



# 美成教育 U.S.A.

**MASON'S Education Jun. 2021 六月號**

發行單位：美成國際事業有限公司 地址：臺北市仁愛路四段 137 號 6 樓之三  
電話：(02)2775-4863 傳真：(02)2775-5405 <http://www.masonsimmigrate.com>

## 關於 ‘論文’ 的誤區：

### MYTHS ABOUT ‘THE ESSAY’

BY ROBERT A.G. LEVINE

The summer before the senior year of high school is the best time to write college admissions essays. There are a lot of myths, urban legends and misinformation about these essays. Effective college applications start with understanding the true purpose and method behind writing the things that are evaluated by admissions offices.

#### **MYTH: COLLEGE ESSAYS SHOULD SHOW A DIFFERENT SIDE.**

Many people believe that the way to success is to include as much material as possible in an application. This is incorrect. Humans can't remember dozens of ideas at once. At best, we can grasp perhaps three concepts at a time. What's in a resume, transcript, or list of activities is easy to evaluate, so focus on presenting one or two additional ideas in the application. All of the essays – and even the way you put things in order throughout the application – should be directed towards getting one “big idea,” a personal thesis that will be remembered after the entire package is read.

#### **MYTH: COLLEGE ESSAYS MUST BE WRITTEN WITH STYLE AND FLAIR.**

If you buy a book about how to write a successful college essay, or if you look online for advice or sample essays, what you'll find is the notion that applicants should write like Hemingway or F. Scott Fitzgerald. This is balderdash. Content should always prevail over style. Powerful essays transmit ideas, not imagery. In an environment where fatigued admissions representatives read thousands of essays, attempting to create imagery that they will absorb is a difficult proposition at best. Instead, use the essays as an opportunity to transmit an idea, one that will add value to the overall presentation. One can write stylistically, but focus first on your concept.

**MYTH: THE ESSAY IS INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR WRITING ABILITY.**

Very few colleges “grade” application essays. They know that the essays are overworked by students, parents, teachers, counselors, paid editors and consultants. They also realize that a student’s writing ability is already reflected in the academic grades and even the standardized testing. What college admissions officers are looking for is the applicant’s human side and personal qualities. Information about character, integrity, ethics, collaboration, initiative, and maturity is critical to the admissions evaluation but cannot be found in test scores, GPA’s, or a list of activities and achievements. Essays (and recommendation letters) can provide insight into an applicant’s humanity.

**MYTH: IT SOUNDS EGOTISTICAL TO TALK ABOUT ONESELF.**

Transmitting ideas about personal qualities need not be boasting. Students should write essays using more narrative than commentary. Instead of saying “I am ethical” (or some other personal quality), try telling a story about you doing something ethical. Great college admissions essays are full of short stories, and they are successful for a reason: stories are easy to remember. Those stories need not show life-changing moments or monumental achievement. As long as the stories represent your idea or thesis accurately, then the idea will be communicated effectively. In truth, communicating about oneself in an essay is best accomplished by a balanced blend of both “showing” and “telling.”

There is an art and science to writing college admissions essays. Worry about content, not style. Start by understanding what the colleges want to learn about you, then figure out which of your human qualities you wish them to know. The best essays communicate those aspects of your human side through personal, genuine storytelling.