Tips for the college application essay

Your college application essay is a key aspect of your overall application. Here are some ways you can take your essay to the next level:

1. **Pick the perfect topic**

Instead of writing about a topic that you think a college admissions professional would want to read, write about something you’re passionate about. What do you want your potential college to know about you? Your essay should let admissions professionals see a unique side of you that is different than your high school transcripts and list of activities.

For example:

* 1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.
  2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
  3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
  4. Describe a problem you’ve solved or a problem you’d like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma — anything of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
  5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
  6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
  7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you’ve already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Whether one of the listed essay prompts catches your eye, or you wish to write about something else, picking a topic that you want to write about will help let your creativity shine. An admissions professional will be able to feel your passion and interest through the paper.

**Proofread, and proofread again**

Your college essay is a written representation of your true self. Show college admissions panels that you’re a serious applicant by staying structured. Make sure your essay is free from any grammatical errors and misspellings. Ask a friend, family member, or one of your high school teachers to look over your college essay before you submit. It’s always helpful to get a second set of eyes on your work to make sure it’s complete and accurate.