



Essay Writing

Title VI

Jordan School District

How Important are Essays?



Essays are one of the most important part of a college application.

Sales Pitch

Perspective

Character



Sales Pitch

Think of your essay as the chance to really "sell" yourself. This is the part of your application that is most open to personal style, so it is the time to show your perspective and convince the board that you are more interesting than other candidates.



Perspective

Utilize your differences. Colleges have people applying from all around the world, but only you have your perspective. Use the essay as the time to showcase how your upbringing and life has made your perspective valuable, and given you insight that no one else has.

Character

Essays are the one part of an application that is open to interpretation and allows the reader to get to know you. The rest of a college application is fairly rigid, but the essay is open to interpretation. This means that no matter how you write it, your character and personality will come through.

What are colleges looking for?

Be yourself

Follow instructions

Impact

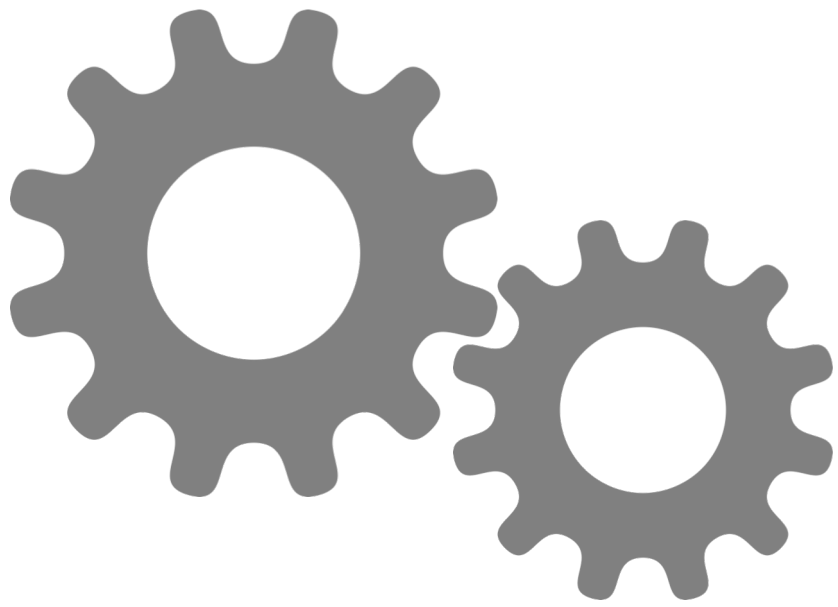
Tell a story

Be natural



Be Yourself

The essay section is the time and space in your application where you are supposed to illustrate what makes you unique. This is the time to showcase your perspective on the world. Do not be disingenuous.



Follow Instructions

The people reading college essays have to read through so many every day. They don't have time or inclination to read through something that doesn't follow the instructions.



Impact

Write about something that's important to you. - No matter what the prompt is, you should focus on making sure that the essay you write focuses on how the experience was important to you.



Tell a story

Make sure that your essay is engaging. It doesn't need to be “fun”, you could be talking about a very serious situation, or something sad. However, remember that the person reading your essay is still a person, and they want to be engaged with your writing.

Be natural



Use words that seem natural. - One of the major pitfalls in many college application essays is that many students feel the need to swap out words they would normally use for bigger more “impressive” words. It will definitely be noticeable if you are using a thesaurus to swap out words.

When is your essay ready?

Look around

Brainstorm

One month rule

Revise, revise, revise!

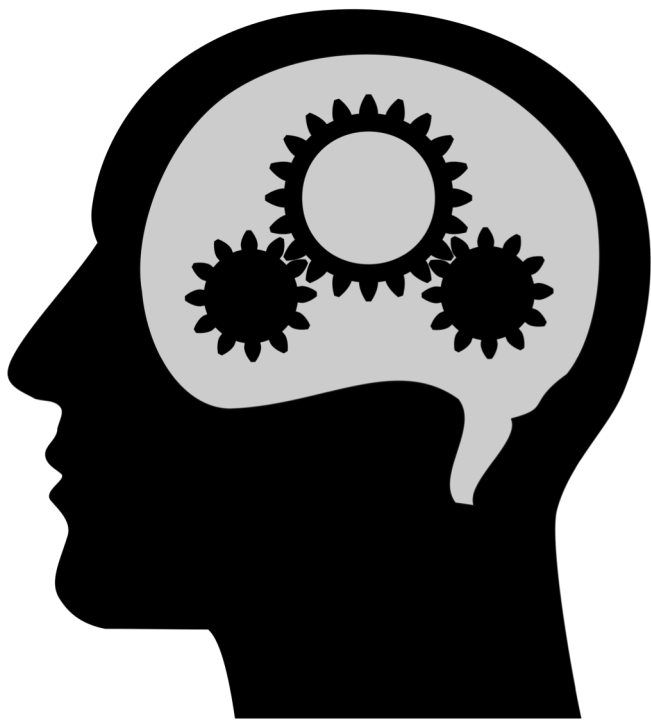
Feedback





Look around

Look at colleges. While most colleges have very similar essay prompts, it is important to know exactly what the prompts are for the colleges you want to apply to.



