

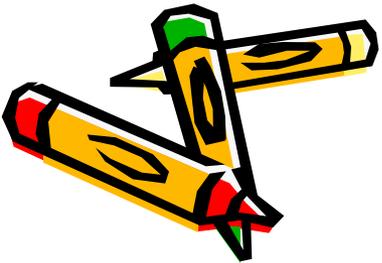
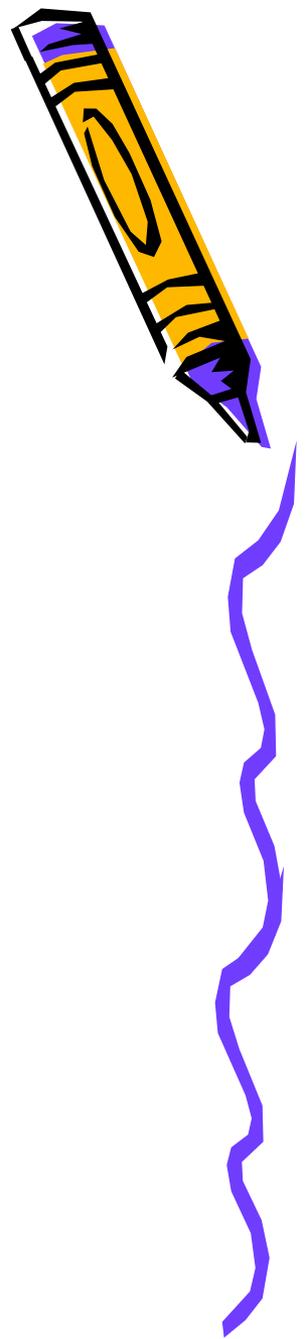
Writing the College Essay

Presented by College OPTIONS

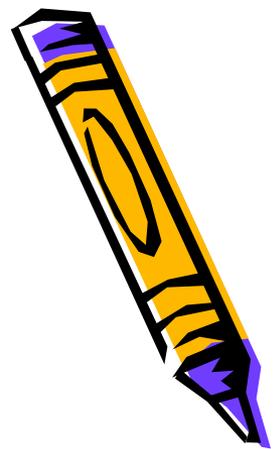


What the essay is NOT...

- A list of classes and grades taken
- A list of extracurricular activities
- An opportunity to show off your vocabulary
- An essay about someone else
- A scholastic essay
- Bartlett's book of quotations

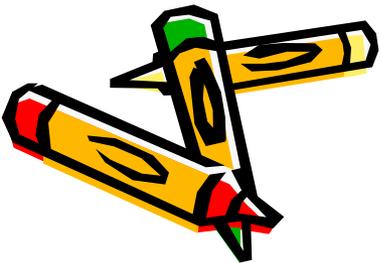


What the essay *is*...

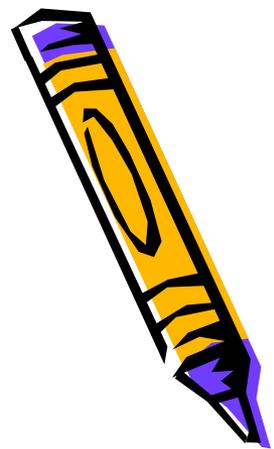


- "The Interview" (on paper)
- Opportunity to explain in-depth ONE thing about yourself (maybe two if two essays)
- YOU!

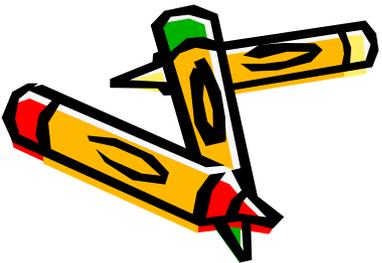
- UC Personal Statement Video



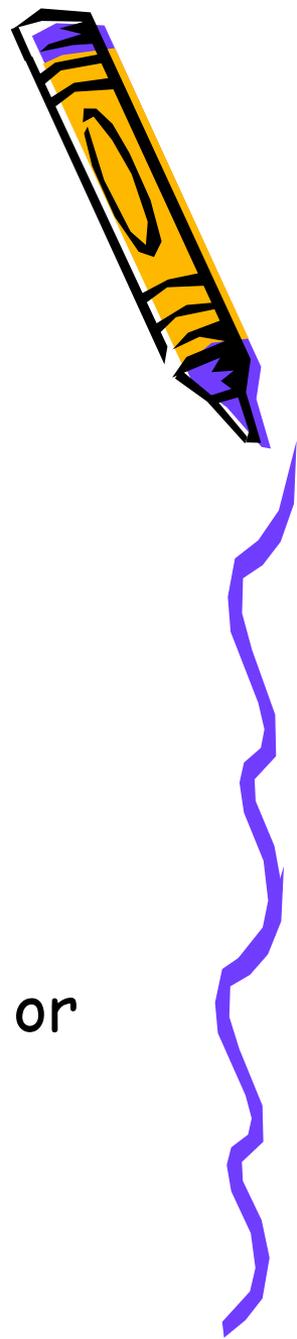
K.I.S.S.



