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成功写作

美国大学

WRITING A WINNING
COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAY

申请信

美国大学招生办负责人坦率的表白，让你明白在申请信里，应该包括些什么，哪些东西一定要删去。

由美国大学招生办
讲述一个新鲜生动
与众不同的 **你**

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苏珊·麦克克鲁斯基

海南出版社
三环出版社

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三十年以来,在 Peterson's 的指导下
世界各地上百万的学子
步入了他们理想的大学殿堂

Peterson's——准备留学英语考试最值得信赖的名字!

Peterson's 是美国排名第一的大学考试准备出版社 (No.1 In College & Test Preparation)。已有 30 余年历史的《Peterson's 四年制大学指南》(Peterson's Four-Year Colleges)、《Peterson's 研究生院指南系列》(Peterson's Graduate Programs Series) 是其闻名遐迩的旗帜性产品。

这类图书的目的就是提高学生的考试分数,锻炼应试能力。在其“成功指南”系列附送的光盘中,特别设计了诊断试题,测试结果不但可以让考生了解自己的实力和不足,还能根据考生的个人情况及考试准备时间,量身定做“成功蓝图”,指明何处应该重点突破,这一点在各类备考丛中还是独一无二的。

高等教育研究部是 Peterson's 的核心主导部门,负责美国上千所大学及研究生院的数据和动态分析。该部门提交的年度统计分析报告为其新版图书的修订提供了依据。除此之外,他们的代表每年出席“全美大学招生录取咨询联合会”(NACAC)、“全美大学研究协会”(AIR)、“全美学生奖学金管理协会”(NASFAA) 的年会,保证了 Peterson's 时时处于信息的中心和领导地位。

Peterson's 的网站 <http://www.petersons.com>, 以其权威性和富于实用价值而著称,迄今已成为教育类网站中访问人数最多的四星级网站。在上面可以虚拟参观校园,了解美国所有大学和研究生院的详细情况和教师、课程设置,寻找有关考试、申请、招生及奖学金等各种资讯,疑难问题可以随问随答,佛罗里达大学环境系主任的约瑟夫博士说:“通过 Peterson's 网站,我们得到了来自世界各地的学生。”

在此基础上, Peterson's 又专门为申请大学的学生创办了 <http://www.collegequest.com> 网站;同 ETS 和 GMAC (GMAT 出题机构) 合作创办了 <http://www.gradavantage.org> 网站,为报考研究生院和 MBA 的学生提供专业服务。

经过不懈努力, Peterson's 即将在中国全面登陆。首批引进的《2000 年 TOEFL 成功指南》、《2000 年 GRE 成功指南》、《2000 年 GMAT 成功指南》、《2000 年托福全真模拟试题集》、《托福语法一点通》、《托福词汇一点通》、《托福阅读一点通》、《成

功写作美国大学申请信》、《成功写作美国研究生院个人自传》系列丛书,不但保留了 Peterson's 一以贯之的特色,还细致介绍了至关重要的计算机答题(CAT)的特点和方式。

Peterson's 为您打开成功之门!

前言：做个深呼吸

绝大多数作家在 15 岁前就掌握了基本的写作技能。

——维拉·凯撒

这本书能帮助你做什么

每年秋季，大学招生办都会要求你及你的同学写作一封申请信，内容是问你面临的最大的挑战是什么？或者要你评说当前的热门话题，或是问你你对未来的规划。面对如此宽泛的题目，同时又向往着能被第一志愿的学校录取，你也许会处于如下两种情形：恐慌或诅咒。如果你确实体验到了这种大多数人都会有的感受，那么写作大学申请信意味着经受折磨和难以入眠，不光对你，你的父母也一样。

用不着心慌意乱，这本指南可以帮助你轻松渡过难关。你可以找到正想要的东西，并且得知什么样的申请信是招生办想看到的。书里分别列举了好的和不好的申请信的范例（后附评语），针对典型的问题（无论它是多么的乏味或者古怪）做出解答，帮助你找到新的写作角度。你将在如何构思、起草、修改、完善自己的申请信方面得到实用的帮助，可以看到一些范例从起草到成稿的整个过程，学生们又是如何获得帮助来完成这一艰巨任务的。

这本书还可以防止一些想当然的父母提供的不好的建议，

让他们了解到申请信并不是把你的才能写到一张纸上这样简单的事,不管他们的写作能力有多好也不能由他们代劳。但是你的父母、顾问和老师们仍可以为你提供必要的支持,例如你可以把草稿交给他们审阅。但是这封信必须确实确实是你自己的。

