



ADMISSION ESSAY CHEAT SHEET

Use this cheat sheet to help you get started

| JUST STARTING? | ALREADY FINISHED? |
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| Brainstorm sentences or words for these questions... | Does your Essay... |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I dream about... • I think about... • I'm afraid of... • I'm interested in... • On the weekends I like to... • I'm good at... • I'm not good at... • I'm glad when... • I'm sad when... • I don't believe... • I have difficulty with... • I laugh when... • I get angry when... • I love it when... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a story? • Highlight one aspect of your personality that isn't already reflected in your application? If you try to cover too many, it sounds like a resume. • Have a clear main idea? • Include specific details and examples to help develop your main idea? (hint: use the five senses to describe something). • Sound like yourself? Avoid using general statements like, "I am passionate about helping people." Let your personality show! • Sound good when you read it out loud? Mistakes become more clear when you read aloud. |

COMMON THEMES OF SUCCESSFUL ESSAYS:

Tells a story using specific details

"Maurizio brought me to a dangerously steep staircase that looked like it had been purposely drenched in oil to increase the chance of a fall. As he gracefully flew down each step, I clutched onto the rusty tile walls, strategically putting one foot first and then the other."

Connects the story to a bigger theme and has a "take away"

"It was in that lunchroom when I was 17, when I realized that I can choose how to remember something. I can choose to find meaning in that day, not in the horror but in other people's kindness."

Demonstrates ability to reflect on and learn from experiences

“Moments such as those challenge my criteria of what constitutes true success. My mother, despite never going to college, still managed to make a difference in my life. Tomorrow, she will put on her uniform with just as much dignity as a businesswoman would her power suit. What is her secret? She wholeheartedly believes that her son’s future is worth the investment. The outcome of my education will be vindication of that belief.”

Voice and personality

“Today is the day when Isaac (that’s me) starts his job of putting smiles on grim faces as the reader of the morning announcements. “But Isaac, that job is super boring! You just read what’s written on a piece of paper,” is what an uninformed person might say...”

Curiosity and/or passion for learning

“To me, the Italian language holds an essential connection to my past, but also a constant goal for the future. It is likely that I will never fully master the vernacular and colloquialisms, yet learning this language will stimulate me intellectually and culturally for life.”

Demonstrates how you will make a positive impact on a community

“I watch the [morning] announcements evolve from an unfortunate but necessary part of the day to a positive and inspiring event. It is now more than just a monotonous script; it becomes a time to make sure that everyone has at least one thing to smile about.”

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