

The Essay

The essay is your chance to show the college admissions office something about yourself that is not evident on your transcript or in your other recommendations. The most important thing to keep in mind is that the reader should know more about **you** when they come to the end of your essay.

Sometimes an application will indicate that the essay is optional. If you really want to be accepted to a school, no part should be considered optional. Take every opportunity to make the college see what a unique and wonderful person you are and this includes writing a great essay. Take advantage of Mohonasen's Essay Writing Workshop presented by a college admissions counselor in late September. Brainstorm essay ideas with your counselor and be sure to bring your drafts to your counselor or an English teacher. Take advantage of the expertise around you to write an essay that will make the admissions office remember you!

To preview some sample essays, check out the online applications of some of your schools of interest or at www.commonapp.org. You may find that you are able to use the same essay for more than one college application. It's never too early to start working on your essays so give some thought to starting sooner rather than later!

Recommendations

Who Do You Ask?

Recommendations are another piece of the admissions picture that can help tip the scales in your favor if they are good. Students should ask teachers, counselors, coaches and club advisors from their junior and senior year. The people that you ask should be the ones who saw your excellent work ethic or major investment in their class or activity. Were you a leader in the class or sport? Was it an area in which you worked very hard to be successful? Did you put in extra time after school? If the answer to these questions is yes, then consider asking this person to write a recommendation for you.

When and How Do You Ask?

The time to ask is early in your senior year. Teachers may be asked to write recommendations for many students so they will need at least three weeks notice. As a rule, students are encouraged to ask their recommenders by the end of September. Students need to research how many and from whom the recommendations are required for each of their school choices. For instance, if you are applying to West Point, a recommendation from your physics teacher will be required. Students should