

SAMPLE WORK

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SAMPLE 1: HOW TO WRITE YOUR MBA ADMISSION ESSAYS

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Preparing to Write

The first five steps of our 9-step process actually precede those involved in the writing of the essays themselves. Just as a good cook would never start assembling a gourmet dish without having all the proper ingredients and cookware at hand, you will not want to begin answering the first admission essay question—even for a first draft—before taking these important preparatory steps.

Keep in mind that part of the reason for this extra required writing is that business schools place a stronger emphasis on practical experience than most other schools. Business schools pay close attention to personal qualities, including your leadership, communication skills, initiative, vision, and many more. Grades and scores do not explain this side of you, and neither does a resume.

Thus your admission will depend largely on your ability to convey your experiences and goals in written form. Self-assessment is a significant part of this process, as is a careful review of both your life and what you have done professionally.

Step 1: Brainstorming

Although there are no “standard” MBA admission essay questions—each business school has its own set of questions, and each set may vary from year to year—there is one question that will almost assuredly be asked of you, no matter what school you apply to: **Why do you want to earn an MBA?**

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The first step to take in preparing for any and all admission essay questions is to brainstorm around your motives, objectives, stratagems—yeah! dreams, even—around this “Why an MBA?” Jot them down as fast as the ideas come to you, even if they seem trivial—they will inspire further thoughts and words.

The other essay questions that you are likely to be asked for MBA admission will cover a wide range of topics, but what they will all have in common is their aim to determine what is unique about YOU.

To get you started in this exercise of self-appraisal, here are 10 sample topics, most of which are likely to appear as topics in the essays you will be completing for MBA admission. Don't spend a lot of time writing your response to any one in particular—at this point, you are just corralling key concepts and getting them down on paper; some of these you will be elaborating on later. To keep your answers brief, call them “Ten Lists About Me”.

Writing Your Essay

Step 6: Structure and Outline

You may think that you've got a clear idea of what you'll be writing in your essay, and therefore be tempted to skip this step—don't! Writing is a discipline as well as an art. You must conscientiously impose structure around your ideas to ensure that your essays flow well and make sense; otherwise, your essay will ramble and be ineffective.

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An outline is the railroad track that supports the train of thought that conveys your point to the reader. Laying down those tracks can be hard work—done right, an outline will save you from tangential topics that lead to conceptual dead ends.

The same rules apply to your essay outline as they did for the initial outline in Step 2:

- Organize your points according to a unifying topic.
- Put your points in a reasonable order that shows a logical progression.
- Determine which points to emphasize and give them prominence. (This does not necessarily mean that you will put them at the beginning of your essay—see next bullet!)
- An outline should conclude with an insightful thought or potent image. Just make sure that the rest of your outline reinforces this conclusion!