





# WRITING the College Essay



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**Writing**  
**is HARD!**  
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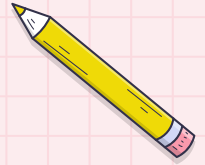
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**Why must  
students write  
an application  
essay?**



# Admissions Process

Competition to enter colleges is at an all-time high with many applicants having similar “paper” qualifications

- *SAT/ACT scores*
- *GPA*
- *Course loads*
- *Extracurricular activities*

# Essays showcase:

01

## Individualism

Black and White data can be identical to many other applicants. The essay gives you a chance to be YOU!

02

## Writing Skills

Writing well is an acquired skill that can demonstrate your ACADEMIC ability.

03

## Thinking

Good writing relies on good thinking and organizational skills. Show off your MIND.

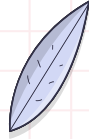
04

## Maturity

Using a reflective tone shows self-awareness and maturity--qualities you need to be INDEPENDENT.



\*



\*



- On that note...here is a note I received in 2019:

Good Afternoon Ms. Scully,

I recently read your student, (name redacted)'s application to RPI and wanted to reach out to thank you for sharing your recommendation with us. I read many math and science recommendation letters (as that is what we require from students), and it is always refreshing to have someone who teaches English share a different side of a student.

Thank you so much for your insight into (name redacted). I truly appreciate it.

All my best,

(name redacted)

*Admissions Counselor, Undergraduate Admissions*

PS – I cried reading (name redacted)'s essay, too.

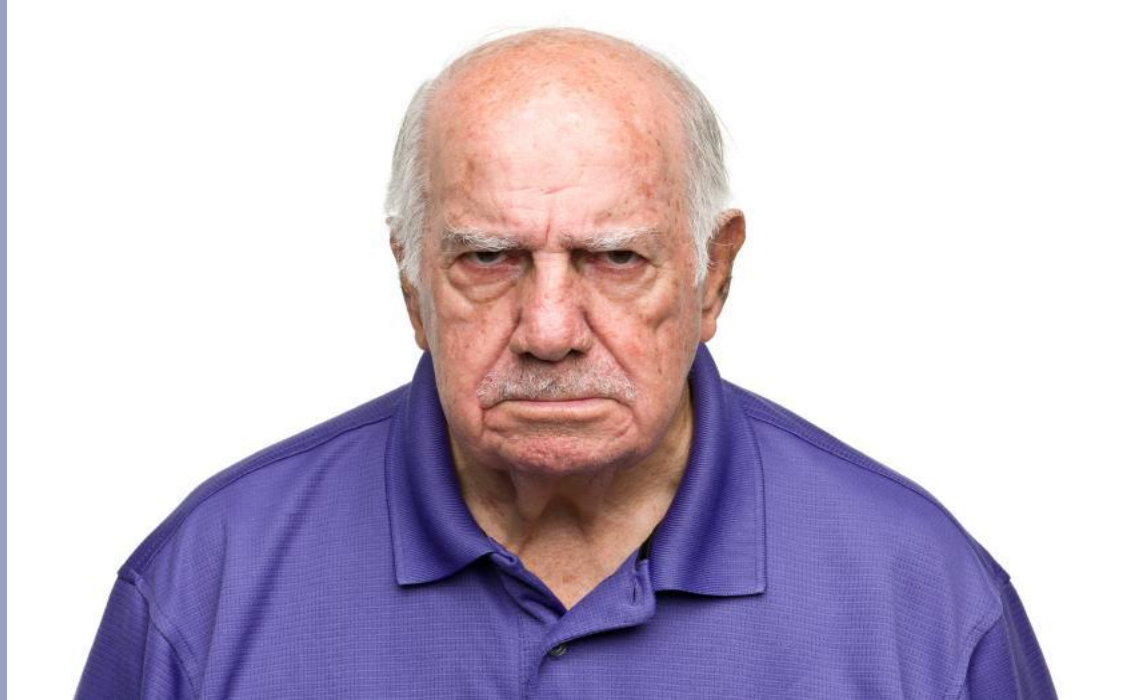
- 
- 
- What type of audience should you imagine?
- 
- 



