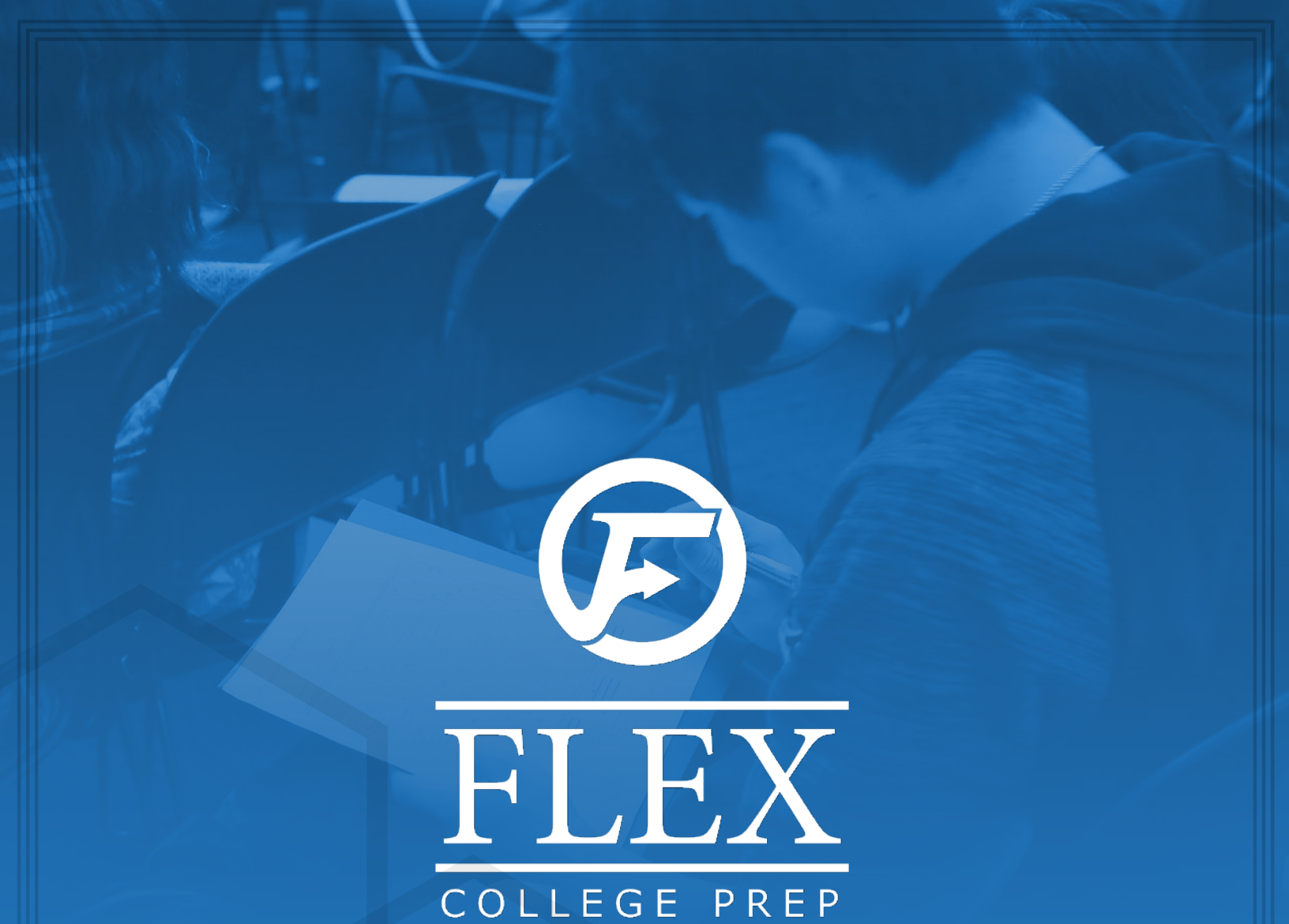


FLEX
COLLEGE PREP

How to Write The Perfect College Essay

FLEX College Prep

Summer has already begun and for our rising seniors (Class of 2019), it is the season of the college essay.

All across the country, sixteen and seventeen year olds are struggling to find the five hundred words that will capture their unique selves and make them stand out among the tens of thousands of other college applicants—all of whom will also have their say.

This prospect, which would be daunting for many adults, has some high school students so fazed that it prompts them to say they wish they had experienced adversity simply in order to have something to write about.

For all the ruckus, however, the college admissions essay remains a wasted opportunity for all too many students. This is largely a result of the misperceptions that surround this particular area of the college admissions process.

Many people aren't even sure how much weight the essay carries in the admissions process, let alone what the college admissions officer is looking for in a student's essay. In fact, this question is worth tackling right at the onset: Just how important is the college essay?

