

International Students Hub

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/international-hub>

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- Non-U.S. College Application & Admissions Checklist
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- 10 Mistakes International Students Make When Applying to College
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- Writing school-specific essays
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- The Super Essay (Combining Prompts to Save Time)
- The "Why Us" Essay
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- Demonstrated Interest
- College Visits
- Common App: How To Guide

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How Important is the College Interview? A Guide for International Students

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-interview-international-students>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Gloria Chyou Crawford, Co-founder and COO of InitialView
- How important is the college interview...for an international student?
- You may have heard that college interviews are “not that important”. While this might be true for an applicant applying to college from a typical high school in the U.S., it almost certainly is not true for international students.
- When one considers the recent COVID-induced changes in the U.S. admissions process, it’s likely that now every applicant to a selective college should take interviews more seriously.
- Here’s what we’ll cover in this post:
- How interviews help admissions officers
- Options for interviews
- Strategies for interview preparation
- For the past ten years, I’ve asked admissions officers, “What is the purpose of the college interview and what are you looking for?” The answers vary and have evolved over time, and I am happy to highlight some key insights for international applicants.
- But first, let’s define “international student”. From the standpoint of admissions officers, this term could be either (a) a non-U.S. passport holder studying in high school in the U.S. or (b) a student who, regardless of their passport, is studying outside of the U.S.. As you’ll see, my advice applies regardless of which category you fall into.
- At a bare minimum, admissions officers, particularly if they are interviewing someone from a country where English is not one of the official languages, are looking to ensure that all of their students have the level of English communication skills necessary to be successful at their institutions.
- There are many ways that schools gauge this ability as highlighted here . However, at the end of the day, admissions officers aren’t using the interview for another score. What they really want to know is: Can this student “hang” when it comes to participating fully in college life? What will they be like as a roommate? Will they be able to contribute in class? When they open their mouths to share their opinions, will professors be impressed? What better way to prove your ability to “hang” than by having a conversation!
- “InitialView is a great way to not only see that a student has the high level of communication ability that sets them up for success on our campus, but also a great opportunity for the student to show what they are passionate about.” – Georgia Tech
- “It was crucial to my application because one of the major barriers for international students to education abroad is the distance. What InitialView does is bridge that distance.” – Anjali, student from India
- “We don’t get to visit all high schools around the world and the interviews give us a better sense of students’ backgrounds and communities.” – University of Virginia
- Admissions officers do the best they can. However, even before COVID, opportunities for international applicants to visit campuses and engage with admissions officers was limited. With travel now even more restricted, admissions officers are looking for new ways to better understand the diverse experiences and backgrounds of their international applicants. Interviews are a great way to do this.
- Of course, many institutions review applications by territory. The admissions officers reviewing your file have hopefully over the years developed some familiarity with your high school. But even with the resources institutions might have, admissions officers do not always have the most up-to-date information about the various regions providing them with applications.
- More critically, admissions officers are less likely to understand how you and your complex personal story fit in your high school. Having a conversation with you provides context and nuance to help them connect the dots of your story.

- “You are not a two-dimensional being. Admissions officers need to know who is going to show up on that first day of college.” Gizem, student from Turkey
- The U.S. admissions process prides itself in being “holistic”. This means admissions officers are not just looking at one aspect of your application, and they are given a broad range of discretion when reviewing applications. Your ability to be academically successful at their institution is important, but admissions officers are also looking to build a class of students who will contribute to the community, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Almost everything an admissions officer receives from you is “on paper” or “two-dimensional”. The interview not only brings two-dimensional materials to life, but it ties all aspects of your hard work together.
- In particular, admissions officers often mention phrases like “intellectual curiosity” or “intellectual depth”, or as Ethan calls it, “intellectual vitality” —but whatever the concept it’s something that is hard to measure in just a test score or a transcript. An interview gives you an opportunity to explain what you did with your academics, what you did with your activities, and what you did with your curiosity.
- You get to tell the story, fill in the details, and provide nuance to every other piece of your application.
- “We can read about an activity on an extracurricular list, but it means a lot more when we hear the student talking about it from their own perspective.” – Hamilton College
- Why does all of this matter? Admissions officers want to make sure that you are going to make the most of your college experience. They are looking to assess how well you are going to engage, both inside and outside of the classroom. Will the student be able to thrive in a discussion-based class or collaborative environment?
- The only time they get to see you actually interact is during the interview. Everything else they see is described, curated, and edited over time. Utilize this opportunity to give them a glimpse of who you actually are, not just how you or others described you in written words.
- What ends up mattering the most to admissions officers? It isn’t so much the content of the interview (a lot of people enjoy similar things and have had similar experiences).
- Instead, it’s feeling like they really got to know you and want you on their campus. With all of the contemplation, assistance, and crafting that one can apply to other parts of their application, it’s sometimes hard for admissions officers to feel deeply connected to you. Interviews give you the chance to show that you are who you say you are.
- And remember: It’s harder to say “no” to someone you’ve “met”!
- In an ideal world, I think admissions offices would interview all applicants. The virtual world has made this more feasible, but most universities don’t have the resources to interview everyone themselves. Interviews for international applicants sometimes seem few and far between, but there are options and you should grab hold of them!
- For some schools, you can request interviews via their websites as early as June before your senior year. For others, you might need to email their admissions office to ask for an opportunity. And for quite a few, you might need to wait for the admissions office to assign you to an interviewer after you apply.
- You’ll often see language on a website that might say something like, “Because of limited interviewing capacity...” or “Because of the high volume of applicants...” Since schools can’t guarantee an interview, they have to make it optional and reassure you that there is no disadvantage to not having one.
- The good news is that you do have an opportunity to make sure the interview becomes an advantage. (WARNING: You’re about to receive highly biased information from the co-founder of InitialView—so don’t hesitate to ask questions and confirm what I say for yourself!)
- “One of the advantages of InitialView is we can send an interview to as many schools as we want to, which saved me a lot of time and stress.” – Ana, student from Brazil
- Practically all selective institutions in the U.S. have received InitialView interviews from international applicants. These interviews are conducted online and recorded so that admissions officers can watch the video in its entirety. The interviews are automatically added directly to a student’s file, along with your transcript and test scores, so that admissions officers can listen to them in the background while they review other parts of the application.
- Institutions that don’t traditionally do interviews (i.e., Georgia Tech, Boston University, University of Virginia, just to name a few) mention how having InitialView videos in students’ files during review provides helpful information in the reading process.
- InitialView also takes away one level of uncertainty with interviews. Interviews conducted by admissions officers or alumni usually result in a written report that goes in your file. You never see that file, and others in the admissions office never meet you. Your interviewer might have had a bad day, and you’ll never know how it impacted your application! In contrast, multiple admissions officers can always “go back to the tape” with your InitialView interview and make more collaborative decisions.

- Perhaps more importantly, you get to see your InitialView interview before you send it. If you don't like it, you don't have to send it! (most do send, however, which is hopefully encouraging as well).
- Being able to do one interview for multiple schools means:
- You can save time.
- You do not need to feel the pressure to contort yourself to a specific school.
- You can focus on having a great conversation and being authentic without worrying about which questions you should ask a school.
- You have agency to tell your story and insert your voice.
- "It gives you a chance to talk to someone not connected to the college, so hopefully you are a little more relaxed." – Earlham College
- These interviews are not rated by the interviewer, but they are evaluated within an admissions office. Because the interview is recorded, admissions officers are able to refer to the video at different parts of the review process (i.e., during the first read, in conversation with their colleagues, pulling up a clip during committee).
- These interviews do cost a fee (check initialview.com/pricing for up-to-date pricing), but it is an all-you-can-send model. Pay for one interview and send it to as many schools as you wish. InitialView provides fee waivers, so do not hesitate to email us to ask (or to email the admissions office you are hoping to send your interview to).
- If you are interested in the school, then by all means, yes. School-specific interviews are few and far between, so if you have the opportunity, take it! As Ethan has mentioned before, just doing an interview can count for something. You'll just want to approach these interviews a little differently. Namely, do your research about the institution. Take the time to ask yourself before the interview "Why [INSERT SCHOOL NAME]?" Refer to Step 3 in ■ Preparing For A College Interview: A Three-Step Process .
- Inserting your voice anywhere you can in the application process is important. Definitely take the time to record yourself if that option is provided. Do not regurgitate what you've already said in the rest of your application (i.e., do not feel the need to list your achievements or resume), but think about what you can add to your story in your authentic voice.
- While video profiles do indeed give admissions officers a glimpse of who you are and an opportunity to "meet" you, they barely scratch the surface, particularly for an international applicant. International applicant stories are particularly important to admissions readers as they may not be as familiar with your curriculum, or they might not fully understand the different types of awards, activities, organizations, and classes you've been a part of. When admissions officers read your file, they are looking for your story. The interview is an opportunity for you to tie the pieces of your story together.
- "As we're watching an InitialView interview, we're listening to the stories. It's a great tool to better understand the humanity of the student." – Boston College
- The wonderful thing about preparing for a college interview is that the skills you are developing are skills you will use in real life. You will be interviewing as soon as you arrive on a college campus—to be a part of a school club, for a research opportunity, for an internship, etc.
- Before you worry about how to maximize the time you have with an interviewer, pause and reflect. It's hard to tell your story unless you know your story. Spend time reading this post . Ethan and Monica lay out some great strategies and exercises for getting at the heart of your how and why.
- "As institutions that are looking for the way you go about your work rather than just your academic and professional achievements, the interview is often times a very helpful part of the application." – Johns Hopkins University
- Everyone should be able to answer a first-tier question. What is your favorite subject? How do you spend your time? What is something you are proud of? It's the second-tier question that will set you apart from another. This is why the exercises Ethan lays out are so important. How do you connect the question to what is important to you? Are you able to go deeper than the face value answer to the question. Predict the follow-up question by asking yourself "so what?" You only have a short time to make an impression, so don't waste it! Make what you are saying interesting and relatable so that the interviewer wants to know more.
- As with many other things, deliberate practice is key. And in the case of an interview, it means having a lot of intentional conversations. An interview isn't a time to just regurgitate what you've written down. It's a chance for you to be interactive, for you to react, for you to bring someone into your story.
- What does this look like? After you've developed your message box , throw your pieces of paper away. Find a friend, a teacher, a parent, a friend of a parent, and have a conversation with them. In fact, get them to record the conversation (on Zoom or just with the camera on your phone). Watch the conversation and ask for feedback.
- "The interview got me thinking and reflecting even after it was over." – Aaryaa, student from India

- As you continue having conversations, you'll find that most people want to know similar core things about you. The key is recognizing how different questions can lead to the answers that are most important to you. Ask the people you are talking to if they were able to track what you were sharing. Ask them what impressed them. Ask them what else they wish you shared. Take notes and try again. Don't be afraid to watch your video. You will be your worst critic, but you will also be able to pinpoint aspects of your conversation that are easily improved.
- Some of my favorite moments in interviews I've conducted or watched are the most raw and organic moments. When a student pauses to ask a clarifying question or when a student laughs at themselves – those are the moments where I feel like I'm really getting to know the student. I'm able to imagine them in a classroom, in a meeting, or on a campus.
- At the end of the day, what admissions officers want are individuals who are willing to take their thoughts and ideas and engage in a contributory way. It's the interactive piece – the sharing of ideas and experiences – that makes an interview compelling.
- Here's an unfortunate truth about the pressures upon admissions offices: If you're applying to a selective school, admissions officers want your application—but they don't necessarily want to accept you. Maintaining selectivity is one way admissions offices please their bosses in the president's office.
- Therefore, all applicants must take each part of their application seriously, even parts that might be deemed "optional" or previously considered "not that important". Unlike other parts of the application that you'll never need to worry about again, however, the interview is the one most connected to real life.
- You may initially see the interview as another hurdle in the application process, but when you're done you might realize that it was the most helpful part of the process—both when looking to stand out in the minds of admissions officers and in preparation for real life!
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Five Important Tips for International Students Who Need U.S. Financial Aid
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- Tagged: international students , international student , college interview international students

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How to Combine Your College Essay Prompts

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-essay-prompts>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- One of the most daunting aspects of applying to college is the sheer number of essays you have to (wait, get to!) write.
- What do I mean? Say you're applying to eight to ten schools. Each has anywhere from one to five or more (hi, MIT !) supplemental essays. Quick math tells us that's between eight and fifty college essay prompts to respond to. And that's after you write the Personal Statement for your Common App .
- It's ridonkeylips.
- But guess what?
- **YOU TOTALLY DON'T HAVE TO WRITE 50 ESSAYS.**
- In fact, you may end up writing fewer than ten. Why?
- I've developed a pretty simple, step-by-step process to help you see which essay prompts can overlap. Follow my lead and it may not only save you dozens of hours of writing, it could improve the quality of those essays.
- The secret involves doing a little bit of research and creative brainstorming before deciding on your topic.
- How to answer all your college essay prompts in less time:
- Gather all your essay prompts and put them on a single spreadsheet.
- Play the overlapping prompt game: read through all your prompts and decide which might potentially overlap.
- Brainstorm the content and structure for a few "super" essays (i.e. essays that can work for several prompts).
- Write your 4-6 "super" essays.
- **TABLE OF CONTENTS** The Overlapping Game: How Combining College Essay Prompts Can Lead to Better Essays in Less Time How to Write a Super Essay That Fits Multiple College Essay Prompts (Step-By-Step) 25 Questions to Help You Brainstorm Content for Your Super Essay Examples of Prompts that Overlap Extracurricular Essay Prompts Design a Course Prompts Describe Yourself Prompts Community Prompts Diversity Prompts Campus-Life Prompts Leadership Prompts Why this College Prompts
- You know that expression, "A stitch in time saves nine?" This is that stitch.
- In this post I'm basically going to ask you to gather all your college essay prompts, then spend just 10-20 minutes looking for instances where they might overlap. By doing so you'll save tons of time and write better essays.
- Because writing an essay that works for several prompts leads to essays that have much more elasticity (as in: they can stretch to fit multiple prompts), which often means they have more depth.
- For example, writing an essay about your improv comedy troupe could probably work for both of these prompts (bold emphasis below is ours):
- Michigan: Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it .
- Duke: We seek a diverse student body that embodies the wide range of human experience. In that context, we are interested in what you'd like to share about your lived experiences and how they've influenced how you think of yourself .
- Want to save yourself even more time? Look for MORE prompts your topic could work for. Take this one, for example:
- Stanford: Tell us about something that is meaningful to you and why.
- That same essay could work for this prompt too, right? Plus, now Stanford is going to not only learn about why improv comedy is meaningful to you, but also how it's created a kind of community for you (thanks to Michigan) AND how it has equipped you with a unique perspective (thanks to Duke).
- Nice, right?

- So what are we doing here?
- We're brainstorming what I call Super Essays. Check it out:
- The Super Essay not only answers the prompt, but also tells the reader something more. Here's a Venn Diagram to illustrate based on the Michigan/Duke/Stanford example above, but remember that this can be applied to any schools that have overlapping prompts:
- Venn Diagram of a Super Essay Topic
- Develop your college list. I've put together a few detailed resources for list development: here's one that's in podcast form and another is in this blog post . Once you've done that, come back here.
- Gather your college essay prompts for all of your colleges. Hop onto the Common App to do that. (Be sure to double check the prompts are correct when the Common App is released on August 1st!)
- Paste them into an Essay Tracker , which is basically a simple spreadsheet with all the supplemental essays you'll need to write.
- What's that, you ask? It's a topic that could potentially work for multiple prompts.
- How do you find a Super Topic? Look to your brag sheet, resume, or Activities List. Chances are, you'll find a great topic there. If this isn't working for you, choose something that:
- You've spent a LOT of time doing
- Is either awesomely impressive (like a research internship) OR interesting/weird (like leading historical hikes)
- Is NOT something you've already written about in your main statement.
- That's a potential super topic. Take a few minutes now to come up with 2-3 options.
- If you still can't think of anything, try asking yourself these questions (which are basically the UC Personal Insight Question topics)...
- Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.
- Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.
- What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
- Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.
- Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?
- Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.
- What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
- Examples of Super Topics: Robotics Club, drumming, developing an app, improv comedy, ice skating, teaching science to middle schoolers, Officer Cadet School, computer programming, working in a restaurant as a server, working in a garden, Model United Nations, art-making, Volunteering for American Youth Soccer Organization, love of History & Film, being an amazing cook, internship at local hospital, acapella singing, advocating for worker rights...
- Get the idea here? In short, the range is pretty broad. Once you have 1-4 potential Super Topics in mind...
- Let's say, for example, you picked "hiking" as a potential super topic.
- And let's say your college essay prompt list looks something like this:
- In the space available discuss the significance to you of the school or summer activity in which you have been most involved. (1/2 page)
- Briefly describe a non-academic pursuit (such as service to community or family, a club or sport, or work, etc.,) that best illustrates who you are, and why it is important to you. (250 words)
- Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences (150 words)
- Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. (250 words)
- We're seeking a talented, engaged student body that embodies the wide range of human experience; we believe that the diversity of our students makes our community stronger. If you'd like to share a perspective you bring or experiences you've had to help us understand you better... we encourage you to do so. (250 words)
- Ask yourself: for which of these topics could "hiking" potentially work?
- Take a minute to actually think about this.
- The answer is: it can work for them all, of course. Don't believe me? Keep reading.

- Here's an example Super Essay:
- The Hiking Essay
- I'm a history nerd, to the point where I would be that guy reading history textbooks for fun. However, reading about history can only go so far. Through Boy Scouts, I have been able to arrange and lead Historical Trail hikes, giving myself and my troop first hand perspectives on what it felt like to sleep at Valley Forge in the winter, or what the walk up Breed's Hill along Boston's Freedom Trail is really like. Naturally, I became the troop "story-teller" along these hikes, adding my own tidbits of information such as pointing out Eisenhower's five-star general flag waving from his personal putting green in Gettysburg, or how Spuyten Duyvil was perhaps named following one of the first reported shark attacks in America.
- Organizing these historical hikes has also given me the opportunity to teach younger Scouts about various Scouting skills, from orienteering (using a map and compass) to conservation principles like Leave-No-Trace. My troop engages in trail maintenance projects, and we actively monitor a trail we adopted from the NY/NJ Trail Conference.
- I especially relished the opportunity to apply what I had learned in AP Biology towards actually helping preserve the environment. It is one thing to learn about pollution, global warming, and invasive species in a classroom; it is another thing entirely to see the biodiversity of an ecosystem quickly succumb to man-made pressures.
- Finally, hiking with the Boy Scouts has given me the chance to help others experience the beauty of the outdoors. On a recent hike, a new Scout, Louis, confided in me how disconnected he felt away from his video games. I stayed with Louis for the remainder of the hike and pointed out everything from milkweed stalks to coyote scat. After the hike, Louis was exhausted but had a glimmer of excitement towards the environment around him, and could even tell the difference between poison ivy and Virginia creeper. Louis is currently one of my troop's most active younger Scouts.
- When I'm hiking, I'm not merely a hiker; I'm a historian, a conservationist, and a teacher all in one.
- I love this essay. Notice how it answers all the prompts above.
- This wasn't by accident. Here's how he did it:
- Here are some tips for each column:
- (Otherwise known as the BEABIES Exercise)
- What I Did (Day-to-Day):
- Did I list all my tasks, or just a few? What'd I forget? Go back and check.
- Did I list things I did that may have been outside the scope of my responsibilities?
- Did I leave off any awards? Any uncommon achievements?
- Problems I Solved:
- Did I consider the internal problems I solved--any personal challenges?
- Did I name the external problems I solved--for my friends or family? School? Community?
- Was I tackling a much larger (perhaps global) problem?
- Lessons I Learned & Values/Skills I Developed:
- What were some of the soft skills I learned (patience, communication, etc.)?
- Did I learn any specific software (Photoshop, Final Cut Pro)? Languages (Spanish, C++)? Survival skills (how to start a fire or clean a fish)?
- What am I better at now than I was before?
- What would I have done differently?
- Impact I Had (On Self, School, Community and/or Society)
- Did I consider the impact this had on my family? Friends? School? Who else benefited?
- What impact did this have on me personally? Did this change my life/perspective? How?
- Applications to Other Parts of School/Life:
- What skills did I develop and lessons did I learn that will make me a better X (tutor, debater, advocate, volunteer, programmer, fill in the blank)? How so?
- What did I do to build on and take what I learned to the next level?
- What surprised me about this experience?
- Okay, your turn.
- Instructions: Choose a potential Super Topic and spend 10-15 minutes filling out a BEABIES chart using the questions listed above. By the end you should have enough content for a Super Essay.
- Here's one more BEABIES example:
- Are you with me so far? Moving on.
- You won't know for sure which topic is your "best" topic as this process is more art than science. As I mentioned above, you're looking for the topic that is most elastic (i.e. - fits several prompts). Here's one way to do this:
- Spend 10 minutes doing the Essence Objects exercise and ask yourself:

- Could any of these objects or topics potentially connect to multiple themes?
- For example: Maybe you wrote down “ballet slippers.” Maybe that makes you think of all of the time you’ve spent not only training, but also learning about the cultural origins of ballet... Not only that, but how might you track the intergenerational history of ballet dancers in your family?
- See what we’re doing here? Trying to make those essence objects (and the topics they represent) more elastic to fit a greater range of prompts.
- So try this quick exercise: go through your most meaningful essence objects hashtag them with as many values as you can think of.
- Example: ballet slippers #hardwork #culture #family #nopainnogain #health
- Another example: Paul Farmer’s Mountains Beyond Mountains #internship #inspiration #career #community #failure #humor
- If you’re having trouble thinking of values, here’s a list to get you started.
- Now do this: Look over each of your prompts and ask, “Could my favorite topic [whatever you’ve decided that is] work for this prompt... or this one... or that other one?”
- For example, if you wrote solar panel software for a project in a water-scarce community in Libya, there might be connections to any prompt that has the word “culture” or “challenge” or, of course, “extracurricular” and voila: you can write one essay for all three (or four, or six) prompts.
- Have fun with this! See how many you can make one topic work for. And spend as much time as you need to do this because this is what will save you the most time in your college essay process.
- You might be thinking:
- What if I’m stretching too far?
- What if the topic I’m choosing connects to the theme but, like, in a really weird way?
- Fair point.
- I believe that unusual connections are okay. But your connection to the prompt—to each prompt, in fact—has to be super clear. This may mean tweaking a sentence or two to clearly answer each different prompt. (Fun fact: usually those tweaks make the essay better anyway. That’s like the whole thing we’re doing here.) But make the tweaks so you’re clearly answering the prompt. If you can’t, your topic may not be elastic enough. So try another topic for that prompt; the goal here isn’t to find a single topic for every single prompt, but to find one that works for several.
- An exception to this game is if the topic is extremely specific, as can sometimes be the case for college essay prompts that ask you to reflect on a quotation or questions like U Chicago’s supplemental essay prompts or Virginia’s “Describe one of your quirks and why it is part of who you are” (although that one can double with MIT or Caltech).
- In short, making unusual connections will make your topic stand out, flex your creativity, and show multiple sides of you at once.
- Below are some more examples of prompts from past years that students could have answered using the Super Essay approach.
- **IMPORTANT:** Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school’s website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year). We’re leaving them because they nicely illustrate how much time you can save by playing this game.
- Instructions: Below are a few more prompts. Which ones could you imagine overlapping with some of the prompts above, or with your own potential “super” topic?
- Reflect on something that has given you great satisfaction. Why has it been important to you? -Yale University
- Describe how your experiences, perspectives, talents, and/or your involvement in leadership activities (at your school, job, community, or within your family) will help you to make an impact both in and out of the classroom while enrolled at UT. -University of Texas
- Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side. -UC Personal Insight Question
- The Stanford community is deeply curious and driven to learn in and out of the classroom. Reflect on an idea or experience that makes you genuinely excited about learning. -Stanford University
- When was the last time you questioned something you had thought to be true? -Emory University
- Brown’s culture fosters a community in which students challenge the ideas of others and have their ideas challenged in return, promoting a deeper and clearer understanding of the complex issues confronting society. This active engagement in dialogue is as present outside the classroom as it is in academic spaces. Tell us about a time you were challenged by a perspective that differed from your own. How did you respond? -Brown

- Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom. -UC Personal Insight Question
- Oh, and you know those “Why us” essays? You can also re-use content for those, but how to do that is the topic of a completely separate post.
- Click here to learn how to write your “Why us” essay.
- And if you’re confused, I’m basically talking about prompts like these:
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school’s website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- What is it about Yale that has led you to apply? -Yale University
- If you selected one of the computer science or engineering majors, please tell us more about what has led you to an interest in this field of study, what experiences (if any) you have had in engineering, and what it is about Yale’s Engineering program that appeals to you. -Yale University
- Describe how you plan to pursue your academic interests at USC. Please feel free to address your first- and second-choice major selections. -University of Southern California (USC)
- How does the University of Chicago, as you know it now, satisfy your desire for a particular kind of learning, community, and future? Please address with some specificity your own wishes and how they relate to UChicago. -University of Chicago
- With the understanding that the choice of academic school you indicated is not binding, explain why you are applying to that particular school of study. -Rice University
- In 300 words or less, help us understand how you might engage specific resources, opportunities, and/or communities here. We are curious about what these specifics are, as well as how they may enrich your time at Northwestern and beyond. -Northwestern University
- Describe the unique qualities that attract you to the specific undergraduate College or School (including preferred admission and dual degree programs) to which you are applying at the University of Michigan. How would that curriculum support your interests? -University of Michigan
- Why do you want to study your chosen major specifically at Georgia Tech? -Georgia Tech
- If you are applying to the Trinity College of Arts and Sciences as a first year applicant, please discuss why you consider Duke a good match for you. Is there something particular about Duke that attracts you? (Please limit your response to no more than 150 words.) -Duke University
- Why are you interested in attending Columbia University? We encourage you to consider the aspect(s) that you find unique and compelling about Columbia. -Columbia University
- Many students pursue college for a specific degree, career opportunity or personal goal. Whichever it may be, learning will be critical to achieve your ultimate goal. As you think ahead to the process of learning during your college years, how will you define a successful college experience? -Carnegie Mellon University
- Please tell us why BU is a good fit for you and what specifically has led you to apply for admission. -Boston University
- Considering the specific undergraduate school you have selected, describe how you intend to explore your academic and intellectual interests at the University of Pennsylvania. -University of Pennsylvania
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school’s website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- Briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences. -Stanford University
- Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences. -Rice University
- If you could only do one of the activities you have listed in the Activities section of your Common Application, which one would you keep doing? Why? -University of Michigan
- What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time? -UC Personal Insight Question
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school’s website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- You are teaching a Yale course. What is it called? -Yale University
- Pomona’s Critical Inquiry course is required of all first-year students, and is designed to be highly interdisciplinary and engaging. Recent class titles include: ‘Molecules of the Mind’, ‘The Economics of Sin’, and ‘Punk: Poets, Politics and Provocation’. Imagine you were hired to design and teach a Critical Inquiry course. Describe the title of the class, its contents, and why you chose it. -Pomona College
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school’s website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts

are usually released for that year).

- What is something about yourself that is essential to understanding you? -University of Southern California (USC)
- Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement? -UC Personal Insight Question
- What matters to you, and why? -Stanford University
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school's website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- Reflect on your engagement with a community to which you belong. How do you feel you have contributed to this community? -Yale University
- What was the environment in which you were raised? Describe your family, home, neighborhood, or community, and explain how it has shaped you as a person. -University of Texas
- What have you done to make your school or your community a better place? -UC Personal Insight Question
- Tech's motto is progress and service. We find that students who ultimately have a broad impact first had a significant one at home. What is your role in your immediate or extended family? AND how you seen evidence of your impact on them? -Georgia Tech
- Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. -University of Michigan
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school's website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- The quality of Rice's academic life and the Residential College System are heavily influenced by the unique life experiences and traditions each student brings. What perspective do you feel that you will contribute to life at Rice? -Rice University
- The late Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., Notre Dame's president from 1953 to 1987, served as a trusted adviser to U.S. presidents and popes. A champion for human rights, Fr. Hesburgh was one of the architects of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Reflect on the current state of civil rights, the progress that has been made, or the problems still being faced today. -University of Notre Dame
- SMU is a diverse learning environment shaped by the convergence of ideas and cultures. How will your unique experiences or background enhance the University, and how will you benefit from this community? -Southern Methodist University
- 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. -Harvard University
- Duke University seeks a talented, engaged student body that embodies the wide range of human experience; we believe that the diversity of our students makes our community stronger. If you'd like to share a perspective you bring or experiences you've had to help us understand you better—perhaps related to a community you belong to, your sexual orientation or gender identity, or your family or cultural background—we encourage you to do so. Real people are reading your application, and we want to do our best to understand and appreciate the real people applying to Duke. -Duke University
- Reflect on your unique background and tell us about a time when you had to relate to someone whose life experience was very different from your own. How did you approach the difference? If put in a similar situation again today, would you respond differently? If so, how? -University of Colorado
- Nelson Mandela believed that "what counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead." Describe a way in which you have made or hope to make a difference. 200-250 words. -Tufts University
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school's website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- Suite-style living - four to six students sharing a set of rooms - may be an integral part of your Yale College experience. What would you contribute to the dynamic of your suite? -Yale University
- Virtually all of Stanford's undergraduates live on campus. Write a note to your future roommate that reveals something about you or that will help your roommate -- and us -- know you better. (250 word limit) -Stanford University

- List a few words or phrases that describe your ideal college community. -Columbia University
- IMPORTANT: Some of the prompts below may have changed, and others will change each year, so be sure to check the Common App or particular school's website after Aug. 15 (by which point most prompts are usually released for that year).
- Describe how your experiences, perspectives, talents, and/or your involvement in leadership activities (at your school, job, community, or within your family) will help you to make an impact both in and out of the classroom while enrolled at UT. -University of Texas
- Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time. -UC Personal Insight Question
- Wanna know more about how to answer all the supplemental essays for your application? Check out my video course.
- Tagged: college essay tips , example supplemental essay , personal essay

■ Danh sách các bài viế■t và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 8, 2019](#)
- [Supplemental Essays](#)
- [How to Combine Your College Essay Prompts \(To Save 20+ Writing Hours\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 8, 2019](#)
- [Supplemental Essays](#)
- [applying to college](#)
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- [Personal Statement](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [The Overlapping Game: How Combining College Essay Prompts Can Lead to Better Essays in Less Time](#)
- [How to Write a Super Essay That Fits Multiple College Essay Prompts \(Step-By-Step\)](#)
- [25 Questions to Help You Brainstorm Content for Your Super Essay](#)
- [Examples of Prompts that Overlap](#)
- [Extracurricular Essay Prompts](#)
- [Design a Course Prompts](#)
- [Describe Yourself Prompts](#)
- [Community Prompts](#)
- [Diversity Prompts](#)
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U.S. College Application Timeline for International Students

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-application-timeline-international-students>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- Written by Tiffany Knight and Emily Dobson
- —Disclaimer: This timeline is focused on the US admissions process. If you are considering applying outside of the US, please note the respective country's deadlines for applications and visas.
- AUGUST & SEPTEMBER (One year before you apply)
- Have an honest conversation about finances with your grown-ups (parents, guardians, providers)
- Create a Collegeboard.org account to assist with research and virtual counseling (US and some non-US schools)
- Create a college comparison list, including each university's requirements.
- SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER
- Follow (international) admissions offices on social media.
- Join a monthly webinar on ANY part of the process.
- Research university scholarships portals, adding to your list.
- If you are interested in applying outside of the US, make sure to find reliable sources to do your research such as UCAS (UK university central website) or for Dutch universities <https://www.studyinholland.nl/> .
- Log your activities monthly (anything that is not class-related).
- If any of the schools on your in-progress list require testing, take time to read about the tests and set aside the time to do at least one mock exam for each (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject, English proficiency)
- Find tutorials about the ISFAA and CSS Profile (this form may be required for institutional funding) and the FAFSA (for dual citizens of the US). Watch with your grown-ups if possible. If they speak another language than English, it may be helpful to connect with your local EducationUSA office to see if their advisors may have guidance in the native language.
- JANUARY - MARCH
- Register for standardized tests as required. Plan to take ACT/SAT two or three times prior to the application deadline and an English proficiency test, if needed, when you are ready (can be closer to application deadline).
- Make sure to actively continue research and participate in virtual events.
- MARCH - JULY
- Review personal finances and adjust lists and search as necessary. SAVE money!
- Take (first) ACT/SAT as required. Use results as a study guide.
- Time to start thinking about essays and supplements. Start reviewing The College Essay Guy's website and resources on approaches to writing.
- Keep track of required essay prompts for your schools and begin brainstorming and writing.
- Let your school administration and teachers know about your plans to apply- this will be your team. Be prepared to help them understand letters of recommendation and any school forms required by universities.
- Adapted by Tiffany Knight and Emily Dobson from The College Essay Guy's Grade 12 Timeline
- AUGUST & SEPTEMBER
- Keep track of application portals and financial aid portals (FAFSA for dual citizens of the US, CSS, and ISFAA) and when they open! Make sure you get yours started!
- Confirm your final college list, application deadlines (check for a definition of each type of deadline), and requirements. Make a calendar!
- Write your college-specific supplemental essays
- Continue to research scholarships, adding requirements and deadlines to your list.
- Schedule a meeting with your school team (teacher, administrator, counselor) to review your college list to get his or her feedback and review your application deadlines, and ask any questions you may have.
- Set up virtual or in person interviews with colleges, varies by school.

- Check in with your recommendation writers. Update your Letter of Rec Questionnaire and ask for a letter of recommendation from your school counselor.
- Apply to scholarships throughout the school year.
- Parents: Start preparing financial aid paperwork and develop a deadlines list.
- SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER
- Check school/national exams and calendar them along with application dates to stay organized.
- Schedule a meeting with your school team (teacher, administrator, counselor) to review your college list to get his or her feedback and review your application deadlines, and ask any questions you may have.
- Continue participation in college presentations and college fairs (in person and virtual).
- Apply for financial aid using the ISFAA, FAFSA or CSS/PROFILE .
- Have a trusted adult (preferably trained in the process) look over your application. This review cycle can take many weeks, especially writing revisions.
- Complete and send out all Early Action and Early Decision applications no later than late October. (These deadlines are typically around November 1.)
- Many portfolio-based arts programs have December 1st deadlines. And some universities require submission by December 1st to be considered for scholarship opportunities. Attend high school presentations and programs.
- check whether your schools allow self-reported standardized scores and send your test scores.
- Remind your school team to upload/send letters and transcripts to colleges. If they need help, consider having them reach out to the local EducationUSA office.
- Regular Decision (RD) deadlines are typically around January 1. Complete and send out all RD applications no later than mid-December- make sure to get before you (and your school) go on break. Give yourself a relaxing holiday.
- Note: This is also recommended if you have deadlines in February/ March or later as long as the application is complete and well-done.
- JANUARY - MARCH
- January: If deferred, send an email to your admissions representative. Reaffirm your interest in the school and offer any updates (activities, achievements, awards, etc).
- Wait for application decisions.
- MARCH - APRIL
- Colleges have until April 1 to release decisions.
- Evaluate financial aid packages to figure out what is affordable or your family.
- Students need to enroll and submit a deposit by May 1. A deposit is made to save your spot at college, and the amount is usually credited to your school account. Be sure to check whether the deposit includes a tuition payment.
- Take AP/IB exams, as required by school. Your school may have other exams throughout the year. AP or IB is NOT required for those students whose schools do not offer it. You are considered ONLY through the context of your school's curriculum.
- Notify your school team and your grown-ups (teacher, administrator, counselor, parent/guardian) of your college decisions and Financial Aid options.
- Thank your letter of recommendation writers and any grown-ups/peers for supporting you through your applications process.
- If you've been waitlisted, this is a good time to send a) your "I'd like to stay on the waitlist" form and b) the email to your designated admissions rep which states your interest in the school and offers updates (activities, achievements, awards, etc).
- Sign-up for campus housing if you plan to live on campus.
- JUNE - AUGUST
- Continue saving for college.
- Check your email for waitlist notifications.
- Sign up for meal plans and register for classes.
- Contact your future roommate(s).
- Complete your visa application and book your interview appointment.
- Make travel arrangements (You can enter the US 30 days before your program starts).
- Reach out to International Students services about setting up a bank account.
- Set up a meeting with an academic advisor at your college to plan your classes.■
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)

- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , college admissions , timeline

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [September 28, 2020](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [U.S. College Application Timeline for International Students](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [September 28, 2020](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- <https://www.studyinholland.nl/>
- [supplemental essays](#)
- [CSS/PROFILE](#)
- [Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students](#)
- [122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? \(International Version\)](#)
- [211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students \(and Their Counselors\)](#)
- [SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students](#)
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A Guide to Studying in the Netherlands | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/studying-in-netherlands>

■ Mục lục chính:

- Every year, Dutch universities rank among the top universities internationally. Combine that with a vast array of English-language programs and affordable tuition costs and it's no surprise that the Netherlands attracts international students from all around the world. In 2020, 12% of students in the Netherlands were international!
- This guide will outline everything you need to know about why you might want to study in the Netherlands, how to research universities, how to apply, and how to get a study permit. We'll cover:
- Should I attend university in the Netherlands?
- Types of universities in the Netherlands
- Differences between the American and Dutch education systems
- How to research schools
- Admissions Requirements
- How to apply
- Student Visas
- Final Thoughts
- The Netherlands offers a high-quality education and a diverse range of programs in English at the Bachelor's level (and even more at the Master's level!). You'll find it easy to navigate the Netherlands even if you don't speak Dutch—95% of locals speak English! The Netherlands' educational system attracts students from around the world, creating a multicultural and international environment. And all of this for an affordable cost of 6,000–15,000 EUR/year for non-EU students! (Pro tip: Google has an exchange rate calculator for you.)
- Furthermore, the Netherlands is a great place to live, with beautiful outdoor destinations and rich traditions. It's a very safe country and is consistently ranked as one of the happiest nations in the world. And it's centrally located, making travel to other parts of Europe easy and inexpensive.
- Upon graduating, you'll find that the Netherlands, boasting the 18th largest economy in the world, offers a plethora of professional opportunities. International graduates can apply for an orientation or search year , a residence permit to apply for a job or start a business within three years of graduating. You can read more about quality of life in the Netherlands here .
- The Netherlands has two different types of universities: universities of applied sciences and research universities. There's almost no overlap in the types of degrees offered at each one.
- At these universities, the education is more professionally-oriented, concrete, and hands-on. It's focused on the "how" of the subject. Degrees are usually four years long and include a placement year—essentially a year-long paid internship that actually counts as part of your studies. For example, a student studying Marketing might work in market research with a local company for a year, gaining experience and professional connections in the process.
- In contrast, research universities focus on the "why" of a subject. They're more theoretical and emphasize critical analysis. Degrees typically take three years to complete and don't usually include a placement year.
- Some research universities also have university colleges. University colleges, which were first established in 1997 in the Netherlands, are smaller programs inspired by Liberal Arts and Sciences programs in the United States. They provide a small-scale, international learning environment with English instruction. University colleges place an emphasis on holistic education and community building. You can learn more about the nine Dutch university colleges here .
- Unlike American Bachelor's degrees, which usually take four years to complete, the length of a degree in the Netherlands depends on what and where you're studying. Again, generally speaking, a degree at a university of applied sciences will take four years to complete because of the additional internship year, while a degree at a research university will take three years. This doesn't mean that with the latter you

won't have the opportunity to complete an internship! Many research universities provide the opportunity to study abroad or pursue an internship related to your studies in your final year.

- Dutch universities start the academic year in late August or early September and finish it at the end of June or in July, with a two week break for Christmas. The year is broken up into two semesters or four periods.
- In the Netherlands, you'll apply directly to the program that most interests you. The one exception would be at university colleges, where you'll receive a degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences but will be able to choose a major within the program.
- Similarly to many countries in Europe, in the Netherlands, almost all of your classes will be directly related to your major. In your second year of studies, you may be able to specialize more within your major or complete a minor, but it's uncommon to study anything completely unrelated to your focus of study.
- The Netherlands does offer some Double/Joint/Dual Degree programs, which vary depending on the university. Some even involve completing part of your degree at another international university, such as the four-year double degree program between University of Groningen and Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
- Additionally, while they're not exactly double degrees, the Netherlands has a number of interdisciplinary programs, such as the Media, Art, Design, and Architecture program at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam or Politics, Psychology, Law, and Economics at University of Amsterdam .
- Dutch universities are significantly less expensive than American universities. Annual tuition fees start at approximately €1,900 for EU students and €6,000 for non-EU students—generally significantly less than fees in the UK or US. Additionally, the cost of living in the Netherlands will likely be lower than in the US. Of course, this depends on the city in which you're studying. Amsterdam will be significantly more expensive than Rotterdam, for example. Note that tuition costs at university colleges tend to be a bit higher than at universities of applied sciences or research universities. To offset these costs, students may choose to work while studying. With a work permit provided by an employer, you can work up to 16 hours per week during the school year and full-time during the summer.
- Universities in the Netherlands offer few scholarships, and it is close to impossible to receive a full scholarship. Most scholarships will cover only a percentage of tuition and sometimes only for one year. Institutions do offer a handful of scholarships for international students, among them the Holland Scholarship . The Holland Scholarship is a one-time scholarship of 5,000 EUR awarded to international students from outside the European Economic Area. Other scholarships tend to be specific to international students from particular regions, such as the MENA Scholarship Programme (for students from the Middle East and North Africa).
- Be sure to check out the universities that interest you to see the scholarships they offer and whether they require additional application elements to be eligible for the scholarships.
- Unlike in the US and UK, Dutch universities generally do not allow you to defer your admission until the following year. However, if you're accepted to a non-numerus fixus program and decide to take a gap year, you can be certain you'd be accepted the next year as well.
- In the US, students interested in completing a graduate degree may take a few years off to work prior to applying. This is less common in the Netherlands, where students often go directly into graduate studies upon completing their undergraduate degree. Employers in the Netherlands tend to focus more on your postgraduate degree than your undergraduate degree.
- Student life in the US often revolves around the campus itself—sports events, extracurricular activities, student productions ... In contrast, in the Netherlands, most student life will take place off-campus.
- Students are more integrated into the city in which they live. However, universities do have a network of associations that bring students together for academic and sports events, and cities also have student associations that aren't tied to any particular institution. Dutch people pride themselves on maintaining a healthy work-life balance, so don't worry—you won't be just studying all weekend!
- In the Netherlands, students are less likely to live on campus. Instead, students live in student housing throughout the city, usually sharing a place with a few other people. Study in Holland provides great tips for searching for housing. Note that university colleges often do offer on-campus housing for part or all of the degree program.
- Researching colleges in the Netherlands is relatively centralized and easy. You can use Study in Holland to search for programs that interest you, then check out their websites to learn more. You can also take a look at QS World University Rankings to see how universities rank and read a bit more about the school.
- To learn more about individual programs, look at the curriculum, student and graduate testimonials on their websites, and their YouTube channel or social media presence. Check out How to Research Universities Outside of the U.S. for more guidance on how to learn about a school from a distance.

- Admissions requirements at Dutch universities vary from program to program, so make sure to check out the particular requirements for the programs you're applying to.
- Good news though—most programs in the Netherlands, with the exception of university colleges and numerus fixus programs, are General Admission programs. That means that if you meet a program's requirements, you're in!
- Universities require a diploma equivalent to the Dutch VWO. On the Nuffic website , you can see how your diploma from your home country compares to a Dutch diploma. For even more accurate information, see if the particular schools that interest you have a diploma calculator on their website. Note that for US students, many colleges will ask for a certain number of AP exams in addition to a high school diploma.
- If you don't meet the minimum requirements at a university that interests you, consider completing a preparatory program or studying at a university in your home country for a year.
- If you studied in a non-English speaking country, most colleges require you to demonstrate your English proficiency through the TOEFL, IELTS, or Cambridge Assessment English exams. Most universities will require a 6.5 or 7 on the IELTS or between 80 and 100 on the TOEFL.
- Depending on the program you're applying to, you may need to meet certain math requirements. You can meet these through high school courses or through an Online Mathematics Proficiency Test.
- The first step for the vast majority of universities is registering with Studielink , the official application portal for Dutch higher education institutions. However, some programs, particularly numerus fixus programs, may want you to complete an internal review process first. Check their website just to be sure.
- On Studielink, if you're not a resident of the Netherlands, you'll make an account without DigiD. Through Studielink, you'll verify your identity by uploading a scan of your passport or other identification, enter the details of your previous education, and select the study programs for which you want to submit an enrollment application.
- Note that you can only apply to up to four programs through Studielink, only two of which can be numerus fixus programs. If you have questions about Studielink, check out this Studielink Q&A; .
- After completing your enrollment application, pay close attention to your email! You should receive emails from the programs, often within 24 hours, with more information about next steps, which vary from program to program. Generally, you'll receive an initial email with instructions regarding how to set up your account on the university-specific portal. On the application portal, you'll be able to upload required documents, which may include your transcripts, proof of English proficiency, an application form, etc.
- Some programs may also require an interview or audition as part of the application process. Again, be sure to check the requirements of the specific programs you're interested in.
- Unlike most Dutch universities, University Colleges have a more holistic admissions approach. While your grades are important, they will also consider your interests, writing skills, and include supplemental essays, a CV, recommendation letters, and an interview (don't worry—it can be virtual!). Similarly to when applying to American universities, fit is key! Be prepared to show that you are excited about the university college and that your academic, extracurricular, and personal background make you a strong candidate for their program.
- Deadlines range from December 1st through July 1st . The actual date may vary depending on both the program and the applicant's nationality (for visa purposes), so make sure to check the deadlines for the programs that interest you.
- The deadline for all numerus fixus programs —programs that restrict the number of places offered—is January 15th. Note that most programs offered in English aren't numerus fixus programs.
- In the case of numerus fixus programs , if the number of applicants exceeds the number of places in the program, applicants will receive a ranking number via Studielink on April 15th. Depending on your ranking number, you may or may not be offered a spot in the program.
- If you are accepted, you'll have two weeks to accept your place on Studielink. If you're not offered a place, there's still a chance (albeit a small one) that a place will open up. In that case, the university will reach out to you.
- Sometimes the number of applicants will be lower than the number of places available. If so, you're in luck! All applicants will be offered a spot in the program. Note that you still have to accept it within two weeks.
- After the university has received all required documents and evaluated your candidacy, you should receive an admissions decision by email. If your offer is conditional, you have yet to meet all entry requirements (for example, you may still need to submit your high school diploma or final transcripts). Your letter of conditional acceptance should clearly outline the requirements and the deadline for fulfilling them .
- Are you deciding between a few universities? Many universities offer Open Days (both in-person and virtual), a great opportunity to learn about the university's academics and student life and connect with current and prospective students.

- A handful of Dutch universities are also on Unibuddy , a student recruitment platform for higher ed institutions where you can chat with current students.
- Additionally, most universities will have an International Student Office and sometimes even an admission officer specific to your region. Feel free to reach out to them with questions about the university or admissions process (after making sure you can't find the answer on the website, of course!).
- You'll need a student residence permit to study in the Netherlands. Only a higher education institution recognized as a sponsor can apply for you.
- There are several requirements for applying for a student residence permit, including proof of registration at a higher education institution and income requirements . Once you've gathered the required documents, your educational institution will submit the application and you'll pay the € 207,00 application fee. You'll receive a decision within 60 days and be notified when it's time to pick up your student resident permit. You can read more about the process here .
- Final Thoughts
- The Netherlands has a rich history of welcoming international students to its institutions of higher education. That means you'll find International Student Offices and current international students are a great resource and eager to help you with the process of researching and applying to Dutch universities!
- Special thanks to Rachel for writing this blog post.
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson, Independent Educational Consultant with Mosaico Mentors in Mexico City
- Tagged: study abroad , netherlands , exchange student , international student , international , study in netherlands

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

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How to Write a Great Extracurricular Activity Essay

2025/2026

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/extracurricular-activity-essay-examples>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- If you're applying to selective colleges, chances are you'll be asked to write about how you've spent your time outside of school.
- While these questions are sometimes worded differently (see examples below in the FAQ), they generally sound something like this:
- Tell us about one or more of your extracurricular activities.
- In this post, I'll share some practical tips for how to write about your extracurricular involvement in your college essays. But first, answers to a few commonly asked questions.
- Q: Why do so many schools ask about extracurricular activities?
- A: Simply put, they're a great way to learn about the skills/qualities/values/experiences you've had that (and this is important) you haven't already described in your personal statement .
- Q: Do I really have to write it?
- A: If a school asks for it, yes. If a school makes it optional, probably still write it. Why? If you don't, it's a missed opportunity. And also because you have this really great step-by-step guide in front of you that's gonna' show you how to crush it.
- Q: What are some supplemental essay prompts that can be considered "extracurricular activity essays?"
- Here are a few you might see:
- "Briefly discuss the significance to you of the school or summer activity in which you have been most involved." (Georgetown University)
- "Please briefly elaborate on an extracurricular activity or work experience of particular significance to you." (Amherst College)
- "Please provide more details on your most meaningful commitment outside of the classroom while in high school and explain why it was meaningful. This could be related to an extracurricular activity, work, volunteering, an academic activity, family responsibility, or any other non-classroom activity." (University of Florida)
- And while some prompts don't mention the word "activity," the techniques in this post can still help you answer prompts like these:
- "Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time." (The University of California Schools)
- "Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side." (The University of California Schools)
- "What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?" (The University of California Schools)
- Ready? Let's do this.
- My answer to this is simple: Complete the BEABIES exercise for the activities you're debating writing about and see which one yields the best possible content.
- For the sake of argument, let's say there are four types of extracurricular activities:
- Passion Projects (something you love and would do for free even if it didn't help your chances of getting into college)
- Rockstar Achievements (those in which you've won something or held a leadership position)
- One Hit Wonders (things you did once)
- I've Played Piano for 14 Years But I Hate It (something your parents have made you do since you were a kid and you're either too nice or too afraid to tell them you don't want to do it anymore, or maybe you kinda still like it but don't love it)
- So which one should you write about?

- Okay, ideally, your passion project is the one you've turned into a Rockstar Achievement. If so, write about that.
- But what if you have to choose? What if you've been a part of both:
- something very personal that has a strong WHY component (passion project), and
- something less personal that has an impressive WOW (rockstar achievement)
- Which do you write about?
- In general, if your rockstar achievement has...
- a) earned you recognition
- b) demonstrated your leadership potential, and
- c) required you to shoulder some real responsibilities.
- ...then I'd say write about your rockstar achievement.
- Why? A couple reasons:
- The first, kind of superficial reason is this:
- Readers are zipping through your application at a pretty good clip and while they are somewhat interested in who you are (which is what I think your main personal statement is for) they're also interested in what you've done. Don't leave out that second part.
- Here's an example:
- If you're choosing between your passion for listening to different kinds of music, for example, and the time you won Nationals in ACADECA, consider writing about winning ACADECA.
- Why else should you do this?
- If you've put in hours and hours of work prepping for and winning ACADECA and you don't write about it, that's what in the college admissions world we call a missed opportunity. Or, what they call in Vegas, leaving money on the table.
- Here's an exception! What if you have to choose between either:
- a.) that time you won a small award in something you didn't care a whole lot about, or
- b.) a passion project that's really cool and that makes you stand out?
- What if, for example, you won a Certificate of Merit in the 9th grade for playing violin and you're still in the orchestra but it's not a really big deal to you because your REAL passion—the thing that keeps you up 'til 3am—is your passion for constructed languages. That's right, making up your own language. (This is a real example, by the way.)
- **WRITE ABOUT CONSTRUCTED LANGUAGES**
- For reals. That's 'cause constructed languages are the bomb. Actually, I never really knew there was such a thing as ConLang, as the cool kids call it, until one of my students wrote an awesome essay about his passion for constructed languages.
- So, in short, opt for the passion project if it's something really cool and geeky. And by geeky I mean something that you know so much about that when someone mentions it you start talking really fast and start using arcane vocabulary that makes people go, "Wha?"
- And unfortunately, your 1,000 hrs spent building up three Level 90 Warriors in World of Warcraft doesn't count as a "WOW" project. Unless you started a WoW club that held a fundraiser for victims of epilepsy and donated the money.
- Finally, here's a question I get a lot:
- Student: But what if I've already written about my most impressive extracurricular activity in my main personal statement or in another essay the school is receiving?
- Me: Then write about your second most impressive extracurricular activity.
- Click here for more tips on how to write an extracurricular essay without rockstar achievements.
- When it comes to your extracurricular activity essay, you'll either describe a challenge or series of challenges you've encountered and overcome, or you won't. I've developed a structure that works for each case.
- The first is what I call the Shark Tank approach and it works well for students who have addressed or overcome a challenge through their extracurricular activity.
- The second is called the "Uncommon Connections" approach and works well for students who are not writing about a challenge they've encountered through an extracurricular activity.
- But heads-up: you don't have to pick an approach right now. In fact, don't yet. Read through both techniques and see which might work better.
- This approach works particularly well for:
- Any extracurricular essay about overcoming a challenge
- Any volunteer or community service essay
- Any social issue essay, for example that asks "What are you interested in?" or "What's one problem you would like to solve?"

- Step 1: Identify the problem.
- Describe the challenge you were (or are currently) facing. The problem could be something global, like an environmental issue, or something more local, like a lack of creative opportunities in your high school.
- Step 2: Raise the stakes.
- Help us understand: Why was (or is) overcoming this challenge important? What might happen if this problem went (or goes) unchecked?
- Step 3: Describe what you did.
- Tell us the specific things you (or you and your team) did to solve the problem.
- Step 4: Clarify your role.
- Describe your particular involvement. Why were (or are) you crucial to the project or club's success?
- Step 5: Share the impact you had, lessons you learned, or values you gained.
- Provide specific evidence that gives us a sense that your work mattered. I'll show you some ways to do this in a minute.
- Think that's too much to do in one essay?
- Behold. An essay that does it:
- I live in the suburb of Los Angeles, California, known to its residents as the bubble. It has the perfect weather, location, and schools. As amazing as it sounds, however, growing up in La Cañada Flintridge has its drawbacks: the community pressures adolescents to achieve success through mainly academic means. While this approach isn't necessarily wrong, it can be difficult, particularly in my high school, to thrive in a creative and imaginative way.
- Sophomore year, my friends and I began to wonder, What if the teenagers of La Cañada had greater opportunities to express themselves. To pursue their creativity. To follow their dreams.
- That's when we decided to start the Catalyzing Creativity Club.
- Founded two years ago, the Catalyzing Creativity Club (C3, for short), provides students in our community the opportunity to pursue their passion and aspirations outside the classroom.
- Some of our opportunities include: a yearly music festival for our community's young aspiring musicians that showcases local talent to the masses and scouts; a technology expo, which allows students to be rewarded with funding and demonstrate their coding abilities to prospective companies; recording sessions for aspiring musicians, photo-publishing competitions, and a variety of guest speakers ranging from nineteen-year-old college seniors to millionaire entrepreneurs. In addition, we have a blog for aspiring writers to publish their work and are holding a shoe drive for underprivileged athletes.
- As vice president of finances for C3, I work to ensure we can fund these activities. I handle our bank account, fundraising, and organize the event planning. Moreover, I make sure that C3's activities and finances are approved by and follow the guidelines of my high school. This role is crucial, as we work to achieve non-profit status.
- Even though C3 is only a few years old, I believe it is already making an impact in the community. As we grow and the opportunities we provide become more popular, our hope is to inspire our peers to follow their dreams and burst the La Cañada Flintridge bubble. (332 words)
- Brief Notes and Analysis of this Essay
- Check out how the third paragraph is basically a straightforward listing of the club's accomplishments. This was pulled directly from the bullet points of his BEABIES exercise. (See above for more.) It works.
- Notice how specific he gets in the fourth paragraph where he clarifies why he was essential to the club's success. Doing this helps us understand that he was more than just a passive participant who showed up to meetings.
- Another potential use of your extracurricular essay is to expand on something you only mentioned briefly in your personal statement. In this case, the author mentioned in his personal statement that he's "a numbers guy" and the fourth paragraph in this essay expands on why numbers are meaningful to him.
- If he'd had more room, he could have potentially expanded in the final paragraph on the club's impact, describing specific ways the community changed, or personal lessons learned. But again, not every essay has to be perfect (and not every element has to be included) in order for this structure to work.
- Here's another wonderful, imperfect example that uses this structure:
- Last year, nearly 600 earthquakes hit my hometown of Reno in a 'swarm'. Although the magnitudes of these quakes ranged from 2.5 to 3.7, the constant fear and anxiety of impending doom rose in the community. A disaster is unprecedented and unpredictable and, in our community, we always acknowledged their occurrence elsewhere but never fully admitted that a large-scale catastrophe may happen at our doorsteps.
- Recognizing this unspoken apathy, I decided to take a step beyond my school club and get involved in the community chapter of the Reno Red Cross Disaster Cycle Services team. As I was learning the basics of preparedness i.e., general earthquake and fire safety drills, I realized that if disaster were to strike, the

majority of people in my community could not confidently say that they are prepared. As part of the DCS committee, it is my goal to increase the confidence of as many youth and families as possible.

- During my training, I accompanied volunteers during the Home Fire Preparedness Campaign, where we installed and updated smoke alarms and detectors in over thirty low income households in the Reno area, free of charge. I began teaching the “Pillowcase Project” in local elementary schools, leading workshops in and instilling the importance of disaster preparedness for the youngest of children.

- Representing DCS on the Youth Executive Board for our local chapter, I also led a Youth in Disaster Services Seminar, where we trained young adults in CPR Certification as well as basic Shelter Fundamentals.

- Through my work with the Red Cross, and in my interactions with survivors and rescuers who assisted during Hurricane Katrina, I’ve come to discover how teaching even just small preparedness procedures to individuals can help save entire communities.

- The impact of disaster services reverberates throughout our communities, both at home and internationally. It is a selfless, necessary job in which youth, as the future generation of an ever-changing disaster prone world, must take urgent action.

- Brief Notes and Analysis of this Essay

- As you can see, this structure can work for either local, more personal problems (as described in the “Catalyzing Creativity Club” essay) or larger-scale problems (as described in the “Earthquakes” essay).

- These two examples are similar in that the middle includes specific, straightforward details pulled directly from the “What I did” column of the BEABIES exercise.

- The elements of this structure can be used in whatever order makes sense for your story. In this essay, for example, the author chose to conclude with a “Why now”/ Raise the Stakes moment to provide a call to action that creates a sense of urgency and helps us understand the importance of her work. I appreciate that this puts the focus not on the author, but on the value of the work she is doing and, while this may feel counterintuitive, her decision to draw attention to her cause actually draws me to her as a college applicant even more. Why? She’s saying, “It’s not about me—it’s about the work we’re doing.” And that’s something I want in a leader.

- All right, enough analysis. Time for you to get to work.

- Step 1: Complete the BEABIES Exercise .

- This will take you 15-30 minutes and provide all the content you need to write your essay.

- Here’s a tip: The more time you spend working on this chart the easier it’ll be to write your essay.

Students who spend 10 minutes on this exercise will have an outline; students who spend 20 minutes or more will have all the content they need to write their essay.

- Once you’ve completed the BEABIES exercise...

- Step 2: Choose a problem.

- Decide which problem you want to use to start your essay. Some more examples from past students:

- “Our campus was divided into separate social groups...”

- “Our music program was at risk of being shut down...”

- “We didn’t have adequate sports equipment...”

- “A hurricane had recently flooded our nearby town and we wanted to help...”

- “Maternal mortality rates were extremely high in the community where we were working...”

- Draw us in. Get us to wonder how one might solve this problem.

- Step 3: Raise the stakes.

- Help us understand why this problem was/is important to solve. Why do we need to act now?

- Step 4: Tell us what you did about it.

- This content will come directly from the first column of your BEABIES exercise. As I’ve said, if you spend some quality time thinking about your bullet points, you’ll have all the content you need for this section.

- Step 5: Tell us why you were/are crucial to the project or club’s success.

- Many students skip this step, but it can be useful in helping us understand your particular gifts, skills, and strengths. Consider:

- Did you draw on knowledge you’d gained elsewhere (like your musical talents, or your love of research)?

- Did you learn to do something brand new for this project (like coding, for example, or how to ask local business owners for donations)?

- Imagine your team was a team trying to pull off a heist in one of those action movies (not literally, but go with me). What was your special talent that qualified you to be there? Were you the visionary, inspiring the team to dream bigger? Or the team parent, sending reminder texts and making sure everyone was eating enough?

- Step 6: Show us the impact.

