



fulcrum'." He skillfully weaves in his experience at CALS, which shows Cornell University specifically why he has chosen their university.

The last paragraph in particular brings together the lever metaphor, the zoo experience, and Cameron's experience at CALS to show his commitment to Cornell. Cameron's essay could have been strengthened by using the lever/fulcrum metaphor less and introducing leadership earlier on. Though it may be tempting to save big revelations for the end of an essay, often mentioning or at least alluding to these points will help readers frame your topic. One challenge for short essays is to fight the temptation to write everything you can about yourself. As Lauren notes in her essay (Chapter 17), we can hardly fit ourselves into one measly page! It is more effective to highlight specific aspects of your life.

"Inspiration from an Energy Conversion Machine"

**Anonymous
Caltech**

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IT TAKES BOTH hard work and a good understanding of the subject in order to complete a project. However, I never appreciated the other academic strengths and personal qualities needed until my 11th grade physics final. The task was to create an energy conversion machine that would undergo a minimum of five energy conversions. The construction of the machine piqued my interest in pursuing an engineering career and later became the pivotal factor in my decision to apply to Caltech.

I knew from the beginning that it would be a challenge to complete just the minimum requirements for the project. Believing that my teammates and I had the ability and potential to do better, as the team leader, I made it our goal to cover the conversions of all eight energy types that were taught in class. I also strived to add into the machine a bonus feature of breaking an egg. Struggling to find a solution for breaking the egg, I reflected upon the force of gravity we had learned. This idea led to a trap-door mechanism that would allow the egg to fall under gravity and break upon impact.

In addition to excelling in math and the sciences, I am also a strong visual art student. Enjoying drawing and designing, I gained a different perspective that I may not have had as just a science student. The creativity and imagination from the visual arts allowed me to use toilet



paper rolls, Styrofoam, and Popsicle sticks as the primary materials to construct the machine in a limited space within limited time. Together with good planning, coordination, and the ability to work in a team, my innovative perspective from visual arts made this project a success.

On the due date, I watched with a prideful glee as the machine operated smoothly. For going beyond the minimum requirements, the machine was very well received. Beyond earning an excellent grade, the challenge of completing this project intrigued my increasing interest in engineering. My expectations and goals as a future college student were also evolved during the process.

Certain that I wanted to become a professional in the engineering field, I began searching for a college that would provide me with an excellent academic and hands-on experience. While I knew that Caltech is a prestigious science and engineering school, it wasn't until I received the Caltech Signature Award that I developed a stronger interest in becoming a Techer. Upon further research, I realized that Caltech is the college for me.

At Caltech, my engineering aspirations will be realized in this challenging, research-integrated environment. The rigorous coursework and the generous research opportunities at Caltech will provide the challenge I need to achieve my goal of becoming an engineer. In return, I believe the combination of my academic strength and creative personal characteristics will definitely contribute to Caltech and help to add to the interdisciplinary atmosphere of the school.

It takes more than just hard work to succeed as an engineering professional. However, it can be achieved with the outstanding educational opportunity at Caltech and with my other academic strengths and personal qualities.

ANALYSIS

When writing an essay about why a college is a fit for any given student, it's tempting to just regurgitate the information found on the college's website, discussed in its catalog or heard during a campus tour. A greater challenge is to address specific reasons that the college is a fit for you, and what many students omit—*why* you are a fit for the college. This student's essay succeeds on both fronts.

She begins by explaining her academic and professional interest in engineering with a clear, concrete example. An example or anecdote is always welcome to readers because it is stronger to show than it is