

College Essay – Tips on Word Use

Do Not Use These Overly Used Words:

allow/ allowing/ allowed/ will allow me to	kind of
always (use sparingly)	lastly
amazed, amazing	life-changing
bonding, bonded, to bond	literally
change the world	make a difference
diversity	on account of
down to earth	passion, my passion, passionate (sparingly)
etc or et cetera	piece of cake
eye opening	my potential / my goals
exciting	shaped me
express myself	sort of
forever	person I am today, person I will become
give back, giving back	the rest is history
global perspective	thirst for knowledge
I was able to ... (use simple past tense)	true calling
in conclusion	unbelievable
incredible, incredibly	unique (sparingly)
interesting	you / your (avoid 2nd person)
issues (<i>a vague word; be specific!</i>)	

Clichés – Never Ever!

Just a few examples: *one in a million, to make a long story short, over the top, at this point, make them proud, forge ahead, make my mark, anyone having anyone's back*

Enhancers that DO NOT ENHANCE -- Words to use very sparingly if at all:

basically completely greatly literally really totally very

OTHER TIPS and GRAMMA STUFF:

1. Avoid contractions (I'm, he's, wasn't, aren't etc), or use very sparingly
2. Avoid passive voice and use active verbs:

NO: The money that **was raised by** our club **was used for...**

YES: Our club **donated** the money we raised to ...

3. Avoid slang unless it fits a particular anecdote ---BUT ---
4. Use your own fresh voice:

Avoid thesaurus words you have never used, and would not use

Avoid words/phrases from your parents'/teachers' generation that you would not use

5. Don't write *could of should of would of*; use 2 verbs: *could have should have would have*
6. Use infinitives in the following phrases and similar ones:

NO:

try and go

plan on majoring

eager about learning

YES:

try to go

plan to major

eager to learn

Carol Lemei Rev 10/2017