# The “Positive Audience”



# The “Negative Audience”

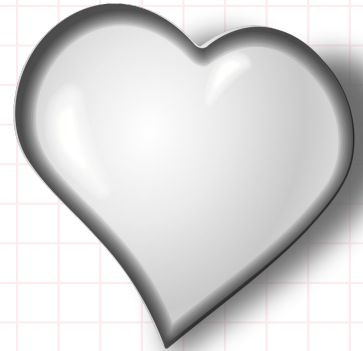


- # What do college admissions officers love to see?

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- - ## Originality of writing topic

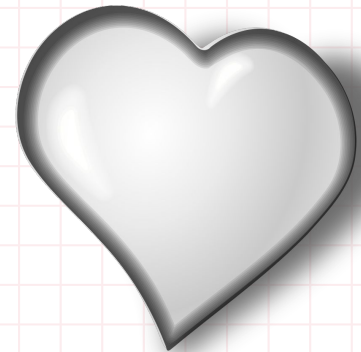
- - *Less original topics call for more unique presentations of ideas*
    - *Being intellectually adventurous and not overly cautious*



# What do college admissions officers love to see?

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- It is not just the topic that matters, it's also about how a student writes about it
  - *Reflective mature thought*
  - *Use of language*
  - *Sound writing mechanics*
  - *Engagement - from the onset and then ongoing*



- # What do college admissions officers love to see?

- Small anecdotes with rich details

- *“Show, don’t tell!”*

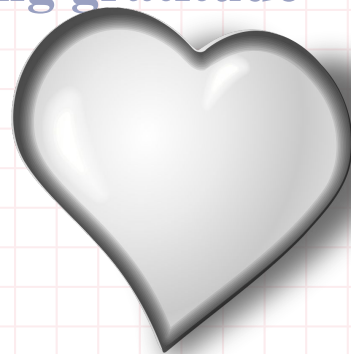
- Answering a question in its entirety

- Use of dialogue

- Essays that show a positive attitude and deserving gratitude

- The confession of weakness and error

- Genuine voice of a high school student



## What do college admissions officers want you to **AVOID**?

-----

- A laundry list of extracurricular activities
- Essays that rely too heavily on humor.
  - *Funny essays can be quite effective, but only if there's substance below the cleverness.*
- Superficiality. Students write what they have been doing and keep it fact-based but do not bring it to a reflective level.





## What do college admissions officers want you to **AVOID**?

- Essays that seem to be written to impress an admissions office  
*They tend to lack authenticity*
- Trite conclusions
  - *After my experience, I now realize that...*
  - *“We’re all fundamentally the same.”*
  - *“We’re all fundamentally different.”*
  - *“I should appreciate my own life.”*
- Essays on “hot topics” that simply restate obvious arguments



What do many college admissions like for you to **AVOID**?

- Misspellings, poor grammar, and typographical errors suggest that students may not be putting much effort into their applications
- The use of profanity, even for “effect,” may be viewed as reflecting poor judgment
- Divisive Ideological issues such as politics and religion
  - *The “Thanksgiving Table Rule”*



What do many college admissions like for you to **AVOID**?

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- Ingratitude falls flat
- Overcoming adversity with grace is great, but sometimes telling of a horrific case leaves the committee hanging
- Forced creativity, forced humor, and self-consciously trying to be different



# Where Are We Right Now?

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It's important that you START EARLY. Drafting and revising take time and patience!

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**Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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# When Should You Start?

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Consider it a living document. Begin and revisit often.

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**Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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# When Should You Finish?

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It's important that you START EARLY. Drafting and revising take time and patience!