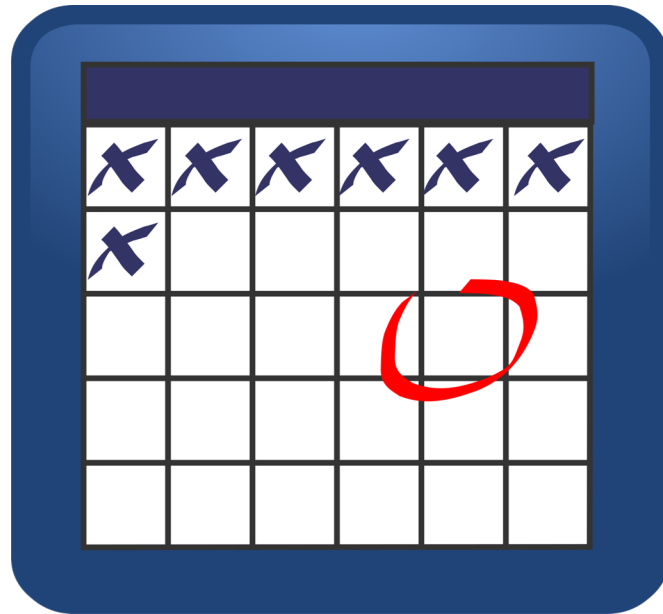
Brainstorm

Once you know that the prompts are going to be for the college or colleges you are applying for, spend some time brainstorming what you are going to write about. Don't just write about the first thing you can remember. Think about it and try to find an experience that would be unique to you, AND make for a compelling story.

One Month Rule

You want to start writing your essay at least a month before the final deadline. You should pick from your list of brainstormed ideas and write about a situation that is important to you.

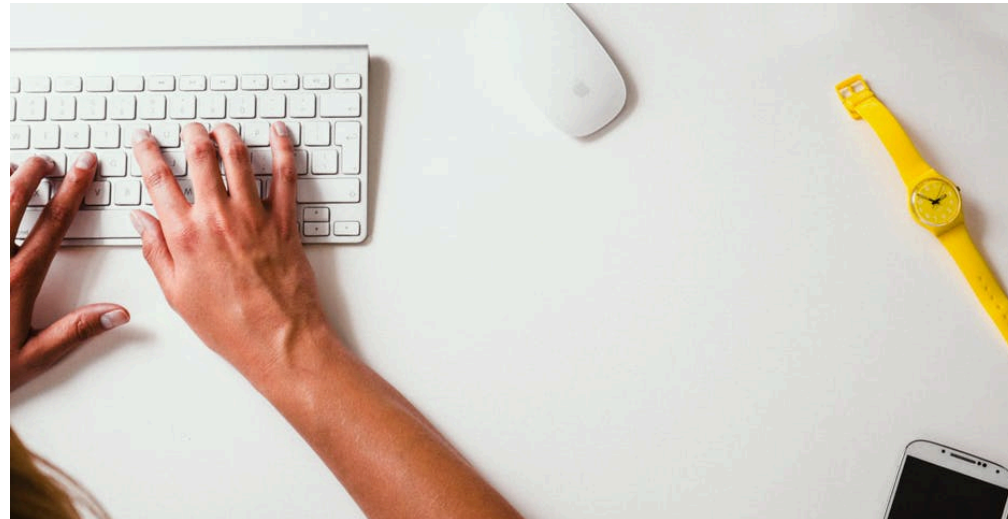
Because it is important to you, and because you should be using your own words, your first draft should be short and from the heart.



Revise, revise, revise!

Once you have your basic outline, make sure that you look your essay over and tweak what you need to in order for the flow to make sense, or for any clarification that you need to make.

You shouldn't really be changing the fundamentals of the essay, because it should be a personal reflection, but you can edit it to make it more compelling and have a better flow.



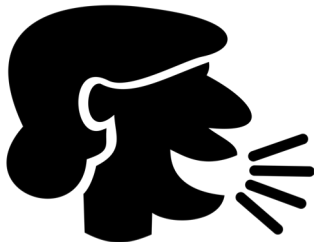
Feedback

Ask for feedback. One of the most important steps is asking for, and receiving feedback from trusted sources.

You should ask for feedback from at least two different sources. One of the people you should ask should be someone who knows you well.