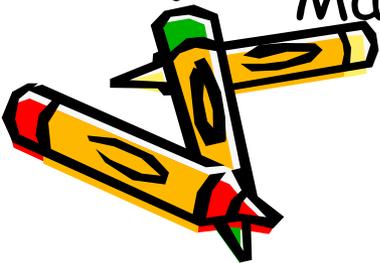
- Keep It Simple, Stu...dent
- Show, Don't Tell - specific examples
- Try to focus the essay on one topic per response
- Minimal intro/conclusion
- Stick to simple prose



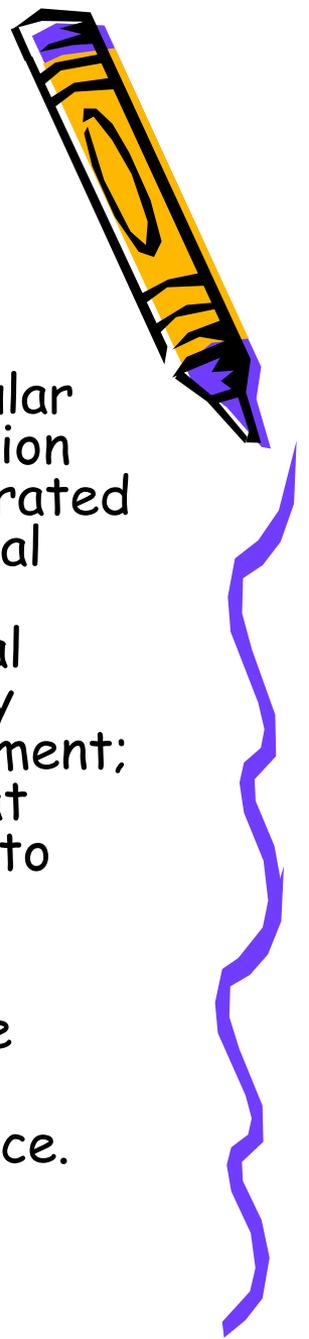
What do colleges consider to admit you?



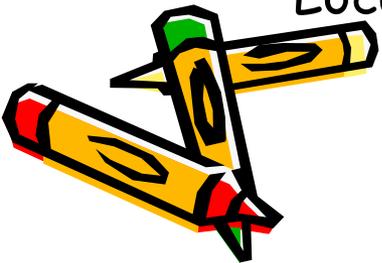
- GPA
- Test Scores
- Courses taken beyond the minimum
- AP, Honors, College level courses
- Ranking in high school
- Senior year academics
- Academic performance compared to opportunities
- Outstanding performance or projects in one or more academic subject areas.
- Marked Improvement



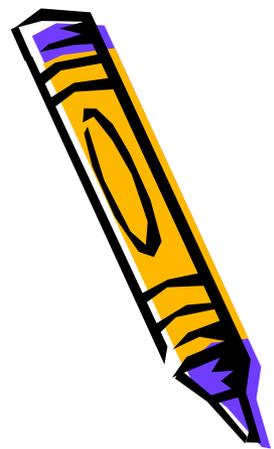
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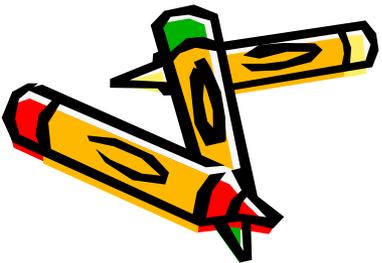
- Special talents, achievements and awards in a particular field, such as visual and performing arts, communication or athletic endeavors; special skills, such as demonstrated written and oral proficiency in other languages; special interests, such as intensive study and exploration of other cultures; experiences that demonstrate unusual promise for leadership, such as significant community service or significant participation in student government; or other significant experiences or achievements that demonstrate the student's promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus.
- Participation in enrichment programs.
- Academic accomplishments in light of a student's life experiences and special circumstances.
- Location of a student's secondary school and residence.



