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# Admissions Essay Tips

The college essay is a major factor in the college admissions process. College admissions officials want to get a sense of who the student is and what they would contribute to the school. Students should represent themselves beyond their test scores and transcripts. Encourage students to put the necessary hard work into their essay to make it a strong and compelling piece of writing.

## Getting Started

- Write an outline
- Follow directions and make sure that the essay follows the prompt provided
- Let the first draft flow – it doesn't have to be perfect
- Tell a story – stand out by being original and engaging
- Create intrigue in the opening paragraph – does the opening sentence make you want to keep reading?
- Use specific and vivid details – show, don't tell
- Stay focused and provide a clear, complete response
- Be honest
- Ask several people – a teacher, counselor, parent/ guardian – to proofread the essay and to offer suggestions
- Revise, revise, and revise!

## Do...

- Be clear and concise – do not go over the word limit
- Be honest – do not embellish your achievements and experiences
- Be an individual – distinguish yourself from the thousands of other students applying
- Be accurate – be mindful of grammar and punctuation errors

## Don't...

- Be offensive – do not use an informal tone
- Be redundant – do not repeat information that can be found on your resume or transcript
- Use clichés – avoid vague and meaningless language
- Plagiarize – don't take words or ideas from someone else
- Focus entirely on the college – the essay is about you, not a college!

### Common Mistakes

- Copying former essays
- Plagiarizing
- Using big words for the sake of using them – good writers use the best words, not the biggest
- Writing more or less than required – follow the directions
- Solely reciting information that can be found on the resume or application
- Focusing on the great aspects of a particular college – the focus should be on the student

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### PhillyGoes2College

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