



We recognize that the essay can be a major source of stress because it asks you to think about your values and goal. Relax, you can do it!

• **Step 1: Brainstorming an Essay Topic**

The most important part of your essay is the subject matter. Make sure to take some time to brainstorm ideas. Below are some suggestions that might spark some ideas.

- What are your major accomplishments and why do you consider them accomplishments?
- Does any attribute, quality, or skill distinguish you from anyone else? How did you develop this attribute?
- Consider your favorite books, movies, works of art, etc. How have these influenced your life in a meaningful way? Why are they your favorites?
- What was the most difficult time in your life and why? How did it change your perspective on life?
- Have you ever struggled for something and then succeeded? What was it that made you successful?
- Have you experienced a moment when your eyes were opened to something new and it made you realize something different about yourself or the world?
- What are your most important extracurricular or community activities? What made you join these activities and continue your involvement in them?

- What are your goals and dreams for the future? How does this particular university fit into your plans?
- What was the worst mistake you made? What did you learn from it?

• **Step 2: Selecting an Essay Topic**

Now you must consider topics that will allow you to synthesize your important personal characteristics and experiences into a coherent whole while simultaneously addressing your desire to attend a specific institution. While most admissions essays allow great latitude in topic selection, you must also be sure to answer the questions that were asked of you. Leaving a lasting impression on someone who reads 50 essays a day will not be easy, but we have compiled some guidelines to help you get started. Consider the following questions below before proceeding

- Have you selected a topic that describes something of personal importance to your life?
- Avoid "cliché" topics and the 3 D's: Death, Drugs, and Divorce, and never write about the prom.
- Is your topic a gimmick: That is, do you plan to write your essay in iambic pentameter or make it humorous? We do not advise this because nothing is worse than having an admission officer misunderstand what you are trying to say.

• **Step 3: Writing the Essay**

- Make sure you answer the question.
- Be original and be yourself.
- Use language that is understandable.
- Use imagery and clear, vivid prose.
- Use transitions.
- Share your draft with an adult.
- Revise, revise and revise!!

• **Step 4: After Writing the Essay**

- Does your application give information about who you are that goes beyond the information on your application?

- Have you used details and concrete examples to support your essay topic?
Do you transition well from paragraph to paragraph?
- Have at least one adult (teacher, counselor, parent) proofread your essay.
Then, proofread again!