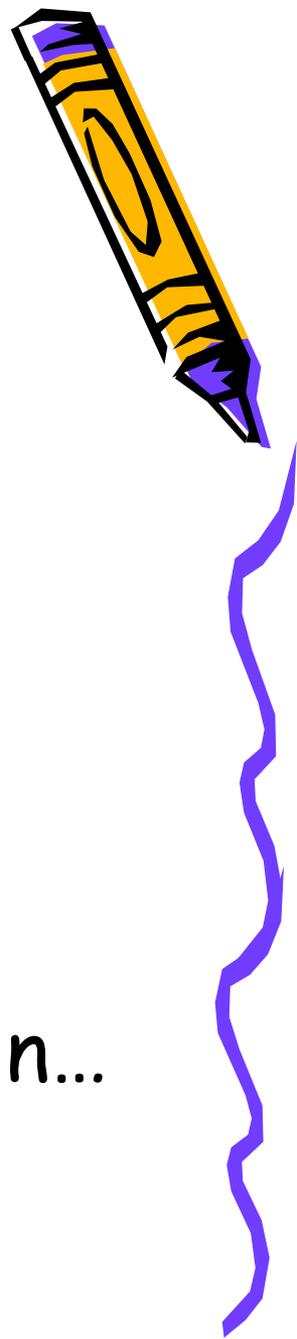
Note to self...



...this is pretty much what scholarship committees are looking at, too, so all this info applies to scholarship essays.



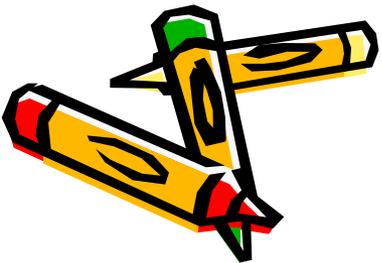
What DO you write about?



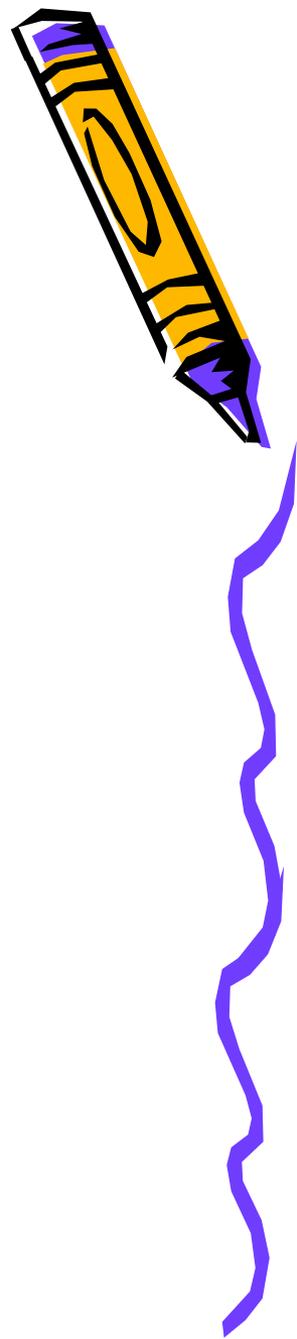
- GPA?
- Test Scores?

NO

Unless you have something to explain...

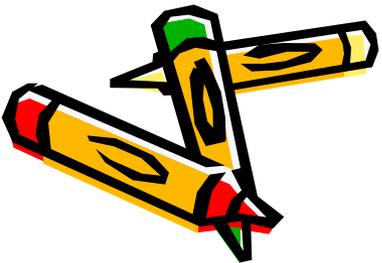


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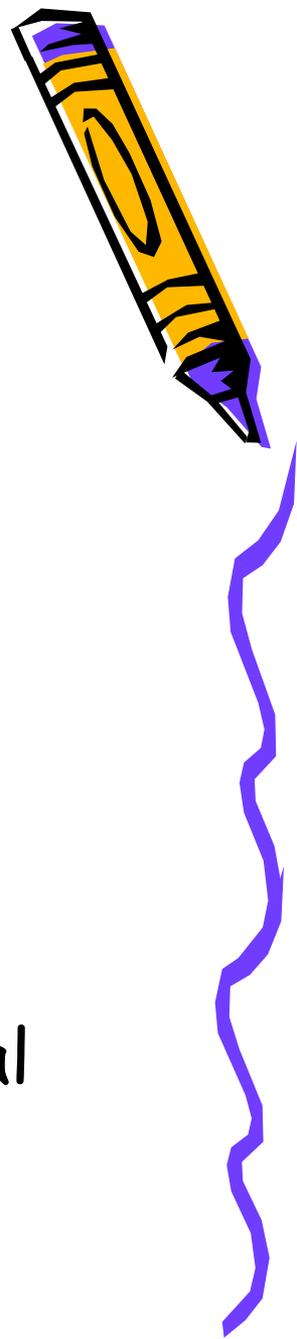


- Courses taken beyond the minimum?
- AP, Honors, College level courses?
- Ranking in high school?

