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Jump to ratings and reviewsA guide to crafting a meaningful and polished college admissions essay that gets students into the school of their dreams by expressing their unique personality, strengths, and goals. Stand out from the crowd with a memorable, meaningful personal statement that will capture the attention of college admissions officers. Writing a college admissions essay is no easy task—but with college essay coach and New York Times contributor Alan Gelb's accessible and encouraging step-by-step instructions, you'll be able to write an honest, one-of-a-kind essay that really shines. Gelb's ten-step approach has garnered great results for the students who have tried it. Many of whom were accepted into their dream schools (Harvard, Brown, Yale, and more). This to-the-point handbook shows you how to identify an engaging essay topic, and then teaches you how to use creative writing techniques to craft a narrative that expresses your unique personality, strengths, and goals. Whether you're an A-student looking for an extra boost or a less-confident writer who needs more intensive help, Gelb's reassuring and concise guidance will help you every step of the way, from your initial draft to final revision. In the end, you will have a well-polished, powerful, and profound personal statement that you can feel proud of—a college essay that doesn't feel "pre-fab," but is a real reflection of your own individuality. GenresNonfictionEducationSelf HelpEssaysCollege 68 people are currently readingDisplaying 1 - 25 of 25 reviewsSeptember 29, 2009ok, first off i am not the preferred audience for this book. i'm not in high school and am applying to grad school. but checked it out in hopes that it would help with articulation & improvement of my overall writing. one great takeaway: killing your babies - letting go of a draft if it isn't working.this saved me hours of forcing idea on the page that didn't want to be there. the book also helped me identify problematic grammar areas and focus on being authentic. but otherwise, i skimmed through a good portion of the novel. it felt too long; 10 steps and it's almost 200 pages? shortened the chapters, don't use so many examples. p.s. the sample essays felt juvenile and weren't helpful :(August 24, 2016I didn't read this cover to cover. After reaching about the 50 page mark I didn't feel that I could get any more information out of it. I might flip through it within the next few months but I have a slew of talented, intelligent people willing to help me with my admissions essay on a much more personal basis. One of the things that stopped me from reading further was an example that was given that did not feel like the pinnacle of essay writing, a very basic sounding piece of writing with decent prose and a straight forward message that did not demonstrate a mastery of subtlety. I have another essay book that I might also flip through.January 17, 2022I truly did try to keep an open mind and learn a few things, but this book just didn't do it. As a college admissions coach, my advice for students and college-applying people is this: if you wish to give this book a go, go for it. But be sure to take it with a few grains of salt. It would be best to consult other books and human coaches, as well. The only reason it's a 3 not a 2/5 is the appendix.Read more in my blog: 14, 2017I've read several college essay books, and this one is organized well, and is easiest to follow. I like how he recommends that you jump into a personal narrative right away to grab the admission reader's attention. I think it's great advice. I like the example essays that he put in at the end. I also teach writing classes to kids and teens, and will use tons of his advice for my general teaching. Great book!July 9, 2022I would not recommend this book to anyone who is looking for college essay advice. This book repeated the same central idea in every chapter with different wording. The only thing I got out of this was to have multiple people peer review my essay. The author added way too much fluff in this book for it to be informative. April 2, 2023another helpful college essay guide!! a tad bit repetitive but that's exactly what a guide book should do. i feel confident and ready to write my college narrative in my authentic voice. i love my starbucks study days December 17, 2015Hardly a fun read. Gelb does know his stuff, and there are many useful suggestions, but the book is pretty pedantic in many places. It's a slim book -- 200 pages, without many words on a page -- and actually could have been more effective as an essay a quarter of that length.Gelb does seem to have been effective in assisting students in writing college admission essays. The problem is not all of what he does probably made it into the book. The first section is on how to get started, and finding a quiet place and writing freely is the basic guideline, though it takes much more than a sentence for him to say it. I suppose, though, that the only advice you can give is to just start writing. But do we need a book to tell us that?The best parts of this book deal with what constitutes good writing. Many of the suggestions are good concerning appropriate tone, varying sentence structure, using active voice, etc. But there are so many other really small points that the book becomes turgid. Towards the end of the book, Gelb gives eighteen points of grammar, and it would surprise me if many people made it through the list.Since I work as a college counselor, I have been able to distill a number of useful things from Gelb's writing. I cannot imagine a student getting much out of this, though. There is so much detail that it sets the bar too high and can make a daunting task seem totally undoable. I'm not sure parents will fare much better. My fear is they will distract their kid from the larger picture, which is the most important aspect of a college essay, and focus on small changes and corrections which will create a tense interaction.September 8, 2017Thanks to NetGalley and Ten Speed Press for the opportunity to read and review Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Easy Steps, Third Edition: Crafting a Winning Personal Statement by Alan Gelb. Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Easy Steps by Alan Gelb. The ten steps are listed in the table of contents as understanding the narrative, finding your topic, point of view, getting it down, "big picture " editing, second draft, self-editing, third draft, pulling it together and finishing up. Examples of real student essays can be found in the appendix, as well as help for parents, teachers and students. Essential information needed to write your essay is included and this book gets down to business. Recap at the end of each chapter summarizes and reviews the needed information. This very helpful book, worth 5 stars, will be beneficial to anyone having to write a personal narrative and not just for college admissions essays. Will be purchasing for school library! *I received a complimentary copy of this book for voluntary review consideration.advanced-reading-copy asked-to-blog college-help October 23, 2017Thanks to NetGalley and Ten Speed Press for the opportunity to read and review Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Easy Steps, Third Edition: Crafting a Winning Personal Statement by Alan Gelb. Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Easy Steps by Alan Gelb. The ten steps are listed in the table of contents as understanding the narrative, finding your topic, point of view, getting it down, "big picture " editing, second draft, self-editing, third draft, pulling it together and finishing up. Examples of real student essays can be found in the appendix, as well as help for parents, teachers and students. Essential information needed to write your essay is included and this book gets down to business. Recap at the end of each chapter summarizes and reviews the needed information. This very helpful book, worth 5 stars, will be beneficial to anyone having to write a personal narrative and not just for college admissions essays. Will be purchasing for school library! advanced-reading-copy asked-to-blog college-help October 31, 2014I would give this book a 3.5 star. I didn't find this book as helpful as the other book (On Writing the College Application Essay by Harry Bauld) I read. I think the most important/useful tip from this book is that it tells you to focus and find the main idea.Your essay should be super elaborated about multiple details; instead it should focus on one theme/idea. Gelb states that it's okay for the first draft to be long, because when you revise, you're supposed to find the main idea on your first draft. Then on the second draft, you would have to focus on that main idea. Gelb also states that every narrative needs a conflict, so your essay should be in a narrative form with a conflict. The book also provided essay samples at the end. You could use those essay samples to spark some motivation and ideas for your essay. AdultNonFiction Teton County LibraryDecember 13, 2013TCL Call #: 808 GelbDiana's rating: 5 stars just skimmed this book and immediately brought it home...my son was struggling to polish up his essay and just reading the first and last chapter brought him to an aha moment. So I can't say you need all 10 steps, but certainly read the first chapter about narrative, and the last chapter with a few examples of essays from draft to final edit.Which is about all a busy senior has time for. And definitely don't dangle a participate in your essay like I just did.July 9, 2010I'm not the preferred audience either, but Gelb stresses the pitfalls of writing that I can relate. Procrastination, fear of failure, parsimony of keywords. I will be reading through this - I'm sure I can pick up handy tips here and there.Ok, so I finished this. I liked how it was written in a personable manner. Also, I liked that Gelb taught us how to write in succinct sentences, removing repetitions and other unsightly sentence constructions. It is useful as a basic writing guide.January 26, 2011I read this book as research for a writing workshop. I found the content very entertaining, but when I went to compile materials, I found that just flipping through "College Admission Essays for Dummies" yielded more helpful information. There was one very helpful section that listed common mistakes, such as missing lose/loose, their/there, etc. I honestly didn't know that 'alright' is not a word!July 13, 2018Engaging and honest breakdown of all of the components that students should include in their college essays. I am reading this as a teacher and this book makes me excited to guide my students with their writing process. The list of questions that Gelb has compiled to help students find a potential topic is especially useful. I am grateful for this book in addition to the free resources that Gelb offers teachers. August 10, 2019It's pretty helpful for writing personal essays but best of all, it's really short. And if you're super pressed for time, there are recaps at the end of each chapter that basically tell you all you need to know.Thank goodness I don't have to worry about college for a long time!(What's that? I'm a sophomore already? EXCUSE ME HOW)It might be time to reread... and kill my babies (just one of many helpful tips from the book)June 16, 2019I very much enjoyed reading Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Steps, because Alan Gelb's advice about writing can be applicable not only to writing college essays, but also to writing fiction. I'm pretty sure I'll reach for it again when I decide to finally dust off my short stories and whip them into better shape.applying-to-college how-to nonfictionMarch 4, 2013 Very good read as a tutor, teacher and one who gets frustrated with the writing I see kids do. Granted, this is higher level writing, but some things don't change at any level. The author also has a website I'd like to check out - www.conqueringthecollegeessay.com May 6, 2011Very helpful. I plan on using this book to write my essays.April 21, 2017As I read this book, I wrote a narrative essay to apply for a scholarship to attend a Summer Scholars program at IWU and I got it!Displaying 1 - 25 of 25 reviewsGet help and learn more about the design. Praise for Alan Gelb's Approach: "Indispensable...Gelb provides applicants with much-needed advice as well as the confidence and skills they need to win over the admissions dean." —Sue Wasiolek, dean of students at Duke University "Alan Gelb has done the impossible: he's created a sane and simple process for crafting a knock-your-socks-off essay! His guide is perfect for high school students facing the most important document they will ever write. The student still has to do the work, but Gelb's approach reduces the stress." —Donald Asher, author of Cool Colleges and Graduate Admissions Essays "Alan's guidance in the process of writing my college essay was invaluable. Not only did I end up with an immensely superior product than I would have without his help, I also learned, with Alan's help, how to mine the depths of my experience to find a meaningful narrative and then convey it with a clear, coherent structure. I got in early decision to Columbia University with that essay; I am forever indebted to Alan for that." —Josh Freed, admitted early decision to Columbia University "Taking an ordinary essay and helping to mold it into an extraordinary one is what Alan Gelb does best. [He] helped transform ... my essay into a final draft that could stand out amongst an elite crowd." —Megan S. Steven, PhD, one of Alan's first students, admitted to Dartmouth for undergrad and awarded a Rhodes scholarship; now a faculty member with the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience, Dartmouth College "Alan Gelb saved us by working with our daughters to help them understand what works in a college essay. My daughters' admissions to Brown and Macalester were enormously helped by his advice." —Jane Hirschmann, parent ALAN GELB is a college essay coach and professional writer whose clients include colleges and universities across the country. He is the author of The Complete Student, A Survival Guide for Students, and Most Likely to Succeed, among others. Introduction If you're looking for an instruction book on how to write the college application essay, you'll be happy to know that there are quite a few excellent ones on the market. In fact, if you have all the time in the world, I suggest you check out as many of these as you can. Chances are, they'll all contain some useful ideas. But if you're pressed for time—and what high school senior isn't?—then you can feel confident that the book at hand is your fastest and surest way to produce the kind of application essay you're after. How is this book different from all the others out there? First of all, it has been pared down to the essentials. I've coached a great many students through this process and know that it doesn't make any sense to choose the first semester of the senior year as the time to "share secrets from college admissions counselors" or "sample essays from great writers like E. B. White, George Orwell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes." This is the time when you want to focus exclusively on that which is absolutely critical, eliminate anything that feels like padding, and simply get the job done in the best possible way as fast as you can. To that end, I've organized this learning process into a ten-step system. I'd like to say ten "easy" steps because "easy" is such a persuasive word, like "new," "improved," and "best ever." But the truth is that some of these steps are not that "easy." That said, none is insurmountable. If you follow this book in its logical sequence, you will arrive at your destination—a well-turned college application essay designed to linger in the minds of those who read it. My book is different from others on this subject in that it focuses entirely on process. As I said, I will not be offering any extraneous material, like "secrets" from admissions counselors at Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. Such secrets are enticing, but ultimately do little to help your cause. What will help is to truly understand the elements of a well-constructed narrative, which is what this book will be teaching. The definitive guide to writing an amazing essay and mastering the college applications process.Writing a memorable personal statement can seem like an overwhelming project for a young college applicant, but college essay coach Alan Gelb's organized and encouraging step-by-step instructions take the intimidation out of the process, enabling applicants to craft a meaningful and polished college admissions essay. Gelb teaches students to identify an engaging topic and use creative writing techniques to compose a vivid statement that will reflect their individuality. A consistent top-seller in the college prep category, Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Easy Steps has been revised to include extra information on supplemental and waitlist essays. This much-needed handbook will help applicants win over the admissions dean, while preparing them to write better papers once they've been accepted.For more, visit the author's website at www.conqueringthecollegeessay.com. The definitive guide to writing an amazing essay and mastering the college applications process.Writing a memorable personal statement can seem like an overwhelming project for a young college applicant, but college essay coach Alan Gelb's organized and encouraging step-by-step instructions take the intimidation out of the process, enabling applicants to craft a meaningful and polished college admissions essay. Gelb teaches students to identify an engaging topic and use creative writing techniques to compose a vivid statement that will reflect their individuality. A consistent top-seller in the college prep category, Conquering the College Admissions Essay in 10 Easy Steps has been revised to include extra information on supplemental and waitlist essays. This much-needed handbook will help applicants win over the admissions dean, while preparing them to write better papers once they've been accepted.For more, visit the author's website at www.conqueringthecollegeessay.com. A guide to crafting a meaningful and polished college admissions essay that gets students into the school of their dreams by expressing their unique personality, strengths, and goals.Stand out from the crowd with a memorable, meaningful personal statement that will capture the attention of college admissions officers. Writing a college admissions essay is no easy task—but with college essay coach and New York Times contributor Alan Gelb's accessible and encouraging step-by-step instructions, you'll be able to write an honest, one-of-a-kind essay that really shines. Gelb's ten-step approach has garnered great results for the students who have tried it, many of whom were accepted into their dream schools (Harvard, Brown, Yale, and more). This to-the-point handbook shows you how to identify an engaging essay topic, and then teaches you how to use creative writing techniques to craft a narrative that expresses your unique personality, strengths, and goals. 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Twenty-five year bookseller with shipments to over fifty million happy customers. Condition: good. May show signs of wear, highlighting, writing, and previous use. This item may be a former library book with typical markings. No guarantee on products that contain supplements Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Twenty-five year bookseller with shipments to over fifty million happy customers. Ask the publishers to restore access to 500,000+ books. It looks like you're offline. An edition of Conquering the college admissions essay in 10 steps (2013) This edition doesn't have a description yet. Can you add one? Publisher Ten Speed Press Previews available in: English Image not available forColour: To view this video download Flash Player