Get to the point!

Six steps to writing your college application essays

WORK SHEET

NAME: **DATE:**

Your college application essay is your chance to let the Admissions Office get to know you. Take this opportunity to think about what it is you want them to know about you.

1. Get started.

Review your application. Do your activities, classes and accomplishments point to a specific trait, commitment, or special interest? Does your application beg any questions? Do a bit of Identity Development: Who am I? What is important to me?

2. Key message statement.

After reviewing your application and reading your essays, the admissions officer says, “WOW! This student sure is _____."

Fill in the blank. This is *your* **Key Message Statement!**

3. Brainstorm.

For ten minutes, write everything that comes to your mind about your **Key Message Statement.**
What events in your life demonstrate the message you want to communicate? Is there an influential person who has greatly impacted you, who is connected to your **Key Message Statement**? Do you have a collection, hobby, or community service activity that defines you? How do your dreams and aspirations fit into your **Key Message Statement?**

4. Examine the prompts.

Once you know what message you want to convey to the essay readers, you are ready to read the prompts. No matter what kind of essay you are asked to write - creative, factual, thought-provoking, etc. - you must make sure your **Key Message Statement** is loud and clear. Answer each prompt with a goal of showcasing your strengths, talents, and goals. Also, look for essays that are asking similar questions. With a little careful planning, you can shrink the number of essays you have to write — just remember to not use another college's name in each prompt you write.

5. Write your first draft.

The first sentence or introduction to your essay is often considered the most important. It is the first impression you will make on the reader. Strategize how to launch your essay in order to really grab the reader's attention. Consider starting your essay in the middle of a story, or pose an intriguing question.
My introduction options:

6. Refine your essay.

Take a break from your essay for awhile, then come back and refine it.

☐ GRAMMAR ☐ SPELLING ☐ FLOW ☐ KEY MESSAGE STATEMENT ☐ VOICE

Ask three people to read your essays to see if they can accurately guess your Key Message Statement.

1.

2.

3.