

# College Essay Checklist

If your essay checks all of the boxes below, you've avoided the most common problems admissions counselors see in submitted essays. Congratulations!

- My topic helps the college to know more about me beyond what is on my activities list.
- I understood that essay word limits are not goals and that more is not necessarily better.
- [I avoided inappropriate topics.](#)
- I've had several people read my essay to see if it sounds like me.
- I checked my essay for run-on sentences and sentence fragments.
- I made sure the majority of my sentences didn't start with "I".
- I chose an upbeat topic.
- I used stories from my life to illustrate my points.
- I understood the difference between being unique and being weird.
- I avoided generic answers to essay questions, particularly for "Why this college?" essays.
- If your essay would work for any other college, you need to make the essay more specific.
- If your essay would work for any other applicant, then you need to make it more personal.
- My essay is [kind to the reader](#). It easily leads the reader along my trail of thoughts.
- I checked the punctuation to make sure I used it correctly.
- I didn't try to impress by using words from a dictionary or thesaurus that aren't words I would normally use.
- The essay sounds like me.
- I used spellcheck, but I didn't trust it alone to find or correct all my mistakes.
- I avoided Wendy's list of [forbidden words and phrases](#).