



TRANSFER SERVICES

WORKSHOP 5: COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAYS

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WHAT I WILL LEARN

Today's workshop will assist you in the following ways as you complete your college application:

- Reflection exercises to help you craft and focus a personal statement
- The components of a quality essay
- The Do's and Don'ts of College Essays





STEP 4A: YOUR PAST-WHO I WAS

Consider the following statements to prepare the introduction of your essay:



- a. What one past experience shaped my decision toward my current career path?
- b. Who were the people who influenced this career decision?
- c. How do these past experiences and influences relate to my chosen theme for this essay?

STEP 4A: YOUR PRESENT-WHO I AM

Consider the following statements to prepare the body of your essay:

- a. Why did I choose to attend a community college?
- b. What lessons have I learned from my current educational experiences that will help the reader know more about who I am?
- c. What community activities am I currently involved in that relate to my chosen major or future career?



STEP 4A: YOUR FUTURE-WHO I HOPE TO BE



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Consider the following statements to prepare the conclusion of your essay:

- a. Why did I decide on my chosen major?
- b. Why do I want to attend this particular college or university (research the colleges values/mission statement, usually found on the “About” web page)?
- c. What areas of the institution’s academic community am I interested in? (Consider academic clubs, groups, study abroad, or internships that are offered at the institution.)
- d. How could this institution and this chosen major assist me in my future career?

STEP 4A: PERSONAL STATEMENT DO'S

- **Develop a theme.** Consider one or two words that defines your story. Shape your essay around those one-two words to help keep you on track and create a flow through your essay.
- **Avoid clichés.** Avoid sentences that include common/clichéd phrasing. It is important to make the personal statement a clear description of who you are.
- **Be specific.** General or vague descriptions can result in the reader feeling disconnected from your story. Using specific details, such as the name of the community group where you volunteered or the name of the mentor who shaped your career path, will help the reader to have a stronger understanding of your story.
- **Wrap up the story.** As with any story, you want to ensure there is a clearly defined conclusion to your essay. A final sentence that summarizes your experience and restates the theme of your story can help create a lasting



STEP 4A: PERSONAL STATEMENT DON'TS



- **Don't write to impress.** Admissions committees want to hear your voice. If you try to impress them with flowery language that is not your normal writing style, you will lose your audience.
- **Don't submit a first draft.** Have a trusted mentor or advisor review your essay to let you know if key components to your story are missing and to check for grammar and spelling errors.
- **Don't submit a résumé.** The personal statement is a story of your personal and academic journey, not a description of your job responsibilities and accomplishments.



KEY POINTS

- Have a clear theme that flows throughout your essay
- Be sure you are clearly responding to the essay prompt
- Maintain your personal voice in your essay
- Stay within the word count requirements
- Have more than one person review your draft and provide feedback

#wearetransfer



NEXT IN THE SERIES

Congratulations! You've completed your college application essays! Now it's time to learn about your options for funding your college education. The next workshop in the series will teach you about completing the College Scholarship Service (CSS) application.