**Subject Line:** 6 Tips to Crafting a Stellar Application Essay

Dear **[Student]**,

Application essays are an effective way for you to communicate unique strengths to admissions officials. Some colleges will have specific prompts they want you to answer. Others will ask for you to just describe your story. Whatever it is, be yourself, speak in your voice, and don’t try to fit in a bunch of fancy words from the thesaurus.

Consider these 6 tips as you write:

1. **Start early.** Make a list of the number of essays you need to write and their deadlines. Give yourself plenty of time to think through the topics and brainstorm writing points.
2. **Create an outline.** Break down the prompt of each essay. Use these anecdotes to help organize your thoughts around your thesis, in bullet-point format. Make sure it has a clear beginning, middle, and end. This is your outline.
3. **Read some examples.** See if the college you’re applying to publishes essay examples on their website. These examples may indicate what that college considers a strong application. Remember, NEVER plagiarize somebody else’s work.
4. **Address what’s NOT on your transcript.** Answer the question, “What else should they know about me?” How can you expand upon the information presented in the other parts of the application or highlight strengths you haven’t pointed out in other parts of the application?
5. **The deeper you go, the better.** For your anecdotes, focus on specific details and really flesh out the scene.
6. **Have a few people review it.** Once you’ve completed a draft, have someone you trust (a parent, counselor, or teacher) review your work. Remember to limit the number of people who review your essay to one or two—too many opinions can muddle your voice.

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**[Signature]**