



Become a College Essay Expert

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Today's Focus

-  Debunk the myths
-  Discuss the facts
-  Get practical tips and resources

What Is Essay Coaching?

-  Reflection
-  Conversation
-  Review

Myths

- The essay should sound sophisticated
- Students need an impressive topic
- Admissions officers do not read them
- Colleges do not know if students get too much help
- There's a secret formula

Barriers

- Writing for results
- Relying on samples
- Lessons learned in English class



The Wow Method

Your College Essay In Ten Simple Steps

CONTENT

1 Understand the Prompt
Before choosing a topic, you should understand what the prompt is asking and how the essay fits into the application. That means reflecting on what readers already know about you and thinking about what they can't find out from the rest of your application.

2 Brainstorm Ideas
In Step 2, we encourage students to consider several different topics. For each one, we discuss the story idea, the prompt, and what readers will learn about you. You might be surprised by what you choose to write about.

3 Focus on Theme
Every essay needs a theme to help the writer stay focused. The theme has two parts: 1) "What happened?" (What story are you sharing?) and 2) "Why does it matter?" (What will readers learn about you that they can't find out from the rest of your application?)

4 Free Write for Details
Once the theme is clear, it's time to get some words on the page. It doesn't matter what those words are or how many you write. This free write is a chance to capture details, focusing on the "What happened?" aspect of your theme.

5 Write Draft 1
Step 5 is a content draft. We suggest writing more than the word limit so you don't overthink this first draft or try to make it perfect. You'll have plenty of time to focus on structure and polish later.

6 Review Prompt and Theme
In Step 6, we read the first draft with the prompt and theme in mind, then give students writing exercises to help focus the essay and add details where needed. This review is for content only. We don't comment yet on structure or polish.

CONTENT + STRUCTURE

7 Write Draft 2
In Step 7, students take a step back and review the work they've completed so far, including theme, free writes, draft 1 and Step 6 writing exercises. Then it's time to write draft 2, this time paying attention to both content and structure.

8 Review Content and Structure
In Step 8, we review the essay for content and structure. We add notes in the margin, pointing out what works and where the essay could be improved, based on the student's willingness and ability to take the essay further.

CONTENT + STRUCTURE + POLISH

9 Write Draft 3
The polish draft gives the student an opportunity to step back once again and read the essay with fresh eyes. The goal is to tie up any loose ends and make sure the essay is clean, but not to rewrite it beyond recognition.

10 Final Review and Proofread
The final review is for clarity and consistency only. We focus on grammar, spelling and punctuation. Perfection is not the goal. You are a high school student and should sound like one.

Start with Content

Step 1: Understand the prompt

Step 2: Brainstorm ideas

Step 3: Focus on theme

Step 1: Understand the Prompt

Establish Context

- What do readers already know?
(accomplishments)
- What do I want readers to know?
(characteristics)

Common Application

*The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself **in your own voice**. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you **apart from courses, grades, and test scores**? Choose the option **that best helps you answer that question** and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response.*

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Step 2: Brainstorm Ideas

Balance prompt, story ideas & characteristics

Prompt	Common App (A background story)
Story Idea	Teaching Ellie to swim
Notes	I worked with her all summer, she was scared, wouldn't put her face in the water, last day she finally tried it. I didn't feel frustrated, really wanted to help her. Pool was quiet that day, a little overcast, she was playful and trusted me.
What do I want readers to know about me?	I am patient and diligent. This was the first time I felt like I taught someone something. I want to do that again, whether as a swim instructor or in other aspects of my life.

Step 3: Focus on Theme

- What happened?
- Why does it matter?

Essay Reviews

You are a coach, not an editor

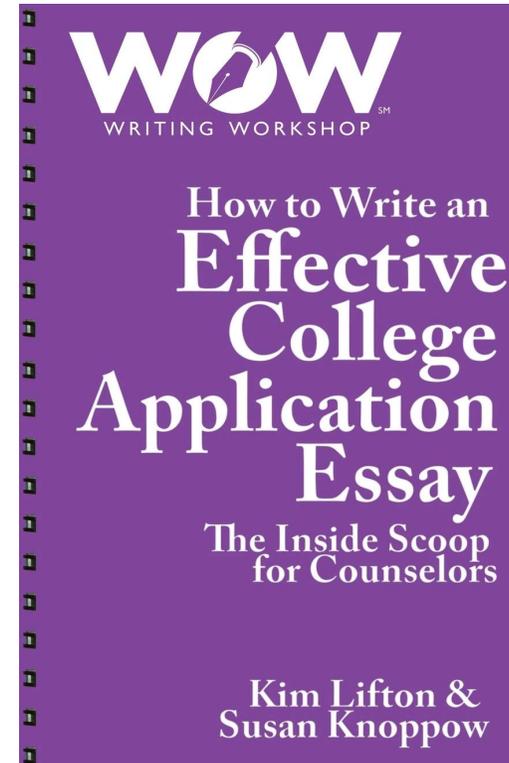
-  Content
-  Structure
-  Polish

Q & A

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Free E-book & Resources





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