



# **Development of the College Essay**

**January 31, 2014**

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**Regional Admissions Manager**

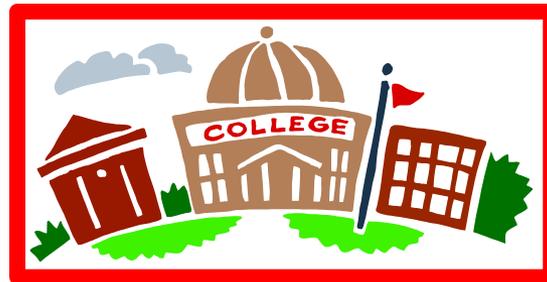
**The Ohio State University**

# Admissions Evaluation

**SAT/ACT**

**HS GPA**

**HS Courses  
AP/IB/Honors**



**Activities  
School  
&Community**

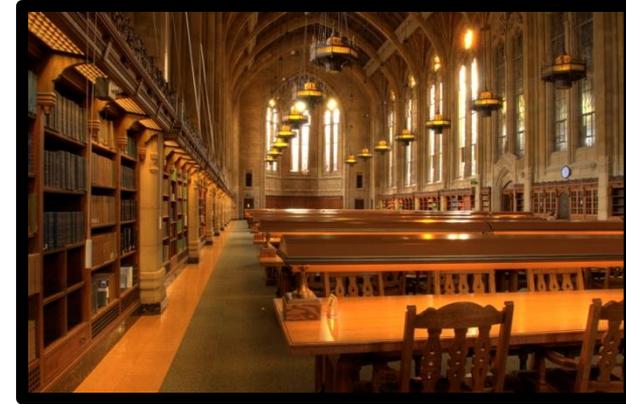
**Work  
Experience**

**Essay**

# Purpose of the Essay

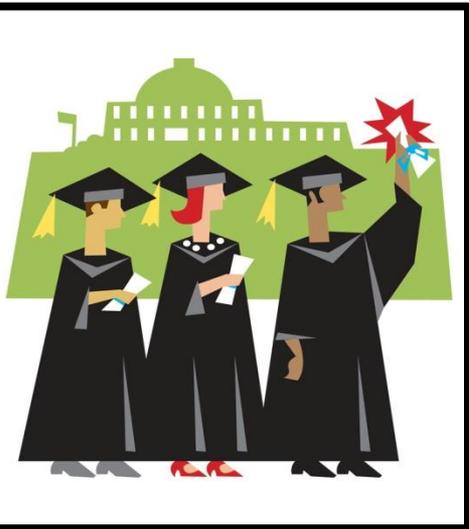
## University

Learn about the individual student  
Help to make admission decision  
Must meet basic criteria



## Student

Present yourself as an individual  
Show how you are unique



# Essay Purpose - University

- High school grades and SAT/ACT scores are still the most important factors in making admission decisions.
- However, with many highly qualified students having similar qualifications, the essay is often used to “break a tie.”
- 26% of admission officers surveyed indicate that they consider the essay quite important.
  - This is an increase from 14% in 1993.

# Essay Purpose - Student

- **For students, this is the one opportunity for students to give their own voices to a mass of data (high school grades and SAT/ACT scores).**
- **It gives students the opportunity to demonstrate how they are unique and how they will add to the university community.**