我们为什么要写这本书

这本书的目的是让学生们避免由于一封失败的申请信导致整个的大学申请过程变为一场恶梦。为什么我们要写这样一本书? 30年来,我们一直致力于帮助像你这样的作者树立一种“我能做”的态度,不管面临的困难是多么大。我们让数不清的学生们看到了怎样克服畏难心理,写出人们真正喜欢的作品。

学生们的成功和快乐使我们确信,他们得出的宝贵经验一定可以让更多的人受益。这本书可以把我和你联系在一起,帮助你进行探索,最终可以使你诚实动人,令人过目不忘并且轻松地表达自己。

我们的出发点非常现实。这本书并不是一本关于写作的论文。那样的书也许会让你花费大量的时间去消化几百页的内容。即便你想这样,现在也许没有这么多的工夫。假如你和我们帮助过的大多数的学生并无太大的不同,我告诉你——学会写一封漂亮的大学申请信需要的时间是11个小时。

那么,就从现在算起,我们会帮助你在压力之下生产出一件重要的产品,而且保证非常容易。

现在就开始吧。

目 录

前言:做个深呼吸	1
<i>这本书能帮助你做什么? 我们为什么要写这本书</i>	
第一章:细心研究——	
别人的作品,和你文章的读者	
1 好的、坏的和无关痛痒的申请信	3
2 谁要读你的文章	31
第二章:负起责任——	
着眼于主题,深入到内文	
3 把陈旧的主题写得新鲜	39
4 找到灵感	53
5 关于写作的几点思考	57
第三章:果断行动——	
写、写、再写	
6 开始写作申请信	61
7 利用良好的反馈把文章写下去	68
第四章:再度审视作品——修改和润饰	
8 修改文章使其更好	73
9 作者的救生衣	99
后记:敬礼	123
词汇表	124

A stylized illustration of a book with a pen and a pencil resting on it. The book is a simple rectangle with the text '第一章' (Chapter 1) written vertically in the center. A pen is positioned horizontally behind the book, and a pencil is positioned diagonally behind it, pointing towards the bottom right. The entire scene is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

第
一
章

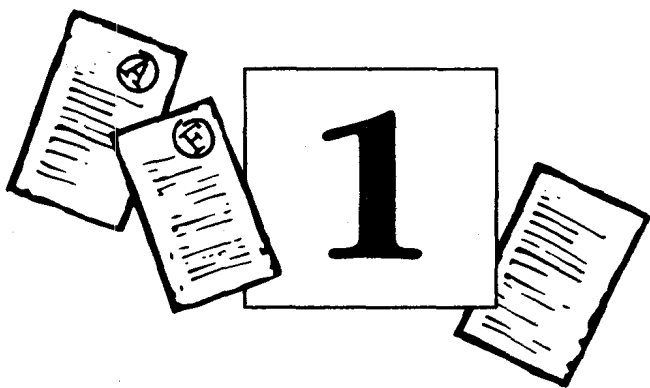
细心研究
——别人的作品
和你文章的读者

作一个乐观的人吧,别的都没有用。

——温斯顿·丘吉尔



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



好的、坏的和无关痛痒的申请信

你的作品写的又好又有创意,但是写的好
的部分没有创意,有创意的地方写得又不好。

——塞缪尔·约翰逊

当 你伏在桌上开始写作大学申请信之前,你可能以为除你之外没有人受过这种罪。可是,就在你想去的大学里,几乎所有的人都经历过你现在的这种感受。他们也写过这样的申请信,经历同样的过程,很多人甚至非常喜欢这一过程。

你当然可以做得一样好。下面的练习教你怎样做。

翻到下一页,阅读我们提供的申请信范例,每一封都是真人写作的。读的时候,想像你自己就是看这封信的大学录取办公室的官员,并做出自己的评价。把你喜欢的归为一类,反之归为另一类。边读边思考你觉得好与不好的区别在哪里。

当你全部读完后,申请信应该是什么样子以及好与坏的分别就非常清楚了。最后,你可以把自己的意见同招生办的评语做一个比较。

申请信范例 1

说说你自己

My appearance is not remarkable; when you look at me, you see a five-foot-nine-inch, brown-haired, blue-eyed, 16-year-old high school senior. A sweater, long pants, and sneakers constitute my dress code; my ties and expensive shoes remain in the closet. As such, to those who do not know me, I am “ordinary.” Nonetheless, after becoming acquainted with me, you will see that my “cover” is no indication of my true self.

