

ACE YOUR APPLICATION ESSAY

WITH THIS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



SEE 3 ESSAYS THAT WORKED

QUICK TIP:



DON'T LOVE YOUR FIRST SENTENCE?

DELETE THE FIRST THREE SENTENCES AND TRY AGAIN.

WHAT ADMISSIONS LOOKS FOR ...



A well-written, thoughtful personal statement that tells them something about you they can't learn from the rest of your application

A proofed essay—no typos, no grammatical mistakes, no spelling errors

A logical argument or creative response, if you're answering a specific question



AS YOU WRITE IT ...

DO

- ✓ Start with a first sentence that really draws the reader in.
- ✓ Continue writing even when you feel blocked, then go back and edit. There may be something usable there.
- ✓ Keep asking yourself if you're answering the question at hand. If you aren't sure, start over.
- ✓ Stay true to your writing style. There's no need to use long words when a short one will do, if that's how you normally talk.

DON'T

- ✗ Embellish or be dishonest about the stories you're telling.
- ✗ Forget to break it up into paragraphs. Even though it's personal, it should still have an introduction, body and conclusion.
- ✗ Use a passive voice when you can make it more active.
- ✗ Stress about the final draft. You'll get there!
- ✗ Use humor too much or in the wrong way. It's a fine line, since you won't know who will be reading your essay.

Wherever you're **applying to college**, the application essay is a great opportunity to show Admissions how well you write. Make it a slam dunk using these tips.

5 THINGS TO DO AFTER YOU WRITE IT

- 1 READ IT OUT LOUD**
so you can distinctly hear clunky parts that don't make sense.
- 2 ASK THREE PEOPLE TO READ IT**
with specific goals in mind: a teacher to look at the content and grammar; a parent to find missing words and typos; and a friend to make sure your voice shines through.
- 3 CHECK THE WORD COUNT**
If it's over the requirement, go back and cut. If the application only has a suggested minimum, keep it concise and close to that.
- 4 USE SPELLCHECK**
and other reputable sources for words you aren't completely sure about.
- 5 HEED ANY SUGGESTIONS YOU TRULY FIND USEFUL**, but at the end of the day, stick with what you're comfortable with and believe in.

BLOCKED FROM THE START?



Write about what you know

Try starting with an anecdote

Pick a topic you care about

Recall the stories you often like to tell about yourself and go from there

DID YOU KNOW ESSAYS ARE OPTIONAL AT SIENA?



Although the essay is optional for the majority of our applicants, many students still choose to submit one to help our admissions team learn more about them. We also offer the option of submitting a graded English or history paper from either junior or senior year to show off your best work.

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT, MAKE SURE ...



- the file name, if you're attaching a file, has your name in it.
- it's in the format the application requires.
- spacing is correct, if you copied and pasted it from a Word doc into an online application.
- the pages are in the correct order, if you're mailing it in.
- YOU CONGRATULATE YOURSELF. IT'S DONE!**



SIENA

USING AI FOR YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

WITH THIS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



REMEMBER:



Using artificial intelligence can be helpful while you're planning or editing your college essay but only if you're doing it the right way.

BOTTOM LINE:



Use AI as a tool to help you get started and clean things up but never as a shortcut to skip the thinking and writing. Your college essay should be your story, in your words. Never let a chat bot write your essay for you.

HOW TO USE AI DURING THE WRITING PROCESS:

✓ BRAINSTORM ESSAY TOPICS

Not sure what to write about? Try typing something like this into a tool like ChatGPT:
"I'm writing my college essay and need ideas. I'm a high school senior who... [add 3-4 details such as work/volunteer experience, hobbies, siblings, etc.]"

✓ MAKE A QUICK OUTLINE

Once you have a topic, you can ask:
"Can you help me outline my college essay about [insert topic]?"

✓ POLISH YOUR DRAFT

When your draft is done, try:
"Can you suggest ways to fix grammar or awkward sentences in this paragraph? [paste your paragraph]"