

NACAC's Top 10 Tips for Writing a College Essay

Read a more detailed discussion of each tip at www.nacacfacts.org/EssayTips.

1. **Start early.** The more time you have, the less stress you'll have.
2. **Be yourself.** One of the biggest mistakes students make is "writing what they think others want to hear."
3. **Be honest.** College admission officers have read hundreds—even thousands—of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism.
4. **Take a risk.** Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing.
5. **Keep in focus.** Use the essay to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.
6. **Write and rewrite.** Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try.
7. **Get a second opinion.** Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they're sent to the publisher.
8. **Proofread.**
9. **Don't confuse applying online with sending email.** Make sure that you put as much effort into an online essay as you would if you were sending it snail mail.
10. **Don't expect too much from an essay.** The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered.