prompt, fully and clearly
- Most are 250--750 words, give or take
- Stay within word count
- Skip the 5 paragraph structure
- Edit & polish
- Get two or more readers to give feedback
- There shud B no typeos

Should I edit the essay one more time?

Yes, children. The correct answer is yes.
Choose Unique Subject Matter

Think about what you’ve already turned in for your application:

- Transcripts
- Resume’
- Application paperwork with GPA, class ranking, etc
- Maybe short answer questions

Now think about all the great information you’ve sent in . . . And don’t repeat any of it in your application essay.
Use your Voice

- This may be your only opportunity to show admissions officers your own, unique personality.
- Let your voice come through in your essay.
- The essay will probably be a little more narrative, and a little less expository.
- The tone won’t be as formal as an academic research paper.
Narrow the Scope

- These essays are usually short.
- Don’t try to cram too much in.
- Choose an anecdote to illustrate your larger point. (An anecdote is a specific story that can help demonstrate a broader concept.)
- “For example”
Be Creative & Include

- Sensory descriptions
- Figurative language
- Quoted dialogue
- Plenty of details (few generalities)
- No cliches
- Active voice
Questions?