

The Personal Statement/Essay

This is your opportunity to set yourself apart from the thousands of other applicants, so be sure to put some time and effort into your essay. Keep these points in mind with your personal statement/essay:

- It provides insight into your unique values, personality, attributes and strengths. Share these and highlight any special qualities, circumstances or obstacles overcome.
- Share majors of interest and possible career plans. This gives them a sense of your goal direction. Write, "I'm interested in pursuing...I'm considering majoring in..."
- If you have visited the campus, share what impressed you...Programs/majors, size, location, certain extra-curricular activities, etc. Students should be able to articulate why the school they are applying to is a good fit.
- Don't tell them what you think they want to hear. Be honest and original. Lay out your uniqueness.
- Make sure the statement/essay is well written, spell checked and proofread. Use the CHS Writing Center! Put your first and last name on your essay. Be careful with punctuation (no text abbreviations) and capitalize appropriately. Colleges draw conclusions about a student's academic ability by this writing sample.
- Don't simply rewrite your resume. If it's already been said somewhere in your application, don't duplicate it in your essay. Use the statement/essay to elaborate on "who you are and how you got to be who you are." It's fine to reference certain activities/accomplishments/achievements that share "your voice."
- Be specific. Avoid clichéd, generic and predictable writing.
- Prove it. Develop your main idea with vivid and specific facts, events, quotations, examples and reasons.
- Link to sample essays and other helpful tips: <https://www.accepted.com/college/essay-tips>

What do I write about if there isn't a specific essay question?

- A significant experience or achievement that has special meaning
- Someone who's had a significant influence on you and why
- Talk about a special travel experience
- Describe how you are moving closer to fulfilling a lifelong dream
- How you've overcome obstacles/setbacks in life

Sample Common App Questions (650 words is your limit, not your goal):

- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?