- While this is perhaps the most important part of the extracurricular essay, many students struggle to articulate the impact of their work. And it's no surprise—even nonprofits and large organizations struggle to articulate the impact of their work. Here are some ways to think about impact:
- Numbers (Ex: "In the past year, club membership has tripled" or "We raised over \$1,200 to buy new books for the library!")
- Anecdotal evidence of impact, or quotations (Ex: "We've received numerous requests to return next year" or "Last week, a first-year student named Elena wrote me an email to say, 'Thank you for making a difference in my life.'")
- Personal impact (on you, the author) in the form of lessons learned, skills gained (Ex: "I have come to better understand the pervasive, damaging effects of white supremacy culture.") It's especially interesting to note if these skills transferred to other areas of your life (Ex: "The facilitation skills I learned through my work with the Gay-Straight Alliance helped me communicate more effectively with my soccer teammates.")
- Once you've brainstormed these elements, you should have everything you need to write your essay.
- FAQs for an Extracurricular Essay Based on a Challenge
- Q: How do I know if my challenge is a "good" challenge?
- A: If it's clear, specific, and compelling then it's probably a good one. But if you're not sure, ask someone. If you don't have someone nearby, ask yourself, "Would this make an interesting news segment or documentary short?" And if your challenge/problem isn't compelling enough on its own, that's what the "Raise the stakes" part is for—tell us why it matters.
- Q: Do I have to include every single element of the Shark Tank structure in order for the essay to work?
- A: Not necessarily. Note for example how the "Catalyzing Creativity Club" essay doesn't include a "Raise the stakes" moment and the "Earthquakes" essay doesn't include an "Articulate the vision" moment, yet both essays work well. Use the elements that make sense for your story; don't use the ones that don't.
- Q: Do I have to focus my extracurricular essay on a challenge?
- A: Absolutely not! Here's how to write your essay if you have NOT faced a challenge (or don't want to feature one in your essay).
- I happen to think that the difference between a boring essay and a stand-out essay is this:
- common topic
- common connections
- common achievements
- common language
- un common topic
- un common connections
- un common achievements
- un common language
- By "uncommon connections" I mean the values people don't normally or immediately associate with the activity you've named. Another word I use for uncommon connections is insights.
- And I know what you're thinking: What if I don't play an obscure instrument, or my most important extracurricular activity and achievements are somewhat common?
- Don't worry. That's what this guide is for.
- If you have no uncommon topic or achievements, it's all the more important to make uncommon connections related to your values. Why? With a common topic and common connections (i.e. basketball taught me hard work and discipline), you'll likely blend in. Instead, you want to generate insights others won't have thought of. How? There's a game for that!
- The UC* Game
- *Uncommon Connections
- First, pick a cliché topic that you might use for an essay. The more cliché the better.
- Football, you say? The mission trip? Awesome, let's do both.
- Step 1: Brainstorm the cliché version of your essay.
- First, tell me what the typical football or mission trip essay will focus on. How? Take a look at the Values Exercise and list some cliché values that you think the typical essay would focus on.
- A cliché connection for [football] would be [teamwork, responsibility, hard work, etc.]
- A cliché connection for a [mission trip] would be [helping others, hard work, passion, etc.].
- You get the idea.
- Step 2: Come up with 3-4 uncommon values.
- Next, brainstorm values that might not normally be associated with football or a mission trip.
- An uncommon connection to [football] might be [resourcefulness, healthy boundaries, critical thinking, etc.].
- An uncommon connection to [a mission trip] might be [serenity, accountability, practicality, etc.].

- If you can find one uncommon connection you can find two, if you can find two you can find three, and if you can find three then you have enough content for a 350-word essay. Here's how to develop your content:
- Step 3: Tie the value to a specific example from your life.
- Describe one specific example of how you've developed or explored that value through that activity... and maybe even applied it to other areas of your life.
- Example: Football has made me a better reader.
- As a cornerback, I meticulously and systematically scan the offense, looking for nuances in formation before the quarterback snaps the ball, all in a matter of seconds. It's not unlike annotating a novel. Finding the subtle complexities in my rival teams' spread offense has not only led me to intercepting a pass, but has given me the skills to fully digest, for example, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, where the smallest, and at first glance, almost unnoticeable details, add to an intricate story that I wouldn't appreciate in the same way had I not been able to notice those details in the first place.
- See how that makes for a more interesting football essay?
- uncommon value (critical thinking) + application elsewhere (English class) = win
- Once you have a list of 3-4 uncommon values and examples of how they've manifested in your life...
- Step 4: Decide on an order for your details and write a draft.
- I recommend chronological order, as it'll make transitions easier. Then try a draft. It doesn't have to be perfect the first time, just get something down on paper.
- Only have 30 minutes? Take a look at this post to turn around your mediocre EC activity essay in just a half hour.
- Check out the example below, for which the author brainstormed these values: beauty, culture, social change, family, helping others, language.
- Do re fa mi, re do fa mi, re do sol fa mi re mi re. Have I completely lost it? Should I be locked up in a mental hospital chained to a chair? No. Then what are these utterances coming from my mouth? Music.
- I have devoted thousands of hours of my life to playing the santur, a classical Persian instrument that originated in the Middle East. Some people think I'm strange: a Persian redheaded Jewish teenager obsessed with an ancient musical instrument. But they don't see what I see. My santur is King David's lyre: it can soothe, enrapture, mesmerize.
- The santur also allows me to connect to my culture and Persian heritage, and to visit Iran of the past, a culture rich in artistic tradition. Sometimes I imagine performing for the king in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the santur sounds echoing through the Seven Hills of Jerusalem.
- Today, some Americans view Iran as a land of terrorists, but when I play the innocent of Iran, the educated, the artists, the innovators, come to life. Iran is not a country of savages; it's Kubla Khan's fountain, an abundant source of knowledge and creativity.
- Finally, the santur represents one of my remaining links to my grandfather. In the last few years of his life, Baba Joon did not know me as his grandson. Alzheimer's slowly took over his brain, and eventually he could not recognize me. Baba Joon grew up with the music of the santur and my father plays it in his car every day, so when I play, the music connects all three generations.
- In December I'll be releasing my first album, a collection of classical Persian pieces. Proceeds from the album will go toward Alzheimer's research, as I hope to play some small part in finding a cure for the disease. My teacher is one of only a handful of santur teachers from Iran, and I sometimes wonder if the santur will soon become extinct, like the seven thousand endangered languages which may soon be gone.
- Not if I have anything to say about it.
- (350 words)
- But you might be wondering: "Ethan, do I have to use uncommon connections? Can't I just tell the reader about what I've done and learned?"
- You can! In fact, here's an essay that does just that:
- Through switch-side policy debate I not only discuss a multitude of competing ideas, but also argue from both sides of widely disputed issues. By equipping me with Protagoras' antilogic and Dissoi Logoi, switch-side policy debate has provided me with a forum to cultivate a diversity of intellectual perspectives that has informed my own intellectual growth.
- I strive to give others the same opportunity for intellectual stimulation. Over the past two years, I have helped expand my debate team from a struggling club of 15 to a force of over 100 debaters, leading my team to place first in our debate league. As team President, I teach new debaters fundamentals in communication theory while facilitating formal and informal debates. Playing a dual role as instructor and competitor has allowed me to establish debate as a lasting forum for discussing ideas at my school.
- The lessons I learned as both a leader and debater have helped me to succeed beyond my debate circles. Inside the classroom, I possess the openness to consider the views of others and the courage to

voice my own opinions. Having been elected to student office four times, I have used these skills to sell my ideas to the student body and earn its vote. More importantly, debate has taught me how to transform these ideas into concrete actions. As the current ASB Vice President, I have used the managerial and communication skills I developed as a debater to spearhead a school wide sustainability campaign that spanned issues concerning water scarcity, ecology, and campus beautification.

- Similarly, the lessons I learned in debate will be instrumental in my future work as an entrepreneur and engineer, both of which require the capacity to approach problems critically and clearly articulate complex ideas. Continuing to develop these skills will be crucial if I am to become a competitive member in the future marketplace of ideas.

- (313 words)

- Brief Notes and Analysis of this Essay

- This essay uses what I call the “firehose” approach. It’s a straightforward account of this student’s accomplishments and the lessons he has learned. Does it feel too braggy? Maybe, since culturally we sometimes recoil when folks too boldly or plainly state their achievements. But maybe not, as I really appreciate how he connects each accomplishment (“Having been elected to student office four times...”) to lessons he’s learned through debate (“...I have used these skills to sell my ideas to the student body and earn its vote”).

- I also appreciate how this essay weaves together different parts of his application, describing both his role in the classroom and his work in student government. In this sense, debate ends up being a thematic thread that connects many parts of his life.

- Also note that, while a few of the connections he makes are somewhat uncommon (e.g., debate taught him managerial skills and how to transform ideas into concrete actions), many of his values are somewhat common, like how debate has taught him courage and openness. And the essay works. One thing that I think prevents his essay from sounding cliché is the specificity of his language throughout the essay.

- You might have realized that several of the colleges on your list have essay prompts that ask about your extracurricular involvement.

- You might have also realized “Hey, wait a minute, I talked about basketball/band/Boy Scouts/MUN in that other essay. Is this the same essay?”

- It might be. Many colleges word their extracurricular essays a bit differently, but at the heart of things, they just want to know what you’re spending time on outside of the classroom.

- To help save students lots of time, I recommend that they write a Super Extracurricular Essay: an essay that can work for multiple schools essay requirements.

- I have a longer, step-by-step guide for writing a Super Essay, which I recommend reading if you’re finding yourself drowning in supplemental essays, but here’s the short version:

- (5-20 min) Choose an extracurricular activity that will work for several prompts listed on your Essay Tracker. (This is basically a spreadsheet that lists all of your required supplemental essays. You can download a template on tab 2 of the document here.) Not sure which topic will work best? The BEABIES will help you flesh out potential topics.

- (2 min.) Copy and paste all the prompts that your topic could work for at the top of the document you’ll be writing your essay on.

- (25 min.) Decide on a structure— Narrative or Montage —and either complete the Shark Tank exercise or play the Uncommon Connections Game.

- (25-50 min.) Write the darn essay.

- Some colleges have much shorter word limits for their extracurricular essay. That can be tricky to tackle, as it asks you to communicate a lot of information in just a few words.

- Here’s a great example, followed by some tips:

- **VIOLENCE IN EGYPT ESCALATES. FINANCIAL CRISIS LEAVES EUROPE IN TURMOIL.** My quest to become a journalist began by writing for the international column of my school newspaper, The Log. My specialty is international affairs; I’m the messenger who delivers news from different continents to the doorsteps of my community. Late-night editing, researching and re-writing is customary, but seeing my articles in print makes it all worthwhile. I’m the editor for this section, responsible for brainstorming ideas and catching mistakes. Each spell-check I make, each sentence I type out, and each article I polish will remain within the pages of The Log. Leading a heated after-school brainstorming session, watching my abstract thoughts materialize onscreen, holding the freshly printed articles in my hand—I write for this joyous process of creation. One day I’ll look back, knowing this is where I began developing the scrutiny, precision and rigor necessary to become a writer.

- Tip #1: Value content (information) over form (poetry). Space is limited here, so make sure the reader understands what you’ve done and what you’ve learned. Notice how, in the example above, a lot of the content probably came from the first column of the BEABIES: (i.e., “What I did”).

- Tip #2: Use active verbs to give a clear sense of what you've done .
- Check out the active verbs in the essay above: writing, delivering, editing, researching, re-writing, brainstorming, catching, polishing, leading, holding, knowing.
- Tip #3: Consider telling us in one good clear sentence what the activity meant to you.
- Examples: "I'm the messenger who delivers news from different continents to the doorsteps of my community" and "I write for this joyous process of creation" and "One day I'll look back, knowing that this is where I began to develop the scrutiny, precision and rigor necessary to become a writer."
- Okay, that's three sentences. But notice how all three are different. (And if you're gonna include three, they better be different.)
- Tip #4. You can "show" some, but not too much.
- Example from the first line: "VIOLENCE IN EGYPT ESCALATES. FINANCIAL CRISIS LEAVES EUROPE IN TURMOIL."
- And later: "Leading a heated after-school brainstorming session, watching my abstract thoughts materialize onscreen, holding the freshly printed articles in my hand..."
- The first one grabs our attention; the second paints a clear and dynamic picture. Keep 'em short!
- This essay uses the montage approach and does not name a specific problem. If, however, you're using the Shark Tank structure from above and want to adapt it for the 150-word essay...
- Tip #5: Consider starting your essay with the "problem."
- In fact, probably name the problem in the first sentence. Then, in the second sentence, say what you did about it. Why? Word count.
- Tip #6: Don't forget to include specific impact, even if it's brief.
- Read the ending again:
- "I helped ease the work of the nurses and doctors, while delivering medicine and smiles to dozens of patients. I may not have directly saved any lives, but I'd like to think I helped."
- Tip #7: Write it long first, then cut it.
- Both these students started with 250-300 word statements, then they trimmed ruthlessly. In my experience this tends to be easier than writing a very short version and then trying to figure out what to add.
- Here are a few more examples to get you inspired.
- Note that the authors of these didn't give them title, but I've given them generic titles to make referring to them easier and to break up the text on this blog post.
- Photography
- Developer, one minute; stop bath, 30 seconds; fixer, two minutes. Under the red beam of safelights a new photo comes to life, a carefully crafted compilation of dark shadows, light skies, and all the greys in between.
- I've spent many hours exploring photography using film cameras, pinhole cameras, plastic cameras, Polaroids, digital cameras, and disposables. I scour antique stores for old cameras to experiment with and learn from. As a result of my passion for photography, I have become one of my school's photographers, responsible for documenting school events and teaching younger students darkroom techniques. Making decisions in the darkroom about contrast filters and apertures has made me more confident in my ability to make choices quickly. I also use my photography to advance social justice causes by drawing attention to issues such as unattainable standards for women's bodies. (139 words)
- In eighth grade, I created an art piece addressing a stereotype I had faced and posted it online, encouraging my friends to do the same and hashtag it #StereotypeProject. The drawing snowballed into a viral movement, gathering the attention of over 1,000 youth artists worldwide, each contributing their own stories and drawings. The Stereotype Project has since grown, extending into local schools and calling on the next generation to stand strong against the biases they face due to race, gender, sexual orientation, mental illness, and more. In a time of increasing youth activism and reminders of the potential we have as young revolutionaries, the Stereotype Project is a channel for creative expression, unity, and a means of imparting a positive impact on the world. Our website continues to be live and accept submissions: stereotypeproject.org. (136 words)
- Hospital Internship
- Upon applying to Irvine Regional Hospital, I was told there were no spaces for Junior Volunteers. After securing additional recommendations, however, I reapplied and was finally accepted and assigned Front Desk duties, where I delivered flowers, transported biopsy samples to labs, directed visitors, and answered nurse requests. Unfortunately, the hospital was shut down due to lack of funds, and hundreds of workers became unemployed, including me. It was distressing to experience the effects of a declining economy. When Kaiser Permanente opened, my applications were also initially rejected. But by requesting an interview, I proved my qualifications from past experiences and was specially assigned to Medical

Surgery instead of the Gift Shop. I answered patients' requests, administered patient surveys, organized wound documentations, filed records, delivered blood and urine samples, assisted nurses with check-ups, stocked supply carts, updated dietary needs with doctors, and discharged patients safely. (146 words)

- Regular Dog: \$1.49. Jimmy's Famous: \$1.89. Twenty-five cents for cheese. Bologna's out. Milkshake machine's broken. Refill sweet tea.
- As cashier at Jimmy's Hot Dogs, I was everything but the cook. After day one, my hair stood straight and old southern ladies sympathetically asked oh honey, is it your first shift? I wanted to cry.
- But, an hour before closing, Nondas, the cook, checked the register. He smiled and said "Luci Lou, you the best." Stress forgotten, we danced around the kitchen in celebration, talking about his brothers in Greece, World Cup soccer, and grilled fish.
- After that, I didn't feel alone. I had Nondas. I had the regulars. And I had the southern ladies to back me up. Jimmy's taught me to value the people that make a job worthwhile. To focus on the positive when there's soccer to be watched and perfectly grilled fish to be eaten. (150 words)
- Two years ago I won the Coach's Award without ever stepping on the volleyball court. How? Sophomore year, a stress fracture prevented me from practicing, but I came to every practice and game to encourage and laugh with my teammates. At the end of the year, I won the award based on my positivity.
- The subsequent year, I transferred schools and tried out for volleyball. Due to MHSAA rules, I couldn't play because of the transfer, but I could practice. I never missed one, worked hard, and acted as team manager. So guess what happened? I won the Coach's Award again, this time from a different coach. Again, without ever having set foot on the court.
- While I'm not sure I'll play D1 or D2 sports, I know for sure that one of my favorite activities ever is being positive and I plan to continue it at Michigan. (148 words)
- Watch the lessons on your own or via the live option.
- Tagged: student , Common App , common app , essay , college essay , Extracurricular Essay , extracurricular activities , supplemental essay

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

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- [Common App](#)
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How to Write a Successful College Transfer Essay

2025/2026

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-transfer-essay-examples>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- It's hard to write a one-size-fits all approach for college transfer essays . Why? As Dan Nannini , Transfer Center Director at Santa Monica College , pointed out to me last week, "Every student is just so darn different."
- He's right. And given the great variety of reasons for students transferring—from military deployment , moving from community college to a university , to simply not vibing with a particular school—it may seem impossible to create a method that can work for everyone.
- But I'd like to try.
- So below, I'm going to lay out steps for writing a strong college transfer essay, and offer some college transfer essay examples.
- And, as with all my other resources, take this is not The Only Way but instead A Pretty Good Way .
- As a transfer student wondering how to start a transfer essay, you're probably dealing with some version of this prompt:
- "Please provide a statement that addresses your reasons for transferring and the objectives you hope to achieve."
- I happen to believe there are...
- Establish some of your core values.
- Explain why you chose your current school (the one you're leaving) in the first place.
- Offer specific reasons why you want to leave your current school.
- Show how you've made the best of things in your current situation.
- What do you want to do/be/study? (aka: What's your dream?)
- Outline how the new school (the one you'd like to transfer to) will help you realize your dream.
- Close it out short and sweet. Bonus points if it's in a memorable way.
- IMPORTANT: The key to presenting each of these qualities isn't just in WHAT you say (your content), but in HOW you say it (your approach). What follows is a paragraph-by-paragraph breakdown of what to do and how to do it, followed by some great example personal statements—and yes, I'm suggesting you focus on establishing one quality per paragraph. Here it goes:
- Establish some of your core values
- What you're trying to do here: In the opening paragraph you want to make an awesome first impression. And, given that first impressions are often established in the first 30 seconds and that this impression isn't likely to change (even when, studies show , people are presented with facts that contradict their first impressions!) your first paragraph better be on point.
- How to start a transfer essay: One efficient way to make a great first impression is to focus on establishing a few core values or, if you can, the essential part of you that is suffering in your current (school) situation.
- How do you identify your core values? Do this 5 min exercise .
- How do you decide which part of you is suffering in your current (school) situation? Well, just ask yourself, "Which part of me is suffering in my current (school) situation?" and, if you wanna' get deep, ask yourself, "Which of my deeper needs isn't being met at this school?" Click here for a list of Feelings and Needs. But here's the key: you may not want to just come out and say it, as that can be boring.
- How can I express my core values in a way that's not super boring? Come up with an essence image that captures that value (or those values). In the sample below, for example, the student wanted to communicate her core values of connection, intimacy, family, and listening. So she chose the dinner table:
- Breakfast isn't the most important meal of the day. In my family the most sacred meal is dinner. The aroma from my mother's authentic Persian saffron and Barberry spirals around the circular dining table as we prepare to pile each other's plates high with current events, future plans, and questions about what we learned that day. Slowly, the notification bells and piercing ring tones are replaced by the clamor of metal

utensils as my sisters try to fit the plates and silverware around our carefully crafted dinner table. Each person sits the same distance from the center as we listen to my little sister's attempt at hopscotch from earlier that day with as much interest as my Dad's stories about his patient with Atherosclerosis. Listening is how we take care of one another.

- Another example:

- Before I could even walk, my parents instilled in me a love for history. And thanks to their passion for travel, much of my early education was experiential. At eight, I could not only recite knowledge of Corrie Ten Boom, I'd visited the house where she'd hidden Jews in her home during WWII. By 10 I'd seen the Roman Ruins just outside Paris and by 11, I'd visited Rome and Florence, and begun to develop a passion for Michelangelo. By 14 I'd climbed the caverns of Mykonos and by 16 I'd walked barefoot through India and jogged along the Great Wall of China. Though moving around wasn't always easy, travel gave me the opportunity to become more adaptable and resourceful, and I came to embrace differences as not only normal but exciting. My passion for cultural experiences and history continued in high school, and I looked forward to more experiential learning opportunities in college.

- See how each example immerses us in the author's world? And note how their descriptions awaken the senses. So much more interesting than if the authors had simply said, for example, "the values that are important to me are connection, intimacy, family, and listening." Instead, each author shows us. And I'm not by the way just advocating for "show, don't tell," because you'll notice that both authors show AND tell. In the first example:

- First the author shows the value:

- Slowly, the notification bells and piercing ring tones are replaced by the clamor of metal utensils as my sisters try to fit the plates and silverware around our carefully crafted dinner table. Each person sits the same distance from the center as we listen to my little sister's attempt at hopscotch from earlier that day with as much interest as my Dad's stories about his patient with Atherosclerosis.

- Then, to make sure we get it, she tells us what that value is:

- Listening is how we take care of one another

- And in doing so, offers a bit of insight (for some specific techniques for adding insight/reflection to your writing, head there).

- Now that's how to start a transfer essay. Okay, let's move on.

- What you're trying to do here : Let the reader know how/why you are where you are. Because, y'know, the reader might wonder.

- How to do this: Simply. Factually. Succinctly.

- I originally chose Pasadena Community College because I wanted to a) stay close to home to take care of my mom, who was recovering from cancer when I graduated high school, b) save money by living at home and finishing my general ed requirements for under \$50 per credit, and c) help my dad at his TV repair business.

- See how simple? Just the facts, ma'am.

- I was obsessed with Top Chef as a kid. While most of my friends were thinking about which expensive summer program they'd attend or whether or not they should take the SAT for the sixteenth time, my mind was on how to whip eggs to create the perfect "lift" in a soufflé and developing a long term strategy to create my own food television network. So I originally chose Drake Colonial University for its Culinary Arts program. And because it was two miles from my house.

- Note the specifics. Also note how the reasons are clearly different and could be bullet pointed.

- Wanted to be close to home (take care of mom)

- Help dad at work

- Drake's Culinary Arts program

- Two miles from me

- This part doesn't have to be flashy, but you could use a couple succinct examples to add a little something ("take the SAT for the sixteenth time" vs. "how to whip eggs to create the perfect "lift" in a soufflé"). Notice also how Example 2 above could serve as the opening paragraph, as it also establishes a couple core values (creativity, excellence, entrepreneurship, practicality). Which leads to an important point: Don't take this as a strict by-the-numbers guide. Take what's useful; discard the rest.

- Heads-up: This is probably the most important part of the essay. Why? Essentially, you're explaining to someone (a college) with whom you'd like to be in a relationship why your last relationship (with that other college) didn't work out. In short, you need to talk crap about your ex but still be really nice about it.

- NO I'M KIDDING. You're not talking crap about your ex.

- What you're (actually) trying to do here: You're trying to articulate, with specifics, why you want to leave your current situation.

- How to do this:

- Three tips:
- Consider describing your expectations and then letting the reader know whether or not those expectations were met (you don't have to do this—it's optional)
- Use specific reasons (to avoid sounding like you're just talking crap)
- Consider including an a-ha moment (in which you discovered something about yourself)
- Let's address these one by one:
- 1. Let the reader know if your expectations were or were not met.
- Some students want to transfer because they had a plan and it worked out, and some students transfer because they had a plan that did not work out.
- The "My expectations were met and the plan worked out!" Example:
- I originally chose Pasadena Community College because I wanted to a) stay close to home to take care of my mother, who was recovering from cancer when I graduated high school, b) save money by living at home and completing my general ed requirements for under \$50 per credit, and c) help my dad at his TV repair business. Achievements unlocked! Now that my mom is cancer free, I've finished my general ed requirements (with straight As!) and my dad has hired my uncle (in other words: he doesn't need me anymore), I'm ready to move on.
- Notice how in this example the author seems to say, "Great! I did what I planned to do and it's time to move on." That's one way to do it. Sometimes, however, things don't work as planned—and, in this next example, it's no one's fault:
- The "My expectations weren't met (and it's not the school's fault)" Example:
- I originally chose Northwestern State Tech for its renowned global health program and looked forward to studying under Prof Paula Farnham, a titan in the global health world. Soon after my arrival, however, Prof Farnham took an indefinite leave of absence when she was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's.
- Notice how in this example things didn't go according to the author's plan, but it's not the school's fault; it's just the way things turned out. But that's not always the case, and sometimes you honestly just want out.
- "My expectations were not met, this was NOT the plan (and I'm not saying it's the school's fault but honestly I just don't want to be here anymore)" Example:
- Initially, Drake Colonial University stood out to me for its culinary arts program and I looked forward to working side-by-side with top-rated chefs, experimenting with gastronomy and Sous-vide and finding others who shared my geeky passion for Transglutaminase. Unfortunately, my experience after arriving differed greatly from the one I'd imagined in at least three important ways: 1) the DCU culinary arts program was focused much more on the theory of cooking than actual cooking (all my finals last year, for example, took place in a classroom using pen and paper rather than in a kitchen); 2) access to supplies and facilities was extremely limited and most were off-limits to underclassmen, and 3) no one here had even heard of Transglutaminase.
- Pulling this one off is a little trickier. Why? First of all, because there may be a lot more emotions wrapped up in your decision to transfer than in the two examples mentioned above. As a result, some part of you might honestly feel that it IS the school's fault you're so unhappy and some part of you may actually want to talk crap about the school. Here's a tip: DON'T. It won't make you look better or smarter—it'll just sound like you're complaining. Here's your greatest ally in this situation: concrete, specific reasons. Let me say this a little more boldly:
- 2. Provide specific evidence demonstrating how your expectations were or weren't met.
- If your expectations were met, great! Just outline your plan, then show how you rocked that plan—maybe even throw in something bonus that happened (and I even did it while keeping a full-time job!).
- But whether your expectations were met or not, you MUST give specifics to support your points. In the sample above, for example, it wouldn't be enough to say, "Unfortunately, DCU wasn't all it was cracked up to be..."
- Why? We need proof! Examples! Specifics! So in that example above the author first lets us know what she expected (hands on! experimentation! other food nerds!) before letting us know specifically what she found instead: theory instead of hands-on (boo) limited access to experimentation (aw) no other Transglutaminase nerds (I am sad).
- Why it can be useful to clarify what your expectations were:
- It kinda' lets the school that you're leaving off the hook, essentially saying that it's not the school's fault entirely, it's just that you wanted something else, which makes no one the bad guy.
- The more specific you are with exactly what you want, the easier it can be for the readers at your potential future college to imagine you on their campus (hopefully the readers will be like, "Oh! We have a great hands-on, experimental Culinary Arts program filled with food nerds!") and maybe even start to root

for you (i.e., want you to get your needs met).

- Side note: Actually, I guess it is kinda' like talking about an ex, but instead of saying "He was awful because of X," you're framing it in a positive way, saying in effect, "It's not his fault, I just realized I was looking for Y." (And, hopefully, your reader will be like, "Ooh!! We have LOTS of Y at our school!") And sometimes, let's be honest, we didn't know what we were looking for until we got the opposite.
- You didn't know how important hands-on experimentation was until you ended up in a culinary arts program where all the "cooking" tests were done with pen and paper.
- You're a girl who didn't know how important freedom to hold hands with your girlfriend in public was to you until some people at your school told you that you couldn't do that (see example essay that follows).
- Just to clarify: You don't have to act like you had it all figured out before you got to your first school. You could:
- 3. Consider including an a-ha moment (one in which you discovered something about yourself)
- Template for this:
- It wasn't until I experienced X that I realized Y [this core value] was so important to me.
- It wasn't until I sailed through my first semester with no homework and straight As that I realized how important intellectual challenge was to me.
- Someone once said, "We don't recognize our home until we lose it," and the same was true for me. Not until I moved 620 miles away to X school did I realize that Y school—which had been in my backyard all along, just 20 minutes from the church I was baptized in, the grandmother who raised me, and the one I love most in this world (my dog, Max)—was home after all.
- Got the idea?
- And by the way: if you don't get 100% specific here with your desires, don't worry—you'll have a chance in two paragraphs. You can keep your desires a little vague here.
- What you're trying to do here: Show the reader you're not the kind of person that just rolls over when confronted with adversity or goes in the corner and pouts when you don't get what you want. Instead: how did you work to meet your needs? What did you do about it? (Note that if your expectations were met—if, in other words, this first school was all part of the plan—this is your chance to brag about all the cool stuff you've done!)
- How to do this: By being creative. Positive. And by reframing everything you've been involved in since graduating high school (even the tough stuff) as preparation for your big awesome future.
- Some examples of making the best of your experience at a school you're about to leave:
- There was no formal Makeup Department, so guess what. I STARTED ONE. WE'VE GOT 16 MEMBERS. BOOM.
- My classes were so much bigger than I thought they'd be AND there were no formal study groups set up, so guess what. I ORGANIZED ONE. AND I EVEN BAKED BROWNIES. #glutenfree
- There were no legit dance studios on campus OR in the dorms open after 7pm, so guess what. I PETITIONED TO LIVE OFF-CAMPUS AS A FRESHMAN, FOUND A TINY APARTMENT WITH A BASEMENT THAT OUR TEAM COULD REHEARSE IN, AND WE GOT TO WORK. #werrrk
- You get the idea. How did you make the best of a just-okay situation while you were waiting (or before you decided) to fill out your transfer application? If you're thinking that the part-time job you took, the decision to quit school, or even the Netflix shows you binge-watched wasn't ultimately preparing you for your big awesome future, you're just not thinking creatively enough—yet. Ask yourself: could it be that I was gaining other skills and values along the way? Could it be that I was doing more than just earning money (hint: learned organizational skills, or discipline, or collaboration), more than just quitting school (hint: learned to put your health first), more than just binge-watching Netflix (hint: learned how much you value productivity by being totally unproductive for three weeks straight).
- Here's a list to get you thinking.
- And if you're like, "Um, well, I didn't do anything," chances are that either a) you didn't really think carefully or creatively enough yet, or that b) YOU DON'T DESERVE TO TRANSFER.
- I'm kidding about that last one. Kinda'. Keep thinking. This part's important.
- What you're trying to do here: Paint the Big Picture—the vision for your life, or a dream job. Don't have one? Uh-oh. Quit now. (I'm kidding.)
- How to do this: By dreaming. Ask yourself, What would a dream job be—even if it isn't your only dream job, and even if you aren't 100% certain that this is what you'd like to do—and use it as a placeholder, like these students did...
- I'm particularly concerned about beauty waste because I am morally disturbed by the fact that my personal grooming is damaging the environment for everyone. The problem is that cosmetics are often objects of desire—we want to be pampered and we crave a luxurious experience—and packaging reflects these consumer instincts. My dream is to rally college communities nation-wide in a drive to reduce

packaging waste. As a community of passionate learners and intellectuals we can spread the message to student groups in colleges that protecting the environment trumps our desire for the most wrapped-up, elaborate, expensive packaging.

- My dream is to become a special effects makeup artist with a specialty in fantasy-based creature makeup. Through an extensive process that includes concept design, face, cowl, and body sculpting in clay, molding the pieces using liquid latex or silicon, applying the products to the human model, hand-painting and airbrushing, and fabricate addition components if necessary, I will create original characters that will be featured in movies and television shows.
- I know, that's pretty specific. But again, these were written by students who weren't 100% certain that they wanted to do this—they picked something they loved and built an argument (read: essay) around it.
- If it's hard for you to think in terms of careers or dream jobs, try asking one of these questions instead:
- "What's one Big Problem I'd like to try to help solve in the world?"
- "Why do I want to go to this other school anyway?" Have you ever stopped to really articulate that? Have a friend ask you this and see what you say. And it can't be simply because it's more prestigious, or because you like living by the beach, or because you just really (like really) want to live in a big city. You need more specifics and more specific specifics. (That's not a typo.)
- A Really Good Tip for This Paragraph: Think of this as a set-up for a "Why us" essay, in particular the part where you're talking about YOU... your hopes, dreams, goals, etc. Because if you can pick something specific—and even if it's a placeholder (like the examples above)—this can lead directly into the next paragraph. How? Because, once you pick a Thing you'd like to do/study/be, then you can ask yourself, "Okay, what skills/resources/classes will I need in order to do/study/become that Thing?"
- For more "Why us" resources: Click here for the Why This College Essay Guide + Examples . Or click here for a Complete Guide to the "Why Us" Essay.
- To recap: In Paragraph 5, you're setting up the specifics that you're seeking. Then...
- What you're trying to do here: Depends. On what? On which of these two options you choose:
- Write one essay for ALL the schools you're applying to . Why do this? Maybe you're short on time. Or maybe you're kinda' lazy (sorry, efficient!) and don't really see the value in writing a different essay for each school. That's fine.
- Write a different essay for EACH of the schools you're applying to. Why do this? It shows each school you're applying to that you cared enough to spend the time researching and have really, really thought this through. I also think it gives you a better chance at WOW-ing the school and demonstrating why you're a great match.
- FAQ: Can you write and submit a separate essay for each school? Yes, as of this writing (2022), Common App allows you to edit your personal statement as many times as you like. So you can write an essay for School X, then submit to School X. Then go back into your Common App, copy and paste in the essay for School Y, then submit to School Y. And so on.
- WARNING: If you choose to use this method, you MUST make sure not to submit the wrong essay to the wrong school. That's a really quick way to get you into the "no" pile.
- How to write one essay for ALL the schools you're applying to (Option A):
- If you opt to do this, you'll want to mention the kinds of classes you'd want to take the kinds of professors you'd like to study with, etc. But I don't want to say too much more about this, as I'd actually prefer to spend more time on the other approach (Option B) because I happen to think it's a better way. So here's:
- How to write a different essay for EACH of the schools you're applying to (Option B):
- By researching. A lot. This paragraph is basically a mini "Why us" essay, and you'll want to include as many specifics as you can find. Click here for a list of resources. But you won't find the content for this paragraph in your beautiful amazing brain. Why? Chances are you don't KNOW yet what specific opportunities the school you're hoping to transfer offers. So go find out.
- Here's a great example of what great research might yield (excerpted from the Complete Guide to the "Why Us" Essay):
- A journalist cannot reach the peak of his craft if his knowledge of literature and critical thinking skills are weak, which is why I'm excited to explore what the Department of English has to offer. I look forward to courses such as 225: Academic Argumentation and 229: Professional Writing, as I believe these will provide me with a firm basis in journalistic writing technique and improve my abilities to write analytically and develop well-supported arguments. In addition, the Professional Writing course will teach me how to write in a concise, straightforward style, a skill vital to a journalist.
- See how specific he is? And how he says why he wants each course? Also, notice how his separate reasons can all be bullet pointed. We could break down the paragraph above, for example, into a What I Need/What You (the school) Have list that might look like this:
- WHAT I NEED:

- knowledge of literature and critical thinking skills
- a firm basis in journalistic writing technique
- ability to write analytically
- ability to develop well-supported arguments
- ability to write in a concise, straightforward style
- WHAT YOU (THE SCHOOL) HAVE:
- 225: Academic Argumentation
- 229: Professional Writing
- Professional Writing course
- And bonus points if you can find stuff that is closer to unique to that school (or maybe even actually unique). For example:
- I would also like to be able to contribute my experiences with neurotechnology to support the cutting edge research in Cornell's brand new NeuroNex Hub. I would love to work with Dr. Chris Xu in expanding the current three-photon microscope to be applied on various animal models. I also look forward to helping Dr. Chris Schaffer, whose research on deep neural activity is not being done anywhere else in the world. I freak out at the possibility of helping him develop a tool to look at multiple brain areas at the same time.
- If the school you're hoping to transfer to is maybe the only one that has certain opportunities that fit your goals ... say so. Show them how you're perfect for each other.
- What you're trying to do here: Close it out. Hopefully in a memorable way. But honestly it doesn't need to be amazing. It needs to be short.
- How to do this: Succinctly. Ask yourself: Is there anything else I need to say? Like, really need to say? Hopefully you've said it all already. If so, just close it out with 1-2 short lines.
- Here are a few options that other students have used:
- The "bringing it back full circle" ending:
- My pulse will always race when I'm creating my grandmother's cacio e pepe for a party of eight. Yet cooking wasn't meant to be my career or my college experience. I learned I truly, deeply, profoundly love chemistry, and only through transferring to [insert school here] can I [name specific skills/resources you hope to gain], becoming a world renowned chemist specializing in global nutrient efficiency and bringing an end to world hunger.
- The "my experiences made me who I am" ending:
- Once I thought about it, I realized that if I hadn't dropped out, I would have never [insert formative experience here], and I would have never [insert positive value here]. Looking back on this part of my life, I realized that dropping out was actually the best decision I could have ever made.
- The "I have a dream (and you can help!)" ending:
- I'm inspired to continue my work spreading nutritional information and resources to low-income communities like the one I was raised in and am committed to helping create not only a healthier future for my own family, but for the larger Latino community. I believe [insert school's name] can help.
- The "I'm looking for a home" ending:
- Finally, the students and faculty that I met on my visit were [insert positive value here]. They made me feel that [insert college here] was a place I could call home.
- Obviously don't copy these word-for-word; let these inspire you. Or write something else altogether (you have lots of options for endings)!
- My advice: Aim for the heart. But be concise.
- Ready to see how it all comes together?
- Here's an example essay—and I'll put tiny notes in bold and italics in between the paragraphs so you can remember what to look for.
- 1. Core values: experiential learning, multiculturalism, embracing differences
- Before I could even walk, my parents instilled in me a love for history. And thanks to their passion for travel, much of my early education was experiential. At eight, I could not only recite knowledge of Corrie Ten Boom, I'd visited the house where she'd hidden Jews in her home during WWII. By 10 I'd seen the Roman Ruins just outside Paris and by 11, I'd visited Rome and Florence, and begun to develop a passion for Michelangelo. By 14 I'd climbed the caverns of Mykonos and by 16 I'd walked barefoot through India and jogged along the Great Wall of China. Though moving around wasn't always easy, travel gave me the opportunity to become more adaptable and resourceful, and I came to embrace differences as not only normal but exciting. My passion for cultural experiences and history continued in high school, and I looked forward to more experiential learning opportunities in college.
- 2. Why she initially chose X school
- One of the things that initially attracted me to Biola University was the Torrey Honors program. I also appreciated the welcoming attitude of its students, and, initially, its emphasis on Judeo-Christian values.

But the past year and a half has given me time for introspection, and I have begun to see that Biola and I are not the best match.

- 3. A polite articulation of why she and the school are not the best match
- I believe, for example, in the freedom to express love for whomever one chooses. But on at least one occasion at Biola I've been reported to my resident director for displaying physical affection toward another girl and have been told I could risk expulsion if we were "caught" in the act. I also believe that one should be free to express her spiritual beliefs in any way she chooses. At Biola, however, students are required to attend a minimum of 30 chapel events, and must pay upwards of \$300 if this requirement is not met. I'm also interested in a diversity of perspective, but faculty are required to teach through a Biblical lens, and over 90% of the students in my department (Anthropology) are seeking to do missionary work following graduation. Finally, I didn't feel the Torrey Honors Program provided the kind of experiential learning environment I was looking for.
- 4. How she made the best of things — and learned some great lessons and skills!
- Two highlights of my time at Biola included debate, and the experience of founding BQU, a safe, but underground group for queer students. Working with the debate team has taught me how to be accountable for my own work and more humble in my losses. Working with BQU has shown me not only the necessity of being vulnerable with others, but has also taught me skills in creating a group constitution, designing a website, and advertising our cause in a non-inflammatory way.
- 5. What she wants to do (a.k.a.: the dream)
- I've always been interested in psychological or environmental root of motives, and I see myself one day working in public policy. I'm seeking science and social science departments that offer both excellent research facilities and opportunities for practical application.
- 6. How she'll pursue her interests at her new school: a mini "Why us" essay
- I am interested in the debate team at Fordham because its Jesuit tradition inspires an intellectually rigorous environment. While my current team is very skilled, it does not fulfill my intellectual values; I want classmates who want to explore controversial topics despite their personal stances, and who want to take debate as seriously as their social lives. My desire to explore diversity is also reflected in my major (Anthropology), and draws me to the Irish Studies department. I am personally looking to revive my cultural heritage, and I am also interested in helping oppressed cultures thrive. I see a need to promote how Celtic culture shaped current American society, and want to explore the gender roles of early Celtic culture.
- 7. And we're out.
- Although my time at Biola has been challenging, it has given me time to discover my own values, ethics, and priorities. I am ready to find a place where I can feel at home, and Fordham is a place where I can picture myself reading Nietzsche in my dorm room or working on progressive debate resolutions with the squad. I hope to contribute my interests and values to the Fordham tradition.
- For what it's worth, here's an alternate ending that she wrote for another school (Haverford):
- Because of my childhood—learning history experientially through travel—I am hoping for a similar style of learning through my college experience. I believe that Haverford can provide this through its independent college programs, bi-college programs, and Ex-Co. My interests in criminology, environmental public policy, and gender studies are not normally included in traditional learning. I hope to take advantage of courses that exist outside of a strict department, such as Epidemiology and Global Health, which "examines the interplay of biomedical, societal and ethical concerns in global health." This is important to me, because as a current anthropology major, I believe it is important to take into consideration all aspects that affect decision making in government and humanitarian efforts. Restorative Justice: A Path to Criminal and Social Justice is also a class that piques my desire to promote rehabilitation of the incarcerated population. Because I understand that social systems are intertwined, my interest into other topics grew. Furthermore, I am interested in advocating for the LGBTQ community in relation to the legal system. I wish to take Haverford's bi-college program in gender and sexuality in order to view criminology from an LGBTQ lense. As a student who intertwines academics with extracurricular involvement, I am impressed by the Ex-Co's ability to provide learning opportunities outside of class. Additionally, I am drawn to extracurriculars that can also increase my knowledge of the world, such as the Debate Team. While Haverford's current team is out of commission, I hope to get it up and running, and give students another place to speak their opinions confidently. As a member of the LGBTQ community myself, I am looking forward to a place where I can openly express myself, not only in a social arena—through the QDG- but also in a political arena—through the SAGA. The two women's centers also address these two important needs, one a need for activism, the other a need for a safe space, including that for male feminists. As an individual with various networks, it will be nice to continue having a religious community, but Grace Covenant Church Fellowship appears to be more inclusive than the one I have

previously been involved with, as well as providing an opportunity to expand my own network to other schools in the area. Because of my focus on activism, I was impressed by Haverford's Honor Code and the Plenary. These encourage students to acknowledge the importance of civic involvement, and inspire students to improve campus policy. This particularly appeals to me as a student who feels my voice is currently not heard at Biola University. I hope to contribute ideas on how the school can help students continue to feel part of the community and celebrated for their differences.

- For those wondering, this student ultimately ended up at Reed College in Portland. She's very happy there.

- And why shouldn't she be? Nice campus, right?

- What should you do next?

- Before you begin writing your essay, ask yourself:

- Is there a way I can visit the campus(es) of the school I'd like to attend?

- Can I set up an interview with an admission officer from the school (s)—either in person or via Skype/Zoom/etc? (Call or email the school to find out.)

- If yes to either, you can use the info you gather there in the "Why us" portion of the essay.

- If no to both...

- Copy and paste these questions somewhere and begin your essay...

- What are my core values? In particular: which ones are suffering most in my current situation? (But don't say that they're suffering yet—just stick to the positive in your first paragraph.)

- Why did I choose my current school (the one I'm leaving)?

- Why do I want to leave my current school?

- What are the specific things I've done to make the best of things?

- What do I want to do/be/study? (aka: What's my dream? Or: What's one big problem I'd like to solve in the world?)

- What specific skills and resources will I gain at this new school that will help me in realizing my dream?

- What else do I need to say before signing off?

- If there's nothing left to say, just sign off.

- Bonus: Two example college transfer essays with analysis

- Note: the student requested that the name of the original college be anonymized.

- I will never forget being eleven years old and skiing in the countryside, away from downtown Beijing. With little air pollution, the sky was dark and the Milky Way was mesmerizing. In the endless starry sky, I saw endless possibilities. It was then that the most basic human drive started to dominate me: curiosity about the world. I have been an amateur astronomer and a science nerd ever since.

- W College offered me a substantial scholarship and an invitation to a special program, which provided me with a chance to work closely with professors and the college's president. Looking forward to meeting more people with geeky enthusiasm for astronomy and harboring the dream of becoming a scientist, I decided to attend W College.

- While at W College, a number of events altered my career goals. The loss of a family member due to severe air pollution made me see the brutal reality of the world—there are people suffering from disease, pollution, and millions of people can't even get an education. I realized that the focus of being a scientist should be to help others and contribute to society. Moreover, my experience of being a TA helped me find a new passion—teaching and inspiring others to pursue their curiosity. Meanwhile, I also began to develop a deeper passion for astronomy and theoretical physics. Finally, I came to understand that by pursuing a Ph.D. and coming back to China to become a professor in these fields, I can help other people and contribute to education while also doing research to satisfy my own curiosity at the same time.

- Therefore, I shifted my priorities and sought teaching opportunities as well as opportunities related to studying astronomy and theoretical physics. However, at W College, there is no Astronomy department, and, by the first semester of my sophomore year, I had taken the highest level astronomy courses that are offered at W College. Looking for more opportunities, I found Prof. M who is providing me with an opportunity to study Relativity. Since many external research opportunities are not available to international students, I reached out to Professor M and began to undertake research on an asteroid, a black hole system, and several other topics in astronomy.

- Even though I made some progress, I knew that I needed to be challenged more; I needed a university that would assist me in my later pursuit of graduate studies in astronomy and physics and that would provide deeper academic offerings and more research resources. So I decided to transfer.

- After visiting Wesleyan, I knew it is an ideal place for me. Academically, Wesleyan provides deep academic offerings in astronomy and physics, including advanced courses like Mathematical Physics and Radio Astronomy. During my visit to Wesleyan, I met with Prof. William Herbst, and his research interests in star formations really inspired me to work with him on this research topic, which is possible at Wesleyan

due to Wesleyan's strong research-focused environment. Wesleyan also has some of the best research facilities in astronomy of any liberal arts college. Prof. Herbst gave me a tour of the Van Vleck Observatory, and the 24-inch research telescope amazed me. Furthermore, the graduate program at Wesleyan also makes my pursuit of graduate studies possible, perhaps even collaborating with the same professors.

- From my conversations with several students at the Astronomy department, I felt their curiosity and enthusiasm for astronomy, and being able to study with them excites me and makes me feel a sense of belonging. They emphasized how they closely collaborate together every day. This close community between students as well as the cooperative study environment would really help me, a transfer student, adjust to a new school.

- While my time at W College has helped me discover my own priorities, values, and goals, I believe that Wesleyan will best help me achieve these goals.

- Tips + Analysis

- Hook into your values. Above, the author uses some simple, beautiful images as a quick hook, but does so in a way that allows them to fairly quickly lead into one of their core values (curiosity) while also setting up their primary academic focus (astronomy). You have a lot of options for possible hooks, but if you're having trouble, a quick, specific image can be your go-to move (especially in an early draft—you can always experiment later), since you can almost always find some kind of image linked to your values, and can frequently just reverse-engineer your hook this way: What values are you going to end your first paragraph with? What are some images that come to mind from your life that illustrate them?

- Be clear and direct with why. In the third and fourth paragraphs, this author does a great job of condensing what some students might have taken several hundred words to write into a clear, direct structural component that helps us understand why they are transferring (realized what my values/priorities are → my goals shifted and I can't do what I want to do where I am). As mentioned in the guide above, it's great to write this in a way that makes clear that there's no animosity or resentment for your current school—you simply don't fit together. That's ok.

- Get super specific in the "why us". This example is packed with nice "why us" details—I count at least 12 in the span of 194 words across 2 paragraphs. The author does a nice job of helping us see a) that they've really done their homework on Wesleyan, and have clearly thought out why they and the school fit together academically; and b) that they'll make a great addition to the community, and have already engaged with the students whom they'll join. Details like these make it easier for your reader to picture you on campus, engaging with professors and other students and adding to the school's vitality.

- Three countries, eight cities, 11 houses with six families, and ten schools. During my frequent moves from Korea, Canada, and the U.S., fashion has provided a consistent creative outlet. In elementary school, I painted magazine covers; in high school, I got creative with my strict dress code; in college, I built my own jewelry brand "Horizon Jewelry" for a marketing project which sparked my interest in marketing.

- I attended Chapman for its programs in communications as well as its proximity to L.A., which offered internships in fashion. However, as a full-time student who planned to work an on-campus job and lived an hour away, I was unable to apply for my desired internships that required their interns to be locally based and dedicate at least 15 hours.

- Furthermore, my major Strategic and Corporate Communication did not incorporate my interests in fashion and film. Recognizing the incompatibility between my major and intended career path, I applied and was accepted as a PR and Advertising major at Chapman University Dodge College. However, the school did not offer any fashion courses.

- I found opportunities for development by joining a professional business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi. Through events, I learned professional interview etiquette and received feedback on my resume and elevator pitch. I developed my leadership skills as an organizer of our social events. These experiences taught me the value of constructive criticism and improved my public speaking skills.

- I also worked for Chapman's Disability Center. I assisted disabled students and served as a liaison between students and professors, which led me to join my fraternity's service committee where I volunteered at the City Net Bake Fest, serving the homeless population.

- After discovering my interest in marketing, I began a telemarketing position for Chapman Fund. I call Chapman community members to build relationships, provide campus news, and raise money for the university. This job has allowed me to possess excellent communication and customer service skills.

- While working on-campus, I continued to search for opportunities in fashion. In January 2019, I discovered a remote marketing internship with Relovv, a sustainable fashion marketplace. Through Relovv, I've learned how to create content to advertise on Relovv's Instagram stories, recruit members, and contribute to organizing influencer collaborations.

- Now, I'm ready to move onto the next phase of my education studying Media, Culture, and Communication at NYU Steinhardt.
- My dream is to create global campaigns for fashion or film organizations that prioritize conveying underrepresented messages, and ultimately work at Refinery29 or Kenzo. Outside class, I plan to gain more experience in the fashion industry as a fashion marketing intern at Lie Sang Bong, a brand originated in Korea. I believe NYU's unique communications degree which incorporates fashion and marketing will provide me with the necessary tools for my career path.
- Tips + Analysis
- Show growth and trajectory. In the intro, this author quickly ties into their primary focus (fashion) and beautifully builds through some brief “ why major ” details, showing impressive growth (from painting magazine covers to building their own jewelry brand). This specifically and directly sets up why, sadly but clearly, they need to break up with Chapman...
- It's not you, it's me... well, it's kinda you, too. In the body, the author offers several clear details for why, ultimately, they need to break up with Chapman—unable to apply for internships, didn't actually have courses that fit specific career path, etc. And the author does a nice job of demonstrating how they tried to make it work, by engaging with the opportunities they did have—joined a business fraternity, organized events, contributed to the community through the Disability Center and service committee, worked for the Chapman Fund, interned with Relovv—but that they need to find a partner (NYU!) that aligns with their interests (communications degree which incorporates fashion and marketing!).
- Show what you bring to the new relationship. As mentioned just above, the author spends a good chunk of word count discussing ways they tried to make the best of the situation with Chapman. But notice that these kinds of details work a double shift—they help us see how the student will be an asset to the NYU campus and community by showing how they've done so at Chapman.
- Tagged: supplemental essay , transfer , transfer essay , example transfer essay , why i want to transfer essay examples , college transfer essay format

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

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How to Write a Scholarship Essay: Complete Guide + Examples

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-write-a-scholarship-essay>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- In this guide, I'll share with you a series of step-by-step mini-guides to answering the top 10 most common scholarship essay question prompts.
- How do I know these are the most common scholarship prompts? Because they're based on a random sample of about 700 scholarship essay prompts analyzed by my friends at the scholarship site Going Merry .
- First, we'll get into questions like:
 - Where do I find scholarships?
 - What are colleges and organizations looking for in a scholarship essay?
 - How do I write a creative scholarship essay that stands out?
 - Can I re-use scholarship essays as college essays (i.e. personal statement or supplemental essays)—and, if so, how?
- After that I'll break down how to write each prompt.
- Here are the top 10 most common scholarship essay prompts:
 - Tell us about you. (Or another very generic bio request)
 - What impact has sports had on your life? (Or some other athletics-related question)
 - How have you contributed to your community, or what community service have you provided?
 - Why do you want to study/pursue [X]?
 - How are you unique?
 - Tell us about a time you failed and what you learned from it.
 - What are your academic and/or career goals?
 - Tell us about a time when you had a belief or idea challenged.
 - Why do you deserve this scholarship?
 - How will this scholarship help you?
 - Let's do this.
- I love both College Greenlight and Going Merry . They both have great search engines. In fact, try them both!
- What are colleges and organizations looking for in a scholarship essay?
- Broadly speaking, colleges want to know what skills/qualities/values/interests you've developed that will contribute to a college campus. Organizations (i.e. not colleges) are still curious about the skills/qualities/values/interests you've developed, but in many cases they're looking for you to share about those in the context of a specific question—how sports have helped you develop those values, for example, or how those qualities are relevant to your future career or goals. I'll get into more detail for each type of essay in a moment.
- First, let's get organized.
- Chances are you're not applying for just one or two scholarships; you're applying for a bunch, right? And if you're not applying for a bunch—or you aren't yet—go over to College Greenlight or Going Merry to see what you qualify for. Then come back.
- Why should you apply for a bunch of scholarships? Because a) MORE FREE MONEY, b) it's relatively easy, as I'll explain in a second, d) it can improve the quality of your essays, and d) another reason that I'll explain at the very end of this post.
- Once you've got a big list of scholarship essay prompts, you'll want to...
- This is basically a big list of all your scholarship essays organized by prompt, due date, word limit, etc. Why do this? Because it'll save you tons of time and improve your essays.
- Click here for a downloadable scholarship tracker you can download and customize.
- Once you've created your tracker, you might notice something: Some of these prompts look alike. You might also notice that you've already written an essay that could work for one or more of these prompts.

- So ask yourself:
- Could I re-use any essay(s) I've already written for college applications?
- Could I write an essay that works for multiple prompts?
- Wait: I can do that? I can use an essay I've already written or write one that works for lots of different scholarships and then just submit the same essay?
- Yes, you totally can. In fact, I'm going to recommend doing so because not only is it going to save you time, but it'll improve your essays. I call this...
- A Super Essay is one that's written on a topic you know well and that works for several different prompts. As a quick example, notice how you could write one essay that answers all these questions:
- Tell us about you (or some other very generic profile/bio request).
- How are you unique? (Discuss your background, identity, interest, or talent) [Similar to Common App prompt #1]
- Tell us about a time you failed and what you learned from it.
- What are your academic and/or career goals?
- Don't believe one essay could answer all these prompts?
- Check out the essay called "With Debate" at this link.
- The essay tells us about: who the author is (Prompt 1), how she is unique (Prompt 2), how she failed and learned from the experience (Prompt 3), and even her academic and career goals (Prompt 4).
- And get this: if she'd wanted to answer the prompt that asks her to "Tell us about a time when you had a belief or idea challenged," she could simply have added something like "I didn't believe I'd ever find my voice/be able to speak up for myself... but I learned I was wrong—that I did have a voice").
- So here's my first bit of advice:
- Write an essay that works for multiple prompts.
- The short version: put all of your prompts in your essay tracker and color code them based on which prompts seem similar. Here's an example of this that a former student created for his college essays. Next, copy and paste prompts of the same color at the top of a blank page and brainstorm topics that might work for each group of prompts. As you create your outline and begin your draft, keep the different prompts in mind.
- Click here for more details on this technique, including a step-by-step guide to writing a Super Essay (with examples).
- But wait: that doesn't really answer how to write each of the prompts above. So let's take a deep-dive into each one, shall we?
- This scholarship prompt is wide open. And by that I mean you can pretty much do anything you want with it. Given that, I'd strongly recommend doubling this with another prompt, which is to say that you can answer this question at the same time that you're writing an essay for another scholarship prompt.
- You'll also notice that this could easily double with your personal statement, so if you've written a great personal statement you really like, you might be able to submit that for this prompt. But if you haven't written a personal statement, here's a free guide to writing a great personal statement . Prefer a YouTube video? Here's my crash course in writing a personal statement.
- Below is a great example essay for the "Tell us about you" prompt. You'll notice it could've also worked for a lot of the other top 10 prompts.
- What Had to Be Done
- At six years old, I stood locked away in the restroom. I held tightly to a tube of toothpaste because I'd been sent to brush my teeth to distract me from the commotion. Regardless, I knew what was happening: my dad was being put under arrest for domestic abuse. He'd hurt my mom physically and mentally, and my brother Jose and I had shared the mental strain. It's what had to be done.
- Living without a father meant money was tight, mom worked two jobs, and my brother and I took care of each other when she worked. For a brief period of time the quality of our lives slowly started to improve as our soon-to-be step-dad became an integral part of our family. He paid attention to the needs of my mom, my brother, and me. But our prosperity was short-lived as my step dad's chronic alcoholism became more and more recurrent. When I was eight, my younger brother Fernando's birth complicated things even further. As my step-dad slipped away, my mom continued working, and Fernando's care was left to Jose and me. I cooked, Jose cleaned, I dressed Fernando, Jose put him to bed. We did what we had to do.
- As undocumented immigrants and with little to no family around us, we had to rely on each other. Fearing that any disclosure of our status would risk deportation, we kept to ourselves when dealing with any financial and medical issues. I avoided going on certain school trips, and at times I was discouraged to even meet new people. I felt isolated and at times disillusioned; my grades started to slip.
- Over time, however, I grew determined to improve the quality of life for my family and myself.

- Without a father figure to teach me the things a father could, I became my own teacher. I learned how to fix a bike, how to swim, and even how to talk to girls. I became resourceful, fixing shoes with strips of duct tape, and I even found a job to help pay bills. I became as independent as I could to lessen the time and money mom had to spend raising me.
- I also worked to apply myself constructively in other ways. I worked hard and took my grades from Bs and Cs to consecutive straight A's. I shattered my school's 100M breaststroke record, and learned how to play the clarinet, saxophone, and the oboe. Plus, I not only became the first student in my school to pass the AP Physics 1 exam, I'm currently pioneering my school's first AP Physics 2 course ever.
- These changes inspired me to help others. I became president of the California Scholarship Federation, providing students with information to prepare them for college, while creating opportunities for my peers to play a bigger part in our community. I began tutoring kids, teens, and adults on a variety of subjects ranging from basic English to home improvement and even Calculus. As the captain of the water polo and swim team I've led practices crafted to individually push my comrades to their limits, and I've counseled friends through circumstances similar to mine. I've done tons, and I can finally say I'm proud of that.
- But I'm excited to say that there's so much I have yet to do. I haven't danced the tango, solved a Rubix Cube, explored how perpetual motion might fuel space exploration, or seen the World Trade Center. And I have yet to see the person that Fernando will become.
- I'll do as much as I can from now on. Not because I have to. Because I choose to.
- Here's a quick step-by-step guide to writing the "Tell us about you" essay:
- Create Your Scholarship Essay Tracker and check to see what other topics this prompt might overlap with.
- Create an outline that works for all the potential overlapping prompts.
- Write a draft using the resources linked above, in particular the free guide .
- Revise your essay using this exercise .
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay and any other required documents before the deadline.
- Click here for more great examples of essays that tell us a lot about their authors and were written using the resources linked above.
- Heads-up: this prompt won't always be phrased precisely like this, but the mini guide I'm about to share will work for most any sports-related prompt.
- Here, you're basically writing an extracurricular essay and the secret to doing it well, IMHO, is making uncommon connections. Here's what I mean:
- I believe the difference between a boring essay and a stand-out essay is this:
- common topic
- common connections
- common achievements
- common language
- un common topic
- un common connections
- un common achievements
- un common language
- Quick definitions:
- Topic : Certain sports (like basketball) are more common than others (like indoor skydiving). That doesn't mean you can't write a great basketball essay, but it's harder to stand out. More details in a sec.
- Connections : These are values that people don't normally or immediately associate with your sport. Students often write about the values of "discipline" or "hard work," but finding uncommon connections (AKA insights) can make for a more interesting essay.
- Achievements : Some accolades (like winning a local or state tournament) are more common than others (like being the only female on your wrestling team, for example, or playing for a national team).
- Language : Some phrases (like "we learned what being a team is really all about" are pretty common).
- And I know what you're thinking: What if the sport I play is super common, or I can't come up with any uncommon connections or don't have any uncommon achievements, or don't know what you mean by uncommon language?
- Don't worry. Stay with me.
- If you don't play an uncommon sport and don't have uncommon achievements to write about, a great way to stand out is by making uncommon connections. Why? With a common topic that makes common connections and uses common language (i.e., "Basketball taught me hard work and discipline"),

you're likely to blend in. Instead, you want to generate insights others won't have thought of. How? There's a game for that:

- *Uncommon Connections

- First, pick a cliché topic that you might use for an essay. In fact, maybe it's the sport you're considering writing about for a scholarship essay.

- Take football, for instance. (And by the way this applies to other typical extracurricular activities—like the classic “mission trip” essay—so let's do that one too, so you can maybe use this for other essays too.)

- Step 1: Brainstorm the cliché version of your essay.

- First, tell me what the typical football or mission trip essay will focus on. How? Take a look at this list of Values and think of a few cliché values that you think the typical essay would focus on.

- A cliché connection for [football] might be [teamwork, responsibility, hard work, etc.]

- A cliché connection for a [mission trip] might be [helping others, hard work, passion, etc.].

- You get the idea.

- Step 2: Come up with 3-4 uncommon values.

- Next, brainstorm values that might not normally be associated with football or a mission trip.

- An uncommon connection to [football] might be [resourcefulness, healthy boundaries, critical thinking, etc.].

- An uncommon connection to [a mission trip] might be [serenity, accountability, practicality, etc.].

- If you can find one uncommon connection you can find two, if you can find two you can find three, and if you can find three then you have enough content for a whole essay. Here's how to develop your content:

- Step 3: Tie the value to a specific example from your life.

- Describe one specific example of how you've developed or explored that value through your activity ... and maybe even applied it to other areas of your life.

