

## The Essay

College essays strengthen your application and are a critical piece of the application for admissions officers who are undecided about a student. It is encouraged that students submit essays if they are listed as required, recommended, or optional.

- Find a topic: begin by answering the question that is being asked. In addition, most colleges often ask applicants to describe themselves. Be sure to illustrate what kind of person you are and share what sets you apart from other applicants. Share travel and/or work experiences, life-events, or moments of achievement and failure. Outline what you are committed to or passionate about. You may also choose to share instances when you learned new skills, something unusual about your family, or describe who you find most interesting or influential in your life. This is another chance for you to showcase who you are as a person, and as a student.
- Be specific & narrow your topic: remember that the admissions committee reads hundreds or thousands of applications; it is your job to make your application memorable. Carefully consider your audience when writing your essay, be appropriate, and do not share intimate details or lie. Choosing a topic of importance is key, however, there will be page limits, so be sure to identify a few of the most important aspects to concentrate on.
- Focus on yourself, & show, don't tell: colleges are interested in adding valuable members to their school communities. Admissions committees want to read about you as a student, what sets you apart, and how your experiences have shaped you as a person. Use this opportunity to describe and show evidence of your achievements and attributes. Give specific examples of when and how you used your skills so that admissions committees are convinced that you are the student you claim to be. You are not expected to be an expert or a member of every organization.

## The Resume

A resume is a summary of your educational and work experiences. If you are applying for a specific job, consider the skills needed for that position and highlight those in the skills or references sections. You may refer to the sections listed below; however, you should tailor your resume to fit your specific needs:

- Personal information: located at the top of the resume, includes your name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- Special interests: you may choose to include travel, extracurricular studies, community service, hobbies, projects, etc.
- Educational history: list the names and locations of each school you have attended. List your major, minor, degree, or certificate that you received. Lastly, list the dates of your attendance and (anticipated) graduation.
- Employment history: begin with your most recent job, then list each of the jobs you have held. If you spent considerable time in a given position, state how long you were in that job. Include the name of your employer and the address.
- Special skills: list on-the-job training, supervising, or other competencies you have earned.
- References: list names of at least three individuals who can speak to your work abilities and personality. You may choose to list former employers, teachers, or other adults. Be sure to list names, addresses, phone numbers, and job titles for your references.

The Upper St. Clair High School Counseling Department recommends that you utilize your resume you completed in Naviance. It is the student's responsibility, alone, to include a resume or activity sheet. The counselors are available for consultation on this aspect of application completion.