



# CHECKLIST 3: WRITING A COLLEGE ESSAY

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- Do some self-exploration. Your college essay is all about showing who you are to the college admissions committee. What are you passionate about? What do you do best? What is important to you?
- Be specific and focused. Writing about a single experience and then putting it into a larger context is usually a good idea. You should provide a single message and avoid cliché topics like “winning a big game,” “taking a trip” or “writing about a parent” – these will not help you stand out from a group.
- Show your thoughtfulness and maturity. Colleges look for students who have dealt with adversity and can persevere. This does not have to be a big obstacle (although it can be) and should show you can overcome challenges and grow from the experience.
- Start early! This process takes time and you will need to write and re-write a few times to get it right.
- Create an essay outline.
- Read instructions and follow them – especially if there is a word limit.
- Use your own voice. This is one of the few times first person is acceptable and don’t use big words just for the sake of it. Use words you would use, but avoid slang, texting language and ALWAYS use proper punctuation.
- Be honest. Who you are is good enough – let your light shine.
- Don’t be afraid to use humor if it is part of who you are.
- Proofread your essay and have someone else proof it too. Give the person you would like to proof it plenty of time. Get their feedback on the content as well.
- Read it aloud to make sure it “sounds right.” Sometimes this is the quickest way to realize something doesn’t quite make sense.
- Revise if necessary – you want every word to count!

# ADMISSIONS APPLICATION ESSAY TOPICS

These essays will be sent to BOTH the admissions and financial aid scholarship committees when required via [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org).

## Topic A:

*Describe a setting in which you have collaborated or interacted with people whose experiences and or beliefs differ from yours. Address your initial feelings and how those feelings were or were not changed by this experience.*

## Topic B:

*Describe a circumstance, obstacle or conflict in your life and the skills and resources you used to resolve it. Did it change you? If so, how?*

## Topic C:

*Considering your lifetime goals, discuss how your current and future academic and extra-curricular activities might help you achieve your goals.*

