

Accepted

By Taylor Schwabe—2006 Student Writers' Workshop

5 Rules for an Unbeatable Admissions Essay

1. Never begin an essay with a blatant nod to the reason as to your essay's subject.
2. Have a tone of voice in your writing—not just a bland description of random facts.
3. Use descriptive words and phrases—see rule No. 2.
4. Keep your prospective audience in mind when writing your essay.
5. Have fun! Others will enjoy your piece more if you obviously did.

Okay – so my admissions paper is due in 10 days. That's plenty of time to write my essay...right? Maybe not. Hmm... how's this:

I am writing this essay because I –

Great! I've ALREADY violated rule No. 1. Oh gosh this is hard.

Tearing her eyes away from the mockingly blank sheet of paper in front of her, Emma drummed her fingers on her desk, exasperated. Strewn across her desk in various states of disarray were several college applications, all of which had one thing in common—a blank essay column. The other info was easy:

Name: Emma Nicole Thompson

Age: 17

DOB: 8/05/88...

...and so on and so forth. But the essay... the essay she couldn't handle.



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Frowning and frustrated, Emma ran her fingers through her hair and sighed.

How are admissions people supposed to judge MY creative voice? Who are they looking for? Surely not a grade-“A” normal, borderline boring girl like me?!

Emma was practically hyperventilating.

How am I supposed to follow Rule No. 4 if I don't know my audience!

Emma released a small snort of laughter. She stared at the ceiling, deep in thought.

I'd be perfect for their school if they're looking for chess team dropouts who are pigheaded and feministic with a “B” average at best. Schools don't want average middle children like me. They want people like, like my 23-year-old sister. She's perfect: gorgeous, blonde and athletic. Michelle just graduated from Hopkins. She was awarded a lacrosse scholarship! Oh, and of course they want Izzy, my 13-year-old smarty-pants

sister. She never gets below a 92 percent and is still appalled by her grades! Oh, and did I mention she is worshiped by everyone in her seventh grade class? Students AND teachers! And then there's me. Frizzy brown hair. Thick glasses. Horrible fashion sense. Hello?! Major GEEK ALERT! In my “professional” opinion... my life sucks.

Emma lowered her head and began hitting it upon the desk. A groan escaped her lips and her head came to a stop, her forehead resting on the cool oak table.

What I am supposed to have: an essay about a “life-altering experience” or a “significant role-model”

What I DO have: zip, nada, nothing, zero

What I need: a life...JK! What I really need is a life-changing experience that will morph me into someone that colleges beg to enroll with them.

Emma snorted once again with laughter.

Like that'll ever happen.