



Essays 101

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Essays 101

Presented by Cram Crew, Inc.



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The Purpose of Admissions Essays

This is a showcase for your personality; it's the introduction to the real you. Essays add dimension to your application that can distinguish you from your peers, who may otherwise appear the same in terms of their resumes and experiences.

- Each student's long-form essay should share a unique and personal experience. When selecting essay topics, encourage students to avoid topics that cover too many concepts. Students should write about a single experience or situation leading to personal growth. These essays should be written as a first-person narrative.

Colleges look for qualities such as:

- Leadership
- Initiative
- Dedication
- Enthusiasm
- Responsibility
- Room to Grow

The Process

For a visual overview of the essay process, refer to the College Readiness CR Process Diagram document.

1. **Brainstorming**

- a. Discuss ideas for your essays with your consultant. Refer to the Brainstorming section on page 4 and the Topic Selection Guidelines.
- b. When you have decided which essays to write and have a general idea about what you want to write about, submit a Topic Check to the internal CR team.
- c. A Topic Check is a well-written paragraph that reveals what you will write in your essay. In the Topic Check, you must explain how you will answer every part of the prompt.
 - i. Topic Checks with loose outlines or a few sentences will be rejected.
- d. Email the prompt, word count, and the Topic Check to collegereadiness@cramcrew.com.

- e. The CR Editing Team will respond with feedback as to whether or not the idea is good, needs further work, or is inadvisable.
- f. Copy your parent and consultant on all emails.

2. Start drafting

- a. Once your topic has been approved, Create an outline to help organize your content. *Refer to the essay outline section.* We strongly discourage the use of AI, as it comes across as inauthentic.
- b. Work with your consultant to create a polished essay that's an accurate reflection of your writing abilities.
- c. PROOFREAD the first draft (and every draft) to ensure the essay is as polished and grammatically correct as possible.
 - i. Ensure that each of your team members (consultant, editor, and parents) are reviewing each draft

3. Send the draft to the CR Editing Team

- a. Upload your first draft through the mycramcrew.com Portal. An estimated return date will be automatically calculated.
 - i. In the busiest part of the season, between July 15 and September 1, plan for a turnaround time of 8-10 business days.

4. Editing

- a. When the CR Editing Team returns the essay, review the comments and edits with your consultant. Remember, you have the final say in all aspects, so if CR makes a suggestion that you don't agree with, you aren't obligated to make that change. The essay is about you, not the editors!
 - i. However, please make a comment in response to ours explaining why you did not want to change it.
 - ii. Communicate any concerns you, your parents, or your consultant has to the editor if there are disagreements on edits.

6. Finding additional prompts

- a. Your consultant will also help you find short answer response prompts.
 - i. In session, sit with your consultant and fill out the Common App to find the correct prompts. This is not guaranteed until August 1.
 - ii. As your consultant to help you check the websites of your schools to verify updated prompts.
- b. *All students should wait for their meeting with Deepak before submitting any application. He will advise you on answers to specific application questions and major/school selections.*

Brainstorming Essay Topics

- Essays are different from resumes. They should be a snapshot of your personality and accurately reflect your abilities and character.
- Some Apply Texas prompts are related to and overlap with Common App prompts. Refer to the Dual Prompt section for guidance.
- Ask your consultant about using **The Obsession List**, **The Topic Selection Guidelines**, and **Questions to Generate Topic Ideas** documents as brainstorming tools to help you come up with creative, unique approaches to the prompts.
- Ask your consultant to show you essays that have worked for past students.
- **Topics to Avoid:**
 - Broad topics such as poverty and world hunger.
 - Overused topics like mission trips, camp experiences, finding contentment at the family ranch/lake house, sports injuries, and living with ADD/ADHD (learning disabilities and ADD can be addressed if you choose to write an AC Essay).
 - “-isms” and “-ists” like racism, classism, and elitism.
 - Subjects that will be approached in ignorance of other viewpoints or information.
 - Other people’s experiences

Outline Drafting Exercise

I. Introduction

Opening Sentence:

Building Material

Detail:

Detail:

Thesis Statement:

II. Body Paragraph 1

Topic Sentence/Idea:

Detail:

Detail:

Transition to next idea or concluding/lead-in statement:

III. Body Paragraph 2

Topic Sentence/Idea:

Detail:

Detail:

Transition to next idea or concluding/lead-in statement:

IV. Body Paragraph 3

Topic Sentence/Idea:

Detail:

Detail:

Transition to next idea or concluding/lead-in statement:

V. Conclusion

Transition Sentence:

Summary:



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