

Rubric for Evaluating College Essays

CLARITY: The essay is well-written and well-structured. It has accurate spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. It is organized logically and makes connections between ideas. It is easy-to-read, not confusing. It is concise.

Disagree

1

2

3

4

Agree

5

ENGAGEMENT: The essay draws in the reader and sustains his/her attention throughout. It is compelling, memorable, and artful, not boring. It fights clichés instead of embracing them.

Disagree

1

2

3

4

Agree

5

AUTHENTICITY: Authenticity has two components: first, the essay tells a real story unique to you; second, it sounds like how you really talk. It uses the vocabulary you use in your everyday life and feels like it was written by a 17-year-old, not by an editor, a parent, or a thesaurus.

Disagree

1

2

3

4

Agree

5

REVEALING CONTENT: The essay does more than tell a story—it gets to a place of real meaning. It grapples with ideas that are thought-provoking, not superficial, and it adds nuance to and pushes beyond its initial ideas. It displays emotional maturity, sophistication, and self-awareness. **It shows something about you that you want the college to know.** At its best, this will be something that isn't revealed elsewhere in the application.

-Ask yourself: could most applicants say this? If so, it's likely not interesting.

Disagree

1

2

3

4

Agree

5

TOTAL SCORE: _____