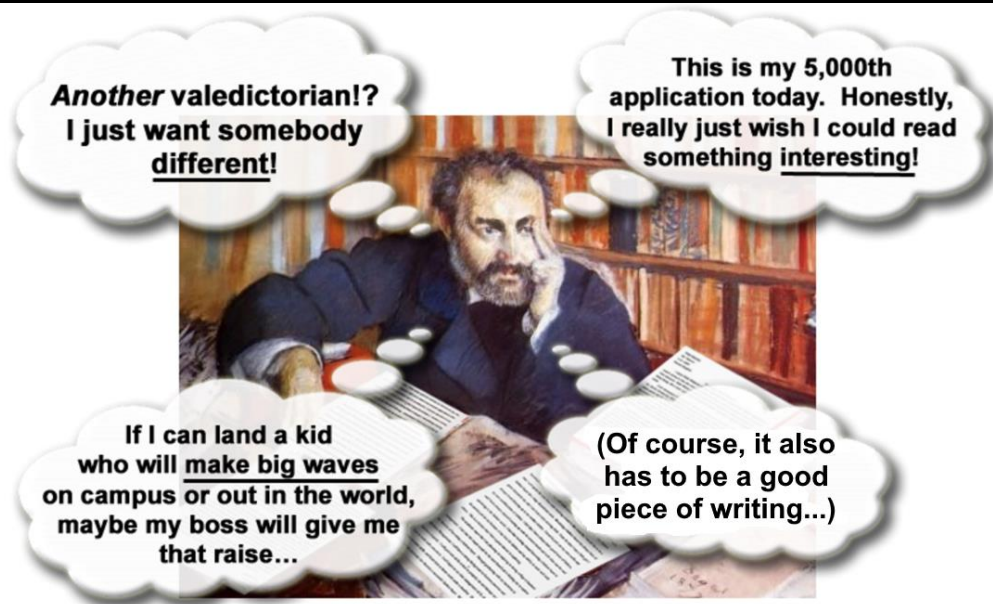


What do Admissions Counselors want?



Mastering the Personal Statement



presented by Paul Jury & **PJ Test Prep**
SAT/ACT Prep Classes, and Test/Academic Tutoring
www.pjtestprep.com – 310 529-7285

Approach #1 – Be Impressive

Any old kid can get good grades in college, graduate, and get a job. Counselors want to find bigger fish who will MAKE WAVES. Their jobs depend on it.

- Suggest what big things you'll do on campus.
- Suggest what big things you'll do in the real world.

EXAMPLES

- **My First Play**
- **Mock Trial/Real Trial**
- + Safe; easy to write (if it's really impressive, just say what happened!)
- - Tone; Not THAT impressive

Approach #2 – Be Different

Colleges don't just want butts in chairs. They want all types of students. Diversity.

- Suggest what makes you different than all the other high-scoring, hard-working, good-grade-getting students out there.

EXAMPLES

- **50% Russia, 50% Redondo**
- **The Twin Who Un-Twinned**

+ Everyone has *some* difference; some differences are especially good in our modern world

- Not **THAT** different; “So what?”

Approach #3 – Be Interesting

Counselors have to read a lot of these essays. Make them remember you.

- Tell stories/use examples

- Start with a hook

- Be funny, touching, dramatic, whatever fits your topic... but don't use a gimmick that isn't you.

EXAMPLES

- **Justin's Uncle**
- **The Basement**

+ Can really set you apart; the “Hail-Mary” essay

- You gotta execute; Risky at some schools (UCs?)

Now, 6 things NOT to write about...

- Stuff that's **already been said** elsewhere on your application.
- Way off-topic stuff. Don't just answer the **prompt**, but don't ignore it either.
- Somebody **else** (unless that's the prompt, but regardless it should really be about you).
- “**Smoke words**” (“My commitment and passion for goals”) and other **generic stuff anybody could say** (“My work ethic”). Readers **HATE** vague or obvious stuff and **LOVE** description and uniqueness (“Steve Madden boots in cow pies”).
- Overly **cliché topics** (my sport, my mental illness/tragedy, my trip, my bland activity...)
- A gimmick that **isn't you**. Give what they want, but not at the expense of who you are.
- **#7 Covid? Depends...**

Make your list, then a plan. UCs → Common App → Supps/Scholarships. And get help!

Application Essay Brainstorm Sheet

- What will be the most notable thing you do in college?
- What will be the most notable thing you do in your career?
- What are you really good at?
 - o How did you get good at it?
 - o What was the moment you realized you were good?
 - o When did you get a chance to show it?
 - o How could this ability help you in college or life?
- Do you have any interesting stories?
 - o Funny?
 - o Amazing?
 - o Touching?
- What's something really random about you?
- What are you really BAD at?
- What's the biggest challenge you've had to overcome?
 - o Did you overcome it? (It's OK if you didn't)
 - o Either way, what did you learn?
- What is your biggest regret?
- Have you ever found yourself thrown into a new situation?
- Have you ever not fitting in somewhere?
- Have you ever taken any interesting trips? Any good stories? What did you learn about the world/other people/yourself?
- What has been your most meaningful extra-curricular activity, even (especially?) if it's not the most resume-worthy?
- What adults in your life/in society do you most admire?
 - o Why?



PJ Test Prep

College Essay Program

PJ Test Prep Personalized Zoom and Video Essay program

GOAL: To minimize stress and cost and maximize quality and flexibility in helping a student COMPLETE THEIR PRIMARY COMMON APP ESSAY + 4 UC INSIGHT ESSAYS (which can also be re-used later for non-UC supplement essays!)

Includes:

- **3+ hours of pro video guidance** that 1) teach what colleges are looking for in App Essays and 2) demonstrate the steps needed to write a set of standout college essays, from start to finish.
- **5** (approximately weekly, but can be sped up) **Assignment Stages**, to plan, draft and polish these essays one step at a time.
- **Direct feedback at each stage**, including an initial call and email comments and answers at each stage, **two 30-minute coaching Zooms with Paul**, and **two rounds of audio and/or written notes** on ALL five essays.
- And while this program is generally enough to for students to complete solid third drafts of all essays, registration also grants a **25% discount on any additional essay review hours** that might be desired, for instance for later additional supplemental essays.

\$375

The program is instructed/guided by **Paul Jury**, founder of PJ Test Prep and Jury Academics, graduate of Northwestern University's Creative Writing for the Media Program, Author of "States of Confusion," Writer for TV shows on A&E, Vh1 and Discovery Channel, and coach for more than 1,000 College App essays.

www.pjtestprep.com to sign up
paul@pjtestprep.com or (310) 529-7285 for more info