



TIPS FOR EDITING & REVISING

1. **Make sure your recommendations and changes are clearly marked.** It may be helpful to highlight your recommendations, add them as comments, and/or use the “track changes” tool in Microsoft Word. We highly recommend **avoiding the color red** to mark changes.
2. **Offer suggestions throughout the essay and ask clarifying questions.** This will help the student focus their narrative and define a central theme. Don’t wait until the very end of the essay or your next phone call to provide feedback. If a sentence doesn’t make sense or an entire paragraph feels repetitive, highlight the section that needs revisions and explain your thought process.
3. **Determine if the personal statement or supplemental question directly addresses the essay prompt.** If it doesn’t, provide necessary feedback and point the student back to the prompt. You can provide feedback by saying things like “This question is asking you to do X” or “This is a great story, but it isn’t addressing the prompt.”
4. **Pose open-ended questions.** This will help the student identify specific points where they can provide more supportive evidence and detail.
5. **Provide validation and encouragement.** Students often share deeply personal stories for their personal statement so it’s important to acknowledge this and thank them for sharing. You’ll want to focus on the essay’s strengths and be clear and concise about what changes should be made, especially during the first round of edits. Marking up an entire essay in red may deter the student from keeping a positive mindset, making sure to validate the good parts of an essay along with changes will ensure your student feels confident when making edits and improvements.
6. **Stay away from performing trauma or poverty.** We do not ask students to perform their traumas via their essay. It is important that students write about their strengths, character traits, and challenges that they faced while not feeling that they have to write about traumatic experiences or events in their lives.

STRATEGIES FOR ADVISING

1. **Set clear time boundaries.** Let the student know when you’re available, how many days it will take you to edit before you can send a revision, and your boundaries for editing the day before an application deadline. If you’re helping

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other students or balancing other responsibilities like work and life, let the student know this as well.

2. **Start with the positive.** Before jumping into edits, let the student know what they've done well! This goes a long way in building trust.
3. **Thank the student.** Students are often sharing deeply personal stories in their personal statements, so be sure to thank them for their vulnerability and for sharing this part of their story with you.
4. **Refer to their audience.** When providing feedback, explain what admissions counselors are looking for rather than framing your feedback as what you personally think they should change in their essay.
5. **Help the student set deadlines.** Students will apply to several colleges that each have their own set of prompts and deadlines. This means that students may have to write and keep track of numerous different essays. Helping students set and follow deadlines will limit the amount of stress the student is experiencing and ensure they complete their applications on time.