A few essay writing tips

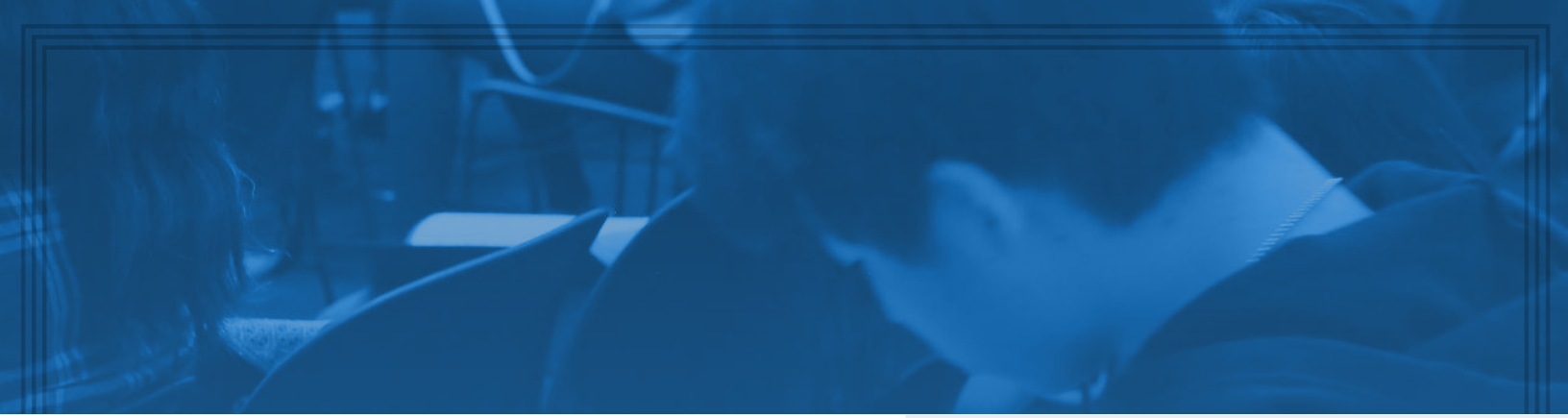
1. Be yourself. College admissions officers don't want to read essays that merely recount your achievements or successes.

2. On the other hand, package yourself strategically. While you want to be honest, there are certain weaknesses and less positive experiences that you may not want to detail in a personal statement.

3. Do not simply repeat information found elsewhere in your application. A student's activity resume is on the page immediately preceding the essays. The essay is an opportunity to expand on activities found on this list rather than merely restating them.

4. Show, don't tell. Use details, descriptions, and narrative scenes to give the admissions reader an enjoyable reading experience.

5. Use common sense! There are topics you should and should not write about. For instance, boys should not write about video gaming.



As college admission becomes increasingly competitive, the nuanced differences between one student and another are becoming magnified. But the differences are not only academic.

For instance, whether a student scores 1580 or 1520 on the SAT, whether he earns straight A's with three AP classes or four, will not have a major impact on the admission process for most private universities.

Instead, personal points of contact (the college essay, the admission interview and other correspondence with the college) are where students can differentiate themselves.

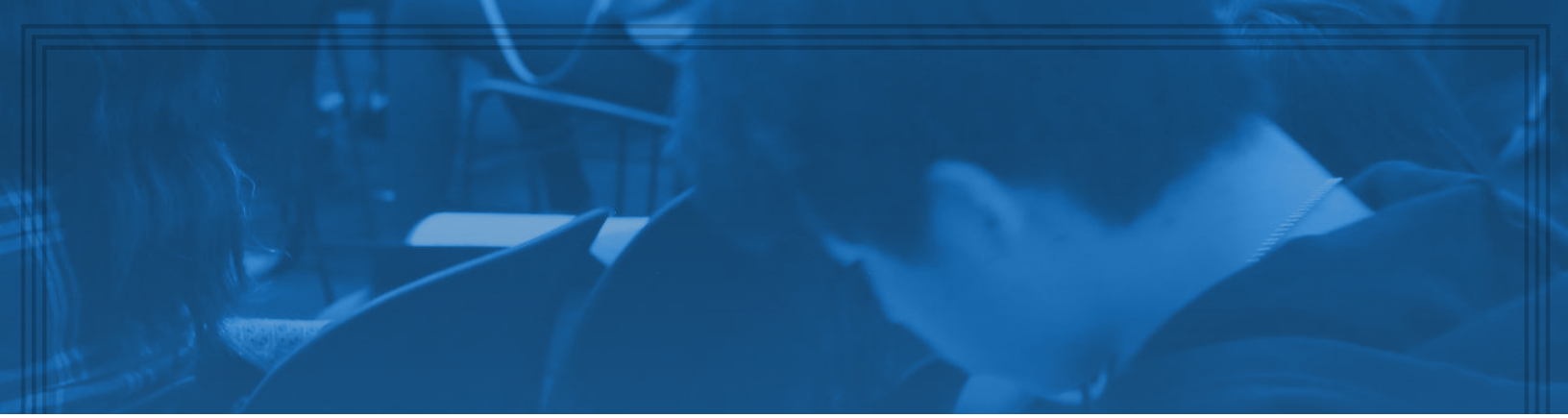
In that sense, the college essay is the main way for students to communicate their passions, advance their application strategies and stand out in a crowd. So what exactly is the college essay?

The college essay is a written response to a prompt (or prompts) in the college application. It is an opportunity to show how you as an applicant are different or unique from your peers.

Most high school students have similar activities and experiences. For instance, many students play piano, violin or cello; play soccer, golf or basketball;

6. Make sure the different parts of your application come together to tell a consistent story. The essay should highlight, develop, or expand on key factors in your application, or should shed light on situations that might not come up during the normal course of the application.

7. Finally, start early! Essays take a lot of effort. In fact, the brainstorming process requires time and patience. Many of our best student writers find themselves scrapping multiple first drafts of ideas before hitting their stride. Don't wait until the last minute!



volunteer at the library, hospital or community center.

After a while, all these students begin to look alike to the colleges. The college essay gives students an opportunity to differentiate their experiences by sharing their personal characteristics, some of which may have been learned through said experiences.

I like to consider the prompts a personal invitation from the admissions officer for a student to reveal something intimate, authentic, and unique about himself. In other words, colleges really want to know who you are.

And despite what a student might think about him/herself, every student truly does have a unique perspective that is worth sharing!

General Essay Formula

Using this formula is not mandatory, essays can be written in many ways. This is a place to start.

25%	**HOOK**
5%	****Pivotal Moment****
70%	**So what?**

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