

Writing a Winning College Essay

Purpose of the Essay

Why are you an asset to the class of 2021?

Prompt study

Option 1: Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Prompt study

Option 2: The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success.

Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

Prompt study

Option 3: Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?

Prompt study

Option 4: Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma-anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

Prompt study

Option 5: Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Why this program?

While many of you are pursuing Common App Essays, some may also be responding to prompts/questions from a specific university or college.

If so, the approach is very different...

Responding to University/College Specific Essays:

Heavily research the following aspects of
the school:

History, culture, unique or recognized
student programs, organizations (clubs,
sports), and fields of study (majors/minors
available).

Responding to University/College Specific Essays:

In your response to the question or prompt, use your prior research to craft a response that will:

- Let the institution know that you will benefit in a very specific way from their school culture or certain programs.
- Explain how your own talents and interests will also benefit the school in a specific way.

Responding to University/College Specific Essays:

Schools are looking at you as an investment in their own continued culture, campus diversity, and academic potential.

Your job is to convince them why your admission will be mutually beneficial for school and student.

You must capture this idea in your writing.

Tips and Tricks

or

How to fool your audience into thinking you write better than you really do write.

Use dialogue - helps your essay stand out

Creates a storytelling tone

Differentiates your “wall of text” from others.

Avoid using forms of the verb "to be" and weak verbs.

Lists of active verbs can be found online.

Revise, revise, revise!

SAS Curriculum Pathways Writing Navigator.

<https://www.sascurriculumpathways.com/portal/#/info/126>

Enter “Catamount” in username, leave password blank.

“Remember...” my mother tells me every morning when I leave for school, “mommy loves you!”

My English teacher greeted us every morning with a sincere, “Good morning, English Scholars!”

Harvard **is** the school for me.

I **want to go** to Harvard.

I can hear Harvard calling to me.

Harvard beckons me...

Analyzes multiple aspects of your writing:

Sentence variety

Weak and Active verbs

Vague words and stuff

A Gentle Reader