- Example: Football has made me a better reader.

- As a cornerback, I meticulously and systematically scan the offense, looking for nuances in formation before the quarterback snaps the ball, all in a matter of seconds. It's not unlike annotating a novel. Finding the subtle complexities in my rival teams' spread offense has not only led me to intercepting a pass, but has given me the skills to fully digest, for example, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, where the smallest, and at first glance, almost unnoticeable details, add to an intricate story that I wouldn't appreciate in the same way had I not been able to notice those details in the first place.

- See how that makes for a more interesting football essay?

- Uncommon Value (critical thinking) + Application Elsewhere (English class) = Win.

- After doing this, you should have a list of 3-4 uncommon values and examples of how they've manifested in your life. This may take you a little while, but be patient and stick with it. It's worth it and will make up the bulk of your essay content.

- Step 4: Decide on an order for your details and write a draft.

- I recommend chronological order, as it'll make transitions easier. Then try a draft. It doesn't have to be perfect the first time, just get something down on paper.

- For a more comprehensive guide that explains how to write an extracurricular activity essay that can work for other college essay and scholarship prompts, click here. ■

- This is basically what they call a “Why major” essay. Here's a step-by-step approach:

- Step #1: Imagine a mini-movie of the moments that led you to your interest and create a simple, bullet point outline:

- Why Biology?

- Elementary school: Getting my first dinosaur toy and reading dinosaur books

- Middle school: Visiting museums, seeing water under a microscope

- High school: Doing online research, getting internship where we analyzed brainwaves and dissected a stingray

- Step #2: Put your moments (aka the “scenes” of your mini-movie) in chronological order, as it'll help you see how your interests developed. It also makes it easier to write transitions.

- Pro Tip: If you're writing a shorter essay (e.g., 100-150 words), try writing one scene per sentence. If you're writing a medium-length (e.g., 250-300 word) essay, try one scene per short paragraph. If you're writing a longer essay, you can build a montage that uses your major/career as a thematic thread.

- Step #3: Decide if you want to include a specific thesis that explicitly states your central argument—in this case what you want to study and why. This thesis can be at the beginning, middle, or end of your essay.

- Here's a short essay that puts the thesis at the beginning:

- Why Electrical Engineering?

- My decision to major in Electrical Engineering was inspired by my desire to improve security through technology. When I lived in Mexico, my father's restaurant security system lacked the ability to protect our property from robbers, who would break in multiple times a year. Thanks to the influence of my cousin, who now studies Autonomous Systems, I developed an interest in electrical engineering. I am inspired to not only improve my father's security system, but contributing to security innovations for larger companies and perhaps, one day, national security. (89 words)
- Outline - Why Electrical Engineering?
- Thesis: I want to improve security through technology
- Robbers broke into dad's restaurant
- Cousin taught me about Autonomous Systems
- In the future: work with large companies or on national security
- Here's a medium-length example with the thesis at the end:
- Why Gender and Sexuality Studies?
- My interest in Gender and Sexuality Studies was sparked in my eighth grade Civics class when we studied topics pertaining to sexual equality. I went into the class knowing I believed women had a right to make choices for their own bodies and that view remained the same, but I discovered the complexity of abortion debates. I challenged myself by thinking about the disparity between actual and potential personhood and the moral rights of unconscious lives. If pregnancy had the same consequences for men as it does women, how might the debate be different? Would this debate even exist?
- A year later, I shadowed an OB/GYN at a nearby hospital. On my first shift, I watched an incarcerated woman receive a postpartum exam after giving birth in her cell toilet with just Advil, and the issues discussed in Civics suddenly became urgent and real.
- My school projects have often focused on reproductive rights. I've spent numerous hours delving into summaries of Supreme Court cases on abortion and contraception, and am even known as the "Tampon Fairy" at school because I frequently restock the school bathrooms with tampons and condoms.
- I'm interested in exploring how Gender and Sexuality Studies connect to Public Health and Reproductive Biology, as well as Public Policy and Law. The interdisciplinary nature of this major will allow me to investigate many other areas of study and create a more nuanced understanding of how this particular field interacts with our world and society. (246 words)
- Outline - Why Gender and Sexuality Studies:
- Eighth grade Civics class conversations
- Shadowing OB/GYN at a nearby hospital and seeing woman receive postpartum exam
- Being the school "tampon fairy" (restocking school bathrooms with tampons and condoms)
- School projects on reproductive rights
- Thesis: name my major and briefly say why
- You can also use a hook to grab your reader's attention. Here's a medium-length example that does this:
- Why Neuroscience?
- Imagine all the stars in the universe. The brain has a thousand times the number of synapses, making neurological errors a near certainty. I learned this fact firsthand as a 14 year-old, when I suffered from sleepless nights because of an uncomfortable, indescribable feeling in my leg. It took months of appointments and tests to be told it was a condition called cortical dysplasia. Even after the diagnosis, there is no cure.
- I am lucky. My condition does not severely affect my quality of life. However, I know this is not the case for everyone. After this experience, I took AP Biology and attended a neuroscience program, which reinforced the subject as my future calling. One of the most impactful lectures discussed the plight of healthcare in developing nations. Newborns with extreme neurological deficits are common, but finding treatments is not. Without prenatal care, this is becoming a growing epidemic, leaving millions of children helpless.
- With a degree in neuroscience, I will gain a strong understanding of neural tube development and neuronal migration in infants. I will then become a neurologist, specializing in pediatric care. I hope to work for humanitarian organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders, in Africa, where HIV and polio are rampant, as are numerous other diseases.
- Imagine the stars once more. From across the world, I will look at the same stars in the future, as I help children secure the ability to not only look at the stars, but do much more. (247 words)
- Outline - Why Neuroscience:
- Hook: Connect number of stars to number of connections in brain (and maybe mention cortical dysplasia)
- AP Bio + neuroscience program: learning about healthcare in developing nations
- Thesis: say why neuroscience (get specific) and what I'll do with degree
- Return to opening (stars) and look to future

- Even if you're unsure of your major, you might still research and select 1-3 areas of interest and describe why you chose each one. If possible, connect them.
- If you're choosing "undecided" on your application, that's okay! Describing 1-3 areas of interest is still a good idea. It shows your intellectual curiosity and demonstrates your ability to make connections across a range of academic disciplines.
- When it comes to writing about a community service project, you'll either be describing a challenge or series of challenges you've encountered, or you won't. I've developed a structure that works for each case.
- The first is called the "Uncommon Connections" approach and works well for students who are not writing about a challenge. It's basically the one I described in the mini guide to writing the "What impact has sports had on your life?" essay above.
- The second is what I call the "Powerwall" approach and it works well for students who have addressed or overcome a challenge through their community service project. It works like this:
- This structure was inspired by an article by Andy Raskin in which he analyzes a pitch Elon Musk gave on the Powerwall. Here's Raskin's take on Musk's pitch:
- "Musk's delivery isn't stellar. He's self-conscious and fidgety. But at the end, his audience cheers. For a battery. That's because Musk does five things right that you should emulate in every pitch you ever make to anybody."
- While reading Raskin's article, I realized (because I'm the College Essay Guy and this is where my brain is half the time) Musk's approach could easily be applied to a wide range of extracurricular essay topics, so I adapted the structure, added a step, and created an approach that will help you map out a challenge-based extracurricular essay in about ten minutes.
- Step 1: Identify the problem.
- Describe the challenge you were (or are currently) facing. The problem could be something global, like an environmental issue, or something more local, like a lack of creative opportunities in your high school.
- Step 2: Raise the stakes.
- Help us understand: Why was (or is) overcoming this challenge important? What might happen if this problem went (or goes) unchecked?
- Step 3: Describe what you did.
- Tell us the specific things you (or you and your team) did to solve the problem.
- Step 4: Clarify your role.
- Describe your particular involvement. Why were (or are) you crucial to the project or club's success?
- Step 5: Share the impact you had, lessons you learned, or values you gained.
- Provide specific evidence that gives us a sense that your work mattered. I'll show you some ways to do this in a minute.
- Think that's too much to do in one essay?
- The Catalyzing Creativity Club
- I live in the suburb of Los Angeles, California, known to its residents as the bubble. It has the perfect weather, location, and schools. As amazing as it sounds, however, growing up in La Cañada Flintridge has its drawbacks: the community pressures adolescents to achieve success through mainly academic means. While this approach isn't necessarily wrong, it can be difficult, particularly in my high school, to thrive in a creative and imaginative way.
- Sophomore year, my friends and I began to wonder, What if the teenagers of La Cañada had greater opportunities to express themselves. To pursue their creativity. To follow their dreams.
- That's when we decided to start the Catalyzing Creativity Club.
- Founded two years ago, the Catalyzing Creativity Club (C3, for short), provides students in our community the opportunity to pursue their passion and aspirations outside the classroom.
- Some of our opportunities include: a yearly music festival for our community's young aspiring musicians that showcases local talent to the masses and scouts; a technology expo, which allows students to be rewarded with funding and demonstrate their coding abilities to prospective companies; recording sessions for aspiring musicians, photo-publishing competitions, and a variety of guest speakers ranging from nineteen-year-old college seniors to millionaire entrepreneurs. In addition, we have a blog for aspiring writers to publish their work and are holding a shoe drive for underprivileged athletes.
- As vice president of finances for C3, I work to ensure we can fund these activities. I handle our bank account, fundraising, and organize the event planning. Moreover, I make sure that C3's activities and finances are approved by and follow the guidelines of my high school. This role is crucial, as we work to achieve non-profit status.
- Even though C3 is only a few years old, I believe it is already making an impact in the community. As we grow and the opportunities we provide become more popular, our hope is to inspire our peers to follow their dreams and burst the La Cañada Flintridge bubble. (332 words)

- Brief Notes and Analysis:

- I love how direct the tone is in the third paragraph. It's basically a straightforward listing of the club's accomplishments. This was pulled directly from the bullet points of his BEABIES exercise. It works.
- Notice how specific he gets in the fourth paragraph where he clarifies why he was essential to the club's success. Doing this helps us understand that he was more than just a passive member who showed up to meetings.
- Another potential use of your extracurricular essay is to expand on something you only mentioned briefly in your personal statement. In this case, the author mentioned in his personal statement that he's "a numbers guy" and, in the fourth paragraph of this essay, expands upon why numbers are meaningful to him.
- If he'd had more room, he could have potentially expanded on the club's impact in the final paragraph, describing specific ways the community changed, or personal lessons learned. But again, not every essay has to be perfect (and not every element has to be included) in order for this structure to work.
- This prompt (and those like it) ask students to discuss their backgrounds, identities, interests, or talents and tell the reader why these are meaningful to them. They're usually some variation on the Common App prompt #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.
- So guess what? You can totally use the resources linked above, in particular the free guide .
- Why am I sending you to those links instead of spelling it out here? Because there isn't, as far as I can tell, a short and simple way to describe to you how to express your uniqueness ... besides the process that I've spent the past 15 years developing and have summarized in neat, bite-sized chunks at the links above . (And if you're not sure which guide I mean, it's this one .) Plus, if I'd listed all that content here it would've made this blog post like 2-3 times as long and it's already pretty long.
- Here's a great example of a student who wrote a personal statement that shows their uniqueness:
- I'm no stranger to contrast. A Chinese American with accented Chinese, a Florida-born Texan, a first generation American with a British passport: no label fits me without a caveat.
- But I've always strived to find connections among the dissimilar. In my home across the sea, although my relatives' rapid Mandarin sails over my head, in them I recognize the same work ethic that carried my parents out of rural Shanghai to America, that fueled me through sweltering marching band practices and over caffeinated late nights. I even spend my free time doing nonograms, grid-based logic puzzles solved by using clues to fill in seemingly random pixels to create a picture.
- It started when I was a kid. One day, my dad captured my fickle kindergartner attention (a herculean feat) and taught me Sudoku. As he explained the rules, those mysterious scaffoldings of numbers I often saw on his computer screen transformed into complex structures of logic built by careful strategy.
- From then on, I wondered if I could uncover the hidden order behind other things in my life. In elementary school, I began to recognize patterns in the world around me: thin, dark clouds signaled rain, the moon changed shape every week, and the best snacks were the first to go. I wanted to know what unseen rules affected these things and how they worked. My parents, both pipeline engineers, encouraged this inquisitiveness and sometimes tried explaining to me how they solved puzzles in their own work. Although I didn't understand the particulars, their analytical mindsets helped me muddle through math homework and optimize matches in Candy Crush.
- In high school, I studied by linking concepts across subjects as if my coursework was another puzzle to solve. PEMDAS helped me understand appositive phrases, and the catalysts for revolutions resembled chemical isotopes, nominally different with the same properties.
- As I grew older, my interests expanded to include the delicate systems of biology, the complexity of animation, and the nuances of language. Despite these subjects' apparent dissimilarity, each provided fresh, fascinating perspectives on the world with approaches like color theory and evolution. I was (and remain) voracious for the new and unusual, spending hours entrenched in Wikipedia articles on obscure topics, i.e. classical ciphers or dragons, and analyzing absurdist YouTube videos.
- Unsurprisingly, like pilot fish to their sharks, my career aspirations followed my varied passions: one day I wanted to be an illustrator, the next a biochemist, then a stand-up comedian. When it came to narrowing down the choices, narrowing down myself, I felt like nothing would satisfy my ever-fluctuating intellectual appetite.
- But when I discovered programming, something seemed to settle. In computer science, I had found a field where I could be creative, explore a different type of language, and (yes) solve puzzles. Coding let me both analyze logic in its purest form and manipulate it to accomplish anything from a simple "print 'hello world'" to creating functional games. Even when lines of red error messages fill my console, debugging offered me the same thrill as a particularly good puzzle. Now, when I see my buggy versions of Snake, Paint, and Pacman in my files, I'm filled paradoxically with both satisfaction and a restless itch to improve

the code and write new, better programs.

- While to others my life may seem like a jumble of incompatible fragments, like a jigsaw puzzle, each piece connects to become something more. However, there are still missing pieces at the periphery: experiences to have, knowledge to gain, bad jokes to tell. Someday I hope to solve the unsolvable. But for now, I've got a nonogram with my name on it.
- Some quick tips and ideas based on this essay:
- This author first brainstormed her content using the 21 Details exercise and the "Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List .
- As she did that, she noticed that some parts of her seemed to contradict. She decided to use this as a thematic thread for her essay, and brainstormed other specific details that showed other contrasts.
- Initially she couldn't find an ending, but when she realized she also would have to write an essay explaining her career interests, she decided to focus the essay on the contrasts that helped her develop qualities that would serve her in the future (intellectual curiosity, solving puzzles), and use this essay for both. Yup, like a Super Essay.
- Then she focused on one smaller theme/value per paragraph (culture for first paragraph, finding connections among the dissimilar for the second paragraph, etc.).
- Here's a quick step-by-step guide to writing your own "How are you unique" essay:
- Create Your Scholarship Essay Tracker and check to see what other topics this prompt might overlap with.
- Create an outline that works for all the potential overlapping prompts.
- Write a draft using the resources linked above.
- Revise your essay using this exercise .
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.
- For more essays by students who expressed their uniqueness well in their essays, click here.
- This is the type of challenge-based essay I discuss in the free guide , and which I call the Type A and Type C essays. What's the difference between those? Simply that Type A essays do talk about a career at the end, while Type C essays don't .
- Want the short version of the guide? Complete this 15-min exercise and you'll have your outline.
- Want the even shorter version? Here are six questions to answer in your essay:
- What was the failure you experienced?
- What was the impact on your life (not emotions, which come next, but external effects)?
- How did you feel?
- What were the needs underlying your feelings?
- What did you do to meet those needs?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- Not sure how these six questions can lead to an essay? Watch the Feelings and Needs video , as it'll walk you through those questions and lead you to an outline.
- Here's an essay that describes a failure (which I've highlighted in bold below so you won't miss it) that was written using the resources above:
- Does every life matter? Because it seems like certain lives matter more than others, especially when it comes to money.
- I was in eighth grade when a medical volunteer group that my dad had led to Northern Thailand faced a dilemma of choosing between treating a patient with MDR-TB or saving \$5000 (the estimated treatment cost for this patient) for future patients. I remember overhearing intense conversations outside the headquarters tent. My dad and his friend were arguing that we should treat the woman regardless of the treatment cost, whereas the others were arguing that it simply cost too much to treat her. Looking back, it was a conflict between ideals—one side argued that everyone should receive treatment whereas the other argued that interventions should be based on cost-effectiveness. I was angry for two reasons. First, because my father lost the argument. Second, because I couldn't logically defend what I intuitively believed: that every human being has a right to good health. In short, that every life matters.
- Over the next four years I read piles of books on social justice and global health equity in order to prove my intuitive belief in a logical manner. I even took online courses at the undergraduate and graduate level. But I failed to find a clear, logical argument for why every life mattered . I did, however, find sound arguments for the other side, supporting the idea that society should pursue the well-being of the greatest number, that interventions should mitigate the most death and disability per dollar spent. Essentially, my research screamed, "Kid, it's all about the numbers."

- But I continued searching, even saving up pocket money to attend a summer course on global health at Brown University. It was there that I met Cate Oswald, a program director for Partners in Health (PIH), an organization that believed “the idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world.” It was like finding a ray of light in the darkness.
- Refueled with hope, I went back to find the answer, but this time I didn’t dive into piles of books or lectures. I searched my memories. Why was I convinced that every life mattered?
- When the woman with MDR-TB came to our team, she brought along with her a boy that looked about my age. Six years have passed since I met him, but I still remember the gaze he gave me as he left with his mother. It wasn’t angry, nor was it sad. It was, in a way, serene. It was almost as if he knew this was coming. That burdened me. Something inside me knew this wasn’t right. It just didn’t feel right. Perhaps it was because I, for a second, placed myself in his shoes, picturing what I’d feel if my mother was the woman with MDR-TB.
- Upon reflection, I found that my answer didn’t exist in books or research, but somewhere very close from the beginning—my intuition. In other words, I didn’t need an elaborate and intricate reason to prove to myself that health is an inalienable right for every human being—I needed self-reflection.
- So I ask again, “Does every life matter?” Yes. “Do I have solid, written proof?” No.
- Paul Farmer once said, “The thing about rights is that in the end you can’t prove what is a right.” To me, global health is not merely a study. It’s an attitude—a lens I use to look at the world—and it’s a statement about my commitment to health as a fundamental quality of liberty and equity.
- Some quick tips and ideas based on this essay:
- This author decided to use a compelling question as his hook. And get this: he didn’t know the answer to the question. That’s part of what makes it a compelling hook and what keeps us interested throughout the essay.
- He describes the many steps he took (and he did a lot!) to try to answer the question. This shows his tenacity. But, again, he never fully answers it. This demonstrates vulnerability. Why? Many essays tie things up in a neat little bow. In this case, there is no bow. Instead, the author explores the complexities surrounding this question, which shows his ability to embrace nuance. The key here was finding a compelling question. And you don’t of course have to use this “start with a question” technique for a failure essay; it’s just one way.
- For the ending, the author knew what he wanted to study so, when he couldn’t come up with a conclusion, he decided it might be neat to find a way to connect this failure to his future career. It works, plus allowed him a chance to name a few other values that were important to him: health, liberty, and equity.
- Here’s a quick step-by-step guide to writing the “Tell us about a time you failed and what you learned from it” essay:
- Watch the Feelings and Needs Exercise , and use it to...
- Create your outline.
- Write your first draft.
- Revise your essay using this exercise .
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.
- Both the Type A and Type B essays I mention in the free guide would answer this prompt. The difference is that a Type A essay describes how your challenges helped you develop skills/qualities/values that will one day serve you in your career. On the other hand, the Type B essay still shows how you’ve developed skills/qualities/values that will one day serve you in the future without explicitly referencing a challenge. In both cases, though, you’ll want to be sure the academic or career goal is clear, and you may want to do this near the end.
- Here’s a great Type A essay (i.e., one that demonstrates how challenges helped shape the author’s career interest). Again, I’ve highlighted in bold the academic and career goal so you don’t miss the connection to the prompt.
- It was Easter and we should’ve been celebrating with our family, but my father had locked us in the house. If he wasn’t going out, neither were my mother and I.
- My mother came to the U.S. from Mexico to study English. She’d been an exceptional student and had a bright future ahead of her. But she fell in love and eloped with the man that eventually became my father. He loved her in an unhealthy way, and was both physically and verbally abusive. My mother lacked the courage to start over so she stayed with him and slowly let go of her dreams and aspirations. But she wouldn’t allow for the same to happen to me.

- In the summer before my junior year I was offered a scholarship to study abroad in Egypt. Not to my surprise, my father refused to let me go. But my mother wouldn't let him crush my dreams as well. I'd do this for myself and for my mother's unfulfilled aspirations. I accepted the scholarship.
- I thought I'd finally have all the freedom I longed for in Egypt, but initially I didn't. On a weekly basis I heard insults and received harassment in the streets, yet I didn't yield to the societal expectations for women by staying indoors. I continued to roam throughout Egypt, exploring the Great Pyramids of Giza, cruising on the Nile, and traveling to Luxor and Aswan. And before I returned to the U.S. I received the unexpected opportunity to travel to London and Paris. It was surreal: a girl from the ghetto traveling alone around the world with a map in her hands. And no man or cultural standards could dictate what I was to do. I rode the subway from Cambridge University to the British Museum. I took a train from London to Paris and in two days I visited the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame Cathedral, and took a cruise on the Seine. Despite the language barrier I found I had the self-confidence to approach anyone for directions.
- While I was in Europe enjoying my freedom, my mother moved out and rented her own place. It was as if we'd simultaneously gained our independence. We were proud of each other. And she vicariously lived through my experiences as I sent her pictures and told her about my adventures.
- Finally, we were free.
- I currently live in the U.S with my mother. My father has gradually transformed from a frigid man to the loving father I always yearned for. Life isn't perfect, but for the moment I'm enjoying tranquility and stability with my family and are communicating much better than ever before.
- I'm involved in my school's Leadership Council as leader of our events committee. We plan and execute school dances and create effective donation letters. I see this as a stepping-stone for my future, as I plan to double major in Women's Studies and International Relations with a focus on Middle Eastern studies. After the political turmoil of the Arab Spring many Middle Eastern countries refuse to grant women equal positions in society because that would contradict Islamic texts. By oppressing women they're silencing half of their population. I believe these Islamic texts have been misinterpreted throughout time, and my journey towards my own independence has inspired me to help other women find liberation as well.
- My Easter will drastically differ from past years. Rather than being locked at home, my mother and I will celebrate outdoors our rebirth and renewal.
- Some quick tips and ideas based on this essay:
- The author uses as her hook a compelling challenge, which raises a few questions, including, "Will she be okay?" and "What will she do?" And she doesn't fully answer either of them until close to the end of the essay, which keeps us engaged.
- Her essay follows this simple structure: a) What challenge did you face? b) What did you do about it? c) What did you learn? If you are writing about challenges, you can use this simple structure as well.
- This essay also follows pretty closely the Feelings and Needs structure. The main need this author identified was freedom, and she highlights this theme in the beginning (when she describes feeling trapped), middle (when she describes exploring Europe), and end (when she describes her desire to work for the liberation of herself and others).
- Here's a quick step-by-step guide to writing the "What are your academic goals and your career goals?" essay:
- If you ARE writing about a challenge...
- Watch the Feelings and Needs Exercise and make sure you do the final, seventh column.
- Create your outline.
- Write a draft.
- Revise your essay using this exercise.
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.
- If you are NOT writing about a challenge...
- Read this essay then do this exercise, which will help you...
- Create your outline.
- Write a draft.
- Revise your essay using this exercise.
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.

- This prompt is similar to Common App prompt #3: Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- The essay example for the “failure” prompt (above) would have worked great for this prompt as well, as that author had his belief—that “every life matters”—challenged.
- Some quick tips and ideas for this essay:
- Like the authors in the essays above, you might begin with a question that you will explore for the rest of the essay. This question keeps us engaged.
- Make sure to clarify the specific idea that was challenged ... and how it was challenged ... This may seem obvious, but I often find that students working on this prompt can get a bit foggy with what the specific idea or belief was.
- Getting super clear on the specific idea or belief that was challenged can help give your essay a structure. One possible structural approach to outline your essay:
- a) (Briefly) describe the experience/s that led my initial belief.
- b) Describe the experience/s that challenged this belief,
- c) Describe what happened + what I learned as a result.
- Make sure your insights at the end aren’t super obvious (i.e., “I learned that it’s important to challenge my own beliefs”). You can do this by asking yourself “so what” until you come up with an idea that feels uncommon (scroll up to the “sports” essay guide for more on “uncommon connections”).
- You don’t need to tie things up with a neat little bow. Nuance and complexity can show your ability to wrestle with big ideas.
- Here’s a quick step-by-step guide to writing the “Tell us about a time when you had a belief or idea challenged” essay:
- Watch the Feelings and Needs Exercise to explore in more depth the idea or belief that was challenged. Use the results of that exercise to...
- Create your outline. It may be the simple three-part structure I mentioned above:
- What led you to develop your initial belief(s)?
- What specific experience challenged that/those belief(s)?
- What happened? What did you learn?
- Write a draft.
- Revise your essay using this exercise .
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.
- I want to make this one simple for you.
- Don’t just tell them why you deserve this scholarship ... show them.
- How? Tell them your story.
- You can do this by sharing some of the challenges you’ve been through, or not.
- If you ARE writing about a challenge...
- Watch the Feelings and Needs Exercise and use it to...
- Create your outline.
- Write a draft.
- Revise your essay using this exercise .
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.
- Side note: Often, scholarships have corporate sponsors, and it doesn’t hurt to understand the mission of the company/organization and ham it up a bit. An example that comes to mind is this scholarship essay by Emily Trader . Here the organization is a group of life insurance companies, and their prompt specifically tells you to mention their mission. But even if it didn’t, it would probably be wise to give a nod to the importance of insurance in your essay.
- Here’s a great example of an essay by a student who describes the challenges she faced and how she worked to overcome them:
- The Little Porch and a Dog
- I t was the first Sunday of April. My siblings and I were sitting at the dinner table giggling and spelling out words in our alphabet soup. The phone rang and my mother answered. It was my father; he was calling from prison in Oregon.

- My father had been stopped by immigration on his way to Yakima, Washington, where he'd gone in search of work. He wanted to fulfill a promise he'd made to my family of owning our own house with a nice little porch and a dog.
- Fortunately, my father was bailed out of prison by a family friend in Yakima. Unfortunately, though, most of our life savings was spent on his bail. We moved into a rented house, and though we did have a porch, it wasn't ours. My father went from being a costurero (sewing worker) to being a water-filter salesman, mosaic tile maker, lemon deliverer, and butcher.
- Money became an issue at home, so I started helping out more. After school I'd rush home to clean up and make dinner. My parents refused to let me have a "real" job, so on Saturday afternoons I'd go to the park with my older brother to collect soda cans. Sundays and summertime were spent cleaning houses with my mother.
- I worked twice as hard in school. I helped clean my church, joined the choir, and tutored my younger sister in math. As tensions eased at home, I returned to cheerleading, joined a school club called Step Up, and got involved in my school's urban farm, where I learned the value of healthy eating. Slowly, life improved. Then I received some life-changing news.
- My father's case was still pending and, due to a form he'd signed when he was released in Yakima, it was not only him that was now in danger of being deported, it was my entire family. My father's lawyer informed me that I'd have to testify in court and in fact our stay in the US was now dependent on my testimony.
- The lawyer had an idea: I had outstanding grades and recommendation letters. If we could show the judge the importance of my family remaining here to support my education, perhaps we had a chance. So I testified.
- My father won his case and was granted residency.
- Living in a low-income immigrant household has taught me to appreciate all I've been given. Testifying in court helped me grow as a person, has made me more open-minded and aware of the problems facing my community. And my involvement in the urban farm has led me to consider a career as a nutritionist.
- Though neither of my parents attended college, they understand that college is a key factor to a bright future and therefore have been very supportive. And though we don't yet have the house with the small porch and the dog, we're still holding out hope.
- I believe college can help.
- If this student doesn't deserve a scholarship, I don't know who does.
- Some quick tips and ideas based on this essay:
- Again, this author uses the following simple structure:
- What was the challenge you faced?
- What did you do about it?
- What did you learn through this experience?
- By starting with the problem/question/challenge to be solved and not resolving it 'til the end she keeps us engaged.
- By showing us all the work she did to overcome this challenge we see all the strengths, skills, and qualities she'll bring to a college campus (and there are many: leadership, perseverance, helping others, awareness of health, etc.).
- By ending with her career we get a sense of where she is headed. Tip: You can list your current dream even if you change your mind later. No application reader is going to reference your essay later and say, "But you said you were going to become a nutritionist" if one day you decide to do something else. It just needs to make sense given the experiences you've described.
- She takes a unique approach at the end by emphasizing the hope she feels, and putting it on the reader "I believe college can help" to invite them into her journey. In other words: "I believe you [person who is determining my college/scholarship acceptance] can help." So smart.
- Having said this, if you are NOT writing about a challenge for this prompt...
- If you know your future career, read this essay then do this exercise .
- If you don't know your future career, read through the "Type D" essay guide that starts on page 21 of this Google doc .
- Create your outline.
- Write a draft.
- Revise your essay using this exercise .
- Use the Great College Essay Test to see how your essay might be improved, then revise as needed until your essay is solid.
- Share it with 1-2 people you trust and revise again, as needed.
- Submit your essay (and any other required documents) before the deadline.

- Two ways you can go with this:
- Approach #1: Use the resources above to write a great essay that spells out your big dreams, then end with 1-3 sentences describing specifically how you'll use the scholarship money. (We'll call this the "I have big dreams and you can help" approach.)
- Approach #2: Explain your financial situation in detail, then end with 1-3 sentences saying how you'll use the scholarship money. (We'll call this the "Financial Details" approach.)
- The difference: Approach #1 describes you + your dreams for 75-95% of the essay, then describes where the money will go for 5-25% of the essay, whereas Approach #2 describes financial details for 75-95%, then describes where the money will go for the last 5-25% of the essay.
- Let's look at examples for each.
- Approach #1: "I have big dreams and you can help"
- This one's pretty simple. Take any of the great essays above and add 1-3 sentences explaining where the money will go.
- Example A: The "Easter" Essay
- The ending of that essay reads:
- I'm involved in my school's Leadership Council as leader of our events committee. We plan and execute school dances and create effective donation letters. I see this as a stepping-stone for my future, as I plan to double major in Women's Studies and International Relations with a focus on Middle Eastern studies. After the political turmoil of the Arab Spring many Middle Eastern countries refuse to grant women equal positions in society because that would contradict Islamic texts. By oppressing women they're silencing half of their population. I believe these Islamic texts have been misinterpreted throughout time, and my journey towards my own independence has inspired me to help other women find liberation as well.
- My Easter will drastically differ from past years. Rather than being locked at home, my mother and I will celebrate outdoors our rebirth and renewal.
- But it could have been easily revised to fit this prompt if the author chose to simply include a couple details describing how she'd use the scholarship funds. Like this, for example:
- I'm involved in my school's Leadership Council as leader of our events committee. We plan and execute school dances and create effective donation letters. I see this as a stepping-stone for my future, as I plan to double major in Women's Studies and International Relations with a focus on Middle Eastern studies. While I have received a full scholarship to attend Georgetown, my financial aid package does not include money for my airfare, school supplies, or books. The funds from this scholarship would help cover those costs.
- My Easter will drastically differ from past years. Rather than being locked at home, my mother and I will celebrate outdoors our rebirth and renewal.
- Example B: The "Little Porch and a Dog" Essay
- The ending of that essay (which is also above) reads:
- Though neither of my parents attended college, they understand that college is a key factor to a bright future and therefore have been very supportive. And though we don't yet have the house with the small porch and the dog, we're still holding out hope.
- I believe college can help.
- But she could add just three words to make the connection to the prompt super clear (and I've bolded them below so you don't miss them). That might look like this:
- Though neither of my parents attended college, they understand that college is a key factor to a bright future and therefore have been very supportive. And though we don't yet have the house with the small porch and the dog, we're still holding out hope.
- I believe college and this scholarship can help.
- Simple, right?
- And while tweaking an essay you've already written can be efficient (while showing a lot about who you are), it's not the only way to demonstrate how you'd use scholarship funds.
- Approach #2: The Financial Details Approach
- The letter below takes a different angle from the approach above by explaining in more detail her family's current financial situation and why she needs the money. Take a look:
- I am so excited to have been admitted to University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) this year, as it was my number one choice.
- There is a problem, however, and it is a financial one.
- I'd love to attend UCLA—it's near home, which would allow me to be closer to my family, and the Bio department is phenomenal. But, as a low-income Hispanic student, I simply don't feel I can afford it.
- Here are some more details of my financial situation. Currently, my father works as an assistant supervisor for American Apparel Co. and he is the only source of income for my family of five, while my

mother is a housewife. The income my father receives weekly barely meets paying the bills.

- My family's overall income:
- Father's average weekly gross pay: \$493.30
- Father's adjusted gross income: \$27,022
- Our household expenses:
- Legal Services: \$200
- Car payment: \$230.32
- My parents cannot afford to have medical insurance, so they do not have a medical bill. My father's average monthly income is an estimate of \$1,973.20 (see attached pay stub). When household expenses such as rent, car payment, legal services, gas bill, and electricity bill are added together the cost is of \$1,402.70. Other payments such as the phone bill, internet bill, and groceries also add to the list. But in order to make ends meet my father usually works overtime and tailors clothes for people in our neighborhood.
- My family is on an extremely tight budget and unfortunately cannot afford to pay for my schooling. I have worked my way up and was recently awarded Valedictorian for the class of 2014. My goals and my aspiration of becoming a nutritionist have helped me push forward. I appreciate your time in reconsidering my financial aid award.
- I'm looking forward to becoming a Bruin, but without additional financial support, that may not be possible. This scholarship could change my life.
- This approach still answers the prompt. And if you're not sure which approach the scholarship provider is looking for or would prefer, don't be afraid to reach out to them and ask. (Your readers are nice people and they want to help you submit a great application!)
- Side note: this approach also works well for a financial aid appeal letter—like, if you don't get the money you need from a college. You'll find more on how (and why) to write a financial aid appeal letter at this link .
- Get this: Going Merry let me know in a recent conversation that more than 15% of the scholarships on their site went unclaimed last year.
- That's basically free money that just sat there ... because no one tried to win it.
- What's the lesson?
- You miss out on 100% of the scholarships you don't apply for.
- So get on it.
- Watch the lessons on your own or via the live option.
- Tagged: student , essay , college essay , scholarships , scholarship essay , Financial Aid

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [January 20, 2020](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [How to Write a Scholarship Essay: Complete Guide + Examples](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [January 20, 2020](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [Where do I find scholarships?What are colleges and organizations looking for in a scholarship essay?](#)
- [Can I re-use college essays as scholarship essays?](#)
- [Tell us about you.](#)
- [What impact has sports had on your life?](#)

- Why do you want to study/pursue [X]?
- How have you contributed to your community, or what community service have you provided?
- How are you unique?
- Tell us about a time you failed and what you learned from it.
- What are your academic and/or career goals?
- Tell us about a time when you had a belief or idea challenged.
- Why do you deserve this scholarship?
- How will this scholarship help you?
- Going Merry
-
- a bunch of great examples
- College Greenlight
- Going Merry
- College Greenlight
- Going Merry
- Click here for a downloadable scholarship tracker you can download and customize.
- Check out the essay called “With Debate” at this link.
- Here’s an example of this
- Click here for more details on this technique, including a step-by-step guide to writing a Super Essay (with examples).
- free guide to writing a great personal statement
- Here’s my crash course
- free guide
- this exercise
- Great College Essay Test
- Click here for more great examples of essays that tell us a lot about their authors and were written using the resources linked above.
- this list of Values
- For a more comprehensive guide that explains how to write an extracurricular activity essay that can work for other college essay and scholarship prompts, click here.
- build a montage
-
- “What impact has sports had on your life?” essay
- article by Andy Raskin

- [free guide](#)
- [this one](#)
- [21 Details exercise](#)
- ["Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List](#)
- [this exercise](#)
- [Great College Essay Test](#)
- [For more essays by students who expressed their uniqueness well in their essays, click here.](#)
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- [Feelings and Needs video](#)
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- [Feelings and Needs Exercise](#)
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- [Great College Essay Test](#)
- [Feelings and Needs Exercise](#)
- [this exercise](#)
- [Great College Essay Test](#)
- [this scholarship essay by Emily Trader](#)
- [this essay](#)
- [this exercise](#)
- [page 21 of this Google doc](#)
- [this exercise](#)

- [Great College Essay Test](#)
- [You'll find more on how \(and why\) to write a financial aid appeal letter at this link](#)
- [Going Merry](#)
- [student](#)
- [essay](#)
- [college essay](#)
- [scholarships](#)
- [scholarship essay](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)

What is Demonstrated Interest | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-demonstrate-interest-in-a-college-a-brief-and-practical-guide>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This blog post was inspired by podcast Episode 108 with Monica James, in which we discuss everything from how to find out which colleges track demonstrated interest to whether you should or shouldn't like a college's Facebook page. You can find that episode [here](#).
- Spoiler alert: In this blog post I'll share with you a list of potential Action Items that involve (among other things) attending college fairs, speaking with admission reps, and maybe even opening a few of those emails that colleges send you—things that might stress you out. And why, you might wonder, would the “ease, purpose and joy” guy ask you to do things that mostly bring you anxiety?
- Demonstrated interest (which I'll explain in a moment) has become an important factor that some (keyword: some!) colleges consider when deciding whether to admit students or not. In fact, take a look at this NACAC survey from 2019 asking colleges which factors most influenced admission decisions:
- That's right, it's #6. ONE SPOT BELOW ESSAYS.
- Head to this link for NACAC's 2023 report.
- In short, demonstrated interest can play a big part in increasing your chance of admission. Want more proof? Research from Lehigh University (unfortunately, their link is now dead) concluded that, for the colleges mentioned in their study (those that track demonstrated interest), “off-site contacts [such as sending an email to a rep or requesting info from the school] increase the probability of admission by 10-13 percentage points,” while making both an on-site contact (like taking a campus tour) and ALSO making an off-site contact “increases the probability of admission by 21-24 percentage points.”
- And get this: according to a 2012 NACAC report, between 2004 and 2011, the percentage of colleges that rated demonstrated interest as being “considerably important” rose from 7% to 23% (see page 23 of the report), although since then it has stayed right around the 20% mark.
- Simply put, demonstrated interest is something that many colleges and universities use to track a) how much you (prospective student) like their school and, more importantly b) how likely you are to enroll if the school admits you.
- A few reasons:
 - 1. Schools have a target enrollment number, which means that each year they want a certain number of students to enroll. Why? Think about it: if they enroll 200 (or even 20) too many students, they've got a problem: where do they put everyone? Similarly, if they enroll 200 (or even 20) too few students, then they've got a different problem: 20 or 200 empty dorm beds. And when you multiply that number times that many tuitions, it can add up to a really big reason (or, if you like, millions of reasons) why schools want to try and hit their target enrollment number.
 - 2. Schools want to protect their “yield.” What's yield, you ask? It's the percentage of students who decide to enroll at a particular college or university after being accepted. So, for example, if Northwestern offers ten spots to ten students and all of them accept, that's great for them! That means Northwestern is a great place to be and everyone loves Northwestern yay! But if the school offers ten spots to ten students and only one student accepts, then that's bad. Why? Because then they seem like that one giraffe at the zoo that none of the other giraffes want to play with. #sadgiraffeemoji Why else is it bad? Because yield is tied to a school's ranking in US News and World Report, which is a place that some parents and students look when deciding which schools they should apply to. (Speaking of: Here's a better way to build a college list) Put simply, if their yield gets worse, this can have a negative impact on their rankings.
- In short, colleges want to know:
 - Who really loves us?
 - And can you blame them? If you were running a college, wouldn't you want to know who was not only likely to enroll, but also likely to stay all four years and graduate?
- Quick personal anecdote: In college I applied for a job at a Mongolian BBQ restaurant in Evanston, IL and they required me to come to not one, but four interviews. Four interviews! The first interview went great, but I was ten minutes late to the second interview and, when I showed up late, the hiring manager

said, "Sorry, we won't be hiring you." I asked why and they said, "We just really value punctuality and this shows us you don't really share that commitment." And at first I was like, "Daaang," but then I was like, "Yeah, you're right." By showing up late I was basically demonstrating a lack of interest in the job.

- That hiring manager was saying what schools are saying: Show us you care. Like, actually care.
- Okay, so you may be wondering: How do I do that? I'll tell you in a sec. First, I want to share...

• Note: this info is from a presentation given at a conference in 2015 by a few college admission counselors. Here's what colleges tend to track:

- Interaction and inquiry card submission (or scan) at college fairs
- Campus visit during junior year or summer after junior year
- Early application
- Supplemental essay: showing your particular interest in that college and how you have researched that school specifically
- Speaking with alumni or students who may share information with admission office
- Campus info session/tour in fall of senior year
- Interview with admission rep/alum
- Second visit to campus in senior year
- Overnight program
- Contacting admission rep
- Meeting with faculty on campus or by phone

• Oh, and you know those 42 questions that you answer when you sign up for the SAT? Some colleges pay for that info too. So those are, y'know, 42 other things they track.

• Side note—and you can skip this if you wanna' get to the practical stuff: At a party last night (yes, actually) I met a business analyst for the development office of a highly selective school (and "development office" folks are those who call alumni asking for donations) and she let me know that student engagement is tracked even while students are on campus and—get this— even after you graduate . Why? Because a student who attends alumni events may be more likely to donate. Fun fact: they even use something called "wealth screening" to find out how much money you might have. Yay for data!

• A couple options:

• 1. Nothing. That's right. You can just keep getting good grades and participating in the activities and projects you love and keep living your awesome life. So there is literally nothing that you have to do differently now that you know this . For real. You can still get into a great school without demonstrating interest.

• But if you've read this and you're thinking, "Okay, I could probably go to a college fair, and maybe reach out to an admission rep, and I could maybe even like the college's Facebook page," then here's what you should do first:

• 2. Spend some time developing your college list. Why do this first? So that you don't stress yourself out trying to "demonstrate interest" for like 20 schools, some of which you may not apply to anyway. Here's a resource for creating a great college list , for free.

• Once you've done that, and by the way developing your list may take some time, then...

• 3. Pick a small number of schools to which you'd like to demonstrate some interest. How many? I don't know, pick three or four. But...

• 4. (Heads-up: this is important!) Make sure that each of these schools actually tracks demonstrated interest. Otherwise it's like you're buying gifts for someone whose love language isn't even gifts! (Okay, pretty obscure reference for this crowd, maybe.)

• How do you find out which schools track demonstrated interest? Just search: "Does [school's name] track demonstrated interest?"

• I love this site.

• Once you do, you might learn that, for example, Brown does not track demonstrated interest . In fact, none of the Ivies do. (Don't get me wrong: even though Ivies don't track demonstrated interest, it's still a good idea to interview, visit campus, and learn about each school you're applying to, just make sure you're spending your time wisely.) And, btw, if that Google search doesn't turn up an answer, Google the school name and the words "Common Data Set" and you can scroll down to find a list of factors that a particular school takes into account (for a full guide to what the Common Data Set is and how to use it in your application process , head to that link). It'll look something like this screenshot from the 2019 Common Data Set for Loyola Marymount University:

• See: LMU doesn't track demonstrated interest. So maybe stop demonstrating?

• And here's a look at the Common Data Set for Bates College:

• See: they do track it! (So they do care that you care.)

- Wow, schools publish this info? Yup.
- For more schools, check out the huge Wiki list of Common Data Sets at this link. Check out this PDF guide of Institutional Use of Demonstrated Interest from My March Consulting .
- I'll make this really simple. You might consider demonstrating interest if a) there's a school that you're super excited about attending and b) that school actually tracks demonstrated interest.
- Okay, with all those qualifiers in place, here are 13 ways you can demonstrate interest, adapted from a great article by Lisa Rubin-Johnson. Note that I've added how much time each one should take because a) the word "practical" is in the title of this post, and b) it's a great way to help you make sure you're doing this with ease, joy and purpose.
- 13 Ways You Can Demonstrate Interest (in order of the college process)
- Apply Early Action or Early Decision. (Takes pre-planning, but no extra work to do beyond actual application.) Early Decision (ED) is something you can do for only one school and means that, if you get in, you have to go. Early Action (EA) is something you can do for several schools and, if you get in, you don't have to go, but doing so shows you're interested enough to apply earlier than most students. A few schools have something called Restricted Early Action, but make sure to check the school's website to see which school offers what. Why might you apply ED or EA? Because the ED and EA acceptance rates are often higher. How much higher? Wouldn't it be great if a resource existed that compared the difference between regular decision and early decision numbers? Behold: ED vs RD acceptance rates . You can thank Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy for the time it took them to contact all the schools on this list and put together all this info. (Thanks, Jennie and Jeff!) Keep in mind that students applying early often have stronger applications and more access to resources, so the applicant pool for EA and ED is sometimes stronger. But still: look at the difference in acceptance percentage for regular decision and early decision applicants to American University. (Spoiler: pretty consistently around 35% for RD and 85% for ED.) Think it matters? Uh huh.
- Get on the school's email list. (2 min.) You can do this by Googling the name of the school and filling out an "information request" form like this one .
- Pro Tip: Use the same email address for everything (including when you submit your application), so it's easy for schools to connect your demonstrated interest actions to your application.
- Open the emails you receive from a school and click on something in the email. (3-5 min.) That's right: actually read the emails they send you, then consider clicking on something in the email (if it's interesting to you), and maybe even spend a few minutes reading what's on the web page that it sends you to. (Some schools track these things.) But mostly do it because, hey, you may learn something! And while you're there...
- "Click deep" on the school's website. (15-30 min.) This is my friend Michelle's phrase; it basically means spending some time researching to learn, for example, if the school has a rad program that may be right for you. This will not only help you eventually write your "Why us" statement (assuming the school has one), but will prep you for a potential conversation with your regional rep if and when you...
- Attend a college fair (in person or virtual). (1-3 hrs.) Check out our tips for making the most of a college fair experience . For a list of virtual college admission events, click here .
- Contact your regional rep. (10-30 min.) More tips on developing an authentic relationship with your rep below.
- Follow the school on social media. (5-10 min.) Google to find out what social media platforms the school is on, and follow or like their pages, then maybe even share or re-Tweet something from the school.
- Visit campus, either in person or virtually. (Time spent depends how far away you live.) Visiting in person isn't possible for everyone, but if you're within a couple hours from the school, it's a good idea (if you do live close to the school and never visit, a school might wonder why). Make sure they've got some record you were there by signing up for a tour or meeting with a rep. If you sign up for a virtual visit, make sure you use the same email you use as when you apply, so your visit is tracked and connected to your application.
- Interview. (1 hr prep + 1-3 hrs for actual interview, depending on whether in-person or virtual) Some schools have interviews, some don't—you can find out by Googling—if yes, do the interview. An alumni interview is fine; an interview with your regional rep (i.e. the person who is likely to read your application) is better. More tips on interviews at this link and note that at that link I address, "Does the interview matter?" For schools that track demonstrated interest, the interview matters.
- Supplemental essays. (You'll have to write these anyway if you're applying; time will vary.) The big one is the "Why us" essay, where essentially you get a chance to show the school why you feel you'd be a great fit for one another. If the school is (actually) your #1 choice, say that in your "Why us." Lots more tips on how to write that essay at this link .

- Submit your application before the deadline. (No extra time required.) This is especially true for schools that read applications on a rolling basis (in other words: in the order applications are submitted). As Monica James says on the podcast, better to be the first oboe player that a reader reads than the sixth!
- Thank you notes and emails. (10-15 min.) Hello, life skill. Spend a few minutes following up after an interview or college fair meeting with a little, "Thanks for talking with me!" You can even ask a follow-up question, if you'd like to keep the conversation going, but don't go crazy (see tips below for more on this).
- Follow the waitlist instructions. (10 min-2 hrs, depending) If you've been waitlisted by a school, make sure you do whatever they tell you to do—including the optional stuff. They may for example just ask you to fill out a simple form declaring your interest (10 min.), or they may say that you can submit one additional recommendation letter or a short letter detailing any additional information not included in the original application (if they do, send the one—not six—rec letter, and in the follow-up letter you write, only include new information, as they've asked). The school website will tell you what to do; if you can't find the info, give the school a quick call to ask what to do and take careful notes.
- All right, at this point, you might be saying...
- Hey Ethan, this all sounds exhausting and I don't feel like doing it. Great, then don't! You do not have to do any of the 13 things mentioned above. Colleges will still read your application and you will be considered for admission. Assuming you have good grades and test scores, you have followed all the directions on the application and (this is important) assuming you have developed a balanced college list, you will still end up at a great school where you can get a great education and find happiness.
- But before you decide not to do anything, remember: You don't have to do all 13 things for all 9 or 10 schools you're applying to and you certainly don't have to do them all in one day or even one week. You could just pick a couple schools that you're 100% certain actually track demonstrated interest, then pick a few things from the list of 13 things and do those.
- Here's the key:
- Focus on building an authentic relationship with your regional rep from 2-3 schools on your list. How? Here are...
- Search the school's website to find out who your regional rep is. This is as easy as Googling, for example, "Davidson College regional rep."
- Email your rep and ask a question you are genuinely interested in. If, for example, you've looked on the school's website (important if!) and have been unable to find out if your rep will be in your area sometime soon, you might write briefly to say, "Hi! I'm wondering if you might be in the Bay Area (or wherever you live) sometime soon, as I'm really excited to apply to your school and I'd love to meet you." Or you might ask something really specific like, "Hi! I'm writing to find out if it's easy for freshmen enrolled in the School of Speech to easily take advanced courses in Journalism, as I know that they're separate schools. But I'm really passionate about both, and I'm especially excited to apply to your school, since I know it has great programs for both of my interests: Communication Studies and Journalism." Then sign off with a simple, "Thank you!" and give your name and perhaps the name of your high school. (Pro Tip: I've even seen some students create a simple signature for their emails where they pop in a headshot so reps can attach their name to a face.)
- Keep the email conversation going (for a little bit). Not forever, just a couple emails. How? Ask a question at the end of each email. Careful: this can get annoying after a while, so don't go crazy with this. And make sure you don't email until you have a good and real question. You might, for example, ask if they're going to be in your area visiting other schools and see if they might have time in your schedule to visit your school (make sure to check with your counselor first!). But treat this like you're having an actual, in-person conversation at a college fair. Speaking of which:
- If the rep is coming to a college fair near you, go and meet them! Especially if you won't or may not be able to visit the campus. And if you've already met the rep because they visited your school, still go and just say hello.
- Why do this?
- Quick personal story: A few years ago I was chatting with a rep at a selective school and a student came up to him and said hello and introduced himself. The rep said, "Oh, yeah, I remember you!" and they chatted for like 90 seconds, then the student said good-bye. I was impressed by how the student carried himself and, once the student left, I asked the rep half-jokingly, "What do you think? Is he in?"
- "Oh, he's in," the rep said. But he was serious.
- "Really?" I said? "If he's got As?"
- "Oh, even Bs. He was the student ambassador when I visited his school and he showed me around—he's a great kid and we'd love to have him."
- I don't know if that student ultimately ended up at that school, but his demonstrated interest game was on point.

- Okay, that's enough for you to do and think about so I'm gonna' cut this off here and let you either get to work or get back to your life.
- If I had to re-cap the most important things from this post, I'd say:
- Check out that PDF that compares Regular Decision and Early Decision percentages for 2016 , as it can help you decide if you want to apply ED or not.
- Get to work on your college list , so you can decide which schools you may like to apply some of the 13 tips to.
- That's all. Now go back to having an awesome life.
- Links referenced in or researched for this post:
- NACAC 2015 State of College Admission Report
- Demonstrated Interest: Signaling Behavior in College Admissions
- Powerpoint presentation: Measuring Demonstrated Interest in College Admission — A Life Skill
- The College Admission Landscape, 2012 (CollegeBoard)
- Wiki of Common Data Sets for a number of different schools
- How Do I Love Thee? Demonstrated Interest and How Colleges Count the Ways
- If you'd like to continue diving deeper into understanding how demonstrated interest works, check out this podcast episode with Christine Bowman, Assistant VP for admission at Southwestern University .
- Tagged: student resources , demonstrated interest

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 1, 2017](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [What is Demonstrated Interest? A Practical How-To Guide](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 1, 2017](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [here](#)
- [this link for NACAC's 2023 report](#)
- [the report](#)
- [while you're here, you might as well check out my blog post on how to create a great college list.](#)
- [Here's a better way to build a college list](#)
- [those 42 questions](#)
- [College Interviews: Do They Really Matter? \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)
- [Here's a resource for creating a great college list](#)
- [love language](#)
- [Brown does not track demonstrated interest](#)
- [guide to what the Common Data Set is and how to use it in your application process](#)

- the huge Wiki list of Common Data Sets at this link.
- My March Consulting
- great article
- ED vs RD acceptance rates
- this one
- “Why us” statement
- tips for making the most of a college fair experience
- click here
- at this link
- at this link
- balanced college list
- here are my best college resume templates.
- PDF that compares Regular Decision and Early Decision percentages for 2016
- college list
- NACAC 2015 State of College Admission Report
- Demonstrated Interest: Signaling Behavior in College Admissions
- Powerpoint presentation: Measuring Demonstrated Interest in College Admission
- A Life Skill
- The College Admission Landscape, 2012 (CollegeBoard)
- Wiki of Common Data Sets for a number of different schools
- How Do I Love Thee? Demonstrated Interest and How Colleges Count the Ways
- check out this podcast episode with Christine Bowman, Assistant VP for admission at Southwestern University
- MY COURSE
-
- student resources
- demonstrated interest

Why This College Essay Guide + Examples | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/why-this-college-essay>

■ Mục l■c n■i dung chính:

- The purpose of the “Why us?” or “Why this college” essay is to demonstrate—through specific details and examples—why you’re a great match for a particular school. In some cases, the “Why us?” essay is an important way to demonstrate interest in a particular college.
- The “Why this college?” essay, and variations of this prompt, also happens to be one of the most popular supplemental essay questions asked of students on the college application.
- Here are just a few schools that have (or recently required) this prompt:
 - Bowdoin College
 - Brown University
 - Colorado College
 - Columbia University
 - Cornell University
 - Duke University
 - New York University (NYU)
 - Northwestern University
 - Oberlin College
 - Swarthmore College
 - Tufts University
 - University of Michigan
 - University of Pennsylvania
 - University of Southern California
- And there are dozens of other colleges that ask this question as well.
- This guide will provide a step-by-step strategy and tons of “Why this college?” (sometimes called “Why us?”) essay examples to help you stand out on your essay and even help you decide what kind of school you want to go to .
- We'll start by covering what NOT to do, what kinds of details you SHOULD include in your essay, and where to find the best resources for researching your “Why this college?” essay.
- Mistake #1: Writing about the school's size, location, reputation, weather, or ranking.
- Why shouldn't you do this? Because that's what many other students are writing about and you don't want to blend in. Take a hint from Emory University, whose “Why us?” prompt used to read:
 - Many students decide to apply to Emory University based on our size, location, reputation, and yes, the weather. Besides these valid reasons as a possible college choice, why is Emory University a particularly good match for you?
- Or check out Georgia Tech's old prompt:
 - Beyond rankings, location, and athletics, why are you interested in attending Georgia Tech?
 - Clearly their admissions readers are tired of reading about those things.
- Mistake #2: Simply using emotional language to demonstrate fit.
- Telling the school that you walked onto campus and “it just felt right” is a) something else a lot of students say and b) doesn't the reader understand how are a good match for the school. And, for that matter, neither does the statement, “I can see myself rooting for the Wildcats at MetLife Stadium on Sundays.”
- Mistake #3: Screwing up the mascot, stadium, team colors or names of any important people or places on campus
 - Why avoid this? It's the quickest way to show you're a sloppy researcher. In the example above, the Wildcats play neither at MetLife Stadium nor on Sundays. Also, the “I can see myself in [insert school colors here]” is a cliché of the “Why this College” essay. Avoid it too.
- Mistake #4: Parroting the brochures or website language .

- It could be that the person reading your essay and evaluating your application actually wrote the words you're copying and pasting.
- "On the one hand, it shows that a student has actually researched us and I appreciate that," says Brian Liechti of Warren Wilson College. "On the other, as one of those people who wrote the words you're copying, I'd rather see evidence of how what I wrote resonated with you—do we share values? What stood out or spoke to you in that brochure or on that web page? That's what I really want to see."
- Mistake #5: Describing traditions the school is well-known for.
- In fact, find out the school's common traditions (like throwing toast on the field at Penn, for example, or painting the rock at Northwestern) and then don't write about those things. Why? Everyone and their brother already has. How do you learn these? Google the name of the school and the word "traditions."
- Mistake #6: Thinking of this as only a "Why them" essay.
- The school knows it's awesome. "You probably don't need to tell us about the beautiful Nott Memorial," says Nicole Buenzli of Union College. "I pass the Nott every day, it's on every brochure we create, and we all know it has 16 sides!"
- Instead, think of this as a "Why we are perfect for each other" essay.
- In fact, imagine you're on a date and the person sitting across from you leans in to ask, "So, why do you like me?" Don't just say, "Because you're hot," or "My auntie says a relationship with you will improve my job prospects." When it comes to the "us" in "Why us?" think of it this way:
 - "Us" ≠ the college you're applying to
 - "Us" = the school + you
- In order to prove you and the school are destined to be together, make connections between the two of you.
- Step #1: Do your research.
- How? Like this:
 - "Click deep" on the school's website. Spend serious time on the school's online catalogue/course schedule and look for not only majors and minors, but also specific programs, courses, activities, and opportunities that set this school apart from all the others you're applying to.
 - Read reviews from experts. Here are some good ones:
 - The Fiske Guide to Colleges (Edward B. Fiske)
 - Colleges That Change Lives (Loren Pope)
 - The Best 376 Colleges (Princeton Review)
 - Read student reviews. Students sometimes say things that experts don't or won't say. Both Niche.com and Unigo.com have real student reviews. Read a bunch so you can get a sense of the campus vibe and aren't skewed by just 1-2 opinions.
 - I particularly like the Unigo question, "What's the stereotype of the students at your school?" and "Is the stereotype true?" Note that if the "stereotype" comments contradict one another (one student says "hippie school," another says "nerdy," and another says "jocks and frat boys," that could be a sign it's actually a pretty diverse school).
 - Take real and virtual tours. It's hard to really know a campus without seeing it. And if you can, do it. But if you can't visit in person, check out:
 - www.campusreel.org
 - www.campustours.com
 - www.youniversitytv.com
 - www.youtube.com
 - Tours on individual school websites
 - TIP: Take at least five online tours so you can compare schools.
 - Contact the admissions office and, if possible, talk to your local rep.
 - Most colleges have particular representatives for particular regions of the country (and the world). You can talk to them. And they're really nice! A few reasons why this is a good idea:
 - It's a fantastic way to find out about a school. In fact, there are people who get paid to answer your questions. (My best friend was one of them.) Don't be afraid. They won't be mad at you; they'll be happy you asked.
 - Your conversation may help you write your essay. If you learn something meaningful on the call, you may be able to write in your essay, "When I spoke to so-and-so in the Admissions Office, she told me..."
 - At some schools, the person you speak to on the phone may be the one who reads your application. And how cool will it be when they're reading your app and they think, "Oh, I remember this student! They were so nice."
 - Pro Tip: Definitely have a few specific questions in mind before you call and try not to ask about anything you could Google in five minutes.

