

COLLEGE ESSAY FAQS

1. Help, I haven't done anything important enough to write about!

Marcel Proust wrote a whole book based on a cookie. Students write successful college essays on topics like their favorite pancake recipe, their walk to school, and the story of how they sank a single basketball shot (all real Bespoke essays, all accepted into their first-choice schools). Anything you love to do is a window into who you are.

2. I don't even know small things I could write about.

Do you have a favorite color? A favorite food? A pet peeve? These questions sound simple and even silly, but they're the seeds of great essays. When you work with us, we'll guide you through brainstorming exercises that can unlock buried ideas.

3. Writing isn't my strength. Am I doomed?

What makes a good essay is not the ability to use big words or fancy prose, or even to tell a great story. One of our students wrote an "essay" in the form of a computer program! There are many ways to express yourself, and we'll help you find the best one for you.

4. Seriously. I don't like writing. I feel paralyzed when I sit down in front of an empty Google Document.

Guess what? Writing doesn't have to mean writing anymore. You can just talk into your phone—or to anyone who can write as fast as you talk. (We coaches do this for students all the time. We're fast typists!).

5. I don't want to seem like I'm bragging in my essay.

We hear this concern all the time. An essay can sound like bragging if it's missing details. If you simply say "I won a city-wide award for my science project," that might sound braggy. If you write about the frustrations you felt when you had to start over and your sadness when you realized your findings would need years of further study to verify.... Now you aren't bragging—you're telling a story.

6. My essay is way too long.

The longer, the better—at least for drafts. One of our most important jobs as editors is to help you cut a longer draft down to size. Think of the Statue of David. Michelangelo needed a huge block of marble to carve out the perfect beautiful statue. That's how it is with drafts. The more words you have to start with, the more beautifully you can carve the final product.