
ALIF + AKEB

11th grade - Essay Writing



**AMERICAN LIVED
ISMAILI FAITH**



College Essay Writing

ALIF 2022 SW

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a document with a pen. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a desk with some papers and a pen. The lighting is soft, and the overall tone is professional and focused.

Why personal statements are important

Personal statements are like pilot episodes of TV shows. They give admissions officers a glimpse of what you're all about.

They allow you to set yourself apart and show how your experiences, skills and interests can contribute to a campus.

With the removal of standardized testing requirements, essays often times weigh more in the decision than they used to.

The Basics

From the College Essay Guy

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/cwiab-student-11-essay-essentials>

Length: Your main Common App essay can be up to 650 words, while supplemental essays will vary.

Goal: Answer these questions: Who is this person? Will this person contribute something of value to our campus? Can this person write?

Focus area: Both writing and message are important. Aim for “A good story, well told.”

What do you
think?

What are the
qualities of a
successful
essay?

Examples

An aerial photograph of a city skyline at dusk. The sky is a mix of dark blue and purple, with some clouds. The city is densely packed with skyscrapers, many of which are illuminated with lights. The word "Examples" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image. The Empire State Building is prominent in the center, and the Chrysler Building is visible to its right. The Hudson River is visible in the background on the right side.

When my family immigrated to America I was only eight years old, and one of the few things I can remember was the joy of watching the sun rise. Due to our financial situation my family was unable to afford beds. Thus, when the rays of sun crept over the horizon, to me, it signaled the end of another dreadful night of sleeping on the cold floor. Needless to say, our American dream did not begin in the most glamorous fashion, but those early struggles taught me the value of a helping hand. As a physician I hope to help others in need.

Although we started out in poverty, with help from family and friends my father was able to stand on his feet and improve our quality of life. His sacrifices have inspired me, and as a result I would do anything in order to help him. For instance, in 2010 due to unforeseen circumstances my father's wholesale company was in desperate need of an inventory manager. At that time I was 16 years old and not excited about taking on some of the responsibilities that this position required, but I knew it had to be done. ...

I first thought about becoming a doctor after admiring the great care provided to me at my free community health clinic. This desire turned into an uncontrollable flame in the spring of 2013 when my grandfather became hospitalized due to complications with his gallbladder. At the same time, I was also dealing with hardships of my own. This was a very difficult time in my life, and for the first time I couldn't lean upon my grandfather who had always served as my rock. Constant travel for personal matters, a full time job, the emotional stress from my grandfather's illness and a full load of classes caused me to stumble. Thankfully my grandfather recovered, and his strength inspired me to gather myself. Watching the compassionate medical team rehabilitate my grandfather and help him with his struggles to regain his foundation so that he would walk again served as motivation for me to regain my own foundation. The excellent patient care he received truly touched me, and from that moment I knew in my heart that becoming a physician was my American dream. ...

My ability to adapt and succeed in unfamiliar situations can be attributed to my desire to find solutions and communicate in an understandable manner. For example, my first job required me to spend countless hours driving to convenience stores to sell phone cards. It was my responsibility to adapt to the different cultures I encountered in order to provide the right customer care and personal service that is also found in medicine. In addition, my experiences shadowing at North Metro Medical Center and performing research at the Arkansas Children's Hospital Complex Brain Function Laboratory have cemented my desire to be involved in the medical field. These opportunities have allowed me to interact with patients and their families. Such hands-on experiences combined with my strong ability to problem-solve will allow me to examine medical problems in a timely and productive manner.

My upbringing has always involved aspects of work. Ergo, I realize that I must find a career that will fuel my passion for helping others through a very direct and hands-on approach. My experiences have given me the confidence to say that entering medical school is the right choice, and I am extremely motivated and humbled by the chance to be a doctor. I still enjoy the sunrise, but now I rise everyday blessed with an opportunity to help those in need.

June 5, 2008 — I stared at her with wet, pleading eyes, but she refused to meet my gaze. She hung her head low as she sat in the chair, gripping the knife firmly in her hand. Her body trembled. The bawling had passed, and she now entered into a stage of silent, heavy breathing. The floor to her left was stained red, and her slashed wrist hung limp across her legs. Her cries echoed in my head, as if without speaking, she was trying to convince me that what she said was true: she was a terrible mother who did not deserve to live. I had already tried to call my grandma, my dad, my aunt -- but no one was awake at 3 a.m. I had already tried to reason with her, to tell her I loved her and that she was an amazing mother. She refused to listen, let alone believe, anything I had to say. When I tried to pull the knife from her tight grasp, she refused to let go and screamed at me to go away. I reluctantly followed her orders and retreated to my room; I knew in that moment that my mom had lost her will to live. She was ready to take her own life.

