

College Admissions: Essay Success

Many college applications ask for an original essay introducing you, your extracurricular activities, and your career goals. This shows the entrance committee that you are ready for college courses, all of which have written components (yes, even math!). This is a quick guide to help you wow them.

Introduction (3-5 sentences):

Here is your opportunity to make a great impression. Don't be afraid to get creative by using an interesting question, quote, experience, or hypothetical situation to open the essay. Entrance committees read hundreds of essays a day, your introduction is what determines if it stands out or blends in.

Bland:

Hello, my name is Jane Doe, and I would love to be a part of XYZ College for many reasons. Both of parents graduated from there and want to me attend, as well. I am hoping to major in pre-med and someday become a doctor. Please continue reading for more about my aspirations and why you should choose me.

Wow:

Growing up, my parents told many stories of their time at XYZ. The quad was always lovely in Spring, my mother insists, but my father preferred to spend his time in the Jones Library. They met in a Calculus class and shared their first kiss in the James hall common room. Their stories have inspired me to not only go to college, but to attend the very one their dreams were first woven from. If accepted, I plan to major in pre-med with the hope of one day becoming a pediatrician.

Why: An interesting story that captures attention and talk about personal life!!

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Body Paragraphs (3-5 paragraphs, depending on assignment specifics):

- These topics should follow the order, in which they were mentioned in the introduction, so don't be afraid to go back and rework the intro or play with the paragraph order to get them in line with each other.
- Start from where you have been. For example, a paragraph about your involvement in high school soccer and football should come before a paragraph about what type of doctor you one day hope to be.
- Stay on topic. Try to include only relevant stories or details of your life. If you're not sure whether to include something, ask a teacher or friend to give you a different perspective.
- Vary your word choice. Start every paragraph with a different word and avoid common ones like 'my' or 'the'.

Bland:

The Pelicans soccer team won twelve out of seventeen games while I was goalie for them.

Wow:

Spending quality time on and off the soccer field with my fellow Pelicans, who became like sisters, was an amazing experience.

Why: Brings the admission committee to your world rather than just describing it.

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Conclusion (3-5 sentences):

Wrap-up everything that you have been saying so far, like a wave goodbye at the end of a conversation. Reword your main points (paragraphs) and hint that they should keep you in mind as they choose who gets accepted. Leave on a positive note.

Bland:

I would love to go to XYZ University and am very qualified. Sports have been my life for the past four year, meaning I will definitely try out for your teams and make the school look good on and off the field. To be a doctor is my dream, so when I'm not passing the ball, I'll be studying the human body. My mom and dad went there back in the day and I would be following in their footsteps. You will not be disappointed when you send me my acceptance letter later this year.

Wow:

XYZ College seems like such an exciting place, full of opportunity. It would make me and my parents incredibly proud if I were given a chance to prove my worth there. Soccer and football have been my life these past four years, and they will continue to be a big part of my life at college. When the ball is not in my hand, ready to sail through the air, I will be working hard to study and do well in my pre-med classes. XYZ College will be a gateway toward achieving my dream of being a pediatrician. Please consider me for one of your limited acceptance positions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Why: Doesn't just state the information but weaves them together in a fluid fashion!!

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Disclaimer: *This is a SAFE way of writing the essay, but NOT the only way.*

Feel free to write however you chose just makes sure that it captures the essence of what you want to discuss and it presents you in a unique and interesting way. Feel free exploring option like writing a story of a time you did something interesting or just simply recounting an interesting experience you had. The point is having a well-written essay that captures who you are or some important aspect about you.

Any questions?