NO



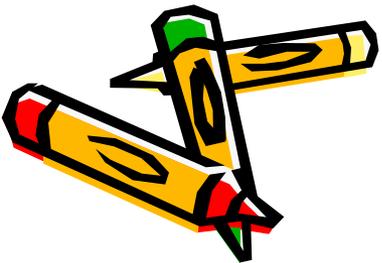
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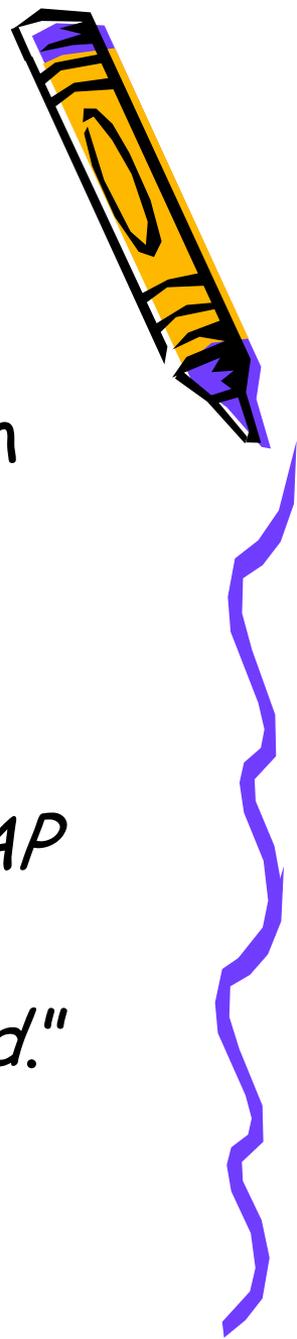
- Senior year academics?
- Academic performance compared to opportunities?

Possibly

Especially if you are not like the typical student at your school...



What DO you write about?

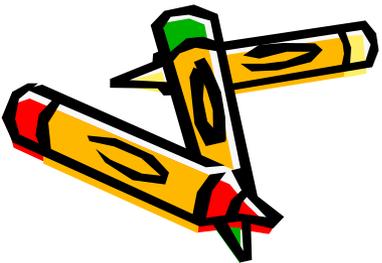


- Outstanding performance or projects in one or more academic subject areas?

Yes, but...

We're not talking about "*I got an A in AP English*".

We're talking about "*I've been published.*"



What DO you write about?

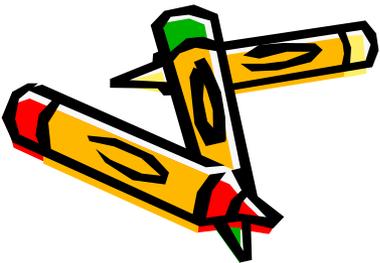
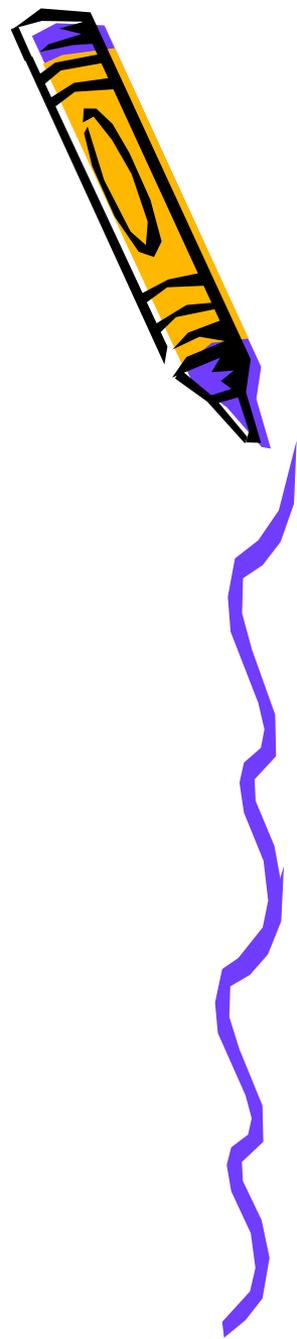
- Marked Improvement?

Possibly

Basic level to AP/Honors

C/Ds to A/Bs

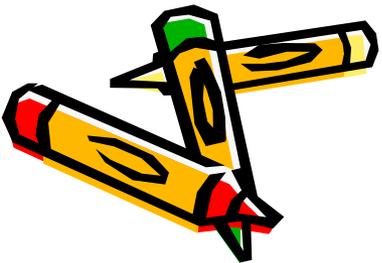
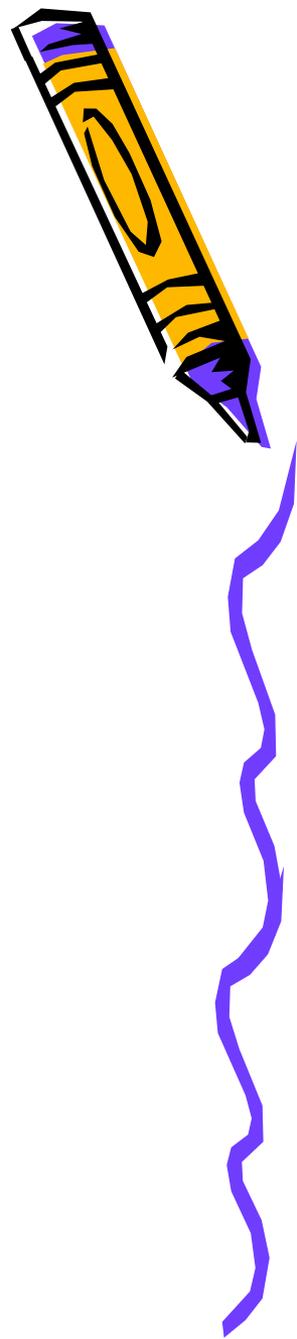
Outside influences on school



