

Common Application Essay Suggestions & Reminders

- **DON'T plagiarize.** This one should hopefully go without saying. Not only does plagiarism reflect poorly on your character, chances are copying someone else's words verbatim (or close enough) will not result in an essay that is reflective of your distinctive personality traits and writing style. Believe in your own abilities and create work that is yours and yours alone.
- **DO be honest.** You are awesome (yes, you). Many of your experiences, when discussed honestly and thoughtfully, are absolutely worthy of inclusion in a personal statement. Even if you don't have kooky, out-of-the-box stories to tell, sincerity counts for a lot in an essay that aims to say something about your personality and values. You don't need to make things up or exaggerate your circumstances. You are enough.
- **DO respond to the prompt.** You may have that really great story you want to tell, but if no one's asking for it, writing it won't do you any good. That said, we find that a wide range of stories, with just a bit of tweaking, can be molded to fit within the boundaries of the Common Application personal statement prompts.
- **DON'T exceed length limit.** Attention to detail! An arguably annoying, yet critically important skill that will be relevant in almost any task you tackle in the future. Start this next phase of your life right by paying attention to the length limit. Many applications help you with this detail by providing word-limiting boxes in which you will paste your beautifully written masterpieces. However, for those that don't — beware! Double and triple check these details before submission.
- **DON'T use cliches or overuse idioms.** Cliches in college essays get us all *bent out of shape*. Think you can't *crack the nut* of the personal statement without using these over-worn phrases? We don't buy it. Whenever you find yourself recording an overused phrase, dig deeper. We know you have it in you! Also, tell your story simply and directly. If you don't use idioms in your everyday speech, don't try to squeeze them into your essay.
- **DO take breaks.** Breaks are essential for generating creativity and keeping yourself from getting burned out. Taking regular breaks will keep you on schedule, but don't take too many! Too many breaks in a row stop being breaks and start being procrastination.

- **DON'T rely on spell check.** Spell check catches a lot, but not everything. It won't catch homophones (the famous your/you're pair, for example), but admissions officers sure will. Plus, giving yourself the chance to proofread in-depth will also allow you yet another chance to make sure you like the way your essay flows.
- **DO write about things other than your accomplishments.** An essay in resume form is not the best use of your essay space. You can list all the great things you've done in other places in the application. Use your essay for reflection, showcasing humor, talking about your passions — anything that isn't already reflected on your application.
- **DON'T stress out.** Stress helped cavemen flee lions, but it may hurt you more than help you when writing your essay. Take a deep breath. Know that one hundred percent of students we speak to, even if they are scared at first, complete their college admissions essays.

~Courtesy of College Essay Advisors

<https://www.collegeessayadvisors.com/college-essay-dos-and-donts/>

REMINDER: The Common Application Personal Essay needs to be a minimum of 250 words and cannot be any more than 650 words. Be sure to double space it, use Times New Roman as your font style, and make the text size 12.

The logo features the words "Class of" in a black, elegant script font. A black graduation cap is positioned above the letter "o" in "of". Below "Class of", the year "2022" is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font.