



9 THINGS

YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY
MUST DO TO

Be Memorable

(AND AVOID THE REJECT PILE)

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WWW.MEMORABLEESSAY.COM

Once you hit submit and send your application off to your dream college, it has one chance to make an excellent, lasting impression.

The aspects that will be scrutinized include the grades you earned in high school, as well as your standardized test scores, recommendation letters, class rank, extracurricular activities, and the interest you have shown in the college reading your application. **These are all important; however, none of these things have the power to speak for you like your essay.**

The right essay can make or break your application. Don't miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime simply because you didn't know how to stand out.

Dive into the nine things your essay must do so it can make every admission officer who reads it think about you for days afterward and recommend you get admitted.

You can do this.

My college essay:

1. ANSWERS WHAT WAS ASKED

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay that doesn't answer the given prompt, because the applicant just wrote what was on their mind.

SOLUTION:

Read the given prompt closely, and ensure that you are staying on topic and answering the question. If you are unsure, ask your college counselor, mentor, consultant, or whoever is reviewing your essays for help. In addition, whenever you ask someone to review your essay, be sure to provide them the prompt so they can let you know if you have fully answered it.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

2. MAKES ONE CLEAR POINT

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay that makes three or four major points. This confuses your reader, and prevents you from deeply exploring any of your points and creating an impactful essay.

SOLUTION:

Pick one point (a main message) and ensure that each of your paragraphs talk about that point.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 3. USES AN ANECDOTE WITH SOME SENSORY INFORMATION

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay that shares the writer's opinions and dreams but never tells an engaging story that includes things they could see, hear, feel, taste, or smell. Admissions committees read hundreds of essays; you need yours to engage them so you stand out.

SOLUTION:

After you choose one clear point, or main message, your essay will communicate, identify one entertaining anecdote that can help you drive home that point. Use that anecdote in your essay.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 4. IS AUTHENTIC

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay that sounds formulaic because the writer has included paragraph after paragraph of what they think admissions wants to read -for example, how fulfilled they felt when volunteering at an orphanage, or how hard they worked to get a high grade.

SOLUTION:

Write about something that is truly meaningful to you, even if it seems "too simple" to write about. Your enthusiasm will shine through.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 5. HAS SPECIFIC DETAILS

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay that makes general statements by using terms like “always,” “all the time,” and “never,” instead of giving the reader specific information that allows them to form a mental picture of what was happening.

SOLUTION:

Show the reader what happened and allow them to make their own conclusion. For example—“As a child, my father and I always argued” vs. “My father barged into my room, shouting. ‘Why aren’t you helping your mother with the groceries?!’ This happened at least once a week.”

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 6. HAS AN UNFORGETTABLE START

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay with a hackneyed first line and a first paragraph that tries to communicate too much information at once.

SOLUTION:

When you start writing, consider your first paragraph to be a placeholder. After you finish a full draft of your essay, revise the essay, making sure to spend a few hours working on the first paragraph until it is something that will reel in your reader. As you review your first sentence, experiment with both what it says and how it says it.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 7. HAS A CLEAR, ENGAGING BODY

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay with an engaging first paragraph but subsequent paragraphs that are jumbled and boring.

SOLUTION:

Ensure every paragraph makes a clear point related to your main message, and has specific details that “show” the reader what is happening. Every sentence in your essay must perform.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 8. ENDS WITH A BANG

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay with a final paragraph that introduces new, additional information instead of smoothly bringing a close to the essay's main message.

SOLUTION:

Try as much as possible to refrain from introducing a new idea in your final paragraph. Instead, write a simple, powerful ending that underscores the point you want the reader to take away.

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

□ 9. TELLS MY STORY

COMMON MISTAKE:

An essay that discusses someone else's life, how others' actions have affected you, or explores an issue you care about deeply in academic, unemotional language.

SOLUTION:

Tell your story. Even if you focus on a general topic, such as an academic subject you like, let the reader learn about who you are as a person. Even if you talk about others, don't forget that your college essay is the only chance that you have to speak for you. Make the most of it!

1 My essay doesn't do this

2 I don't know

3 I nailed it!

✓ SO HOW DID YOU SCORE?

FEWER THAN 18 POINTS

[Book a session with me immediately](#), so we can work together to ensure your application isn't fast-tracked to the "Reject Pile."

18–26 POINTS

[Consider booking an appointment with me](#) to ensure your application stands out from the stack.

27 POINTS

Submit your essay NOW and write me when you're famous, friend! Your essay is going places—from the looks of things, right to your dream school's heart.

Print the list on the next page and tape it to your wall.

My college essay:

- 1. ANSWERS WHAT WAS ASKED**
- 2. MAKES ONE CLEAR POINT**
- 3. USES AN ANECDOTE WITH SOME SENSORY INFORMATION**
- 4. IS AUTHENTIC**
- 5. HAS SPECIFIC DETAILS**
- 6. HAS AN UNFORGETTABLE START**
- 7. HAS A CLEAR, ENGAGING BODY**
- 8. ENDS WITH A BANG**
- 9. TELLS MY STORY**

Hi there!

I'm Shawna-Kaye Lester, Founder of Memorable Essay®.

I help ambitious college applicants like you stand out in a sea of competition and get into your dream school, so that you can use your education to impact the world and create a legacy you're proud of.



→ Since 2007, I have helped over 400 ambitious college and grad school applicants win **MORE THAN US\$ 6 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS** to top schools around the world.

→ The schools my college-bound clients have gotten into include Harvard University, Princeton University, Cornell University, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, The University of Chicago, Amherst College, and MIT.

For the Class of 2022, 75% of my private clients were admitted to their top-choice college.

→ **Memorable Essay's happy clients include The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation (JKCF).** The JKCF gives the largest scholarships in the United States to

students with financial need and exceptional academic promise. I am the foundation's Essay Consultant for their college-bound students.

→ I'm a trained journalist published by CNN's Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown.

→ I started working as a Senior Admission Fellow at Bates College in 2007, interviewing prospective students and recommending the best candidates for admission. I still interview prospective students now, as an Alumni in Admission. Having been an applicant and an interviewer gives me the unique perspective required to help you shine.

I treat every application I touch with care; my college education changed my life, and I want you to experience that transformation.



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