

Wow  
Writing  
Workshop

# Protect Yourself from the Threat of ChatGPT

# Counselor Concerns

- Prevention
- Detection
- Punishment

(and a little bit of how-to)

That leads  
to...

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Quick changes
- More walls and complex contracts

# ChatGPT



## Examples

"Explain quantum computing in simple terms" →

"Got any creative ideas for a 10 year old's birthday?" →

"How do I make an HTTP request in Javascript?" →



## Capabilities

Remembers what user said earlier in the conversation

Allows user to provide follow-up corrections

Trained to decline inappropriate requests



## Limitations

May occasionally generate incorrect information

May occasionally produce harmful instructions or biased content

Limited knowledge of world and events after 2021

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# Common Questions

# Principles of Ethical Essay Coaching

1. Theme matters more than topic
2. Reviewing is simple if you know what to look for
3. Every exercise, meeting and email has a purpose

# Principle #1: Theme Matters More than Topic

- What happened?
- Why does it matter?

# Principle #1: Theme Matters More than Topic

- Hook is a red herring
- Unique topic is a red herring
- These things distract you from what matters:  
Theme
- All that other stuff – you're wasting your time!  
(It doesn't matter as much as you think)

# Principle #1: Theme Matters More than Topic

## Common App Instructions:

... 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 ...

# Principle #1: Theme Matters More than Topic

## What Happened? Why Does It Matter?

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. Describe a **problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve**. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is **of personal importance, no matter the scale**. Explain its **significance** to you and what **steps you took or could be taken** to identify a solution.
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.

# Principles of Ethical Essay Coaching

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# Principle #2: Reviewing is Simple if you Know What to Look for

How do you know what to look for?

- Content, Structure, Polish
- Identify patterns
- Only comment on what's relevant

# Where are you in the process?

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## The Wow Method

Your College Essay In Ten Simple Steps

### CONTENT

#### Step 1: Understand the Prompt

Before choosing a topic, make sure you understand what the prompt is asking and how the essay fits into the application. Focus on what readers already know about you, as well as what they can't find out from the rest of your application.

#### Step 2: Brainstorm Ideas

Consider several topics. For each, consider the prompt, the story idea, and the positive characteristic(s) the story illustrates. You might be surprised by which one you choose.

#### Step 3: Focus on Theme

Every essay needs a theme to help you focus. The theme includes both 1) What happened? (What story are you sharing?) and 2) Why does it matter? (What will readers learn about you?)

#### Step 4: Free Write for Details

This is your chance to capture details, focusing on the What happened? aspect of your theme.

#### Step 5: Write Draft 1

Draft 1 is a content draft. It's okay to go over the word limit. Don't over-think it or try to make the essay perfect. You'll focus on structure and polish later.

#### Step 6: Review Prompt & Theme

We read first drafts with the prompt and theme in mind, then give writing exercises to help students focus the essay and add details where needed. This review is for content only.

### CONTENT + STRUCTURE

#### Step 7: Write Draft 2

Step back to review the work you've completed so far, from Step 1 through Step 6. Then write draft 2, focusing on both content and structure.

#### Step 8: Review Content and Structure

For second drafts, we add notes in the margin, pointing out what works and places for improvement, based on each student's willingness and ability to take the essay further.

### CONTENT + STRUCTURE + POLISH

#### Step 9: Write Draft 3

Step back again and read the essay with fresh eyes. Tie up loose ends and make sure it is clean, but don't revise your work beyond recognition.

#### Step 10: Final Review and Proofread

We read final drafts for clarity and consistency, focusing on grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Perfection is not the goal. College applicants should sound like high school students, not professional writers.

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