

# What is the college essay?



- **SERVES AS THE MOST PERSONAL PART OF THE COLLEGE APPLICATION.**
- **GIVES THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT THE APPLICANT THAT CANNOT BE FOUND ON A TRANSCRIPT, RESUME, OR TEST SCORE REPORT.**
- **PROVIDES EVIDENCE OF WRITING ABILITY.**

# What should be included?



- **Key components are:**
  - ✦ **Authentic voice**
  - ✦ **Effective structure**
  - ✦ **Engaging content**
  - ✦ **Proper grammar**

# When writing, do:



- Be specific and focused
- Choose a topic you are invested in and that represents you
- Avoid simple grammatical errors and typos
- Make your essay authentic and unique
- Choose a positive quality of yours to convey to the admissions committee
- Read exemplars
- Get your reader's attention with a compelling introduction
- Include a reflection at the end of your essay
- Use conventions of standard English

# DO...



- Use colorful, vivid language
- Incorporate description
- Use consistent point of view
- Maintain consistent verb tense
- Decide on a thesis and support it throughout your essay
- Include humor where appropriate
- Make sure to answer the question
- Express yourself in your *own* voice
- Be genuine and honest
- Show more than tell
- Tell a story

# Don't...



- Be cliché
- Brag
- Try to make people pity you
- Use vocabulary words when you are not sure of their meaning
- Be overly sarcastic or humorous
- Shift pronouns
- Be general and vague
- Restate your thesis in the conclusion or summarize your essay
- Reiterate what's already on your application
- Write an autobiography

# Prewriting



- This is the first stage in the writing process. During this stage, you will come up with ideas and/or topics for the particular pieces of writing. This may include any or all of the following prewriting strategies:
  - ✓ Brainstorming
  - ✓ Listing/Bulleting
  - ✓ Asking Questions
    - ✓ Mapping
    - ✓ Free writing
    - ✓ Outlining

# When planning your essay...



- Consider three adjectives that describe you.
- List significant experiences you have had.
- Describe a passion and/ or interest.
- What do you value? Who or what has informed your values?
- Define a shining moment.
- Recall when you were forced to take a position.

# Drafting



After you decide on an idea, the next stage is drafting the ideas. During this stage, write everything you know about your topic. Focus on getting all of your ideas on the page.

This is not the time to worry about the final product (grammar, word choice, etc). At this point, just say what you want to say in whatever manner you choose. You should, however, pay some attention to the following:

- A thesis statement
- Topic sentences
- Organization
- Supporting details/information



# Revising



- During this stage of the writing process, you add, remove, or reorganize information in the draft. This stage often requires the most work.
- You should make an appointment to visit the Writing Center to facilitate a dialogue about your writing and the product.

# Consider:



- Have you persuaded the admissions officer that you are a candidate of choice?
- Does the essay demonstrate your “creative” intelligence?
- Will the opening or introduction hold your reader’s attention?
- Have you created a lasting impression?

## Also...



- **Decide if your essay supports your thesis. This should be the first step in the revision process.**
- **Look for transitions between paragraphs and/or ideas. Are all of your ideas smoothly connected?**
- **Determine if you have enough supporting (not irrelevant information). Do you need to add more “vibrant” detail?**
- **Think about your word choice. Have you used the most specific words possible?**

# Resources



## Writing Center:

- ❑ Meet with a teacher who will engage in a spoken dialogue to review/revise your draft, ideas, and final copy.
- ❑ Ask questions about the college essay, whether you are finishing or just beginning.