

ScholarMatch

COACHES SHOULD:

- Review our [Guidance for College Coaches on College Advising Following the Students for Fair Admission \(SFFA\) SCOTUS Decision](#)
- Be aware that they will be providing feedback on a document rather than in person. This means they should not assume a student will understand the tone of their feedback. We recommend coaches provide in-depth feedback and advice during the first round of edits.
- Help a student brainstorm by **asking open-ended questions**.
- Read a rough draft and **offer advice** (e.g. “Let’s check your thesis and see if it addresses the essay topic question”).
- **Allow a student’s voice to come through**. Rather than changing the student’s voice, try to help them clarify their personal voice to make the essay more effective.
- Be aware that students have the tendency to want to write and rewrite their personal statements. Coaches should help students **determine whether an essay is close to a final draft** by answering:
 1. Does the essay answer the personal statement prompt?
 2. Does it make sense to the reader and have a flow?
 3. If yes to both of the above, edit the essay for grammar/spelling.

COACHES SHOULD NOT:

- **Provide a thesis statement**. Instead, help the student brainstorm by asking open-ended questions.
- **Suggest specific wording**. You can suggest resources like thesaurus.com, however the essay should sound like the student rather than using vocabulary they don’t use regularly. Encourage your student to read their essay out loud to make sure the essay is in their voice.
- **Edit specific grammatical errors on a first read - save this for the final draft**. Since the essay will go through many iterations, focus on big ideas and whether the student is answering the prompt. Save the grammar edits for later - first, you need to make sure the essay is compelling, has a voice, and tells a story unique to your student.

ADVICE FROM ADMISSIONS OFFICES:

1. **Be specific**. Some of the best essays come from stories of a single day or a specific location. A simple story goes a long way.
2. **Demonstrate growth or development**. Growth is important - an admissions counselor isn’t expecting a high school student to have it all figured out.
3. **Voice Matters**. Students want to be able to read their essay and say “This sounds like ME.”

Find more college essay tips [here](#).