



Essentials in Writing®
Where Students Learn to Write



COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAY GUIDE

*Learn how to create a college
application essay with ease!*

USER GUIDE

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The College Application Essay Guide is designed for college-bound students who are preparing their college applications. Students will engage in an easy-to-follow, step-by-step video course for writing a personal statement essay for their college applications. Some of the important features are highlighted below:

- Instructs students about what makes an application essay effective and what colleges will be looking for, complete with fully developed examples.
- Guides students through the essay writing process, including digging into their personal history and interests in order to choose an effective focus.
- Provides students with brainstorming, organizing, and revising activities that make each step of the process simple and manageable, all of which will be demonstrated by the instructor through the video lessons.
- Through the instruction and activities in this course, students will craft a highly effective application essay that will be well written as well as demonstrate their best qualities to prospective universities/programs.

A Note about Specific Rules:

The College Application Essay Guide includes instructions and activities that are applicable in any situation wherein a student is applying for a college or comparable program. However, students should keep in mind that they must also *follow the specific instructions provided by the college/program to which they are applying.*

This product is a general guide. When it comes to writing prompts, formatting requirements, and submission instructions, students should *know and follow the guidelines of the college/program to which they are applying.*

A Note about Common App:

Common App is referenced in the textbook because it is a frequently used resource when applying to college. The content of this College Application Essay Guide is applicable when using Common App, but using Common App is not required. The content taught in this Guide is applicable to any college, university, or program. Essentials in Writing is not affiliated with and does not encourage nor discourage students from using Common App.

COURSE LAYOUT

The College Application Essay Guide is divided into seven major **sections**, followed by a collection of example essays. Sections 1-7 delve into what an application essay is and how to effectively craft one. The example essays in the latter half of the Guide are present for students to review as needed.

