

# Essay Do's and Don'ts

There is no formula to writing an essay; no right or wrong answers. Be true to yourself and write what you care about.

## What to Do:

- Be original in your word choice and the way you present your ideas. Your essay should be in your voice. Colleges can tell the difference between a student's essay and one that has been overly edited by a parent or adult.
- Your essay should give the admissions reader insight into you as a student and a person. This is your opportunity to show the admissions committee what is unique and outstanding about you.
- Address the essay topic. Avoid generalizations.
- Know the word limit on the essay and stick to it. Be precise and to point.
- Proofread your essay. Have others review it to give you feedback and suggestions. Ask the reader if it accurately reflects you as a person.
- Write about a topic that you are passionate about.
- Remember your audience. Understand the college you are applying to; why are they asking these questions?

## What Not to Do:

- Do not be funny if you are not a comic writer. This may not come across as you expect to the admissions committee.
- Do not repeat information in your essay that can be found elsewhere in your application. Do not just repeat your resume information or activities list.
- Do not write "what you think the admissions committee wants to read". Remember your audience while being true to yourself and be honest.
- Do not use an essay that was written for an academic class. You don't need a thesis and don't use a thesaurus, big words are not necessary.
- Do not wait until the last minute. You will need at least three drafts.
- Do not get too many people involved in your essay. Pick one or two people to ready your essay. If too many people get involved you lose "your voice" in the essay. It should always be in "your words". Limit parent involvement.

## Reasons college admissions have you write essays:

- To see how well you write. Grammar, punctuation and sentence structure.
- Your sense of maturity and perspective; values. What qualities would you bring to the school? How will you fit in?
- To get to know you better. Tell about yourself; who you are.