

Tips for Writing the College Essay

- Tell a story that reveals something about yourself - but be creative... no sports stories, no short term mission stories, no camp stories, do not be cliché in your choice!
- You want a story that is going to reveal something that makes you unique... that makes you- you! Tell a story that only you can! Focus on qualities and/or values that make you unique!
- Do not be afraid to write about the ordinary, (even seemingly mundane events), but be creative in how you tell it. The story (even if the event is not earth-shattering) should mark a turning point for you. (Explore what moments made up that turning point)
- Tone is vitally important! Be sincere, be yourself, use common sense! Avoid sounding arrogant or worse, self-righteous! Be humble... even vulnerable.
- Should reveal something about the human condition... what does this mean? You don't just recount... you *reflect*! So take the time to reflect on the story. What does it mean? Create some sort of balance between the story and the reflection/analysis.
- This is personal... do not try to copy a story, style, or structure! First person is ok.
- Obviously it needs to be well written... active writing- describe... don't tell!
- If a friend/family member finds your essay on the ground with no name on it, they should know it's yours simply by reading it.
- Some suggestions of great college essays:
<http://www.businessinsider.com/high-school-senior-who-got-into-5-ivy-league-schools-shares-her-admissions-essay-2016-4>
http://info.story2.com/hubfs/STC-Success_stories-2.pdf?t=1509131436479
- See Kurt Vonnegut's seven rules for writing well:
 - 1) Find a subject you care about
 - 2) Do not ramble
 - 3) Keep it simple
 - 4) Have the guts to cut (things out- words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs)
 - 5) Sound like yourself
 - 6) Say what you mean to say
 - 7) Pity the readers

Other resources:

<http://mitadmissions.org/blogs/entry/how-to-write-a-college-essay>