



# Summer 2018 Essay Workshop



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# Recommended Summer To-Do List

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1. Solidify list of colleges (Safety, Target, Reach)
2. Visit campuses
3. Check college websites for application systems & requirements
  - a. Common, Coalition or School-Specific Application
4. Develop Essays (will be updated online throughout summer)

# Types of College Essays

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1. Optional Personal Statement (Illinois State, Northern Illinois U, etc.)
2. Why \_\_\_\_\_ major (UIUC)?
3. Why us (college/university)?
4. Personal Essay Writing Prompts (for the Common/Coalition Application)
5. Other personal/academic information (Optional)
6. Institutional Supplement Questions (within the Common/Coalition Application)
7. Short Answer Responses (primarily for highly selective colleges)

# Admissions Counselor Perspective...

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1. Chance to get to know the student, from the student's voice
2. Assessing demonstrated understanding of the college/program
3. What are relevant details to share about your academic journey (obstacles, transcript hiccups, personal circumstances, etc.)
4. Ability to communicate clearly through writing

# What does Admissions REALLY want to know?!

## Chance to get to know the student, from the student's voice

1. Learn more about what's important for the student
  - a. What has become important as you have progressed in life....relationships, the environment, your family, your future hopes and dreams.....
2. Self reflection & self awareness
  - a. Focus on creating your voice, not on what you think they want to hear
3. Unique experiences
  - a. Summer enrichment opportunities, employment, co-curricular involvement
  - b. (beyond a list found on your resume: why you do what you do, NOT only what you do)
  - c. Hardship or overcoming difficulties - should focus on how you have grown in a positive way

# What does Admissions REALLY want to know?!

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## **Assessing demonstrated understanding of the college/program**

1. Colleges want to see you are a “serious” applicant
2. It is a way for them to determine “fit” with their philosophy and style
3. Are you likely to yield?

# What does Admissions REALLY want to know?!

**What are relevant details to share about your academic journey (obstacles, transcript hiccups, personal circumstances, etc.)**

1. Colleges want to know you are fully recovered and ready for the personal and intellectual challenges independent living provides
2. How has your academic record been affected by your particular circumstances in life?
3. Perhaps you disclose information about IEP/504

*Tips: Be specific enough, but not too specific.*

*Speak more about what you are doing differently.*

*Be cautious to not make excuses, show growth and maturity.*

# What does Admissions REALLY want to know?!

## Ability to communicate clearly through writing

1. Be sure to answer the prompt. And have a logical flow.
2. Have someone read for content and for grammar
3. Remember, they read anywhere from 100 - 3000 essays a season. They ARE NOT reading with a red ink pen, but glaring errors need to be caught.
4. Should be beyond, and deeper, than what is reflected in your application.

General rules:       $\frac{1}{3}$  about the topic/event,  $\frac{2}{3}$  about why it is meaningful to you.

Stick to the word limit, some systems will cut off your essay.



# Writing for your audience...

## *Know your audience:*

- Could be any age, race, religion and political background
- They read 1,000+ essays each season at all times of the day
- They want to admit you!
- Humor and controversial topics can be tricky...
- Be cautious about “clichéd” topics (death, divorce, disease, “mission trips”), they might value more unique approaches to essays
- You do not need to cure cancer, or save a life for your essay to be “good”
- Proofreading for content is very important, have a few different “types” of people read