

Steps to a Great College Essay

Decide which personal qualities you want to highlight in your essay

2. **Think of a single event or experience that reflects these qualities. Think about a specific time you were influenced by:**

- .Your **family, ancestors, or heritage**
- .Your **pastimes or favorite activities**
- .**Significant people outside your family**
- .**Travel**
- .Your **strongest beliefs or values**
- .A **difficult or challenging event**
- .**Criticism or failure**
- .Your **dreams for the future**
- .**A piece of art, literature, or music**

- 3 Take 15 minutes and write the first information that comes to your mind about your chosen event. -This is your rough draft. Don't worry about grammar, structure, etc., JUST WRITE!

4. Take a break. Walk away from your essay for at least one day and let the information "marinate" in your mind.

- 5 Re-write your essay. This time, correct your grammar, punctuation, and structure.

Make sure your story covers the basic facts:

- .What -What happened?
- .Who -Who are the important people in the story?
- .When- When did this take place? Over how much time? How old were you? What was the season?
- .Where -Where did it take place? What was important about the setting?
- .Why- Why was this experience important to you?

Bring out the details in your story including:

- .Sights
- .Sounds
- .Smell .Taste
- .Touch .Emotions

6. Let it sit, again. Walk away for another day so you can look at it again with fresh eyes.

- 7 Proof-read your essay. Reading it backwards will help you catch punctuation and grammar mistakes.

- 8 Have a parent, teacher, or counselor read your essay and make suggestions.

- 9 Write your final essay.