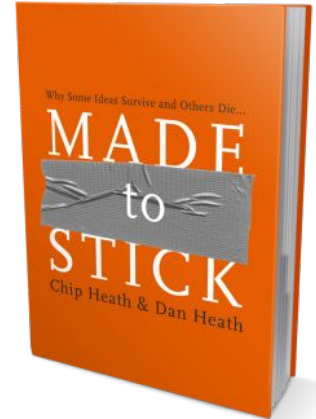

Writing Essays for College Applications


VAHS Student Services Team

Respond to the prompt

The first question to answer is whether you are writing a college admission essay or a personal statement.

An **admission essay** is a structured piece of writing that deals with a particular prompt. A **personal statement**, on the other hand, is a form of essay that relays autobiographical information about its author.





Challenges to writing the essay

Lack of confidence is a common barrier to writing

- “I’m not a good writer”
- “What do I write about?”
- “The word limit is too short”
- “There’s nothing exciting about me”

Primary Tips before you begin

It is important to research the institution you are applying to. You can't just tell them why you deserve to be there; you need to show them why they need you there without repeating everything in your brag sheet.

What are the values/mantras of the institution and how do your values align with theirs? Convince the admission reps that their school and you are the perfect fit.



- A formula that has been successful is *“who you are,” “what you’ve done,” “what you’ve learned from that and how you plan to use it to change the campus or the world.”*

Tips

- Get started early and by brainstorming- Starting the essay can be the hardest part, Brainstorming about your personality traits and defining your strengths is a good place to begin. Don't just recount-reflect!
- Let your first draft flow-After you've gathered your notes, create an outline to organize your essay and decide where you want examples to appear. Don't worry about making it perfect. Just get your ideas flowing and your thoughts down on paper. You'll fix mistakes and improve the writing in later drafts.

Develop three essay parts

- Introduction: One paragraph that introduces your essay.
- Body: Several paragraphs explaining the main idea with examples.
- Conclusion: One paragraph that summarizes and ends the essay.

Structure





Structure

- Be Specific
- Give your essay focus by figuring out how the question relates to your personal qualities and then taking a specific angle. Make sure everything you write supports that viewpoint.
- Be creative- Take a unique angle that will make your essay compelling and memorable.

Common application has announced that the 2019-2020 essay prompts will be the same for 2020-2021!



Link to the common app

<https://blog.ivywise.com/blog-0/common-application-essay-prompts>

Get feedback and please
proofread for errors.

People who know you well would be good
editors for your essay.





Good luck!

Remember that the essay is just one component of the application review but it does have the power to be a game changer for your admission status so take it seriously.

This is the part of the application where a school gets to know you as a person and not just a scholar. Show them who you are.

Questions?

Please contact your counselor with specific questions on how to begin/complete essays
