**College Application Essay/ Personal Statement**

Most colleges require a short essay response to a given question as part of the application process. This type of essay is perhaps the most daunting; you are asked to create an honest, vivid approximation of yourself on paper in a manner that engages your reader and provides a deeper understanding of you as an individual.

**If you are planning to apply soon:**

Find the questions your potential college typically asks on a college application. Your requirements for the essay will meet the expectations for the particular college.

If you cannot find an essay question for the college, you may choose from one of the prompts below:

* Evaluate a signiﬁcant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
* Indicate a person who has had a signiﬁcant inﬂuence on you, and describe that inﬂuence.
* A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
* Consider something in your life that you feel goes unnoticed and describe its importance to you.

**If you have already applied or are currently working on an essay:**

If you are currently working on a college essay, you must see me about how that may or may not become this assignment.

Is your essay written and accepted? Great! You’re going to take your essay and revise it to meet my standards. Yes, you’ll need to do this even if you don’t need the essay anymore.

**Your requirements (if your school does not provide them):**

* No more than 500 words
* Name, school, and topic written at the top (not included in 500 words)

**Jane Smith**

**Stanford University, Class of 2018**

**Evaluate a signiﬁcant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.**

* 12 point readable font
* Double spaced
* One inch margins on all sides

**Schedule:**

First draft: Due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Peer Edit: Due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Final draft: Due \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Writer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Editor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Peer Edit Checklist**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction** | | | |
| **Criteria** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments/ Explanations (Required)** |
| Does the introduction create mystery or intrigue? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer use an effective anecdote, zinger, or straightforward statement? |  |  |  |
| **Body** | | | |
| **Criteria** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments/ Explanations (Required)** |
| Does the writer use transitions within and between paragraphs? |  |  |  |
| Does the body continue telling the story and reflecting on the effects of the main event? |  |  |  |
| Are there any parts of the essay that do not stay focused on the main topic? |  |  |  |
| Are there any unnecessary details the writer could stand to remove? |  |  |  |
| Can the reader sense the connection between the narrative and the positive qualities the candidate can bring to the college? |  |  |  |
| Does the tone of the writing reflect the writer’s personality and message? |  |  |  |
| **Conclusion** | | | |
| **Criteria** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments/ Explanations (Required)** |
| Does the writer make a connection to a particular school? |  |  |  |
| Is the conclusion memorable? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer examine the significance of whatever experience he/she explained in the other paragraphs? |  |  |  |
| **Overall** | | | |
| **Criteria** | **Yes** | **No** | **Comments/ Explanations (Required)** |
| Were there any parts of the essay that didn’t stay focused on the main topic? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer use precise, accurate words, limiting the use of general words (good, cool, super, a lot) and pompous words? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer use the active voice instead of the passive voice? |  |  |  |
| Is the organization of the essay logical and easy to follow? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer use vivid details that show rather than tell? |  |  |  |
| Are there a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex)? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer vary sentence starters? |  |  |  |
| Are all sentences complete (no fragments, run-ons, or comma splices)? |  |  |  |
| Are there any clichés used? |  |  |  |
| Does the format/length meet the criteria? |  |  |  |
| Does the writer take any creative risks? |  |  |  |
| As a whole, does the essay “work”? Does it keep the reader’s interest throughout? |  |  |  |
| Does the essay communicate that the writer is a strong candidate for admission? |  |  |  |

**College Application Essay Scoring Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria to be Assessed** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| 1. Ideas & Organization | Writing successfully presents the topic in a novel or unique way.  Writing includes excellent and specific concrete detail and insightful commentary.  Writing has a compelling and logical flow of ideas. | Writing presents the topic in an interesting way. Writing includes good concrete detail and some insightful commentary.  Writing has a logical flow of ideas. | Writing presents the topic in an ordinary way. Writing includes concrete detail, but commentary is obvious, simplistic, or generic.  Organization is rough but workable. It sometimes gets off topic. | Writing presents topic in an ordinary way. Concrete details and commentary are either weak or missing.  Writing is aimless and disorganized. |
| 2. Topic Sentences and Transitions | Paragraphs have focused and poignant topic sentences and smooth, almost seamless transitions. | Paragraphs have focused topic sentences and obvious transitions. | Paragraphs have topic sentences that need to be more focused and rough transitions. | Paragraphs lack topic sentences and transitions. |
| 3. Description & Voice | Writing consistently and effectively shows rather than tells through specific and vivid details.  Writing reveals your unique personality and view of the world, leaving the reader to want to know more about who you are. | Writing shows rather than tell, but details could be more specific and vivid.  Writing reveals some of your thoughts and feelings, but needs more personality behind it. | Writing includes some showing but needs more.  Writing is bland. There is either no hint of a real person behind the writing. | Writing uses all telling and no showing.  Writing is too informal. It sounds like you don't care about the topic of the essay. |
| 4. Word Choice | Writing uses words that are striking and fresh but natural, varied, and vivid. | Writing makes some quality but also some routine or ordinary word choices. | Writing uses words that are dull or uninspired. Writing sounds like you are trying too hard to impress. | Writing uses the same words over and over. Some words may be confusing or inappropriate. |
| 5. Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation | Writing uses proper grammar 100% of the time. Sentences flow well and vary in construction and length.  Writing uses correct punctuation and spelling 100% of the time. | Writing has a few grammar problems. Sentences flow well but do not vary much.  Writing has a few errors to fix, but generally uses correct conventions. | Writing has enough grammar errors to distract a reader. Some sentences do not flow well and/or are not varied at all.  Writing has enough errors in the essay to distract a reader. | Writing has numerous grammar mistakes and poor sentence construction that make the paper hard to read.  Writing has numerous errors that make the paper hard to read. |

**Total Score X 3 = /60**