

"My first advice is to be less concerned about what we want and more concerned about what you want us to know about you," Jordan said. "You can write about more mundane topics. What's important is to make it your own."

Jordan recounted students who wrote strong essays about overcoming struggles in academic classes or how they learned about their neighbors through a newspaper route. Mary Elizabeth Morse, a senior at Pace Academy in Atlanta, wrote six essays for seven colleges. She's using the same essay for multiple colleges.

One essay was about an Outward Bound experience the summer before her junior year. Without the stress of school or her friends nearby, Morse said she was free to be alone with her thoughts and learned what she's capable of.

That experience became her essay. She wrote the first draft in about 2 1/2 hours, has finished a second draft, and may do one more.

At Northview High in Johns Creek, teachers include first EMC /P /MCID 6h first EMC /P /MCBTKI62009(TJ

Source: Emory University, University of Georgia, Northview High, College Counseling Center of Atlanta, and Towles Educational Consulting.

Blog advice

Admissions officers at many colleges write blogs to answer students questions and provide application tips. These blogs also include samples of essays that have left a strong impression.

University of Georgia's blog can be found at: ugaadmissions.blogspot.com

Georgia Tech's blog can be found at: gatechadmissions.blogspot.com

Emory University's