

Tips for Writing a Personal Statement

Good essays take time, patience and a good idea.

Starting early gives you time to craft something truly great. A personal statement (also known as the Common Application main essay question) is a question prompt designed to let you tell the reader all what you want he or she to know and convince them that you are a good fit for their school. Get the essay right and maybe you will get in, get it wrong and they may just ask you to get out!



It is important that you do not leave this work until the last minute and then feel rushed; there is just too much riding on a great application. In fact, the sooner you start to get something written the better. The summer break is a good time to begin writing before you get too busy with school. Junior year is also realistic for some people.

The topics that you will write about will not change much or at all between the summer break and your application deadline, and if there are any changes you can make alter your already almost complete essay draft in no time at all.

Follow these tips and get moving on writing up your personal statement:

1. Don't Overthink Your Essay

The more you wonder, "will this impress an admissions officer?" the more likely it will not. They will see that you spent too much time deciding on the "right" topic, causing your essay to lose your personality. Think about what you are going to write about, make an essay outline and then get busy putting it together. If the essay is personal and tells the reader who you are then just submit it.

2. Tell me something and SAY something!

There is no right or wrong answer to an essay question but there is good and bad answers. Instead of just recounting a past experience (I went there, I did that and then such-and-such happened to so-and-so), tell your story in an interesting way that tells admissions something (i.e., I went there and did this and then I realized that ... and now I think this...).

Your essay should be a personal story and help you to jump out from the admissions computer screen to shake hands with the reader.

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3. Reading Too Many Essays = CONFUSION

The GOOD news is that there are a ton of essays on the web for you to read. The BAD news is that there is a ton of essays on the web for you to read.

Reading too many essays will leave you confused. You may also start to question your work and then change it many times until you drive your friends and family right up the wall. Read a few essays. Make an outline. Start writing.

4. Short and Sweet

Admissions read thousands of essays every year. If you bore them they will just move on to the next applicant and you will quickly end up on the 'no' pile. Make an essay outline with what is important. Engage the reader with a 'hook' and by getting to the point quickly. Keep your paragraphs short (4-5 sentences) and don't be too wordy. Use simple English and avoid big words.

5. Funny or Not Funny?

Funny people are naturally funny. Colleges admit both funny and not-funny people so just be yourself. If humour is not your natural strength then don't risk a comedy routine in your essay. Non-funny people look bad and bore a reader when they *try* to be funny. For those who *are* funny, make sure you keep it tasteful and non-offensive; non-funny people sometimes work in admissions.

6. Set A Deadline

Coursework. Homework. Exams. Activities. Friends. Everyone is busy. If you are writing an admissions essay the night before it is due then don't expect good results. Applying for college is a huge undertaking that needs to be prioritized, as college is the next important step in your life. Start early and set up a deadline to get your work done. Stick to your schedule.

7. Talk to Others

Ask your friends and family what they think is **interesting and unique about you**. Ask them to read your essay and listen to their feedback. Does it sound like you? Bear in mind that parents, teachers and friends are not professionals for what admissions essays are supposed to be like, so it is worthwhile to invest in success and seek professional help and feedback.

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8. Age Appropriate

Admissions know how seventeen and eighteen year-olds write. They also know how parents, counselors and teachers write. You should write with your own voice and 'speak' to admissions in your essay. Be careful that you do not sound immature or childish; write like someone who is going into college, not like someone who is stuck in high school.

9. Positioning

In your essay you should discuss past experiences and how those might support your future goals at college. Admissions want to know where you have been and also where you are going. Talking about the past is very important but college is about your future. Make sure you discuss your past experience and preparation for future academic and even career goals.

10. Proofread Your Work

Forgot spill chuck! You need to proofread you work and eliminate mistakes that come from auto-correct. Print out your essay and read it again. Get a friend to read your work too, and then another friend. Invest in getting a professional admissions essay editor to review your work and make it stronger. First impressions are lasting impressions. Spelling and grammar mistakes will be the kiss of death when trying to impress admissions.

Addmitto is College Admissions Made Easy™



Your grades and test scores are already fixed so the only part of the application that you have any control over is your essays. Get some help with topics and telling your story with a full service coaching package or use our hourly editing services to get your essays just right.

About Addmitto

ADDMITTO was founded to help undergraduate applicants structure their experience and goals in a way that highlights their strengths, deals with their weak points and sets them apart from other applicants through their college admission essays and interviews.

Take an admission coaching session with us on Skype to discuss your admission strategy, choose admission essay topics or to get some help smoothing over the rough spots in your application. Stand out from other applicants by getting your essays edited and restructured to leave a more solid impact on the reader. An interview preparation session will help you to master the art of the interview and practice for the main event, helping you gain even more of an edge over your competition.

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