- Don't ask, for example, if the school has a Biology major (spoiler: it does!) Ask instead how easy it is for non-majors to take advanced musical theater classes or what sets their Engineering program apart from other schools' (assuming you've already Googled these things and can't find the answers).
- Don't be afraid to make a connection and simply be a curious human. It's a great way to engage with the world. Even if you're doing something as specific as researching an essay about why you chose this college.
- Get in touch with a current student.
- Try putting the word out on social media: "Anyone know a current or former student at Purdue?" Ask that person for 15 minutes of their time. Then ask a short set of questions that you've prepared beforehand. Ideally these are questions that will help you write your "Why this College" essay and will be interesting, specific, and open-ended.
- Don't just ask, "So, what's it like there?" (too general) or "Did you like it?" (close-ended question). Ask open-ended questions that will be fun for them to answer like: "What was the most mind-blowing class you took and why? What surprised you about [this particular] college? What do most people not know about [insert school]?"
- The more interesting your questions are, the more interesting the answers will be, and the more you'll show why you are interested in this college.
- Find a syllabus.
- That's it. Research high and low, search the deepest depths of Google (or better yet: ask someone who attends the school) and find a syllabus for a class you may take at that school.
- Why does this help? Imagine you're trying to articulate why you'd take a certain class. What better way than to peruse the language the professor is using in the part of the syllabus that says "What I hope you will learn from this class"?
- Take this course description, for example, excerpted from a syllabus by (and quoted with permission from) Dr. Frank Anderson at the University of Michigan:
- This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the field of reproductive health, both in the United States and from a global perspective. The course will introduce students to cross-cutting themes including 1) historical discourses on reproductive health; 2) the social ecology of reproductive risks (e.g., gender, race, sexuality); 3) the relevance of physical anatomy to reproductive risks; 4) life course perspectives; 5) human rights frameworks; and 6) application to health behavior and health education assessments and interventions. Additional (more specific) topics in reproductive health will be addressed including maternal morbidity, contraceptive use, pregnancy, STI care, HIV, abortion care, and violence against women. Through a comparative look at reproductive health needs in a range of diverse social settings, we will critically examine the logic and impact of current domestic and international standards for reproductive health policy and practice.
- You can show off your research skills by mentioning in your essay you found a syllabus:
- "When I read Professor [X]'s syllabus for her Class in [Y], I was intrigued by the possibility of exploring [Z], in particular..."
- College Essay Guy's "Why us?" Essay Research Chart 2.0
- What you're looking for as you research: Specific reasons that connect the school (i.e. "them") AND your own interests and needs (i.e. "you"). Here's a simple formula:
- A (school-related detail) + B (how this connects back to you) = a great "Why us?" sentence
- Pro Tip: Remember the "Why this College" essay is another opportunity to share a few more of your skills/talents/interests/passions. So look back at your "Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List and ask yourself: are all these values/qualities somewhere else in my application? If not, where could I weave them into my "Why this College" essay?
- Step #3: Decide on your approach to the essay.
- Important: There is no "best" approach and students are accepted to wonderful schools each year with each of these strategies.
- Here are a few options:
- How it works: Research a bunch of opportunities at the school and connect each one back to you in an organized way.
- How many is "a bunch?" Try to find 10-15 reasons. While you may not ultimately name all the reasons in your final version, research this many will give you plenty to choose from when you start your draft.
- What do I mean by "organized" way?
- Here's an outline for a basic, solid "Why this College" essay:
- Clear thesis that names the academic area(s) you want to pursue and maybe charts the path of the essay
- Main reason #1 and 3-4 specific details

- Main reason #2 and 3-4 specific details
- Main reason #3 and 3-4 specific details
- An ending that maybe discusses what you'll give back
- Here's an example of a basic, solid "Why this College" Essay that includes a bunch of reasons:
- The Why Michigan "Why this College" Essay Example
- Prompt: Describe the unique qualities that attract you to the specific undergraduate College or School (including preferred admission and dual degree programs) to which you are applying at the University of Michigan. How would that curriculum support your interests? (500 word limit)
- Mark Twain was a steamboat pilot. Agatha Christie was a nurse. Robert Frost was a light bulb filament changer. The best writers do not only write beautifully, but also integrate their personal experiences and knowledge outside the world of literature. By combining the study of literature , media and perhaps law , I believe the University of Michigan will provide the education necessary for me to evolve as a journalist.
- A journalist cannot reach the peak of his craft if his knowledge of literature and critical thinking skills are weak, which is why I'm excited to explore what the Department of English has to offer. I look forward to courses such as Academic Argumentation and Professional Writing, as I believe these will provide me with a firm basis in journalistic writing technique and improve my abilities to write analytically and develop well-supported arguments. Furthermore, the Professional Writing course will teach me how to write in a concise, straightforward style, a skill vital to a journalist.
- At The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, I will be able to apply the skills learned in class with media studies in and beyond the classroom. The Honors Program provides an opportunity for independent research into the field of mass media, which will allow for intensive group studies and in-depth research opportunities, and the superb networking opportunity provides the chance to meet and engage with prominent figures in media-related studies, which will provide a deeper insight and knowledge into the field. Outside the classroom, I can see myself writing scripts for the student-run television station WOLV-TV, or composing headlines for The Michigan Daily.
- And although journalism is the path I'm currently on, I want to remain open to other opportunities I may encounter at UM. The Pre-Law Advising Program is interesting because I want to explore the intricacies of law and policies that govern this world. I believe that the judicial role of a lawyer is closely related to the expository skills of a writer, and I look forward to exploring this new field of study that wasn't offered in my high school education.
- But all these are what UM has to offer me. I realize that, as a member of the UM community, I'll want to give back as well . The various volunteer programs offered by Volunteers Involved Every Week appeals to me, as does the possibility of volunteering at the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Michigan, as I have previous experience with elementary school teaching. And as an international student, I know the pains of learning English as a second language. I believe I can contribute to the ESL teaching program either at UM or abroad, and see this as an opportunity to have an impact not only at UM, but in Washtenaw County and beyond. (466 words)
- Four Things I Love About the "Why Michigan" Essay
- The short hook. Many students spend way too long on their opening when a short one will do. This essay's hook is just 40 words long and works well. Does your "Why this College" essay even need a hook? Nope. If you use this first approach, get to the main argument as fast as you can.
- The clear thesis that provides a path for the essay . This will probably take you back to AP English class essays where you're asked to make your argument explicit at the start and then provide evidence to support it. That's what you're doing in a "Why this College" essay and your argument is that you and the school are a perfect match.
- Three main reasons and 3-4 bits of supporting evidence per paragraph . I recommend identifying three main reasons because a) it keeps your essay organized, b) it's easy to adapt for different length "Why this College" essays, and c) it provides "buckets" for your research. ("Buckets" = the themed paragraphs you need to "fill" with research.)
- The way he sprinkles "salt" into his essay. Remember above where the author notes that he "look[s] forward to exploring [law at Michigan, as it] wasn't offered in [his] high school education"? I call this sprinkling "salt" into your "Why us?" essay. Why? Consider this analogy: salt makes one thirsty and, by mentioning opportunities you haven't had access to, you let the reader know that you're thirsty for something the school has to offer. And the reader may know of opportunities for quenching that thirst that you don't—including the "salt" may inspire them to think of those ways.
- A Slightly More Advanced Example of This Approach
- Here's another example that follows the basic structure of the "Why Michigan" essay, but it's a bit more advanced because the details are a bit more specific. As a result, we learn a bit more about both the school and the author. Read it first, then take a look at the outline below to see how it's constructed.

- The Why Penn “Why this College” Essay Example
- Note: I’m bolding the school-specific reasons in his essay so you can spot them more easily, but you shouldn’t do this in your final draft.
- Prompt: How will you explore your intellectual and academic interests at the University of Pennsylvania? Please answer this question given the specific undergraduate school to which you are applying. (Word limit: 650)
- I want to be a catalyst when I grow up, someone who sparks growth while also trying to sustain the environment through improved efficiency. At UPenn, I look forward to pursuing a major in Mechanical Engineering and exploring interdisciplinary programs, as I believe that sustainability can be a viable solution to preserve earth’s resources.
- At the GRASP laboratory , I hope to work at the Haptics Lab under Professor Katherine Kuchenbecker to devise an integrated haptic-responsive camera trap. I believe that the use of teleoperation (in camera traps) in wildlife censuses and studies can be a potential gamechanger in a geologically diverse country like India. I also feel that haptics interfaces can catalyze the process of discovering and studying unexplored biodiversity hotspots like the Western Ghats and the high-rising Himalayas. Besides this, I would also really get a chance to perfect my butterfly stroke through stroke rehabilitation at the Haptics Lab!
- In addition, hands-on project courses like Machine Design and Manufacturing and Product Design will help me in developing, testing and prototyping product permutations, and through ISAC Program 2018, I would love to advocate for a course called Environmentally Sustainable Product Design, as I feel that a product’s longevity in a market is directly related to its environmental sustainability.
- I believe that little sparks of innovation can turn into developed businesses if given the right acceleration and, having already negotiated a deal with the software company Everlution Software Ltd. for my eco-friendly innovation ‘Water Wave’, I look forward to using the opportunities at IGEL to turn my innovations into sustainable technological ventures. After accompanying my father to joint-venture meetings across Europe, I have picked upon certain technical aspects of negotiations such as the influence of ‘EBITDA’, the use of inter-cultural body language to change mindsets and the long-drawn-out process of Due Diligence. Courses like Engineering Negotiations will advance my skills in the subtle art of negotiation and develop my thinking in high-pressure situations.
- I look forward to contributing in unconventional ways: through Penn’s policy of Climate Action 2.0 , I’d love to help increase the efficiency of alternative energy machinery through responsive auto-sensors and I would also contribute to the establishing of wildlife corridors at UPenn by conducting case studies at the Morris Arboretum with the help of the Penn Green Fund . I also look forward to engaging in bird photography and ornithology by being an active member of the Penn Birding Club and potentially conducting fall bird censuses to illuminate for students the birdlife that nestles in the university. I hope to photograph and document each and every one of the 104 species (Morris Arboretum Checklist) of birds at UPenn. Furthermore, courses like Documentary Strategies and Photographic Thinking will help me better integrate critical thought into my photos and construct out-of-the-box documentaries to put into perspective environmental sustainability at UPenn. Also, contributing photo essays to the Penn Sustainability Review will allow me to depict the need for a change, beyond words.
- UPenn will also help me pursue a multitude of activities at its various clubs such as Penn Cricket Club , PennNaatak , where I hope to spark my flair for Marathi Drama , and men’s club basketball (I was all state for three years!).
- As I move with a redefined pace towards the goal of global sustainability, I am reminded of the UPenn ideology of addressing the most challenging questions and problems of our time by integrating and combining different disciplines and perspectives. Through my stay at UPenn, I hope to do just that.
- Here’s the outline for the “Why UPenn” essay (which you can adapt for your own essay):
- Intro/Thesis (say what you want to study and why)
- Really specific academic offering at the school that is in your intended major/concentration (this should connect to you in a really specific way)
- A second really specific academic offering that is also in your intended major/concentration (and that also connects back to you)
- Something academic that’s not in your intended major/concentration (this keeps the focus on academics, but also brings in some variety)
- Best/most important extracurricular offering (that connects to you in a really specific way)
- Miscellaneous extracurriculars paragraph (2-3 things to demonstrate social/non-academic fit)
- Closing (this can be short and, in shorter “Why this College” essays, is unnecessary)
- Note that the content in the two essays above are roughly 50% about the school and 50% about the student, which is a nice balance. Below is an example essay that uses a similar structure (thesis followed

by main reasons), but is more like 75% about the school and 25% about the student. This isn't not "wrong," it's just a slightly different approach.

- The Why Tufts "Why this College" Essay Example

- Prompt: Which aspects of Tufts' curriculum or undergraduate experience prompt your application? In short: "Why Tufts?" (200 word limit)

- In addition to providing a strong foundation in economics, Tufts provides me the opportunity to further explore global health care policy through an International Relations Program that leverages the strengths of 18 related departments and programs. I'm also keen to continue my study of the Chinese language through Tufts' Chinese Department, studying with Professor Mingquan Wang and perhaps study abroad at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China, to receive the full immersion experience. Tufts' Experimental College intrigues me as I can take unconventional courses such as Game Strategy (EXP-0029-S) and Rising Tide: Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Adaptation (EXP-0021-F). Further, Tufts' urban backdrop provides me the opportunity to play league cricket year round to train for my bid to become the first Jumbo on the US National Cricket Team, while studying abroad at Oxford would provide me with not only global economic perspectives, but also the opportunity to continue my pursuit of cricket in its birthplace. Visiting Tufts, my mother's alma mater, I felt I was at home in Singapore. Its strengths in Chinese, Econ and International Relations, combined with its beautiful suburban campus, academic rigor, and global reach have confirmed that Tufts is the place for me. (196 words)

- I call this the "firehose" approach because it packs 14 reasons into 196 words. The author offers the reader a sense that he has clearly done his research and knows how he might make use of the school's offerings, which is the goal of the solid, basic "Why this College" essay.

- Did you notice how easy it would be to adapt the "Why Tufts" essay for another school? Switch out "18" in "18 related departments and programs," change the names of the Chinese professor and University, name two different interesting courses and cut the "mother's alma mater" line and voila—suddenly this is an essay for another school.

- But how do you make the school feel really special? Like this:

- How it works: find 3-5 opportunities that are particular to the school (i.e. available at no other school or no other school you're applying to) and connect each one back to you.

- This is my favorite approach, as focusing on fewer reasons allows you the chance to share more about yourself and your interests (i.e., "why you"). But it can be more difficult to write because, frankly, it can be hard to find specifics that truly set a school apart from other schools. It is possible to find these unique offerings, however, and I believe it's worth trying, especially for your top-choice school(s).

- Pro Tip: Ask admission reps what sets their school (or the department you're applying to) apart from other schools.

- As an example, notice how the author below names four unique offerings that connect him to Cornell (I've labeled them below). Plus, we learn a little more about the author's interests than we do from the essays above.

- The Why Cornell "Why this College" Essay Example

- Prompt: Students in Arts and Sciences embrace the opportunity to delve into their academic interests, discover new realms of intellectual inquiry, and chart their own path through the College. Tell us why the depth, breadth, and flexibility of our curriculum are ideally suited to exploring the areas of study that excite you. (Word limit: 650)

- Whenever I have time on my hands, I hook myself up to my EEG and analyze my brain waves. Or if I am feeling slightly less adventurous, I am reading about the latest neuroscience trends in ScienceDirect or NCBI PubMed. I want to spend my life studying, understanding, and helping to fix the human brain.

- I bought my EEG online two years ago for about \$150 and have used it to compare the beneficial effects of both circadian and non-circadian sleep on the brain by analyzing the number of clear peaks in a 3-minute interval of a theta wave. But just counting the peaks is not the best way to measure the benefits. I look forward to gaining a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of neurophysiology (as well as working with better equipment) in courses like Principles of Neurophysiology. As someone who has long been passionate about neurotechnology, the fact that Cornell is unique in offering classes devoted specifically to the field is very important to me.

- I would also like to be able to contribute my experiences with neurotechnology to support the cutting edge research in Cornell's brand new NeuroNex Hub. I would love to work with Dr. Chris Xu in expanding the current three-photon microscope to be applied on various animal models. I also look forward to helping Dr. Chris Schaffer, whose research on deep neural activity is not being done anywhere else in the world. I freak out at the possibility of helping him develop a tool to look at multiple brain areas at the same time.

- Though I have long aspired to study at Cornell, when I visited and sat in on Neurobiology and Behavior II, it made me all the more determined. I found Professor Christiane Linster's presentation on synaptic

plasticity absolutely riveting. Her animations of neurotransmitters crossing a synapse and new synapses forming in neuron clusters kept her students engaged in a way I have not seen in any other classrooms. I want to go to Cornell because of teachers like her.

- During my visit I also enjoyed talking with Kacey about her experiences in the college scholars program. I loved that she had studied the effects of circus and gymnastic performances, like Cirque Du Soleil, on therapy for children with neurological disabilities. I am very excited by the idea of combining neuroscience with something like the effects of learning a classical language on developing brains. Many studies have shown the plethora of positive effects of being bilingual, but not much research has been done on classical languages. I have been studying Latin for over seven years, and I have experienced firsthand the positive effects. I spend hours every day breaking down complex sentences such as those in Vergil's Aeneid, and so have extended this approach to problem-solving to other aspects of my life, like my neuroscience research. This is the program I would create for my college scholars project.

- Cornell is also the only university I am interested in that offers a speaking course in Latin: Conversational Latin. For the past six years, I have rarely had to translate more than a few sentences at a time from English to Latin, never truly experiencing the unique grammatical features of Latin, such as intricate word play by Catullus in his Odes, that drew me so much to this language. I would love to supplement my knowledge by being able to formulate my thoughts in Latin and actively immerse myself in the language. I am really excited about learning the language as it was meant to be learned, as well as the new perspective it will provide me on Latin rhetorical artifacts.

- As a kid who loves inventing, enjoys interactive learning, and wants to speak a dead language, I know Cornell is where I want to be. I wonder if my roommate will mind if I bring my EEG?

- How this essay is similar to the first approach:

- He begins with a short intro and solid thesis; both work well.

- He weaves back and forth between what he wants and what the school offers.

- What sets this essay apart: The four examples that name how the school is unique give us a really clear sense of how Cornell is a great fit for this student. Also, we know this essay was written specifically for the school because it would be much more difficult (than the "Why Tufts" essay, for example) to switch out the variables and use this for another school. Finally, while the "Why Michigan" and "Why UPenn" examples go for breadth, discussing many different reasons; the "Why Cornell" example discusses fewer reasons but with more depth.

- How it works: identify one core value that links you to the school and tell a story.

- This approach might be good for:

- Schools that a) have shorter "Why this College" essays and b) seem to be asking for this type of response

- Students who feel approaches #1 and #2 might blend in too much, and are willing to take a risk

- Why is this a risky approach?

- You're foregoing listing 5-15 reasons that connect you to the school (and, frankly, that some admission officers like to see)

- This approach hinges on a particular story, value, or insight. And if:

- your reader is skimming (as many are), or

- your story isn't well-told, or

- the central theme or value isn't clear, or

- the insight doesn't make the reader feel something... the essay may not work.

- That's a lot of ifs! Having said that, here's an example essay that, I think, does work:

- The Why Bowdoin "Why this College" Essay Example

- Prompt: Bowdoin students and alumni often cite world-class faculty and opportunities for intellectual engagement, the College's commitment to the Common Good, and the special quality of life on the coast of Maine as important aspects of the Bowdoin experience. (Word limit: 250)

- Reflecting on your own interests and experiences, please comment on one of the following:

- 1. Intellectual engagement

- 2. The Common Good

- 3. Connection to place

- On the first dawn of the summer, I found myself in a familiar place: sitting awkwardly in the back of a crowded bus full of rowdy twelve year olds. But this time around, I wasn't the shy, new kid at school, a position I knew all too well. I was the teacher, implementing a middle school aquatic ecology curriculum I'd developed the year before.

- As New Jersey's Passaic River appeared on the horizon, I tightened the red laces on my Merrell hiking boots and checked my bag: clipboards, lesson plans, and a new water testing kit.

- For the entire day, I watched as twenty-five young minds tested the Passaic River's water. Using the river as a natural learning laboratory, I taught them about pollution and industrialization, urban design and remediation strategies.
- That summer, through my work in environmental education, I discovered the power of place. I realized that in a changing world, places really are the best storytellers. By tracking the Passaic's pollution levels, we toured the tales of its waters, beginning with its use by the Lenape Native Americans, to its unjust usurpation by European hegemony, to the Vietnam War, during which tons of Agent Orange were dumped recklessly.
- At Bowdoin, I'll encounter this again. I find myself doing the very thing I was teaching: investigating the rich stories behind a place. As part of my major in Earth and Oceanographic Science, I blissfully get lost on Orr's Island, researching everything from the historical ecology to the changing geography of the Maine coastline. And I can't wait.
- Why does this essay work?
- This author checks a few "Why us?" boxes by focusing on specifics, showing us he's done his research, and clearly answering the prompt. But what to know the main thing that sets this essay apart?
- The author found a deep connection between one of the school's core values and one of his own.
- I know this flies in the face of the "provide a whole bunch of specific reasons" for your essay that I mentioned in Approach #1. Instead, the author found one really good reason: Both he and Bowdoin are deeply committed to investigating place. This focus was particularly apropos for this student, as he planned to major in Environmental Science. And, as you read this essay you sense that it couldn't have been written for another prompt.
- Because he used a value as the central theme, this essay is primarily about the author. Check out that word count: the essay is 258 words long, but he doesn't even mention the school until word 202.
- This works because he stays connected to the central themes, which are nature and storytelling. In fact, if in your essay we don't get a sense of the central themes in the first 200 words, we might wonder, "Where is this going?"
- Instead, though, we feel as we read this essay that the author is taking us somewhere. He's a guide we trust. So we relax.
- How can you write an essay like this?
- 1. Find a way in which you and the school are deeply aligned.
- Hint: It's probably a value.
- It'll take some research. And it may be easier to do this with a smaller liberal arts school (like Bowdoin) that has a particular character. Reed College, for example, is proud to call its students "Reedies"—even going so far as to call them a particular species—so, for Reed, you might figure out what being a "Reedie" means to you, then demonstrate why you are without a doubt one of them.
- 2. Take your time crafting the essay.
- What do I mean? I believe a great "Why this College" essay is similar to a great personal statement in that it should demonstrate:
 - Core values (which this essay does)
 - Insight (aka important and interesting connections, aka "so what" moments)
 - Craft (it should be obvious, in other words, that the author has revised the essay over several drafts and knows the purpose of each paragraph, sentence, and word)
 - And because the Bowdoin essay above essentially focuses on just one important and interesting connection (connection to place), I believe that craft becomes a LOT more important. In other words: this essay would be much less awesome if it were much less beautiful.
- What do I mean by beautiful? Read it aloud. Note phrases like, "Using the river as a natural learning laboratory" and "places really are the best storytellers." The writer even makes water testing kits sound like exciting tools of a real-life adventurer, as essential to the author as an explorer's compass (and when I read this essay I'm convinced they are)!
- How do you get to this point? I think you have to really love the thing you're writing about. I also think (if I'm being honest) that you have to love to write, or at least to convince yourself you do.
- This approach takes time. But it's worth it. Why? I believe this is the type of essay that, particularly at a small liberal arts college, can truly make a difference. I have only anecdotal evidence—stories from a few admissions officers—to prove it, but in some cases I believe essays like this have tipped the scales in favor of a particular student.
- 3. Find a way to be vulnerable.
- This part is perhaps the most difficult, but most crucial. Let me explain:
- I mentioned above that a great "Why us?" essay should demonstrate a) important and interesting questions and b) craft. But there's a third quality that I think a great personal statement should have, and

that a “Why us?” essay can, in rare instances, demonstrate. That quality is vulnerability.

- How does the Bowdoin essay above show vulnerability? He lets his geekiness show. (My definition of “geek,” by the way, is someone with a lot of knowledge in a particular area, particularly an area that is not conventionally popular.) He does this by writing about what he loves without apology.
- Why is this vulnerable? Because, in doing so, he risks public ridicule. (I mean, water testing? Come on ...) But he pulls it off because he doesn’t go too far or include too much jargon. Why is this important? He draws us in rather than push us away. And we’ve all met both kinds of geeks: the kind that draw us in and the kind that alienate us. Be the draw-us-in kind.
- Another thing that makes this essay vulnerable: he lists very few (almost no) Bowdoin specifics. And that’s a risk! Did it work? You decide.
- Could I create a hybrid approach by focusing on a central theme, but still listing a few reasons?
- Yup. Here’s...
- The Why Swarthmore “Why this College Essay Example
- The human body’s greatest asset is its ears. They come pimpled, freckled, mushed, bent, rounded, and pointed. But, despite their differences, they share a single purpose: to listen.
- Swarthmore is all about ears. It not only understands the importance of empathetic and open dialogue, but also the ways in which listening can be the first step towards bridging deeply entrenched ideological divides. Whether I’m learning from guest lecturers at the Center for Innovation and Leadership, engaging in dialogue at the Global Health Forum, or exploring my sexuality through the Intercultural Center, I know I’d be at a place that values collaboration, honest discourse, ethical leadership, and creativity invested in the public good. Everything at Swarthmore is about putting those cartilage appendages on the sides of your head to good use.
- As a person drawn to audio and visual storytelling, my life has been defined by listening. At Swarthmore, I would continue to foster the quality relationships I’ve created and the love I’ve spread by inviting people to share their stories on my podcasts. Majoring in Film & Media Studies or English Literature, broadcasting at WSRN, and writing for The Review is the next chapter in my life of listening. I would creatively explore how narratives have been told in the past and can be redefined digitally for a new generation of ears. Swarthmore knows that global change starts with an honest conversation. I want to be pioneering new networks of connection. I want to be starting those conversations. (247 words)
- Ethan’s note: If you go with this approach, ideally you would find offerings unique to the school (as in the “Why Cornell” essay). But if you can’t, just find reasons that are as specific as possible and connect them back to you (as in the “Why Michigan” and “Why UPenn” essays).
- Good news: you can still write a great “Why this College” even if you have no idea what you want to be when you grow up. Some tips:
- 1. Consider including a thesis that either names your 2-3 areas of interest or states that you’re unsure what you want to study. In that thesis, consider saying what you do want, and including the name of the school (Example: “I’m interested in X, Y, and Z, and I believe there’s no other place for me to explore these areas than the University of Wisconsin-Madison.”)
- 2. You can also begin with a nice hook to not only show your creativity but also perhaps distract from the fact that you have no idea what you want to be when you grow up (and oh by the way it’s totally fine to not know).
- Here’s a great example to illustrate these points:
- The Why Johns Hopkins “Why this College” Essay Example
- Prompt: Johns Hopkins University was founded in 1876 on a spirit of exploration and discovery. As a result, students can pursue a multi-dimensional undergraduate experience both in and outside of the classroom. Given the opportunities at Hopkins, please discuss your current interests (academic, extracurricular, personal passions, summer experiences, etc.) and how you will build upon them here. (500 words)
- Dear 2016 Ariana,
- It’s 2026. I have just returned from the G20 summit after delivering the annual-report on demographic transition and population stability.
- Throughout your seventeen years of life, you have been barraged with choices: Which airline seat to choose? Is the answer B or C? Is “the dress” blue/black or white/gold? But, you will soon make a choice that will allow you to harness your knowledge and apply it to reality. The choice to go to Johns Hopkins.
- By now, you have lived in India, the UK, and the USA: multicultural exposure that shaped your worldview. You are confused as to what you want exactly, but deep down you strive for a synergy of ideas and fields. That can and will be found at Hopkins.
- Particularly, the JHU Humanities Center will provide you with a flexible approach toward interdisciplinary study: important, as you value the need to explore before settling on a choice. You will find this at

Homewood , but also globally; through study at the Sciences Po campus , Paris , which outlines the interconnectedness between areas such as law, finance, and urban policy.

- In Model United Nations, you built skills in collaboration, working with students across the country to embody pluralism and reach consensus. At Hopkins, you will enhance these skills and your knowledge of international relations in Professors Moss and Hanchard's class, *Diaspora, Nation, Race, & Politics* . The discussions, which range from political sociology and human rights to the fall of late nineteenth century empires, will give you greater insight into how history determines our understanding of today's geopolitical challenges.
- And although you stuck your toe in the ocean of government and politics through your internship in Senator Glazer's office, JHU provides an immersive dive into this field through their International Studies Program , with opportunities at the Nanjing Center, China and the Nitze School in Washington D.C .
- On a local level, you will be able to extend your political service when you run for JHU Student Government Association , where you will continue to represent diverse viewpoints and provide a forum for recognition and discussion.
- You will also have the opportunity to continue your work with the Red Cross , giving back to the Baltimore community by joining the JHU and the Chesapeake Regional chapters . And by joining the Public Health Student Forum , you will gain access to speakers who have worked in these fields all their life, like Former Director of the Peace Corps, Dr. Jody Olsen, and Dr. Richard Benjamin, Chief Medical Officer of the Red Cross .
- All your life experiences, from building community to understanding behavior in order to enact decisions, have stemmed from One. Single. Choice. Without Johns Hopkins, you would not have become an expert on global policy change, speaking at events like the G20 emporium.
- Yes, the world has changed dramatically in the past 10 years. But Hopkins recognizes this fluidity, and paired with you, Ariana, will propel the importance of integrative study.
- Future Ariana
- PS: The dress is white/gold.
- Final note from me: Do you notice how in the end this approach isn't all that different from Approaches 1 and 2? The main difference is her thesis, which, instead of naming a major, simply states that she's unsure what she wants to study. We're cool with it, though, especially because she still includes lots of reasons and connects each back to herself.
- 1. Scan your essay for capital letters. Why? Because, chances are, capital letters means you've included something specific that the school offers. In fact...
- 2. Highlight in bold your reasons for wanting to attend. I've done this in the "Why Johns Hopkins" essay above. Notice after doing this if you have just 1-3 items highlighted in bold. If so, you can probably trim in some places to make room for more reasons. This isn't a hard and fast rule, but if you're going for the first or second approach I've described, then 1-3 reasons per paragraph is a good rule of thumb, whereas if you're going for the third approach you can kind of do whatever: you might choose to go in-depth on one really great reason. But either way...
- 3. Make sure that each time you mention something about the school you connect it back to yourself. How do you know? Simply check each mention of the school and see if you've explained why this is important—not just in general, but to you.
- Finally, just so you can see how a personal statement and "Why this College" essay can work together, here is:
- The Laptop Sticker "Why this College" Essay Example
- If I could pursue only one goal for the rest of my life, it would be taking measurable action towards gender equality. Since the age of six, I have observed the difference in how I am treated because of my gender—when playing sports, during mealtimes, or at social gatherings. I have tried to counter the effects of gender bias through social entrepreneurship, and now I would like to gain insight into the societal constructs that underlie these issues.
- At UPenn, I hope to study Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies with a concentration in Feminist Studies and Global Gender and Sexuality Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. Through Professor Kathleen Brown's "Gender & Society" class, I will learn how complex social identities such as race and gender impact economic exchange and demarcate opportunities available to minorities. I hope to further explore the consequences of electoral quotas and their effect on women's mobilization transnationally with Dawn Teele in her class, "Sex and Power." Such classes will help me ensure that I am not working for one cause at the expense of another, and will arm me with the skills necessary to analyze social, economic and political dynamics in the real world.
- Last summer, I spent a month at UPenn, living in Harnwell College House and incubating my social impact startup, Straw'd, through the LaunchX program held at the Pennovation Center. At the program,

MEAM Professor Jenna Shanis spoke about her work designing soda machines with Coca Cola. Presenting us with a simple task ("design a way for humans to enjoy flowers"), she showed us that the first solution is usually never the best solution, and that innovation is most effective when it is iteratively brainstormed and cross-fertilized. Material Science and Engineering Professor Vanessa Chan, inventor of the tangle-free headphones 'Loopit,' inspired me to take on the challenge of creating a consumer good instead of a company in the service industry. These two professors, along with others who spoke, have given me a new perspective on integrating theory into practice, critical thinking into activism.

- Given my interest in building new social enterprises, I would like to join the Penn Social Entrepreneurship Movement to learn more about empowering women economically in different countries. Through events like 'Social Impact Talk Series' held by PennSEM, I will learn about the multi-faceted industry of social entrepreneurship and gain exposure to issues such as food innovation and food policymaking.

Additionally, planning TEDxYouth@Austin events has been an integral part of my four years of high school, and I will continue this passion through TEDxPenn by finding women speakers from underrepresented industries and helping to elevate their voices.

- I've been an artist longer than I have been an activist. Through classes such as "Photographic Thinking-a Benjamin Franklin Seminar" and "Art, Design, and Digital Culture", I will learn to use design as a vehicle to fight for gender equality in the future, as digital art is currently heavily influencing the way social movements develop momentum through media.

- While at UPenn, I noticed that many youth from surrounding neighborhoods grow up with difficult socioeconomic circumstances, and I hope to empower women of color from these neighborhoods as I study how race and gender impact economic opportunity. I will join the Community School Student Partnerships to lead social impact and entrepreneurship workshops at the after-school programs in high schools. I've experienced firsthand how entrepreneurship training can empower individuals, and by training girls from underrepresented communities, I hope to help them solve the problems they experience. Joining CSSP would give me the opportunity to give back to the Philadelphia and Penn communities while continuing my passion for empowering young females.

- The GSWS program at UPenn is a perfect fit for me. Its interdisciplinary training and intersectional approach would provide me with the knowledge, mentorship, and resources I need to continue growing as a social justice advocate and champion of equality.

- And there you have it. Three approaches to tackle your 'Why this college' essay, and some important context before you dive in. Hopefully these tips have you off and running.

- Have a tip or question? Have a totally different approach to this essay? Let me know in the comments.

- Happy "Why us?"-ing.

- "Why this College" Essay Example #1: annotated essay for the University of Michigan.

- "Why this College" Essay Example #2: annotated essay for Tufts.

- Guide: Writing a "Why us?" Essay for a Safety School

- More DOs and DON'Ts for Your "Why Us?" Statement

- Personal Statement Examples

- Extracurricular Activity Examples

- Tagged: why this college essay , why this college essay example , why this school essay

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [November 6, 2019](#)

- [Supplemental Essays](#)

- [Why This College Essay Guide + Examples](#)

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [November 6, 2019](#)

- [Supplemental Essays](#)

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- demonstrate interest
- supplemental essay questions
- decide what kind of school you want to go to
- Six Common Mistakes Students Make on the "Why this College" Essay
- How to Write A "Why this College" Essay: A Step-by-Step Guide
- Step 1: How to Find All the Resources You Need to Learn about a Particular School
- The Top Secret Three-Word Trick to Finding Specific Info for Your "Why this College" Essay
- Step 2: Organize Your Research
- Step 3: Decide on Your Approach: Approach #1: The Basic, Solid "Why this College" Essay That Includes a Bunch of Reasons
- Approach #2: The "3-5 Unique Reasons" Strategy
- Approach #3: The "One Value" Strategy
- How to Write a "Why this College" Essay If You Don't Know What You Want to Study
- Three Ways to Make Sure Your "Why this College" Essay Is Doing Its Job
- majors and minors
- Niche.com
- Unigo.com
- www.campusreel.org
- www.campustours.com
- www.youniversitytv.com
- www.youtube.com
- Here's a viewable version of this chart for you to copy/download and edit on your own.
- Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List
- STILL DEBATING on which COLLEGE MAJORS to choose?
- Why this College" Essay Example #1: annotated essay for the University of Michigan.
- Why this College" Essay Example #2: annotated essay for Tufts.
- Guide: Writing a "Why us?" Essay for a Safety School
- More DOs and DON'Ts for Your "Why Us?" Statement
- Personal Statement Examples
- Extracurricular Activity Examples
- why this college essay
- why this college essay example
- why this school essay

Tips for Planning a College Visit | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/tips-for-planning-a-college-visit>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- We're betting that you would love a giant list of virtual college tours right about now. Voilà.
- Special thanks to Rebecca Chabrow for putting this together.
- Planning which college to attend is one of the most important decisions you will make as a young adult, and there is so much to consider. It can feel overwhelming narrowing down the search and deciding on which colleges to visit. This guide will help alleviate some of that stress and answer all your burning questions.
- It is impossible to visit every single school on your list, especially when geography is working against you. Start your search online by navigating around the school's virtual tour, which can be found on most college websites. Ask yourself a few simple questions first: are you looking for a big or small school, what are you studying (liberal arts or trade/tech) and do you prefer state or private? Try visiting at least one of each type of school (big, small, far from home, close to home, etc.) if you are unsure.
- Now it's time to plan the visit! Make sure to plan far in advance especially if you are planning to go at a busy time of year. Browse the college website's admissions page and schedule your tour ahead of time. Ensure the time you select will allow for dorm visits or perhaps the option to sit in on a class. Avoid school holidays when the campus is likely to be empty, and times when it might be particularly busy such as "move in" days.
- On visit day, try and think of a few minor details they may not mention in the tour: how do people get around, are they riding bikes, taking the bus, or walking? Is there a sense of fun and positive school spirit or do people look stressed and exhausted? Are there safety measures put in place around campus? Also, take the time to check out the nearby neighborhoods and popular hangouts in order to get caught up on what is going on in the community surrounding the campus.
- Treat your visit like a family vacation, have fun, ask questions, and don't be afraid to explore!
- Want to know how to choose a college? [Click here](#).
- Need an awesome college application timeline? [Click here](#).
- For more tips on planning a college visit, check out the full article by our friends at [Fix.com](#).
- Amy is a travel writer and editor based out of Southern Oregon. She specializes in planning outdoors adventures for children and founded the family travel site [PitStopsForKids.com](#).
- Tagged: college visit , campus visit , college tour

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [March 15, 2017](#)
- [Parent Resources](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to Get Most Out of your College Visit](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [March 15, 2017](#)
- [Parent Resources](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

- [a giant list of virtual college tours](#)
- [Click here](#)
- [Click here.](#)
- [CampusReel](#)
- [Fix.com](#)
- [Fix.com](#)
- [Fix.com Blog](#)
- [my course](#)
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- [college visit](#)
- [campus visit](#)
- [college tour](#)

Researching Admissions to Non-US Universities: Tips from the National Association of College Admissions Counseling

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/nacac-international-admissions-tips>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kristen Karovic, Founder of College Bloom
- Is it really free to study in Germany? Do you have to know French to study in France? Is it more valuable to earn a college degree from the United States?
- There are many fantastic options to earn your undergraduate degree around the world: English-speaking destinations such as Australia, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom are a popular choice (especially for U.S. students), but you also can immerse yourself in English-taught programs in countries such as France, Germany, and Spain. Simultaneously, so many options can also raise so many questions!
- To streamline your research, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) put together this incredibly helpful Guide to International University Admission . In it, you will find 15 Country Profiles to explore and supplement your research about possibilities for your higher education. Give yourself at least an hour to read the guide carefully as you learn more about the college landscape in these 15 countries: Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- For a point of reference on the bigger-picture questions, read our How to Develop a Great College List when Applying to Schools Outside the U.S . as you map out—yes, literally map out—your options. (Fun fact: we often open a map as we research schools!).
- For each country in the NACAC Guide, you will find insightful information including: background information on higher education in the country, an overview of the undergraduate degree programs offered, academic calendar, useful websites, application guidelines, deadlines, application fees, admission requirements, documents required after acceptance, tuition and fees, housing, visa and other permits, work eligibility, and advice from experienced counselors.
- In other words, you'll get a great foundation to explore options for your undergraduate degree.
- Our own helpful guide expands on some of the countries in the NACAC guide with specific universities, as well as other fantastic locations, such as Bulgaria, Czech Republic, India, and Malaysia. What's even better news? Many of the universities within these countries cost 10,000 USD/year total. That's right: tuition and living expenses included. Intrigued? Check out Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year .
- Happy reading and researching!
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , NACAC , researching admissions , how to research universities , how to research non-U.S. universities

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 19, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

- [International Students](#)
- [Researching Admissions to Non-US Universities: Tips from the National Association of College Admissions Counseling](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 19, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [College Bloom](#)
- [Guide to International University Admission](#)
- [How to Develop a Great College List when Applying to Schools Outside the U.S](#)
- [Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year](#)
- [Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students](#)
- [122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? \(International Version\)](#)
- [211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students \(and Their Counselors\)](#)
- [SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students](#)
- [international students](#)
- [NACAC](#)
- [researching admissions](#)
- [how to research universities](#)
- [how to research non-U.S. universities](#)

How to Write the "Why this Major" College Essay | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/why-major-college-essay>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- Tons of colleges require a supplemental essay that essentially asks, "Why do you want to major in what you want to major in?"
- Two quick tips:
 - 1. It's worth spending some time on these essays to make sure your answer complements your personal statement. What do I mean? If your personal statement is all about business and your "Why Major" college essay is all about dance, admissions readers might be like, "Whaaaaat?" So make sure they make sense together. Also,
 - 2. Just because you pick a major for this essay, it doesn't mean you 100% can't change it later. In many cases, you can. (Important: This varies from school to school, so if you're unsure, find out.) It can help to choose a major as a placeholder, though, as it makes this essay a LOT easier to write.
- Okay, let's check out some "Why this College Major" prompts:
- Why are you drawn to the area(s) of study you indicated earlier in this application? (You may share with us a skill or concept that you found challenging and rewarding to learn, or any experiences beyond coursework that may have broadened your interest.)
- Students at Yale have plenty of time to explore their academic interests before committing to one or more major fields of study. Many students either modify their original academic direction or change their minds entirely. As of this moment, what academic areas seem to fit your interests or goals most comfortably? Please indicate up to three from the list provided. Why do these areas appeal to you?
- In short: Why do you want to study what you want to study?
- Step #1: Imagine a mini-movie of the moments that led you to your interest and create a simple, bullet point outline:
 - Why Biology?
 - Elementary school: Getting my first dinosaur toy and reading dinosaur books
 - Middle school: Visiting museums, seeing water under a microscope
 - High school: Doing online research, getting internship where we analyzed brainwaves and dissected a stingray
- Step #2: Put your moments (aka the "scenes" of your mini-movie) in chronological order, as it'll help you see how your interests developed. It also makes it easier to write transitions.
- Pro Tip: If you're writing a shorter essay (e.g., 100-150 words), try writing one scene per sentence. If you're writing a medium-length (e.g., 250-300 word) essay, try one scene per short paragraph.
- Step #3: Decide if you want to include a specific thesis that explicitly states your central argument—in this case what you want to study and why. This thesis can come at the beginning, middle, or end of your essay.
- My decision to major in Electrical Engineering was inspired by my desire to improve security through technology. When I lived in Mexico, my father's restaurant security system lacked the ability to protect our property from robbers, who would break in multiple times a year. Thanks to the influence of my cousin, who now studies Autonomous Systems, I developed an interest in electrical engineering. I am inspired to not only improve my father's security system, but contributing to security innovations for larger companies and perhaps, one day, national security. (89 words)
- Why Electrical Engineering?
- Thesis: I want to improve security through technology
- Robbers broke into dad's restaurant
- Cousin taught me about Autonomous Systems
- In the future: work with large companies or on national security
- Here's a medium-length example with the thesis at the end:

- My interest in Gender and Sexuality Studies was sparked in my eighth grade Civics class when we studied topics pertaining to sexual equality. I went into the class knowing I believed women had a right to make choices for their own bodies and that view remained the same, but I discovered the complexity of abortion debates. I challenged myself by thinking about the disparity between actual and potential personhood and the moral rights of unconscious lives. If pregnancy had the same consequences for men as it does women, how might the debate be different? Would this debate even exist?
- A year later, I shadowed an OB/GYN at a nearby hospital. On my first shift, I watched an incarcerated woman receive a post-partum exam after giving birth in her cell toilet with just Advil, and the issues discussed in Civics suddenly became urgent and real.
- My school projects have often focused on reproductive rights. I've spent numerous hours delving into summaries of Supreme Court cases on abortion and contraception, and am even known as the "Tampon Fairy" at school because I frequently restock the school bathrooms with tampons and condoms.
- I'm interested in exploring how Gender and Sexuality Studies connect to Public Health and Reproductive Biology, as well as Public Policy and Law. The interdisciplinary nature of this major will allow me to investigate many other areas of study and create a more nuanced understanding of how this particular field interacts with our world and society. (246 words)
- Why Gender and Sexuality Studies:
- Eighth grade Civics class conversations
- Shadowing OB/GYN at a nearby hospital and seeing woman receive post-partum exam
- Being the school "tampon fairy" (restocking school bathrooms with tampons and condoms)
- School projects on reproductive rights
- Thesis: name my major and briefly say why
- You can also use a hook to grab your reader's attention. Here's a medium-length example that does this:
- Imagine all the stars in the universe. The brain has a thousand times the number of synapses, making neurological errors a near certainty. I learned this fact firsthand as a 14 year-old, when I suffered from sleepless nights because of an uncomfortable, indescribable feeling in my leg. It took months of appointments and tests to be told it was a condition called cortical dysplasia. Even after the diagnosis, there is no cure.
- I am lucky. My condition does not severely affect my quality of life. However, I know this is not the case for everyone. After this experience, I took AP Biology and attended a neuroscience program, which reinforced the subject as my future calling. One of the most impactful lectures discussed the plight of healthcare in developing nations. Newborns with extreme neurological deficits are common, but finding treatments is not. Without prenatal care, this is becoming a growing epidemic, leaving millions of children helpless.
- With a degree in neuroscience, I will gain a strong understanding of neural tube development and neuronal migration in infants. I will then become a neurologist, specializing in pediatric care. I hope to work for humanitarian organizations, such as Doctors Without Borders, in Africa, where HIV and polio are rampant, as are numerous other diseases.
- Imagine the stars once more. From across the world, I will look at the same stars in the future, as I help children secure the ability to not only look at the stars, but do much more. (247 words)
- Why Neuroscience:
- Hook: Connect number of stars to number of connections in brain (and maybe mention cortical dysplasia)
- AP Bio + neuroscience program: learning about healthcare in developing nations
- Thesis: say why neuroscience (get specific) and what I'll do with degree
- Return to opening (stars) and look to future
- Even if you're unsure of your major, you might still research and select 1-3 areas of interest and describe how you became interested in each. If possible, say how the different fields connect.
- Fun fact: Two of the essay examples on this page were written by students who weren't totally certain of their major. But you won't be able to guess which ones they are.
- The example below establishes in the first paragraph a thematic thread: storytelling . The second paragraph then explains how her particular major would take her storytelling to the next level. Take a look:
- Why Literary Arts or Modern Culture and Media?
- My whole life, storytelling has shaped me. When I lived in London, my parents would read me The Lion King every night until I'd memorized the whole book. In elementary school, I would curl up in my bed, warm lamplight making my room golden, listening to my dad bring to life classics like Wilderness Champion and Tom Sawyer . Later, I found audio storytelling, laughing hysterically at Wait Wait Don't Tell Me on the car ride to school and connecting to a radio network of humanity through This American Life . It wasn't long before I got hooked on visual narratives, mesmerized by the cinematic intensity of Whiplash and the whimsical world of Moonrise Kingdom , alternate realities I could explore as if they were my own. By high

school, I was creating my own array of stories through satirical school newspaper articles, analysis of mise-en-scene in film class, podcasting, and my own locally-broadcasted radio series.

• A concentration in the Literary Arts or Modern Culture and Media is the next step in my life of storytelling. The dynamic world of connection and vulnerability a well-told story can create is what continues to fascinate me. At Brown, I would explore how engaging narratives have been told in the past and can be innovated in the future through new digital platforms. Whether researching radio's historical impact on public opinion during World War II or the Vietnam War, developing screenplays, producing my own documentary or learning from Writers-In-Residence, I hope to pioneer networks of connection. (250 words)

- Part 1: Establish "storytelling" as thematic thread
- Mom and dad reading me The Lion King before bed
- Dad reading me Wilderness Champion and Tom Sawyer
- Audio storytelling: Wait Wait Don't Tell Me , This American Life
- Visual storytelling: Whiplash, Moonrise Kingdom
- Creating my own stories: school newspaper articles, film class analysis, podcasting, local radio series
- Part 2: Why Literary Arts or Modern Culture and Media
- Next step in my journey
- Values: connection and vulnerability
- Explore history of storytelling (past) + digital platforms (future)
- Ways I might do this: studying impact of radio during wars, writing screenplays, producing a documentary, or learning from Writers-In-Residence
- End on the theme of "connection," to tie things together
- If writing a short (100-150 word) essay, perhaps describe one interest per sentence. If writing a medium-length (200-250 word) essay, try describing one interest per paragraph.
- Here's a short example, written by a student who listed on his application the following areas of interest: Computer Science and Mathematics; Computer Science and Psychology; Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
- Having attended college Physics classes every Saturday for a year, I've embraced the wisdom from centuries-old mathematics and the vast potential of computers, a realization I can honor by pursuing Computer Science and Mathematics. Much of my interest in AI lies in its basis in the human brain, which I can pursue in a Psychology concentration. And Electrical Engineering allows me to connect the virtual world with the physical, as I currently do in robotics. Yale will fuel my interdisciplinary interests that stem from my curiosity about connections between the materials and systems in the world around me. (98 words)
- Final note: While this may feel pretty straightforward, that's okay. Prioritize content over poetry when writing a short "Why Major" essay.
- Tagged: College Majors , supplemental essay , why this major , college essay

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [October 14, 2019](#)
- [Supplemental Essays](#)
- [How to Write the "Why this Major" College Essay](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [October 14, 2019](#)
- [Supplemental Essays](#)
- [What does a "Why Major" essay look like?](#)
- [A Brief, Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Your "Why Major" Essay](#)
- [Three "Why Major" Essay Examples](#)
- [Why Electrical Engineering?](#)

- [Why Gender and Sexuality Studies?](#)
- [Why Neuroscience?](#)
- [What to Do If You're Unsure of Your Major or Choosing "Undecided" on Your Application](#)
- [How to Write Your "Why Major" Essay Using a Thematic Thread](#)
- [College Majors](#)
- [supplemental essay](#)
- [why this major](#)
- [college essay](#)

Non-U.S. College Application & Admissions Checklist (for International Students)

Website:

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/non-us-college-application-checklist-international-students>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was adapted from The College Essay Guy's College Application Timeline for International Students by:
- Kavita Chandran, University Counselor at UWC Changshu China
- Alex Feinson, Deputy Director of University Counseling at UWC Changshu China
- — Disclaimer: This checklist is focused on the non-US admissions process . If you are considering applying to colleges in the US, please check out the U.S. College Application Timeline for International Students .
- A note from the authors : The content of this article won't help every applicant, as we understand that every situation is sensitive and unique, and education is continuously changing. However, we want to be transparent that our goal is to give you context, steps, and tools for further research so you can be empowered in your next decisions
- Being open to studying in countries all over the world is awesome. So many programs, cultures, and experiences at our fingertips! Tons of places where you can get a great education for a low cost ! The challenge comes when you suddenly need to keep all the deadlines straight for writing your applications to those awesome locations.
- Some countries have application procedures with centralized systems and deadlines (US, UK, Netherlands... somewhat). But the more countries you add to your college list, the more timelines you will be juggling. And juggling multiple timelines is challenging.
- The application checklist below will help you think through the coming few years when it comes to applying for non-U.S. colleges and universities.
- This article is primarily focused on organizing your deadlines while applying to multiple countries. But how do you decide which countries to add to your list? To investigate the myriad opportunities for pursuing higher education abroad, we recommend:
- Have an honest conversation about finances with your grown-ups (parents, guardians, providers). Read:
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Five Things to Know for Non-U.S. Students Who Need Financial Aid
- How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College?
- Create a college comparison list, comparing schools from different regions of the world. Read: How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.
- Make sure to find reliable sources to do your research such as UCAS (UK university central website), DAAD (study programmes in Germany), or Study in Holland (for Dutch universities).
- As you narrow in on the countries you hope to apply to for university, you will quickly realize that basically every country has a unique admissions process. Sometimes there are even multiple unique processes within a country... even as many as one unique process for each university!
- As we said earlier, every situation is unique and higher education is continuously changing. To get you started, the bullets below will give you a sense of what time of year you will need to be focusing on applications to some of the major higher education destinations around the world.
- The list below does not capture every country - and simply listing may not suit everyone's organizational style. We encourage you to build calendars that help you stay organized.
- (Starting OCT 15, through NOVEMBER) Complete and send out all applications to programs with early/priority deadlines such as the UK (Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Conservatories), Norway, and some programs in Canada, Hong Kong, and India.
- (Due JANUARY) Deadlines for the UK, Canada, numerus fixus programs in the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Sweden, and some programs in India are coming up in early January. Complete and get these applications ready to submit by mid-December (before you go on break). Give yourself a relaxing holiday.

- (JANUARY through MARCH) Submit applications to remaining programs in the Netherlands, as well as countries like Singapore, Japan, Estonia, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.
- (MARCH and APRIL) Participate in interviews and admissions tests as requested/initiated by the college.
- Continue to apply to programs in France, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, and Spain.
- (Late FEBRUARY through late JUNE) Add extra choices in UCAS if available
- (JUNE) Make firm and conditional choices in UCAS once all offers are received
- (MAY) Prepare your applications to Australia and New Zealand while you are still at school and have the support of your teachers/counselors/administrators.
- (JUNE and JULY) Submit applications to Australia, New Zealand, Croatia, Poland, and Germany.
- (JULY) Engage with UCAS Clearing if you need other offers in the UK.
- Using the chart/list above as a starting point, and then finding reliable sources for country-specific research, you should be able to find the date when applications are due for each country/school on your list. But even within a single university, you may encounter multiple deadlines depending on what application components are required in their admissions process.
- No matter which countries or schools are on your list, here are some things you should keep in mind for all non-U.S. applications:
 - If any of the schools on your in-progress list require testing, take time to read about the tests and set aside the time to do mock exams or practice sets for each (English proficiency , UK Admissions tests, SATs). Register for admissions tests as required.
 - Keep track of required essays for your schools. Learn how to write essays for different countries/systems using resources like this article on the UCAS Personal Statement, or reading about motivation letters on university admissions websites.
 - Let your school administration and teachers know about your plans to apply—this will be your team. Be prepared to help them understand letters of recommendation and any school forms required by universities. It is your job to remind your school team to upload/send letters and transcripts to colleges.
 - Participate in interviews and admissions tests as requested/initiated by the college.
 - Need a handy place to keep track of everything? Here is a chart you can use to keep track of deadlines for different application components at universities around the world:
 - * Please remember that these dates change every year. The dates above may not be current and we encourage you to look them up on the country or system website!
 - Once you are admitted to a university, the checklists don't stop. Take a few days to enjoy the feeling of making your university choice, and then dive back into your preparations for moving abroad. Your future home should offer support in tackling the tasks below:
 - Sign-up for campus housing if you plan to live on campus. Research housing nearby if you plan to live off-campus.
 - Register for classes, and sign up for meal plans if applicable.
 - Contact your future roommate(s) if assigned by the university. Reach out to fellow incoming students to ask about living together if you plan to live off-campus with peers.
 - Complete your visa application and book your interview appointment.
 - Make travel arrangements.
 - Reach out to International Students services about setting up a bank account.
 - Set up a meeting with an academic advisor at your college to plan your classes.
- Applying to universities can be a tedious and time consuming process if proper planning is not involved. The steps and checklist shared above is meant to help guide you through the entire application process from the research step all the way to your preparation to enroll in university. Use the checklist as a way to keep track of the different application requirements that you need and constantly check the university website to make sure you are on top of the different deadlines that might come up.
- That said, we wish you all the best with the whole process and if you have any questions or concerns about the application process and requirement - contact the university directly!
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
 - Should I Complete a Foundation Program?
 - How to Research Colleges (Without Visiting a Campus)
 - How to Decide Whether to Apply Early Action (EA) or Early Decision (ED)
 - A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Tagged: international students , international student , college checklist for international students

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [July 8, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Non-U.S. College Application & Admissions Checklist \(for International Students\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [July 8, 2021](#)
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- [U.S. College Application Timeline for International Students](#)
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- [Five Things to Know for Non-U.S. Students Who Need Financial Aid](#)
- [How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College?](#)
- [How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.](#)
- [UCAS](#)
- [DAAD](#)
- [Study in Holland](#)
- [English proficiency](#)
- [this article](#)
- [Here is a chart](#)
- [Should I Complete a Foundation Program?](#)
- [How to Research Colleges \(Without Visiting a Campus\)](#)
- [How to Decide Whether to Apply Early Action \(EA\) or Early Decision \(ED\)](#)
- [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
- [international students](#)
- [international student](#)
- [college checklist for international students](#)

How to Write a Successful Common App Activities List in 2024

Website:

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/guide-college-activities-list-common-app-example-application>

■ Mục lục chính:

- The Common App activities section is an opportunity to demonstrate to the Common App colleges your talents, skills, and specific examples of extracurricular activities you've participated in over the last few years.
- I think one of the best ways to write a great activities list is to look at some really solid Common App activities section examples (which I'll share in this guide). In this post, you'll also find some great tips and exercises to help you draft and then up-level a successful Common App activities section that highlights all of your awesome-ness, as well as the impact you've had in your activities, beyond what you're sharing in your response to the Common App essay prompts.
- TABLE OF CONTENTS (Click to scroll) Three Tools for Up-Leveling Your Activities List 1. The Epic List of Activities List Verbs 2. The BEABIES Exercise 3. The Values Scan 10 Tips for Making Your Activities List Awesome Activities List FAQs 10 More Great Activities List Examples The Honors and Awards Section
- You only get 150 characters on the activities list for the Common Application. How do you make the most of them? Here are some tips with accompanying college activities list examples.
- Applying through the Coalition Application, ApplyTexas, UC Application, or another application system? These tips still apply.
- In this guide I'll cover:
 - Why it's worth spending half an hour up-leveling your activities list
 - How to develop more and better content for your activities list
 - How values can help you bring much more variety to your activities list
 - Whether you should "show" or "tell"
 - Why you should never stretch the truth on your activities list
 - Answers to commonly asked questions
 - Tips for the Honors and Awards section
 - Tons of examples
- What's the activities list again? It's the space on the application where you name and briefly describe your non-academic pursuits.
- What's its purpose? "Extracurricular activities can be a great opportunity to see how an applicant has self-directed their passions and interests," says Jorge Delgado, Associate Director of International Admissions at Brandeis. "There are only so many hours in the day so seeing how a student has involved themselves outside the academic arena is a great way of understanding their potential fit for a university campus."
- Why should you spend 30 minutes up-leveling it?
- Your activities list can make a big difference in your application.
- Want proof? Compare these two:
 - Art Created art and organized club.
 - Founder, Art Honors Society Organized and ran meetings, set up field trips, brainstormed and created group art activities, wrote and sent newsletter to members.
- Most students write a pretty good activities list description and then they stop there. But it doesn't take long to up-level an activities list from pretty good to great .
- Here are three tips for doing that:
 - Use stronger verbs . I'll define "stronger" in a moment, but in short: Are you describing your activity in the most dynamic way possible? Most students aren't. Why? Because they're using just-okay verbs.
 - Develop better (and perhaps a bit more) content . Have you included a wide range of responsibilities? Most students forget to include solving problems, gaining skills, and making tangible (and even

quantifiable!) impact.

- Demonstrate skills & values . Are you communicating what you learned or how an activity changed you? If not, you may be leaving money on the table.

- Here's how to make it happen.

- ...Or you can watch me break down the activities list here. ■

- You probably need stronger verbs. How do I know? I've seen hundreds of Activities Lists and most need stronger verbs.

- Compare this typical description of debate:

- Member, Debate Debated topics, attended tournaments, researched topics.

- Shall we break that down right quick?

- Debated topics (um, redundant)

- Attended tournaments (we assumed?)

- Researched topics (I hope so!)

- BTW I am so much nicer and less sarcastic in real life—just employing it here to make a point.

- Here's a much clearer, more interesting, and more varied description:

- I lead research and case writing, mentor younger debate students, organize mock debates, host an annual debate tournament. See Add'l Info for Awards.

- FRIENDS, LOOK AT THOSE VERBS:

- "lead" (BOOM)

- "mentor" (YES)

- "organize" (SIZZLE)

- "host" (POP)

- That's what I'm talking about. I'm like, "Oh, now I get what debate looks like to you." But wait, what makes a verb stronger ?

- A stronger verb ... is more specific.

- Example: "taught" is fine, but did you coach, mentor, train, or demystify ?

- A stronger verb ... often provides more information.

- Example: "organize" is fine, but did you arrange, catalog, compile, or systematize ?

- A stronger verb ... just sounds better.

- A few examples I like: mediate, publicize, administer, or plagiarize (I'm kidding about plagiarize, please don't).

- I know, some of you are probably wondering: "But Ethan, which verbs should I use?"

- Heads up: Using this list for ten minutes will up-level your activities list verbs, and thereby your descriptions.

- But wait. We're not done yet. Here's the second tool for up-leveling your activities list:

- What's the BEABIES exercise? Simply the B est E xtracurricular A ctivity B rainstorm I 've E ver S een.

- It's great for developing better content for your activities list.

- Instructions : Spend 5-8 minutes filling out a BEABIES chart per activity on your list to generate plenty of content for your activities list descriptions. Use the 25 questions below the chart for ideas.

- After a few minutes, your chart may look something like this:

- 25 Questions to Help You Brainstorm More Content for Your Activities List

- What I Did (Day-to-Day):

- Did I list all my tasks, or just a few? What'd I forget? Go back and check.

- Did I list tasks I completed that fell slightly outside the scope of my responsibilities?

- Did I leave off any awards? Any uncommon achievements?

- Problems I Solved:

- Did I consider the internal problems I solved—any personal challenges?

- Did I name the external problems I solved—for my friends or family? School? Community?

- Was I tackling a much larger (perhaps global) problem?

- Lessons I learned & Values/Skills I Developed:

- What were some of the soft skills I learned (patience, communication, etc.)?

- Did I learn any specific software (Photoshop, Final Cut Pro)? Languages (Spanish, C++)? Survival skills (how to start a fire or clean a fish)?

- What am I better at now than I was before?

- What would I have done differently?

- Impact I Had (On Self, School, Community and/or Society)

- Did I consider the impact this had on my family? Friends? School? Who else benefited?

- What impact did this have on me personally? Did this change my life/perspective? How?

- Applications to Other Parts of School/Life:

- What skills did I develop and lessons did I learn that will make me a better X (tutor, debater, advocate, volunteer, programmer, fill in the blank)? How so?
- What did I do to build on and take what I learned to the next level?
- What surprised me about this experience?
- How might I continue this activity during college and beyond?
- FYI: Spend 10-15 minutes filling out a BEABIES chart using these 25 questions and (bonus) you'll have enough content for pretty much any extracurricular activity essay, too.
- Here's the third tool for up-leveling your Activities List:
- The Values Scan is a great way to make sure your core values are apparent throughout your application. If you haven't completed the values exercise, you can do that here. It's an awesome (and quick) way to figure out what your top 3-5 core values are.
- You're about to use it to make your activities list EXPLODE with depth and variety. How? Like this:
- Pick one of the activities list descriptions you've written and ask of it these three questions:
- Which values are clearly being revealed in the description?
- Which values are kind of being revealed, but could probably be revealed more clearly in the description?
- Which values are not in the description at all yet, but perhaps could be included?
- Take this description as an example, written by a student who was secretary of her Red Cross Club:
- Responsible for taking minutes, updating calendar and active member list, communicating with advisors, acting as a liaison to our local chapter.
- Okay, now ask those three questions:
- 1. Which values is this description clearly revealing?
- I see the author is:
- Organized: "taking minutes" and "updating calendar"
- Responsible and collaborative: "communicating with advisors" and "acting as liaison"
- Do you see others? Maybe! But this is a good start. Okay, next ask...
- 2. Which values could be revealed more clearly in the description?
- Reading the example above, I'm curious if the author might demonstrate leadership more clearly. She hints at some responsibilities, but I wonder if she could delete "updating calendar and active member list" in favor of a detail more clearly demonstrating leadership skills.
- I might ask the student if she can think of something she did that might demonstrate leadership. (If not, that's okay! This is a process of asking questions and seeing what variety might be possible. But we're not in the business of making stuff up—see warning note below.) I'd also wonder if the description could more clearly demonstrate the author's commitment to health—this is the Red Cross, after all—or perhaps social change.
- Finally, ask:
- 3. Which values are not in the description at all yet, but perhaps could be?
- To determine the answer for this student, it helps to know the author. I happen to know one of this author's core values was adaptability . So I asked her: Did working with the Red Cross help you become more adaptable? If so, how? What detail might show this?
- Once you've written a new draft, hand your activities and awards list to a trusted editor. They should have your Values Exercise nearby for reference so they can assess how well you're demonstrating your values. Here's an example:
- Indian Tabla Self-taught via YouTube videos; played drums at community meetings for worker rights awareness; helped my sister become proficient.
- I see these values:
- Ambition: "Self-taught..."
- Social change: "Played drums at community meetings for worker rights awareness"
- Family, helping others: "helped sister become more proficient"
- See how that works?
- Goal: Include 2-3 values per activity. If you can achieve this, just think: your list could demonstrate 20 or 30 values! That's rad. But don't drive yourself crazy with this . If your Activities List shows a nice variety of 10 or so values, that's enough. Really.
- Once you've got some great verbs and some great content, here are:
- 1. Aim for variety, making sure your verbs aren't redundant.
- Instead of: Instructed, helped, taught children tennis (how are these three different?) Try: Instructed in proper technique, while imparting lessons in sportsmanship, health and integrity.
- 2. Use the present tense if it's something you still do.
- Instead of: I gave tour campus tours and provided info on school history, student activities, and boarding life. Try: I give campus tours and provide info on school history, student activities, boarding life.