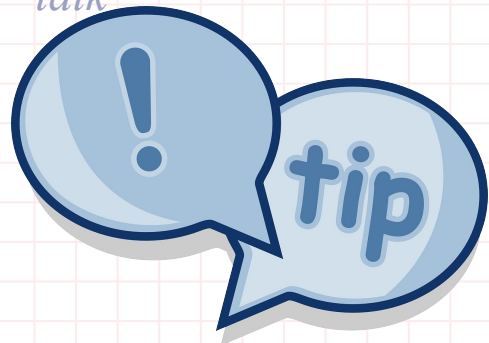
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**Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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# Tips for Writing

- Start early!
- Write a draft and then set it aside for a few days before attempting to proofread or revise.
- Don't "thesaurize" your essay either. Loading your essay with SAT words makes it sound unnatural.
- Show, don't tell!
  - Narratives "work" better than lists, especially for questions that ask you to "tell about yourself" or to "talk about someone who has influenced you."
  - Keep your audience in mind with the knowledge that admissions officers are spending about two to three minutes on your essay.



- 
- **REVISE!**

- - *Revision is not the same thing as proofreading.*
  - *Revision literally means “seeing again”—you should make big changes. (See Tips for Revision)*
- 

- 
- **PROOFREAD!**

- *Your essay should be as technically perfect as possible.*
- 





# Tips for Revision

- Spend quality revision time trying out different “hooks” to gain your reader’s interest.
  - *Rhetorical questions, dictionary definitions, and famous quotations can work, but keep in mind that many people use these techniques. Your goal is stand out from the crowd.*
- Be as personal and concrete as you can.
  - *Narratives and specific examples work best.*
  - Are you writing about your trip to Great Adventure or your feelings about overcoming your fear of heights by going on a roller coaster for the first time?



- ■ Use vivid, active verbs as often as possible.
  - – *Try to get rid of most of your “to be” verbs: is, are, am, was, were, etc.*
- ■ Replace bland nouns with specific nouns.
  - – *For example, trade “shoes” for “lime green Nikes” or “lunch” with “half-smushed peanut butter and jelly sandwich”.*
  - – *Never use terms such as “things” and “stuff” when you could be more specific.*
- ■ Beware of ambiguous pronouns.
  - – *Every pronoun you use should have a clear referent.*
  - – *Be especially aware of “it,” “this,” and “that,” which can often be vague or confusing.*



- ■ Vary your sentence length and sentence structure.

- - *Intersperse short declarative sentences with longer complex and compound sentences.*
  - *Notice and revise repetitive sentence structures such as subject-verb-object.*
  - *Avoid using “I” over and over again as the first word of sentences.*

- ■ Check for redundancy. And you should check for redundancy. 😊

- - *Don’t use two adjectives in a series that mean the same thing as in “gorgeous, beautiful” or an unnecessary adjective in front of a noun or verb as in “fast sprint.”*
  - *When in doubt, choose a vivid verb or specific noun over an adjective or adverb.*

- ■ Write everything you can think of.

- - *Don’t just stop writing when you reach the word limit or get tired. You can always prune later.*



- 
- Conclusions are very important!

- - *Make your last sentence count. A stand-alone sentence can sometimes be the most effective concluding paragraph.*
  - *Don't summarize or repeat information; the essay is short enough that the reader will not have forgotten any details.*
- 

- DO NOT rely on spell check to catch errors.

- - *Spell check only notices when a word is spelled incorrectly, not when you have used the wrong word in a given circumstance. There, their, and they're and other common usage problems will not be corrected.*
- - Likewise, you may not catch typos like "form" instead of "from".*

- - Reading your essay aloud can help you catch these as can showing it to someone else. A second set of eyes can be invaluable!



# Who should help you?

- You should help yourself.

- *That said, don't go for help to anyone until you have read through the packet and sketched out some ideas IN WRITING at the very least.*
- *Use Appendix 3 — the Self Evaluation Form section included in the packet.*

- If you are still only at the idea phase (I just can't think of anything to write...), try talking to your friends, parents, siblings, present and former teachers, coaches, and administrators.

- If you have drafted an essay, you might want a parent, older sibling, friend, your CURRENT English teacher, or a former English teacher to read it over and offer suggestions.

