

## why you need a writing coach

### (the agonizing truth)

Colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom require you to write *The Essay of Your Life*— the more memorable, excellent, original, the better. In fact you'll be writing not one but a total of three essays on the following topics:

*Who you are*

*Why you want to go to a school like, say, Columbia or McGill*

*Why the admissions committee should accept you instead of any of 1,000 other high school seniors.*

Occasionally, an application like the University of Chicago's will reveal its sense of humor and ask you to hold forth on a whacky question like

*Have you ever worn your underwear on the outside of your clothes?*

*Tell us why or why not.*

Remember that schools in North America using the Common App require not only the short essay (about 250 words) but long answers on their supplements.

Institutions in Europe— Erasmus University in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, for one — often require a short statement. Such concise, persuasive writing is notoriously trickier than the traditional school composition.

When you apply to a specific program at universities in Europe or the United Kingdom, your essay or letter of motivation must explain why you want to study sculpture at Goldsmith's College or medicine at Cardiff University, for example. It is crucial that this letter be convincing and engaging because admissions committees in the U.K. weight it a full 80% of the application. Schools in Europe, especially the Benelux countries, also consider the letter of motivation critical.

**why you need a writing coach** (cont.)

The college essay represents a sterling moment wherein you hold the attention of admissions committee readers, which is to say the folks who hold sway over your acceptance or rejection, and can convey your truest self. What you write and how you write should reveal how singular you are, the mettle of your character, your sense of humor, your earnestness in how approach the world. Your essay will reveal to readers what your G.P.A., standardized test scores, and teacher recommendations cannot— your *you-ness*. It also will speak volumes about how well you'll fit into a school and whether you'll enhance the composition of the incoming class or bring anything unique to the school.

So rise to the challenge and write *right!*

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