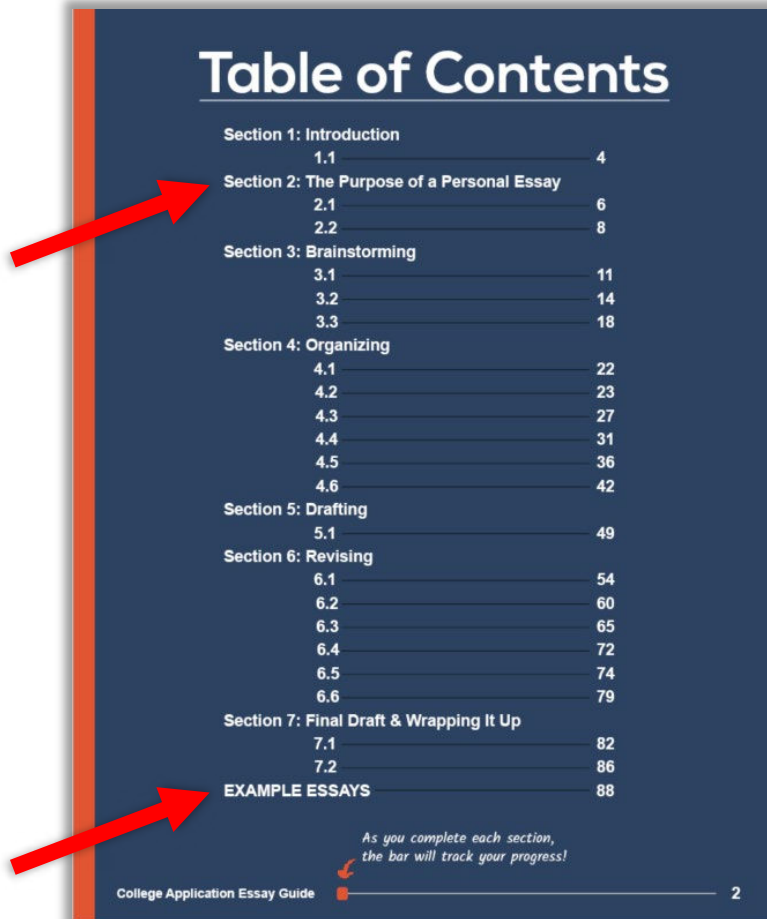

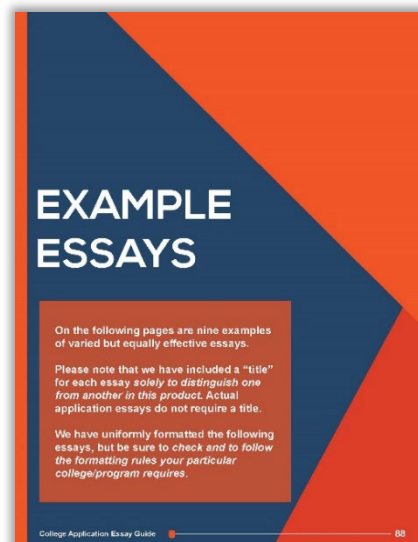
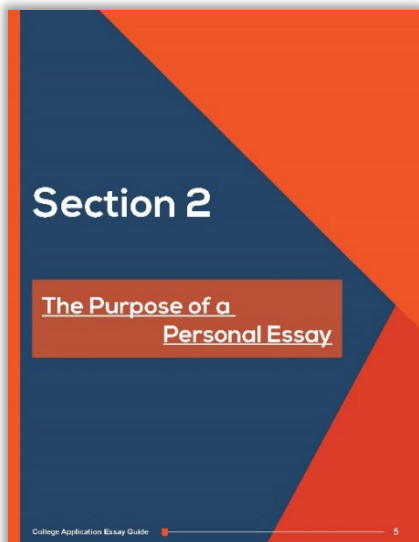


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As you complete each section, the bar will track your progress!

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Each section is divided into individual **lessons**.



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Section 2: The Purpose of a Personal Essay	
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Each lesson contains **text** that the student should read before watching the corresponding **video** lesson. The student will be reminded to watch the video lesson by the presence of a **video icon** at the beginning of each text lesson.



Lesson 2.1 

“What is a Personal Essay?”

Before we start writing a personal essay, we have to ask important questions:
What is it, and why does it matter?

What is a personal essay?


A personal essay is a story about one's personal experiences. It is generally written in narrative form and is often about an important, interesting, or entertaining event in the writer's life.

You may have written personal essays before as homework assignments, and you may love or hate having to write them. In either case, you might think that you know what a personal essay is all about, but remember that we don't want to write a typical personal essay. We want to write a personal essay *to accompany a college application*.

What is a personal essay for a college application?

Unlike a typical personal essay, a personal essay for a college application has a very specific

Most text lessons end with an **activity** for the student to complete. Students should follow the instructions listed to complete the activity.



Activity: Plan the Hook and Closing

1. On a blank sheet of paper, write down ideas for the type of hook(s) you may want to use (narrative or topic). Write down your ideas in a list or idea web. It may help to think about the following questions:

- Does the essay contain more narrative, or more reflection/application?
- Does the essay center around an intense moment or experience that contains a lot of action? Is there any memorable dialogue you can pull from this moment or experience?
- Does the essay contain an extended metaphor thread that unfolds throughout the essay?
- Does the essay explain how a particular idea, subject, or hobby influenced the author's life?
- Does the essay contain a lot of figurative language or sensory description of a particular scene?

2. After thinking about these questions, choose the type of hook you want to use and draft it. (If you find that you cannot choose one particular hook type, you may draft

These activities are modeled in the video lesson. An **example** of the completed activity is included on the pages after the activity. The content of these examples corresponds to what was modeled in the video lesson.

4.5 Organizing

Example of Planning the Hook and Closing

HOOK

- Metaphorical hook introducing metaphor of music
- Narrative dialogue hook about walking in choir room
- Topical hook, straightforward, snappy intro to passion about music
- Descriptive hook describing walking through hallways alone
- Topical hook, straightforward about importance of putting others above self
- Short anecdote about when I cried when being sung to at a birthday party; shows how shy I was/still am

Metaphorical hook: A song is a work of art that is made up of many parts and instruments. Each instrument is important to create the song, like in an orchestra.

Descriptive hook: The echo of chatter and squeaking sneakers matched the endless echoes of thoughts in my mind as I traveled through the hallways, previous uncharted. "Would I fit in?" "Do I really belong here?" my mind wondered.

At the end of the textbook, nine **example essays** are included for the student to reference as needed, complete with annotations explaining what makes the essay effective.

Example Essay: Animation

PROMPT: Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

I cannot draw a convincing stick figure, but I love watching and researching animation. Did you know animation projects do not begin with art, but with recorded voices? Before scenes are set or characters are drawn, people use their voices to start the work.

Who I am also started with voices.

"You best sit down and pay attention," said Mrs. Valdez. Discovering how much I enjoyed math started in her class.

