



College Essay and Interview Tips

Each year thousands of students fill out admission applications in an attempt to gain entrance into the college of their choice. Many students attempt to enter prestigious colleges with the understanding that, there are thousands of other students as good, or better, competing for the same privilege.

Furthermore, admission officers at each one of these colleges review thousands of applications. Being accepted to a particular school may be important to the student, but to admission officers, the admissions process is at best a tedious, yearly task. And their decision is a tough one because the best colleges admit only 6% - 10% of their student applicants.

The Essay

While grades, the strength of curriculum and admission test scores are the top factors in the college admission decision, a majority of colleges use the essay to give the student a chance to show admission officers who he or she really is beyond grades and test scores. Students can use the following checklist as a simple guideline to write their essay:

- List the initial thought that you would like to emphasize about yourself or and experience you've been through.
- Focus on the topics that you feel would best describe your strengths or experience.
- Write a tentative statement that would reflect what you want to say.
- Write a list of details that can be used to support your statement.
- Arrange this list of details into a well-ordered outline.
- Demonstrate your intellectual curiosity, dedication, and commitment to goals, ability to complete tasks and leadership and self-control.
- Write a draft of your admission essay.
- Revise your first draft, paying attention to your introductory and concluding paragraphs, as well to transitions between your paragraphs.
- Proofread your revised essay at least twice: once for spelling, punctuation, usage, and other mechanical errors and a second time for meaning and overall effectiveness.
- Have someone else proofread your essay and make suggestions for improvements.

Be sure the essay is within the recommended length.

Use words and phrases that are common to you and do not overuse adjectives or adverbs.

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The Interview

An interview is a chance for the student to meet with someone in the college admissions department and explain why he or she would make a great addition to the campus community. Students can use the following checklist as a guideline for their admissions interview:

- Practice for your interview. Be prepared to answer obvious questions. Consult your guidance department for these standard questions and review them with your counselor or parents.
- Practice makes perfect. Arrange your first interviews at the colleges in which you're least interested in attending.
- Relax and be yourself.
- Be alert and to the point. Make the interview easy for the interviewer.
- Be sure you are neat and presentable.
- If they do not already have it, provide the interviewer with a copy of your Résumé of Achievement.
- Showcase your abilities and talents. Stay positive.
- Don't dwell on a particular question. Show consideration for their time.
- Don't make lofty statements about yourself. Be humble.
- Avoid negatives about yourself or making excuses for any sub-par performance.
- Be prepared to answer the following questions: Describe your ideal college. Which other colleges are you considering? Which college is your top choice?
- Send a thank-you note to each interviewer within 3 days after the interview.

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