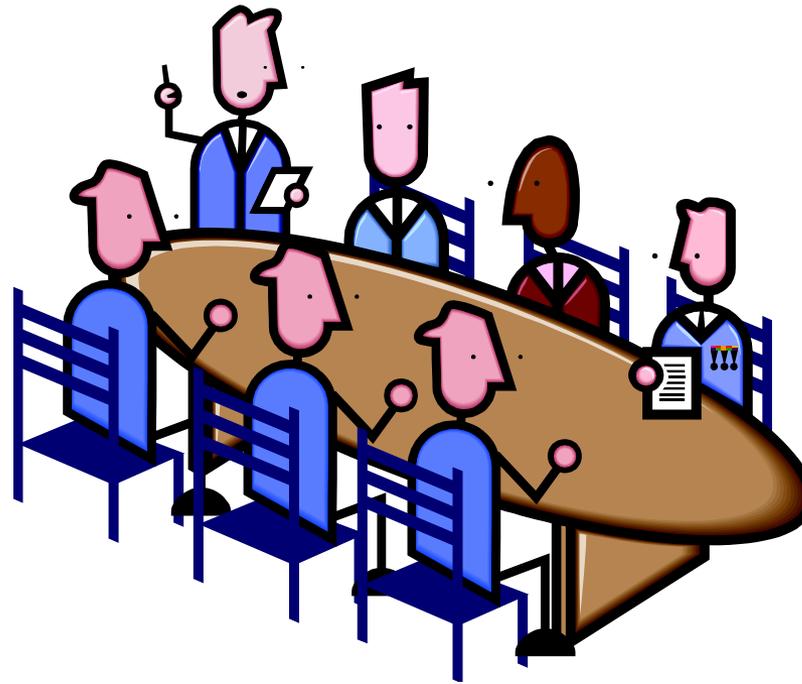
## Essay Topics

- **Common Application (<https://www.commonapp.org>)**
  - If you have something in your background that is central to your identity that would make your application incomplete without it, please share your story.
  - If there was a time you experienced failure, please describe the event and how this experience affected you and what you learned.
  - Describe a time when you challenged a belief or idea. Explain why you decided to act and if you would make the same decision again.
  - Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content and why this is meaningful to you.
  - Discuss an accomplishment or event that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community or family.

# Essay Topics

- **Additional Application Prompts**
  - Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
  - Discuss an issue of personal, local, national or international concern and its importance to you.
  - Indicate a person who had a significant influence on you and describe the influence.
  - Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (art, music, etc) that had an influence on you and explain that influence.
  - Describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community or an encounter that demonstrates the importance of diversity to you.
  - What are your talents and strengths?
  - What do you do exceptionally well?
  - Why are you interested in attending this university?

# Discuss the Possibilities



# Examples of Common Application Responses

- **Background Story**
  - One student wrote about learning she had cancer and how she learned to focus on living.
  - Another student discussed feeling inadequate and learning about her strengths after being nominated and participating in an internship at Yale.
- **Dealing with Failure**
  - One student wrote about forgetting the music during a recital but overcame the fear of performing in public to do the same selection at Carnegie Hall.
  - A student who was leading a cross-country run in Austria got lost and did not share the issue with other runners until it was too late. He learned it is important to collaborate.

# Examples of Common Application Responses

- **Challenging a Belief**
  - A student wrote about challenging others who were harassing gay and lesbian students.
  - One student, an Orthodox, questioned some of the practices of the group and his father and enrolled in public school.
- **A Place of Contentment**
  - Students wrote about feeling content in a variety of places such as
    - Walking in the woods
    - Running
    - In the pool
- **Marking Transition from Childhood to Adulthood**
  - One student described having to take responsibility for her younger siblings when her mother was hospitalized for an extensive period.
  - Another discussed learning to understand the importance of his father's rules and expectations that resulted in his success.

# Example of Essay Responses

- **Significant experience**
  - A student wrote about losing her home due to family financial issues. The student described balancing work to help support the family with maintaining excellent academic standing.
  - An outstanding athlete described overcoming a serious injury.
- **Local, national or international concern**
  - Student described a mission to Haiti following the earthquake and efforts to assist in providing support to a school in Port-au –Prince.
  - Another described concern with poverty in America and work with Habitat for Humanity.
- **Person who had influence on you**
  - A student wrote of her disabled brother and her desire to support him in the future as motivation for success.
  - Another wrote about a teacher who served as a model. This teacher motivated the student to pursue a career in education.
- **Character in fiction, historical figure, creative work**
  - Some would mention leaders such as Thomas Jefferson or Dr. King and their commitment to liberty.
  - One student described her experience as a dancer and how that motivated her to excel.
- **Diversity**
  - The diversity could be philosophical, social, ethnic.
  - One student wrote about living in Europe and the influence the experience had upon his philosophy.

