

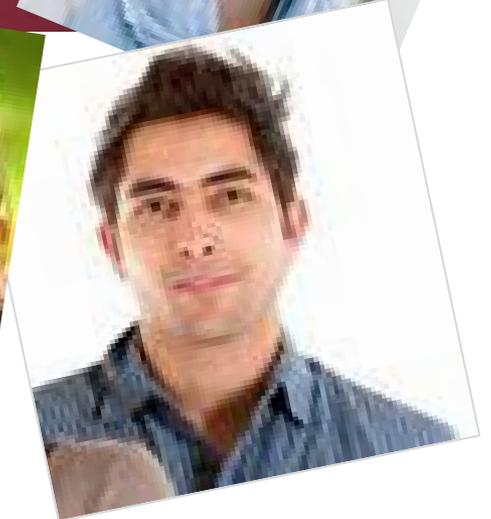
THE  
HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENT'S  
NEMESIS:  
THE DREADED  
COLLEGE ESSAY

# Turn it into Your Asset



- Here is your opportunity to seize control of the college application process.
- It is the **ONLY** place you have **TOTAL** control over what goes into it.
- Use this opportunity wisely 😊

# What are colleges looking for in their freshman class?



# Diversity

## What is the mix they are seeking?

- **An ECLECTIC class made up of students from different backgrounds.**

## How does this work to your advantage?

- **Schools are often willing to offer scholarships to generate the right mix of diversity for the class.**
- **Use your personal statement to help the college know your story.**

# TOP 5 TIPS FOR WRITING THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

Avoiding the “McEssay” syndrome



# 5. Avoid Cliches

- “It’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.”
- “I learned how to be a team player.”
- “I want to help people.”
- “I have a dream.”

## 4. Tell a good story in your own voice

- This is not an essay for English class- that is academic writing. College essays are for story telling.
- You are obligated to entertain your reader.
- Use humor sparingly. Humor isn't the only way to entertain.

# 3. Don't try to impress.

- If you try to guess what admissions officers want to hear, you are on the wrong path.
- Don't extract life lessons you did not learn.
- Sometimes it's good to admit what you aren't good at.

## 2. Delve deeper

- Use the personal statement to **provide** answers to questions raised in your application.
- Use the personal statement to give more **insight** into your application.
- Use the personal statement to **explain** what an admissions office doesn't know from your application.

**PIE**

# 1. Own your personal story

- You have to write a personal statement that could only come from YOU.
- Think about what you have to contribute to the college. Diversity? Talent? Geographic location? Life experience?
- Brainstorm with a teacher or a friend.
- Narrow your topic.

# Getting Started

- Start with the UC personal statement.
- Be sure to do the third prompt.
- Plan all three personal statements at once.
- Don't worry about including all parts of the question in your answer.
- Use graphic organizer for brainstorming.
- UC's say: Be open. Be honest. Be real.

# UC Instructions

- The first two prompts have a total word budget of +/- 1000 words.
- The essays do not need to be the same length. Any answer has to be at least 250 words.

# Prompt 1

- Describe the world you come from---for example, your family, community or school--- and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

**FAMILY**

**DREAMS/  
ASPIRATIONS**

**COMMUNITY**

**SCHOOL**

# PROMPT 2

- Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you.
- What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?



Experiences are the easiest item to start with.  
Experiences often lead to answers for Prompt 1 and 3 as well.

# PROMPT 3

## UC ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

**“If you wish, you may use this space to tell us anything else you want us to know about you that you have not had the opportunity to describe elsewhere in the application.”**

- ❑ Word limit: 550 words
- ❑ Use to answer academic issues raised in application
- ❑ Use to answer unraised issues- family, personal, other

# Do's and Don'ts

## Don't

- Write what you think others want to read
- Exaggerate or try to impress
- Use flowery or pretentious language
- Neglect technical parts
- Ramble

## Do

- Think small- write about what you know
- Reveal yourself in your writing
- Show rather than tell
- Write in your own voice and style
- Write your own essay

# Contact

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