- 3. Trim ruthlessly.
- Because the space you're using is so limited, the words you choose are incredibly important.
- Actually, let me rephrase: Because your space is limited, your word choice is important.
- One more time: Limited space demands precise wording.
- See what I did there? Cut my character count from 92, to 61, to 37.
- 4. State role, leadership description, and the organization name in the top two sections so you don't waste characters in the 150-character description section.
- So instead of:
- Position/Leadership description: Editor Organization Name: School newspaper Description: I am the editor for the school newspaper
- ...which wastes space, try instead:
- Position/Leadership Description: Editor of International Column Organization Name: Daily Herald, Ridgewood High School Description: Responsible for brainstorming and copy-editing articles by underclassmen; managed deadlines; offered layout & design input; liaised w/faculty sponsor."
- And are you still using complete sentences? If so, stop. No need here.
- So instead of: I raised money to donate to a school in India by selling t-shirts and bracelets. You might end up with: Arranged advertising events, organized fundraisers, and presented to student body at assemblies (400+ students).
- 5. Emphasize tangible, measurable impact.
- Notice for example the "400 students" inclusion above. This comes as a result of asking questions like "Whom did your activity help? How many people? How much money did you raise?"
- Instead of: Raised money for children in Africa . Try: Raised \$3,000 to provide three uniforms and scholarships for students attending the Joseph Waweru Home School in Kenya .
- 6. Include any responsibilities that demonstrate leadership skills.
- Instead of: I swim on the swim team . Try: Responsible for leading swim practices, planning fundraising events, assisting in recruiting process .
- 7. What if there isn't much to say or it was a one-time event?
- Instead of: Tutored students . Try: Provided support to fourth graders with particularly difficult math concepts . (This works because you've explained the significance of the activity: why the event mattered and to whom).
- Or you can...
- 8. Describe selectivity. This is key if the reader might not understand the achievement your activity represents.
- Example: 1 of 2 student leaders elected by my peers to represent our class of 450 . Another example: Received 1st place out of 300 competing teams .
- 9. Avoid extreme language.
- Instead of: ... to help all those in need (or) to end poverty in the world Try: ... to help those in need (or) ...to fight against global poverty
- 10. If your role was simply "member" or "participant," it's okay to just list the activity.
- In other words, instead of writing Participant, MLK Day of Service You can just write MLK Day of Service
- Q: What if I didn't do much for the activity and I don't have much to say?
- A: If you aren't participating in many or any extracurriculars, ask yourself: why? And I'm not assuming you should be, I'm really asking... why? Perhaps a better, less confronting way of asking this is: What values have become more important to you than extracurricular activities?
- Do you have to work and provide childcare for your family, for example? Do you have and enjoy an intense academic load? Or maybe you practice gymnastics eight hours a day? If so, mention this in your Additional Info section , as that will help admission officers see your Activities List within the context of your life experiences.
- Q: What if I feel like I haven't done "enough"?
- First, stop comparing! It'll drive you crazy. Next, some questions to ask:
- 1. Have you remembered everything you've done? Try sitting down with a parent or friend who can help you remember stuff you might've forgotten you did.
- 2. How could you explore some things that are important to you, gain some experiences, or learn some new skills in the time left before your application is due? Heads-up: admission officers can usually spot it when a student is loading up activities in 12th grade just to pad their activities lists. That's not quite what I'm talking about doing. If you have a few months before it's time to apply, however, ask yourself, "What can I do that I'd enjoy doing?" But if you've remembered everything and you're submitting your application soon...

- 3. Focus on what you can control. Use the resources above—the Epic Verbs List, BEABIES and questions, and Values Scan—to describe what you did in a way that's clear and varied.
- Q: Is it better to have a few really strong activities (less is more) or should I list everything I've done (more is more)?
- A: I find counselors are divided into two camps on this: "less is more" and "more is more." Here's a quick comparison chart:
- When I asked Brian Liechti of Warren Wilson College what he prefers, he said, "It depends! I would rather see meaningful, current activities that also show up elsewhere in an essay or a letter of recommendation. This adds weight and validation to what a student includes as an activity and I know it was a more impactful experience. But uncommon activities can add flair and character, especially if those activities are also represented on campus."
- In short, the choice is yours.
- Q: What if a multi-dimensional activity is impossible to describe in 150 characters?
- A: Write a short description in the Activities List, then put additional information into the... Additional Information section (that redundancy was on purpose). Here's an example of such an activity:
- Creator, AquaVR Researched, brainstormed, created 3 prototypes for virtual reality scuba gear. Recognized statewide. Developing app with Siemens. (See add'l info.)
- That little note at the end signals the activity's richness while directing the reader to find out more in the additional information section.
- Member, (9th,10th) Treasurer (11th, 12th) National Honors Society, Ridgefield High School Chapter We are amongst the highest academically achieving students at our school, who collectively and consistently participate in community service projects.
- Student, Class TA Robotics Fundamentals, Online Course at Carnegie Mellon University Learned the fundamentals of computer programming, robot assembly, and worked as a team in competitions.
- Intern Center for Advanced Head & Neck Surgery, Duluth, MN Learned how to operate various screening & diagnostic technologies under Dr. Yang; assisted in patient care & diagnosis procedures in Otolaryngology & Oncology.
- Leader/Concertmaster AMAC Youth Chamber Ensemble (AYCE) Lead ensemble in rehearsal and performance, coordinate rehearsal times, aid younger members in learning music, present free community concerts yearly.
- Volunteer (June 2012 - August 2012) Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica Supervised and served as mentor for K-8 grade kids; Helped prepare lunch, entertained, and tutored students in math and science.
- Number 3 Starter (August 30th, 2013 - November 11th, 2015) Varsity Girls Tennis, Robinson Crusoe High School Practiced and conditioned daily, led daily stretches, competed in district and regional matches against other schools.
- Starter JV/V Beverly Hills High School Tennis Team Three-year League Champions; planned and hosted team banquet; Coach's Award Recipient. Led practices and motivated teammates to perform at high level.
- Local Violin Tutor Gupta Violin Lesson & Training Provide aspiring middle school students a foundation on music and basics of violin, demonstrate proper technique, develop strong cognitive and musical skills.
- Full-time volunteer EMT (11th - 12th) Virginia Paramedic Association Responded to emergency calls, performed BLS protocols, interacted with patients and families, assisted paramedics, organized ambulance rigs. 24 hr/wk for every week.
- Volunteer (9th), Summer Intern (10th) Red Cross of San Fernando Valley Assisted supervisors, filed paperwork, made phone calls to donors, prepared facilities for training programs by helping with class planning.
- If it wasn't obvious from the title, this is the place on your application where you list awards you've won and honors you've received.
- Here's what Common App says:
- Do you wish to report any honors related to your academic achievements?
- So while the focus of this section will be on academic honors and awards, based on a few conversations with folks who work in admission, it's OK to list other significant awards and honors that you'd like to highlight here.
- What if I haven't won any awards? Don't worry. Many schools don't offer academic awards, many activities are not competitive, and some students don't have the time, money, or resources to compete. Admission officers understand this based on the context of the applicant (what's shared in your school report or what you've shared in the Additional Information) and won't use it against you.
- If you do have awards to list, here are...
- Seven Tips for the Honors and Awards Section

- 1. List your awards in order of importance. Start with those that mean the most to you. If you're unclear on your awards' personal meaning, start with international. Work down from there to national, state, regional, school-wide, club, then team-wide.
- 2. Specify what the award means. Congrats on winning the "Beacon Award"... but I have no idea what that means. Did you win a beacon? Were you the beacon? Say so! Similarly, an "academic excellence" award could mean so many things. Define the bar of excellence in the context of the award.
- 3. Emphasize selectivity. Were you the best team out of four teams, or 400? We won't know unless you tell us.
- 4. Explain acronyms. Speaking of things we won't know unless you tell us. Some acronyms (like TEDx and AP) will be familiar to readers, while others (like Future Business Leaders of America or regional designations like California Scholarship Federation) may be less familiar. When in doubt, spell it out. (Totally didn't mean to rhyme there.)
- 5. Want to pack multiple awards into one slot? Go for it. Just make sure they're somehow connected. Example: SkillsUSA, Best of Show (1st) Interior Design; (1st) Employment Portfolio; (2nd) Web Design Technical
- 6. Did your honor/award include money? Throw it in there! Example: TEDx NYC Student Startup Competition Winner: granted \$1,500 in seed funding
- 7. Did they fly you out? Mention that too! Example:
- Google "Young Changemaker" Winner: all-expenses-paid trip + mentoring @ Google HQ
- 10 Examples of Honors and Awards That Could Have Been Improved — And Then Were!
- The examples below were revised to add context and specifics.
- 1. "FBLA Award" Revised version: "Won 3rd in nation, Desktop Application Programming (Future Business Leaders of America)"
- 2. "Congressional Award" Revised version: "Gold Medalist, The Congressional Award, for 400+ hours public volunteer service"
- 3. "Student of the Month" Revised version: Student of the Month (1 of 350 students chosen) for "positive impact on school culture." Won twice.
- 4. "Journalism Award" Revised version: "Silver Knight Award, Journalism. Given to 1 in entire county, included \$2,000 prize."
- 5. "Science Olympiad" Revised version: "1st in state, Analytical Lab, PA Chemistry Olympics"
- 6. "Debate Awards" Revised version: "Debate: (4) 1st place finishes, Dade County Forensic League, 19-3 career policy debate record"
- 7. "Boy Scouts: Various Awards" Revised version: "Boy Scouts: 36 merit badges, Silver Buffalo Award (10th) & Distinguished Service Award (11th)"
- 8. "DECA Champion" Revised version: "DECA 2x Regional & State Champion and Int'l Finalist out of over 200K members worldwide"
- 9. "Chess Champion" Revised version: "1st place @ Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship"
- 10. "Dog Breeding Award" Revised version: "4-H Best in Show Project on Dog Breeding"
- What to see more example activities list descriptions? Here's 80+ more descriptions that might get you inspired.
- Applying to the UC schools? You get a bit more space. Check out my How to Create the University of California (UC) Activities List guide here.
- Tagged: common app , activities list

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [August 20, 2020](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to Write a Successful Common App Activities List](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [August 20, 2020](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [Three Tools for Up-Leveling Your Activities List](#)
- [1. The Epic List of Activities List Verbs](#)
- [2. The BEABIES Exercise](#)
- [3. The Values Scan](#)
- [10 Tips for Making Your Activities List Awesome](#)
- [Activities List FAQs](#)
- [10 More Great Activities List Examples](#)
- [The Honors and Awards Section](#)
- [college activities](#)
- [College Essay Guy's Epic List of Activities List Verbs](#)
- [you can do that here.](#)
- [Additional Info section](#)
- [Here's 80+ more descriptions that might get you inspired.](#)
- [How to Create the University of California \(UC\) Activities List](#)
- [common app](#)
- [activities list](#)

How to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-ask-for-a-letter-of-recommendation>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Are you a teacher looking to write a letter of recommendation for your students?
- Are you a counselor looking to learn how to write a great recommendation letter for your students?
- Written by Alexis Allison , College Essay Guy Team
- Cue the Hallelujah chorus: the letter of recommendation is the one part of the application that students don't have to write.
- But wait! Before you crank up Pharrell Williams, know this: You still have to know how to ask for a letter of recommendation.
- There's actually a strategy to getting a creme-de-la-creme letter of recommendation for college—kind of like there's a strategy to getting your parents to un-ground you, or your teacher to throw out that homework assignment over spring break.
- In the spirit of this topic, we've gathered advice from a number of experts, including:
- Chris Reeves, school counselor and member of the NACAC board of directors
- Trevor Rusert, director of college counseling at Chadwick International in South Korea
- Michelle Rasich, director of college counseling at Rowland Hall
- Kati Sweaney, senior assistant dean of admission at Reed College
- Sara Urquidez, executive director of Academic Success Program, a nonprofit that promotes a college-going culture in Dallas/Fort Worth high schools
- Martin Walsh, school counselor and former assistant dean of admission at Stanford
- Michelle McAnaney, educational consultant and founder of The College Spy
- And I'm Alexis, a high school English teacher-turned college counselor-turned journalist. Ethan (the College Essay Guy) and I serve as your synthesizers and storytellers in this guide, which we've chunked into a few steps:
- TABLE OF CONTENTS Getting Started: Preparing to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation for College How to Choose the Right Teachers for a Letter of Recommendation How to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation for College When to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation The Follow-Up Email: What to Send Your Teacher After Asking for a Letter of Recommendation
- So, you've got to get another human's stamp of approval.
- Why bother? Because some colleges consider letters of rec pretty darn important — above class rank, extracurricular activities and, at least when it comes to the counselor recommendation, demonstrated interest (dun dun dun!). Check out the results of the 2023 NACAC "State of College Admission" survey :
- Our buddy Chris Reeves, a member of NACAC's board of directors, has another way to read this table:
- "If you consider 'considerable importance' AND 'moderate importance,' the teacher letter is also more important than demonstrated interest. The counselor rec even ranks above the essay."
- Basically, if it comes down to you and another candidate—all else being equal—your letters of recommendation can get you in or keep you out.
- And, according to a presentation co-led by our friend Sara Urquidez at a 2017 AP conference, rec letters can also help decide who gets scholarships and who gets into honors programs. All told, they're a big deal.
- In this student guide, we focus on how to approach your teachers for a rec letter. Your school counselor may also write you one—ask to find out.
- Either way, a word to the wise: Make sure your counselor knows who you are.
- According to Sara, your counselor is the person that admissions representatives will call if they have questions about your application. She writes, "It's important to keep them up to date and in the know." So pop in every now and again and say hi. Make a copy of this counselor questionnaire , fill it out and either email it to them or print it and hand-deliver it. They will love you for it.
- Now, the teacher letter.
- How do I get started?

- First things first. Find out which schools on your list require a teacher letter of recommendation for college (or two! or three!), and which deadlines you're pursuing : Early Action, Early Decision, Regular—some will be earlier than others. You'll eventually give this curated list to your recommenders. A note: They'll typically only write one universal letter to be sent to all the schools on your list, not individually tailored letters for each school.
- Now you can start asking around.
- In an ideal world, you'd ask someone who teaches a core subject (English, math, science, social studies), who taught you recently (junior year is prime) and who knows you well and actually likes you. If you can't find one person who fits all of those things, this is what you should prioritize:
 - Someone who knows you well and actually likes you
 - Someone who taught you recently
 - Someone who teaches a core subject*
- *Important note: Some colleges require or recommend that students submit recommendations from teachers in certain subject areas. Be sure you double check that.
- Overall, think of it this way—it won't help the college get to know you if your recommender doesn't know you.
- What if I need two (or three!) teachers?
- Pick teachers who can highlight separate strengths. For example, your band teacher knows things about you that your English teacher doesn't, and vice versa. Having said this, I wouldn't recommend picking teachers who teach electives for your main letter of rec (with exceptions like your music teacher for music school and art teacher for art school) as colleges are most interested in how well you're doing and will do in academic subjects.
- What if I don't know any of my teachers?
- It's better to cultivate a relationship with a teacher before you need something. But if you find yourself in a bind and haven't gotten to know any of your teachers, it's not too late to start. One of the best things you can do is pop in during your teacher's office hours and, if they aren't busy, ask questions. About class, work, life. Get to know them too.
- Finally, to help your teachers get to know YOU better, click here . Make your own copy of the document, fill it out and either email it to them OR print it and deliver in person.
- (For good measure, here's that questionnaire for you to fill out and give your counselor , too!)
- As you think about which teachers to ask, here's an exercise, adapted from our colleague Stacey Pickett Cunitz, that can help strengthen both their eventual recommendations and your understanding of what they'll be doing.
 - Step 1: Grab paper and pencil, or open a new doc for notes...
 - Step 2: And then open this up.
 - That's the Common App's Teacher Recommendation Form.
 - Step 3: Take some time and imagine how your teacher/s might fill it out for you.
 - With the "What are the first words that come to mind..." identify and jot down both what you think comes to your teacher/s' minds, and the words you want to come to mind (are there differences?).
 - With the "ratings" section, what are your strengths? What could you improve on?
 - What are concrete, actionable steps you could take to improve? And what are actions you could take, with integrity, to shift the words that come to their minds?
 - Note that this exercise is useful to work through regardless of how much time you have before your letters or rec are due, but if you want to be able to act on that final bullet point, you'll probably want a few months to be able to shift your actions appropriately.
 - Actually ask.
 - Don't just add your teacher's name to your Common App. When I was a senior in high school, a guy went around telling people we were going to prom together without asking me. Yeah, no. This is just as bad. I told students who did that "no" on principle.
 - Ask in advance.
 - I mean way in advance—like, end-of-junior-year advance, if possible. Three weeks before the application deadline should be your minimum, and even that's pushing it. Martin Walsh, former assistant dean of admission at Stanford, recommends a 90-day heads' up. A rule of thumb: The more time you give your teachers, the more they will love you and the better your letter will turn out.
 - Ask in person.
 - An email ask should be a last resort. Be bold, young grasshopper! If you or they have moved, and asking in person isn't possible, opt for the phone call first, email second, text never.
 - Don't group-ask the teacher.

- Make sure you ask one-on-one. Once I had two students ask me for a letter of rec at the same time, so I felt obligated to tell them both yes—how awkward would it have been if I'd told one yes and one no?
- (Pro tip: This is not how you want your teachers to feel as they're writing your letter.)
- Handle the print submissions.
- While this isn't the norm, some schools still want you to snail mail your letters of rec. If that's the case, it's your responsibility to provide the teacher with a stamped envelope addressed to the admissions office of the relevant college.
- Know your teachers (and school counselors on behalf of your teachers) may have their own process—and follow it.
- For example, they may have their own questionnaire for you to fill out (and they might tell you to fill it out immediately). Whatever it is, follow through and respect their timeline.
- Prepare to return in kind.
- The more you ask of a teacher, the more you should plan to give them in return. These rec letters—especially the good ones—can take three hours to write. And the thing is, teachers don't have to write these letters. They don't get paid for them. They do them out of kindness and care on top of their other work. At the very least, plan to write thank-you notes.
- As mentioned above, ideally you'd ask for letters of recommendation at the end of your junior year (and you would, after doing the exercise above, spend a few months before the end of your junior year establishing a stronger relationship with them).
- To keep it simple, the sooner your application is due, the sooner you need to ask.
- But be sure to ask at an appropriate time. You know how you wait until your parents are in a good mood before you ask them for something? Do that with this.
- That means: Don't ask your teachers during lunch. (They're humans. They eat.)
- Not right before class. (You'll interrupt their class-prepping mojo.)
- Not in the middle of class (just, no).
- Two better options for when to ask for a letter of recommendation:
- Schedule a brief meeting with your teacher in advance.
- Shoot them an email asking if they have five minutes to chat with you about college sometime in the next week, then set up a time and don't be late. The thoughtfulness will add another jewel to your crown in Letter of Recommendation heaven.
- Wait until all the students have left the classroom at the end of the day, and cautiously approach the teacher, as you would a wild animal .
- Here's a sample dialogue that works:
- You: "Ms. Smith, do you have five minutes to talk?" (This is key. You're inviting her into the conversation, while also giving her a quick out if she needs one.)
- Ms. Smith: "Sure, Johnny. What's up?"
- You: "Well, I'm in the throes of applying to college. I've got some deadlines in about three months, so I'm trying to be proactive and organized before all hell breaks loose. (She'll love you for thinking ahead.) That's why I'm here. Of all the teachers I've had, I think you know me the best, and I'm wondering: Would you be willing and able to write me a strong letter of recommendation?" (The word "strong" gives teachers a polite out if they feel like they don't know you well enough or don't have time to take on your letter.)
- Ms. Smith: "Oh Johnny, I thought you'd never ask." (She probably won't say this, but you can dream.)
- You: "Really? That would be wonderful/epic/lit. Tonight I'll email you all the relevant information—my resume, my list of colleges and their deadlines, and some bullet points with stuff I've done in class. (See below for more info on this follow-up email.) Is there anything else you'd like from me?"
- Ms. Smith: "Wow, no, I think that about covers it. Thanks, Johnny."
- You: "Thank you, Ms. Smith!"
- (Turns away, nearing the door. Stops as if remembering something, turns back toward Ms. Smith with a winning smile.)
- You: "Oh, Ms. Smith! I almost forgot to ask ... what's your favorite coffee shop?"
- Ms. Smith: "Oh heavens. Starbucks, I think. Why?"
- You: "No reason! Have a great day!"
- (Skips out the door and immediately jots "Starbucks—Ms. Smith" into notes app, because you'll be getting her a Starbucks gift card and thank-you note when all this is over.)
- And that's how it's done.
- Now you know how to ask for a letter of recommendation.
- But you aren't finished yet.
- Once you've had That Conversation, you need to do one more thing the very same day : Write your teacher a follow-up email.

- A teacher's brain is like a very smart bowl of spaghetti: If you don't put your conversation down in writing, it might get lost in a thick vat of garlic and marinara.
- For this follow-up email, you'll need these things:
- A heart of gratitude. Seriously.
- This completed questionnaire about yourself. Be detailed. Your teacher will love you for it.
- An up-to-date, professional resume. Don't have a resume? Read this blog post on writing a killer one (or if you need a template).
- A list of the colleges that will need your teacher's letter of recommendation, and each college's application deadline. (This part is in the questionnaire!)
- A brief paragraph about what you hope to study, and any relevant life dreams, etc. (This part is also in the questionnaire!)
- Here's a good example:
- SUBJECT: Letter of recommendation follow-up (Deadline: Nov. 15)
- Dear Ms. Smith,
- I hope this email finds you well.
- First of all, thank you. It means a lot that you're writing me a letter. To make the process smoother, I've included my current resume, as well as the attached questionnaire to remind you of all my amazing qualities (hehe). Otherwise, here's what you need to know in brief:
- I'm applying to the University of Texas, Stanford and USC.
- All three schools have a deadline of Nov. 15 , so you've got plenty of time.
- I hope to study mechanical engineering with a minor in philosophy regardless of where I end up, but Stanford is my No. 1 because I'd get to take classes at the d.school to supplement my studies.
- My dream job: NASA.
- That's it! Again, thank you, thank you for doing this for me. Please let me know if there's anything else you need, or if you have any follow-up questions. And, if it's okay with you, I'll probably send a check-in email maybe a week or two before the deadline to make sure all is well.
- In the meantime, I hope you have a beautiful day!
- To quote Bob from Stranger Things season 2: "Easy-peasy."
- A final important tip: After you've requested a letter of recommendation, at some point in the application process you'll need to waive your FERPA rights .
- What's FERPA?
- It's a law that, among other things, protects your rights as a student to view your own education records. If you waive those rights on the app, it means you won't be able to see what your teachers write about you, which basically frees them up to write whatever they like.
- But what if you want to see how great they think you are?
- Have them sign your yearbook instead. If colleges see that you have not waived your FERPA rights, they'll assume you've read your letter of recommendation for college and may not trust its objectivity. So we recommend waiving your FERPA rights.
- This is what you should see if you're using the Common App :
- Congratulations—and phew! You've made it to the end of our guide.
- Before you fall over from the mental food baby we've given you, we'd love to hear from you. Is there something we've overlooked? A burning question we haven't answered? Maybe you've your own suave asking strategy you'd like to share. Email us at help@collegeessayguy.com.
- Finally, if you're feeling inspired and want to learn more about all things college-admissions, we've got you covered— find your next free guide here .
- Tagged: college essay tips , example supplemental essay , personal essay

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Andrew Simpson](#)
- [November 1, 2018](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation for College: Step-by-Step Guide for Students](#)
- [Andrew Simpson](#)

- [November 1, 2018](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [Read the teachers guide](#)
- [read the Counselors Guide](#)
- [Alexis Allison](#)
- [Getting Started: Preparing to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation for College](#)
- [How to Choose the Right Teachers for a Letter of Recommendation](#)
- [How to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation for College](#)
- [When to Ask for a Letter of Recommendation](#)
- [The Follow-Up Email: What to Send Your Teacher After Asking for a Letter of Recommendation](#)
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How to Create a School Profile for U.S. and Non-U.S. Students (A Guide for School Officials)

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/school-profile-international-students>

■ Mục lục chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kristen Karovic, Independent Educational Consultant and Founder of College Bloom
- A high school profile is a useful tool for college admissions officers—and prospective students and families—to interpret and understand general information about your school. This PDF is ideally two pages and is created and updated by a high school official. It can be uploaded on many application platforms (such as the Common App) or sent with a transcript. The school profile is also specific to your school, whereas a transcript is specific for the individual student.
- Many U.S. universities use the school profile to better understand:
 - Overall context of your school
 - School-specific graduation requirements
 - Rigor of a student's curriculum and the opportunities available
 - Student's performance in context with peers
 - Academic records from your high school
- Readers can then evaluate a student's accomplishments within the academic and social context of the opportunities available at school.
- Still not sure what a school profile is? Here's an example .
- (Want more? Here are examples of 1200+ U.S. Secondary School Profiles, including 30+ outside of the U.S. , courtesy of the National Association for College Admission Counseling.)
- Never heard of a school profile and deadlines are fast approaching? Rest assured—whether you're a school official creating/revising a profile to help your students or an applicant researching the application process for your school, read through this article carefully to develop a beautiful high school profile.
- In this blog we'll help you...
- (If you're a student) understand the importance of making sure your school profile is created and updated as part of your application on behalf of your school official.
- Note: if it is challenging for you to make a school profile with someone at your school, you can still make note of some of the points below to potentially include in a letter of recommendation or an additional information section .
- (If you're a school official) learn how to craft a great profile.
- Before we get into how to create a profile, let's address:
 - In short, yes. While most students don't actually realize it's even part of the application, the school profile's content is extremely valuable to understand the context of a student's application—especially the transcript. For example, what's considered a good GPA at your school ... or does your school even calculate a GPA? What classes are available to you? Where do students from your school attend college or are applicants among the first in your school to study internationally? Who should admission officers contact at your school if they have more questions?
 - If that's the case, the recommendation and profile can be filled out and uploaded by the principal or another school official, including a school's administrative assistant.
 - Yes—but highly recommended, especially for U.S. universities. Keep reading.
 - If a student is applying via the Common App , there are a few general questions that a school official is obligated to fill out, and then there's an optional upload for a school profile document.
 - Some high schools use a document uploading platform such as MaiaLearning , SCOIR , or Unifrog . If your school does not use a document uploading platform, then the school profile will be submitted through a Counselor Recommender account . The school counselor/official will be able to upload the school profile in the "School Profile" section in the "Profile" tab of the Common Application.
 - These are helpful step-by-step instructions from the Fulbright Commission which walk you through the Common Application School forms .

- Typically, a school administrator or counselor is responsible for creating and updating the school profile annually, sending it along with a student's transcript and relevant exam results to the universities to which a student applies, as well as including it on the school's website.
- It is extremely helpful to have the school profile directly on the school's website so the information can be easily located by admission officers who search for context about your school. Some non-U.S. universities, which do not use the Common App, still search for a school profile, even if it is not required as part of the original application.
- A number of forms also ask for a link to the school profile, and school officials can also include the link when they are writing to a university to establish contact.
- Yes and no. The information on the school profile is too specific for a student to even know offhand. However, many proactive students outside of the U.S. help the school official (and an English teacher) facilitate the translation of the information that ideally should be included. In extreme cases, the student can help the school official to share certain details about the school in a letter of recommendation or an additional information section.
- These are tips recommended by admissions counselors from several U.S. universities:
- Written in English (or in a language that the university can understand. i.e. written in Spanish for a university in Colombia with Spanish-language programs)
- Include school's logo/letterhead on all pages with school address, phone number, website, principal's name, and ideal contact person for any needed follow-up information.
- Ideally one page, front and back.
- Use charts, graphs, bullet points, and color to break-up and highlight areas, as well as save space.
- School's name should be on every page of the profile (i.e., on the header or footer)
- If school uses multiple curricula, include side-by-side comparison.
- Define all abbreviations.
- There is no template on the Common App to create a school profile. A local EducationUSA office can be instrumental in providing resources to you. Remember to check out these examples of 1200+ U.S. Secondary School Profiles, including 30+ outside of the U.S. , courtesy of the National Association for College Admission Counseling, and keep reading for how you can generate excellent and useful content for your school profile
- Note to students outside the U.S.: don't feel discouraged, or that this is only a problem limited to students abroad. The National Admission for College Admission Counseling research estimates that about 25% of schools in the U.S. do not maintain a school profile, particularly small schools and schools with large percentages of low-income students .
- Identify your school official who can serve as your "college coordinator."
- Who will advocate and work through the process with you as you plan and apply to college? When applying to institutions through the Common Application, you will need a designated school official to do several tasks on your behalf, including uploading a Counselor of Letter Recommendation , sending transcripts, identifying current year courses, answering basic questions about your school (these are minimal, which is why a school profile is highly recommended), approving a fee waiver if necessary, and uploading a school profile. It is important that the information you provide as a student on the Common, Coalition or Institutional Application matches the information the counselor/school official is also providing. Embrace this experience together to take on this mission with enthusiasm. Communication is very important. Remember that if you do not have a designated school counselor, and your school doesn't use a service such as SCOIR or MaiaLearning , you will need the email of a school official in order to upload the information mentioned above. Circling back to school profiles, students cannot write the school profiles as you won't have all of this data available to you; however, you can assist your school officials in facilitating the information about school profiles and the other necessary documents that need to be uploaded. Be both gentle and assertive in your collaboration with your high school officials. Inform yourself through this blog so you can be clear about the information in the school profile that is preferred and recommended by experienced admission officers.
- Search if your school has an existing school profile. To do this, simply Google the name of your school plus the word "profile" to see what comes up. While it should be listed on your high school's website, this is not always the case—although obviously preferred.
- If you cannot find the profile, contact your school "college coordinator" as soon as possible to see if a profile is available and up-to-date, if it can be added to the website in the near future, and, above all, sent as part of your application along with your transcript.
- Use the guidelines below for suggestions for revising (or creating!) a school profile. There is no one way to write a school profile; some are succinct in two pages and cover basic information while other profiles are more descriptive and detailed. The goal, however, remains the same: be as straightforward and

accurate as possible about your high school context.

- School Official Pro Tip: Many admission officers are available to respond directly to your questions and concerns, especially outside of the busy time application season. If you're early in the process, send your existing school profile to the admission officer for your geographical territory and ask for feedback: What needs to be clarified? Elaborated on? Eliminated? One college will not have the same preferences as another, but use this feedback as you work on revising your school profile.

- Pro Tip: A School Profile should be easy to find on your school's website. If it is not on your website, if you Google "School Profile" + "Name of Your High School," it should be at the top of the results. For example, Le Rosey has a clear and informative School Profile, and is found easily on the school's website , and via a Google search.

- Remember that the suggestions below are not a checklist, but a guide of what thousands of college representatives and high school counselors have deemed helpful elements. A good profile is short, well organized, and contains useful graphics.

- Remember that you can find more examples here: 1200+ U.S. Secondary School Profiles, including 30+ outside of the U.S. .

- Name, Address, Phone/Fax Number, Email, Website, Administrators' Names

- Information for the primary contact of the Counseling Team, including if college admission representatives are welcome to schedule visits (virtual or in-person), when, and who to contact

- CEEB / ACT code numbers (if applicable)

- Date last revised/academic year (you need to be transparent about when the data were gathered and that it is current)

- Location: city, province, state, country

- Type (i.e., public, private, technical, academic, independent, boarding, religious affiliation, for-profit, IB World School, etc.)

- Accreditations (i.e., Cognia, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, etc.), licensing, institutional memberships (i.e., College Board, NACAC, Northwest Accreditation Commission, etc.), special recognitions, and honors

- History (including the year founded), school ethos, vision/mission & admission guidelines

- Languages (what language(s) classes are taught in)

- Date opened & date of first graduating class

- Student enrollment and distribution by grade level

- Faculty demographic information (i.e. number of nationalities, % holding advanced degrees and/or teaching certificates/degrees, teacher-to-student ratios, counselor-to-student ratios, etc.)

- District/community demographics (i.e., socioeconomic and ethnic mix, level of education of parents, major employers, etc.)

- Student demographic information (% by ethnicity, number of nationalities, % by region, % receiving scholarships, % who participate in low-income programs, if applicable)

- Special recognitions associated with school curricula, including terminology or acronyms specific to your school

- Link to the Department/Ministry of Education's website, especially for less well-known curriculum

- Extracurricular opportunities (i.e., sports, clubs, etc.). Include if there are additional fees to participate.

- Policies for reporting disciplinary infractions

- Transcript availability (especially if not available until the end of the academic year) and if the country system is solely exam based

- Academic school year, calendar system, and school schedule (i.e., quarters, semesters, trimesters; August to May, February to December; traditional or block; total class hours per week, minutes per class, etc.)

- Academic Programs (i.e., national, IB, AP, British, special diplomas, tracks, nontraditional curricula, etc.) and % of students who choose each, if applicable

- Offerings (i.e., IB Diploma Program, AP, Honors, college-preparatory courses, regular)

- Requirements for course selection (open or selective—do you have to apply or take an exam to enter a class, or can anyone enroll in the course?)

- Limitations (i.e., number of AP/IB courses taken per year, maximum number of classes taken per semester, number of universities a student can apply to)

- Graduation requirements (i.e., number of credits needed, community service hours, etc.)

- Special projects unique to your school (i.e. is a class research- or project-based?)

- Context of how demanding is the curriculum and what are "impressive" grades within your school

- Scale details (you do not need to convert the scale to letters (A, B, C, D) if your school does not follow that format).

- Grade distribution (many high schools use a chart or bullet points to list the ranges of the most recent graduating class' GPA). If GPA is not calculated, that should also be indicated.
- Class rank policy and, if applicable, how it is calculated
- Policies on weighting courses, recording grades (if grades from all courses attempted are reported on transcripts), pass/fail, and repeating courses
- Summary breakdown (i.e., how many students took "x" exam and earned "x" grade over "x" period of time or for the most recent class—some counselors include a chart with this information; others include middle 50% range)
- Distribution of specialized test scores: AP, IB, TOEFL and/or IELTS scores
- State-required or national test score summaries with timelines, including the state/national average as a comparison point (if applicable)
- Disadvantages/hardships/restrictions/support (i.e., test cancellations, delays, capacity limits, lack of proximity to testing centers, availability for students to take a PSAT, SAT coaching availability, in-country resources available (or not) for recent books or e-books)
- External exams (exams not affiliated with your school) offered on site (if applicable)
- Simultaneous exam preparation for students: for example, prepping for non-U.S. based exams such as Cambridge English exams.
- Closing/reopening dates
- Changes to grading system
- Scheduling conflicts
- Changes in instructional methods
- Extenuating circumstances, including if students and teachers have had access (or lack thereof) to learning technology
- Curricula changes due to COVID (i.e., removal of practical/lab requirements, did classes change to pass/fail? Were classes given on the same schedule via Zoom?)
- # of students from the Class of 20XX who have graduated (or are on track to graduate, depending on timing)
- Post-high school placements (i.e., % students attending university in-country and international universities)
- % of students who pursue a pre-university program of study (as dictated by the curriculum), two- and three/four-year degrees (a Bachelor's), etc.
- Alternative/mandatory post secondary destinations (gap year, workforce, military, etc.)
- List of universities students have been accepted to and attended (include all schools, not just selective schools; indicate # next to school name of how many matriculate)
- Awards/distinctions of recent graduates
- Counselor Session: School Profile and Transcripts: the University Perspective for counselors in Latin America, October 18, 2021.
- Fulbright - Common Application School Forms
- NACAC Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission , June 2020.
- NACAC Best Practices for Developing a School Profile, April 20
- College Board: Creating Your School Profile. What colleges need to know about your school
- Cambridge Assessment International Education: A School Profile
- Concourse Global C4: Creating a high school profile , July 9, 2019.
- By using the credible resources highlighted in this blog to create/revise your school profile, you're making a difference in how your students will be portrayed as applicants and how your school is represented to college admission officers, administrators, parents, and current/future students.
- With this said, here are your next steps:
- Collect all the information you have available about your school. Ask other teachers and the principal for help. You do not need to include all the points listed above: use what is most relevant, what a university needs to understand your students, and what accurately represents your school.
- Keep your profile simple: especially under a time crunch, content is what is most valuable.
- Ask for feedback about your school profile from admission officers and/or through the International Association for College Admission Counseling.
- Make sure your school profile can be found on your school's website and/or easily through a Google search.
- Keep it up-to-date, and update the profile at least annually.
- Check on your school's website and/or on Google to see if your school has a profile.
- If your school is new to students applying to U.S. universities, in particular:

- Identify your school official (i.e., principal, administrator, secretary etc.) who will be sending documents on your behalf.
- Send an example of a school profile to this contact person and discuss creating one, updating it, and/or including some of these points in a recommendation.
- If it is not possible to create a school profile, consider including some of the points above in the Additional Information section of the Common Application .
- 10 Common Mistakes International Students Make When Applying to College
- U.S. College Application & Admissions Timeline for International Students
- How to Write a College Essay for US Universities
- College Interview Guide for International Students
- Tagged: international students , international student , counselor guide , Counselor Resources

■ Danh sách các bài vi■t và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [November 2, 2021](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Counselor Resources](#)
- [How to Create a School Profile for U.S. and Non-U.S. Students \(A Guide for School Officials\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [November 2, 2021](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Counselor Resources](#)
- [College Bloom](#)
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- [1200+ U.S. Secondary School Profiles, including 30+ outside of the U.S.](#)
- [letter of recommendation](#)
- [an additional information section](#)
- [the recommendation and profile can be filled out and uploaded](#)
- [applying via the Common App](#)
- [MaiaLearning](#)
- [SCOIR](#)
- [Unifrog](#)
- [Counselor Recommender account](#)
- [helpful step-by-step instructions from the Fulbright Commission which walk you through the Common Application School forms](#)
- [1200+ U.S. Secondary School Profiles, including 30+ outside of the U.S.](#)
- [The National Admission for College Admission Counseling research estimates that about 25% of schools in the U.S. do not maintain a school profile, particularly small schools and schools with large per](#)

- [uploading a Counselor of Letter Recommendation](#)
- [SCOIR](#)
- [MaiaLearning](#)
- [Le Rosey](#)
- [is found easily on the school's website](#)
- [1200+ U.S. Secondary School Profiles, including 30+ outside of the U.S.](#)
- [CEEB](#)
- [ACT](#)
- [Class rank](#)
- [Fulbright - Common Application School Forms](#)
- [Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission](#)
- [NACAC Best Practices for Developing a School Profile, April 20](#)
- [College Board: Creating Your School Profile. What colleges need to know about your school](#)
- [Cambridge Assessment International Education: A School Profile](#)
- [Concourse Global C4: Creating a high school profile](#)
- [Additional Information section of the Common Application](#)
- [10 Common Mistakes International Students Make When Applying to College](#)
- [U.S. College Application & Admissions Timeline for International Students](#)
- [How to Write a College Essay for US Universities](#)
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A Guide to Studying in the United Kingdom

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/studying-in-unitedkingdom>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Imagine spending the weekend exploring the Tate Modern and walking around Hyde Park before sitting down with friends for fish and chips to watch Arsenal vs Chelsea. Or studying in an independent cafe on Beech Street in Manchester before a night out at Warehouse Project. Or visiting the Beatles Story in Liverpool, then wandering through the Botanical Gardens in Sefton Park.
- The United Kingdom offers countless opportunities to study at world-renowned institutions in dynamic, culturally-rich cities.
- This guide will walk you through everything you need to know about studying in the UK.
- We'll cover:
 - Should I go to university in the UK?
 - Differences between universities in the UK and US
 - How to research universities
 - Admissions requirements
 - How to apply
 - After applying
 - Student visas
 - Final thoughts
- The UK boasts a large number of high quality and internationally recognized academic institutions. Many are in exciting, cosmopolitan cities and have large international student bodies. Additionally, tuition costs in the UK tend to be considerably lower than in the US. Think anywhere from \$14,000 to \$40,000/per year—and degrees can be earned in three years. Another advantage: international students can work part-time while studying (up to 20 hours per week and even off-campus) and full-time during school breaks. Moreover, the Graduate Route visa also offers graduates of UK universities the opportunity to apply to stay in the UK for a further two years to seek employment.
- Furthermore, regardless of where you study, doing so outside of your home country can be an incredible way to explore a new part of the world, learn about a different culture, and become a more mature and self-confident individual.
- Education in the UK can be pretty different than in the US. Here are a few of the key differences:
 - The UK has three primary types of universities: Russell Group, ancient, and polytechnic and metropolitan.
 - The Russell Group represents 24 world-class, research-intensive universities. These are some of the most prestigious UK universities and, as a whole, they make up over two-thirds of the research produced by UK universities.
 - Ancient universities refer to the oldest universities in the UK, those founded before the year 1600, some of which also form part of the Russell Group. The oldest of these is the University of Oxford, which was founded in 1096!
 - Finally, there are polytechnic or metropolitan universities. These are universities founded in the late 1900s to boost skilled labor in science, technology, and engineering, which emphasize skills for career development.
 - One of the most notable differences is that earning a Bachelor's degree in most parts of the UK takes only three years, instead of four. However, many universities offer the option of a foundation year, professional work placement/sandwich year, or study abroad, which could extend the length of the degree to four years. The foundation year takes place prior to starting the program, while a placement year or study abroad often takes place after two years of study.
 - The main exception to this is Scotland. In Scotland, most degrees are four years in length, but culminate in a Master's degree. Despite culminating in a Master's degree, these degrees are still considered undergraduate degrees.
 - The academic term is not standardized in the UK so it can vary from university to university. Most schools use a semester system, although some use a trimester or quarter system. The school year starts in

September or October and ends in May or June.

- With a few exceptions, students studying in the UK must decide their major (or “course”, as they’re called in the UK) prior to applying. They then apply directly to that course. This means that, unlike at many American institutions, you’ll need to have a lot of clarity on what you want to study prior to applying.
- Scotland, however, because of the four-year duration of its programs, allows for more flexibility. Students can study up to three subjects in their first year and narrow it down as they progress. You can read more about this approach on the University of Edinburgh’s website .
- At most American colleges, you’ll be required to fulfill certain general education requirements, such as classes in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences, etc. Furthermore, you’ll likely have space for classes that may have nothing to do with your major. Maybe you want to tap into your artistic side through an Art class or explore a lifelong fascination with space through an Astronomy class.
- In contrast, British universities don’t provide as much flexibility. The emphasis is on depth rather than breadth. If you’re studying History, you’ll only take classes related to History. Your first year, you may not be able to choose any of the classes. In your second and third years, you may have some electives available to you, but they’ll likely all be directly related to your course (again, meaning your major).
- You might be wondering: can I double major or minor in the UK? British universities do offer Combined or Joint Honours Programmes, which allow you to complete a degree in two—or even three—different disciplines. But that doesn’t mean you can necessarily study English and Physics or Statistics and Musical Theater simultaneously. Combined Honours Programmes are only available in select disciplines that are related to each other.
- In the UK, classes tend to be more lecture-based, with few assignments. At times, your final grade may actually be based exclusively on your final exam.
- In the US, students often live in dorms for their first year or two of college (or even all four years). In the UK, most students live in what are known as student halls or halls of residence for their first year of college to ease the transition. Student halls are large buildings, often divided into apartments. While you may share a room with another student, single rooms are more common. Most student halls will have a dining hall, as well as communal space. Self-catered halls have a communal kitchen where students can cook their own meals, instead of a dining hall.
- For their second and third years, most students move out of student halls and seek out private accommodations in the city. Universities often support students with resources to find housing.
- Extracurricular activities play a less significant role in applications to UK universities, but an important role on UK campuses themselves. Many students are significantly involved outside of classes. British universities often have active clubs and societies where you can meet people who share your interests. These range from the Quidditch Club at Oxford University to SocieTEA, a tea society at the University of Bath. First year students often arrive on campus a week earlier than other students and participate in Freshers Week. During this induction week, students will have the opportunity to learn about the clubs and societies on campus and indicate their interest. Just be sure not to over-commit yourself!
- British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) is the organization that runs sports on university campuses in England. Many Scottish universities also compete in BUCS as well as the Scottish League. At the start of each academic year, university teams hold a trial period, giving players the chance to find the correct standard team for their ability level. Players are able to progress up or down on a team as the academic year progresses based on performance and interest.
- There are multiple levels of participation: club, recreational, intramural and university teams, and UK universities are very accommodating for all levels of play. Sports teams can be a great way to become socially integrated within the university. Every Wednesday, classes end early so that students can compete across the country. Athletic scholarships are available, but are less common than in the US and do not cover significant expenses.
- If you’re not familiar with UK universities, it can be daunting to start researching. The UK has over 395 universities offering over 50,000 undergraduate programs—that’s a lot!
- The best place to start your research is the University and Colleges Admission Service or UCAS , the platform you’ll use to apply to UK universities as well. On the UCAS platform, you can search by course or location. Trying to figure out what path of study is best for you? You can also find helpful subject, industry, and career guides, as well as guides to different regions and cities in the UK.
- Rankings can be problematic (remember just because a school is highly ranked doesn’t mean it’s a good fit for you!), so don’t base your decision for where to study exclusively on rankings. However, they can also be useful. Rankings can introduce you to schools you’ve never heard of before, particularly important given that you may not actually know that many schools in the UK. They provide you with an idea of how recognized a university’s name is on an international scale and how rigorous its academics are. Check out The Complete University Guide, Times Higher Education , and the Guardian League Tables to see how

schools stack up in terms of entry standards, student satisfaction, research quality, and graduate prospects.

- One universal requirement for international students is English proficiency. If you're a non-native English speaker, expect to take the IELTS or TOEFL to demonstrate English proficiency. However, if you've studied all four years at an English-speaking high school, you may not be required to demonstrate proficiency. Even if you're a native speaker, it's possible you'll need to take an English proficiency test as well for your visa. It's imperative to look into each university's requirements just to be sure.
- Entry requirements will almost always include your qualifications (essentially your high school academic background). The university system will base your admission on your academic background, exam results, personal statement, and school reference (recommender).
- For students graduating with an American high school diploma, this means you'd be evaluated on your cumulative GPA (most universities will require a GPA of 3.0) and Advanced Placement results (usually 3-5). Some universities will also require a minimum SAT or ACT score. Check each course website—not just the university website—to see if you meet the required qualifications. If not, you may need to complete a year of university study in your home country or a foundation year.
- In addition to evaluating your qualifications and English proficiency, universities may have supplemental requirements, such as admissions tests, interviews, auditions, and portfolios.
- So you're excited to apply to university in the UK! You've found a handful of courses that interest you and ensured you meet the entry requirements. But what are universities looking for in your application? And how do you actually apply?
- In the UK, you'll be evaluated on the basis of your qualifications (academic background), UCAS personal statement, reference letter, knowledge of the discipline, attitude towards learning, and writing skills. Unlike some US universities, UK universities do not weigh involvement in extracurricular activities and leadership roles heavily. With the exception of some of the most competitive programs, if you meet the entry requirements for a given course, you have a high likelihood of being given an offer.
- Applications for UK universities are due in mid to late January for the majority of courses. Check the course website for the most up-to-date details.
- However, there are some exceptions. Any course at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, or most courses in dentistry, medicine, and veterinary medicine have a deadline of October 15th.
- While the October 15th deadline is usually inflexible, don't worry too much if you've missed the January deadline. June 30th is the final deadline for late applications for international students. Furthermore, you can apply up until the end of September (exact deadline may vary), but you'll be entered into Clearing, the process by which universities fill any open spots. International students are eligible for Clearing as long as they've applied through UCAS at an earlier stage.
- The application fee is £22 for a single choice or £27 for multiple courses.
- The first step is to register with UCAS. You'll see a number of different sections—personal details, education history, employment history.
- In the education history section, you'll add your qualifications. They're listed by country and name. If you don't see yours, don't worry! You can always choose "Other."
- Note that the employment history section should only include part or full-time paid employment. If you don't have any paid employment to add, that's okay. As long as you list qualifications, you don't need to include employment.
- On the Common App, you can apply to up to 20 colleges. On UCAS, the limit is significantly lower: five. You'll also notice that you'll apply directly to the course, not just to the university itself. The courses you apply to will not be able to see the other courses you're applying to, nor will you rank the courses in terms of your preference. If you have your heart set on one particular university, reach out to the admissions staff before applying to two courses as they may not consider you for both.
- An essential part of the UCAS application is the UCAS personal statement, where you describe your interest in the course, relevant academic and extracurricular experience, and the skills that make you a strong candidate. You can write up to 47 lines or 4000 characters for the personal statement—whichever comes first.
- You will see that the personal statement is based on you as an academic and your knowledge and interest in your future course. Only roughly 20% at most should be given to outside-of-class activities that are not related to your major/course. It is important that you follow the guidelines given and understand that this is not like a US personal statement for college admission.
- Keep in mind that you'll be sending the same personal statement to all five schools. So don't rave about University of the Arts London and the opportunities that come with living in London if you're also applying to University of Manchester. See [How to Write the UCAS Personal Statement \(Guide + Examples\)](#) for great advice on how to approach the personal statement.

- Another element of the application is your referee (your recommender). UCAS only requires one reference. Your referee should be a teacher, principal, counselor, or other educator who can speak to your academic ability and work ethic—ideally someone who’s taught you within the last two years. Check out the UCAS page on references for more information about what universities are looking for in a reference letter.
- If you have not completed your qualifications, such as IB and AP exams, the UCAS application and universities will want the referee to enter a predicted grade. This can seem quite strange for a US high school to predict an AP score in October-December, but it is required by the UCAS application.
- Admissions tests are fairly uncommon in the UK. However, it’s worth checking the entry requirements for the courses you’re applying to just in case they require one. Some courses will require you to register and take exams prior to submitting your application. Make sure that you’re registered for the exam by the deadline and that your exam results are sent to the university.
- Some universities, such as University of Oxford and University of Cambridge, require an interview. If that’s the case, they’ll let you know after you’ve applied. Make sure to check out the UCAS website for interview tips ! Courses in the arts may also require an audition, which will vary depending on the discipline and the university itself.
- If you’re applying to a degree in the Arts, it’s likely you’ll be asked to submit a portfolio as well, usually after submitting your application via UCAS. Make sure to research the specifics of what the course asks for.
- UK universities will notify you if you’ve been accepted via UCAS Track . Once you’ve received your admissions decisions, you’ll be able to accept one offer (firm choice) and even select your second choice (insurance choice). Most offers will be conditional, meaning they may still need additional documentation (likely your diploma, final transcripts, or exam scores) before officially accepting you.
- Deciding between a few universities? Most universities will offer Open Days, virtual or in-person events to learn more about the university and its academic and extracurricular offerings. Check out these Open Day tips for a list of things to consider before, during, and after your visit. If you can’t visit in person, make sure to attend a virtual open day or virtual tour. On the UCAS website, you’ll be able to see upcoming Open Days and other events from universities across the UK.
- Unibuddy is also a phenomenal resource for chatting with current students at a number of UK institutions (and institutions around the world for that matter!).
- Finally, don’t be afraid to reach out to the International Office to ask questions, schedule a time to meet with your regional representative, or ask to be put in touch with a current student.
- As an international student, you’ll need a visa to study in the UK. You’ll be able to apply for a visa once you’ve been offered a place in a course by an official student sponsor (the school at which you’ll be studying). To apply for the visa, you’ll need to demonstrate that you have enough money to pay for the course and support yourself during your studies. The earliest you can apply for a visa is six months before your course, and the process is fairly quick. You’ll usually get a decision within three weeks.
- And if you want to stay in the UK upon graduating, you can apply for a Graduate visa and work in the UK for up to two years! For more information on the student visa process, take a look at Study in the UK on a Student Visa .
- Final Thoughts
- Already dreaming about visiting the British Museum or Edinburgh Castle? Then what are you waiting for?
- Dive in—start to research schools in the UK, develop your school list, and apply!
- Special thanks to Rachel for writing this blog post.
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson, Independent Educational Consultant with Mosaico Mentors in Mexico City
- Tagged: study abroad , exchange student , international student , international , united kingdom , UK , study in united kingdom , study in UK

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [August 26, 2022](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [A Guide to Studying in the United Kingdom](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [August 26, 2022](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [University of Edinburgh's website](#)
- [UCAS](#)
- [The Complete University Guide, Times Higher Education](#)
- [Guardian League Tables](#)
- [foundation year](#)
- [UCAS personal statement](#)
- [UCAS](#)
- [How to Write the UCAS Personal Statement \(Guide + Examples\)](#)
- [UCAS page on references](#)
- [UCAS](#)
- [interview tips](#)
- [UCAS Track](#)
- [Open Day tips](#)
- [upcoming Open Days and other events](#)
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How To Start a College Essay: 9 Effective Techniques

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-start-college-essay>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was co-written by me (Ethan) and Luci Jones (Brown University, CO '23).
- In anything you do, there's a special, pivotal moment.
- I don't mean the moment when inspiration strikes or the last brushstroke is painted or the audience oohs and ahs over the final product. The point in time we're talking about here is the Moment When You Do The Darn Thing (DTDT for short). It's when you get off the couch, stop binging Netflix, and take action. It's when you put pencil to paper, fingers to keyboard, or *insert whatever other analogy feels applicable here.*
- For many, getting started is the hardest part of anything. And that's understandable. First, because it turns whatever you're doing into a reality, which raises the stakes. Second, because where you start can easily dictate the quality of where you end up.
- College essays have their own special brand of DTDT. Knowing how to begin a college essay is daunting. It can be hard to write an engaging, authentic opener. But without an interesting hook, you risk getting lost in a vast sea of applications. To this end, we've put together some techniques about how to start a college essay to make your DTDT moment a little smoother and a little less stressful.
- I say "probably" because I'm about to share a few overused techniques that I don't recommend. Having said that, it is possible to pull them off—they're just really hard to do well.
- The Overly Grand Ambiguous Statement: From a distance, it might seem nice to talk about why all of humankind has felt some type of way for as long as history has existed. (Examples: "Many great thinkers have existed in our nation's history" or "The key to a successful endeavor is perseverance.") But these kinds of overly generalized or impersonal grand statements get lost easily in the crowd because they don't tell the reader much about you. And without a connection to you, there's not much reason for them to continue reading.
- Going Meta: As cool as it may seem to demonstrate to your audience that you are aware of how you're writing your essay in the moment you're writing it, it's less cool to college admissions officers who read meta stuff like that all the time. There are other, more subtle ways to demonstrate self-awareness in your intro rather than to open your essay with some variation of, "I stare at the blank screen..." or, worse, "When I was asked to write this personal statement, at first I wasn't sure how to begin." Note that the meta essay can sometimes work (you'll see a couple examples below), but has a higher degree of difficulty.
- The Quote: While quoting famous people who have said something cool in the past may seem like an appealing way to start your essay, remember that colleges want to hear YOUR thoughts. Don't use the words of another person to stand in for your own opinions or insights. You have cool things to say. It may just take a little while to discover what those things are.
- The Too-Obvious Thesis That Spoils the Ending of the Movie (i.e. Your Essay): What if Avengers: Infinity War had opened with a voiceover from the director saying, "This is a film about how Thanos collects all the infinity stones and destroys half the population." (Aaaaaand this is your too-late spoiler alert. Sorry. But don't worry, they go back in time and undo it in Endgame. Oh, also spoiler.) That would've sucked. That's what it feels like, though, if you start your essay with something like, "I want to be a veterinarian because I care about animals and the environment." I read a sentence like that and I go, "Cool, thanks, now I can save myself the three minutes it would've taken to read the essay. Thank you, next." While you may want to have that sentence in mind so you know what you're trying to get across (this is called a logline), just don't give away the whole thing. Instead, start your essay with something to pique our interest. How? We're about to share 9 ways.
- Want to read a few more college essay tips? Check out this huge list from admissions experts.
- An image-based description that focuses on a particular moment and doesn't explain much—at least not right away. This technique lets dialogue, actions, or details speak for themselves.
- (Note that there are many other authors that do this — it's part of great writing — but my little brother suggested Hemingway and I kinda' liked the sound of it.)
- Every Saturday morning, I'd awaken to the smell of crushed garlic and piquant pepper. I would stumble into the kitchen to find my grandma squatting over a large silver bowl, mixing fat lips of fresh cabbages

with garlic, salt, and red pepper.

- **Why It Works:** In this intro, the author paints a very visceral picture of waking up in the morning to the smell of her grandmother's traditional Korean cooking. Through the careful word choice ("piquant pepper," "fat lips of fresh cabbages," etc.), we get a sense that something important is happening, even if we don't know what it is yet. But this one can be difficult to pull off if you don't help the reader understand why you've described what you've described. Read the rest of the essay [here](#) .
- Which brings us to...
- An image-based description, perhaps 1-3 sentences in length, that focuses on a particular moment and then follows up with a sentence that explains, comments on, or somehow provides context for what is being described.
- Take a look at how this can happen by just adding one sentence to the example above (see bolded line below):
- Every Saturday morning, I'd awaken to the smell of crushed garlic and piquant pepper. I would stumble into the kitchen to find my grandma squatting over a large silver bowl, mixing fat lips of fresh cabbages with garlic, salt, and red pepper. That was how the delectable Korean dish, kimchi, was born every weekend at my home.
- **Why it Works:** This single sentence hints at some of the author's core values—culture, ritual, family—without giving too much away about where the essay is headed. Like any good intro, this one creates more questions than answers. (Read the rest of the essay [here](#) .)
- Another example:
- They covered the precious mahogany coffin with a brown amalgam of rocks, decomposed organisms, and weeds. It was my turn to take the shovel, but I felt too ashamed to dutifully send her off when I had not properly said goodbye. I refused to throw dirt on her. I refused to let go of my grandmother, to accept a death I had not seen coming, to believe that an illness could not only interrupt, but steal a beloved life.
- **Why It Works:** The author drops us right into the middle of something we know nothing about, yet it invites us to care. How? The specifics. The details she notices and the resistance she's feeling help to put us in her shoes. This means we don't just feel sympathy, we feel empathy . And that empathetic connection heightens the stakes for us by raising questions: How did her grandmother die? Why can't the author let her go? Why is she angry? (Spoiler: It turns out she's more angry at herself than anyone else. Read the rest of the essay [here](#) .)
- The author begins with information that creates certain expectations about them before taking us in a surprising direction.
- Growing up, my world was basketball. My summers were spent between the two solid black lines. My skin was consistently tan in splotches and ridden with random scratches. My wardrobe consisted mainly of track shorts, Nike shoes, and tournament t-shirts. Gatorade and Fun Dip were my pre-game snacks. The cacophony of rowdy crowds, ref whistles, squeaky shoes, and scoreboard buzzers was a familiar sound. I was the team captain of almost every team I played on—familiar with the Xs and Os of plays, commander of the court, and the coach's right hand girl.
- But that was only me on the surface.
- Deep down I was an East-Asian influenced bibliophile and a Young Adult fiction writer.
- **Why It Works:** We're introduced to the author as a basketball superstar, the queen of the court, a sports fanatic—and at this point the reader may even be making assumptions about this author's identity based on her initial description of herself. However, in one sentence, the writer takes us in a completely unexpected direction. This plays with audience expectations and demonstrates that she has a good degree of self awareness about the layers of her identity. After having our expectations thrown for a loop, we can't help but wonder more about who exactly this person is (and if you want to know like I did, read the rest of this essay [here](#)).
- Another example:
- I am on Oxford Academy's Speech and Debate Team, in both the Parliamentary Debate division and the Lincoln-Douglass debate division. I write screenplays, short stories, and opinionated blogs and am a regular contributor to my school literary magazine, The Gluestick. I have accumulated over 300 community service hours that includes work at homeless shelters, libraries, and special education youth camps. I have been evaluated by the College Board and have placed within the top percentile.
- But I am not any of these things. I am not a test score, nor a debater, nor a writer. I am an anti-nihilist punk rock philosopher. And I became so when I realized three things:
- **Why It Works:** He basically tears up his (impressive) resume in the first few sentences and says, "That's not me! Here's the real me..." and as a result we wonder, "How does one become an anti-nihilist punk rock philosopher? And what are the three things??" (Read the rest [here](#) .)