# Examples of Other Essay Topics

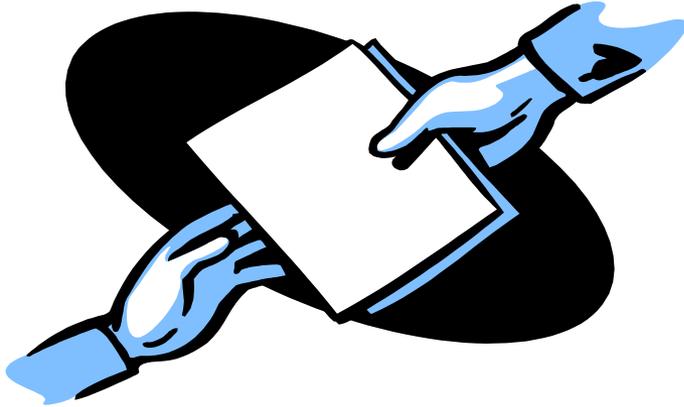
- **What are your strengths and/or talents?**
  - One student wrote about her ability to respond to adversity. Her mother died after suffering with breast cancer. During this period, she cared for her mother and her siblings.
  - Another described her dedication to music and the amount of practice required for selection in a chorus that performed in Europe.
- **What do you do very well?**
  - Some describe academic achievements or sports. Others note their leadership abilities. One student described her leadership creating an event to support a local charity.
- **Why are you interested in this university?**
  - Some mention information mentioned in the recruitment brochure. This is a bit trite.
  - Others mention school spirit surrounding the athletic program. While social life is important you should focus on academics.
  - For example, what programs are offered at the university that will help you achieve your goals.

# Essay Content

- **Include experiences that demonstrate your strengths**
  - What have you done that reveals growth?
  - What experiences make you an exceptional candidate?
- **Discuss your goals**
- **Review how attending the university will enable you to capitalize on your strengths to achieve objectives**
- **You are selling yourself**
  - Do not lie but do not be overly modest
  - Do not write what you think we want to read. The essay will sound the same as others.
  - Be yourself!



# Essay Preparation



- Carefully review grammar, spelling and content.
- Be creative but avoid being “cute”.
- Do not use jargon. Assume you are submitting a report to a strict teacher.
- You are selling yourself. This is an overview of your accomplishments and what makes you unique.
- Prepare on your computer and save. You may have to modify for different schools.

- **OUTLINE**
- **PREPARE A DRAFT**
- **PROOFREAD**
- **SAVE ON COMPUTER**
- **HAVE PARENT OR TEACHER READ**

# Essay Preparation

- **Spelling and grammar**
  - Remember that spell check doesn't catch everything.
    - from/form
  - Make sure to check punctuation and capitalization.
    - air force/Air Force
    - Schools needs/school's needs
  - Check your vocabulary.
    - suburb/superb
- **Avoid jargon and vernacular phrases**
  - The school has lots to offer.
  - The campus blows my mind.
  - The school will permit me to be all I can be.
- **Carefully monitor word limitations**
  - Common Application - 250 words

# QUESTIONS/COMMENTS



# Selecting a College

**Academic  
Program/Quality**

**Campus Life**

**Size**

**Facilities**



**Location**

**Qualifications**

**Cost/Scholarships**



# The Ohio State University

**55,000 students**

**19:1 student staff ratio**

**70% of classes fewer than 40 students**

**Size provides opportunity academically/socially**

**175 majors 450 minors**

**1,000 student organizations (largest student union in nation)**

**Comprehensive campus**

**All programs at Columbus (med, vet, law, PhD)**

**RAC (largest student recreation center)**

**Urban (Columbus largest city and capital of Ohio)**

**Business and political center (internships)**

**Opportunities to enjoy life in Columbus**

**Campus separate from city**

# ADMISSION FACTORS

## **Primary**

High school curriculum

High school performance (class rank or GPA)

ACT/SAT scores

## **Other considerations**

Accelerated curriculum (Honors, AP, IB)

