

THE ATTAIN JOURNAL

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Greetings!

Application essays are a critical component of the admissions process for top MBA programs; the essays are an important piece of your story. We suggest you get an early start on the essay portion of the application process once your GMAT is out of the way.

After you have completed one essay, send it in to us, and we'll edit it – **free** of charge. This sample edit is intended to demonstrate Attain's editing and communication style. It also helps us determine if we're a good match. This free offer applies to both college and MBA essays.

If you become a client of Attain by August 31, 2005, we have a special offer for you. [Click here to contact us for more details.](#)

Looking for news on college admissions? Stay tuned for upcoming Attain newsletters featuring college admissions advice.

Attain

Great MBA Admissions Essays

MBA Essay Tips

We get a lot of questions about how to write a great essay. There is an art to writing business school essays, therefore there is no one "right" way to write compelling and persuasive essays. However, we do have a few tips for you to keep in mind as you are writing and rewriting.

1. **Be personal.** Use specific stories and examples from your life to show the reader your leadership style, skills, achievements and leadership potential. Don't ruminate or think of the essays as an opportunity to spout your philosophies on life. Show – don't tell. The best way to show is to use vivid examples.
2. **Don't use the same story more than once in one set of essays.** The essays provide a unique opportunity for the admissions committee to peek into your life. Use that opportunity wisely and provide distinct and different stories for each essay.
3. **Use stories and anecdotes from different aspects and time periods of your life.** While you want to focus on stories from your life after college, there may be opportunities to use stories from your childhood, grammar school, high school and college. Strategically and thoughtfully using stories from different periods in your life can give the admissions committee a panoramic view of who you are.
4. **Use headings to help with organization.** Headings are not necessary, but if you have a hard time organizing your essays, they may help. If the feedback you are

receiving about your essays indicate they are hard to follow, consider using headings as a map to guide the reader through your essays.

5. Don't try too hard to start your essay with an attention grabbing opening or story. Most people want to start their essays with an opening that grabs the reader's attention. If you can do that, that's great. However, many are unable to effectively begin essays with an interesting opening and then smoothly transition it into the body of the essay. Unless you know you are a strong writer, start your essay by simply answering the question. Consider coming up with an opening after you have completed the essay

6. Read your essay aloud after each draft. You'd be surprised at how many errors, awkward and unclear sentences, and grammar mistakes you can catch by simply reading your essay out loud. As you get into the later drafts, continue the practice of reading your essay aloud. Add the additional step of having someone else read your essay aloud while you listen. Another option is to record the reading of your essay and listen to it.

7. Don't use the optional essay to explain things that don't need explaining. If you aren't sure whether or not you should use the optional essay to explain a possible weakness, seek objective advice. Too many applicants use the optional essay to explain things that don't need explanation. It simply brings unnecessary attention to a potentially weak part of your application. Of course, there are things that should be explained using the optional essay, but be sure that it's beneficial before you use the optional essay to explain a weakness.

8. Don't lie or "spin." Lack of transparency, lying or exaggerating is often apparent to the reader. Be honest in your essays because it's the right thing to do. If you were fired from a job, don't say that you resigned. If you came close to winning an award but didn't quite make it, don't say that you won.

9. Edit. Learn how to edit your own work. You should always get an objective opinion, but it's always a good idea to know the basics of style. Every writer should have a copy of Strunk & White's, *The Elements of Style*.

10. After you have done your own editing, seek a third party opinion. This third party opinion should have some knowledge of the admissions process and also should be able to provide you with objective, critical feedback.



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