- *The first draft is NOT the time to edit; it is the time to revise. See the Glossary of Terms for an explanation.*



# Who should help you?

Your CURRENT English teacher can be a powerful resource in the writing of your college essay, but remember: this is your application process, not their application essay.

Your English teacher has a caseload of students who need him or her for remediation during 10<sup>th</sup> period. This is why you should...

Ask your teacher if they can help you, and

**MAKE AN APPOINTMENT** and keep it.

Your teacher is not responsible for proofreading and editing your paper—that's your job. According to Randy Cohen (The Ethicist/NY Times Magazine), “A teacher may read students essays but not write them” and should “...eschew anything as hands-on as editing or proofreading...”

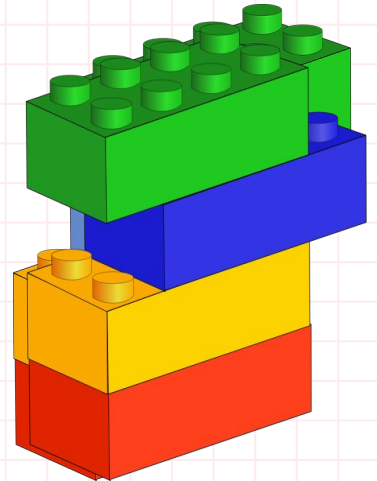


**HELP**

# Structure of Essay

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- There is no single structure that works best. This will depend a lot on the question you are answering and on your own writing style.
- A traditional five-paragraph essay may work just fine for an issue-based question.
- A narrative describing a significant experience may include more short paragraphs and dialogue.



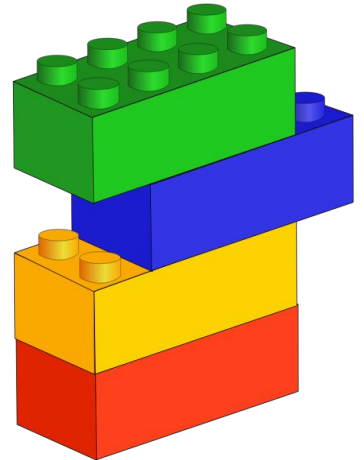




# Sequencing of a Narrative

- Traditionally, many students write their narrative in a chronologically sequential “linear” manner:
  - *I was a camp counselor last summer.*
  - *I had a problematic camper that I needed to work with.*
  - *Together, we made great strides over the summer.*
  - *By the end of the summer, the camper became a team player.*
  - *I learned as much from him as he learned from me.*
- Many students have had very successful revisions by reordering their narrative.
  - *Classically, the essay can begin with “the end” of the story and work its way back. This also allows for a full-circle ending, a great way to frame your essay.*

*Please, please,  
PLEASE DO  
NOT WRITE  
ABOUT CAMP!*



## Don't lose sight of your focus (subject)!

[illegible][illegible]

# Welcome to Syracuse, Grandma!



## Don't lose sight of your focus (*negative experience*)!

[illegible][illegible]

# Idea Generation

## Where will my ideas come from?

- *Dig out those old photo albums, diaries, and journals to help refresh your memory about seminal events in your life.*

## Outside the Box:

- *The standard college essay questions can, within reason, be refined by you to become uniquely personal.*
  - Sometimes we don't think to use stories of our pets, or even an inanimate object such as a “blankie” because afraid to seem immature or silly. As a young adult, you now have the perspective to see your own growth from these early childhood experiences—this can be very revealing of who you are now.



## ■ Write Positively About Something Negative:

- *Are you the kid who used to, or who is known to be, the crayon eater during kindergarten?*
- *Pain and tragedy can reveal character in a “show, don’t tell” way.*
- *Don’t make the thrust of such an essay the pain of the experience, but the insights gained as a result.*



- ■ I Have Writer's Block...
- ■ If you have an idea about what you want to write about, but can't think of a way to start writing it, grab a recording device and a close friend or family member who remembers the incident and tell that person about the event.
- ■ Make sure before you begin recording that the person is prepared to ask probing questions about the event:
  - - *Who else was involved?*
  - - *What was the worst/best aspect of the event?*
  - - *How did that make you feel?*
  - - *What did you learn?*
  - - *If you had it to do all over again, what would you do differently?*
- ■ Listen to the recording and transcribe some or all of what was disc



# Idea Generation

- I Have Writer's Block...
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  - *If you had it to do all over again, what would you do differently?*
- Listen to the recording and transcribe some or all of what was discussed.