"You got to show up every day, and you gotta work harder and harder, and that's how you win," said Coach Crane. What I learned about putting in the time and effort for something important, I owe to him.

"You are my son, and you are gonna walk with your head held high, and you are gonna be good," said my mom. She gave me everything she had to give and made me want to give my all as well.

The next step in the animation process is storyboarding, a black and white sketching of the general layout and plot. Stories in

Hook
A thought-provoking question to grab reader's interest and introduce animation thread.

Narrative/Thread
This student could have struggled with spending too much time detailing his interests, which would not have shown colleges the student himself. To avoid this pitfall, the student creatively turned his area of interest (animation) into an extended metaphor for his own life.

Thread
Here, the writer switches back from his own life to animation. The essay alternates between these two throughout, effectively demonstrating both his area of interest and his own personhood, and creating a "thread" centered on the animation process.

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Occasionally throughout the textbook, these essays are referenced in order to demonstrate a concept being taught.

Topical Hook

Introduce your topic in a snazzy, memorable way. This could take the form of the following:

- a quotation from a well-known figure
- a thought-provoking question
- an intriguing fact about yourself
- a powerful emotional statement
- a straightforward declaration
- an introduction of a metaphor

Look Ahead

Check out the sample essay on **page 101** for an example of an essay that uses a topical hook.

SUGGESTED SYLLABUS

Below is a suggested syllabus as well as time estimates to complete the College Application Essay Guide. Students can combine or separate sessions as needed to complete the Guide at the desired pace.

Session 1	<i>Section 1: Introduction</i>
<i>(20 min)</i>	Read Lesson 1.1 Watch Lesson 1.1
	<i>Section 2: The Purpose of a Personal Essay</i>
	Read Lesson 2.1 Watch Lesson 2.1
	Read Lesson 2.2 Watch Lesson 2.2
Session 2	<i>Section 3: Brainstorming</i>
<i>(75 min)</i>	Read Lesson 3.1 Watch Lesson 3.1
	Activity: Personal Snapshot
	Read Lesson 3.2 Watch Lesson 3.2
	Activity: Takeaways
Session 3	Read Lesson 3.3 Watch Lesson 3.3
<i>(40 min)</i>	Activity: Choosing a Prompt
	<i>Section 4: Organizing</i>
	Read Lesson 4.1 Watch Lesson 4.1
Session 4	Read Lesson 4.2 Watch Lesson 4.2
<i>(75 min)</i>	Activity: Plan the Narrative
	Read Lesson 4.3 Watch Lesson 4.3
	Activity: Plan the Reflection/Application
Session 5	Read Lesson 4.4 Watch Lesson 4.4
<i>(2 hr)</i>	Activity: Plan the Thread
	Read Lesson 4.5 Watch Lesson 4.5
	Activity: Plan the Hook and Closing
	Read Lesson 4.6 Watch Lesson 4.6
	Activity: Organize Your Essay

Session 6	<i>Section 5: Drafting</i>	
<i>(60 min)</i>	Read Lesson 5.1 Watch Lesson 5.1	
	{Create a rough draft of your essay}	
Session 7	<i>Section 6: Revising</i>	
<i>(40 min)</i>	Read Lesson 6.1 Watch Lesson 6.1	
	<i>Activity: Revise for Length</i>	
Session 8	Read Lesson 6.2 Watch Lesson 6.2	
<i>(40 min)</i>	<i>Activity: Refine Your Voice</i>	
Session 9	Read Lesson 6.3 Watch Lesson 6.3	
<i>(40 min)</i>	<i>Activity: Show, Don't Tell</i>	
Session 10	Read Lesson 6.4 Watch Lesson 6.4	
<i>(90 min)</i>	{Revise as necessary}	
	Read Lesson 6.5 Watch Lesson 6.5	
	<i>Activity: Sentence Check</i>	
Session 11	Read Lesson 6.6 Watch Lesson 6.6	
<i>(60 min)</i>	<i>Activity: Peer and Self-Editing</i>	
Session 12	<i>Section 7: Final Draft & Wrapping It Up</i>	
<i>(30 min)</i>	Read Lesson 7.1 Watch Lesson 7.1	
	<i>Activity: Editing</i>	
	Read Lesson 7.2 Watch Lesson 7.2	

Total completion time is estimated at 11.5 hours, depending on how much time students take for the activities and actual essay writing.

If you have any questions or need any assistance,
please contact our Customer Service Team at
info@essentialsinwriting.com.



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