

College Essay/Personal Statement Self-Check

This document is intended for you to use as a guide while writing and editing your first draft(s). Once you have checked off every box below, we recommend you print off the *Essay Critique Sheet* from our website and share your essay/personal statement with one or more counselors, teachers, college admission officers or others who might be able to give you some good feedback before finalizing your essay. Follow the steps outlined below as you brainstorm, draft, and revise your essay/personal statement.



- Introduction:**
 - Is my introduction engaging?
 - Did I start out with an interesting quote or anecdote?
 - I didn't give everything away in the first paragraph, did I?
- Body:**
 - Have I effectively developed the main idea?
 - Are there parts that could be explained more?
 - Have I clearly stated the relevance of the topic to my audience?
 - *In essence—have I clearly said how/why what I am writing about is so important?*
- Conclusion:**
 - Is my closing clear and does it avoid clichés like “in conclusion, in summary, etc?”
 - Did I summarize main points/overarching themes that appeared throughout my essay?
- Throughout:**
 - Are my personal voice and personality clear throughout the essay? –Can they get a sense of who I am by reading this?
 - Have I set the right tone? – Did I sound like I was negative, whining or making excuses? If so, change your tone to make your essay sound more positive.
 - Are there any grammatical, structural or spelling problems? – Be sure to break up ideas into separate paragraphs and eliminate txtspk and contractions.
 - Did I use vivid language to effectively engage the audience?