



Start building your essay!

A good essay is composed of three things: a message (also called a thesis), evidence, and a conclusion.

What story do you want to tell? Why is that experience or idea important to you? How did it impact your goals for the future? Using all that information, **choose the message that you want to communicate in this essay:**

Your Message

Your Evidence

Now spend five minutes thinking about your story and your message. What are the main points of the story? How do they reinforce your message? **List them out to the left -- these may eventually become your paragraphs!**

How does the story end? What have you learned about yourself or about the world? How do those lessons tie in with college or your life goals?

Your Conclusion

This is just the beginning!

You can use this worksheet to start writing your essay or use our questions to practice brainstorming another story. Good luck!

What to do with a draft

Share! Analyze! Edit! The essay isn't finished just because you met your suggested word count. Here are some questions to make your essay the best it can be:

What do you think is the message (or thesis statement) of the essay?

Now look at each paragraph - how do they contribute to that message?

Paragraph	Contribution
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List three characteristics that the essay conveyed about its author:

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Now provide examples from the text that demonstrate those characteristics:

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What have you learned about the author or the world from this essay? How do those lessons tie in with the author's goals or college?

Keep going!

Have you successfully communicated your message? Were there any distractions or unintended ideas? Keep refining your essay until the message shines through!