# **The Common App**

Word Count

650

# Common Application Essay Topics

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?

- 

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- 

- 3. Reflect on a time when you *questioned* or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your *thinking*? What *was the outcome*?

- 

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- 
- **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?**
- 
- 
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- **5. Discuss an accomplishment, event,**  
*or realization that sparked a period of personal  
growth and a new understanding of yourself or  
others.*

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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?



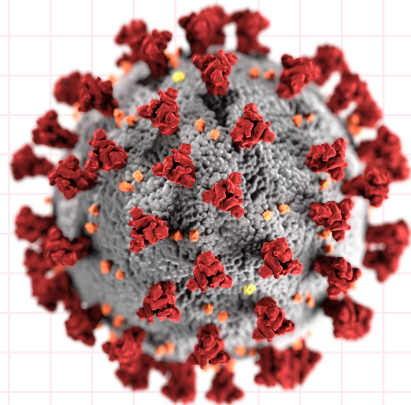
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7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

# COVID

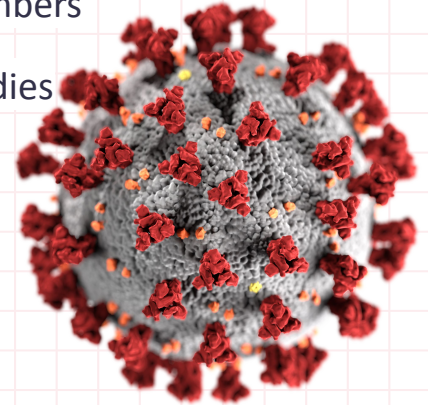
COVID-19 has affected students in dramatically different ways. If you need it, the COVID-19 and natural disaster question in the Additional Information section is a place for you to describe the impact of these events.

The question is not intended to be an **EXTRA ESSAY**. There's also no need to describe how your school responded to these events. Your counselor will have an opportunity to discuss impacts like closures, online instruction, and grading policies. Instead, consider how these events may have impacted you, your family, and your learning environment.



- Examples might include:

- - 01. Illness or loss within your family or support network
  - 02. Employment or housing disruptions within your family
  - 03. Food insecurity
  - 04. Toll on mental and emotional health
  - 05. New obligations such as part-time work or care for siblings or family members
  - 06. Availability of computer or internet access required to continue your studies
  - 07. Access to a safe and quiet study space
  - 08. A new direction for your major or career interests
- 





# **Sample Essays**



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

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W A S H I N G T O N , D C

# Introduction with an anecdote

The scolding of my kindergarten teacher still roars through my brain, "Irene, you're a little Miss Chatterbox!" That was my nickname consistently through the year from her—chatterbox. As I matured I thought about that constantly, and in school, I grew taciturn. The years passed, and I would struggle learning, not because the teachers were inadequate, but rather, because I was afraid to ask questions when I had them. I was petrified of holding the title chatterbox for the rest of my life.

- ## Elaborating the Problem

- — — — — —  
Finally middle school came, and with it, my entry level course in French. Suddenly it was expected of everyone to speak. I picked up French rapidly, eager for an excuse to hear my own voice. Even if all I could say was *J'mappelle Irène*, I said my new French name with pride. For now I wasn't the chatterbox, I was *Irène*, my newfound identity.
- 
-

## Shift from Problem to Solution

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However, repeating *Irène* numerous times didn't quench my desire to speak. Especially for only forty two minutes a day. There wasn't enough time, or enough vocabulary, to say a majority of what I felt, and I could only say what was important. Thankfully, there was an easy solution to the problem. To get more time to speak, all I had to do was add more language classes to my schedule.



