

Senior Essay Workshop

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College Application Essays

Essay = Opportunity!

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Start by spending some time thinking before you start- what would you share in an interview if you had the chance?

You can write a great essay

- **Be concise-** Minimum of 250 words, about a page and a half double spaced is ideal.
- **Be Honest-** Be yourself. Don't embellish your achievements. Write in your own voice.
- **Be an Individual-** How can you distinguish yourself?
- **Be coherent & organized-** Don't try to cover it all, narrow your focus.

More tips

- **Be accurate-** Get the punctuation right, spell names correctly, don't depend on spell check, explain abbreviations. Don't Plagiarize!
- **Be descriptive-** Engage the reader with vivid descriptions, narratives are good, tell a story.
- **Be likable-** Convey your ability to work with others, humor is alright, but don't over use it.

Critiquing and Revising

- The best people to critique your essay will be your English teacher, BUT do not forget...
 - Give them ample time
 - “Thank you” note
 - Receive their criticism with an open mind, they are here to help you even if they may say things you don’t want to hear

Who Else Should Critique Your Essays?

- Counselors
- Parents
- Other teachers

No-Nos in your Writing

- Insincerity
- Forced humor
- Ideological issues
- Misspellings, grammar, or typographical errors
- Focus on boyfriend/girlfriend relationships
- Profanity

Topics They Don't Like

- Rehashing extracurricular activities because you already listed these in the application
- Travelogues
- Recovery from sports injury (athletes)
- Editorializing the top news item

Topics They Like

- Curiosity
- Passion
- Persistence
- Responsibility
- Leadership
- Commitment
- Growth
 - Don't TELL the admission officers that you are curious/passionate/persistent, but SHOW them.

Finalizing

- Be sure that you have no misspellings
- Be sure that you have the correct SCHOOL NAME in the essay

Apply Texas-Essay A

- What was the environment in which you were raised? Describe your family, home, neighborhood, or community, and explain how it has shaped you as a person.

Apply Texas Essay B

- Some students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. If you are one of these students, then tell us about yourself.

Apply Texas Essay C

- You've got a ticket in your hand – Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?