

ESSAY WRITING TIPS

Here are some tips from colleges/universities:

- Follow instructions.
- Answer the question/prompt.
- Use good grammar; articulate your ideas and experiences thoughtfully. The readers want to see college level writing.
- Write with feeling and emotion; talk about your passions and values.
- Talk about why you are interested in that specific campus AND what you can bring/contribute to the campus.
- Give the writer an academic glimpse. Talk about the rigor of your courses, your GPA (or artifacts/elements/proficiency portfolio), and your ACT score. Explain any “flags” they may see and how you overcame these or pushed through.
- Get feedback from peers, from adults who know you and from adults who don’t know you so that you know your essay will be good for your audience.

FAQs:

- What if I need to explain things that are not part of the question/prompt?
 - Answer the prompt first and tie this information in the end.
- How long is an appropriate essay?
 - The focus should be on a solid essay. It could be 2 to 3 paragraphs. In most cases, it can be under a page.
- What if I’m a bad test taker and this is reflected in my ACT score or GPA?
 - Explain this in the essay, but also talk about how you are overcoming this. There will be tests in college, so how will you handle this and graduate?

Other information:

- More colleges are moving towards using applications for scholarships as well, so remember this when you are writing your essay.
- Many colleges look at the essay for students “on the bubble”, who may not have the exact GPA or ACT score they are looking for as a way to decide on acceptance. Follow the above tips for a solid essay that could work in your favor!