- Development of idea:

- Soon, it wasn't only French, but Spanish, in my schedule as well. I was the only junior in an entry level Spanish class. Yet, rather than deter me, I was intrigued.
- I wasn't *Irène* here, rather *Me llamo Irene*. The long “e” in my name could finally be spoken! Even though
- French and Spanish are each derived from Latin, the differences between them startled me. But even though
- they were different languages, I could speak them both. I got to hear myself for over an hour a day, which
- satisfied me—for awhile.

- This paragraph shows growth:

- Eventually even two periods of language couldn't keep me content. At this moment, my languages taught me my most invaluable lesson. If I spoke, my words wouldn't always be received negatively. I began to proudly put my voice into my classes, and my interest in my classes skyrocketed, along with my grades. This was all from learning two languages and, of course, speaking. I could only think *Bienvenue! My voice was finally welcome.*
- 
-

- Conclusion: brings it to the *present* and *future* while going back to the *original idea*:

- 
- Sadly, my time at high school is almost over, but there is a positive outcome. American University's international opportunities are boundless, and I would be honored by the privilege of studying abroad and broadening my
- language skills. In addition, Washington, D.C. is the prime location for voicing my political opinions, as it's closest to the source of government. Washington, D.C. is a city where a person is meant to be heard. So who said it was
- bad to be a chatterbox?

- # Analysis:

- ■ Irene's first draft began with the idea of being called a chatterbox; in her revised version she made that fact into a bit of vivid **dialogue**.
- ■ Her first draft talked a lot about the confidence her World Language classes gave her, so I encouraged her to use some of her world language skills in her essay to **spice it up**. She kept it simple so as not to alienate a reader with no experience in French or Spanish.

# Commentary

- The use of *Irène* as almost an alter-ego is a clever way to show that she was changing and growing.
- Finally, she concluded the essay with a reprisal of her role as “chatterbox” “but changes the connotation of that title. As a general rule any mirroring or framing is an impressive technique.



**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

# Exemplar Essay 1

A single spotlight radiates down on the empty stage, slightly reaching the tips of my fingers as they cling onto the barricade placed before me. The hundreds of bodies surrounding me are nothing more than a few old friends—we've reconnected over a common interest. Before we have time to fill each other in on the past few years, a familiar saxophone solo captivates the room. A single clap turns into a roar of cheers as the anticipated act gracefully makes her way onto the stage, with that same lone spotlight now gleaming on her. The wave of cheers flushes every thought out of my mind, yet I know a tsunami is going to hit as soon as the house lights are turned back on. It's on the barricades of these New York City venues that I don't dwell on the past and future, I'm truly present in my thoughts—I'm living in the moment.

Halfway through the set and my favorite song fills the room, causing a catharsis I should've expected. Everything that has built up inside me is released as I cry out my favorite lyrics. My fixation on the performance in front of me blurs the image of the crowd around me—I'm reminded of their existence as they sing along with as much emotion as I do, as if the lyrics have become a plea for help. A feeling of intimacy is created in the sea of people that I can't even see the end of. I'm lost and don't want to be found.



The X's on my hand provide me with a feeling of power, rather than the defeat that comes with the X's on my tests. Nothing can bring me down. The swaying of bodies to the mesmerizing beats invites me in, rather than pushing me away as the abundance of careless bodies in the school hallway do. I'm able to let loose. The sound of off-key voices singing along becomes the most beautiful choir begging me to be their newest member, rather than being just another student in the perfectly in-tune group that I'm a part of each day. It's okay if I'm not perfect. The diverse crowd around me only smiles at me, rather than glaring at me for not being a clone of the stereotypical Long Island girl I'm expected to be. They accept me for who I am.

Nothing compares to the euphoria I feel when squished in a crowd while hearing the songs that mean the most to me in their rawest form. At the end of the night my cheeks throb from the smile that never left my face, even more than my legs or ears do. I'm just that happy. There's sweat dripping down my face, my makeup smeared, and yet I feel more beautiful than ever. It's as if I'm in my own Garden of Eden, my own paradise on earth. Yet as soon as the last chord is played the temptation takes over, I allow all worries to take over me again.