The other should help to make sure that the essay flows well, and is compelling to read.

Make sure that you ask them without assuming that they will do it.



Topics to avoid

Too personal

No Impact

Overused

Divisive

Quotes

Bragging

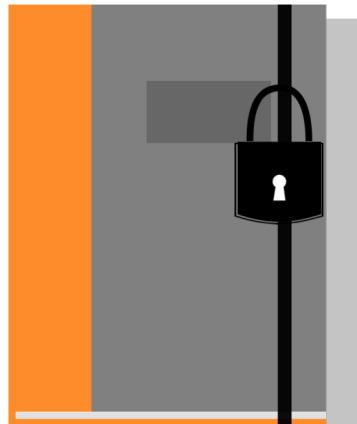
Illegal activity



Too personal

Make it personal, but not too personal. There is a fine line between disclosing important information to establish character, and disclosing information that is too personal that it is inappropriate to discuss with strangers.

Do NOT disclose information that you would be uncomfortable with strangers knowing.



No Impact

Don't talk about experiences that you have had that didn't actually make a large impact on you.

Try not to have your entire essay be a metaphor for something else, it is okay to use metaphors in your essay, but I would avoid it if possible.

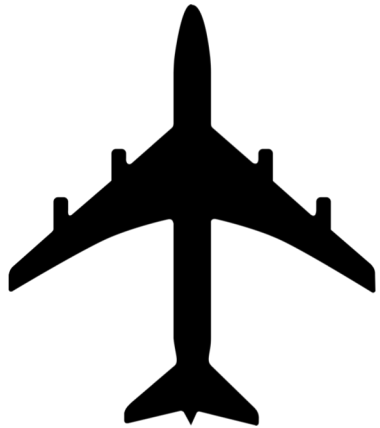


Overused



Avoid talking about sports, volunteer work, or travel.

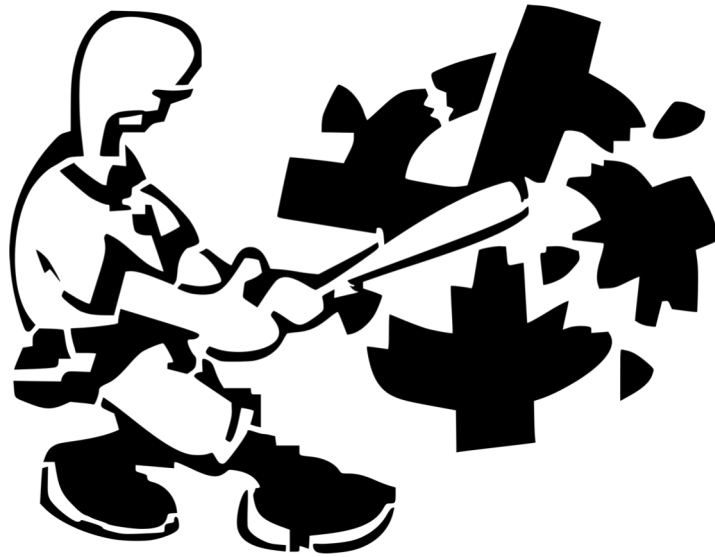
All of these topics are simply overused. They generally are not very interesting, however if you truly believe that your experience is different than the majority of essays discussing these topics, you may do it, but it is not recommended.



Divisive

Avoid talking about religion, politics, or death.

These topics can be dealt with in an interesting way, but often times they can be divisive.



Quotes

Avoid using quotes. Even quotes by famous people-those are cliché and most of the time they don't make a positive impact on your essay.

If you are using quotes from the event then cut as much of it out as possible.

In general, reading quotes kills the flow of an essay.



Bragging

Don't use the essay as an opportunity to brag. All of your awards, commendations, and accolades should be in the other parts of your application.



Illegal activity

DO NOT discuss illegal activity. This should be self-explanatory, but never put in information about illegal or illicit activities that you have engaged in.

It is **HIGHLY** recommended that you do not write about any situation that involves illegal or illicit activity, but if it cannot be avoided, then make sure to never include personal information about the person who is engaging in the activity.



Scholarship Opportunities



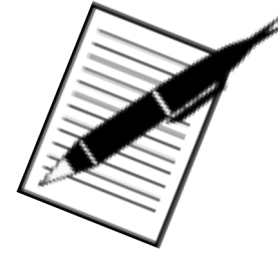
Never pay for a scholarship application. - If any scholarship offer requires you to pay for any service related to it, that is a very strong sign that it is a scam. Scholarships exist to give YOU money, not for you to give money to them.

<http://www.americanindianservices.org/>

Links will be emailed to anyone who leaves their email address.



Go find them!



Questions?

Concerns?