



Concise Advice: Jump-Starting Your College Admissions Essays (Second Edition)

Robert Cronk

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Notice: Now includes an insert updating the 2013-2014 COMMON APP essay prompts

The Second Edition of the popular book, *Concise Advice: Jump-Starting Your College Admissions Essays*, remains a great resource for students writing college essays. It has an approach that makes so much sense that we're astonished that no one else has suggested it before. We've heard over and over that a college essay must *show, not tell* when giving a story. The ultimate model of showing is a movie script. And *Concise Advice* demonstrates why movie scripts work in getting you emotionally involved in a story and a main character. Most screenplays have a structure which is similar no matter whether the movie is an action thriller or a romantic comedy. And that structure, along with the story wrapped around it, is what draws an audience in. This book talks about the basic components of a screenplay and shows the applicability to college admissions essays. In an essay, the main character is the applicant, and the goal is to write an essay that is memorable and powerful.

Examples are built in a series of steps so a student can see exactly how the essays come about, from thoughts to topics to starting paragraphs to complete polished essays. The way *Concise Advice* lays out the steps and the process makes it seem like writing a good essay is almost effortless.

The book is indeed "concise." It wastes no time in getting right to the point of providing help. Pity the poor students trying to write essays - they are inundated with "advice." Where do they start? We think this book is the answer to that question.

Concise Advice also takes many common application prompts and shows some clever tricks for approaching these. The core of the advice seems to be: spend your time writing a good personal statement using the techniques in the book, and adapt that same essay to a wide variety of prompts. Some of the advice is counterintuitive. For example, if a student is faced with the prompt: *Give us an example of a quote which would apply to you and tell us how it applies*, *Concise Advice* suggests a trick: Don't try to think of a quote first and then write an essay around that quote. Take the essay you've already written and Google the word "quote" with some key words from the essay. In seconds, you'll have hundreds of quotes to choose from, all of which apply to that essay.

So, all in all, this is an extremely helpful book, and may make the process of writing an essay a lot easier and less stressful.

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