On ordinary days, stress consumes me like a vacuum sucking up the remnants of confetti that fell during the encore. I'm constantly concentrated on a fear of the future, as well as being haunted by the past, yet in those few hours of live music blasting through a mediocre sound system it's as if I'm born again—pure, and not yet affected by the troubles of the world. These late nights are the best medicine, curing me of the everyday stresses. It's here that I'm my present self, my best self, not consumed with anxious thoughts. I'm the most “me” I'll ever be.

“Life is made of small moments like these.” -Above & Beyond

# UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

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## Exemplar Essay 2

“Number 24, you’re next”. I look down and feel every hair stand on end as those exact digits stare up at me from my shirt. My heart palpitates with the fear of humiliating myself in front of my classmates, but deep down I know that I am ready. Each step towards the platform grows increasingly heavier as though shackles are clasped around my ankles, tightening their unforgiving grip. The velvet curtains open and there I stand center stage, feeling completely vulnerable, while a glaring spotlight and a hundred beady little eyes watch my every move. Taking in one last gulp of air, I cue the pianist to play my starting pitch. The stage is finally mine.

Ever since I can remember, I have watched individuals perform in jaw dropping admiration, yearning for the day that I would be the one in the spotlight. I have always found an excuse to burst out into song, choreograph a dance, or even reenact some of my favorite movie scenes, albeit behind closed doors.

One winter day in fourth grade, those closed doors opened. I walked into a room filled with complete darkness, apart from the speck of light coming from the classroom's projector. As I inaudibly sat down next to one of my classmates, the projector displayed a silhouette of a young girl sitting on top of a rock gazing at the horizon. Beneath her, in the depths of the prismatic ocean in enormous blue letters reads Disney's The Little Mermaid.

Butterflies fluttered in my stomach just thinking about auditioning. Nevertheless, I would not allow my trepidations to consume me. I no longer wanted to be perceived as a subservient and soft-spoken little girl but rather as a gregarious and outgoing young lady. It was finally my chance to show people who I truly was.

As soon as the first words spouted from my lips, I broke free—free from the shackles, free from my insecurities, and most importantly, free from my introspective self. My entire persona transformed. I was the wicked sea witch Ursula and I took command of the stage. As though eight tentacles flowed from my body, I had never felt more empowered. I was fully submerged into the character, engrossed in every lyric I sang. I blossomed into a new individual, capable of the inconceivable. In the next instant, it was over. I was brought back to reality, though I left the stage a different person than the one who ascended it.

For most, the Old Bethpage production of The Little Mermaid was a juvenile musical funded by the local elementary school a charming performance, though surely forgotten by many. Yet, it is that same show that will always remind me of my first, and certainly not my last, encounter with the theater. As the leading antagonist, Ursula, I have learned to be comfortable in my own skin and to always be willing to take risks even if it means venturing into uncharted territory, as I did the day that I went on my first audition. More importantly, theater has taught me to see beyond my own insular views, to be a better communicator, and to appreciate everything that life has to offer.

As I reflect on that first audition, I realize that theater is everything to me; it is fused within my identity. I would not trade acting—the audition process, the angst, the rejections, the prolonged rehearsals, and the aches and pains after countless hours of singing and dancing—for the world. Even though I may not pursue theater as my primary major, the techniques and experiences that I have acquired and will continue to gain will always be by my side, helping me persevere in any given circumstance. Just as actors can touch the minds, hearts, and souls of those sitting in the audience, I too will make my mark in this world whether it be on or off the stage.



**Impressive?**



## *The set up...*

Dig the trenches, build the moats, construct walls and palisades by the bucket. Lay out the castle and towers and raise the flag proudly from every point. Don't forget the seashell decorations. The people of the land stand on a hill and admire the pride of the nation—a monument for eternity—or at least the next big wave. In the little flipped-over boat under the boardwalk, we knew we had built a magical kingdom just like Prince Caspian's, where he had defended his mighty castle. What we didn't know was that it was a world no one over four feet tall would be able to appreciate in the same way, and that chaos had erupted on the boardwalk above. It turns out that perspective is everything.