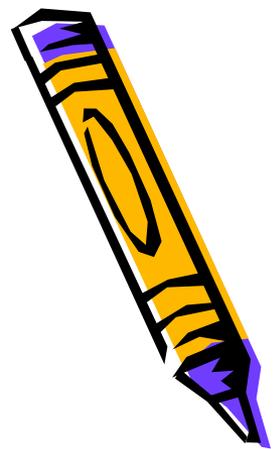
What DO you write about?

- Special talents, achievements and awards?

YES!!!



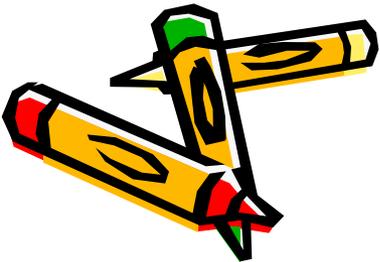
What DO you write about?



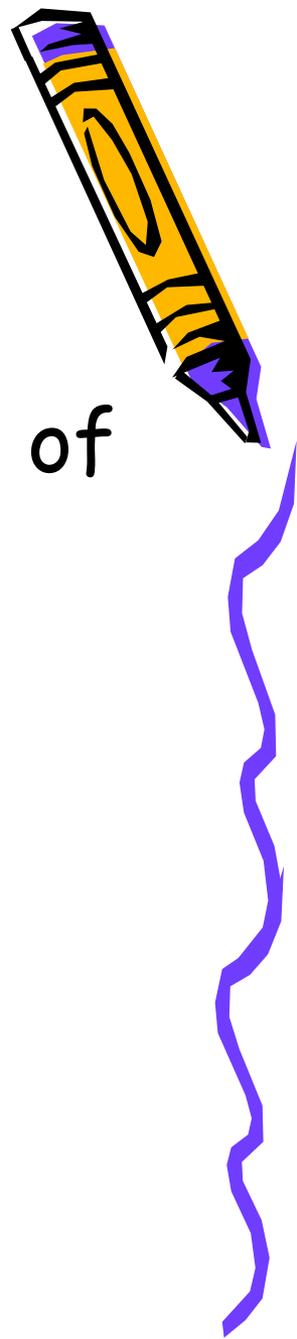
- Participation in enrichment programs?

YES!!!

ETS, Upward Bound, GEAR UP, summer programs, academic camps (not recreational camps)

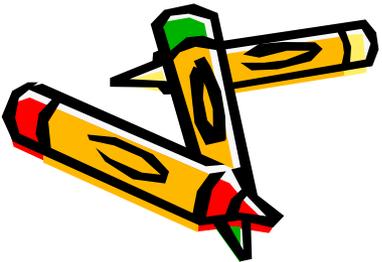


What DO you write about?

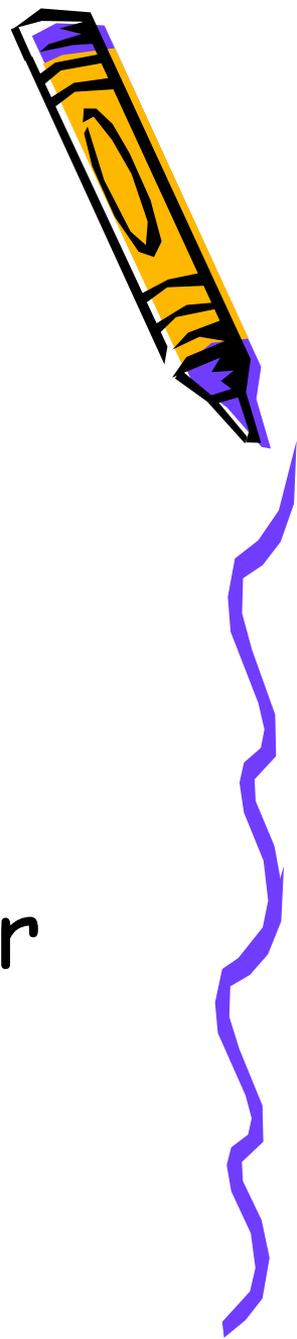


- Academic accomplishments in light of a student's life experiences and special circumstances?

