



# The Application Authority™

[www.TheApplicationAuthority.com](http://www.TheApplicationAuthority.com)

## Essay Dos and Don'ts

My number one DO is DO be genuine!

My number one DON'T is DON'T underestimate the importance of the essays. Essays are an effective way to differentiate amongst similarly qualified applicants.

Here's a list of other dos and don'ts:

### DOs:

- **Spend time brainstorming:** A significant portion of your essay-writing time should be spent brainstorming. Build a solid foundation before starting your essays
- **Start early:** It's never too early to start the process. Trust me, you'll be glad you did
- **Be genuine:** YOU are the one applying to get into the school. Don't take tips from Heather, who got into your school of choice last year. You are not Heather. Express YOUR unique qualities and attributes. Plus, do you want to look back and wonder for the rest of your life if you would have gotten in by expressing your true self instead of emulating others? Be you and go after your goals genuinely and authentically
- **Be honest:** There's no need to lie on your college applications
- **Focus beyond your accomplishments:** Your accomplishments are great and certainly tell part of your story, but a large part of what the college is looking at is YOU. It's your job to show them everything they need to know
- **Tell YOUR story:** Many students want their "story" to be flawless and perfect. That's just not realistic and that's not how life works.



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- Don't be afraid to show your journey, with the ups and downs included. It's all about how you contextualize the points
- **Be direct:** With the word count restrictions, not to mention that application reviewers are reading thousands of essays, you simply don't have room to be indirect and passive
- **Contextualize:** It's your job to put your experiences, attributes, qualities, and interests into context. Do this well and make sure the application reviewers don't have to work to understand your points
- **Understand the difference between the Common Application personal statement and school-specific essays:** The Common Application prompt is a personal statement. The school-specific essays are just that, they're essays

## DON'TS:

- **Underestimate the importance of the essays:** See intro paragraph. The essays are often the only glimpse into who you are. Anyone can score well on tests and in quantitative, objective work, but use the essays to showcase YOU. The essays are extremely important and can swing your application either way!
- **Plagiarize:** Just like with lying, there's no need to plagiarize
- **Be afraid:** Fear can be paralyzing. Start early and spend time brainstorming. Set a strong foundation
- **Exceed the word limit:** The word limit is there for a reason. Plus, a good writer can express him or her self in fewer words
- **Rely on your Aunt Sally to proofread your essays:** This decision is too important to rely on a family member to review your essays. Sure, that may work for a class essay here or there, but this is your future!
- **Try too hard:** Write in your natural style. If you include verbiage, style, or humor in an unnatural way, it's apparent
- **Write what you think Admissions Officers want to hear:** This is the quickest route to a BAD essay



## Want to Learn More?

Check out our *Book on College Applications*. Or, work with us 1:1 and we'll help you craft winning essays!