

## WRITING YOUR ESSAY

Some college applications are never submitted because students “can’t” write an essay. The essay is the part of the application that recognizes your uniqueness. It tells much more about you than your “numbers” (SAT I/ACT scores, grades, class rank) do. Use the following tips and seek help if you need it from teachers, counselors and parents.

- DO write lean! Quantity is not quality. Clear, concise writing is much better than volumes of mediocrity.
- DO start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword, and rewrite. You can improve on your presentation.
- DO read the directions carefully. You will want to answer the question as directly as possible, and you'll want to follow word limits exactly.
- DO be honest about yourself. The admission committee is anonymous to you. You are completely unknown to them.
- DO focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than broad-based generalizations. Make your point with examples; show rather than tell.
- DO be creative. Find an original way to express yourself. Catching and maintaining the interest of the reader can be influential.
- DO feel comfortable in expressing anxieties or weaknesses. Everybody has them, and it's good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.
- DO speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.
- DO write about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them!
- Don't be afraid to “toot your own horn.”
- DO reorganize and rewrite.
- DO package neatly. Type your essay, unless told otherwise.
- DO have someone proofread your work. The essay should demonstrate a strong command of grammar with no spelling or typographical errors.