Heck yes!!



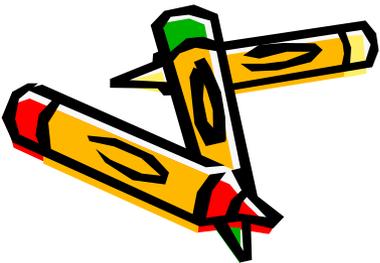
What DO you write about?



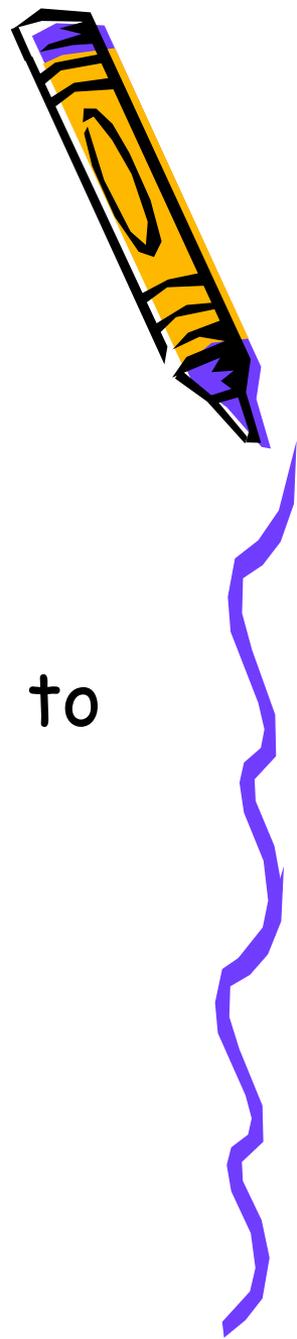
- Location of a student's secondary school and residence?

Yes...

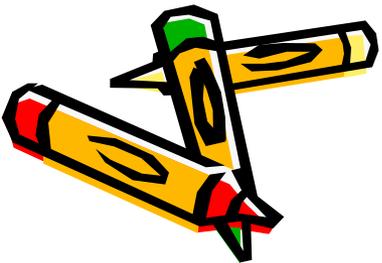
If you don't have a lot of other stuff to write about.



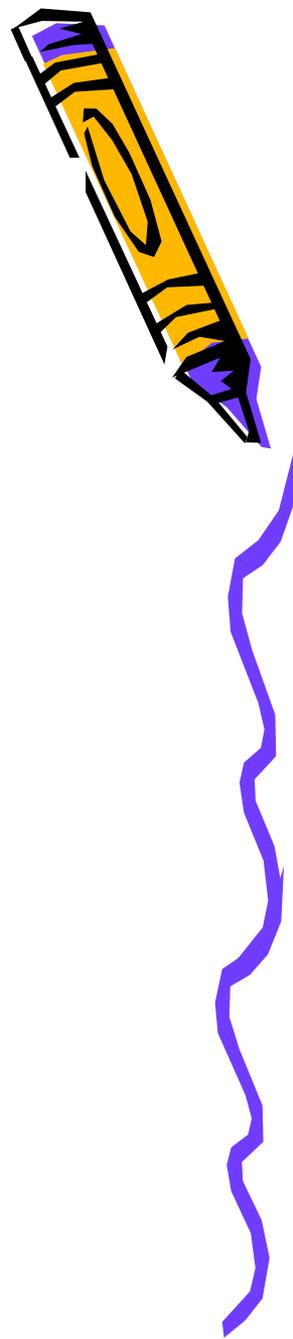
Starting to write



- DO **NOT**
 - Focus on word count
 - Start with a quote (unless instructed to do so)
 - Wait til the last minute
 - Sacrifice content for style



Tools to help



Activity Chart

Activity*	Brief Description (be specific and pretend that your reader knows absolutely nothing about the activity)	Grades involved (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)	Hours per week	Weeks per year	Total Hours**	Any special recognition? (awards, honors or leadership position)

www.collegeoptions.org for an electronic version in Word. Cells will expand as you type and you can add lines.

