

College Application Essay – Revision Checklist Bundle

Step-by-step guides for content revision, structural editing, style refinement, and final proofreading

(6 Page Content Layout)

PAGE 1 — How to Use This Revision Bundle

This bundle is meant to be used **after you already have a complete draft** of your essay.

Revision is where **good essays become memorable essays**.

You will not do all steps in one sitting.

Treat each page like a separate mini-session.

Revision Order:

1. Content (Meaning & Depth)
2. Structure (Organization & Flow)
3. Voice & Style (How it Sounds)
4. Details (Showing vs Telling)
5. Impact (What Sticks)
6. Proofreading (Polish & Perfection)

Rule:

Never revise while emotional or rushed. Only revise with a clear mind.

PAGE 2 — CONTENT REVISION: Is This Essay Worth Reading?

Answer YES or NO for each:

- Is there a clear **moment, problem, or question** at the center?
- Does this essay show something meaningful about ME?
- Is the topic personal (not just impressive)?
- Does it feel honest, not filtered?
- Would I care about this story if it wasn't mine?

Now answer in writing:

1. What is this essay really about? (NOT the event — the meaning)
→ "This essay is really about..."

2. What does it reveal about my character, values, or mindset?
3. What does the reader learn about who I'm becoming?

Highlight this sentence in your essay:

The moment that changed me was: _____

If you can't find it – add it.

DELETE anything that:

- Is only there to impress
 - Doesn't move the story forward
 - Could be written by anyone
-

PAGE 3 — STRUCTURE CHECK: Does This Flow Naturally?

Read your essay's **topic sentence** of every paragraph only.

Answer:

- Does it still make sense as a full story?
- Is there a beginning, middle, and end?
- Does it jump randomly in time?

Now analyze:

Paragraph 1 — Hook

- Do we start in a moment, not a summary?
- Is it interesting in the first 2–3 sentences?

Middle Paragraphs — Development

- Are events in logical order?
- Does each paragraph build on the previous?
- Is there a clear conflict/tension?

Final Paragraph — Reflection

- Do I reflect, not just summarize?
- Do I connect past → present → future?
- Does it show growth and perspective?

Now answer:

If I had to name my paragraphs:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Each paragraph should have a purpose.

If one doesn't fit → revise or remove.

PAGE 4 — VOICE & STYLE: Does This Actually Sound Like Me?

Read your essay OUT LOUD.

Circle any sentence that:

- Sounds too formal
- Sounds like an adult, not you
- Uses big words you wouldn't say
- Sounds like a résumé

Now check:

- Do I use "I" too much?
- Do I use the same sentence starter repeatedly?
- Do my sentences all have the same length?

Improve:

Replace vague words like:

- Nice
- Things
- A lot
- Good
- Bad
- Very

With specific language.

Change:

✗ “I was very sad”

✓ “My hands shook as I read the text again.”

Your goal:

Sound like the most honest, expressive version of YOU.

PAGE 5 — DETAILS & IMAGERY: Show Me the Moment

Find your most important scene.

Answer:

- What could I SEE in this moment?
- What could I HEAR?
- What could I SMELL?
- What could I FEEL physically?

Add sensory detail to at least ONE paragraph.

Underline:

- 3 strong images
- 3 emotions
- 3 thoughts

If you can't find those → add them.

Remember:

Don't TELL: “I was nervous”

DO SHOW: “I kept picking at the chipped polish on my nails.”

Now check balance:

- 70% story (showing)
- 30% reflection (thinking about it)

This is the ideal ratio.

PAGE 6 — FINAL PROOFREAD & POLISH CHECKLIST

Do this LAST. And slowly.

✓ Spelling

✓ Punctuation

- ✓ Capitalization
- ✓ Correct names/places
- ✓ Verb tenses consistent
- ✓ No double spaces
- ✓ Word count within limit
- ✓ No emojis/slang
- ✓ No text language (u, btw, etc.)

Now ask 1–2 trusted people:

- Is this clear?
- Do you feel something?
- What part was strongest?

But remember:

Only accept feedback that still sounds like YOU.

Your final question:

After reading this, does someone know me better?

If yes — your essay is ready.