HAMiLTON: WORDS MATTER

As a college with a long tradition of emphasizing writing and speaking as cornerstone values, we like to say that students come to Hamilton to find their voice. In our admission process, we seek students who embody that aspiration and demonstrate that potential in their application essays.

To that end, as a service to our applicants (and for those who might not even be considering Hamilton), our Director of Admission Lora Schilder has been offering College Essay Writing Workshops for more than 20 years. Feel free to invite Lora to join your AP English class with this goal in mind, and she’ll check her calendar to see if she or one of our associate deans can join you. But knowing that Lora can’t be everywhere, and in our ongoing quest to fill this space with useful information for our guidance counselor friends and their advisees, we decided to include some of Lora’s writing tips in this year’s newsletter. Enjoy.

Visit Hamilton’s Seven Deadly Sins of Writing website: www.hamilton.edu/writing/sins

LORA’S TIPS FOR A GOOD COLLEGE ESSAY

• It goes without saying that your essay needs to be written by you. Period.

• Choose a topic that’s right for you. Write about something that interests you. If you aren’t interested in what you’re saying, no one will be.

• Share something about yourself, not everything about yourself.

• Offer something only you could write and remember, the details make it interesting. Stay away from your obvious passion. We’ll learn more about you if you share something we’re unlikely to find out about you otherwise.

• Stay away from fads/current events. Stick to your own experience.

• Avoid writing about other people. We all have grandparents we love, but they’re not applying to college — you are.

• Don’t try to be funny if you’re not.

• Use a strong opener — catch our attention right from the start.

• Put away the thesaurus.

• Show rather than tell.

• EDIT — use spellcheck and then proofread carefully to catch their/there or it’s/its kind of mistakes.

• Get someone to proofread, but don’t let that person overedit and make it stale.

• Make it your best, most correct writing.

• You’ve got a great essay in you.

Visit our counselor website: hamilton.edu/admission/counselors