*Simple name of activity. Example: "High School soccer team" or "Cashier at Subway"

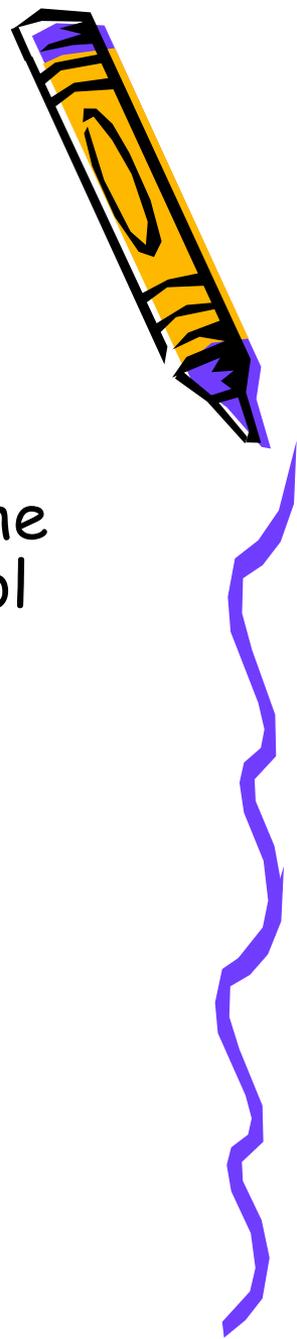
**Total Hours = Hours per week X Weeks per year X number of years/grades involved

Once you have filled this out, get feedback from someone else (teacher, counselor, College OPTIONS advisor, friend, parent). Check for spelling, accuracy and clarity. Include any and all of the following:

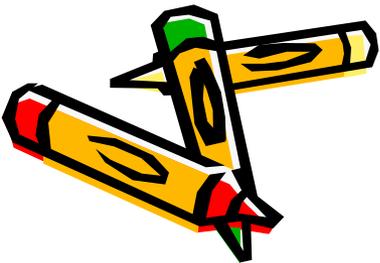
- Activities through school (may be during or after)
- Activities through church/temple
- Activities through the community
- Paid jobs
- Volunteer/Community Service
- Family responsibilities
- Any special summer or year-round academic enrichment programs/camps (participation in a program such as TRiO Educational Talent Search or Upward Bound, GEAR UP, or a camp/program on a college campus is appropriate to include)



Get feedback!

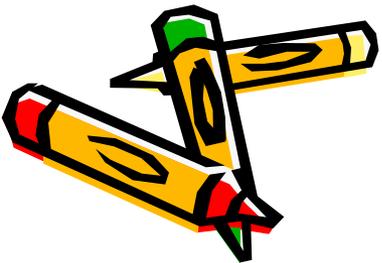
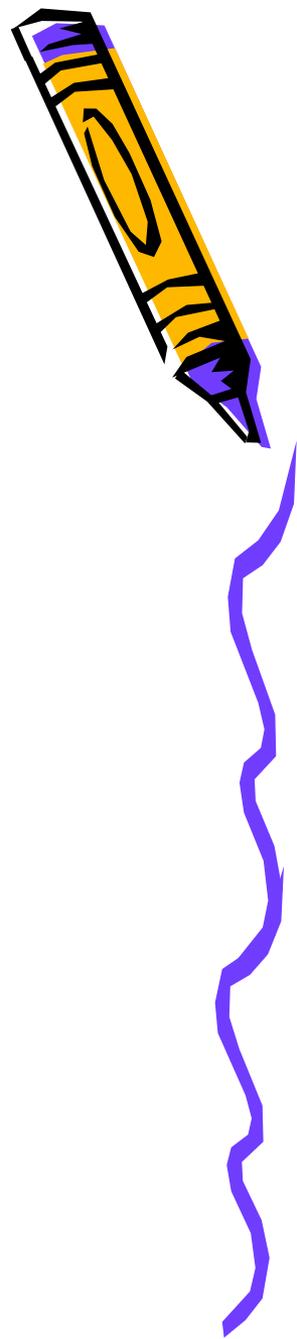


- Content (WHAT you write)
 - College OPTIONS - call 245-1845 to get the email address of the advisor for your school
 - Shasta College ETS or Upward Bound staff
 - Allow a week for feedback
- Style (HOW you write it)
 - English teacher
 - Friend, parent, other adult

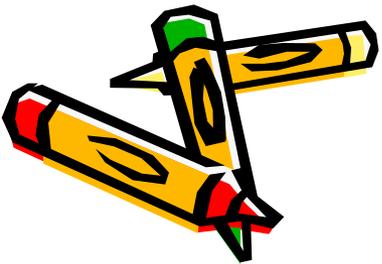
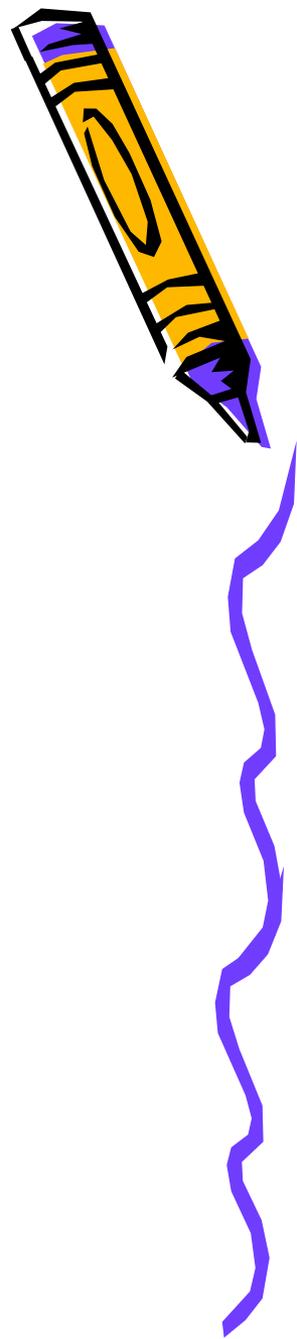