Crouched against the wall with my hands clasped over my mouth to stifle my sobs, I replayed everything I could remember of my mom. She was my hero, my best friend. Life without her was unimaginable. Desperately, I scribbled, "Please don't do it. I love you" on a piece of notebook paper and slipped it into the kitchen. I hurried to my room, hoping she would look up, read it, and realize what she was doing. I waited for her to come to me with apologetic eyes and reassure me that everything would be okay. Unfortunately, that moment never came. The only choice left was to call 911. I watched wistfully as the officers dragged my mom out of my house. My mom was taken to the hospital and put in the psychiatric ward. When she came home a few days later, everything went back to "normal." We avoided discussing the events of that night. ... At only 10 years old, I had to make decisions when no one else was there to make them for me. But being so young, my awareness of the society around me had been shaped by very few events; I had not obtained enough knowledge about the world to know how to live in and appreciate it. As time went on, I found myself thinking back to the hours I spent praying that my mom would live. ... I saw firsthand that people really do have the ability, the right, to control their own life. ...

In my first AP class of high school, Human Geography, I learned about the societal issues that penetrate countries across the globe. I realized that what I experienced could not even come close to the adversities others encounter on a daily basis. Millions suffer each day as outside forces rip away their right to life. I used this newfound understanding to appreciate the things I had at my disposal. I learned to avail my education and value the opportunities I had that others did not. ... I eventually concluded that I wanted my future career to have a positive impact on others. Although I haven't chosen a specific career yet, I hope to apply my interest in psychology, my proficiency in mathematics, and my thirst for knowledge of humanities to lend myself to organizations that aim to help those in need. I think back to June 5, 2008 and feel proud that I did not let the horrors I faced to impact the rest of my life. I was propelled to use the control I knew I had to further my passions and pursuits. Now, I never settle for less than what I know I'm capable of. Despite the healthy and happy condition my mother is in now, I cannot forget the period of time when she lost sight of her own potential, and this fact is a reminder of the long life I have ahead of me. It is because of this that I want to dedicate myself to the preservation of the lives that are often taken for granted.

French Vanilla? Check. Brown sugar? Got it. The brew? Hot to the touch. I crafted my ideal cup of coffee and took a quick whiff before returning to my desk. I was an intern for the University of North Texas (UNT) Office of Sustainability, and a fresh cup of coffee was the perfect beverage for what was a hectic morning. As I took a warm sip, I wondered how sustainability affects coffee brewing. Are coffee makers as green as they could be? How can I design a more sustainable version? My experiences with UNT serve as a starting point to my ideas, but I will need revolutionary research, sustainable strategies, and inspiring initiatives to bring my concept to life. Cornell's College of Engineering is the perfect place to seek the resources I need to make a truly sustainable product.

One initiative I led at UNT was the BigBelly Solar Compactor project, which saved thousands of dollars in landfill expenses by compacting trash every time bins filled up. My coffee maker will incorporate solar technology so coffee drinkers can get the most out of their coffee. To practically implement this, I will research new materials that could serve as solar cells and determine the optimal output necessary for an efficient compactor. Cornell Engineering's Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future is the perfect place to discover the right solar cell apparatus for my coffee maker. From spray-on solar cells to "green" nanomaterials, the center pushes solar cells by engineering materials with numerous applications. ...

Not only will my coffee maker give consumers an economical advantage, but it will also reduce their carbon footprint. Last year, I developed a program that challenged my classmates to charge their cell phones and laptops using bike energy stations instead of plugging into the grid. My coffee maker could be equipped with this functionality, but there must be a strong incentive for consumers to opt for it. ... At Cornell, I will learn how to address challenges in sustainability through the Cornell Center for Sustainable Global Enterprise (CSGE). ... CSGE will help me find incentives for consumers to grind their own coffee and appreciate going green.

My coffee maker features economic and environmental savings, but these should impact consumers on a personal level as well. At UNT, I helped promote the campus recycling program by making custom bins for every hall. How can my coffee maker have a similar impact on consumers? Questions like this are what Cornell University Sustainable Design (CUSD) is all about. One of CUSD's flagship programs, Sustainable Education Ghana, ... gives youth a sense of ecological consciousness, passion for the environment, and social responsibility. My coffee maker can have lasting impacts on consumers by offering coffee from various cultures, from Turkish Ebrick to Spicy Mexican brew. Once consumers see their coffee can be brewed sustainably, they will be more likely to include sustainability in other parts of their lives. With CUSD's help, I can make this idea a reality and show consumers that sustainability – like coffee – is a way of life.

