



Louis Educational Consulting
The Do's and Don'ts of
WRITING A COLLEGE ESSAY

By the time students are filling out their college applications their essay is the one element, they still have control over. Students should make the most of this opportunity to tell colleges about them.

DO'S

- ⇒ Start early.
- ⇒ Answer the question.
- ⇒ Be original.
- ⇒ Brainstorm.
- ⇒ Use a moment that only you can speak about and develop it with specific facts and imagery.
- ⇒ Be yourself, focused and personal.
- ⇒ Develop your introduction; it must grab the reader.
- ⇒ Use good transitions.
- ⇒ Take a break from your essay and then return to it.
- ⇒ Revise and revise again - good writing requires many drafts.
- ⇒ Proofread and proofread again by reading it out loud.



DON'TS

- ⇒ Use "SAT" words you wouldn't use in casual conversation. Trying to impress the reader with words that you don't use in everyday conversation can backfire.
- ⇒ Repeat words if at all possible.
- ⇒ Manufacture things about yourself.
- ⇒ Use cliches.
- ⇒ Repeat your resume or list of activities.
- ⇒ Make someone else look bad to make yourself look good.
- ⇒ Write what you think the reader wants to hear - you will guess wrong.
- ⇒ Recount what the reader already knows. Don't regurgitate what is on the college's website or in their viewbooks.
- ⇒ Tell - instead of showing the reader using imagery.
- ⇒ Use the essay to explain blemishes on your record. Use the additional information section to write a matter-of-fact paragraph to explain any red flags.
- ⇒ Assume you will submit the first draft. Most every piece of good writing requires revision.
- ⇒ Use off-color, one-liners or limericks.
- ⇒ Rely on spell-check.
- ⇒ Use 50 words when five will do.
- ⇒ Forget to proofread and proofread again by reading it out loud.

