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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