Cornell Engineering has all the necessary ingredients to brew up a sustainable product. From solar cell technology to international flavor, my coffee maker has it all. Now, it's time to pour my coffee into a cup that's bright red and white.

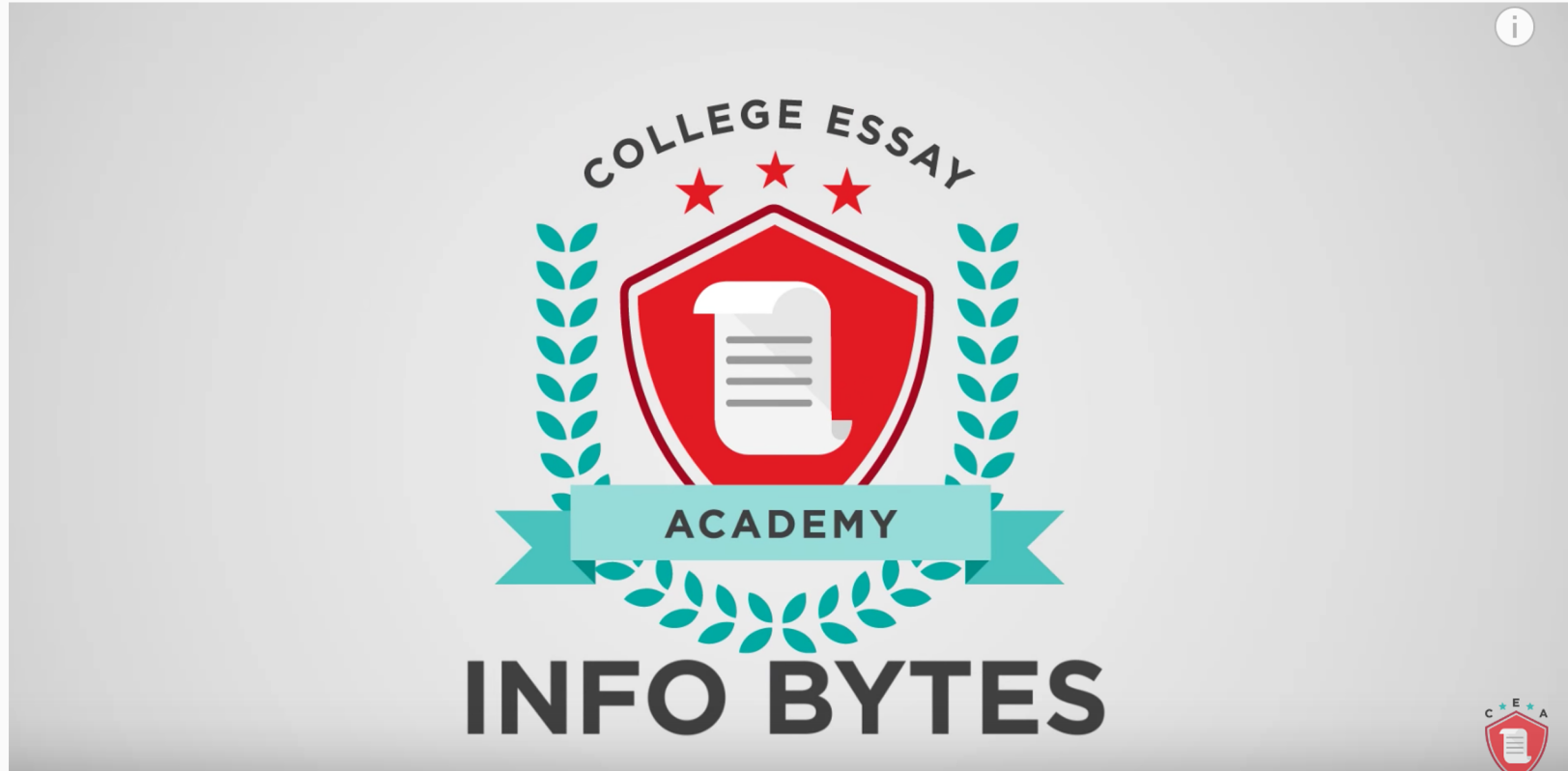
Where are you in the Essay Writing Process?

