

**THE COLLEGE
ESSAY**

Stacey Thomas
Admissions Representative
Johnson & Wales University



GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- It is **MOST IMPORTANT** to choose a topic that means something to **YOU!**
- The essay is the best place in the application to reveal who you are and what is most important to **YOU!**
- **Glimpse of your personality, experiences, values, goals.**

GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- **Don't be afraid to brag a little.**

You've worked hard for your accomplishments.

- **“The Hook”**

In the first two sentences, have us wanting to read more.

GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- **Be Descriptive**

Details, Details, Details

HOW did your coach inspire you?

WHY is your room your favorite place to escape?

Think about your **FIVE SENSES**

GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- Don't overuse **THESAURUS** words that you don't regularly use to try to impress colleges
- **BUT KEEP IN MIND**, your essay is a written piece of work, not a conversation with your best friend.
- Stay away from **SLANG** or **TEXTING** language unless they are essential to the tone or message you need to convey

GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- **PROOFREAD** your essay. Be sure to spell-check, grammar-check and have multiple people read your essay for **TONE**.
- **STRATEGY:** Write your essay in an editable program that will check for spelling and grammar (Microsoft Word, Google Doc), then copy and paste into your online application.

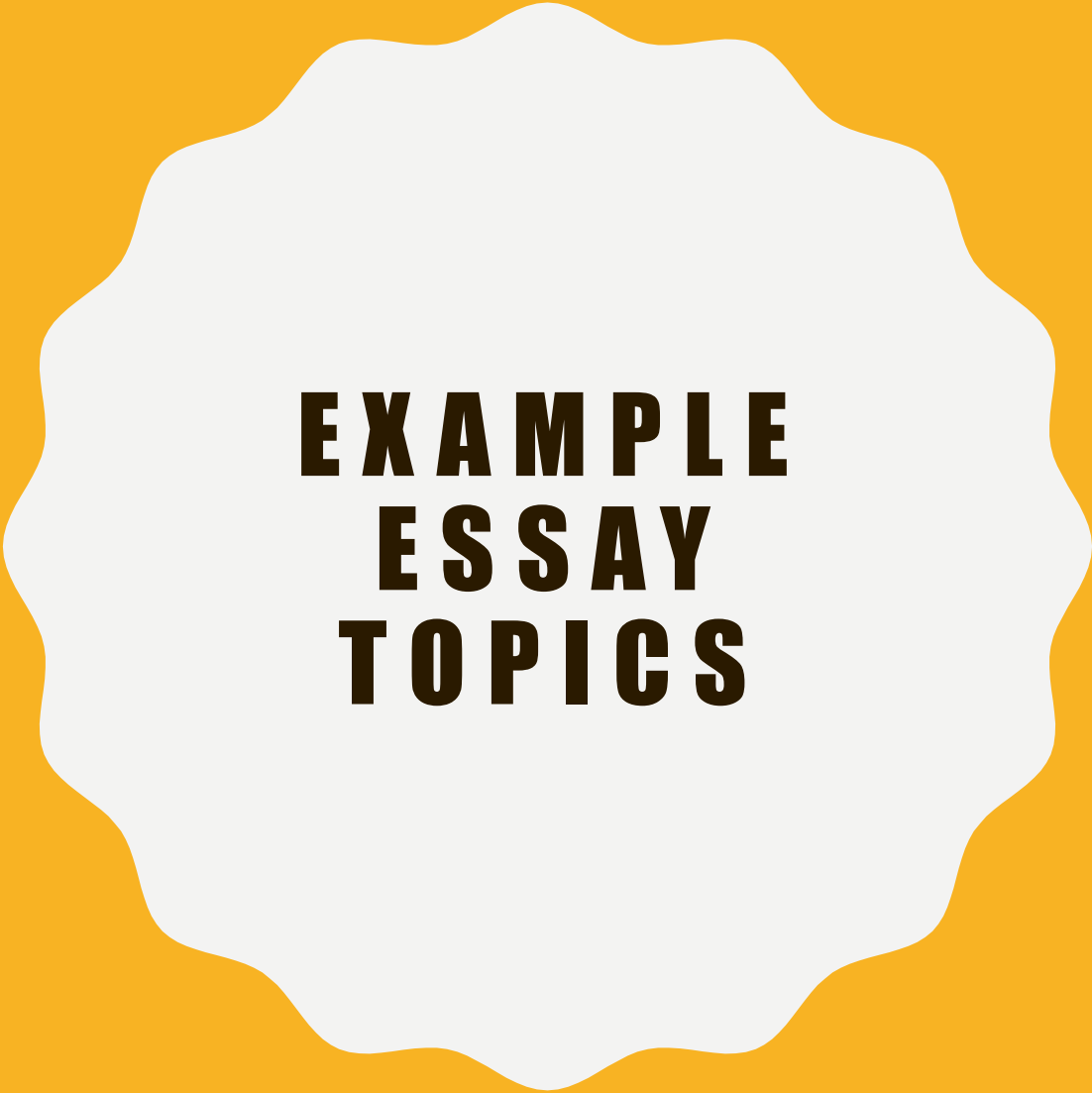
GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- It's OK to use **HUMOR** in your essay, **BUT** don't use your essay to try out humor for the first time.
- **HUMOR** can backfire! Proofread for **TONE**.
What is funny to you may be perceived as sarcastic or judgmental by someone else.