- Ask a question that you won't (and probably can't) answer in your essay. This gives you a chance to show how your brilliant brain works, plus keeps us hooked as you explore possible answers/solutions.
- Does every life matter? Because it seems like certain lives matter more than others, especially when it comes to money.
- Why it Works: It raises a complex, interesting question and poses a controversial idea: that we treat some lives as though they matter more than others. We wonder: "Is that true? Could it be? Say more..." Heads-up: This one can veer into the "Overly Grand Ambiguous Statement" opening if you're not careful. Click here to read the rest of the essay mentioned above, which by the way took him a long time to refine—as this approach is not easy to pull off.
- Begin by admitting something you might be judged (or judge yourself) for.
- I have been pooped on many times. I mean this in the most literal sense possible. I have been pooped on by pigeons and possums, house finches and hawks, egrets and eastern grays. (Read the rest here .)
- Why it Works: Shows vulnerability, but also in many cases intrigues us to learn more.
- Another example:
- Here is a secret that no one in my family knows: I shot my brother when I was six. Luckily, it was a BB gun. But to this day, my older brother Jonathan does not know who shot him. And I have finally promised myself to confess this eleven year old secret to him after I write this essay.
- Why It Works: This is a super vulnerable to admit and raises all sorts of questions for us: Why did he shoot his brother? Why hasn't he confessed it to him? What will his brother say once he tells him? (Fun fact: This essay actually breaks the "don't start with a quote" rule. Here's the rest if you wanna' read it.)
- A contextualizing 1-2-sentences (often at the end of the first paragraph) to ground the essay by giving us a sneak peek at what's to come in the essay—but that do NOT give away the ending.
- Example (I've marked it in bold below at the end of the first paragraph):
- Six years ago, a scrawny twelve year old kid took his first steps into Home Depot: the epitome of manliness. As he marched through the wood section, his eyes scrolled past the options. Red Oak? No, too ubiquitous. Pine? No, too banal. Mahogany? Perfect, it would nicely complement his walls. As days went on, the final product was almost ready. 91 degree angles had been perfected to 90. Drawer slides had been lubricated ten times over. Finally, the masterpiece was finished, and the little boy couldn't help but smile. A scrawny 12-year-old kid had become a scrawny 12-year-old man. This desk I sit at has not only seen me through the last six years, but its story and the story of the objects I keep on it provide a foundation for my future pursuits.
- Why It Works: As we read the first few sentences of this paragraph we might wonder, "Where is this going?" But this sentence sets us at ease and—again, without giving too much away—gives us a sense of what's to come. We know that we're going to learn about the author and his future through the objects on his desk. Great! It also signals to the reader "Don't worry, you're in good hands. I'm still aware of the task at hand."
- Begin with a concept that's unusual, paradoxical, and/or marked a turning point in your thinking. This is often followed up with context explaining where the concept came from and why the author is considering it.
- Crayfish can turn their red blood cells into precursor neuronal cells, I read in shock. The scientific paper, published in Cell 2014, outlined the process where crayfish could regenerate lost eyestalks or olfactory (smell and odor) nerves with their blood – they could see and smell again! It seemed unfair from an evolutionary standpoint. Humans, who were so much larger than a 7-ounce crayfish, couldn't use their abundant blood to fix their brain damage.
- Why It Works: This opening signals to the reader that the author is: a) someone who has read quite a bit, b) curious, and c) knows, as I like to say, "some stuff about some stuff." In this case, she knows some science stuff.
- Do you know some stuff about some stuff? If so, a little geeky language can help signal this to the reader. Don't overdo it, though, or it can seem showy.
- FYI: I see this more often at the start of great essays than personal statements, as this can often lead to an essay that's more heady/intellectual and less vulnerable/personal. A variation on this that's a bit more personal is the...
- Begin with a strange fact about yourself to grab our attention. Then go on to say why it's meaningful.
- Example:
- I subscribe to what the New York Times dubs "the most welcomed piece of daily e-mail in cyberspace." Cat pictures? Kardashian updates? Nope: A Word A Day.
- (Read the rest here .)
- Why It Works: It pulls us in by making us think, "Oh, that's cool!" and then wondering, "Okay, where is this going?"

- Grab our attention with an incredibly specific and arresting image or sentence. Then tell us why it matters.
- Smear blood, shredded feathers. Clearly, the bird was dead. But wait, the slight fluctuation of its chest, the slow blinking of its shiny black eyes. No, it was alive.
- Why It Works: This style subtly highlights the writing talent of the author without drawing attention away from the content of the story. In this example, the staccatoed sentence fragments convey a sense of halting anxiety and also mimic the movement of the bird's chest as it struggles to breathe. All sorts of questions come up: What happened to the bird? What will the author do? (Read the rest of the essay here .)
- Another example:
- February 2011— My brothers and I were showing off our soccer dribbling skills in my grandfather's yard when we heard gunshots and screaming in the distance. We paused and listened, confused by sounds we had only ever heard on the news or in movies. My mother rushed out of the house and ordered us inside. The Arab Spring had come to Bahrain.
- (Read the rest of the essay here .)
- Another example:
- Bowing down to the porcelain god, I emptied the contents of my stomach. Foaming at the mouth, I was ready to pass out. My body couldn't stop shaking as I gasped for air, and the room started spinning. (Read the rest of the essay here .)
- There are, of course, many more kinds of openings—and I'll add to this post as I discover new ones.
- We get it, writing a standout introduction is easier said than done. Hopefully though, after seeing some examples of dynamic and thoughtful intros that used our techniques, you're inspired to brainstorm some of your own . You've got this. DTD has never looked so good.
- Have a great college essay opening or a new type of opening you'd like to suggest? Share it in the comments below!
- This post was co-written by me (Ethan) and Luci Jones (Brown University, CO '23). Luci took my How to Write a Personal Statement course last year. The essay that she produced was so good and her writing was so beautiful, I've asked her to help me co-write this blog post with me, create a few techniques for writing a great introduction, and analyze why they work so well.
- Tagged: student , personal statement , introduction , start an essay , beginning

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [September 24, 2019](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [How To Start a College Essay: 9 Effective Techniques](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [September 24, 2019](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [How You Probably Shouldn't Start Your College Essay](#)
- [9 Ways to Start a College Essay](#)
- [The Full Hemingway](#)
- [The Mini Hemingway](#)
- [The Twist](#)
- [The Philosophical Question](#)

- The Confession
- The Trailer Thesis
- The Fascinating Concept
- The Random Personal Fun Fact
- The Shocking Image
- binging Netflix
- getting started
- Check out this huge list from admissions experts.
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21 College Essay Topics & Ideas That Worked | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-essay-topics-ideas>

■ Mục lục chính:

- You're looking for a giant list of college essay topics to choose from.
- And that's exactly what you'll find at the bottom of this page.
- Wouldn't it be nice if I gave you two great brainstorming exercises to help you find your own college essay topics?
- I'll answer that rhetorical question: Yes.
- And that's what you'll find before we get to that giant list.
- How do I know these exercises work? Because over the years I've worked with thousands of students, many of whom (like you)...
 - Have decent grades and a pretty good but not perfect SAT score
 - Are afraid they don't have outstanding extracurricular activities to write about
 - Feel like their essay could make a difference in their college application but aren't sure where to start.
 - Sound familiar?
- My hope is that, by going through these step-by-step brainstorming exercises, you'll find a topic that's elastic, meaning that it's stretchy enough to talk about lots of different parts of you, which is a characteristic you'll find in most outstanding personal statements.
- Great brainstorming is key to a great application. Want to see an example of a student's brainstorming exercises, and the essays and application that brainstorming led to? Go here .
- Pro Tip: Download your own blank template of that list and fill it in here.
- All right, let's do this.
- This exercise is useful for identifying both your core values and your aspirations by answering this question: WHAT DO I VALUE?
- This is one of my favorite brainstorming activities for generating college essay ideas. Why?
- It's one of the most efficient ways I know to help create a TON of content for your personal statement and also add texture to bring your essay to life.
- Also, it's just fun to do and a great way to reflect.
- Ready to do it?
- Click here for a list of questions to help you with the exercise. Then, watch the video below.
- What's one of your essence objects?
- Make a list of all the things you want colleges to know about you.
- How? You can do this either:
 - in a bulletpoint format (organized, easy to read)
 - on a blank sheet of paper (with drawings, get creative)
 - on a timeline
- For more detailed instructions, head here .
- Here's a list of essay topics and ideas that worked for my one-on-one students:
 - Essay Topic: My Allergies Inspired Me
 - After nearly dying from anaphylactic shock at five years old, I began a journey healing my anxiety and understanding the PTSD around my allergies. This created a passion for medicine and immunology, and now I want to become an allergist so no other child will have to feel the same.
 - To read the full essay, click here.
 - Essay Topic: My Foreign Exchange Experience
 - My 28 months in America living with five families helped me develop five values: open mindedness, spending quality time with family, understanding, discipline, and genuine appreciation.
 - To read the full essay, click here.
 - Essay Topic: Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

- I've created my own essay prompt: why did the chicken cross the road? In short, the chicken discovers that her idyllic world is not all it seems, and she must cross the road to discover her true purpose in life. She may come to realize that the world is more terrible and beautiful than she's ever known.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: A Palestinian Hunger Strike Turns Into a Purpose
- My experience supporting a hunger strike in my native land, and watching my fellow students slowly lose interest in the strike and my protest, taught me to be passionate about social justice and inspired the creation of my own ethical clothing company.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: Lessons From My Pilgrimage to Mecca
- My pilgrimage to Mecca taught me that I am valuable and family is centrally important. Now, I'm proud of my heritage, passionate about languages, and excited to bring all of it to college.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: From Homeschool to the Football Field
- Instead of my original plan of playing football in high school, I freed myself of my fear of social interactions and my age gap by discovering a love for coaching.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: My First Flight Failed, But My Love Was Born
- While my attempt at flight when I was five years old ended in disaster, my passion only grew as I became older. My love of engineering has taught me collaboration, social justice, curiosity, and diligence.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: Poop, Animals, and the Environment
- I don't mind being pooped on, bitten or scratched because my passion for animals is bigger than all of that. I know the world is rife with environmental problems, and I'm ready to spend my life making a difference.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: A Word a Day, A Life of Imagination
- The NYT word of the day reminds me of something: my own imagination. My curiosity has taught me to love playing basketball, the violin, and inventing new words.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: Where I'm Home
- I find myself feeling at "home" wherever I am, whether it's spending quality time eating chicken with my family, diligently working on my chemistry research in the lab, or expanding my world through my college electives at Governor's School East.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: Easter, Travel, and Dad
- Despite my abusive father's wishes, I took a trip abroad and discovered my independence. Now, I want to pursue international relations and women's studies to help women around the world discover who they are.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: My Cosmetic Journey
- Although I initially saw my interest in cosmetics as a superficial obsession, through research and advocacy I'm now a community leader and online advocate for ethical cosmetics testing and labeling.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: Transformers Are Not Just for Boys
- Being punished for playing with transformers because they "aren't for girls" didn't stop me from becoming passionate about robotics, where I created and fought for an open source platform that educates children about robotics around the world.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: The Instagram Post
- Being publicly shamed for my pro-choice stance taught me to be passionate about my point of view, and now I understand that, while dissent and social justice are sometimes painful, they are sometimes necessary.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: My Grandmother Passing
- My grandmother is my source of inspiration. When she passed away I couldn't help but reflect on my love of family, passion for education, and my volunteering experiences at a cancer treatment center.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: My Self-Proclaimed Identity

- I love writing, philosophy, speech and debate... and punk rock music. But I am not any one of these things, because I am all of them. I call myself a “punk-rock philosopher.”
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: My Grandma’s Kimchi
- I’ll always remember the passion and attention to detail my grandmother put into making kimchi. Watching my grandmother eventually lose her ability to make this important dish made me reflect on memory, death, and the importance of family. Now I’m the one who makes the kimchi.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: How Traveling Led to My Love of Language
- My experiences traveling around the world influenced my interest in language and human connection. That interest is what I want to bring into my dual majors of foreign language and linguistics.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: A Girl Muses on a Dead Bird
- One day, my cat attacked a bird in the front yard. In my vain attempt at saving its life, I was forced to reconcile with losing one of my best friends in a tragic accident years ago.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Essay Topic: I Shot My Brother
- My lifelong jealousy towards my little brother erupted when I shot him with a bb gun. Haunted with guilt, I sought to treat my brother with newfound respect and love, and learned the importance of family.
- To read the full essay, [click here](#).
- Tagged: college essay topics , College essay ideas , Sample topics , Example college essay , college application , personal statement , essay

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [June 8, 2019](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [21 College Essay Topics & Ideas That Worked \(Guide + Examples\)](#)
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- [Topic Brainstorming: The Values Exercise](#)
- [Topic Brainstorming: The Essence Objects Exercise](#)

- [Topic Brainstorming:"Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List](#)
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5 Reasons to Attend Graduate School Abroad (+ Admissions Timeline)

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/why-attend-graduate-school-abroad>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kavita Chandran, University Counselor at UWC Changshu China
- After completing your undergraduate degree, you might feel like school is over and you need to get right into the working world. Or, you might be actively considering graduate school as an option to learn more and specialize in your field.
- This article is useful if:
- You're someone who completed your undergraduate degree back home and are looking to pursue your graduate education abroad, or
- You studied abroad as an undergraduate and plan to return abroad to pursue your graduate education
- Today's young adults are much better educated than their previous generations. The share of young adults with a bachelor's degree or higher has steadily climbed since 1968: According to research by the Pew Research Center in 2019, an estimated 39% of Millennials (those ages 25 to 37) have a bachelor's degree or higher. The recent trends in higher education indicate that, sooner or later, most people will try to get their advanced degree, either back home or abroad.
- If you're interested in a graduate education and are looking for where to attend, consider putting studying abroad on the table. Research conducted by the Institute of International Education in 2017 indicated that studying abroad for a longer period of time has a high impact on increasing one's chances for multiple employment offers and career advancement in the workforce.
- Let's look at some reasons why.
- Pursuing a graduate degree enables you to strengthen your professional network. Depending on your program, you'll have practicals, rotations, or internships in your country of study, all of which provides you the chance to network there. For example, the University of Bergen in Norway requires their Global Health master's degree students to complete an internship in Norway for one semester, enabling their graduates to start building their professional networks while still in school. This can give you a head start on building your career or having a mentor who can support you in your professional journey. Your classes will also have guest faculty members and visiting lecturers from a broad range of disciplines who can teach you more about your field in a global context.
- Additionally, compared to the relatively homogenous culture of U.S. higher education, your classmates will be from around the world. Your peers will expose you to very diverse global and political viewpoints. How much more dynamic will the moment be when discussing political systems in a class that contains students from Turkey, Austria, and the United States? The exposure gained from these situations will give you an advantage when working in an ever-growing global work environment.
- Every culture has a different take on what it means to get an education. Adapting to a different learning environment is an excellent experience to broaden your mind and break out of your comfort zone. What better way to broaden your knowledge than to gain ideas shaped by unique international perspectives you might have not considered or be exposed to?
- Plus, the best universities for you might not be located where you live. While abroad, you'll get to study at institutions that have an excellent reputation and top-notch educational opportunities. For example, the opportunity to pursue your graduate education in a location that is well known as the leading global hub in your field of interest will enable you to have the chance to learn from renowned experts and guest speakers while maybe gaining some impressive work experience. These unique new viewpoints can provide a distinctive educational experience that makes you competitive and marketable in the global job market.
- In today's highly competitive and globalized world, international work and study experience can help you get noticed in international job markets. That said, it can be challenging to secure work visas and employment abroad without being in the country or with minimal contact with the job sector abroad.

Studying abroad as an international graduate student would offer you a path toward seeking employment opportunities in your host country upon graduation.

- Generally, as an international student, you are required to apply for a student visa, and most student visas allow international students to stay after graduation to seek employment and work for a certain period of time. For example, international students can apply to live and work in the UK for up to two years after graduating with the Graduate Route visa.
- The decision to pursue your graduate education abroad is a big one; it means being open to new challenges and learning how to navigate a new culture by trial and error. You'll likely develop a new sense of independence. When you're abroad, a simple task like figuring out how to secure housing can be challenging compared to figuring it out back home. When you live in an unfamiliar community, you learn to develop your cultural understanding by adapting and learning more about the community you're in. An in-depth knowledge of culturally specific characteristics of your host country can equip you with background knowledge and a better understanding of international politics, and socio-demographic and economic trends.
- Studying somewhere that speaks a different language from your home country can give you an added advantage when it comes to developing your language skills—making you that much more competitive in the job sector. If you opt for an English-taught degree in a non-English speaking country like France, Czech Republic, or Germany, you'll have the option to learn a new language. If you're preparing for an English-taught course, you'll need to prove your English language proficiency. This process will help you strengthen your skills in English, helping to develop your English knowledge to an advanced level.
- In most countries, the technical work when it comes to applying to graduate school happens during the fall semester (August to December). Some schools might have a different intake period and deadlines. Before you begin working on your application timeline, make sure you check in with each of the institutions you plan on applying to, to see when you'll be enrolling and when your application deadline is. That way, you can alter the timeline below to fit the deadline for the programs you'll be applying to. That said, you're expected to begin your research process much earlier. Graduate school applications take a lot of time, but when you work within the application timeline, you can ease the burden and stress of applying.
- You can also refer to this article, which guides you on how to develop a great university list when applying outside the U.S. .
- Create a spreadsheet for all the must-haves you're looking for in an ideal graduate school program.
- Do an outline search for all the graduate programs in your intended field of study.
- Expand your spreadsheet as you go; add more criteria and refine your school list.
- Identify any professors from specific programs you'd be interested in working with or learning from in your field of choice.
- Determine whether any exams are required by your institution or program. You can also begin preparing for tests required as part of your application.
- Check to see whether you meet the application requirement for the program you'll be applying to.
- Secure documentation like transcripts from your prior universities required by your graduate programs.
- Explore the updated course curriculum for the programs of your choice to ensure your undergraduate education has prepared you for this course. If not, you can take some bridging courses back home before you begin your graduate course abroad.
- Register for and take any specific exams required by your program. Most universities will ask you for some form of English proficiency test by default unless you completed your undergraduate studies in a country/program where English is the first language.
- Start reaching out to your contacts to see who can be a potential recommender.
- Begin your draft for your motivation letter. Generally, these letters are program-specific and designed to tell the universities more about your intentions to pursue a specific course at that particular university.
- Prepare a shortlist for your graduate schools. After spending months researching different programs, you'll have a good idea of programs that are the right fit for you. Having a shortlist would make it easier for you to go through the application cycle moving forward.
- Remember that there's no limit to how many graduate schools around the globe you can apply to. That said, certain universities will limit you to only applying to one or two programs. Keep in mind that you would need to craft each motivation letter specific to the program you've selected. Try to allocate time to ensure that you can produce quality applications that best represent your skills/talents/qualities.
- Continue with thorough research before the application season so it'll be easier for you to apply to more graduate schools.
- Make sure you have all the documentation needed for the program you'll be applying to.
- Prepare your undergraduate transcripts now. Request your transcripts from your undergraduate institution. You'll need to check with admission officials at the graduate school you plan on applying to on

how they'd like your prior transcripts to be delivered to them. (This requirement can vary depending on where you completed your undergraduate degree.)

- Continue working on your motivation letter and try to complete it before you begin filing out your graduate application.
- Begin filling out your graduate school applications now. Try to set aside time every day to work on this. This way, you can regularly chip away at the application and avoid feeling rushed or overwhelmed. This may also help to prevent mistakes.
- Revise the drafts of your motivation letters at this point. This way, you have all your components for each application complete as you go.
- Follow up with your recommenders to see whether they have everything they need and are ready to submit their letters/forms.
- Make sure your graduate schools have received your transcripts.
- This is the final push. Fine-tune your applications. Go over each of the sections to be sure you've filled out all the answers accurately. Check for any mistakes when filling out your applications.
- Have your final draft of your personal statements ready, and proofread them thoroughly. Try to get someone else to help you proofread them too.
- Work on submitting all your applications accordingly. Prepare your application fees and make sure you have the money to cover them all (a declined payment might cause you to miss a deadline).
- Enjoy the unique sensation of accomplishment of finally sending everything in. Wait until you hear back from the universities, which will be around March/April of the following year.
- This timeline is meant to provide you with guidance on how you can begin the graduate school research process and submit your application(s) ahead of the deadline(s). Different schools and programs can have different deadlines. Please make sure that you're keeping track of all of them in your spreadsheet.
- This timeline can also give you the chance to be ready to submit your graduate school application before your deadlines. The extra time you have before your deadline will be useful if you need to follow up on your materials or resubmit anything if something goes wrong. The ultimate goal is to get you prepared and to avoid making mistakes ahead of time so you can focus on preparing for your graduate school plan once you hear back from your schools of choice.
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Five Important Tips for International Students Who Need U.S. Financial Aid
- How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College in the US?
- Schools That Are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year
- The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the U.S. for International Students
- Tagged: international students , international student , grad school , graduate school

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- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [July 21, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [5 Reasons to Attend Graduate School Abroad \(+ Admissions Timeline\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [July 21, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [UWC Changshu China](#)
- [Institute of International Education](#)

- [English language proficiency](#)
- [refer to this article, which guides you on how to develop a great university list when applying outside the U.S.](#)
- [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
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- [graduate school](#)

How to Write About COVID-19 In Your College Essay & Application

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/coronavirus-covid19-college-essay>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This year, the Common App is including a special 250-word section allowing students to describe the impacts of COVID-19 on their lives. Here's the official word from the Common App website:
- We want to provide colleges with the information they need, with the goal of having students answer COVID-19 questions only once while using the rest of the application as they would have before to share their interests and perspectives beyond COVID-19.
- Below is the question applicants will see:
- Community disruptions such as COVID-19 and natural disasters can have deep and long-lasting impacts. If you need it, this space is yours to describe those impacts. Colleges care about the effects on your health and well-being, safety, family circumstances, future plans, and education, including access to reliable technology and quiet study spaces.
- Do you wish to share anything on this topic? Y/N
- Please use this space to describe how these events have impacted you.
- The question will be optional and will appear in the Additional Information section of the application. The response length will be limited to 250 words.
- It's worth reading from the Common App website directly , which also notes that counselors will have 500 words to detail impacts that their schools have experienced based on the pandemic.
- Note: If you're applying via the Coalition Application, you'll also have an opportunity to add information. Learn the details here . And the advice below will apply!
- So should you write about coronavirus?
- On this webinar at the 14:00 mark, I asked Rick Clark, Director of Admission at Georgia Tech, this very question. His response: "How could they not!" In other words: You totally have permission to write about this.
- But it also kinda' depends on your pandemic experience.
- Which of the following best describes what the pandemic has been like for you?
- It's been okay . Online school wasn't as good as real school, but I adapted, played video games maybe a little more than usual (so my sleeping schedule was weird), and hung out with my family a little more. TBH, though, things haven't changed (or didn't change) too much for me.
- Very negative. Coronavirus rocked my world—and not in a good way. The pandemic has led to serious hardships for my family and me. It's been incredibly stressful, and we're still living with some uncertainty.
- Very positive. And I feel weird saying that because I know so many people have been negatively impacted. But I've learned some new things/felt inspired/maybe even started a new project and (maybe even) I've even shifted the way I'm thinking about my future!
- It's been a roller coaster (so 2 and 3). In some ways, it's been really difficult, but in other ways, it's been productive, and I'm learning a lot.
- Do a quick self-scan: Which feels most like your experience?
- And if your experience has been way too complex to fit into one of these (admittedly) overly-simplistic and reductive categories, read on.
- But based on these broad categories, I'd say ...
- If your life hasn't changed too much (so A), no need to write about it.
- If the pandemic has been either very negative (B), very positive (C), or like a roller coaster (D), maybe do write about it.
- The questions are: Where should you write about it in your application, and how?
- You've got options.
- If the school you're applying to is on the Common App, your options include:
- The special COVID-19 question (250 words)
- The Additional Information section (650 words)

- Your main personal statement (650 words)
- Below, I'll offer tips on how to write each one. And if the school you're applying to is not on the Common App, check out that school's particular application.
- There's an old saying in the musical theater world that goes something like this: If what you want to say is so important that mere words can't capture it, you sing it. And if not even singing can capture those feelings, you dance it. (More commonly: "If you can't say it, sing it. If you can't sing it, dance it.")
- That's pretty much my advice when it comes to writing about coronavirus/COVID-19 on your college application.
- More specifically, if you feel as though you need to address your pandemic experience in your college application, I'd say:
 - If you can fit your pandemic experiences into the 250-word COVID-19 section, do it.
 - If you need more space, use the 650-word Additional Information section.
 - If a) your pandemic experience was one of the most important things that's ever happened to you and there's no way it could fit in both of the sections named above, b) you believe that describing your pandemic experience is the best way to demonstrate the values/skills/qualities that you'll bring with you to a college campus, and c) you've spent at least an hour exploring other topics using high-quality brainstorming exercises with a partner and still haven't come up with any other ideas, then you might consider using the 650-word personal statement.
 - But keep in mind that if you do write about the pandemic in your personal statement, then you can't use the 250-word COVID-specific section for anything else. On the other hand, if you write about the pandemic in the COVID-specific space, you can use your personal statement for whatever you want.
 - Also note that the Common App is kind of hinting that you should use the 250-word COVID-19 section so that you can use the rest of your application for other things: "We want to provide colleges with the information they need, with the goal of having students answer COVID-19 questions only once while using the rest of the application as they would have before to share their interests and perspectives beyond COVID-19."
 - Again, I'm going to show you how to write something in each section, but can you sense which way I'm nudging you?
 - And btw, if you're unsure what else to write your personal statement on, keep reading—I'll share brainstorming exercises below.
- Here again is the question you'll see on the Common App:
 - Community disruptions such as COVID-19 and natural disasters can have deep and long-lasting impacts. If you need it, this space is yours to describe those impacts. Colleges care about the effects on your health and well-being, safety, family circumstances, future plans, and education, including access to reliable technology and quiet study spaces.
 - Do you wish to share anything on this topic? Y/N
 - Please use this space to describe how these events have impacted you.
 - The question will be optional and will appear in the Additional Information section of the application. The response length will be limited to 250 words.
 - If you did face significant challenges during the pandemic, one way to write about your pandemic experience is by using this structure:
 - a) Challenges Faced + Impacts on Me
 - b) What I Did about It
 - c) What I Learned
 - Below is an example of what this might look like. (It's not an actual example, but was written by a former student to illustrate how you can write yours)
 - Example 1 (faced significant challenges):
 - Living in rural North Carolina, I have limited access to a consistent, high-speed internet connection. During the pandemic, my family did not have the means to upgrade to a higher internet speed and were working hard around the house trying to make ends meet. This meant I was often unable to access the internet in time to turn in assignments when they were due. It was also difficult to concentrate because our house is very small and everyone was working in close proximity.
 - Although I found it hard to focus on schoolwork, I communicated these problems to my family so that we could work together. I organized a rotating schedule for my parents and my older sister. We marked off the blocks of time during which we would need to be online and created a system in which only two family members would be on the internet at the same time. The people who were not busy would stay quiet indoors or go outside to talk. This made it so that the internet was faster and there was less noise inside the house.

- I am proud to say that I used what I had at my disposal to make the best out of a difficult situation. The unusual conditions instilled in me the value of organization and clear communication. I found ways of adapting my work to fit new time constraints and will bring this knowledge with me to college. (240 words)

- Quick Notes + Tips:

- This kind of straightforward and factual tone is fine. In fact, some readers will prefer it.

- Notice how the example above devotes one bullet point to each of the elements I mentioned: a) Challenges Faced + Impacts on Me, b) What I Did about It, c) What I Learned. And yes, bullet points are OK in this section.

- Notice how, in the third bullet point, the author demonstrates a few values that will serve them in college and beyond: adaptability, organization, communication. For a list of values, [click here](#).

- Example 2 (did not face significant challenges):

- I live in Marfa, Texas, where an important part of the local economy is the restaurant industry. Many businesses in the area were forced to shut down or operate in a more limited capacity. To support these people and their contributions to our community, I started an online blog to write reviews about the takeout my family and I ate during quarantine. I made sure to include details about how food could be ordered and what options they had for different dietary restrictions. As someone who has a very restrictive diet, I understand the importance of finding food that is healthy, delicious, and conscious of different dietary needs. I also wanted to encourage people to support their local businesses.

- In addition, to keep myself physically active despite limited mobility, I created a makeshift gym in my house. I fashioned “dumbbells” out of old milk cartons filled with dirt and took an online class about weight training to build a balanced workout schedule. I even got my parents to join me once a week!

- I stayed connected with friends during weekly sessions on Zoom and Discord. We often spent hours playing online board games like Bananagrams and Codenames. Because I enjoyed bonding over these games and being intellectually stimulated by the puzzles they posed, I ended up taking an online course in Python and am working on coding my first video game. (231 words)

- Quick Notes + Tips:

- Notice how in this example, which is not a real example either but was written for illustrative purposes, the author chooses three specific aspects of the pandemic and devotes one bullet point to each.

- The author begins by describing a particular need (supporting local businesses) and what they did about it (started a blog). This demonstrates the values of leadership and entrepreneurialism—even without naming the values explicitly, which is fine.

- The second bullet point addresses a separate value (health), and the author gives evidence that the impact went beyond themselves—to their parents!

- Finally, the author demonstrates the value of what I like to call “curiosity with legs” (i.e., being interested in something—then doing something about it). Again, the tone is straightforward, which works well.

- If this kind of straightforward, factual tone isn't your thing, you could start with something that grabs our attention. Like this:

- Example 3 (faced significant challenges):

- “Jose, turn down the TV. MOM, THE STOVE WON'T TURN ON! Be quiet, I'm on a call. Zuli, have you seen the scissors anywhere?!”

- Life in quarantine was actually four lives squished together. The pandemic forced my parents, my older sister, and I into a space that wasn't built for all of our preferences and professions. Living in a small, one-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles meant that internet speed was often slow and privacy was minimal. We were constantly yelling, stepping on each other's toes.

- Although I was discouraged, I knew that the tension in our house came mostly from fear of uncertainty, not a lack of love. I kept a level head and called a family meeting. Together, we organized a rotating schedule, marking off when we needed to be online. With this information, we created a system in which only two family members would be on the internet at any time. The people who were not busy would keep quiet or go outside to talk. In a matter of days, the internet was faster and the noise had gone down.

- I did what I could to make the best out of a difficult situation. The unusual conditions instilled in me the value of organization and clear communication. And I learned how to hit pause when things got intense. We're still squished, but our love is louder than our yelling. (231 words)

- Quick Notes + Tips:

- Using a slightly more creative approach is also fine. In fact, some readers may find it refreshing. But note that the “slightly more creative” opening is really just 24 words long. The rest is pretty straightforward. So don't spend too much time obsessing over this. The information you share is what's most important here.

- Notice how, in this example, the author takes the framework of the first example essay and bends it into a more cohesive narrative. It still follows the same path (i.e., identifying the challenges/effects, how you dealt with them, what you learned), but smooths the edges between those sections. It also gets a bit more

creative with the intro, hooking readers with some intriguing sentence fragments. If you want to do something a little unconventional, this is a good framework you can use.

- Also notice that the author still keeps all the relevant information here. It's still crucial for her to communicate that the internet speed was slow and the house was crowded because that's essentially the answer to the prompt. Those are challenges that will help admissions officers contextualize the author's transcript. Remember, important information like that should be included no matter which of these formats you use.

- How to Brainstorm Content for Your Own COVID-19 Response:

- Use this Values List to identify 3-5 values you gained (or strengthened) during the pandemic.

- Brainstorm examples to demonstrate each value (e.g., to show the value of "health" the example might be "I built a makeshift gym and designed a workout schedule").

- Write one bullet point per value. Keep it succinct, as in the examples above.

- Here's a simple Google doc template where you can brainstorm the ideas above.

- First, here's a comprehensive guide that describes what students typically use this section for. Know that writing about coronavirus in this section is also totally fine.

- Next, ask yourself, "Am I sure I can't fit everything into the 250-word Coronavirus/COVID-19 section described above?" The reason I ask that is that it's tough for me to imagine a scenario in which your pandemic experience(s) would not fit into the space above. I suppose if you created a project that was so large in scope that you have lots of details that wouldn't fit into 250 words, but I imagine this will apply to fewer than 5% of students. But if that's you, then by all means, use this section.

- If you do use this section, here are some general tips:

- When you're ready to brainstorm content for that section, use the simple three-step process described above where it says, "How to Brainstorm Content for Your Own COVID-19 Response."

- Probably keep the tone straightforward and factual. Value content over poetry. This is, after all, the Additional Information section.

- Probably don't write a whole 650-word essay on your coronavirus experience. Why?

- a) What can be communicated in a 650-word essay can probably be communicated in 250 words in the coronavirus-specific section (see above).

- b) It's likely to be a very common essay topic (more on that below), so writing a full-length essay may lead to blending in more than standing out.

- c) Again, this is the additional information (and not the additional essay) section.

- Note that I say probably in the bullet points above. Could there be an exception to these tips? Something I'm not thinking about? Absolutely. If you are that exception, rock on. (In fact, email me and let me know if you feel you're the exception, and please share with me what you wrote: help@collegeessayguy.com)

- Again, here's some guidance on how to use the Additional Information section in general.

- Quick recap in case you skipped straight to this section:

- Probably use the coronavirus-specific 250-word section on the Common App. That may be enough space to say what you want to say. Read the section above to see if that might be true for you.

- Whatever doesn't fit there, you can probably fit into the Additional Info section.

- If you've read both of the sections above and you're still feeling like you want to write about your pandemic experience in your personal statement, ask yourself if you want to devote:

- Part of your personal statement to your pandemic experience (maybe because it connects to a topic you were considering anyway) or

- All of your personal statement to your pandemic experience (maybe because you've faced extraordinary challenges)

- If the answer is part (because you don't want to potentially be defined by your pandemic experience in your reader's eyes), I'd recommend using the Montage Structure and devoting a paragraph of your essay to your pandemic experience.

- In other words, think of it as a chapter in your life as opposed to the whole book.

- If the answer is all (maybe because you've faced significant challenges), I'd recommend the Narrative Structure .

- Here's how to write both of these, beginning with ...

- Before you start writing about the pandemic, I'd recommend first brainstorming a variety of topics that might show different values/skills/qualities that you'll bring with you to a college campus. You can do that using the exercises on this page in the section called "My favorite resources for brainstorming everything you'll need for your college application." Each exercise will take you 5-20 minutes but will set you up for your entire application. In fact, you may want to bookmark that link because a) I'll refer to it a couple of times below, plus b) the resources on that page will probably answer a lot of other college application questions you'll have.

- Once you've found a great non-pandemic-related topic that captures some of the magic of who you are, ask yourself ...
- What was my main take-away from the pandemic?
- A simple way to figure that out is to look at this List of Needs and identify 1-2 main needs that became more apparent to you during the pandemic.
- Example: Maybe you realized how much you needed community . Or structure . Or contribution .
- Whatever need(s) you identify, next answer: How did I work to meet that need during the pandemic?
- In other words: How did you meet your need for community? Or structure? Or contribution? (Or whatever value you've picked.) What did you actually do ?
- Once you've identified that, answer: What did I learn? Or how did I grow?
- A great way to figure out what you learned or how you grew is to pick from this List of Values .
- Try to identify 1-3 values you connected with more deeply as a result of your work to meet your needs.
- Example Brainstorm:
- Needs: Community + contribution
- How I tried to meet these needs: Hosted a virtual open mic with my class where my peers took turns reading and sharing their pandemic experiences
- What I learned: Some of my friends are really creative (or) that vulnerability can create closeness even when we can't be together in person (or) you get the idea ...
- Again, here's a simple Google doc template where you can brainstorm the ideas above.
- Once you've identified a few potential (ideally, uncommon!) values, ask yourself: How could I work this idea or these ideas into the topic I've already thought of?
- Again, make this just one part of the larger story of your life.
- First, as I mentioned above, COVID-19 is likely to be a common topic this year. And while that doesn't mean that you shouldn't write about it, I do think it's going to be a lot harder to stand out with this topic. So, if possible, brainstorm other possible ideas using the resources above before you commit to this as your topic.
- Second, check in with yourself: Are you choosing this because some part of you believes, or someone told you, that it's "better" to write about a challenge for your college essay? BECAUSE IT'S NOT TRUE. :) You'll find many examples of amazing essays written by students who do not discuss significant challenges. (To see some, click this link and scroll down to the "Personal Statement Examples" link.)
- Having said all this, if you still feel that describing your pandemic experience is The Best Way to Show Who You Are, then I recommend this structure:
- Challenge(s) I faced based on the pandemic + their impact on me
- What I did about it/them
- What I learned/How I grew from the experience
- Important: Make sure that only the start of your essay describes the challenges and their impact on you, then most of your essay is devoted to describing what you did about it and what you learned from the experience. Why? Because your goal with the personal statement is to demonstrate skills, qualities, values, and interests. If you're committing to COVID-19 as a topic, you're basically saying that you feel this is the best way to show the many sides of who you are. Is that true? Is this your deepest story?
- If you're not sure, complete this Feelings and Needs exercise . You'll find out in about 15 minutes.
- If you're certain if this is your deepest story, still do the Feelings and Needs exercise . It'll help you create an outline that you can use to write your personal statement.
- That's what I've got.
- Feel free to email to share examples of what you're working on with help@collegeessayguy.com , as I'll likely publish a follow-up once we get deeper into the fall.
- Tagged: student , coronavirus , COVID , COVID-19 , Pandemic , Virus , College Essay , personal statement

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [June 9, 2020](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [How to Write About Coronavirus / COVID-19 In Your College Essay & Application](#)

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [June 9, 2020](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [Should I Write About Coronavirus/COVID-19 in My College Essay?](#)
- [Where to Write About COVID/Coronavirus on Your College Application](#)
- [How to Write About COVID-19/Coronavirus on Your College Application](#)
- [How to Write About Coronavirus Using the Special COVID-19 \(250-Word\) Section on the Common App](#)
- [Option 1: The Straightforward Way](#)
- [Option 2: The Slightly More Creative Way](#)
- [How to Write About Coronavirus Using the \(650-Word\) Additional Information Section](#)
- [How to Write About Coronavirus in Your College Essay \(i.e., the 650-Word Personal Statement\)](#)
- [How to Use Montage Structure to Describe Your Pandemic Experience in Part of Your Essay](#)
- [A Quick Word of Advice on How to Stand Out If You're Writing About Coronavirus](#)
- [How to Use Narrative Structure to Describe Your Pandemic Experience If You Want It to Be All of Your Essay](#)
- [the official word](#)
- [from the Common App website directly](#)
- [Learn the details here](#)
- [this webinar](#)
- [high-quality brainstorming exercises](#)
- [click here](#)
- [this Values List](#)
- [simple Google doc template](#)
- [here's a comprehensive guide](#)
- help@collegeessayguy.com
- [here's some guidance](#)
- [Montage Structure](#)
- [Narrative Structure.](#)
- [on this page](#)
- [this List of Needs](#)
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- [College Essay](#)
- [personal statement](#)

How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.

Website: <http://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/developing-university-list-outside-us>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson, an Independent Educational Consultant with Mosaico Mentors in Mexico City
- Kristen Karovic, Founder of College Bloom
- —Disclaimer: For the purposes of this article, an “international student” is a student who is a “nonresident alien”—not a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or eligible non-resident, who has not passed the green card test or the substantial presence test—regardless of where the student completed his/her high school education. “College” and “university” are also used interchangeably.
- How many universities in the world can you name? Twenty? Fifty? Maybe even a hundred? Did you know that there are actually over 17,000 accredited universities around the globe?
- For students dreaming of studying abroad, the idea of learning about so many distinct educational systems and unique universities can be daunting.
- So, where should you begin?
- If you’re concentrating on creating a list with a handful of the 4,360 colleges and universities in the U.S. and can afford U.S. college price tags, this blog post—How to Choose a College: A Step-By-Step Guide—has wonderful suggestions.
- However, a huge caveat for students on a budget is that being granted a generous to full financial aid packages in the U.S. to lower the total cost of attendance to below USD \$20,000 is extremely competitive—so competitive that we dedicated an article to it (see: How Realistic is it to get a Full Scholarship in the USA for International Students).
- ... but fear not! Even with limited financial resources, you can create a list with wonderful schools and programs. And you may be surprised at how many great options there are; we ask that you keep an open mind as you move forward and to keep informing yourself. Education varies from institution to institution, country to country, and you need to keep research if the pedagogy, grading system, timeline for major choices, and more is truly the right fit for you.
- So, if you’re interested in universities outside of the U.S., then this is the guide for you.
- In this guide, we will:
- Lead you through 10 questions to consider as you plan for college
- Give tips on how to advocate for yourself and be proactive in this process
- Recommend reflection exercises to help you gain clarity on what you’re looking for in your college experience
- Reinforce the need to create a plan in your home country
- Explain what to consider as you evaluate a Gap Year
- The more clarity you have about what you’re looking for in your education, the more likely you’ll find the best fit for you.
- Think of these questions less like an “interview” and more like a journaling exercise: we want you swirling with options for your future, especially if you haven’t given these responses your full attention before. Grab that favorite pen and a notebook, write out your thoughts, and discuss them with a trusted friend/mentor.
- Why do you want to go to college outside of your home country? Will receiving a degree abroad, such as in medicine, be accepted in your home country? What are your options if you stay in your hometown or your country?
- What’s your budget for higher education?
- What do you want to study? Why? If you’re not sure what you want to study, how can you inform yourself better as you plan for college?
- What’s important to you in your experience as you achieve your undergraduate degree? Which factors are must-haves and which factors can you negotiate?

- Are you looking for a more structured degree (one focused on a specific career or future job) or a less structured degree (open to various majors with more flexibility to find what you're most passionate about)?
- In which countries are you open to studying abroad? How can you inform yourself better about these options? Would you consider English-language degrees in non-English speaking countries? Will an 8-hour plane ride away or a 22-hour plane ride away make a significant difference in your decision?
- In what languages besides English would you feel comfortable studying? Does that shift the options you could consider?
- Have you considered graduate school? Will your undergraduate studies support your graduate level studies?
- Do you see yourself working in your home country as soon as you graduate, in 10 years, or do you not have plans to return? Do you want to work in the country where you attended university? What support will you have from the university to get a work-visa in the same country as you studied after you graduate?
- Where do you see yourself five years after graduating from college? And in 10 years?
- You need to think long and hard about your answers to these questions, especially in terms of the goals you have set for yourself, and how committed you are to them. We highly recommend you talk out your answers to someone you trust.
- Is there a counselor or teacher at your high school who has supported students applying to international universities before? If not, is there a counselor or teacher who'd be willing to learn alongside you?
- When applying, you'll need to send certain documents from your high school, such as your transcripts and recommendation letters. It's incredibly helpful to have someone who can support you in the process, from discussing your interests to researching schools to submitting the applications themselves.
- EducationUSA has 400+ advising centers worldwide to assist you in accessing U.S. higher education opportunities. Most centers can connect you with university administrators, host college fairs, can speak to you in your native language, provide you with a computer with Internet access, advise you about financial aid, and more. There are free information sessions as well as advising available, sometimes for a small fee.
- In addition, you can benefit from reaching out to a local college advising mentor. Many countries have volunteer organizations to guide you through the college planning and admissions process, and can even support you with plane tickets, test fee waivers, and more. For example, Education Matters supports Zimbabwean students and BRASA aids students in Brazil. Virtually, The Matchlighters Scholarship offers free college application counseling for high-achieving, low-income students from experienced college counselors to students from the U.S. Acceptance to these programs is competitive though, and it is always recommended that you begin early.
- Has anyone from your school or community applied to college abroad? Ask around. Chat with that alum from your high school who studied in Belgium or your neighbor's friend who spent a semester abroad in Japan. More often than not, you'll be surprised by how eager people are to share their experiences and advice.
- Don't be afraid to reach out to a college's admission office! Look to see who is in charge of international admission or admission in your region or country and reach out directly with questions. What countries are most of their international students from? Can they put you in touch with a current student studying Psychology (or your chosen major)? Building a relationship with the International admission officer is an invaluable way to learn more about a college and demonstrate interest.
- Ask for fee waivers if you need them. If you demonstrate financial need, admission offices and testing offices can often waive the fees: however, this can be more common in applications to U.S. universities than non-U.S. universities. This can make the process itself of applying to college much more financially accessible.
- Do you love to be bicycling down the city street on your way to class in a city building—ready to watch your lecture in an auditorium with rows of students from all over campus? Or do you want to watch the sun set over the ocean on your way across the campus green to enjoy one-on-one conversations with a professor and a handful of classmates?
- It's time to dig into what you're hoping to get out of your college experience. Dr. Steven Antonoff, an independent educational consultant who has worked with more than 3,800 students, has some great resources to guide you in this exciting, and sometimes challenging, reflection process. To learn more about yourself and your values, take a look at his activity guides. They'll help you better understand yourself as a learner, pinpoint your values, and consider the different qualities that characterize colleges.
- College Planning Values Assessment
- Self-Knowledge Questionnaire
- Qualities That Will Make a College Right for You
- Activities and Experiences Worksheet

- Thoughtfully working on these activities will bring you more clarity in your search. Keeping your answer in mind, let's check out how to create and use a college list.
- Research is key! Before you even start researching, you want to set yourself up for success.
- 1. Download and make a copy of the College List Research Tracker.
- This Research Tracker will help you stay organized as you research. Even if you think you'll remember all the details about a particular school, chances are you won't. Take detailed notes of what you like and dislike about each program. Trust your gut. You'll learn a lot about yourself and what you're looking for in a college in the process.
- 2. Begin to research colleges using the questions and resources below.
- Remember to take a look at multiple sources and not to just jump at the highest ranked schools or the ones you've heard of. There are thousands of incredible schools out there. It's impossible that you've heard of all of them.
- 3. Start adding schools to your list and take notes in your research tracker.
- Just because you include a school on your list doesn't mean you'll definitely apply to it. Include 15-25 colleges on your initial list. You'll narrow it down as you go.
- For lots of specific resources to help you in your research process, take a look at [How to Research Colleges Outside of the US](#).
- And be sure to check out [How much does it ACTUALLY cost to go to college?](#) to better understand all the hidden costs that attending college implies.
- If cost is a significant consideration for you and your family, it will be a central part of your research and application process from the beginning. Take a look at [Schools that are actually cheap](#) to learn more about five countries with programs that total under 10,000 USD/year, all costs included.
- Deciding to study abroad is not always an easy choice. It is very important that you research and are aware of the opportunities available to you in your home country, especially in regard to what timelines you need to follow for their applications.
- Even if you are decided on studying abroad, consider the option to take the exams offered in your country (if applicable) to enter into one of your local universities.
- Refer back to what you're looking for in a college and what you're interested in studying. What options are available in your home country? Which colleges are the best fit for you?
- International foundation years are another great option if you find you don't meet enrollment requirements. They offer the opportunity to study an additional year and develop your English and study skills, and, provided you maintain high enough grades, often mean a direct pass to the university.
- If college admissions is competitive, I might as well apply to 20 or 30 schools, right? Wrong. Applying to colleges takes time and energy, and it can be expensive. Most universities require application fees, which can sometimes go towards your enrollment fee, but also can quickly add up.
- If the cost of the application is a barrier in your family's financial situation, some universities will waive the application fee, even for international students. Students would want to reach out directly to admission officers to see if this is a possibility.
- Concourse Global offers one flat fee of \$75—paid by the student—to submit a single profile to dozens of universities. Fee waivers are also available, and students do not have to pay any other application fees. More details about Concourse are below.
- It can be hard to pinpoint a specific number of schools that are ideal to apply to for all students, as it is a personal decision and there are so many factors that weigh in. For example: the multiple countries you are considering, if you can afford the total cost of attendance for the school, your dialogue with the admission officers before you apply, the availability or lack of availability of fee waivers ... the list of personal examples that affect each student's situation can go on and on.
- What is fundamental to consider is:
- You have created a balanced list. For example, you don't want to apply only to eight schools that you have a very low chance of getting into. Financial, social, and academic are all very important to evaluate, as well as your long-term plans personally and professionally.
- You are putting your full heart and energy into sending the best application possible.
- It can be challenging to predict if you'll get into a given school or not. But be honest with yourself. Do you meet the enrollment requirements? How strong are your grades?
- UK colleges tend to publish their acceptance rates, but finding these stats can be tricky, depending on the country. If you can't find admissions stats, rankings can give you some idea of how competitive a given college is.
- Once you have an initial list of 15-25 colleges, you'll want to begin narrowing it down. This is when you'll want to take your research to the next level. Refer back to your notes. Look at the college's website again, particularly at the courses they offer. Check out their YouTube channel (like this video about student

organizations at the University of Auckland) to get a better sense of the school vibe.

- Think about fit! Take time to listen to this podcast with Mark Moody about the Myth of Fit . Just because a college is a great school doesn't mean it's a great school for you. After all, what makes it a "great school"?
- Above all, connect directly with the college. Most schools offer Open Days or Info Sessions, either in person or virtually. Check out the school website to see what they offer.
- You can also reach out directly to the school's admissions office, although this is only recommended if you have looked extensively at their page and still can't find the answer to your question.
- Beware though, as many institutions outside of the U.S. do not do as much hand holding as you might be accustomed to on U.S.-college websites and through correspondence with admissions officers at U.S. schools. However, don't let this discourage you! Evaluate as part of your fit how you want to be supported through housing, extracurriculars, sports, and overall support.
- Pro Tip: It's incredibly important that you feel supported as an international student in your new home. Is there a designated office for international students? Are you comfortable finding housing and/or meals on your own? Does the university support you with activities so you can make friends outside of the classroom?
- If you're able to, visiting, particularly when classes are in session, is another incredible way to get a sense of a college. Attend info sessions, sit in on a few classes that interest you, talk with current students, and wander the surrounding community.
- You can't: we're not behind the doors listening in on the conversations admissions officers are having as they review your application. But you can get an idea about how in-depth your application review process is in this YouTube clip:
- It is also important to note that the process of applying to universities outside of the U.S. can actually be more straightforward in many ways than that of applying to U.S. universities. Of course, it can depend on the institution, but, for example, for some universities, admissions can be less holistic and more focused purely on your transcript in conjunction with a placement test, followed by, for example, your CV, personal statement, and a letter of recommendation.
- Looking at the enrollment requirements is essential! Be sure to look at the enrollment requirements particular to your home country or, if you received an international diploma such as the International Baccalaureate, that particular diploma.
- If your country is not listed, we'd highly recommend reaching out to the admissions office directly. Do they accept your high school diploma? Are there any necessary intake exams? If so, how can you best prepare for them? Do they require SAT or SAT Subject Test scores?
- If you don't meet the requirements, many universities in the UK, Europe, and Australia (among other countries) offer the option of an international foundation year , a year-long course designed to complement your high school education in preparing you for academic success at university. This can be a great option to increase your chances of university admission and familiarize you with university life. But it's also an additional cost.
- In place of an international foundation year, many universities accept a year of university study in your home country. If you don't meet the enrollment requirements but are really excited about a particular school, consider which of these routes would be the best fit for you. See our guide, Do I Need to Complete a Foundation Program? , for more details!
- Have you considered a gap year (taking a year off between high school and college)? Gap years can give you time to pursue your interests, take extra classes, work and save money, or volunteer abroad, strengthening your candidacy when you apply the following year.
- If you are deciding on a gap year, remember to ask yourself what will change in your life and skillset as you wait to send in your application. Will you maintain the same college list, gain greater insight into colleges you hadn't considered, or start your research during this gap year for the first time? Will your family's financial situation change (for better or worse) or do you need to be more proactive in opening up yourself to universities that will fit you financially?
- Be sure to talk out your options with a trusted mentor or friend before deciding on a gap year. A good paper and pencil and a pro con list can also help you articulate the many questions you will have as you move forward with your future plans.
- Take a deep breath. There is a lot to do, but with a healthy attitude and careful research, you can do it.
- Remember that many universities around the world open applications and accept students on different schedules. It's true that your friends might receive acceptances in March before they begin university in August or September, but there are other (non-U.S.) school systems that don't even begin accepting students until August, and classes will also start in October of that same year. Other universities start in February/March and there are June/July intakes of students as well.

- The moral of the story? You have your own timeline to work through this process, and there are universities accepting students over many different time periods over the year.
- The process of developing an international college list may be challenging, but it can also be incredibly rewarding. It's time to reflect on yourself and your future and to get excited about what's to come!
- Here are some action items of the highlights of this article:
- Start the invaluable reflection process! Think about what you're looking for in a college , your budget, where you're interested in studying, etc.
- Set up your College List Research Tracker.
- Research research research. Check out How to Research Colleges Outside of the U.S. for lots of resources to help you research colleges internationally. Keep an open mind and learn as much as you can about schools of interest to you. As you develop that initial list, be realistic! Don't lose sight of your budget, the competitiveness of scholarships, and your chances of getting into each school.
- Find a school in your home country that would be a great fit for you. Look into international foundation years . Or check out these Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year.
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , how to create a university list international , how to create a college list international , College List

■ Danh sách các bài vi■t và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 18, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
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- [4,360 colleges and universities in the U.S.](#)
- [How to Choose a College: A Step-By-Step Guide](#)
- [How Realistic is it to get a Full Scholarship in the USA for International Students](#)
- [English-language degrees in non-English speaking countries](#)
- [EducationUSA](#)
- [Education Matters](#)

- BRASA
- The Matchlighters Scholarship
- College Planning Values Assessment
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- international students
- how to create a university list international
- how to create a college list international
- College List

Developing a College List on a Budget with Auxilia: A Guide for International Students

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/affordable-college-list-auxilia>

■ Mục lục chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson, an Independent Educational Consultant with Mosaico Mentors in Mexico City
- So, you're an international student excited about studying in the US, but the cost of college is a determining factor.
- How can you develop a cost-conscious school list? How can you predict how much aid you might receive from a given school, instead of just counting on receiving that one full scholarship (spoiler alert: they're extremely competitive)?
- Financial aid at US institutions can be tricky to understand. So much lingo—need-blind, merit-based aid, estimated family contribution, CSS profile, demonstrated need. Luckily, A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students can walk you through the nuances of both calculating the costs of college and applying for financial aid.
- One of the first steps to developing a cost-conscious college list is to figure out exactly how much your family can afford. Sit down with your parents or guardians and talk frankly about how much they can pay. Is that for college tuition or does it include living expenses as well? What about costs like visas and flights to and from your home country? Unfortunately, there are also a number of costs just to apply to college. Don't forget to consider application costs, financial application costs, and, if you intend to take them, standardized testing fees. Too often we see international students not considering all the costs of college beyond tuition itself .
- Fast forward: you have a clear sense of your family's budget and have identified what you're looking for in a college. (If you're having trouble with developing a college list, take a look at How to Choose a College: A Step-By-Step Guide for great tips). You have a list of colleges you're excited about, but you know that the costs of attendance are beyond what your family can afford. Maybe your list is even full of schools that are need-blind or need-aware for international students. That's great, but it's only part of the story!
- How can you really figure out how much financial aid these colleges are likely to offer you? And how can you find additional colleges that might be better financial fits?
- Fortunately, you don't have to do it blindly. You don't have to cross your fingers that you'll receive enough aid to be able to afford a particular school. There are tons of data out there to help you understand how much financial aid a given college offers.
- Enter Auxilia . Auxilia is a collaboration between a high school student from India named Vikhyat and the College Essay Guy. The goal: making financial aid data more accessible to international students.
- This guide will walk you through:
 - Financial aid terminology
 - When to use Auxilia
 - The data Auxilia provides
 - How you can use that data most effectively
 - Mini case studies of colleges and the financial aid they offer
 - What if the school I'm interested in isn't on Auxilia?
 - Broadening your mind
 - Final thoughts
- One of the hardest parts of understanding financial aid is all the unfamiliar terms you may run into. Here are a few of the terms you'll see throughout this article and more generally while researching financial aid.
- This is an estimate of your educational expenses, usually for a year. It includes direct costs (tuition and fees) and indirect costs (room & board and books & supplies).
- This is an online service provided by College Board, which allows international students to apply for financial aid. It requires you to submit a detailed account of your family's assets, income sources and

financial circumstances.

- This is the remainder when you subtract your EFC from the COA. It's essentially how much aid a given school would need to give you for you to be able to attend.
- This is a number that financial aid staff have determined your family could pay, based off of your CSS profile. It is used to decide how much financial aid you would receive if you were to attend their school. Note that since this is calculated by assessing your family's financial documents, it may differ from what your family is "willing to pay."
- This means that a student's ability to pay is factored into the admissions process.
- This means that a student's ability to pay is NOT factored into the admissions process. Instead, students are evaluated solely on their merits.
- This financial aid is offered based on a student's achievements, not financial need. This could be their academic or athletic achievements or something else entirely.
- This is a type of college funding available to low-income students and based on their family's income and other financial factors.
- Check out A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students for even more helpful terminology and guidance. And now, drum roll please... Auxilia.
- Auxilia can be helpful at numerous points in the college application process. You can use it as a tool to learn about colleges you haven't heard of that might be financial fits or to find out if a college that already interests you is a potential financial fit for your family. So let's dig in.
- You probably noticed that Auxilia has numerous different columns. Here's a quick guide to the columns, highlighting the ones that will be most helpful to you.
- But one quick note first: all of the data in Auxilia is historical data. As helpful as it is, we can't assume this coming year's data will be identical to that of the previous year. Auxilia can't account for all the factors that impact how universities allocate financial aid, such as COVID-19, increases in overall admissions competitiveness, and increases in international applicants.
- Higher Ed Institution: The name of the college/university
- Bookmark: This allows you to bookmark colleges that interest you to find them more easily
- State: The state where the college is located
- Type: Whether the college is public or private. Public universities tend to have lower costs of attendance for both international and domestic students, while private universities are more generous with financial aid to internationals, but this is not universally true.
- Total UGs : The total number of undergraduate students at the institution
- 2019-2020 Intl UGs: The number of enrolled international undergraduate students, as of Fall 2019. You can also see these numbers from past academic years.
- Intl UG Trend (increase per year): The average yearly increase or decrease in number of international students, across 5 years. A negative number indicates that the number of international students has dropped, a positive number that it's risen.
- Financial Aid Offering Type: This is one of the most important categories! Here you can see a given college's financial aid policy for international students – essentially whether they offer need-based aid, merit-based aid, or both. Remember that need-based aid is aid given because of a family's demonstrated need, while merit-based aid is aid offered because of a student's academic ability, athletic ability, or other merits.
- % of Total International UGs Awarded Aid: Another very important category! This refers to the percentage of international students at the college who received financial aid. Note that some schools may offer very large amounts of aid to small percentages of students, while others may offer small amounts of aid to a higher percentage of students. If you see a college that offers aid to 100% of students, you can count on receiving some aid, even if it's not a lot!
- Number of International UGs Awarded Financial Aid: This important category refers to the number of international students of all class years (not just first-year students!) who received aid. Careful though– this can be a bit misleading because it doesn't reflect the total student body nor the amount of aid international students received.
- Total Financial Aid Award to International UGs: Here we can see the total amount of aid given to international students. Again, it's possible this amount was dispersed amongst many students or given to just a select few. While this doesn't give you much information about how much aid you personally might receive, it can give you an idea about how generous the school is with international financial aid in general.
- Avg Award for Intl UGs receiving aid: This number is the average dollar amount of aid that international students received. Remember that even if this is a comparatively high number, it's important to look at it in the context of the next category, the total cost of attendance for international students. A school with a COA (cost of attendance) of \$40,000 that offers \$15,000 in aid on average will still be much less expensive

than a school with a COA of \$75,000 that offers an average of \$30,000 in aid. Keep in mind that this single number is not representative of the whole range of financial aid packages a school may offer. It is only the average and doesn't account for outliers. Additionally, some schools have a 'minimum EFC' expected of international students, meaning they will only accept international students who are able to meet that minimum EFC.

