

Writing Successful MBA Application Essays  
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The first step to a package of successful MBA application essays for a school is to read all of the questions carefully and check the maximum word limits for each. That may sound simple, but many applicants either don't answer the exact question being answered (frequently because they're trying to use one essay for six schools) or far exceed the word limit for the essays. It is acceptable to go *slightly* over the limit, but not by more than a sentence or two. Even better, keep your essays short and focused. The schools probably won't count your words, but one of the purposes of the essay is to determine how the applicant follows directions. If you ignore the guidelines or question topics, the admissions committee will assume you'll ignore the professors and assignments as a student.

Second, start the process early enough to give yourself lots of time to think about your answers, write three drafts (at least), and give the essays to someone else to proofread. Although admissions officials will know that English is not your native language, your essays need to be near flawless in terms of grammar and structure in order to be competitive. MBA essay questions are designed to let the readers learn more about you as a person—your passions, goals, and obstacles you've overcome. They should be in your own voice and tell about experiences unique to you using specific examples, not general terms. If you are writing several essays for one school, outline what you want to emphasize and which examples you'll use in each before you begin drafting.

Admissions committees not only want to find out how unique you are, they want to evaluate your capacity for leadership, your learning abilities, and your future goals. In at least one of the essays you write for each school, it is important to explain why you want to attend their program. Many schools focus on particular areas of the MBA, like technology or international relations, or are looking for certain types of students, like entrepreneurs or people with experience in non-profit companies. Carefully read the brochures and websites of the schools you are applying to and you'll likely find clues about how to shape your essays.

Essays are your chance to stand out from the thousands of other applicants to top MBA programs, and admissions committees give them significant time and consideration. Without trying to shock the readers, strive to make your essays memorable in a positive way.

Recommended reading (all titles available at the EducationUSA Advising Center, [www.useic.ru](http://www.useic.ru)):  
*How to Get into the Top MBA Programs*, Richard Montauk  
*Getting into Graduate Business School Today*, Thomas H. Martinson and David P. Waldherr  
*How to Get into the Right Business School*, James L. Strachan  
*Game Plan for Getting into Business School*, Michele F. Kornegay  
*88 Great MBA Application Tips and Strategies to Get into a Top Business School*, Brandon Royal