

Goose Creek Memorial College Application Essay Workshop

How to Write an Effective College Application Essay

General Overview

- Needs to breathe life into your application
- Explains who you are beyond test scores, grades, and activities
- Should capture your genuine personality
- Mention why you're a good fit for the university or college you're applying to and why the university or college is a good fit for you.

What Makes You Unique?

- Think about the admissions officer reading your essay. How will your essay convey your background and what makes you unique?
- This is the chance to share your personality, goals, influences, challenges, triumphs, life experiences, or lessons learned.
- Stories behind the list of activities or leadership roles on your application.

Common Struggles

- Resist the urge to squeeze everything you've done, seen, and heard into your essay.
- The essay is not your complete life story.
- Pick one moment in time and focus in on telling the story behind it.

Step 1: Get to Know Your Prompt

- Ease yourself into the essay-writing process.
- Take time to truly understand the question or prompt being asked.
- Essay questions and prompts seek to challenge you and spark your creativity and insight.
- **Make sure your essay adheres to the prompt.**
- Read the prompt. Read it again. Read it a third time.
- Take some time to think about what is truly being asked and let it sink in.
- Define what it is you're trying to accomplish. Is the prompt asking you to Inform? Defend? Support? Expand upon?
- Relate the question back to yourself. How does this apply to me?
- **DO NOT** use any of your old English papers as they rarely showcase who you are as an applicant.

Step 2: Brainstorm

- Brainstorm all possible ideas you can think of to address the question.
- Purpose is to have many ideas written down so when you begin writing, you know where you are going with the topic.
- This part is arguably the hardest. Once you have your idea solidified, writing becomes easier.
- Reflect on your past years and experiences. Think of strong, specific examples that can support your response to the prompt.
- What are your strengths? How would your friends describe you? What sets you apart from other applicants?
- Write all of your ideas down.
- Choose one of your ideas. It should answer the prompt the best. You should be able to develop the idea the furthest without losing the reader. It should capture who you really are.

Step 3: Create an Outline

- This is your plan for how you will write your essay.
- This helps break down your essay into sections, making it easier to write.
- Be sure to have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This insures that it's coherent.
- Strategize. How will you open your essay?
 - Anecdote, question, dialogue, or use of humor.
- Try to identify the tone of your essay based on your ideas
- **Write Naturally.** Stick to your writing style and voice.
- By planning your essay out ahead of time, you'll avoid changing your writing style mid-story.

Step 4: Write the Essay

- Keep essay's focus narrow and personal.
- Stick with your main idea and follow it from beginning to end.
- Be specific. Develop your main idea with vivid and detailed facts, events, quotations, examples, or reasons.
- Avoid using clichéd, predictable, or generic phrases.
- Be yourself.
- Admission officers read plenty of application essays and know the difference between a student's original story and a recycled academic essay
- Bring something new to the table, not just what you think they want to hear.
- Be concise.
- Try to only use information that is necessary.
- Stay within the word limit.

Step 5: Proofread

- A single typo or error could indicate carelessness.
- Give yourself some time before proofreading your essay. Approach it with a fresh mind.
- Don't abbreviate or use acronyms or slang.
- Have another person read your essay.
- Read your essay out loud, forces you to focus.
- Check for consistency.

Texas Common Application Essays

Below is the full set of Common App essay prompts for 2023-24

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

Essay TIPS

- ▶ Write with YOUR voice. Let the reader see who you are
- ▶ Imagine how the person reading your essay will feel
- ▶ Write like a journalist - capture their attention in the beginning - lead them into your story
- ▶ Show your emotions - let the reader identify with you and connect with your personality
- ▶ Revise often and early- let qualified others help you edit. BUT do NOT lose your voice.



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Apply Texas Prompt A

Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?

- What is this essay truly asking you?
- What qualities do you have that make you the person you are?
- How has this opportunity given or influenced these qualities and when will you use them in the future?

Apply Texas Prompt B

Some students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. If you are one of these students, then tell us about yourself.

- What is this essay truly asking you?
- What qualities do you have that make you the person you are?
- How has this opportunity given or influenced these qualities and when will you use them in the future?

Apply Texas Prompt C

You've got a ticket in your hand - Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?

- What is this essay truly asking you?
- What qualities do you have that make you the person you are?
- How has this opportunity given or influenced these qualities and when will you use them in the future?

Short Answers

- ▶ University of Texas
 - ▶ Texas A&M University
 - ▶ others
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- ▶ Fully address the question in the space/limit you are given.

