



**THE COLLEGE  
ESSAY**

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- It is **MOST IMPORTANT** to choose a topic that means something to **YOU!**
- The essay is the best place in the application to reveal who you are and what is most important to **YOU!**

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- **Don't be afraid to brag a little.**

You've worked hard for your accomplishments.

- **“The Hook”**

In the first two sentences, have us wanting to read more.

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- **Be Descriptive**

**Details, Details, Details**

**HOW** did your coach inspire you?

**WHY** is your room your favorite place to escape?

Think about your **FIVE SENSES**

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- Don't overuse **THESAURUS** words that you don't regularly use to try to impress colleges
- **BUT KEEP IN MIND**, your essay is a written piece of work, not a conversation with your best friend.
- Stay away from **SLANG** or **TEXTING** language

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- **PROOFREAD** your essay. Be sure to spell-check, grammar-check and have multiple people read your essay for **TONE**.
- **STRATEGY:** Write your essay in a word processing program (Microsoft Word), then copy and paste it into your online application.

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

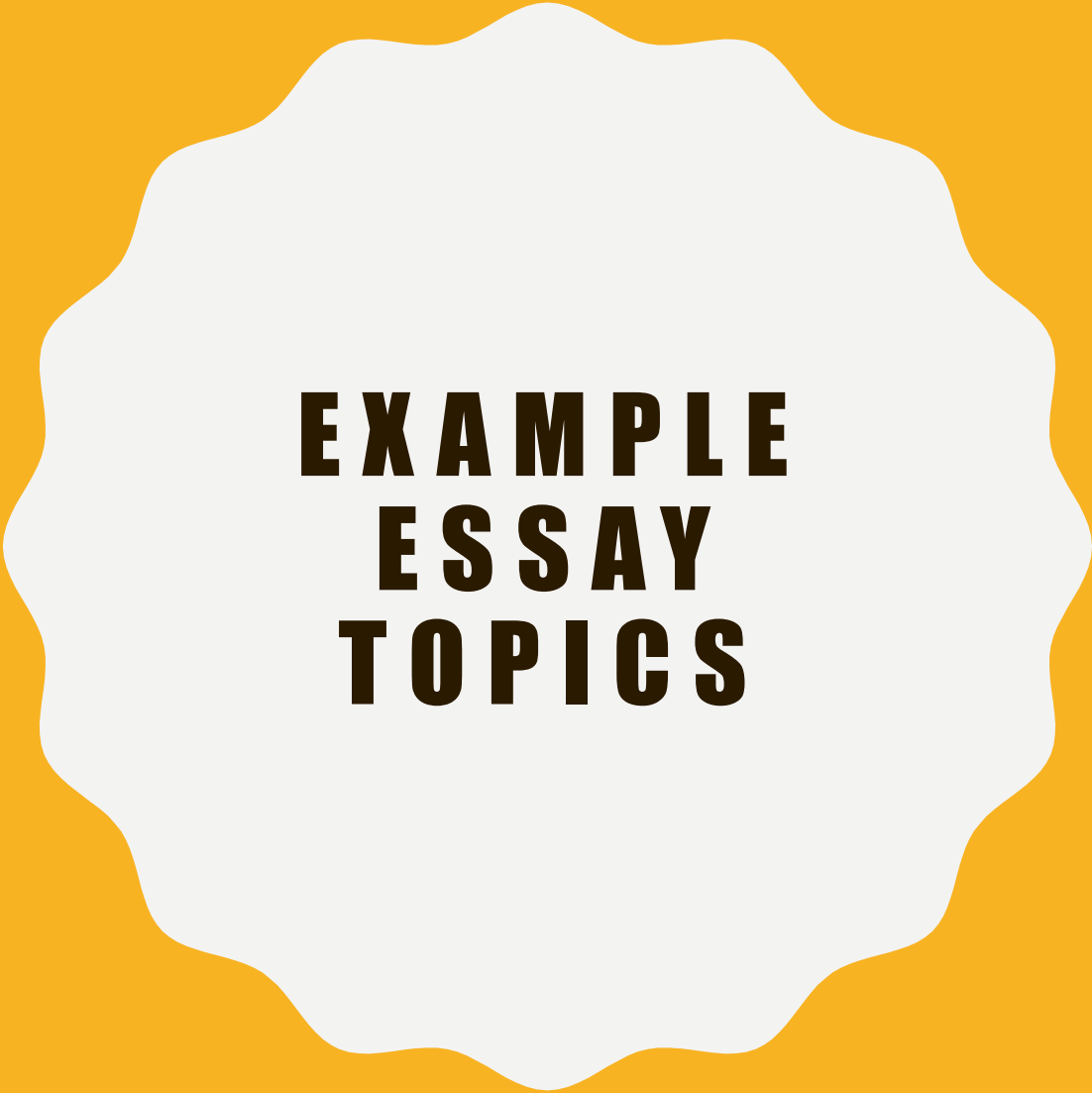
- It's OK to use **HUMOR** in your essay, **BUT** don't use your essay to try out humor for the first time.
- **HUMOR** can backfire! Proofread for **TONE**.  
What is funny to you may be perceived as sarcastic or judgmental by someone else.

# GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- If you are submitting the same essay to multiple colleges (**GREAT STRATEGY!**), stay away from a topic where you specifically reference one institution.

**We don't want to know the top three reasons you want to attend *another* college.**





**EXAMPLE  
ESSAY  
TOPICS**

# **KALAMAZOO**

**What invention would the world be better off without and why?**

# **SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY**

**Tell us about the most  
embarrassing moment of  
your life.**

# UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**What is your favorite word,  
and why?**

# **COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY**

**If you were to develop a Mt. Rushmore representing the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whose faces would you select and why?**

# **COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY**

**Once you have completed your education, would you return to your hometown to begin your adult life? Why or why not?**

# **ST. MARY'S, MARYLAND**

**Please write a journal entry  
as if the date were  
September 20, 2030.**

**GETTING  
STARTED**



# **THE THREE PART RULE**

- **Tell a story or tell about an experience.**
- **How did that experience change you?**
- **How will that experience influence you going forward?**

# WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Take Time To Reflect**
  - Who are you?
  - What do you value?
  - What is exciting to you?
- What do you want us to know about you that we didn't ask on our application?

# WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Write a Personal Statement**
  - **Approximately 500 words**
  - **Looking for more of an “I” response/  
First Person Narrative**
- **Used for college applications and scholarship applications**
  - **Save and “tweek” for each scenario**

# **IF YOU GET “STUCK”**

- **If we went to lunch, what would we talk about?**
  - **What is important to you?**
    - **Where are you going?**
    - **What are your dreams?**

# AND FINALLY.....

- **RELAX!**
- **HAVE FUN!**
- **Give yourself plenty of time to write your  
MASTERPIECE!**

# AND FINALLY.....

- **Your essay should be:**
  - **Thoughtful**
  - **Insightful**
  - **Well-Organized**
  - **Error-Free**
- **Something to be PROUD of!**



**Stacey Thomas**

Assistant Director of Admissions

StaceyThomas@uky.edu

Schedule a meeting with me: [Go.uky.edu/stacey](https://go.uky.edu/stacey)

859-218-5339

[uky.edu/admission](https://uky.edu/admission)

**GO CATS!**