

HURWITZ CONSULTING • DR. NATHAN HURWITZ

# Student Starter Kit

*A clear, honest guide to college admissions — without stress, panic, or pretending*

Welcome to your college journey. This process isn't about perfection — it's about understanding yourself and learning how to communicate who you are with confidence. You don't need to have everything figured out. You just need to be willing to reflect, write honestly, and keep moving forward.

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## WHAT THIS PROCESS IS ACTUALLY ABOUT

Admissions officers review thousands of applications hoping to meet someone who feels genuine — not just a résumé. A great essay doesn't try to impress. It helps the reader understand how you think, what matters to you, and what you might contribute to their campus.

### The most important thing to understand:

- You are not being evaluated on being extraordinary
- You are being evaluated on being thoughtful, self-aware, and honest
- You already have a real voice and real insights — our job is to draw them out

## HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

### ✓ One-on-one coaching sessions

We discuss meaningful experiences, beliefs, and moments from your life — and shape them into a compelling story.

### ✓ A clear writing process

Outlining, drafting, revising, and polishing — with specific assignments and due dates. No guessing.

### ✓ Structure and a timeline

The process moves forward consistently so nothing stalls or becomes overwhelming.

✓ **Clear, usable feedback**

You'll always know exactly what to work on before our next session.

✓ **A calm, focused space**

College admissions can easily get sidetracked. Our sessions keep it organized and manageable.

## THE WRITING PROCESS — A QUICK OVERVIEW

### 1 Reflect

Think about experiences that changed, challenged, surprised, or stayed with you. Small moments often make the best essays.

### 2 Discover

What do those experiences reveal about you? What insights have you gained? Why do they matter?

### 3 Write

Don't aim for good — aim for something. Start with an outline and develop from there. Early drafts are called rough for a reason.

### 4 Revise

This is where the essay takes shape. We deepen understanding, clarify the message, and cut anything unrelated to the story.

### 5 Clarify

Final polish to ensure your message is clear and maintains your authentic voice.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

**The personal statement answers one question: Why will you be a valuable member of their campus community?**

You can be valuable in many ways — academic curiosity, leadership, creativity, empathy, resilience, or perspective. There is no single 'right' type of student.

**A strong personal statement:**

- Tells a story of growth
- Shows perspective or empathy
- Reflects honestly on your experiences
- Focuses on insight — not just events

**THE KEY RULE**

*Your story does not need to be extraordinary. It just needs to be thoughtful and true. Honesty beats drama every time.*

**THEME DISCOVERY — GETTING STARTED**

*Set aside 30–60 minutes. Write for 2–5 minutes on each question below without stopping or editing. Bullet points, fragments, and messy thoughts are all fine.*

**1. What have you discovered about yourself lately?**

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**2. Describe a challenge that has changed how you see something.**

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**3. What small detail matters more to you than most people realize?**

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**4. Which questions keep circling back in your mind?**

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**5. Is there a moment from the past two years that remains vivid to you?**

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**6. What topics ignite your academic curiosity?**

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**7. When do you feel most like yourself?**

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**8. What do people typically seek your advice or help with?**



## IDENTITY MAPPING — FIND YOUR CORE

'Who am I?' feels like a big question. So we don't answer it in one sentence — we build it piece by piece.

*For each prompt below, jot 3–5 quick bullets. Don't overthink it.*

### Identity

- Which groups are you a part of — teams, family, clubs, community, culture?
- What roles do you play in those groups — leader, helper, organizer, problem-solver?
- How would you describe yourself as a person — how you think, feel, act, and relate to others?

**Your answers:**

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### Values

- What do you care about more than most people realize?
- What qualities do you respect in others?
- What rules do you try to live by — even when it's hard?

**Your answers:**

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### Curiosity

- What problems do you want to solve, or which questions keep coming back to you?
- What ideas truly interest you, even outside school?

**Your answers:**

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## Experiences

- What challenge has affected you — even if you didn't succeed?
- What achievement are you proud of — big or small?
- What moments have changed you?

Your answers:

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## ESSAY STRUCTURE OPTIONS

Choose a structure that fits your story:

### A) Past → Change → Now

*Best for a moment that transformed you. Open in that moment. Show the insight. Show who you are now because of it.*

### B) The Lens

*Best for showing who you are through one recurring thing — activity, habit, object, responsibility. Introduce it. Explain why it matters. Share a specific moment. Reveal what it taught you.*

### C) Question → Exploration → Growth

*Best for students who think deeply. Open with a question. Explore different perspectives. Share the insight that clarified your thinking. Explain how it shapes your life.*

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FAQs

### When should I start thinking about college?

Sophomore or early junior year is ideal. Starting early doesn't mean stressing early — it means avoiding last-minute pressure.

### Do I need to know my major?

No. Many students apply undecided or change majors later. Colleges value curiosity and genuine engagement more than a fixed plan.

### **Do colleges actually read essays?**

Yes. Essays are very important. They reveal how you think, reflect, and communicate. Honesty is far more impactful than drama.

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### **Do I have to write about something traumatic?**

No. You are never required to share pain. Growth, curiosity, and insight matter far more than hardship.

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### **What if my grades aren't perfect?**

Colleges evaluate trends, effort, and context — not just outcomes. Strong writing can provide important perspective.

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### **What if I don't get into my first-choice school?**

Many successful students don't. What matters most is your experience in college, not the name on the diploma.

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## **MYTH vs. REALITY**

**Myth:** Only perfect students get into top colleges.

**Reality:** Colleges value growth, character, and fit. A complete, authentic application matters far more than a perfect GPA.

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**Myth:** You need an extraordinary story.

**Reality:** Reflection and thoughtfulness are more important than a dramatic life event. Everyday moments become powerful essays all the time.

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**Myth:** Everyone else has it all figured out.

**Reality:** Nearly every student feels uncertain. The ones who do well are simply the ones who keep moving forward.

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**Myth:** One mistake will ruin your chances.

**Reality:** Admissions are holistic. The whole application matters.

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**Myth:** The most selective school is always the best choice.

**Reality:** The best school is where you'll thrive — where support, challenge, and fit all align.

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## THE BOTTOM LINE

*College admissions isn't about being perfect. It's about showing who you are, how you think, and how you're ready to grow. With preparation, honesty, and support, this process can feel manageable — and even empowering.*

## Ready to take the next step?

Schedule a free 30-minute consultation — no obligation.

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