



2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Quick College Essay Reviews:
Get In, Get Out, and Get It Right

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#HECA2019RI



Overview

- Managing Time & Expectations
- Content, Structure and Polish
- Common Issues
- A New Approach

Three Stages

- Content
- Structure
- Polish

Pre-Draft Review

- During brainstorming, solidify theme
- Confirm theme before draft
- Return to theme during reviews
- Make sure students know WHY they chose a topic

Time Savers

- Think like a reviewer, not an editor
- Template responses to common problems
- Set a timer
- Think big picture, not sentence by sentence

Technique

- Read once
- Read again, mark a few things
- Respond

Content Review

- Does the essay answer the prompt?
- Can you tell why the writer chose this topic?
- Is the essay about the student, or is it really about the place, person or experience featured in the essay?
- Does it illustrate a trait your student wants to share with colleges?
- Does it tell colleges something meaningful about the writer that they could not find out from the rest of the application package?
- Does the story sound like a teenage writer?

Content Review

- Narrative review
- General observations – concepts, intention, focus
- Questions
- Writing exercises

Two Writing Exercises

- Get two writing exercises to help students move from content to structure
- Send an email to susan@wowwritingworkshop.com
- Subject line: HECA Essay Reviews

Structure Review

- Does the first paragraph make you want to keep reading?
- Does the essay move smoothly from beginning to end?
- Is the essay ever redundant?

Structure Review

- Comment review
- Notes in the margins (Google doc comments or Word Review mode)
- Specific observations – lines, paragraphs, sections
- Writing exercises

Polish Review

- Does the essay include the same verb tense throughout?
- Has the student avoided sentence fragments and run-on sentences?
- Is the punctuation correct and consistent?
- Is every word spelled correctly?
- Does the writer feel confident and proud of the work?

Polish Review

- Editorial review
- Minor line edits
- Punctuation, grammar, etc.

Awareness and Change

- Differentiate between content, structure and polish
- Read before diving in with comments
- Think like a reviewer, not an editor

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