- **Out-of-State COA:** Out-of-state COA refers to the cost of attendance for international students or, in the case of public institutions, anyone from another state (including international students). This cost of attendance is approximate. It includes tuition, room and board, and books and supplies; however, it doesn't include the cost of flights, visas, or college applications themselves. While Auxilia is updated frequently, remember that the college website will always be the most up-to-date place for information about tuition and cost of attendance.
- **Estimated COA after Avg Award:** Another very helpful column! This column shows you the remaining cost of attendance if you were to receive the institution's average international financial aid award. Of course, there's no guarantee you'll receive the average award. You might receive less. Or you might receive more aid! But this can give you a good sense of if the college might be a financial fit. If the Estimated COA after Avg Award is much higher than your family's budget, it's probably not a good fit.
- **% Avg Award Covers of COA:** Given that the cost of attendance can vary dramatically from one institution to another, this column shows you what percentage of the COA the average award covers. Does it cover half the COA? 85%?
- **Applications:** Number of students applying to the institution
- **Enrolls:** Number of students who enrolled in the institution
- **% Enrollment Rate:** Percentage of accepted students who enrolled
- **% Acceptance Rate:** While not directly related to financial aid data, a college's acceptance rate is extremely important information. It can be really exciting to find a school whose Estimated COA after Avg Award is low, but make sure you have a chance of being accepted there in the first place. Unfortunately, many of the colleges that offer the most aid (particularly need-based aid) have very low acceptance rates.
- It's also important to note that selectivity can vary dramatically for different groups of applicants, such as international students or students with a low EFC. For example, at a need-aware school, the acceptance rate for applicants seeking financial aid may be significantly lower than the acceptance rate for those who can pay the full COA. Or the acceptance rate for international students from a given country may be lower than the overall acceptance rate.
- Well, it's great to understand what the different labels mean, but how can you actually use Auxilia?
- Read on to see how to use Auxilia, or check out this helpful video guide made by Auxilia creator Vikhyat here !
- When you visit the Auxilia page, you'll see that a number of the most helpful columns are already toggled on. You can toggle the columns on or off by clicking on the check boxes at the top.
- Start with the column Estimated COA after Avg Award. In the column entitled Estimated COA after Avg Award, enter the upper limit of what your family can afford as the maximum. This will allow you to see all the schools that, for the average international student, ended up costing less than your family's limit for cost of attendance.
- Now sort the table by Number of Intl UGs Awarded Financial Aid , with the highest number at the top. This won't account for the size of the school, but it will give you a sense of how welcoming the college is towards aid-seeking international students. You can also set a minimum number to filter out schools with very few aid-receiving international students.
- You can also set the minimum % of Total International UGs Awarded Financial Aid . For example, if you set it to 75%, you'll only see the colleges that offer aid to the vast majority of international students. If you set it to 50%, you'll see the colleges that offer aid to at least half of international students. This can give you an idea of how likely it is that you receive aid, although it doesn't speak to the actual amount of aid you'll receive. If a school offers aid to a high percentage of students and the Estimated COA after Avg Award is within your family's budget, it's likely you'd be offered enough aid to attend.
- Unfortunately, many of the colleges that offer the largest amount of aid to the highest percentage of international students may be highly competitive to get into. Try setting the minimum % Acceptance Rate to 30%. This will eliminate some of the most competitive options.
- You can also increase the minimum acceptance rate to a higher value, like 70%, to search for less competitive colleges. Remember that if your GPA and test scores are higher than a college's average (you can find this information on the Admissions website or a resource like Princeton Review), you have a strong chance of receiving merit aid.
- Check that you have the Financial Aid Offering Type set to Both. Now you'll be able to see colleges where you have a high chance of being accepted and, if you're a particularly strong applicant, a high

chance of receiving Merit Aid.

- If your family could cover the cost of attendance of most colleges but you're looking for scholarships, set the Financial Aid Offering Type to Both or Merit Aid. Now, you'll see the colleges that offer either both merit and need aid or solely merit aid.
- If you find a school that seems like a great fit for you, you can Bookmark it, which allows you to easily come back to it. You can also click on the university's name to see its profile, which includes basic information, financial aid data, and enrollment statistics. Even if you reset the page, you'll still be able to see the colleges you bookmarked by clicking on the Bookmark filter.
- And if you want to clear your filters, just click on Reset Filters and you can start again!
- To see this all in action, check out Vikhyat's video guide [here](#).
- College of the Atlantic, located in Maine, offers both merit and need aid, and gives aid to 100% of international students. Their average financial aid package brings down the COA to under \$9,000. Even better— they have a fairly high acceptance rate of 72%! This is a college that demonstrates a great commitment to making itself financially accessible to international students.
- St. Olaf College (Minnesota) offers both merit and need aid, and also provides 100% of international students with aid. Their average financial aid package brings the COA down to under \$19,000. This is a college where you'd be likely guaranteed some financial aid, and quite possibly a very large amount. It has an acceptance rate of 48% – competitive but not insanely so.
- California Institute of the Arts offers aid to 100% of international students. But note that the actual amount of aid given is very low. The average COA after aid is still nearly \$68,000. This probably wouldn't be a good option unless you needed a very small amount of financial aid.
- Barnard College, an all-women's college in New York, offers a large amount of need based aid—nearly \$69,000—but only to 6% of international students. It's not a college you could count on for financial aid by any means.
- Check out this podcast to learn more about which schools are most generous with financial aid for international students!
- You can find much of the information that Auxilia provides independently (albeit in a format that may be more difficult to navigate) via the Common Data Set. Try Googling a "Common Data Set" followed by the name of a school you're interested in. You should be able to find a long document with a huge amount of data about that school, including financial aid data. See [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#) (specifically the section entitled "How to Use the Common Data Set for Understanding College Fit") for more guidance on how to use the Common Data Set.
- Maybe your dream school is a perfect financial fit. Or maybe, it's not financially feasible after all. Don't forget that there are thousands of wonderful colleges out there that could be a great fit for you.
- In addition to using Auxilia to research colleges in the United States, what about looking beyond the US? There are tons of international universities that can provide a phenomenal English-language education at a fraction of the cost of American colleges. Check out [Schools That Are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year](#) and [How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.](#) for more info!
- Final Thoughts
- We hope that Auxilia is helpful to you and that it allows you to discover new colleges and better understand which colleges will be financial fits for you and your family. Best of luck!
- Tagged: College List , college list building , auxilia , international student , international students case study , financial aid for international students

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [July 15, 2022](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Developing a College List on a Budget with Auxilia: A Guide for International Students](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- July 15, 2022
- Student Resources
- International Students
- Mosaico Mentors
- they're extremely competitive
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- not considering all the costs of college beyond tuition itself
- .
- How to Choose a College: A Step-By-Step Guide
- Auxilia
- Click here to access Auxilia
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- here
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- Princeton Review
- here
- this podcast
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Schools That Are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year
- How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.
-
- College List
- college list building
- auxilia
- international student
- international students case study
- financial aid for international students

12 Outstanding Personal Statement Examples + Why They Work 2025/2026

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/personal-statement-examples>

■ Mục lục chính:

- If you're applying to college, you'll most likely need to write a personal statement as part of your college application. (And please note that the personal statement examples below are for undergraduate applications—if you're trying to find grad school statement of purpose examples, please head to that link.)
- But before diving into analyzing some great personal statement examples, it helps to get some context on what a personal statement actually is, and what writers should plan to include when writing their own personal statement.
- It's the main essay required by the Common Application as well as most other application systems. They basically require you to answer some version of the question "Who are you, and what do you value?" And in recent years, the main Common Application essay has become more and more important in colleges' decision making process, especially as many colleges are relying less and less on standardized test scores.
- In our work with students, we often encourage students to review examples of personal statements to get a sense of what a great essay might look like and to just generally share a wide range of topics, structures, and writing styles so that they can see what's possible when writing this essay. In this spirit, we're sharing 12 of our favorite examples from the past few years. We've also included analysis for what makes them outstanding to (hopefully) help you uplevel your own essay.
- The personal statement should demonstrate the qualities, skills, and values that you've cultivated over your life and how those skills have prepared you for attending college. I (Ethan) have spent the last 15 years answering this question, which you can learn more about in my free 1-hour guide.
- In our opinion, a great personal statement example has 4 qualities. After reading the essay, you can identify whether your essay or topic show each of the four qualities by asking yourself the questions below:
- Values : Can you name at least 4-5 of the author's core values? Do you detect a variety of values, or do the values repeat?
- Vulnerability : Does the essay sound like it's mostly analytical or like it's coming from a deeper, more vulnerable place? Does it sound like the author wrote it using mostly his or her head (intellect) or his or her heart and gut? After reading the essay, do you know more about the author AND feel closer to him or her?
- Insight : Can you identify at least 3-5 "so what" moments of insight in the essay? Are these moments kind of predictable, or are they truly illuminating?
- Craft : Do the ideas in the essay connect in a way that is logical, but not too obvious (aka boring)? Can you tell that the essay represents a series of carefully considered choices and that the author spent a lot of time revising the essay over the course of several drafts?
- Want a more thorough guide on how to write a personal statement? We've got you covered.
- Let's read some essays.
- Example #1 - Quattro Lingue Example #2 - 12 Example #3 - Flying Example #4 - Far Away Example #5 - Poop, Animals and the Environment Example #6 - Riddles Example #7 - The Builder & Problem Solver Example #8 - The Little Porch and a Dog (With Spanish Translation) Example #9 - Life As an Undocumented Student Example #10 - Umbra Example #11 - Angry brown girl, feminist, singer, meme lover Example #12 - Learning Curiosity
- Day 1: "Labbayka Allhumma Labbayk. Labbayk L Sharika Laka Labbayk," we chant, sweat dripping onto the wispy sand in brutal Arabian heat, as millions of us prepare to march from the rocky desert hills of Mount Arafat to the cool, flat valleys of Muzdalifa. As we make our way into the Haram, my heart shakes. Tears rolling down my cheeks, we circumvent the Ka'ba one last time before embarking on Hajj, the compulsory pilgrimage of Islam. It became the spiritual, visceral, and linguistic journey of a lifetime.
- "Ureed an Ahtare Hijab."
- "Al-harir aw al-Qathan?"
- "Hilaahuma."

- “Kham ■hamanu-huma?”
- “Mi’at Riyal.”
- “La. Khizth sab’een.”
- “Sa’uethikhá Sab’een.”
- “Shukran la■.”
- “Show me hijabs.”
- “Silk or cotton?”
- “How much do these cost?”
- “100 Riyal.”
- “No. Take 70.”
- “Fine. Thanks Hajjah.”

• In Makkah, I quickly learn shopkeepers rip off foreigners, so exchanges like this, where I only have to say a few Arabic words, make me appear local. It also connects me with real locals: the Saudi Arabian pharmacist who sells me cough syrup, the Egyptian grandmother seeking directions to the restroom, the Moroccan family who educates me on the Algerian conflict. As the sounds of Arabic swirl around me like the fluttering sands (Jamal, Naqah, Ibl, Ba’eer...), I’m reconnecting with an old friend: we’d first met when I decided to add a third language to English and Bengali.

• Day 6: The tents of Mina. Temperature blazing. Humidity high. I sleep next to an old woman who just embarked on her twentieth Hajj. When I discover she’s Pakistani, I speak to her in Urdu. Her ninety-year old energy--grounded, spiritual, and non-materialistic--inspires me. So far, every day has been a new discovery of my courage, spirit, and faith, and I see myself going on this journey many more times in my life. My new friend is curious where I, a Bengali, learned Urdu. I explain that as a Muslim living in America’s divided political climate, I wanted to understand my religion better by reading an ancient account of the life of Prophet Muhammad, but Seerat-un-Nabi is only in Urdu, so I learned to read it. I was delighted to discover the resonances: Qi-yaa-mah in Arabic becomes Qi-ya-mat in Urdu, Dh-a-lim becomes Zaa-lim... Urdu, which I had previously only understood academically, was the key to developing a personal connection with a generation different from mine.

• Day 8: “Fix your hair. You look silly,” my mom says in Bengali. When my parents want to speak privately, they speak our native tongue. Phrases like, “Can you grab some guava juice?” draw us closer together. My parents taught me to look out for myself from a young age, so Hajj is one of the only times we experienced something formative together. Our “secret” language made me see Bengali, which I’ve spoken all my life, as beautiful. It also made me aware of how important shared traditions are.

• As I think back to those sweltering, eclectic days, the stories and spiritual connections linger. No matter what languages we spoke, we are all Muslims in a Muslim country, the first time I’d ever experienced that. I came out of my American bubble and discovered I was someone to be looked up to. Having studied Islam my whole life, I knew the ins and outs of Hajj. This, along with my love for language, made me, the youngest, the sage of our group. Whether at the Al-Baik store in our camp or the Jamarat where Satan is stoned, people asked me about standards for wearing hijab or to read the Quran out loud. I left the journey feeling fearless. Throughout my life, I’ll continue to seek opportunities where I’m respected, proud to be Muslim, and strong enough to stand up for others. The next time I go to Hajj, I want to speak two more languages: *donc je peux parler à plus de gens* and *quiero escuchar más historias*.

• It’s visceral and evocative. Details about the specific resonance of Urdu words and the conversations this author shared with the people they met on their Hajj brings this essay to life. Nearly every line is full of vivid imagery and textured language. Those details make this piece fun to read and truly bring us into the world of the author. Whenever you’re writing, think about how you can engage all five senses to show, not simply tell, how you experienced something.

• It uses images to convey a sense of time, place, and self. Notice how this author’s use of images and details give this personal statement a dream-like quality, hopping between spaces, people, languages, and thoughts. As a result, the author is able to talk about so many different aspects of their culture. The way the details are conveyed also speaks to the aesthetic sensibilities of the author, providing another window into who they are as a person. When you’re writing, think about how you can use imagistic language to show the reader what you care about.

• It uses dialogue effectively. Dialogue isn’t always the best strategy, as it can take up a good chunk of your word count without explicitly saying anything about who you are. In this piece, however, the author does a great job of using their conversations with people they meet along their journey to convey their values and interests. Not only does the dialogue emphasize their fascination with language and cultural exchange, but it breaks up what would have been dense paragraphs into nice manageable chunks that are easier to read.

- 12 is the number of my idol, Tom Brady. It's the sum of all the letters in my name. It's also how old I was when I started high school.
- In short, I skipped two grades: first and sixth. Between kindergarten and eighth grade, I attended five schools, including two different styles of homeschooling (three years at a co-op and one in my kitchen). Before skipping, I was perennially bored.
- But when I began homeschooling, everything changed. Free to move as fast as I wanted, I devoured tomes from Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison to London, Kipling, and Twain. I wrote 10-page papers on subjects from Ancient Sparta and military history to the founding of the United States and the resounding impact of slavery. I discovered more than I ever had, kindling a lifelong joy for learning.
- While high school offered welcome academic opportunities--studying two languages and taking early science APs chief among them--the social environment was a different beast. Many classmates considered me more a little brother than a true friend, and my age and laser focus on academics initially made me socially inept. I joined sports teams in spring and built better relationships, but my lack of size (5'1") and strength relegated me to the end of the bench. Oftentimes, I secretly wished I was normal age.
- That secret desire manifested itself in different ways. While I've loved football since I was a little kid, I soon became obsessed with personal success on the gridiron--the key, I figured, to social acceptance and the solution to my age problem. I had grown up obsessively tracking my New England Patriots. Now, instead of armchair quarterbacking, I poured hours into throwing mechanics and studying film after my homework each night. Itching to grow, I adopted Brady's diet, cutting dairy, white flour, and processed sugar. But in the rush to change, my attitude towards academics shifted; I came to regard learning as more a job than a joy. No matter what talents I possessed, I viewed myself as a failure because I couldn't play.
- That view held sway until a conversation with my friend Alex, the fastest receiver on the team. As I told him I wished we could switch places so I could succeed on the gridiron, he stared incredulously. "Dude," he exclaimed, "I wish I was you!" Hearing my friend's voice and their confidence in my abilities prompted me to reflect: I quickly realized I was discounting my academic talents to fit a social construct. Instead of pushing myself to be something I wasn't, I needed to meld my talents and my passions. Instead of playing sports, I recognized, I should coach them.
- My goal to coach professionally has already helped me embrace the academic side of the game--my side--rather than sidelining it. I have devoured scouting tomes, analyzed NFL game film, spoken with pros like Dante Scarnecchia, and even joined the American Football Coaches Association. Translating that coach's mentality into practice, I began explaining the concepts behind different plays to my teammates, helping them see the subtleties of strategy (despite Coach Whitcher's complaints that I was trying to steal his job). And I discovered that my intellectual understanding of the game is far more important in determining my success than my athletic tools: with the discipline, adaptability, and drive I had already developed, I've become a better player, student, and friend.
- Physically and mentally, I've changed a lot since freshman year, growing 11 inches and gaining newfound confidence in myself and my abilities. Instead of fighting for social acceptance, I'm free to focus on the things I love. Academically, that change re-inspired me. Able to express my full personality without social pressure, I rededicated myself in the classroom and my community. I still secretly wish to be Tom Brady. But now, I'm happy to settle for Bill Belichick.
- There's a wonderful hook. The first line is great. It's funny, intriguing, and doesn't give too much away. In just the first bit we already know that the author is a football enthusiast, detail-oriented, and academically gifted. Not only does it tell us a lot about him, but it allows him to transition into the meat of his story about how his unconventional educational trajectory influenced the person he is today. Think about how you can use the first sentence or two of your personal statement to effectively introduce readers to your narrative voice and rope them into reading more.
- It has a great "Aha!" moment. Great personal statements often convey growth. In this example, the author struggles to find a place for himself in high school after skipping two grades and being homeschooled for a significant portion of his life. It isn't until his friend on the football team affirms his value that he starts to see all of the ways in which his unique skills benefit the people around him. If you think of your essay like a movie reel of your life, this moment is sort of like the climax. It's when the mindset of the main character changes and allows him to embrace what he's got. The anticipation and release of this "aha moment" keeps readers engaged in the piece and demonstrates your ability, as the applicant, to be self-reflective and adaptable to change.
- It covers a broad time frame, but still fits in tons of nice details. This essay essentially talks about the author's life from 5th grade to present day. He's not focusing on one specific moment. This is absolutely something you can do as well if you want to demonstrate how you've grown over a longer period of time. However, notice that the author here doesn't sacrifice depth for breadth. Even though he's covering a

pretty significant chunk of time, he still touches on great details about his favorite classes and authors, football role models, and conversations with friends. These are what make the essay great and specific to his life. If you're going to talk about more than just one event or moment, don't forget to highlight important details along the way.

- As a young child, I was obsessed with flying. I spent hours watching birds fly, noting how the angle of their wings affected the trajectory of their flight. I would then waste tons of fresh printer paper, much to the dismay of my parents, to test out various wing types by constructing paper airplanes.
- One day, this obsession reached its fever pitch.
- I decided to fly.
- I built a plane out of a wooden clothes rack and blankets, with trash bags as precautionary parachutes. As you can imagine, the maiden flight didn't go so well. After being in the air for a solid second, the world came crashing around me as I slammed onto the bed, sending shards of wood flying everywhere.
- Yet, even as a five-year-old, my first thoughts weren't about the bleeding scratches that covered my body. Why didn't the wings function like a bird's wings? Why did hitting something soft break my frame? Why hadn't the parachutes deployed correctly? Above all, why didn't I fly?
- As I grew older, my intrinsic drive to discover why stimulated a desire to solve problems, allowing my singular passion of flying to evolve into a deep-seated love of engineering.
- I began to challenge myself academically, taking the hardest STEM classes offered. Not only did this allow me to complete all possible science and math courses by the end of my junior year, but it also surrounded me with the smartest kids of the grades above me, allowing me access to the advanced research they were working on. As such, I developed an innate understanding of topics such as protein function in the brain and differential equation modeling early in high school, helping me develop a strong science and math foundation to supplement my passion for engineering.
- I also elected to participate in my school's engineering pathway. As a team leader, I was able to develop my leadership skills as I identified and utilized each member's strength to produce the best product. I sought to make design collaborative, not limited to the ideas of one person. In major group projects, such as building a hovercraft, I served as both president and devil's advocate, constantly questioning if each design decision was the best option, ultimately resulting in a more efficient model that performed significantly better than our initial prototype.
- Most of all, I sought to solve problems that impact the real world. Inspired by the water crisis in India, I developed a water purification system that combines carbon nanotube filters with shock electro dialysis to both desalinate and purify water more efficiently and cost-effectively than conventional plants. The following year, I ventured into disease detection, designing a piezoresistive microcantilever that detected the concentration of beta-amyloid protein to medically diagnose a patient with Alzheimer's disease, a use for cantilevers that hadn't yet been discovered. The project received 1st Honors at the Georgia Science Fair.
- Working on these two projects, I saw the raw power of engineering – an abstract idea gradually becoming reality. I was spending most of my days understanding the why behind things, while also discovering solutions to prevalent issues. In a world that increasingly prioritizes a singular solution, I am captivated by engineering's ability to continuously offer better answers to each problem.
- Thirteen years have passed since that maiden flight, and I have yet to crack physical human flight. My five-year-old self would have seen this as a colossal failure. But the intense curiosity that I found in myself that day is still with me. It has continued to push me, forcing me to challenge myself to tackle ever more complex problems, engrossed by the promise and applicability of engineering.
- I may never achieve human flight. However, now I see what once seemed like a crash landing as a runway, the platform off of which my love of engineering first took flight.
- The author isn't afraid to ask questions. This writer is clearly a curious and intellectual person. The questions they ask in the first part of the essay ("Why didn't the wings function like a bird's wings? Why did hitting something soft break my frame? Why hadn't the parachutes deployed correctly? Above all, why didn't I fly?") highlight that. In your essay, don't shy away from asking tough questions. In the end, the author still hasn't achieved human flight, but you can clearly see how his interest in the whys of life has propelled him to take on new engineering problems. Sometimes, you don't need to answer the questions you pose for them to serve a purpose in your essay.
- It returns back to where it started. There's something satisfying about returning to your intro in your conclusion. In this case, the author comes back to his first flying experience and re-evaluates what the experience means to him now as well as how his thinking has evolved. Think of your essay as a circle (or maybe a blob depending on what you're writing about). Your end should loop back to where you started after your narrative arc is mostly complete.

- Uses specific jargon (but not too much). We might not know what a “piezoresistive microcantilever” is or how it relates to “beta-amyloid proteins,” but that’s not really the point of including it in this essay. By using these terms the author signals to us that he knows what he’s talking about and has a degree of expertise in engineering. On the flip side, you don’t want to use so much jargon that your reader has no idea what you’re saying. Including a little bit of field-specific language can go a long way, so you don’t want to overdo it. If you’re not sure what specific details or language to include, check out our 21 Details Exercise and see if that helps you brainstorm some ideas.
- In a realm where a princess can be a general and a wookiee can be a soldier, it’s equally possible for me to be a Jedi. Over the years I’ve sat enraptured by exploding planets, majestic costumes, and spaceship maneuvers. I’ve piled up an impressive collection of Darth Vader slippers, Yoda-t-shirts, and lightsabers (with noise included). On May 4th I’m greeted with choruses of “May the fourth be with you” from my friends. When I’m not on earth, I’m in a galaxy far, far away. I’m continuously inspired by the Jedi who seek knowledge, find balance, train with dedication, and carry ideals of peace across the planets.
- The Jedi Code is formed on the principle of discipline. Just as Luke must work tirelessly on Dagobah, training until he can easily lift a plane from a swamp, I dedicate time to my craft. The sewing studio I’ve attended for ten years is a hodgepodge of students across grades, their presence noted in design inspiration spread over the walls. Despite the hullabaloo of children, there is work to be done. Each week is a flurry of designing on mannequins, cutting fabric, remeasuring when I realize I’ve cut too much, sewing, and resewing. When I exit the dressing-room shimmering in my new, silk, cowl neck bias-cut frock, everyone claps, and I remember why I spend so much time perfecting the hem and embroidered pinwheel roses. We applaud the creativity and the many, many times we watched someone undo and redo the same mistakes. The more years I spend in the studio, the more I learn about patience and grit.
- The Force is built on a pillar of balance, one that seeks peace. In my life, I find calm in nurturing my physical garden alongside the forest of my mind. From my bromeliads and devil’s vine, to tomatoes and basil, my garden is expansive. The vines climb up and down my bookshelf and tumble to the carpet, while the tomatoes slurp up the sun in my window. The lengthy process of planting seeds, watering, singing to them, making oatmeal tea for nutrients, and keeping them clean, happy, and free of bugs gives me time away from worry, in a forgiving realm where the only living things that see my mistakes are the plants themselves. Nowhere else exists such immediate fruits of my labor than when I’m eating homegrown bruschetta, or munching on basil straight off the stem. In exchange for my care, the plants repay me in harmony and purpose.
- The Jedi seek to understand both the light and dark sides of the Force. As my fascination with law grows, the more I respect both sides of the coin. In mock trials everything’s made to be equal; each side has reason to be upset, and each is equally arguable. However, during my internship, what I saw reading cases, dismissals, and meeting clients proved reality is anything but equal. The Law and the Jedi Code both seek to ensure justice and harmony, but it isn’t always attainable. Restorative justice bridges the gap between accountability and community improvement. Star Wars has taught me the goal is not revenge, but healing. Just as Anakin comes to the light and helps his son, the court leaves room for the amelioration of perpetrators. My experience illustrated that everyone has a story, and deserves respect and equal opportunity to argue their side.
- Armed with the ideals of the Jedi, a needle in place of a lightsaber, and a room with more plants than the planet Endor, I march forth, preparing for the hyperspeed jump of high school to college. May the Force guide me as I cycle from Padawan into teacher, and share my diligence, mindfulness, and morals intergalactically. End now, this essay must.
- I have been pooped on many times. I mean this in the most literal sense possible. I have been pooped on by pigeons and possums, house finches and hawks, egrets and eastern grays.
- I don’t mind it, either. For that matter, I also don’t mind being pecked at, hissed at, scratched and bitten—and believe me, I have experienced them all.
- I don’t mind having to skin dead mice, feeding the remaining red embryonic mass to baby owls. (Actually, that I do mind a little.)
- I don’t mind all this because when I’m working with animals, I know that even though they probably hate me as I patch them up, their health and welfare is completely in my hands. Their chances of going back to the wild, going back to their homes, rely on my attention to their needs and behaviors.
- My enduring interest in animals and habitat loss led me to intern at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley over the summer, and it was there that I was lucky enough to meet those opossum joeys that defecated on my shoes whenever I picked them up (forcing me to designate my favorite pair of shoes as animal hospital shoes, never to be worn elsewhere again). It was there that a juvenile squirrel decided my finger looked fit to suckle, and that many an angry pigeon tried to peck off my hands.

- And yet, when the internship ended, I found myself hesitant to leave . That hesitation didn't simply stem from my inherent love of animals. It was from the sense of responsibility that I developed while working with orphaned and injured wildlife. After all, most of the animals are there because of us—the baby opossums and squirrels are there because we hit their mothers with our cars, raptors and coyotes end up there due to secondary rodenticide poisoning and illegal traps. We are responsible for the damage, so I believe we are responsible for doing what we can to help. And of course, there is empathy—empathy for the animals who lost their mothers, their homes, their sight and smell, their ability to fly or swim. I couldn't just abandon them.
- I couldn't just abandon them the same way I couldn't let big oil companies completely devastate the Arctic, earth's air conditioner . The same way I couldn't ignore the oceans, where destructive fishing practices have been wiping out ocean life.
- These are not jobs that can be avoided or left half-finished. For some, the Arctic is simply too far away, and the oceans will always teem with life, while for others these problems seem too great to ever conquer. And while I have had these same feelings many times over, I organized letter-writing campaigns, protested, and petitioned the oil companies to withdraw. I campaigned in local parks to educate people on sustaining the seas. I hold on to the hope that persistent efforts will prevent further damage.
- I sometimes wonder if my preoccupation with social and environmental causes just makes me feel less guilty. Maybe I do it just to ease my own conscience, so I can tell people "At least I did something." I hope that it's not just that. I hope it's because my mother always told me to treat others as I want to be treated, even if I sometimes took this to its logical extreme, moving roadkill to the bushes along the side of the road because "Ma, if I was hit by a car I would want someone to move me off the road, too."
- The upshot is that I simply cannot walk away from injustice, however uncomfortable it is to confront it . I choose to act, taking a stand and exposing the truth in the most effective manner that I think is possible. And while I'm sure I will be dumped on many times, both literally and metaphorically, I won't do the same to others.
- Another great hook. Much like the football essay, this one starts off with a bang. After hearing about all the pecking, hissing, pooping, and clawing that the author endured, chances are you want to read more. And notice how the initial pooping hook comes back in the last line of the essay.
- The scope gets wider as the piece progresses. The author starts with specific details about an internship opportunity then gradually works her way to broader topics about social justice and environmental activism. Every part of the piece emphasizes her values, but they are more explicitly stated towards the end. This trajectory is nice because it allows the reader to ease themselves into the world of the author and then see how specific opportunities or interests connect to broader goals or ambitions. When you're revising your essay, take a look at each paragraph and see if each one brings something new to the table or moves the narrative forward in some way.
- It's funny . This author does a great job of using humor as a tool to endear her to readers, but not as a crutch to lean on when she has nothing else to say. Not only is she cracking jokes about poop, but also deeply interrogating her own motivations for being interested in social and environmental activism. The balance of humor and genuine reflection is fun to read while also saying a lot about the author and her values/interests.
- How far can a dog run into the woods? Huh ? After a week-long stay at my grandparents' house and the consistent answering of my grandfather's riddles, I've finally been stumped.
- I was always fascinated by my grandfather's vast collection of riddles. When my fourth-grade teacher showed us a video about philosophy, I needed clarification as to why my grandfather's name wasn't included among Socrates, Aristotle, and Plato. How else could he have thought of so many intelligent quips?
- It wasn't until later that year that I would find Bennett Cerf's *The Book of Riddles* inside my grandparents' piano bench.
- While reminiscing on my youth, I chuckle at how naive my childhood innocence had made me, yet I do not regret my willingness to trust others.
- The love for riddles that my grandfather instilled in me translated into a hunger for knowledge and a seemingly incessant supply of questions.
- Sure, seven "ate" nine, but what can six do to alleviate its fear? Why did seven eat nine in the first place? How do we know six is afraid of seven? Who decided that a library is the building with the most stories? Can an airport contain more, since every person has a variety of stories to tell? I began writing my questions and findings in a blue spiral notebook.
- As the pages filled, so did my knowledge. Trivia Tuesdays and nightly Jeopardy supported my love of trivia, allowing me to put the multitude of random facts in my arsenal to use— Fire is made of oxygen, heat, and fuel ; FDR was the 32nd president of the United States ; Genesis is the first book in the Bible .

- After confusing equity with equality on a sixth-grade vocabulary test, I dedicated a notebook page to differentiating the two. Equality is when everyone is treated equally whereas equity is when everyone is provided with what they need to succeed . My desire to ensure equality and equity for all solidified.
- Unlike the riddles in my grandfather's book, many of my questions did not have trivial answers. In 2019, there were 1,732 gun deaths among American adolescents ; the majority of black adults say they've been discriminated against because of their race ; Latinas compose around 2% of all lawyers in the United States . Coming from a minority background, these findings especially resonated with me.
- As I grew up, so did my questions, reflecting my increased self-awareness of society and its flaws. How do misconceptions surrounding affirmative action impact the mental health of minority students throughout the college admissions process? It felt like one unjust statistic led to two more unanswerable questions: What solutions can be implemented to increase Latina representation in the legal field? How can diversity programs influence inclusion in the workplace?
- My curiosity had turned to passion— a passion to research and, eventually, to answer life's most complicated questions so that solutions could be applied, resulting in change.
- The cover of my once blue spiral notebook now tatters unrecognizable, with stickers ranging from glittery unicorns to barcodes from apples, the flimsy cardboard back empty besides the word "halfway" in bold red letters.
- How far can a dog run into the woods? Halfway, because the other way, he's running out. I find myself halfway in and halfway out of this mysterious woods. I look forward to what I might find along the way and on the other side.
- I have no "idea" what you call a deer with no eyes, but I do know that a person's heart is the one thing somebody can touch and not see. It were as though my grandfather whispered riddles into my heart and told it a secret whose answer eludes me—instilling me with the passion, curiosity, and determination to learn and arrive at the truth that defines me.
- Since childhood, I have been an obsessive builder and problem solver . When I was 6, I spent two months digging a hole in my backyard, ruining the grass lawn, determined to make a giant koi pond after watching a show on HGTV. After watching Castaway when I was 7, I started a fire in my backyard--to my mother's horror--using bark and kindling like Tom Hanks did. I neglected chores and spent nights locked in my room drawing pictures and diagrams or learning rubik's cube algorithms while my mother yelled at me through the door to go to sleep. I've always been compulsive about the things I set my mind to. The satisfaction of solving problems and executing my visions is all-consuming.
- But my obsessive personality has helped me solve other problems, too.
- When I was 8, I taught myself how to pick locks . I always dreamed of how cool it must have been inside my brother's locked bedroom. So I didn't eat at school for two weeks and saved up enough lunch money to buy a lockpicking set from Home Depot. After I wiggled the tension wrench into the keyhole and twisted it counterclockwise, I began manipulating the tumblers in the keyhole with the pick until I heard the satisfying click of the lock and entered the room. Devouring his stash of Lemonheads was awesome, but not as gratifying as finally getting inside his room.
- As the projects I tackled got bigger, I had to be more resourceful . One day in history class after reading about early American inventions, I decided to learn how to use a Spinning Jenny. When my parents unsurprisingly refused to waste \$500 on an 18th century spinning wheel, I got to work visiting DIY websites to construct my own by disassembling my bike and removing the inner tube from the wheel, gathering string and nails, and cutting scrap wood. For weeks, I brushed my two cats everyday until I had gathered enough fur. I washed and soaked it, carded it with paddle brushes to align the fibers, and then spun it into yarn, which I then used to crochet a clutch purse for my grandmother on mother's day. She still uses it to this day.
- In high school, my obsessive nature found a new outlet in art . Being a perfectionist, I often tore up my work in frustration at the slightest hint of imperfection. As a result, I was slowly falling behind in my art class, so I had to seek out alternate solutions to actualize the ideas I had in my head. Oftentimes that meant using mixed media or experimenting with unconventional materials like newspaper or cardboard. Eventually I went on to win several awards, showcased my art in numerous galleries and magazines, and became President of National Art Honors Society. Taking four years of art hasn't just taught me to be creative, it's taught me that there are multiple solutions to a problem.
- After high school I began to work on more difficult projects and I channeled my creativity into a different form of art - programming . I'm currently working on an individual project at the Schepens Institute at Harvard University. I'm writing a program in Matlab that can measure visual acuity and determine what prescription glasses someone would need. I ultimately plan to turn this into a smartphone app to be released to the general public.

- The fact is that computer coding is in many ways similar to the talents and hobbies I enjoyed as a child—they all require finding creative ways to solve problems. While my motivation to solve these problems might have been a childlike sense of satisfaction in creating new things, I have developed a new and profound sense of purpose and desire to put my problem solving skills to better our world.
- It turns a perceived weakness into a critical strength. At the beginning of the essay, the author talks about all of the problems she caused because of her obsession (ironically) with problem-solving. However, as the piece progresses, we begin to see how her childlike curiosity and interest in making things became a clear asset. It becomes a way of emphasizing values like resourcefulness, empathy, and dedication. In several other essay examples, we've highlighted this idea of growth. This example is no exception. Highlighting the ways in which you've changed or reframed your thinking is a great thing to show off to college admissions officers. If you know you've experienced some significant change but you're not sure how to describe it, use our Feelings and Needs Exercise to get started.
- There's a discussion of what's next. Many colleges are interested not only in what you've done, but also how you'd like to pursue your interests in the future. The author here spends some time at the end talking about her plans for a prescription-measuring smartphone app and her general interest in learning more about computer coding. While the piece has a clear conclusion, these examples highlight the ongoing nature of her educational journey and her openness to further learning. It answers the question of "so what?"
- It was the first Sunday of April. My siblings and I were sitting at the dinner table giggling and spelling out words in our alphabet soup. The phone rang and my mother answered. It was my father; he was calling from prison in Oregon.
- My father had been stopped by immigration on his way to Yakima, Washington, where he'd gone in search of work. He wanted to fulfill a promise he'd made to my family of owning our own house with a nice little porch and a dog.
- Fortunately, my father was bailed out of prison by a family friend in Yakima. Unfortunately, though, most of our life savings was spent on his bail. We moved into a rented house, and though we did have a porch, it wasn't ours. My father went from being a costurero (sewing worker) to being a water-filter salesman, mosaic tile maker, lemon deliverer, and butcher.
- Money became an issue at home, so I started helping out more. After school I'd rush home to clean up and make dinner. My parents refused to let me have a "real" job, so on Saturday afternoons I'd go to the park with my older brother to collect soda cans. Sundays and summertime were spent cleaning houses with my mother.
- I worked twice as hard in school. I helped clean my church, joined the choir, and tutored my younger sister in math. As tensions eased at home, I returned to cheerleading, joined a school club called Step Up, and got involved in my school's urban farm, where I learned the value of healthy eating. Slowly, life improved. Then I received some life-changing news.
- My father's case was still pending and, due to a form he'd signed when he was released in Yakima, it was not only him that was now in danger of being deported, it was my entire family. My father's lawyer informed me that I'd have to testify in court and in fact our stay in the US was now dependent on my testimony.
- The lawyer had an idea: I had outstanding grades and recommendation letters. If we could show the judge the importance of my family remaining here to support my education, perhaps we had a chance. So I testified.
- My father won his case and was granted residency.
- Living in a low-income immigrant household has taught me to appreciate all I've been given. Testifying in court helped me grow as a person, has made me more open-minded and aware of the problems facing my community. And my involvement in the urban farm has led me to consider a career as a nutritionist.
- Though neither of my parents attended college, they understand that college is a key factor to a bright future and therefore have been very supportive. And though we don't yet have the house with the small porch and the dog, we're still holding out hope.
- I believe college can help.
- Drops us in a moment in time. The beginning of this essay is a bit disorienting because it places us in a scene within the author's life as they experience it. We don't know all of the information, so we're a bit confused, but that confusion makes us want to read more. This is a great tactic when done well because it helps us identify with the author and piques our curiosity.
- Shows the agency, independence, and resilience of the applicant. The author here goes through a lot over the course of the essay. They have to face very real fears about incarceration, deportation, and financial instability on a daily basis. Talking about the ways in which they approached these obstacles highlights their ability to think clearly under pressure and make the most of what they have. If you have

faced significant hardships , worked through them, learned valuable lessons, and want to share these with colleges, the personal statement can be a good place to do that. If you'd prefer to write about something else in your personal statement, but you'd still like to mention your challenges somewhere in your application, you can instead briefly describe them in your Additional Information section. If you want to write about struggles that are particularly related to COVID-19, check out our guide for specific suggestions.

- Era el primer domingo de abril. Mis hermanos y yo estábamos sentados en la mesa del comedor riendonos y deletreando palabras en nuestra sopa de letras. El teléfono sonó y mi madre respondió. Era mi padre. El estaba llamando desde la cárcel en Oregon.
- Mi padre había sido detenido por inmigración en su camino a Yakima, Washington, donde había ido en busca de trabajo. Quería cumplir una promesa que le había hecho a mi familia de tener nuestra propia casa con un pequeño y agradable porche y un perro.
- Afortunadamente, mi padre fue rescatado de la cárcel por un amigo de la familia en Yakima. Pero lamentablemente la mayor parte de nuestros ahorros se gastó en su fianza . Nos mudamos a una casa alquilada, y aunque teníamos un porche, no era nuestra. Mi padre pasó de ser un costurero (trabajador de coser) de ser un vendedor de filtros de agua, fabricante de baldosas de mosaicos, libertador de limones, y carnicero.
- El dinero se convirtió en un problema en casa, así que comencé a ayudar más. Después de la escuela llegaba temprano a mi hogar para limpiar y preparar la cena. Mis padres se negaron a dejarme tener un trabajo "real." Por lo tanto, los sábados por la tarde me iba al parque con mi hermano mayor para recoger latas de refrescos. En domingos y en el verano limpiaba casas con mi madre.
- Trabajé dos veces más duro en la escuela. Ayudé a limpiar mi iglesia, me uní al coro, y dí clases particulares a mi hermana menor en las matemáticas. Mientras las tensiones disminuyeron en casa, volví al grupo de porristas, me uní a un club escolar llamado Step Up, y me involucré en la granja urbana de mi escuela, donde aprendí el valor de la alimentación saludable. Poco a poco, la vida mejoraba. Luego recibí una noticia que cambia la vida.
- El caso de mi padre todavía estaba pendiente, y debido a una forma que había firmado cuando fue liberado en Yakima, no sólo era él que estaba ahora en peligro de ser deportado, era toda mi familia. El abogado de mi padre me informó que yo tendría que declarar ante los tribunales, y de hecho, nuestra estancia en los EE.UU. ahora dependía de mi testimonio.
- El abogado tuvo una idea: yo tenía sobresalientes calificaciones y cartas de recomendaciones. Si pudiéramos demostrar a la juez la importancia de que mi familia se quedará aquí para apoyar a mi educación, tal vez tuviéramos una oportunidad. Así que di mi testimonio.
- Mi padre ganó su caso y se le concedió la residencia.
- Vivir en un hogar de inmigrantes de bajos ingresos me ha enseñado a apreciar todo lo que se me ha dado . Dar mi testimonio en el tribunal me ha ayudado a crecer como persona y me ha hecho más consciente de los problemas que se enfrentan en mi comunidad. Y mi implicación en la granja urbana me ha llevado a considerar una carrera como nutricionista .
- Aunque ninguno de mis padres asistieron a la universidad, ellos entienden que la universidad es un factor clave para un futuro brillante, y por lo tanto, han sido un gran apoyo . Y aunque todavía no tenemos la casa con el pequeño porche y el perro, todavía estamos tendiendo la esperanza.
- Creo que la universidad puede ayudar.
- At six years old, I stood locked away in the restroom. I held tightly to a tube of toothpaste because I'd been sent to brush my teeth to distract me from the commotion. Regardless, I knew what was happening: my dad was being put under arrest for domestic abuse. He'd hurt my mom physically and mentally, and my brother Jose and I had shared the mental strain. It's what had to be done.
- Living without a father meant money was tight, mom worked two jobs, and my brother and I took care of each other when she worked. For a brief period of time the quality of our lives slowly started to improve as our soon-to-be step-dad became an integral part of our family. He paid attention to the needs of my mom, my brother, and me. But our prosperity was short-lived as my step dad's chronic alcoholism became more and more recurrent. When I was eight, my younger brother Fernando's birth complicated things even further. As my step-dad slipped away, my mom continued working, and Fernando's care was left to Jose and me. I cooked, Jose cleaned, I dressed Fernando, Jose put him to bed. We did what we had to do.
- As undocumented immigrants and with little to no family around us, we had to rely on each other. Fearing that any disclosure of our status would risk deportation, we kept to ourselves when dealing with any financial and medical issues. I avoided going on certain school trips, and at times I was discouraged to even meet new people. I felt isolated and at times disillusioned; my grades started to slip.
- Over time, however, I grew determined to improve the quality of life for my family and myself.

- Without a father figure to teach me the things a father could, I became my own teacher. I learned how to fix a bike, how to swim, and even how to talk to girls. I became resourceful, fixing shoes with strips of duct tape, and I even found a job to help pay bills. I became as independent as I could to lessen the time and money mom had to spend raising me.
- I also worked to apply myself constructively in other ways. I worked hard and took my grades from Bs and Cs to consecutive straight A's. I shattered my school's 100M breaststroke record, and learned how to play the clarinet, saxophone, and the oboe. Plus, I not only became the first student in my school to pass the AP Physics 1 exam, I'm currently pioneering my school's first AP Physics 2 course ever.
- These changes inspired me to help others. I became president of the California Scholarship Federation, providing students with information to prepare them for college, while creating opportunities for my peers to play a bigger part in our community. I began tutoring kids, teens, and adults on a variety of subjects ranging from basic English to home improvement and even Calculus. As the captain of the water polo and swim team I've led practices crafted to individually push my comrades to their limits, and I've counseled friends through circumstances similar to mine. I've done tons, and I can finally say I'm proud of that.
- But I'm excited to say that there's so much I have yet to do. I haven't danced the tango, solved a Rubix Cube, explored how perpetual motion might fuel space exploration, or seen the World Trade Center. And I have yet to see the person that Fernando will become.
- I'll do as much as I can from now on. Not because I have to. Because I choose to.
- Again, the author shows growth. We've said it a couple times, but it's nice to highlight growth when possible. Although the author's family circumstances and immigrant status meant he had to face significant hardships, he learned how to take care of themselves and use his obstacles as motivation to succeed. We see concrete signs of growth in the way he improved his grades and got more involved in school clubs like the California Scholarship Federation as well as athletic extracurriculars like swimming. Essentially, he shows how he made the best of his situation.
- The author's curiosity is palpable. One of the best things about this essay is the very end. The writer has already shown us how much he has had to overcome and how much he's thrived in high school despite his circumstances. However, he doesn't just stop. He tells us about all the other things he hopes to do and conveys a clear excitement at the possibility for learning in the future. There's something lovely about seeing someone who is excited for what the future might hold. It endears him to readers and demonstrates his natural inclination to continue pushing forward, no matter what life might throw his way. Plus, it's worth noting that he ends on the quality of autonomy, which was his #1 value when you completed the Values Exercise.
- Umbra: the innermost, darkest part of a shadow
- The fifth set of chimes rings out and I press my hands against the dusty doors. My nose itches, but scratching would smudge the little black whiskers painted onto my face. I peer through the tiny crack between the cupboard doors, trying to glimpse the audience. The sixth set of chimes, my cue, begins, and I pop onto stage, the brilliant lights flooding my vision. Clara and Drosselmeyer stand to my left, and in front of me lies an endless ocean of audience. I pause a moment, taking it in, then do my best mouse scurry towards the wings. I love performing and dancing to connect with an audience. I dance to inspire others, to share my joy and passion, and because I love the rush of excitement while I'm surrounded by the stage lights.
- My hands, covered in grease, hurt terribly as I help another girl with the wire crimper. We force the handles together, and our Anderson connector is finally ready. People scurry around us—several students are riveting metal, assisted by my father (for me, robotics is a family activity), while another pair, including my younger brother, works on assembling the drive train. The next room is filled with shouted Java commands and autonomous code. I'm working on a system that will focus on the reflective tape on our target, allowing the camera to align our shooting mechanism. I love the comradery in robotics, the way teams support each other even amid intense competitions. I love seeing the real world application of knowledge, and take pride in competing in front of hundreds of people. Most of all, I love spending time with my family, connecting with them in our own unique way. Back in the electrical room, I plug in my connector, and the room is filled with bright green light.
- I pull on a pair of Nitrile gloves before grabbing my forceps. I carefully extract my latest Western Blot from its gel box, placing it on the imaging system. I'm searching for the presence of PARP1 and PLK1 in dysplasia and tumor cells, especially in reference to DNA damage and apoptosis. I've already probed the blot with a fluorescent reagent for imaging. On the screen, I see my bands of protein expression, the bands of red light showing PARP1 and the bands of green showing PLK1. I haven't been doing research for long, but I've already fallen in love with constantly having something new to learn.
- Christmas carols play softly as I chase my little brother around the living room, trying to get him to wear a Santa hat. The smell of tamales wafts through the air as my mom and grandmother stand over the pot of

mole sauce. The ornament boxes are opened on the floor, each one special to our family, representing our adventures, our love, our history. My dad is winding a mile-long string of lights around the tree, covering the room with a soft glow. My homemade gifts—hats, scarves, blankets I've knitted—lie messily wrapped beneath the tree. My family has made tamales on Christmas Eve for generations, and each year it's a way for us to connect to both each other and our heritage.

- Light will usually travel in a perfectly straight line, but if it comes in contact with something it can bounce off it or bend around it, which is why people make shadows. The very innermost part of that shadow, the umbra, is where no light has bent around you—it has completely changed direction, bounced off. People are constantly changing and shaping the light around them, and never notice. But in hindsight, I see it's the lights that have shaped me.

- It demonstrates craft. This author went through 10+ drafts of this essay, and her effort shows in her refined language and structure. She uses images to beautiful effect, drawing us into each experience in her montage, from the moments on stage to robotics to the lab to her family. She also demonstrates craft through the subtlety of her structural thread—we've bolded light above, to make it more obvious, but notice how she essentially saves what would traditionally be her introduction for her final paragraph (with some beautiful, refined phrasing therein), and uses "Umbra" and light to thread the paragraphs. This is very hard to pull off well, and is why she went through so many revisions, to walk a fine line between subtlety and clarity.

- Show and tell. Rather than just "Show, don't tell," in a college essay, we think it's useful to show your reader first, but then use some "telling" language to make sure they walk away with a clear understanding of what's important to you. For example, this author shows her values through details/actions/experiences—more on values in a sec—then uses the ends of her body paragraphs to more directly tell us about those values and reflect on what they mean to her. And her final paragraph both shows and tells, using language that offers strong symbolism, while also ending with some poetic phrasing that tells us how this all comes together (in case we somehow missed it).

- Values and insight/reflection. Because values are core to your essay and application, we're going to end this post discussing them one more time. Notice how each paragraph demonstrates different values (art/performing, community, engagement, inspiration, joy/passion in the first paragraph alone) and reflects on how or why those values are important to her. We walk away with a strong sense of who this student is and what she would bring to our college campus.

- My Twitter bio reads: angry brown girl, feminist, singer, meme-lover. You will notice live-tweets of my feminist Pride and Prejudice thoughts, analyses of Hamilton's power for musical representation, and political memes. Just as my posts bring together seemingly disparate topics, I believe there is a vibrancy that exists at the multidimensional place where my interests intersect.

- Growing up as a debater and musician, it was easy to see the two as distinct entities where I had to make unequivocal choices. At the start of my junior year, I decided not to participate in the musical in order to work for Emerge California, an organization that helps Democratic women run for office. There I learned about data science, gender distributions in public office, and how to work with the evil printer. I also halted my voice and piano lessons to focus on building my student-led non-profit, Agents of Change. As someone who has diverted my energy into community activism, I can attest to the power of grassroots movements. It has been so rewarding to measure the impact that my team has had on my community. But even so, I felt that I was losing touch with the music that was such a profound part of me.

- I found a new way of being when I started combining my artsy and political sides. I took an intensive class on protest music, where I learned how political movements have been shaped by the music of their time. While in the class, we were asked to compose our own songs. I am not a songwriter, but I am an activist, and I embraced the opportunity to turn music into an outlet for my political beliefs. As a first-generation American, I am dedicated to raising awareness about refugee rights and immigration. My songs about the Syrian Refugee Crisis let me find a way to bring the two sides of me together and gave me a rush that neither music nor politics by themselves would have provided.

- This introduction led me to apply to the Telluride Association Protest Poetics program, where I dove deeper into my own identity. I wrote songs about police brutality and the ways that as a non-black person of color I am implicated in instances of subliminal racism. Over the course of the program, as I became more familiar with the visual, literary, and performance art we analyzed, I slowly started to realize that, though I confront colorism, jokes about Indian culture, and intra-community violence in some form every day, my proximity to whiteness still gives me immense amounts of privilege. I have come to know that this means I have a responsibility to both be at the forefront of movements, and conscious of not stepping over the voices of other intersectional identities. I hope that the music I choose to perform and the way I live my life can amplify, not overwrite, any of the struggles that others deal with daily.

- Last year, I had another opportunity to use music to pay homage to an issue I care deeply about. In my South Asian community, mental health is an issue that is often papered over. When a member of my school community committed suicide, I was asked to sing “Amazing Grace” for the school to both unify and honor the student. Though I thought that I had really understood the power of music, holding that space for my entire school had a profound resonance that I still don’t fully understand.
- My voice is an instrument for change -- whether it be through me raising my hand to contribute to a discussion in a classroom, speaking out against gun violence at a rally, or singing at an event of solidarity. I know that someday my voice, in conjunction with many other unique voices and perspectives, will make a difference.
- Get clear on the story you’re telling. Debate? Political organizing? Musical theater? Protest music? This writer probably had a lot more to say about all of those experiences. But we don’t get the whole backstory about her journey toward musical theater. Why? Because she’s clear on what this story is about (she may have even written a logline to get that clarity...). We don’t need a lot of context about her decision “not to participate in the musical” because this essay isn’t about her experiences with musical theater; it’s about her forging a new identity by combining seemingly disparate interests (e.g., music and political advocacy). Telling us every musical she’s ever been in won’t help us “get” what she’s saying in this essay (and she has the activities list to tell us that...). Instead, she shows us only the details relevant to her trying to balance a love of music with her newfound interests: she decides “not to participate in the musical,” and she “halts voice and piano lessons.”
- Bridge the gap (between paragraphs). Stronger essays have paragraphs with clear relationships to one another. This writer uses various phrases to achieve that clarity. When she starts paragraph four with “this introduction,” you understand that she’s referring to her “songs about the Syrian Refugee Crisis” from the end of paragraph three. Similarly, she resolves the problem of her “losing touch” with music at the end of paragraph two by beginning paragraph three by stating she found a “new way of being...” She’s using those key moments of transition to tell her readers: hey, I’m going somewhere with all these ideas, you can trust me.
- You don’t have to have all the answers . When the writer tells us that she sang “Amazing Grace” to honor someone in her community who died by suicide, she gets vulnerable—she says that she still doesn’t “fully understand” the effects of that moment. In admitting that she’s still coming to terms with that experience, she comes off as a mature, reasoned person who thinks deeply about lived experience. No one reading your essay is going to expect you to have fully processed every difficult experience you’ve ever had in your life. That would be outrageous. What they will appreciate seeing, though, is that you’ve reflected deeply on lived experiences. Sometimes reflection yields answers. Sometimes it just yields more questions. Either is okay—just don’t feel like you need to have everything figured out to write about it (or that you need to pretend like you do).
- The grocery list grew moist and crinkly in my hand. Seasoned shoppers circled the produce section, shaking excess water off leafy greens and slapping watermelons to test their ripeness. Meanwhile, I stared blankly at the shelves, baffled by the seemingly identical cilantro and parsley. I felt berry out of place.
- When COVID hit, my mom shielded herself from the public due to her asthma. With our family’s main grocery shopper sidelined, someone needed to step up.
- That person was not my dad.
- On one trip, he committed three atrocious crimes that locked him in “husband jail”: mistaking green onion for leek, adding two dozen eggs to the 30 already in the fridge, and buying soymilk that poured out chunky.
- Thus, I volunteered to rescue the situation. Despite equally catastrophic results, my mom appreciated my willingness to help, which encouraged me to continue. As I shopped more often, my knowledge of foods broadened, and I no longer needed my mom’s list. Without it, I began to explore previously hidden corners of the store.
- As a child, I embodied the “chicken tenders and fries” spirit. Once, after I was forced to try Mom’s roasted eggplant, tears streamed down my face in defiance. Slowly, grocery shopping introduced me to shelves full of flavors. One by one, falafel, goat cheese, and even beef tongue appeared in my basket. While expanding my palate, I also grew curious about fellow shoppers’ tastes.
- Why did that man buy six cartons of cashew milk? Do more people buy organic lemonade despite it being loaded with sugar? These questions sparked my interest in consumer behaviors, leading me to the Freakonomics series, the work of behavioral economist Richard Thaler, and eventually my research on how economic factors influence youth voting behavior.
- But it wasn’t just the food that nourished me.
- Want help on your college essays?
- The CEG mission is to bring more ease, purpose, and joy to the college application process via our library of free resources (much like this blog post).

- CEG also offers one-on-one essay help to students who need a little extra support. Learn more about our comprehensive one-on-one essay coaching right here . And we're proud to be a one-for-one company, which means that for every student who pays, we provide free support to a low-income student. If you identify as low-income, click here .
- 26 College Essay Examples That Worked 10+ Outstanding Common Application Essay Examples 14 Scholarship Essay Examples 17 UC Essay Examples (AKA Personal Insight Questions)
- Tagged: college essay tips , example supplemental essay , personal essay , essay examples , personal statement , personal statement example

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- [Example #3 -Flying](#)
- [Example #4 -Far Away](#)
- [Example #5 -Poop, Animals and the Environment](#)
- [Example #6 -Riddles](#)
- [Example #7 -The Builder & Problem Solver](#)

- Example #8 -The Little Porch and a Dog (With Spanish Translation)
- Example #9 -Life As an Undocumented Student
- Example #10 -Umbra
- Example #11 -Angry brown girl, feminist, singer, meme lover
- Example #12 -Learning Curiosity
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- 21 Details Exercise
- READY TO START WRITING?
- How To Start a College Essay: 9 Surefire Techniques
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- READ ABOUT COMBINING YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY PROMPTS TO SAVE 20+ WRITING HOURS
- beginning
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- Show, don't tell
- logline
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- here
- 26 College Essay Examples That Worked
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Why it's Important to Use University Acceptance Rates and GPA/Test Scores When Building a College List: A Guide for International Students

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-list-acceptance-rates-gpa-international-students>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was co-authored especially for College Essay Guy by Independent Educational Consultants
- Kristen Karovic, Founder of College Bloom
- Alina Aksiyote, Co-Founder of Mosaico Mentors
- A note from the authors: The content of this article won't help every applicant: every situation is sensitive and unique, and education is continuously changing. However, we want to be transparent that our goals are to give you context, steps, and tools for further research so you can be empowered in your next decisions.
- —Disclaimer: For the purposes of this article, an "international student" is a student who is a "nonresident alien"—not a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or eligible non-resident, who has not passed the green card test or the substantial presence test—, regardless of where the student completed his/her high school education. "College" and "university" are also used interchangeably.
- Believe it or not, one of the most important steps in the college application process happens before you even start applying to college—creating your college list.
- As educators, we believe wholeheartedly in the power of a balanced and intentional college list. Perhaps you've heard colleges referred to as "reaches," "fits," or "safeties"? A balanced list has all three:
- Colleges that you know you will be able to get into and afford ("safeties")
- Colleges that you might get into ("fits")
- And colleges that you probably won't get into, but want to apply to anyways ("reaches")
- Finding schools you know you'll love, be able to get into, and be able to afford is ESSENTIAL. This may seem tricky, but there are so many options out there. For more on creating a balanced, intentional college list, check out this article if you want to study outside the US and this one if you want to study in the US. If you're a student who needs financial aid we also highly recommend checking out these schools that are actually cheap.
- Now you may be asking yourself, how can I tell if a school is a safety, a fit or a reach?
- Most students and counselor's go-to is to look at the school's stats of their freshmen year profile, mainly their acceptance rate, average SAT/ACT scores, average grade point average (GPA), and any other specifics they can find in the school's Common Data Set.
- Which leads us to the topic of this guide: acceptance rates and average test scores/GPA.
- In this guide we'll review:
- The importance of knowing a school's acceptance rate, SAT/ACT range and average GPA.
- The best places to find this information
- How to assess if a school outside the U.S. is a fit, reach or safety
- Why this information can be misleading and what you can do
- As we mentioned earlier, a balanced and intentional college list is incredibly important.
- To create this list, you need to figure out if schools are safeties, fits or reaches.. And to get an idea of whether a U.S. school is a safety, fit, or reach you're going to need to look at their acceptance rate, and compare your GPA and test scores (if you have them) to each school's average GPA and test scores.
- One go-to for students is to make sure that they're within the middle 50th percentile. In other words, you want to check that at least 25% of the students accepted to the school had lower scores or lower grades than you do.
- Of course, matching your stats with the school's stats is no guarantee. Just because you're in the middle 50th percentile of test scores for your favorite school, or even above the 75th percentile, that does not mean you're going to get in. Schools look at everything: your extracurriculars, service work, essays, letters of recommendation, if you chose the most rigorous classes available to you, what your counselor says about you... the list goes on.

- Test scores and grades can get you in the front door and can give you a basic idea of whether a school is a reach, fit or safety. They do not guarantee you will get into a certain school, even if you surpass their acceptance profile. "Safeties" aren't always a safe bet, which is why many counselors choose to call them "likelies" instead. We recommend having at least two or three of these on your list, just in case.
- Acceptance rates can also give you a basic idea of what your chances are at getting into certain U.S. colleges and universities. No matter what your profile is, you're going to want to include schools with a whole variety of acceptance rates- high and low. As Mark Moody explains with his Quick and Dirty List Builder , acceptance rates can even be a starting point for creating your college list.
- Now you may be thinking that every school has one acceptance rate, which you can easily search for on Google. However, if you choose to simply Google a college's acceptance rate, you'll get their overall acceptance rate. This acceptance rate is based on how many students were accepted to the school out of ALL the students who applied.
- If you dig a little deeper, you may notice that different factors can greatly influence a school's acceptance rate. Just as different factors can affect your chances of getting into a certain school, different factors can also affect a school's acceptance rate. These factors can include:
 - financial need
 - application round (early action, early decision, regular decision)
 - field of study
 - country of origin
 - in-state or out-of-state (for U.S.)
 - classification as a U.S. citizen/permanent resident or international student.
- Essentially, if you're an international student looking for significant financial support, your acceptance rate will likely be much lower than the school's overall acceptance rate.
- Which leads us to...
- Perhaps the clearest way to explain this is with an example. If we take a look at the seven need-blind schools for international students—in other words, schools that do not take into account how much an international student can pay for college when making their admissions decision—their overall acceptance rates are as follows:
 - Amherst: 12%
 - Harvard: 5.0%
 - Princeton: 5.6%
 - Minerva Schools at KGI: <1%
 - Curtis Institute of Music: 3.3%
- Let's take a look at MIT for a moment. In 2020, 4,149 international students applied to the Class of 2024, but only 142 were admitted . That's a 3.4% acceptance rate for international students instead of the general 7.3% acceptance for that same year, making it one of the most selective universities in the country, but one of the most well known in the world. While this data is not available, it is also possible that the SAT range and GPA average for international students could be higher than the overall statistic.
- If we look at a need-aware institution (an institution that takes how much you can pay for college into account when making their admissions decision) we'll also see other factors come into play.
- For more on the differences between need-blind and need-aware schools, check out this article on terms you need to know before you apply for financial aid.
- At Oberlin College & Conservatory, 38% first-year students were admitted to the College of Arts and Sciences, and 29% to the Conservatory of Music in 2020 . 33% of enrolling students (193 students) were admitted through the Early Decision round.
- This would make many prospective international students believe that there is a 30-40% chance for acceptance to Oberlin College (regardless of whether they apply early or regular decision). However, let's look at an international student statistic: " fewer than 15% of international applicants overall are admitted in a typical year ." For the Class of 2024, 10% of international students enrolled .
- What's more, we can find that "the majority of Oberlin's international students are from China, followed next by India and then Vietnam." What does this mean for you? Certain countries may have a higher quantity of applicants, making your chances of getting in even more competitive. Colleges and universities are often looking for a diverse student body, and this includes diverse nationalities. In fact, for Oberlin's Class of 2024, 41 countries are represented in their first-year students who enrolled. So remember that if students from your country apply in large numbers to a certain university, your acceptance rate is likely much lower than the university's international acceptance rate.
- To further thicken the plot, how many of these international students applied Early Decision and were accepted versus how many applied through Regular Decision? And how many of those admitted students during each round needed aid, and exactly how much aid? In 2019-2020 at Oberlin, 52% of those 12% of

international students received aid. That's 181 international students total receiving aid. The average aid award? \$38,222. Oberlin's cost of attendance per year is \$77,124. This means that on average accepted international students still paid \$38,902 per year. So even at a college that can match 100% demonstrated financial aid, how many international students are they accepting who need a full ride (aka, the total \$77,124 covered)?

