**Tips for Writing college essays**

**STEP 1. REVIEW THE ESSAY PROMPT(S)**

* Common App has announced the 2023-2024 essay prompts.

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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?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
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?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
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?
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.

**STEP 2. START BRAINSTORMING**

**STEP 3. TEST DRIVE A FEW TOPICS**

**STEP 4. WRITE A (TERRIBLE) FIRST DRAFT OR TWO**

* **Be careful about being overly influenced by online essay examples.**

**STEP 5. GET FEEDBACK FROM A TEACHER, COUNSELOR, OR OTHER PEOPLE YOU TRUST**

**STEP 6. WRITE AS MANY DRAFTS AS YOU NEED TO**

**1. CHECK YOUR TOPIC — IS IT ABOUT YOU?**

**2. DON’T BE AFRAID TO BE VULNERABLE**

**3. REVIEW STRUCTURE AND FLOW**

**improve the structure and flow of your essay and help clarify what you’re trying to say:**

* **Bold the first sentence of each paragraph in your personal statement.**
* **Reading only those sentences, the essay should still make sense and read like a “mini” essay on its own.**
* **If some parts don’t make sense, write a new outline where all the bold sentences flow together, then…**
* **Revise your paragraphs so that each one fleshes out your new topic sentence.**

**4. READ IT OUT LOUD**

**5. MAKE SURE IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU; don’t use cliches and don’t try to impress**

**6. GET A SECOND OPINION**

**7. BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT MATTERS TO YOU**

**8. Share new information; don’t turn it into a cover letter**

**9. Know your audience!**

***Write an engaging, well-written short story that shows who you are.***

***“I lost it when Darius peed in the girls’ cabin.”***

**Sources: CollegeData. *Do’s and Don’ts for the College Essay***

 **Rosenbloom, Barak*. 7 Secrets for a Great College Essay***