

COLLEGE ESSAYS 2019-2020

GRADING CRITERIA

- ✓ Hook / strong opening
- ✓ Strong voice
- ✓ Balanced: the writer highlights himself/herself and does not get lost in the essay
- ✓ Focused: essay is focused, rather than covering too much
- ✓ Writer looks attractive to colleges by highlighting positive characteristics
 - Maturity
 - Resilience
 - Drive / Determination
 - Curiosity / Inquiry
 - Transformation in attitude or perspective
- ✓ Topic is strong, believable, and convincing (not weak, forced, or unremarkable)
- ✓ Conclusion is effective and thoughtful
- ✓ Avoids words, phrases, or concepts that a broad audience wouldn't understand
- ✓ Properly addresses the prompt
- ✓ Grammar, mechanics, and writing conventions

FORMAT

- ✓ Typed, single-spaced, Times New Roman 12-pt font
- ✓ Topics are clearly labeled and written out
- ✓ Word count included at the bottom of each essay

WORD COUNT

- ✓ 500-750 words (Apply Texas Topic A)
- ✓ 500-650 words (Common App)

PROMPT

Topic A

Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?