

## Writing a College Application Essay

### What should I write about in my college application essay?

This is your chance to let the admissions committee know who you are beyond just the grades and test scores that are on your college and high school transcripts. There is no right or wrong way to write an essay. Think about what is important for the admissions committee to know about you.

**This is an opportunity to showcase who you are. View writing the essay as a positive!**

Unless the school is asking a specific question, the essay can vary greatly. Students have written successful essays about everything from a solo hiking trip, volunteering with a youth program, to the academic program at the school they have an interest in.

There are several reasons why colleges may choose to have you write an essay. Among those are to see what your thought process is, how strong of a writer you are, and what you may bring to the campus as a student... are you an individual who will make a difference in some way? Other possible reasons may include, but are not limited to, finding out more about who you are as a person, what makes you tick, whether or not you have any experience in your desired field of study, how you have grown as a person, how you handle adversity, your view on the world around you... the list goes on.

The 4-year college may want to know the academic fit... are you the right fit based on your interests and goals for what the program offers. You want to express why the school is a strong fit for you beyond repeating the advertising the school does for themselves.

**Avoid negatives or placing blame on others. Show the reader how you have grown and learned from both your good and bad experiences.**

Research the individual major and faculty so you can incorporate some specifics about the program you are applying to and how that relates to what interests you. What are you intellectually curious about? What recent research has been completed at the college that has you interested? Are there any books/papers that have been written by a faculty member that tie into what you want to study?

Also, make sure you refer to the program by its appropriate title. Don't refer to an academic area as the "School of Music" or "Music Department" if it is officially the "College of Performing Arts & Music."

Research the program, know the program, and understand as much as you can about it before you start your essay.

More competitive schools place more weight on the essay than other schools do. They want to be sure the student is the right fit for the school and vice versa.

Ask a few people, including yourself and at least one person with an academic background in English, to read carefully through the essay. **Do Not Rely Solely on Spellcheck!**

For more information, visit Purdue University's webpage on [writing application essays](#).