

# College Essay Checklist

**Directions:** Use this checklist as a guide. Check off each item when you are sure the essay has satisfied the criteria. Use the space for notes.

Prompt: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Does the essay fully and clearly address the prompt?
- Has the writer used the prompt to come up with ideas that are unique and interesting?
- As a whole, does the essay “work”? Does it keep the reader’s interest throughout?
- Does the essay take any creative risks?
- What is the overarching main idea, theme or thesis statement?
- Does each paragraph have a main idea that further develops the overall theme?
- Are all main ideas supported by details that are concrete, lively and interesting?
- Does the writer stay on task and avoid unnecessary tangents?
- Is the writer’s voice and tone consistent and interesting throughout?
- Does the essay reveal something about the writer?
- Does the essay have a definite beginning, middle and conclusion?
- Are transitions in place between sentences and paragraphs, making for a smooth read?
- Do all sentences “pull their weight”?
- Is the essay free of grammatical, spelling and mechanical errors?
- Does the essay communicate that the writer is a strong candidate for admission?