1. I am brainstorming ideas
2. I have a rough draft of an essay
3. I am close to finished with my essay



**Brainstorm Stage:
Essence Exercise
from College Essay
Guy**

Rough draft stage: check in to make sure you are telling a unique story.



Final Draft Stage: Make sure you ‘Show, don’t tell’:

Not two months after the shooting — maybe the deadliest anti-Muslim hate crime ever in North Texas — Omar’s Wheels & Tires is bumping along as if nothing happened.

It’s a gaudy beehive of a garage, painted fire-truck red and crammed full of chrome. Omar’s workers scurry about under a din of engine noise, some hiding scars from the attack, some carrying guns for protection. Step inside Omar’s office, where a photo of the Dome of the Rock sits on a grimy air conditioner, and the Christmas Eve shooting is all his people want to talk about — even if few others in Dallas seemed to pay much attention.

It’s what Muslims fear in a political age of Islamophobic rhetoric: one dead, three wounded in the parking lot. Four wounded if you count the gunman Omar shot.



Let's write ONE paragraph

1. Take one idea
2. Draft out your idea
3. Revise for show don't tell

Share Out

Student Survey

Fewer than 2 minutes to offer your feedback



Some questions to consider:

What's something you never leave home without?

What's a snack you crave?

A food that reminds you of your family?

A food that reminds you of home?

A tradition that reminds you of home?

What else reminds you of home?

An object that represents your best friend?

An object that represents your father? Your mother?

Your grandparents, or lack thereof?

Something you loved and lost?

A toy you used to play with as a kid?

Something that makes you laugh?

A book you love? Best movie ever?

Favorite guilty pleasure movie?

An object that represents a regret?

A favorite gift you received? A favorite gift you gave?

Something about you no one else knows?

Something you stole?

Something you found?

Something that makes you feel safe?

The worst thing that ever happened to you?

The best thing?

Best thing you ever found in the street?

The coolest thing about science?

An accident?

Best money you ever spent?

Something from another country?

An object that represents someone you'd like to know more about?

Something you'll never get rid of?

A bad habit?

A perfect moment?

A time you laughed so hard you cried?

A time you cried so hard you laughed?

An image you'll never forget?

What they'd put in the museum of your life?

A tattoo?

The cover image on your first self-titled album?

Three objects from your room?

A near-death experience?

A moment when you were so embarrassed you wanted to disappear?

Recurring dream?

Worst (actual) nightmare?

When were you most afraid?

If you had a clone, what would you have the clone do?

A time you were speechless?

Your favorite photo?

Tips and tricks:

Planning:

- Brainstorm early: You're more likely to find a good topic when you aren't stressed about an application deadline.
- Discuss ideas/themes with someone before you start writing. Ideally, this person should be an upperclassman at or an alum of the college you're applying to.

Elements:

- Provide specific examples/anecdotes. Don't go overboard, though.
- Use active verbs and sensory words ("I ran to school" gives you a better visual than "I went to school.")
- Expand on something interesting from your resume OR introduce new but relevant information about you.
- Sometimes, shorter sentences > long-winded ones.

Revisions:

- Write/edit in Google Docs so you can track changes.
- Read the essay aloud. By doing this, you will identify places where your writing isn't as clear as it should be.
- Find a few individuals to proofread your essay. Your first draft may seem flawless, but there is always room for improvement. Multiple perspectives help.

More tips:

- The Grammar Girl podcast: Simple writing tricks to make your writing more effective.
- Collegeessayguy.com: This website has tips for essay planning and essay structures.

Instead of just listing experiences, explain the skills you learned through them

Rather than simply saying:

I am a member of the college chess club. I also play the clarinet in the orchestra.

You could say:

I have developed my problem solving skills through playing chess for the college; this requires concentration and analytical thought.

I am used to working as part of a team as a member of the college orchestra (I play clarinet), cooperating with others to achieve a finished production.

Active voice:

Passive voice:



ACTIVE VOICE

Wild penguins
attacked **my sister**.

action subject

PASSIVE VOICE

subject action
My sister **was attacked**
by wild penguins.

Active Voice
You stole the cookie from the cookie jar.

Passive Voice
The cookie was stolen from the cookie jar.

“Mistakes were made.”

by whom?
by you?
by us?!

This year's Common Application prompts:

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.

Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

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?



quick question: did anyone ever tell the backstreet boys "why"?

THE ONLY PEN



THAT MATTERS