For my whole life, Friday summer nights meant beach nights. My mom, her friend, and seven kids trekked to the ocean. Our parade of coolers, chairs, buckets, boogie boards and shovels was a sight to behold. Although the youngest of the troop, I happened to be the specialist at digging, jumping waves, and collecting shells. Much to my mother's dismay I also happened to be Houdini in training.

## *The anecdote...*

One Friday after a long, hard day of riding waves, it was time to head home. Seven kids were charged with rinsing toys, finding flip flops, and lugging stuff back through what seemed like miles of sand. We always walked in a line, my friend's mom the leader, my mom the caboose. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven" counted and recounted, and we were ready to go. We trudged toward the boardwalk. Our moms glanced at us every few seconds as they hauled most of the items, which were somehow heavier on the way back. We finally reached the boardwalk. "One, two, three, four, five, six..." My mom turned around. "Where's Matthew?" But I was gone.

Westhampton Beach was the place to be: boardwalk packed, lobster sizzling, and the band loud and strong. My mom shouted my name but heard no reply. Six kids stood by the stairs with special instructions: “DO NOT MOVE.” Two moms frantically ran about. From the boardwalk, bathrooms, shore, showers, and restaurants they yelled my name. Finally, I reappeared, confused by the chaos at the top of the stairs and everyone’s strange questions. No, I was not lost, kidnapped, or Houdini. When we reached the boardwalk, everyone else had hurried up the stairs, but I went under. You might ask how they missed that, but when you’re under four feet tall, you see a whole different world. Kids were scurrying under a capsized boat under the boardwalk. I had no choice but to investigate. They were constructing a castle, and as the expert, it was my duty to supervise. None of my siblings, friends, or adults knew that underneath existed.

## *The reflection...*

This adventure is one of my favorite memories, and as I've grown older (and taller) it has evolved from a story about the time I nearly scared everyone to death to one about how people see (or don't see) what's right in front of them. For most of my life, I looked back at this experience as a funny story; I was unable to see how others may have felt in the situation. Just as my mom was unable to see where my four foot self would go on an adventure, I was unable to comprehend what I had put her through. Our actions and reactions to events are contingent on the perspective from which we view them; empathy is integral in making sound and socially conscious decisions. My sense of empathy and emphasis on socially conscious decision making is derived from my determination to understand and internalize the core beliefs and ideologies of people I observe in life, which is a value that has allowed me to become a more effective communicator, leader and advocate. After all, perspective is everything.

# Some Dos and Don'ts

- **DO** use your own “voice,” especially when writing your personal statement.
- **DO** write about something that you care about, something that gives us a window into your perspective / experience.
- **DO** take some calculated risks in your essay, and really show your personality.
- **DO** use a reflective tone; go beyond the surface.
- **DON'T** pack in as many SAT-prep words as possible!
- **DON'T** write a laundry list of extracurricular activities—this information is already in the Common Application.
- **DON'T** use slang or otherwise inappropriate language!
- **DON'T** overdo humor!
- **DON'T** forget to proofread for misspellings, punctuation, and usage errors.

# • Last Words of Advice:

- Take your time THINKING about your essay before you actually start WRITING your essay.
- A good topic (one that you care about) can make all of the difference. You must be passionate and reflective. Note: you may have to look in unusual places. Try memory books, photo albums, your daily routine, etc.
- ~~Proofread, proofread~~, proofread!
- Don't be afraid to CUT words, phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs. Longer does not equal better! More precise equals better!
- Remember the PURPOSE of the essay is to make you stand out as an individual, and not just be another Social Security number. BE YOURSELF!
- Don't be afraid to get started. Putting fingertip to keyboard is a necessary, albeit scary, step. Just like a cold pool, it is best to JUMP IN!





**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
WRITE  
THE ESSAY**

# THANKS!



Do you have any questions?

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