

# Personal Statement Checklist

*Hand this checklist over to anyone you have reading your personal statement. They can use it as a guideline or address the questions directly. Either way, the answers will be very helpful in helping you craft a better essay!*

## OVERALL

1. Do I feel like I know who the person is after reading the essay? Why or why not?
2. Did the essay address the prompt? Directly or indirectly?
3. Was the essay intriguing? Would you read more from the author?
4. Do you think the author has maximized the potential of the piece? If not, where do you think they could improve?
5. Are there layers to the essay? Does it work on multiple levels? WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?!?

## VOICE

1. Do I get a sense of the person's voice? What they would sound like in real life?
2. Does the essay feel authentic? Why or why not?
3. Does the author have style? If so, how would you describe it?
4. How is the author's grasp of the English language?
5. Does the author have strong diction variation? Varied sentence structure?

## THEME

1. What is the message the person tried to convey in the essay? Do you buy it?
2. What emotions, if any, did you feel when reading the essay?
3. Does the essay tell a story? If so, does the author grow, and how?
4. Did the person convey anything subconsciously about themselves that they probably didn't mean to? If so, do those traits reflect positively or negatively on them?
5. Did the essay set off any red flags if you were a college counselor? Please elaborate if it does.

## TECHNIQUE

1. Does the opening grab you? Why or why not?
2. Were there any major grammatical or spelling mistakes? Could any of those mistakes be chalked up to stylistic choices?
3. Is there a good balance between showing and telling? Was there a specific point(s) in the essay where you thought some more detail would be helpful?
4. Does the author use symbolism - metaphors, similes, etc. - effectively?
5. Is the ending satisfying? Why or why not?