

Activity: Revise and Proofread Your Essay

This activity helps you revise your essay to prepare it for submission. When you have finalized the content and organization, use the proofreading tips to polish your writing. Poor grammar and poor spelling are the easiest ways to send the wrong message to college admissions officers.

Content

Have I fully answered the essay prompt?

Yes No

Some prompts are multifaceted. Be sure your essay addresses the prompt in full. If you need to more fully meet the essay's specific requirements, write down what you need to add.

Is my writing original?

Yes No

Plagiarism and use of artificial intelligence (AI) are submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own. They are serious offenses and can jeopardize your college admission.

Does my essay express my individuality?

Yes No

Your essay should reflect your individual traits and experiences. Which paragraphs communicate your distinct qualities? Which need more work?

Have I written for my audience?

Yes No

Will your essay capture an admissions officer's attention? Is the topic appropriate for your audience? Which details are most interesting? Could you improve any content to make it more engaging?

Proofreading Tips

- Read through a printed copy of your essay to better catch typos and grammatical or formatting errors.
- Do not rely on Spellcheck. It may not catch words that are spelled correctly but misused in your essay.
- Read your essay out loud. You will catch mistakes and awkward phrases.
- Take breaks between each round of writing and revising.
- Ask a member of your college prep team to proofread your essay. Others will often catch errors you miss even after several readings.

Style And Organization

Is my tone appropriate?

Yes No

It should be positive and professional.

Did I write from a personal perspective?

Yes No

Since a college application essay is a personal statement, use the first-person point of view (i.e., I, me, my).

Is my language appropriate?

Yes No

Remember your audience and avoid slang and casual language. Do not show off with fancy words. Use clear, specific language. Choose strong, descriptive words over vague words, such as "things," "many," "very," and "great."

Is my organization effective with an engaging introduction, a relevant middle, and a strong finish?

Are my transitions well-defined?

Yes No

An appealing essay often begins with an anecdote or statement that makes the main point. It can continue in order of importance or chronology.

Is my essay the right length?

Yes No

Good writing makes your point in as few words as possible. Check your word count against the application's instructions, (e.g., the Common App gives you a 650 word limit for your essay).