

## Writing a Winning College Essay

Tips for letting your story shine through

For the more than 2 million students applying to colleges and universities, the task of essay writing can be a dreadful experience.

Whether applying for admission or scholarships, many students find this part of the application process to be the most stressful and daunting part of their senior year. Often without understanding how to approach the essay, students struggle with staring at a blank page and finding a compelling topic.

However, according to Howard Reichman, president of EssayDog, an easy-to-use, cloud-based platform that helps students write winning college application essays, "a college application essay is really just a story - a story colleges want to hear about you."

"Every good story, from a blockbuster movie to a novel from your high school English class to your favorite show, has four critical elements that make it fascinating and reveal inner depth about its characters," Reichman said. "That's exactly what you want your college application essays to do: show the real you beyond the test scores and GPA."

According to Reichman, every good story has these four essential elements:

1. The initial plan
2. The anticipated outcome
3. The setback
4. The discovery

Whether students use an online tool like EssayDog, which gets students started quickly by asking them to write just one sentence about each of these four parts, or they tackle the task of essay writing on their own, the next step is to round out the narrative by filling in details that let the applicant's true character shine through.

The essays that resonate most with college admissions departments typically convey a student's intangibles or "the Four Ps," specifically:

\* Passion: What drives you and what do you really care about?

\* Personality: What are you like to be around? Would your friends and family be able to identify you by reading your essay?

\* Perseverance: How do you respond to challenges? What gives you strength, both intellectually and emotionally?



\* Potential: What talents, interests and goals will you bring to a university's campus next fall? How can a college help you further develop these as you continue to grow into adulthood?

Visit [essaydog.com](http://essaydog.com) or find EssayDog on Facebook and Twitter to find more tips for confidently writing standout college essays.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Source: EssayDog

More than anything, procrastination and stress are often students' worst enemies when they sit down to begin the essay-writing process.

"If you feel you are wasting time, switching topics or disagreeing with your parents, teachers or college counselors about the direction your essays are taking, try going back to these simple storytelling techniques to ensure you are showcasing what sets you apart from other applicants with similar grades and scores," Reichman said.

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