I am more serious than most of my contemporaries. Frequently, I study in the third-floor basement of the Princeton University Library to avoid the incessant rings of the telephone, leave only as the sun sets, and trek home for an hour via train and foot. While other secondary school students may tune to the hard rock of Princeton's 97.1 WPST, I watch *Prime News* with Bernard Shaw. If someone tells me that he or she does not understand the day's calculus lesson, I voluntarily explain it—even if that means losing all of a valuable 40-minute study hall. When the typical “You don't have to bother” response comes, I say, “Yes, I do; you don't understand it. Now be quiet and listen.” Although for the past ten years I have consistently enduring long, strenuous

practice sessions with my viola, the thought of ending this “career” truly frightens me.

Motivation plays a key role in my success. I suffer from a disease that affects many people: lack of time. Twenty-four hours in a day simply is not enough. Nevertheless, motivation keeps me going on the days when I wake up at six o’ clock to go to high school, leave school to walk a mile to the train station, wait for the train, walk to my Spanish class at Princeton University, study, walk another mile to the Medical Center at Princeton, volunteer for three hours, and return home at seven o’ clock to eat dinner, write an essay, and study for an economics exam. Still, I enjoy going through my daily routine. The thought of sifting through pages of scholarly works to gather information for a class does not discourage me; it intrigues me. A recent research paper for my A. P. American government and comparative politics class using mathematical calculations and equations to demonstrate biases of the Electoral College was not only, as my instructor said, “without question, the best paper I’ve ever read” but also an aid to my concurrent study of derivatives in my A. P. calculus class.

Conversations with me on current events will often result in heated debate. No matter what my position, I attempt to argue the other view—a habit that often causes me to alter my opinion. During the most recent presidential campaign, I

spent two weeks at lunchtime questioning the best solution for deficit reduction. Of the four people who ate with me, all expressed their position on this issue: Cut government spending before raising taxes. I was also a steadfast proponent of this view. However, after gathering my thoughts for a few moments, I vehemently argued that while government spending should be cut in some sectors, taxes needed to be raised at the same time. I argued so forcefully that I and three others at my table now hold that the only way to maintain our current standard of living and cause significant deficit reduction is to combine spending cuts with tax hikes.

Although my “cover” may not be extraordinary, I like to believe that my inside is unique and creative. If a stranger could imagine my habits, personality, and feelings just by looking at my face, of what value would I be? People are not their “covers”; to judge them as such would merely be foolish.

申请信范例 2

让我们知道你是谁,你的思维方式,你最感兴趣的问题和想法。

Knock, knock.

The door opens a crack.

“Hi, can I speak to you for a minute?”

“Go away. Don't speak good English,” the man says while he begins to shut the door.

“Please, I'll only take up a minute of your time.”

“No want to buy. Go!”

“I don't want to sell you anything. I'd like you to register to ——”

The door slams in my face.

Knock, knock.

The door opens all the way.

“Hi, can I speak to you for a minute?”

“Only speak a little English,” the woman says pleasantly.

“That's OK. I'd like you to register to vote.”

“Huh?”

Slower, “I'd like you to register to vote.”

“No.” The woman's tone changes from openness to hostility.

“The congressional election is next month. I think Marty Mean’s policy on tax credits and his belief in raising the minimum wage would benefit you.”

“My vote not count.”

“Please, the reason I’m here is that——”

The door slams in my face.

These are two of the dozens of conversations I had while I registered voters in the Lawrence, Massachusetts, projects. Many of the people I spoke to do not speak English well, and even fewer have any interest in voting. They think it is a waste of time and believe that their vote has no impact. Even though I tried to explain Mr. Mean’s position on tax credits, the minimum wage, and subsidies for the poor, their view of government as a large, foreign entity over which they have no control is so strong that many would not listen to me and my arguments to the contrary.

The people I spoke to fear and are suspicious of the government, probably because it is human nature to fear authority. This fear upsets me because it is one of the reasons the poor do not participate in the system. If they voted as a group, the government would be forced to listen to them and implement policies that benefited them. Politicians are afraid to cut social security because senior citizens vote and have a very powerful lobby. If the underprivileged classes organized, they could have that kind of political clout.