GENERAL TIPS FOR A GREAT ESSAY

- If you are submitting the same essay to multiple colleges (**GREAT TIME-SAVING STRATEGY!**), stay away from a topic where you specifically reference one institution.

We don't want to know the top three reasons you want to attend *another* college.



**EXAMPLE
ESSAY
TOPICS**

KALAMAZOO

What invention would the world be better off without and why?

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

**Tell us about the most
embarrassing moment of
your life.**

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

**What is your favorite word,
and why?**

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

If you were to develop a Mt. Rushmore representing the 20th century, whose faces would you select and why?

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

Once you have completed your education, would you return to your hometown to begin your adult life? Why or why not?

ST. MARY'S, MARYLAND

**Please write a journal entry
as if the date were
September 20, 2030.**

**GETTING
STARTED**

THE THREE PART RULE

- **Tell a story or tell about an experience.**
- **How did that experience change you?**
- **How will that experience influence you going forward?**
- **You can safely abandon the FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAY**

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Take Time To Reflect**
 - Who are you?
 - What do you value?
 - What is exciting to you?
- What do you want us to know about you that we didn't ask on our application?

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Write a Personal Statement**
 - **Approximately 500 words**
 - **Looking for more of an “I” response/
First Person Narrative**
- **Used for college applications and scholarship applications**
 - **Save and “tweek” for each scenario**

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **Research the Common App 2021-2022 Essay Prompts**
 - <https://www.commonapp.org/blog/2021-2022-common-app-essay-prompts>

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

- **New Question:**

Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

Kindness

Gratitude

“An invitation to bring joy to the application process”

IF YOU GET “STUCK”

- **If we went to lunch, what would we talk about?**
 - **What is important to you?**
 - **Where are you going?**
 - **What are your dreams?**

AND FINALLY.....

- **RELAX!**
- **HAVE FUN!**
- **Give yourself plenty of time to write your
MASTERPIECE!**

AND FINALLY.....

- **Your essay should be:**
 - **Thoughtful**
 - **Insightful**
 - **Well-Organized**
 - **Error-Free**
- **Something to be PROUD of!**

AND FINALLY.....

- Juniors: You will not be the first class to address (or not address) **QUARANTINE/COVID-19** in your college applications.
- Common App will have a separate question allowing you to express yourself on this topic separate from the main essay.
 - <https://www.commonapp.org/blog/COVID-19-question-common-app>
- If you decide to write about Quarantine or **COVID**, keep it simple and true to “your story”.

QUESTIONS?

Stacey.Thomas@admissions.jwu.edu