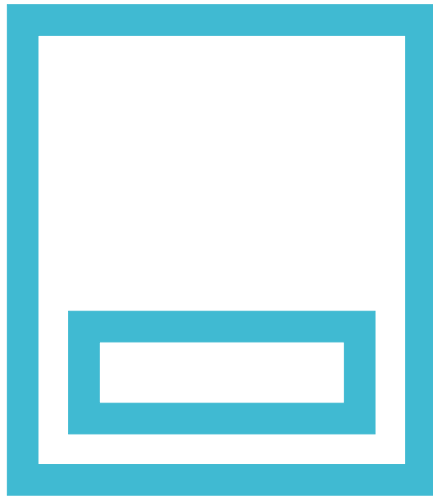


Writing the College Essay



**Vermont State
University**



Workshop

Why essays matter

How schools read essays

Topic + hook workshop

AI & essay services

Wrap-up + questions

Why the
College
Essay
Matters

It adds the human
story

Explains motivation
and values

Helps schools decide
fit

Different
Schools Read
Essays
Differently

Ivy / highly selective

Competitive non-Ivy

Less selective /
access-focused

Competitive
& Less
Selective
Schools

Why college? Why
this program?

Preparation and goals

Persistence and
readiness

The Hook:
Pull the
Reader In

A moment, question,
or tension

Specific beats
impressive

Avoid résumé
repetition

Common Application

Word Limit:
250 – 650

Seven Prompts

Background /
Identity /
Interest / Talent

Challenge /
Setback /
Failure

Questioning a
Belief or Idea

Gratitude

Personal
Growth

Intellectual
Curiosity

Topic of Your
Choice

AI in College
Essays:
Today's
Reality

Brainstorming

Work should not be
written by AI

Essay should be
Student's Original Work

Editing and feedback
= okay

Ghostwriting =
unethical

You must own every
word



THE ADMISSION ESSAY WORKSHOP

CURRENT COMMON APPLICATION PROMPTS

- 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.
- 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?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- 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?
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- 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?
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

BRAINSTORMING

Let's give it a try!



THINK ABOUT
WHAT
EXCITES YOU.
WRITE IT
DOWN.
NOW REALLY,
WHAT
EXCITES YOU?

- **Brainstorming – take your time with the process.**
 - Consider what you want to write about for a topic
 - Write 10 opening sentences and closing sentences once a week for a month
 - At the end of the month re-read all that work and see what sticks
 - Share the work with peers, pay attention to their reactions and feed back
 - Now build the body of your essay

LET'S GIVE IT A TRY! PICK A PROMPT AND WRITE 5 OPENING SENTENCES

- 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.
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Structuring your Essay



ESSAY OUTLINE

Introduction

- **Hook your reader**
- *Set the tone of the essay*

First Point

- **The who/what**

Second Point

- **The why**

Summarize

- *Close the ideas*

NOW LET'S
WRITE YOUR
FIRST
PARAGRAPH!

PICK YOUR
FAVORITE
FIRST
SENTENCE
AND WRITE 4
MORE TO
FOLLOW

- Pick your favorite first sentence and write 4 more for your first paragraph
 - Be authentic
 - Be clear
 - Hook the reader

A background image showing a person with long hair, wearing a striped shirt, sitting and working on a laptop. They are in a library or study area, with bookshelves filled with books visible in the background. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be read over it.

EDITING, REVISING, AND FINALIZING

- Your essay should have a first draft, second draft, and final draft.
- Take your time with this process.
- Hearing honest feedback is valuable. Share with your friends, family members, teachers.
- Take your time with this process. You can have as many edits as you want, but you can only submit once
- Pro-tip: If you don't feel comfortable sharing with peers, think about a new topic

Final Takeaways

Be

Be authentic

Match

Match essay to school type

Use

Use tools wisely

CONNECT WITH US



- ✓ Admissions@VermontState.edu
- ✓ **Call: 888.398.8878 (VTSU)**
- ✓ **Text: 888.810.8878 (VTSU)**
- ✓ **VermontState.edu**