Recap:

- Essay focuses on what is not readily apparent in the rest of the application
- K.I.S.S.
- Brainstorm FIRST
- Content is more important than Style
- Get feedback. GET FEEDBACK!!!!!!
- Allow time for several rewrites



Which is the
best college
essay?

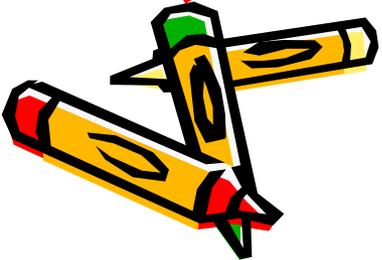
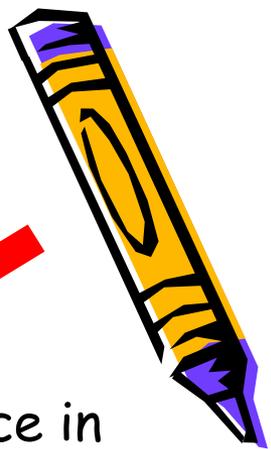


Sample 1

"Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clean away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods.

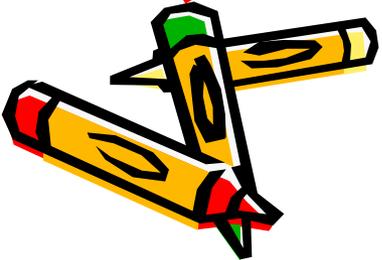
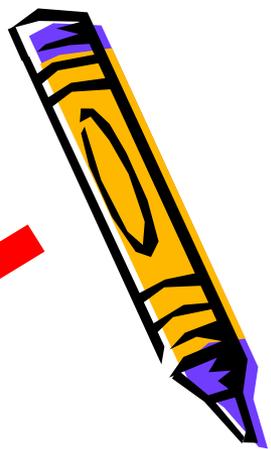
Wash your spirit clean. John Muir

As I meandered through the sylvan glade, I found myself pondering the wonders of the natural environment. The world is an awesome place, in the truest sense of the word. How can we even begin to understand the intricacies of biological ecosystems and the interdependence of man and nature? Caring about the environment is my passion.



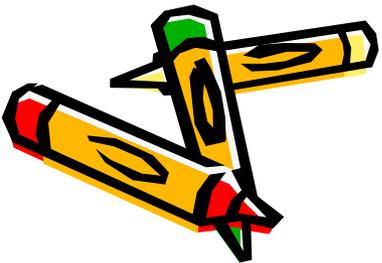
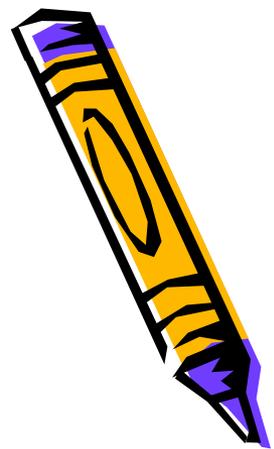
Sample 2

I am your stereotypical "tree hugging environmentalist." I have taken AP Biology, AP Environmental Sciences and am a member of the Sierra Club and am on my school's recycling team. I worry about what effect humans are having on the environment, and it is my goal to attend college so that I can learn what I need to do to protect and preserve the environment for future generations....

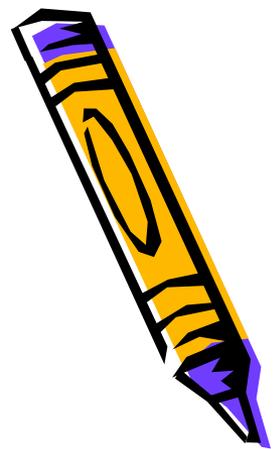


● Sample 3 ●

I care deeply about the environment. When I started high school, I noticed that my school didn't recycle. I wanted to change that, so I approached the principal about starting a recycling program. She told me that I needed to find a teacher who would be willing to serve as a club advisor as well as least four other students willing to participate. I approached the AP Environmental Science teacher about being an advisor and started advertising around school to find other students...



College OPTIONS



245-1845 to connect with an advisor

www.collegeoptions.org

1407 Market Street, Redding

(downtown, opposite the Shasta College
University Center)

