

Writing a Great College Essay

COLLEGE
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TIPS AND RESOURCES FROM THE COLLEGE
TRANSFER CENTER AT SEATTLE CENTRAL

A Step-By-Step Guide



Proofreading Services at Seattle Central!

Transfer Center 1102F
Offers admissions and scholarship essay proofreading by e-mail, drop-in, or appointment. May have a 48-hour turn-around during busy times.

Tutoring Center 2nd Floor
Any English tutor can proofread your essays. The tutoring center requires an appointment most times, with the exception of drop-in, evening hours.

Check out these helpful websites for more essay tips!

www.collegeboard.com
www.essayedge.com
www.nela.net
www.petersons.com
www.princetonreview.com

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If you're in the process of applying to four-year colleges, then you probably know that you're going to have to write an essay of some sort. These essays can be called personal statements, admissions essays, statements of intent, etc... But in essence, they are all geared at finding out more about you. Let's take a step-by-step look at what it takes to write a great essay!

STEP 1: BRAINSTORM!

Most essays are trying to extract information about your goals in a concise report that is indicative of your desire to succeed in the college setting. But be sure to address the nuances of the different questions for each school.

Don't know where to start??? Ask yourself these questions and answer honestly:

- What are your strengths?
- Who has been an influence in your life?
- What characteristics do you admire in yourself? In others?
- What have you participated in outside of class?
- Which jobs, clubs, and/or volunteering had an impact on you?
- Have you encountered any obstacles? How did you overcome them?
- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 or even 20 years?
- What appeals to you about this specific college?
- How do you plan on utilizing the resources available at the college?

STEP 2: SELECT YOUR TOPIC!

From your brainstorming list, choose a topic that has an interesting story, lesson, or person behind it, or a topic that shows your uniqueness. Consider the following:



- The topic is personal and meaningful to you.
- You have concrete examples to support your topic.
- Your story relates to the question being asked.
- The topic or story is interesting or unique, and will grab attention.
- You can be honest and genuine about the story.
- The topic does not focus on your weaknesses.
- Generally, the topic is not controversial, or opinion-based, unless you can be objective.

STEP 3: OUTLINE AND ROUGH DRAFT

Like most essays you'd write for English class, your admissions essay will include an **introduction**, **body** and **conclusion**. Grab attention in your first paragraph, support the topic of your essay with examples in the body of your essay, and conclude your story by relating your examples to the topic sentence.

STEP 4: PROOFREAD!

First, proofread your own essay. Did you use your own vocabulary? Good sentence variety and flow? Did you avoid clichés?

Have other people look at your essay! Friends, family, and school resources can provide valuable feedback!