How to use an AI chatbot to help you draft a college admissions essay

Did you know that AI chatbots can help you with your college application? Follow our guide and use these suggested prompts with a chatbot like ChatGPT or Bard to start writing a draft of your admissions essay. Want more guidance and support? See how Khan Academy's AI tutor Khanmigo can help.

Step 1: Ask the chatbot to interview you

Prompt to use:
- "You're going to help me write an essay for my college application. What information do you need to know about the essay to get started?"

Step 2: Respond to as many of the questions as you can

The chatbot will provide you with a lot of questions to answer. Respond to as many as you can.

Step 3: Focus in on personal experiences

Prompt to use:
- "Interview me about my personal experiences and include questions that will help me stand out as a candidate and avoid the common pitfalls students often make in college admissions essays. This essay is for [*insert college*]. What are some values that this college looks for in candidates? Which of my experiences closely align or exemplify the values unique to this college?"

Step 4: Answer the questions

The chatbot will provide you with a lot of questions to answer. Respond to as many as you can. (Tip - use a separate document to type your answers).

Step 5: Ask the chatbot to help you identify themes

Prompt to use:
- "[*Paste your answers to the interview questions.*] Review my answers above and help me identify key themes, experiences, or qualities that stand out, especially those that closely align with the values of this college. We'll use these to serve as the backbone of my essay."

Step 6: Review the themes and pick one or two that resonate with you

Prompt to use:
- "I like this theme [*paste your theme here*] for my essay. Let's create a rough outline to organize my thoughts and structure the essay. Please include in the outline an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion."

Step 7: Using the outline, write a first draft

Once you have a draft, we recommend that you ask a trusted adult to review it with you and provide feedback. Consider asking your parents, a teacher, or a guidance counselor. You can also ask a chatbot for feedback using this prompt.

Prompt to use:
- "You are on the college admissions committee of [*insert college you're applying to*]. I'm pasting a draft of my essay. Can you give me feedback on how to improve my essay? [*Paste the draft of your essay.*]"

Khanmigo can help you reach your goals

Applying for colleges is no easy task. You have taken an important first step in drafting your admissions essay. Congratulations! 🎉 If you want more personalized support along the way, check out Khan Academy's AI tutor, Khanmigo. From coaching you through the application process to helping you prepare for the SAT, Khanmigo gives you unlimited help.