

Essay Writing for College Applications

The background is a solid teal color. On the right side, there are several decorative elements: a large, semi-transparent pie chart with three segments, a smaller pie chart above it, another smaller pie chart to the right, and a bar chart at the bottom right with four vertical bars of increasing height.

Created by: Michelle Olejnik

Sources: University of Chicago Counselor Symposium

Pre-Survey



Contents

- Selective & Highly Selective Schools
- Personal Statements
- Why This School?
- Application Essay Questions
- Reminders for All Essays





Selective & Highly Selective Schools

- Competing against several highly qualified applicants
- Essays are a way to stand out
- Can highlight information not already on your application

“Most Selective” Colleges by State



Personal Statement

- Can make or break admission
- Show interest in the specific university
- In your own voice
 - Write like you speak





Essay Questions / Extended Essays

- Prompts are intentionally vague
- Make it compelling, personal, and interesting
- Keep audience (admissions committee) in mind
- 3 T's - technique, topic, tone
- Be careful with humor
- If given option to create your own prompt, do not use question from another application!

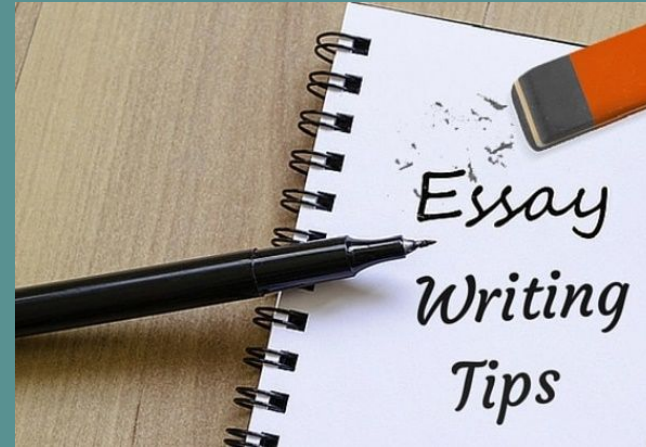
Why This School?

- Make sure it is UNIQUE to the school
 - Include specific details
 - Must pass “white out test”
- Keep in your voice
- Combine details with intangibles
- Can demonstrate fit into school



Reminders for ALL Essays

- Write in your own voice
- 3 T's - technique, topic, tone
- Engaging - personal, compelling, interesting
- Keep final reader (admissions committee) in mind
- Have someone else review
- Optional essays are not optional!
- Start writing early
- Edit and save as you go





Common Application Essay Prompts 2018-2019

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then 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?



Common Application Essay Prompts 2018-2019

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 that is 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 that 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.



Coalition Application Essay Prompts 2018-2019

1. Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.
2. Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.
3. Has there been a time when you've had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your beliefs?
4. What is the hardest part of being a teenager now? What's the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend (assuming they would listen to you)?
5. Submit an essay on a topic of your choice.

Any Questions?



**KEEP
CALM
AND
WRITE
THE ESSAY**



**TELL US WHAT
YOU THINK**

Please complete the post-survey that has been posted to your Google Classroom.

Thank you!