

Peer Response #1

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Hi, my name is _____ and I'm applying to/for _____

The question I chose to answer was _____
(Note to editor: On most applications students will not have a choice.)

Editing directions: In groups of three — read each paper aloud and respond.

- A. Three elements of your essay which shows me your -- personality, goals, originality, -- in other words "a sense of you," are:

Listener #1

Listener #2

Listener #3

- B. Three elements of your essay which need to be improved, i.e., dull, phony, safe, bland, rambling are:

Listener #1

Listener #2

Listener #3

One editor should read the essay and comment on the following:

Examining the Essay for Admission

1. Opening: The admissions director state, "A good beginning helps. One of my favorite essays began: "grandma started in about the rats again today.." How does this opening seem? What would you suggest to make it better?

Closing?

2. "Voice:" Another admissions director said, "that more than anything else she looked for the student's natural voice in the essay." How much of this student comes clear to you in the essay?

Dfoiler

3. Does this essay answer the question chosen? Yes _____ No _____.
Where might the writer make changes or alter the flow to return to the question at hand?

4. Writing skill: List below giving paragraph # especially forceful sentences, diction, syntax, scenes, narratives, etc.

Variety? Vocab? Syntax?
Too smart? Too much slang? Appropriate?
Active voice?

List below glaring errors, i.e., spelling, pronoun antecedent agreement, subject-verb agreement, "there," active vs passive voice, verbs of being, etc.

Answer
Last!

5. Based on this essay would you recommend admittance to your institution?

Why or why not? Be honest!!!!

6. Thesis?

Details?

commentary?

Does each paragraph contain new info? structure?

7. How unique/original?

Favorite line? why?

8. Identity and Personality:

- a. What do you know about the writer (me) after reading this? How much of my real identity/personality have I revealed?
(summarize here)
- b. Is what you know about me appropriate in this piece? (Is it too revealing, does it make you uncomfortable, or is it necessary/helpful to your understanding of this piece?) If so, how? why?
- c. Should I increase or decrease my presence? Why? In what way (specifically)?
- d. How many sentences deal with me and let you know something about me, my views toward the subject of my feelings?

How many sentences do not deal with me (but deal with the subject)?

- e. How many first-person pronouns do I use to name myself (I, me, my and mine)

I me my mine

f. Credibility:

Do I come across here as credible? Why? How?

If not:

Do I need to change to more or less the amount of emphasis on myself?

Do I need to change the manner in which I present myself?
Suggestions, please.

Some background for editors:

Here are some thoughts, ideas and advice from admissions directors around the country according to the NY TIMES.

These are in no particular order, diction or whatever.....

"The essay is supposed to be the chance for an applicant to show something extra-- what used to be known as personality."

"essays are getting 'blander, safer--more polished, but less inspired--and just plain dull.'"

Some admissions directors read 5,000 essays a year. They are sick of "The band taught me responsibility" or "my trip to Europe was meaningful."

The majority of essays are correctly written.

"Don't be phony." For example when asked what they would take out of their burning home, some wrote that they would save Shakespeare, etc.

"No snow jobs"

The questions may change every year.

The student should have career goals in mind.

Sometimes consultants work with them on developing a story that's original and is their own.

"Do I know who this person is by reading their essay."

Humor helps--When Stanford asked applicants to describe themselves in a word--1000's were "determined" only one [who was a competitive swimmer] was 'wet.'

Write on something you know.

A good beginning helps.

Use natural voice.

Pfeifer/McGinty