

# College Essay Editing Guidelines

(Supplied by Ms. Wedge)

## Professional Appearance:

- Neat professional appearance; correct layout, use of white space; correct margins and indentation, and formatting.

## MLA Format:

- Times New Roman Font more professional font, but Calibri if desired.
- 12 point font size (May use professional 11 point font size).
- No bold or underlining
- No abbreviations
- No contractions
- Limit use of First Person Point-of-View. If using personal examples, then, set up: For example....; “I,” “us,” “we,” etc.- depending on type of response; No Second Person Point-of-View: “you,” “your,” etc. **\*\*Third Person Point-of-View is preferable depending on type of response. Narrative/Creative...”I”**

## Grammar and Mechanics:

- Active Voice! No passive voice, which means NO “to be” verbs such as “was,” “were,” “is,” etc.
- Strong action verbs
- Check for spelling errors. Attention to details is very important!
- Check for third person point-of-view
- Check for correct punctuation and word usage. (Note: Comma Rules; esp. Introduction commas after words, phrases, and clauses).
- Check for all proper grammar and mechanics.
- Never end a sentence with a preposition
- Never end a sentence with a verb
- Never start a sentence with “But,” “Or,” or “However.” Conjunctions join words. “However” is a conjunctive adverb, so it joins two main clauses, e.g. ; however, or ,however,
- Sentence structure variety. Do not just have Subject-Verb sentences all the time; try using compound-complex and complex sentence structures.
- **\*\*\*Use your style and “voice” in your diction; sentence structure**
- Ask what tone or impression to be left with the admissions office

## Content:

- Focus – Must answer the prompt question with all parts in correct order. Spend more time writing on the why/how/application/do of the question not the what. Do not tell the college what they already know about their own college
- Specific Elaborative Details
- Transitions for cohesiveness are essential (Words, phrases from previous sentence, etc.)
- Analysis
- Clear organization of thoughts

## Diction; Style; “Voice”:

- Specific Diction (**No vague and generalized words/phrases** such as “things,” “stuff,” “many,” “people,” “a lot,” etc.)
- Vocabulary and sentence structure variety.
- More of writer’s “voice” meaning no citation after citation of other words, ideas, materials. In-text citation supports your “voice” and points being made.
- Use of literary elements such as rhetorical questions; metaphors, etc. Explores different writing style techniques

## Argumentation (If response is showing point of view/global awareness/ opinion on issues):

- Must have both “Pro” and “Con” side of arguments. Refute opponents. Strong tone of argumentation (No information). Strong Verbs will help tone.