Cultural, economic, racial, and geographic diversity

Leadership experiences, co-curricular activities, work experiences



# Admission Criteria

## Class rank Class 2011-12

54% ranked in the top 10% of their classes

90% ranked in the top 25% of their classes

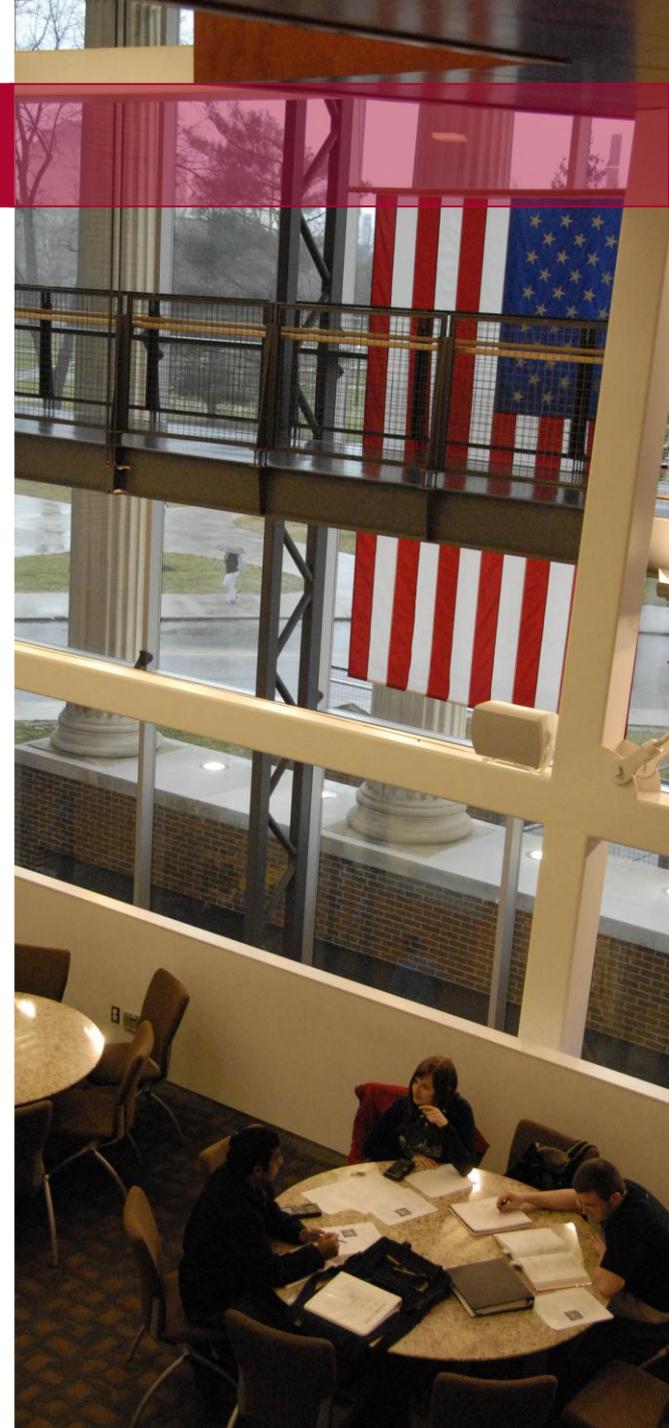
## Test scores Class 2011-12

ACT Composite, middle 50%: 26-31 (av 28)

SAT, middle 50%: 1180-1340 (out of 1600) (av 1240)

## High School Program

English	4 years
Math	4 years – 3 required(95% above)
Science	3 years (97% above)
Social Science	3 years – 2 required(99% above)
Language (same language)	3 years – 2 required(93% above)
Visual/Performing Arts	1 year
Additional of any above	1 year



\$12,000 annually for four years

Granted to out-of-state students

Scholarship criteria includes:

Top 40% of class

SAT 1260 (1600 scale Math/Reading)

Act 28

# BUCKEYE NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP



## Tuition

Out-of-state: \$25,445

## Room & board

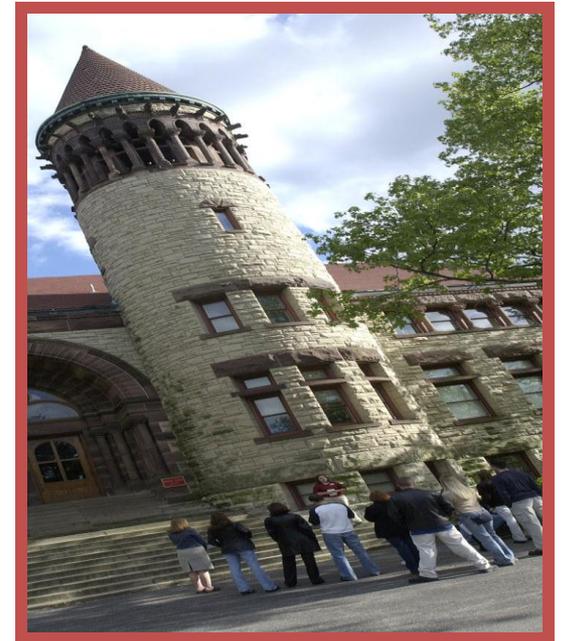
\$10,400 (Most popular room & meal plan)

# 2012–2013 COLUMBUS CAMPUS COSTS



# The Ohio State University

- For application: [apply.osu.edu](https://apply.osu.edu) (Common App)
- To schedule a visit: [campusvisit.osu.edu](https://campusvisit.osu.edu)
- To obtain a personal academic and social overview: [viewbook.osu.edu](https://viewbook.osu.edu)





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