



The Application  
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## Don't Read Other Students' Application Essays

Two of the biggest mistakes you can make are reading other students' essays for inspiration, and trying to model your essay off of another student's essay.

The essay process is extremely personal, and successful essays take many shapes and forms. If there were a formula for successful essay writing, everyone would be following it! And then the formula would change because it would become ubiquitous.

Plus, you need to give yourself the opportunity to create an essay that's so genuine to you that none of the other millions of college applicants could write it. If you copy someone else's story or style, it WILL absolutely sound forced, the Admissions Officers will notice you for the wrong reasons, and you'll do yourself a huge disservice.

For more details on this, see *The Right Approach to Writing Your College Essay*, which includes tips from a University of Richmond Admissions Officer.

Instead of modeling your work off someone else's, follow these guidelines for assessing your essay topic and style:

1. Will anyone else be able to write about this topic the way I do?  
Essays are not first dates; you don't need to avoid cliché topics. You do, however, need to put your own spin on it.
2. Do I share something the Admissions Officers wouldn't otherwise know about me?
3. Will the Admissions Officers want to meet me or know more about me?



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4. Will the Admissions Officers envision me being a good fit at their school?
5. Am I conveying an overall positive message?
6. Does the essay's tone reflect my voice?

I've found that more often than not, students who read other students' essays end up scaring themselves and then tackling the essays in a completely ineffective way. Don't be one of those applicants.

## Want to Learn More?

Work with us 1:1 and we'll guide you through it!