- We simply don't have the data to know for sure, but we do know that it's far, far lower than the 30-40% acceptance rate many focus on. You also want to keep in mind that we, as outsiders, cannot find the institutional goals for every single university, which factor into your admissions decision.
- Videos like these from university representatives can help you understand how many factors influence a college admissions decision
- And so we're faced with a conundrum. We know these numbers are important to figure out if schools are fits, reaches or safeties and create a balanced college list. But we also know that they're misleading, particularly for international students who need financial aid.
- There's a few things you can do. We're here to help. Google is too.
- Although data isn't always available, here are some tips to help you try to seek out the data you need.
- 1. If you've never heard of the Common Data Set, check it out! It's a great way to learn more about schools through their numbers. Just type "Common Data Set" along with the college's name on Google to access it. You can also find a list of several Common Data Sets here .
- 2. If you're applying to state schools, google their "in state" and "out-of-state" acceptance rates rather than their overall acceptance rate.
- 3. Look at the differences between a school's early decision acceptance rate and their regular decision acceptance rate. Make an informed decision about whether to apply early decision or regular decision (and whether a school is a safety, fit or reach) based on the numbers. To do this, check out Jenny Kent and Jeff Levy's podcast and chart on early decision versus regular decision acceptance rates for U.S colleges and universities.
- 4. If you're an international student, make sure to look for each school's international acceptance rate , not just their overall acceptance rate. You can even try searching for acceptance information regarding your particular country of origin.
- 5. If you're an international student who needs financial aid, our greatest piece of advice is to find schools that you'll love and KNOW you'll be able to afford, with or without financial aid or a scholarship. The chances of getting a full ride or very significant aid in the U.S. are close to none. For more on this hard truth, click here . For a list of schools that are actually cheap, click here .
- 6. If you're an international student who needs financial aid, apply to schools outside of the U.S.! You'll find an amazing education and a great deal. To get started on a college list with schools outside of the U.S. check out this wonderful guide .
- 7. Finally, and most importantly, create a balanced and intentional list.
- Choose schools you like, choose schools you know you'll be able to get into AND afford, and remember... a school's acceptance rate, SAT range and average GPA do not define how good the school is or how good a match it is for you.
- Onwards! May the force be with you.
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , scholarships , scholarships for international students , international scholarships

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- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 21, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)

- Why it's Important to Use University Acceptance Rates and GPA/Test Scores When Building a College List: A Guide for International Students

- Ethan Sawyer

- May 21, 2021

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- International Students

- College Bloom

- Mosaico Mentors

- nonresident alien

- non-resident

- to study outside the US

- want to study in the US

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- check out this article

- in 2020

- fewer than 15% of international applicants overall are admitted in a typical year

- 10% of international students enrolled

- "the majority of Oberlin's international students are from China, followed next by India and then Vietnam."

- 52% of those 12%

- here

- this full podcast to learn more about early decision versus regular decision acceptance rates

- international acceptance rate

- click here

- click here

- [check out this wonderful guide](#)
- [this guide on how to create a college list with schools outside of the U.S.](#)
- [this guide on how to create a college list with schools outside of the U.S.](#)
- [Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students](#)
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Brainstorm: 21 Details

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/brainstorm-21-details>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Watch the video above as I guide you through this exercise.
- Instructions: Make a list of 21 details from your life, interesting facts that describe some small, random part of who you are.
- Here are mine:
- I'm the oldest of five siblings.
- My close friends refer to me as the "Snack King."
- I usually listen to down-tempo electronic music when I work.
- I consider myself a Third Culture Kid.
- I speak fluent Spanish because I raised in Spain, Ecuador, Colombia. I also attended 13 schools growing up.
- My guilty pleasure is Pop Chips.
- I spent a lot of time thinking about money in high school and college, mostly because my family didn't have much.
- My first job was working at McDonald's. I started the day after I turned 15 and made \$4.20 an hour. After taxes, it was less than \$3.50 an hour. I mostly used it to rent movies.
- I thought I wanted to be a screenwriter, but realized I was much more fulfilled by teaching.
- I love doing silly voices and can do lots of different accents.
- I love Pixar films and often cry when I watch them.
- When my brothers and I hang out we mostly like to play board games and eat good, cheap food. My youngest brother, Nick, is a vegan and inspired me to become (mostly) vegetarian.
- I lived in New York City for a while, but found it kinda' stressful. I prefer a slower pace of life, I think.
- I love poetry and my favorite poet is Rumi.
- I've been to Burning Man 13 or 14 times (I've lost count).
- I sometimes struggle with work/life balance. I wonder if this will always be the case.
- I learned to do math in my head by playing Monopoly.
- Sometimes at night I watch YouTube videos on chess. I used to procrastinate in college on writing papers by playing Yahoo Chess.
- One place I'm at home is on the basketball court. I could shoot free throws for hours—and I'm pretty good at teaching people how to shoot them.
- I think I have a bit of misophonia (which is when certain sounds really really bug you, like people chewing too loudly or when people scratch certain materials).
- I usually wear blue collared shirts or a black t-shirt these days. Mostly because I don't want to think too much about what I wear each day.
- Note: I originally wrote a few more, but trimmed them to these 21 so you wouldn't be confused.
- See how each is a little tiny glimpse into my world? It's impossible to capture all of who you are in 25 or even 500 words, but with a few, carefully chosen details, a portrait begins to emerge. Think of these 21 details as a collage.
- Once you've written your 21 details, look for themes. Is there anything that comes up again and again? That may be a good theme for your essay.
- What are some random facts about you? Comment below.
- Or click here for another great brainstorming exercise.
- Tagged: Details , Brainstorm

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [November 8, 2013](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [Brainstorm: 21 Details](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
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How to Use the Common App Additional Information section and Challenges and Circumstances section: Guide + Examples

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/common-app-additional-info-guide-examples>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- In this post we'll cover the "Additional Information" section, which is basically the place on the application that asks some version of "What else would you like us to know?"
- We'll also be covering the "challenges and circumstances" section, which is new for 2025 (renamed from the "community disruption" section).
- According to Susan Tree, a former high school counselor, admissions officer at Bates College, and our very own college counselor, the goal of this section is simply: "We really want to distinguish you from other applicants—please help us!" For some students, the Additional Info section offers just that—an opportunity to distinguish themselves.
- Important note: This is not meant to create anxiety—you don't have to put something in the Additional Info section. Many students leave it blank. It is only supporting information.
- We'll say that again, but we wanted to mention it right at the start.
- But students are often baffled by what to do with this section. So here goes.
- It's a section you'll find on the Common App, Coalition Application, and other applications where students can type in extra information they want colleges to know. Keywords: "can" (you aren't required) and "information" (not fluff, filler, or even stories).
- Log into the Common App website. Go to the "Common App" tab, select "Writing" from the sidebar, and click on "additional information." (For a complete guide to the Common App, check out that link.)
- As of August, 2025, the Common App has updated what was once called the "Community disruption" section to be called "Challenges and circumstances." It's a 250-word (for first year applicants) or 1250-character (for transfer applicants) section where you can include brief information on anything that's impacted your academics or extracurricular involvement.
- Details you might mention here include (according to the Common App):
- Lack of access to a safe and quiet study space
- Lack of access to reliable technology and internet
- Community disruption (violence, protests, teacher strikes, etc.)
- Discrimination
- Family disruptions (divorce, incarceration, job loss, health, loss of a family member, addiction, etc.)
- Family or other obligations (care-taking, financial support, etc.)
- Housing instability, displacement, or homelessness
- Military deployment or activation
- Natural disasters
- Challenges related to physical health and mental well-being
- War, conflict, or other hardships
- Other things might include:
- Helping family members with doctors appointments, bank visits, visa interviews, cooking, cleaning, or translating
- Managing family finances or providing transportation
- Taking care of sick relatives or younger siblings for more than 4 hours per week
- Yard or farm work
- Working at a paid job to pay household expenses
- If you're comfortable sharing, this information can help colleges better understand the context of your application (which is a good thing). Colleges may use this information to provide you and your fellow students with support and resources."
- What follows are a few examples.

- We've had students, for example, who have to take two buses plus the Metro to get to school, commuting almost two hours each way. Others have their parents drive them that far. This means extracurriculars have been relatively tough to participate in. But colleges can't know that if you don't tell them.
- (Note that some of this information can be communicated in the counselor recommendation letter, although you aren't likely to know what's in that letter (since counselors don't usually show these to students). If you don't have a counselor, use this section to advocate for yourself.
- Independent counselor Leslie Cohen offers this great advice:
- "Students need to repeatedly ask themselves: 'If I was reading this application, am I getting enough information to understand the applicant's situation and experiences?' Often students assume what they list is clear, but sometimes it's not. I've had many admissions officers say 'I wanted to know more.'"
- If a family member is disabled or has been unable to work and this has had an impact on your life or academics, consider including a few sentences of context. Here are three examples from separate students:
- I would like the admission committee to know that my younger brother has spina bifida and my family and I devote a considerable amount of our free time to his care and trips to the doctor. It also means that my mother has not been able to work outside of our home since he was born.
- Last year my father suffered a series of strokes which left him partially paralyzed and with severe cognitive impairment. He was obviously unable to continue his career as a professor at the local university. With the help of many therapists and medical professionals my father has slowly gained back some of his faculties, but it is rare that he is left at home alone. My mother and my brother and I are typically by his side making sure he has what he needs and that he is safe.
- My mother is a beautiful, warm, and passionate person. Sadly, she also suffers from schizophrenia which she allows to be treated only periodically with medication. She is rarely able to hold a job for more than a few months at a time, and our family depends on my father's job driving heavy equipment for the city for income as well as insurance. Dad isn't able to take time off on those days or long periods of time when mom needs extra attention. My sister and I have taken over household chores and bill paying to fill in some of the gaps.
- But you don't have to only include family challenges. You might also include:
- As for mental health challenges, check out our comprehensive guide on disclosing mental health challenges in the college application .
- As far as physical challenges go: Did a particular illness, for example, keep you from getting the best grades possible in 11th grade? If so—and if this isn't already in your main statement—say a few words about it.
- A few tips:
- Focus on information. Not fluff. Don't tell a story here. Just the facts.
- Focus on impact. How did it affect you? Be specific. How many days/weeks/months did you miss? How'd you make up the work? Did your grades go up afterward? If so, say so. (Example: "Although my grades dipped during this time, one year later I'm happy to report that I was able to receive straight As.")
- Mention it even if your counselor is mentioning it. Michelle Rasich, a counselor at Rowland Hall Saint Mark's, points out that "Reps have shared that they like reading explanations in the student's own words even if I too am dedicating time to it in my letter." Again, be brief, factual, informative.
- If you choose to discuss mental health issues, be sure to run it by your counselor before submitting, as depression and anxiety can often raise more questions than they answer. Admission officers want to make sure their future students have the resources they need on campus. To be clear: we're not saying you shouldn't mention mental health issues; we're saying that "if" and "how" are important questions to discuss with your counselor. If you do not have a counselor and identify as low-income, you can sign up for one .
- What might be a red flag? Something in your application that could raise questions in the mind of the admissions reader (e.g., a bad grade you received in science, why you dropped two sports last year, or the fact that you want to major in math but didn't take math last year). Anticipate questions the reader may have and offer an explanation that provides context. Did you drop the sports to focus on academics, for example? Or maybe you had a complex schedule conflict? If you're not sure whether you should include something or not, ask your counselor.
- In terms of length and tone, be as concise as possible and explain rather than complain. Here's a successful "explaining" example:
- I dropped water polo and cross country after sophomore year due to chronic back problems. My back healed by Junior year and I returned to water polo as an assistant coach, but chose not to return to cross country so I could focus on academics and get a job to help pay bills at home.
- Physical disabilities should be diagnosed by a health professional. You may consider specifying the diagnosis, when you received it, and how long you've navigated the effects overall.

- If you have a diagnosed Learning Disability, you might include a bit of context to help clarify and describe the learning challenge. How has the disability impacted your academic performance and what steps have taken to navigate your disability? If you are dyslexic, for example, do you use audio books as a work around? Indicate when the disability was diagnosed and what you have accomplished or navigated since the diagnosis.
- Here's an example:
- I was diagnosed with ADHD at the end of ninth grade, which helped me understand some of the academic difficulties I'd faced in middle school. Pharmacological treatment, however, led to a complete change in academic performance. Although it sometimes takes me three times as long to comprehend reading material, I've become extremely motivated and self-disciplined and I believe my academic record reflects this. Unfortunately, I do not believe that standardized tests reflect my ability, especially as someone with ADHD, as having more time on a test can be difficult when focusing is the issue.
- Important: Not everyone has to disclose. Ask your counselor what makes sense for your application.
- Step back and take a look at the information you've already included in your application. What's missing? What might not make sense and need an explanation? You may need help seeing what's missing. Ask someone who knows you (and, ideally, the college process) well to offer their editorial perspective.
- Update for 2025: As of August, 2025, the additional information section has been shortened from 650 words to 300 words. That just means you'll want to include challenges you've faced in the "challenges and circumstances" section (see above), while other items (such as those below) can be included in the "additional information section."
- If you're trying to decide which section it goes in, don't worry about it too much. You won't get docked "points" for which section you choose; what's important is that the information is in your application somewhere.
- What follows are a few possibilities for items you might include, written with input from some of my wonderful colleagues on both sides of the college admission desk.
- Let's say you did a really cool fundraiser that positively affected both the people you were donating to and your local community. And let's say you decided not to write an extracurricular essay on this, either because you wrote on something else or the school didn't request an extracurricular essay. When you look at your Activities List description, however, it doesn't capture how incredibly awesome this experience was for everyone. So you might write a short bullet point description in your Additional Info section that looks like this example:
- "Stand for Haiti" Fundraiser
- Raised \$3,500 to benefit victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti
- Proceeds provided disaster housing for displaced persons whose residences were heavily damaged or destroyed
- Event also galvanized local community, leading to a second fundraiser, "Hillsboro High for Haiti," to take place next month
- Be brief. You're on borrowed time in the Additional Info section, so give us the condensed version. Imagine your reader is a very important person with a hundred more applications to read before Friday. Because they are and probably do.
- Be specific and focus on impact. In this case, how much money did you raise? Whom did it help? How?
- Be mindful of special formatting. Formatting like bold and italics may not show up the way you've presented them on your Google/Word document on your Common App. This goes for your personal statement, too.
- Pro tip: use the Common App's Preview feature on your Writing section to see exactly how it will be formatted for the admissions officer reading your application. You can find it at the top right of the page:
- The Common App's text box feature includes three formatting options:
- When pasting your work in from something like Google Docs, it's pretty typical for your text to be bolded by default—AND if you have spaces between paragraphs on your Google Doc, those usually look like giant double spaces on the Common App.
- We recommend that you unbold everything when you paste it into the Common App, use their built-in bold, italics, and underline tools to reformat your work, and hit Preview.
- For a 10-minute walkthrough of how to do this with your Activities List, Personal Statement AND Additional Info section, check out this video here:
- Timestamps:
- 20:51 - 25:09: Activities List
- 25:09 - 29:05: Personal Statement
- 29:06 - 31:55: Additional Information Section

- Or let's say you did write a 150-200 word extracurricular essay for a particular school and you really want other schools to know more about that activity even though they haven't asked for a 150-200 word essay... We generally would recommend NOT simply pasting the whole essay into the additional information section for those other schools—some admission officers have directly said if they wanted another essay, they would ask for it.
- Instead, create a bullet point version of your essay so the reader can get the information more quickly. How?
- You can turn this (short extracurricular essay version):
- The Huntsville Youth Commission is a teen-led faction of the Huntsville County government that was created to provide youth input in local politics. To get into the Commission, applicants must submit a thorough description of their extracurricular and academic interests as well as answer questions about what they would like to see accomplished during their time in office. Out of 100 applicants, I was selected to serve on the commission two years in a row along with about 25 other high schoolers attending school in Huntsville. Along with promoting efforts to combat gun violence during my time serving in the HYC, we also pursued advocacy projects to address mental health challenges and food insecurities. The Commission was regularly updated by various city officials about the nature of their work, including the Mayor of Huntsville. The HYC also attended several conferences hosted by other city youth councils to build leadership and communication skills as well as encourage active community involvement. I volunteered over 60 hours each term I served on this commission for organizations like Mobile Market, Peace Toys for War Toys, Habitat for Humanity, and Kids Voting. (187 words)
- ...into this (shorter, bullet point version):
- The Huntsville Youth Commission (HYC) is a teen-led faction of the Huntsville government created to provide youth input in local politics.
- Out of 100 applicants, I was selected to serve on the commission two years in a row along with about 25 other Huntsville high schoolers
- Promoted efforts to combat gun violence, mental health challenges, and food insecurities.
- Regularly updated by city officials and Huntsville Mayor about the nature of their work.
- Attended several conferences hosted by other city youth councils to build leadership skills and encourage active community involvement.
- Volunteered over 60 hours each term for organizations like Mobile Market, Peace Toys for War Toys, Habitat for Humanity, and Kids Voting. (106 words)
- See? The bullet points version is shorter and easier to read.
- Important: Please don't expand on every single activity in your Activities List; make the most of your descriptions using the tips we've given.
- One example:
- "We have a trimester schedule that is not accommodated by the drop-down menus," notes veteran counselor Tara Dowling. "For example—we have numerous two-trimester courses and there are only 10 slots. So our students put in 'fake date' indicating that courses are full-year courses. Then they explain in the additional info that the classes actually two-terms long." Would the admission officer know that if you didn't tell them? Perhaps not.
- Another example: counselor Barbara Carletta Chen points out,
- "For 12th grade students who attend School Year Abroad [a high school study abroad program], this space is a perfect place to clarify all the details of the two high schools, two CEEB, and why their official documents will be coming from their sending school. For others with more than two high schools, this space can clarify why there was a switch if it wasn't obvious (say, due to a move)."
- Other examples: a performing arts, religious, or trade school with a specialized curriculum.
- What do we mean by unusual classes? North High School in Newton, MA, once had a class called "The Art of the Graphic Novel." If we were admissions reps, we'd be curious to know more—wouldn't you? You might include a 2-3 sentence blurb on what that class entailed (course objective, highlights of the reading list, and any special projects).
- Other weird/awesome high school classes we wish we could've taken include: "Great Books," where students read books like Ulysses and (my favorite) The Brothers Karamazov; and the "Wise Individualized Senior Experience," in which seniors can avoid senioritis by designing their own 10-week curriculum.
- In terms of online courses, not all online classes are created equal. That's why it's important to add context to help the admission officer get an accurate picture:
- Was it a one-week course that required just a few hours of work?
- Or a rigorous eight-week course that required 10+ hrs of reading and group work per week, culminating in a final project that you had to sing in front of 300+ people and oh-by-the-way here's a link?
- Also, maybe say why you took the course(s).

- Was it because the class wasn't offered at your school?
- Or did you take it to make room for another class you really wanted to fit into your schedule?
- Show the reader you were thoughtful in your decision to learn online.
- Parke Muth, counselor and former associate dean at the University of Virginia, writes, "I suggest that people doing an IB extended essay share the topic and title of the essay and maybe a little more info. So few students do projects like this in secondary school and the topics themselves often say something good about the student."
- Here's an example from Ethan's younger brother's actual college application:
- For my IB extended essay requirement, I wrote a 4,000-word thesis arguing that French art film director Gaspar No  breaks the conventions of classical narrative structure as defined by story theorist, Robert McKee. My close reading of No 's film *Irreversible* (2002) seeks to prove that No  defies McKee's principles of the inciting incident, law of diminishing returns, and balance of high and low pace scenes by No 's manipulation of the Russian Formalist elements of fabula and syuzhet.
- Kate Coddair at Cheverus HS reports, "I have students with so many siblings they cannot fit them all on the Family page of the Common App."
- What else might go here?
- Acronyms. You might know what the NCMAC Conference is or what it means to be MSRTP Certified, but your reader may not. Make it easy for them.
- Special Awards or Certifications. You might know how ridiculously hard you worked to earn a Level 8 Certification in violin, but if you don't explain it to the reader, they may not. Also, when possible, quantify. Tell us you were one of 8 chosen out of 500, if it's true.
- What else might go here? Anything that may give the reader a more full understanding of who you are and what you'll contribute on a college campus and beyond.
- Q: How do you know if you should put something in the personal statement or Additional Info section?
- A: The personal statement describes who you are and what you value; your Additional Info often describes external things that have happened to you. (Hat tip to my colleague Hollis Bischoff for this distinction.)
- Having said all this, don't misuse this section. What do I mean?
- While some counselors argue that the Additional Info section is a GREAT place to put a whole essay, we side with those who feel like this section should be reserved for, well, additional information. The exception is reusing or recalibrating short supplemental essays that add factual, succinct context or information (see the tip on " Important details about your activities that wouldn't fit in your Activities List " above).").
- "When we see that a student has completed the additional information section, we surmise that the student has something to share that could not fit anywhere else in the application," says Patricia Peek, Ph.D., Dean of Undergraduate Admission at Fordham. "If a student takes the time to complete this section, it should signal that the content is important. This is also a good place to share context about an element, or elements, of the submission that may need explanation (change in grades, extra activities not reflected or lack of activities, etc.). We do not ask for an extra essay, but even if we did we would not see this section as a place for that type of response."
- If you have straight As, or near straight As, and you got a B+ in one class, don't explain that B+. Why? It may backfire, revealing qualities that are not super flattering. It's like when you walk into someone's house and it's in immaculate condition (but it's clear someone has cleaned the place recently) and they're like, "Sorry the place is such a mess..." and you're thinking, Come on, really?
- If something happened during high school that might raise a red flag on your application or transcript and it's appropriate to take responsibility, do so! But don't make it sound like you're whining. Make sure to confidently and matter-of-factly explain the problem. Example:
- "Freshman year I wasn't ready for the rigorous course load of high school. Because of this, my grades during the first semester don't reflect my true potential. Second semester I worked hard to develop new study habits and became more disciplined. As a result, I brought my grades up."
- You can take responsibility in many ways—this is just one way.
- If you can't give a good explanation for something (e.g., you got a bad grade in math because you didn't like your teacher, you dropped football because you wanted to chill more during the summer), it may be better to not mention it at all. Will the reader wonder about that thing? Maybe. But if you really can't come up with a good reason, maybe don't write anything.
- Telling the reader that you worked with metastatic malignant neoplasm involving the cervical region of the esophagus may not mean that much without context. If you're going to share information that sounds like it might be from an abstract, consider offering a short explanation.
- A small exception to this rule: you can use a little geeky language to explain the particulars, especially if applying to a highly specialized program. But just a little.

- Example: I contributed to Dr. Li's review article to give an overview of the types of skin diseases typically seen with IBD and their respective pathogenesis, proposed mechanisms, and treatments; my contributions were significant enough to earn me recognition as a second author.
- Notice how succinct, how factual.
- Why is this bad? Because:
- It's redundant.
- Admission readers are reading SO much and this wastes their time.
- It looks insecure, like you're saying, "See what I did? Wait, look again!"
- It's redundant. (That's a joke, btw.)
- Sometimes students will even paste a resume (or a link to a resume) instead of filling out the Activities List . Don't do this.
- On that note, some students provide a link to information such as a scientific abstract or published work. The reader often won't get that information because they can't click the link or don't have time. Basically, assume the reader won't click it. Instead, write a short summary of what's at the link.
- It's your call, but if it starts to feel like you're stretching to add random things, stop, take a breath, and remember what we said at the start:
- You do not have to use the Additional Info section.
- That's right: leave it blank! In fact, see if you can be really succinct and fit all your information into the areas provided in the Activities List descriptions. It's possible! And your college reps will thank you.
- Tagged: additional info , common app , Activities List

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [April 1, 2020](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [How to Use the Common App Additional Information section and Challenges and Circumstances section: Guide + Examples](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [April 1, 2020](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [What is the Additional Information section on the Common App?](#)
- [What SHOULD you put in the Challenges and Circumstances section?](#)
- [Circumstances that have made it difficult for you to get more involved in extracurricular activities, such as working to support your family](#)
- [Family member disability or parent unemployment](#)
- [Health challenges \(mental or physical\)](#)
- [Other potential "red flags" on your application](#)
- [Physical or learning disabilities or differences](#)
- [What SHOULD you put in the Additional Information section?](#)
- [Important details about your activities that wouldn't fit in your Activities List](#)
- [Unusual grading systems](#)
- [Unusual classes or online courses](#)

- IB Extended Essay Topics
- Other information that simply won't fit on other parts of the Common App
- What should you NOT put in the Additional Information section?
- A second personal statement
- Details that show you might be overly obsessed with academic perfection
- Excuses
- An overly complex abstract from a scientific paper
- Pasting a resume that repeats everything you've already said in your Activities List
- What if I don't have anything to add to the Add'l Info section?
- complete guide to the Common App
- disclosing mental health challenges in the college application
- you can sign up for one
- 150-200 word extracurricular essay
- Important details about your activities that wouldn't fit in your Activities List
- Activities List
- additional info
- common app
- Activities List

What to Do if You're Rejected From Every College You Applied to

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/rejected-from-every-college>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Can you get rejected by every college? Every once in a while I hear about a student who is either rejected by all the schools they applied to or accepted only to schools they can't afford. This is almost always because they didn't have a balanced college list that included at least 2-3 schools where they were likely to be accepted and that they could afford.
- Important: if that thought scares you and you're reading this while you still have a chance to apply to a range of schools, then whew! Aren't you glad you read this in time? Check out our post on [How to Create a Great College List](#) . Pay special attention to the part on a balanced list, then research to find 2-3 schools where you have a very good chance of getting in.
- But let's say you didn't do that and are not accepted anywhere. It happens. What to do if you're rejected from every college you applied to?
- This is the part we sometimes skip. But gosh, allowing ourselves to feel our feelings is really important in life. So give yourself a week to feel all the things. Or a few days. Talk to people who care about you and tell them how you feel. Once you've done that, remember that life is about more than getting into college. That these colleges' decisions aren't a judgment on your character or your worth as a human being. That life will go on. It will.
- Then, consider these options:
- While many colleges send out their decisions by April, a number of schools still accept applications in April, May, and beyond.
- Rather than taking a year off, think of it as a year on . Create your own "educational" experience, whatever that may look like for you. For resources and ideas, check out www.gapyearassociation.org . Their search feature allows you to search many programs and their planning guides for families. Once you've begun your gap year, you might find either a) you still want to go to college or b) you actually don't (see #5 below)!
- Earn some college credits and save some money. Future employers don't care as much about where you started as where you finished. And some don't even care too much about the latter.
- Heads-up: Be careful about reapplying the following year if you'll need financial aid. Why? Universities will consider you a transfer even if you don't want the credits, and aid is often much less available. Find out more from either your high school counselor or the transfer counselor at your local community college.
- If none of these is feeling right...
- Perhaps there are options you've not even considered yet. For ideas (and lots of perspective), check out Blake Boles's book [Better Than College: How to Build a Successful Life Without a Four-Year Degree](#) .

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 22, 2020](#)
- [What to Do if You're Rejected From Every College You Applied to](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 22, 2020](#)
- [How to Create a Great College List](#)

- www.gapyearassociation.org
- Better Than College: How to Build a Successful Life Without a Four-Year Degree

How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College in the US? A Guide for International Students

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-costs-international-students>

■ Mục lục chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Alexandra Feinson, Deputy Director of University Counseling at UWC Changshu China
- —Big disclaimer: One of the absolute best resources on this website, and maybe even on the whole internet (I'm an objective third party, I swear), for international students is this Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students .
- But let's take one step(-by-step) back.
- Applying for financial aid means you've picked a college and you think you can afford to go there (with some help from the university). But in my experience, understanding how much college costs is less like this:
- And more like this:
- This is especially true if you are trying to calculate costs of different colleges and universities all around the world.
- In this post, we'll cover:
- Snapshot of the most common costs of higher education
- Classes, food and a bed: "direct" costs
- Everything else: the "indirect" or hidden cost
- Cost of living around the world & why that's important
- A budget template
- Highly recommended resources for further reading
- What do you picture when you close your eyes and envision paying for college? It is easy to think ahead and see the tuition you'll pay and the dorm/apartment you'll inhabit. And then suddenly you'll get your first student bill, or your financial aid award letter, and think, "What is this activity fee?" or "How will I get there?" or "Wait, the canteen doesn't serve meals over the holiday break? What will I eat??"
- One of the most common mistakes students make when applying to college is to not consider all the hidden costs that make up the total Cost of Attendance . The good news? We dug through all those costs so you don't have to! Let's start with a snapshot:
- The fees charged for your courses, multiplied by the number of years you will study
- Fees covering things like school activities and campus services (campus shuttles, IT, wellness centers)
- Students may pay annual taxes on things like part-time job income and the scholarship you get to help pay for your education
- Rent for your dormitory or apartment and housing expenses like utilities and repairs
- A meal plan will be the price of eating a certain amount of food in school-affiliated dining facilities like canteens; Colleges without a meal plan will require you to budget for cooking/purchasing your daily meals
- Everything to support your studies: textbooks, notebooks, laptops, your cell phone
- The school will likely require you to buy health insurance through them, which in the U.S. can range from 2,000 to 4,000 USD per year, or prove you have health insurance from elsewhere; you also may incur personal medical expenses like buying medications
- Both getting to school from your home one or more times a year (weekends, holiday breaks) as well as everyday transit needs like a bike, a weekly cab to the grocery store, taking a bus to work
- Visa application fees, travelling to a visa center or consulate, shipping costs
- New clothes for new weather or for different academic/professional needs; bedding for your new home; toiletries and other personal hygiene items
- Food beyond what is offered on campus (cooking, snacks, going out with friends) and other things you do just for fun (movie tickets, museums, shopping)
- Everything listed above makes up the direct and indirect costs of your higher education. And while it is great to be aware of these categories, the more important work of anticipating the costs of college is to

understand how the price of each thing on the list can vary depending on where you choose to study.

- When you research how much it costs to go to college, the first number you will probably encounter is the tuition. This is what you pay for your education: going to class, learning from a professor, taking exams. Tuition is usually reported as the price of one year's worth of studies, and can vary widely depending on the school you attend and how many years you will study there.

- And tuition doesn't pay for any of the things that you need to support your education - both inside and outside of the classroom.

- What are you going to do when you aren't in class? Where will you study, what will you eat? The cost of living and dining throughout your education is a price that could vary widely depending on where you are applying, and could even exceed the price of your actual tuition. This cost is commonly called "room and board." If you are applying to colleges with on-campus housing or dormitories, and on-campus dining halls or canteens, the price of living might be advertised on the college website.

- But what about countries where you are expected to find your own apartment and feed yourself? In that case, the housing and dining expenses may not be advertised alongside the tuition and fall into the category of indirect costs.

- You're in the first year of university and you've finished a long week of classes. You close your biology textbook and look at your to-do list for the weekend. Time to finally get that annual doctor's check-up you've been putting off! After that you might head to the local city center to watch a movie and stock up on bath soap. And then on Sunday you can't wait to join your club football team for a match.

- Sounds like a productive weekend! But it also contains up to SIX hidden costs that aren't covered in tuition, room, and board. Can you spot them? Here's a hint:

- Those study materials aren't going to buy themselves ...

- Depending on where you live, healthcare comes at a price.

- How will you get into the city?

- Gosh, the prices of movies these days ...

- Maybe I don't need to haircut *every* month?

- It's lucky the school has such a nice football pitch!

- Going to college isn't just about taking classes. As I listed in the snapshot above, you will need to pay for school supplies, personal expenses, other fees for things like insurance and activities. Even if you have a full scholarship covering "everything," there will be indirect costs that will need to come out of your own pocket. The school is giving you free housing? Don't expect to crash down for a nap the minute you arrive. That bed will need blankets and pillows!

- Another often-overlooked cost is the price of physically getting to and from campus. This could be anything from hopping on the bus to school or the much larger price of paying for a visa and flight to study in a new country. And how often do you expect to visit home? Each of those trips is an indirect cost that adds up towards the total price of your college education.

- Will the costs never stop?! None of this is meant to scare you, but it should definitely push you to make a budget (see below) . Especially if you are planning to study in a country where fewer of your activities are covered by the fees you are paying directly to the college, you need to spend time thinking about your lifestyle and expenses, and totaling all the costs.

- The key to understanding how much it will actually cost for you to go to college is understanding the cost of living in each of the places where you are applying. Renting a room in Switzerland is very different from renting a room in Estonia .

- The key to this step of your college process is: Research, Research, Research.

- Research: on school websites. Many universities, even if they don't provide housing, will offer tips on how to find accommodations in the area and give you samples of rent prices. For example, the University of Amsterdam provides a webpage on the costs of student housing and living in Amsterdam .

- Research: cost of living articles. This piece on the 25 most expensive countries to live in , or this one on cost of living worldwide , are great places to start. Then, check out this cost of living database .

- Research: the experiences of current students. Read their blogs, Q&As; on social media, watch YouTube videos about international student life. When in doubt, talk to someone who has lived the life you are dreaming of! Colleges sometimes have student ambassadors listed on their website, but if they don't, you can email the college and ask to be put in touch with a student (and if possible, one from your region).

- All of this research leads to an important final step in comparing the costs of attending college in different places around the world: a budget. A budget will be your best friend in figuring out how much it will actually cost to go to college and how to compare options across multiple schools/countries.

- Here's a very simple budget template. I included two examples of schools with different prices to show how to fill it out:

- *Make sure to pick a consistent time period for the costs you are recording. Are you researching cost per semester? Cost per year?
- **Use one consistent currency! This may mean converting between different countries.
- By completing a budget like the one above during the college research process, as opposed to waiting for after you've been admitted/pick a school, you can make an informed decision about how much it will ACTUALLY cost to get a bachelor's degree in different countries.
- Knowing all of the hidden costs is a great step towards making an informed choice about where you will apply to college. If you still have some questions, or are wondering what to do next, I recommend checking out these great resources:
- The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the USA for International Students (Tips + Guide)
- How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.
- Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year
- Mini Case Study: Can working while studying pay for all of my indirect costs?
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , financial aid , college costs , college admissions , college cost international students

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

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The Common App: A How-to Guide

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/common-app>

■ Mục l■c n■i dung chính:

- Applying to college can be a powerful, important experience in a students' life: in a culture with fairly few rites of passage, this can feel like a first major step into adulthood.
- Unfortunately, the college application process can also be confusing and stressful.
- The Common App is built to, hopefully, make the process easier. But it may feel intimidating at first. So in this guide, we're going to walk you through what you need to understand about how to use the Common App, including common questions and mistakes, to (hopefully) bring a little more ease to your application process. We think you'll find that the Common App can be pretty useful (oh, and their customer support is pretty great too).
- Want to watch a complete walkthrough of the Common App? Check out this video:
- The Common App (short for "Common Application") is a platform that allows students to apply to over 1,000 colleges and universities. It's used across the U.S., including by 250+ public universities and 12 HBCU s . (And a heads up that you can apply to any of the 67 HBCUs through the Common Black College App .)
- Bonus: other countries like Canada, Japan, China, and various European nations also use it to some degree.
- See the FAQ below for more on differences between the Common App and the Coalition App.
- The Common App opens on August 1 for that year's application cycle, and most colleges update their applications sometime between August 1st and mid-August, though some colleges take a bit longer. Usually, almost all colleges have updated their application and prompts by the end of August.
- Important note: We used "update" above because many schools don't change much in their applications from year to year (as in, their supplemental essay prompts and other requirements largely stay the same), meaning that you can start working on your Common App applications well before August 1. And if you're planning on applying to any schools either Early Decision or Early Action, we'd highly recommend working on your personal statement and supplemental essays before August.
- We go into detail about Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, and Rolling Admissions in that guide, we talk in detail about how to decide whether to apply EA or ED here , and we have a full college application timeline here , but here are the basics for Common App deadlines:
- *Note: some schools have a "priority deadline"—this isn't a hard deadline to submit, but applications submitted before that deadline will get priority from the admissions office (just like the name implies).
- Before we give you the prompts, we'd actually recommend reading this guide to how to write a college essay and doing some brainstorming first .
- As in, brainstorm and explore before you read the prompts.
- Because sometimes the prompts are useful, but Common App essay prompts 1 and 7 below allow you to write about basically anything. The prompts can be useful if you're feeling totally stuck. But they can also limit your creativity, if you don't explore some before reading them.
- With that in mind , here are the Common App essay prompts:
- **BACKGROUND ESSAY**
- 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.
- **CHALLENGE ESSAY**
- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- **BELIEF ESSAY**
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- **GRATITUDE ESSAY**

- Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
- **ACCOMPLISHMENT ESSAY**
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- **TOPIC ESSAY**
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- **CREATE-YOUR-OWN ESSAY**
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.
- If you want to explore a bunch of different sample essays, check these out .
- Some colleges only require a personal statement, but many colleges, particularly highly-selective schools, require additional essays, usually referred to as “supplemental essays”. (We have guides to tons of specific schools’ essays, plus examples and analysis, at that link.)
- If you’re applying to schools with different supplemental essays, we’d highly recommend what we call the “super essay” approach—a strategy for combining a lot of different schools’ prompts, so you can save yourself possibly dozens of hours of writing.
- Here’s a step-by-step guide:
- You’ll want to gather a few different documents / materials:
- High school transcripts
- Test scores and dates
- Family/demographic info (including parent education)
- A preliminary list of extracurricular activities
- Create your Common App account
- Click the “Start your application” button
- Optional: download the mobile app
- Choose “first-year student” or “transfer student” (more on transfers below)
- Add your name, email address, physical address, phone number, date of birth, enrollment year
- Be sure to use an email address you check regularly
- Be sure to enter your name exactly as it appears on your official school documents / standardized tests.
- Be sure to write down your password and have a parent/guardian/counselor keep a copy.
- **2. Become familiar with the different parts of the Common App**
- Once you’ve created an account, you’ll see five tabs: Dashboard, My Colleges, Common App, College Search, and Financial Aid Resources.
- The Dashboard will be empty until you’ve added colleges. After you’ve added colleges, you will be able to view key information for each college you’re applying to including: college name, admission deadline you’ve selected, and the status of the different parts of your application.
- The My Colleges tab is where you add colleges which you’re interested in applying to. This is also where you will answer questions that are specific to each college. (See below for more details.)
- The Common App tab is where you will enter the information that will be sent to all colleges. Thus, the name “common” application. (Again, see below for more details.)
- The College Search tab is where you can search for and add colleges to your application. (Also again, see below for more details.)
- The Financial Aid Resources tab is where you can learn about and search for information on financial aid.
- **3. Tips for completing the application**
- You can fill out the application in any order you like. Some students fill out the entire “Common Application” first. Others go to the “My Colleges” tab first and add the schools that they are interested in. Please note that you can add/drop schools and change any of this information at any time before you submit.
- Throughout the application, only items with a * are required; the rest are optional.
- You will see a Need Help? Section in most parts of the application. They are specific to the part of the application you’re working on so feel free to click in the Need Help? section for more specific help.
- **4. Common App tab**
- This is the “common” part of the Common App. That means that it is sent to all colleges. Be sure to review this section carefully.
- Included in this tab are the Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities, Writing, and Courses and Grades.

- Once you have completed a required section, you will see a green check mark appear next to the section. If you don't see the checkmark, be sure to check for missing info.
- You can fill out this section in any order you like. Some parts will require information about your parents so you'll want to check that with them if possible.
- The Profile section includes Personal Information, Address, Contact Details, Demographics, Language, Geography and Nationality, and Common App Fee Waiver.
 - o Address : If you move between the time you first filled this out and when you're submitting your applications, be sure to update this . If you don't have a permanent address, list the address of someone who will accept mail on your behalf (but make sure they agree first). If you are experiencing homelessness, ask your counselor if you can use your school address.
 - o Language : Don't forget to list English! They want to know ALL of the languages that you speak.
 - o Common App Fee Waiver: These waivers are for students who demonstrate financial need. If you're not sure, review the economic need indicators, and if you're still uncertain, check in with your school counselor.
- The Family section includes Household, Parent 1, Parent 2, and Sibling.
 - o Household : Here, you will indicate with whom you live—it doesn't matter which parent you list as Parent 1 or Parent 2. If you select Other , a box will appear below where you can describe your living situation.
 - o Sibling: You should list all siblings, half-siblings, and step-siblings. If you have more than five, you should list the rest in the Additional Information field, which you'll find in the Writing section.
- The Education section includes Current or Most Recent Secondary/High School, Other Secondary/High Schools, Colleges & Universities, Grades, Current or Most Recent Year Courses, Honors, Community-Based Organizations, and Future Plans.
 - Note that if you are in an IB system or another kind of educational system, this section may have terms that don't clearly match your school. In this case, be sure to check with your school counselor for clarification.
 - Current or Most Recent High School: Use the "Find School" tool and enter your current school. Note that this is the school you are attending at the time that you are submitting your applications.
 - Other Secondary High Schools : If you have only attended one high school, you will check " 0 ." If you attended more than one high school, you will be asked to enter the other high school(s) and the month/s and year/s of attendance. Additionally, a text box will appear where you can explain why you left each school. Your answer here should be clear, straightforward and positive like "My mom started a new job so my family moved to Ohio" or "I wanted a broader range of classes to choose from than what was offered at the performing arts school."
 - Colleges & Universities: If you took coursework at a college or university, use the "Find College" tool.
 - § Dual Enrollment. Dual enrollment means that you receive both high school and college credit for the course. The courses will show up on your high school transcript. If course(s) you took were not dual credit, select "Credit awarded directly by college". Those courses will not show up on your high school transcript and you will need to submit a transcript from the college you attended in order for those courses and credits to appear on your application. If you're not sure if the course(s) you took were Dual enrollment, check with your school counselor.
 - Grades: Make sure you have a copy of your transcript when filling out this section. You'll be asked for grades in GPA form .
 - GPA Scale Reporting: Even if your school weights honors, AP and/or IB coursework, you are likely still on a 4.0 scale. If in doubt, check in with your school counselor.
 - Cumulative GPA: If your school calculates both weighted and unweighted GPAs, list the weighted version.
 - Current or Most Recent Year Courses : These are your senior year courses. If you're filling out the Common App junior year or in the summer and you don't yet know your schedule, you will need to wait to complete this section until you know your senior schedule. List your course names exactly as they appear on your transcript. If you will earn a fall and spring grade for the same class (like AP English), then you will list it as Full Year . For classes that switch at the semester (like Photography I/Photography II), list each course separately and select the term (First Semester or Second Semester) .
 - Honors: List up to five honors you have received while in high school. If you have more than five, you should list the rest in the Additional Information field, which you'll find in the Writing section.
 - Community-Based Organizations: These are nonprofit organizations that assist under-resourced students with the college process. If you worked with one or more of these organizations, list them here. If you're unsure, select a number and then you can search through the organizations in the Organization drop-down menu.

- **Future Plans:** List a career you're interested in. It can be aspirational, but it should be related to the major you are applying to at each college. If you are applying to different majors at different colleges, you can change this answer prior to submitting your application to each college .
- The Testing section only has one required section. If you choose to self-report your test scores, be sure to double-check the accuracy of your scores.
- The Activities section allows you to add up to 10 activities that you took part in during high school. List the activities in order of importance to you. You can move the order around using the up and down arrows to the right of each activity name. You don't need to fill up all 10 lines—quality is generally more important than quantity. Estimate as accurately as possible when filling out the yearly and weekly time commitments. Be sure to look through the drop-down menu of Activity Type to see the wide range of activities that can be listed. See here for a full guide on how to make the most of the Activities List section .
- The Writing section includes the Personal Essay (also called the Personal Statement) and the Additional Information section.
- The Personal Essay/Statement is required by most colleges. Once you've added your colleges to your College List, this section will show you the list of colleges where the Personal Statement is Required or Not Required. See here for a full guide on how to write your Personal Statement . We recommend that you write the essay outside of the Common App, using a Google or Word doc (or similar software) that will allow you to spend time revising your essay and catching any grammatical errors. Once you're happy with your essay, copy and paste it into the Common App Writing section. Note that sometimes the structure (spacing, indentation, etc.) and typography (bold, italics, underline) will not copy and paste accurately. So be sure to check that the essay looks how you intend after you've pasted it into the Common App .
- Additional Information includes an opportunity to share how you were impacted by COVID-19 and an opportunity to add any additional information to your application. This section is underutilized by most students and can potentially add a lot to your application. See these links for full guides on how to write your Additional Info Section and COVID information .
- The Courses and Grades section is required by some colleges. If none of your colleges requires this, you won't need to complete this section. If you are required to complete it, you will want a copy of your transcript handy, as you will be entering each of your courses and grades received throughout your time in high school. For each grade, enter the School Name, School Year, Grading Scale, Schedule, Subject, Course Name, Course Level, Grade(s) and Credit(s). Note that if your school doesn't give semester grades for a year-long course, you can just enter the Final Grade. If you have courses listed on your transcript from middle school, summer courses, or post-12th grade, list them in the Other Courses section.
- **5. Adding colleges to your Common App account.**
- Before you add schools in the Common App, we'd recommend doing research to decide which colleges may best fit you / your desires and interests. Here's a guide to how to choose a college , and within it there's a college tracker you can download and use to make your college list life easier.
- To add a college, go to the College Search tab. Search for colleges by the college name or city name. You can also add filters by Country, US State, Distance from a Zip code, Term, Deadline, Application Fee, Writing Requirement, Standardized Test Policy, or Letter of Recommendation Required.
- Once you've found the college, click on the name of the college to view information such as: Application Deadlines, Application Fees, Standardized Test Policy, Courses & Grades Section Requirement, Recommendations required and allowed (this is often not listed on the college website), and Writing Requirements.
- To add the college, click on the blue +Add button to add it to your Common Application.
- Be sure to double-check the name and city of your colleges, as some have very similar names (e.g., Miami University and University of Miami are not the same thing).
- Once you've added colleges to your list, the colleges will appear on both your Dashboard tab and My Colleges tab.
- Note that some schools don't take the Common App, such as the UCs , MIT , and Georgetown , while others take the Common App but also have their own platforms, like some of the UT system . (See FAQ below for more)
- To remove a college from your Common App account, either:
 - Click on the My Colleges tab, locate the college, then click on the college name to show the College Information, then scroll down to the bottom and click on X Remove College. or
 - Click on the Dashboard tab, locate the college, then click on the X on the far right of the college information.
- **6. My Colleges tab**
- Once you've added colleges, they will appear in the My Colleges tab.

- By clicking on the name of each college, you will be able to see two or three sections: College Information, Application , and sometimes Writing Supplement.
- The College Information section includes Contact Info for the college, Application Deadlines for Fall and sometimes Spring, Other Deadline Information, Application Information, and Writing Requirements.
- Once you have completed a required section, you will see a green check mark appear next to the section. If you don't see the check mark, be sure to check for missing info .
- While some colleges will include supplemental essay prompts in the separate Writing Supplement section, many will include them in the Application Questions section. (Be sure to check both sections)
- Note that some supplemental essay prompts will be hidden until you answer a question, often a question about your intended major . So be sure to answer these questions as soon as you've decided that you'll be applying to the college so you have the most time available to work on the supplemental essays.
- Some colleges will ask about any disciplinary history. Be honest here. If you've gotten in a bit of trouble during your high school years, this is your chance to tell your story. Don't complain—just briefly explain what you did, how you were punished (suspension, detention, etc.) and what you learned.
- Recommenders and FERPA.
- FERPA Release Authorization. This is a required step before you can enter any recommenders' information, link your Common App account to your school's Naviance account (if your school uses that platform), or submit your application.
- First, it's important to know what FERPA stands for: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects students' privacy and access to their academic records. Confidential letters of recommendation that teachers write for you are a part of your academic records. So, you have the legal right to read those documents. But, to ensure that letters of recommendation remain confidential, thus giving admissions committees confidence that those recommendation letters are genuine, you will be asked to waive your FERPA rights as a part of the application process. If you waive your right, it means that you will not see the letters of recommendation written on your behalf. If you do not waive your right, colleges might think you are worried about what your teacher/counselor might say about you. And your recommender will feel like you don't trust them.
- You will only be asked to waive your FERPA rights once. Once you've answered those questions, they will apply to ALL colleges. You can not choose to waive your FERPA rights for one college, but not another.
- Invite Recommenders.
- This is where you will invite people to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf.
- In order to determine how many recommendations you'll need, first check how many letters of rec each school requires (in the My Colleges tab, under College Information). It's important to note the total number of recommendations allowed. For example, a college may show:
 - § Teacher Evaluation(s): 1 Required, 1 Optional
 - § Other Evaluation(s): 0 Required, 1 Optional.
 - § In this example, the college will allow 3 recommendations (two from the school and one from outside the school).
- Note that one teacher's recommendation can be submitted to multiple schools. So you just need to determine which college requires (or allows) the highest number of recommendations in order to determine how many recommendations you will need.
- Before you invite a recommender from your school, talk to your school counselor about their process. Some schools want you to invite recommenders through another platform like Naviance, and it's important to understand your school's process before moving forward.
- If you are asking someone outside of your school, such as an employer or coach, to write a recommendation, click on Invite Recommenders, then Invite Other Recommender. Once you fill in their contact information, they will receive an email from Common App, asking them to write and submit a recommendation. Be sure to let them know that they will be receiving an email.
- 7. Check and track the application requirements for each college you are considering
- We recommend keeping track of your application requirements in one place, like the College Application + Essay Tracker (File → Make a copy). This will allow you to track deadlines and application requirements, including essays.
- Other potential application requirements.
- Some colleges will require a writing sample.
- Some colleges will require or allow you to upload a portfolio for particular majors.
- Some colleges will require or allow you to upload a resume. Be sure to double-check if this is a requirement. Most colleges don't require them and instead use the Activities Section of the Common App. And some colleges state that they do not want a resume. If you do find that it is required, see here for a full

guide on how to write a college resume .

- 8. Start working on your application/s
- For the personal statement, check out this step-by-step guide (also linked above).
- We'd recommend giving yourself at least a month for brainstorming, drafting, and revising. Ideally more.
- Supplementals
- Again, organize your prompts and try the super essay approach .
- Activities List
- You'll want to try a couple drafts of this. Here's a full Activities List guide , but quick tips: focus on action verbs and impact, list in order of significance, try to highlight leadership, and don't be afraid to show personality.
- Additional Information Section
- We have a full Additional Info guide here , but essentially, anything important that doesn't fit in the elements above can go in this box.
- Tip : you can send different Add'l Info sections to different schools by changing what's in the box before you click 'submit'.
- 9. (Ideally) Have someone double check your work/entries
- If possible, we'd highly recommend having a counselor or parent or guardian or mentor give your application a look before you submit. They can use the Advisor function if you invite them to view your application!
- 10. Track the status of your application(s)
- The Dashboard will show you things at a glance:
- Red Dash = section not required for that college
- Yellow Circle = still in progress
- Green Check = you've submitted your application to that college. (Congrats and good luck!)
- Click "major" boxes / select from dropdowns
- Sometimes, a school will have a " Why Major " type of essay, but it will only appear after you have selected a particular major or field.
- How long does it take to fill out an application on the Common App?
- It will vary from school to school: if you're applying to a school like Stanford or Yale , with a bunch of supplemental essays, it will probably take a while. But once you've completed some schools, if you use the "super essay" approach , you might be basically done with other schools.
- In general, we'd recommend giving yourself at least a month, and ideally two or three months, to work on your personal statement + supplemental essays , Activities List , Additional Info .
- And give your letter of rec writers at least a month (ideally a lot more) to write and submit their letters of recommendation.
- This seems expensive. Can I get Fee Waivers?
- Yes, you can get free college applications through Common App . And almost half of all Common App colleges don't actually charge an application fee.
- Do I have to put something in the Additional Info section?
- No. You are fine leaving this blank. That said, we also think the Additional Info section can be a useful way to offer important information and context that your application readers may not be able to get elsewhere in your applications.
- Do I have to use the Common App to apply to college?
- Nope. A lot of schools allow students to apply through their own website, or have their own platform (like the UCs), or take other platforms like the Coalition App (you'll need to create a SCOIR account).
- But we'd generally recommend going with the Common App when you can, since for most students it will make applying to a bunch of colleges easier.
- Do colleges care if I use the Common App or a different platform/portal?
- No. We'd generally recommend using whatever makes your process easier (as in, if you are applying to 7 colleges, and 5 are on the Common App, go with the Common App).
- Important caveat : if your high school counselor has a platform preference, generally go with it.
- Common App vs Coalition App?
- Here's a guide that gets into detail , including some pros / cons. Again, if a college accepts applications through both, they do not care which you use. And again, go with HS counselor's preferences.
- How Does the Common App Work for Transfer Students?
- It's pretty similar, with a few key differences, like:
- Your transfer essays will tend to be different from your first year apps.
- There are differences in how you approach the "Experiences" section from the Activities List
- For more on differences and a complete guide to how to transfer colleges , check out that post.

- And if you're transferring from a community college to a four-year college, here's a state-by-state database on transfer policies .
- Is college even worth it?
- Maybe not for everybody? We're generally fans, but this post gets into detail on that complex question .
- We've generally covered this above, but in case:
- Most colleges on the Common App will ask for info about your parent or guardian's work history and educational background, your high school transcript, and a list of your extracurricular activities. And most will also require counselor or teacher letters of recommendation.
- Additionally, many schools will require a personal statement, and possibly supplemental essays.
- Some schools will require SAT or ACT scores.
- If you want to see a (pretty massive) grid of the basic requirements of every college on the Common App, check this out .
- There are over 1000. So instead of just listing them out here, we'll point you to the Common App's page that allows you to narrow things down by factors like region, campus setting, financial aid, enrollment size, minority serving institution, and more.
- Happy app'ing!
- Written by Andrew Simpson and the CEG counseling team.
- Andrew Simpson has worked as an educator, consultant, and curriculum writer for the past 15 years, and earned degrees from Stanford in Political Science and Drama. He feels most at home on mountain tops and in oceans.
- Top Values: Insight/Growth | Truth | Integrity
- Tagged: common app resume , common app , Common Application , common app transfer

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- 12 HBCU
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- Common Black College App
- Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, and Rolling Admissions
- how to decide whether to apply EA or ED here
- full college application timeline here
- Rolling
- reading this guide to how to write a college essay and doing some brainstorming first
- a bunch of different sample essays, check these out
- supplemental essays
- super essay
- Common App
- IB system
- GPA form
- how to make the most of the Activities List section
- full guide on how to write your Personal Statement
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- letters of rec
- College Application + Essay Tracker
- here for a full guide on how to write a college resume
- this step-by-step guide
- super essay approach
- full Activities List guide
- full Additional Info guide here
-
- Why Major

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How to Write a College Resume + Templates | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-resume-templates>

■ Mục lục chính:

- Written by Alexis Allison , College Essay Guy Team ■
- How do you sum up your life's work on a single piece of paper?
- First things first. Remember that you are not your college resume. You are a human being, not a human doing . If you don't have a rockstar resume, that's okay. Work with what you've got.
- Now that we've got the touchy-feelies out of the way, let's talk about how to write an amazing resume.
- Well, it depends.
- In general, most colleges have a dedicated space on their application system called the Activities List where you will be able to list out all of the things you've been involved in outside of school. That section is your BEST place to share those details. Don't skip it.
- However, some colleges offer the option of submitting a separate, more traditional style resume. (Think PDF-style resume that you upload.)
- If you feel like you've totally communicated all of the important details in your Activities List, you may not need to submit a separate resume. In fact, for many colleges, you may not even have the opportunity to upload a traditional PDF resume.
- But if given that option, should you do it?
- Some colleges strongly recommend that you submit a resume along with your application (see UT Austin's policies for certain programs .) While others forbid it (see UVA's FAQ section.) So be sure to check with individual colleges to see what they prefer.
- However, keeping a professional resume on hand will serve you in a few other ways. How?
- Your resume:
 - Serves as a foundation for the Common App Activities List (or vice versa—see this post if you've already written your activities list).
 - Gives teachers and counselors a framework for their letters of recommendation.
 - Provides you with a list of ready-made talking points for an admissions interview.
 - May inspire your Common App essay.
 - Is a requirement for many scholarships or internship and employment opportunities (read: \$\$).
 - Finally, it's like having your own business card. There's a "professional cool" factor when you've got a slick resume to slap on someone's desk.
- Now, let's make one.
- For this post, we use examples from this resume template —but feel free to use any of the others linked below.
 - College Resume Template #1: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
 - College Resume Template #2: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
 - College Resume Template #3: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
 - College Resume Template #4: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
 - College Resume Template #5: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
 - College Resume Template #6: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Note: To use these example college resume templates yourself: Click on the link, go to "File" > "Make a copy..." > "Ok"
- We also recommend checking out some of Canva's ready-to-use, customizable resume templates . Choosing the right template is kind of like choosing the right outfit for an interview. You want it to look sharp and feel like you. Ultimately, though, the outfit (or template) doesn't guarantee success—it's how you rock what you've got that matters the most.
- For whichever template you choose, make sure you do the following: Go to File > Make a copy , and copy the document to your Google Drive.
- Read along and make it your own!

- You've heard it's what's on the inside that counts. Well, when it comes to college resume templates, looks matter too. Think of the resume like your first impression.
- Here are some things to consider when it comes to format and design.
- (Don't) Give 'em Helvetica. Choose a serif font. What's a serif font? It's a font with little feet at the bottom of each letter, like Times New Roman. The opposite of a serif font is a sans-serif font, like Helvetica—no feet, see? A serif font looks a little more traditional and professional on a resume.
- Create a style for each level of information. Bold or capitalize headings. Use italics or underline if you'd like. Make use of bullet points. The key here is consistency. There's not one right way—just choose a style and stick to it.
- Commit to one page. Your concision will gain you brownie points from college admissions counselors who've read one too many applications.
- Respect white space. Leave the document's margins at 1 inch. Keep a space between each section. White space is both a useful design tool and gentle on the reader's eyes.
- Use this one. Ex: Times New Roman
- Don't use these. Ex: Helvetica
- Here are 5 things you need for your college resume:
 - Relevant contact information
 - Detailed education history + test scores
 - Experiences (think "Activities List"!)
 - Awards/honors
 - Additional skills
 - I recommend sharing those details in this order, from top to bottom: contact information, education, experience and skills. If you've received honors and awards, you'll have a separate section for those, too—but not all of us are that cool.
- Include the following:
 - Your name. If you go by a nickname, use the name that's attached to your college application—again, consistency is key.
 - A professional email that you check regularly. If you don't have one, make one. If you're still using ZendayaLover99 from middle school, it's time to make a change—for everyone's sake.
 - Your cell phone number.
 - It might look something like this:
 - john.smith@gmail.com
 - 123-456-7891
- This section requires a little more work. Include the following:
 - High School Name, City, STATE (start year – end year).
 - GPA, weighted and unweighted.
 - Best test scores (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, AP).
 - Relevant coursework. This section allows you to show off any extra classes you've taken in high school that reflect an interest in your major. So, if you want to be a doctor and you've taken Anatomy, add it!
 - Here's a sample:
 - North Shore High School, Somewhere, TX (2015-2019)
 - GPA: Weighted: 3.6 / Unweighted: 3.2
 - Relevant Coursework: Advanced Journalism, Desktop Publishing, Multimedia Graphics
 - Remember those kids who started random clubs like underwater basket-weaving just so they could write "Club President" on their resumes? Even if the club never met? Right.
 - This section is your chance to show that you're different, because it's more than just your responsibilities . It's also about your accomplishments . What's the difference?
 - Responsibilities vs. Accomplishments
 - Maybe the underwater basket-weaving club president was responsible for hosting meetings, planning events and organizing a fundraiser. But if she didn't actually accomplish any of those things, she can't add them to her resume. So consider both your responsibilities and accomplishments, whether in a club, on a team, at a job, through a service project, etc. and then think of those accomplishments in terms of numbers.
 - Why numbers matter
 - Numbers give context and scale, plus they can help you stand out. Here's what we mean:
 - Say you're the editor of your school's newspaper. Think back to how many papers you've published. How many articles? How many meetings have you led? How many students in each meeting? Say you babysit neighborhood kids. How many kids? How old are they? How often do you babysit? For how long each time? Maybe you work at a coffee shop. How many shifts per week? How many hours per shift? How

many people do you serve on average each shift? Maybe you're the team captain for your lacrosse team. How many warm-ups do you lead each week? For how many teammates? Do you lead team study sessions to help keep everyone's grades up? How often?

- Use strong active verbs
- Once you've got the numbers, think of active verbs that describe exactly what you did. Here's your chance to show that you've led, managed, organized, created, problem-solved, budgeted, maintained, coached, produced, written, presented, scheduled, built, developed, traveled, bought, bid, sold, delivered, etc.
- Some tips for organizing the Experiences section of your college resume:
 - List experiences in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent activities and working backward.
 - For each activity, list the organization/business (even if it's just your school), location, your position, and the dates of experience. The dates show much you've invested in that activity.
 - Avoid first person. Instead of saying "I managed," just say "managed."
 - Keep verb tenses consistent. So, if you're still participating in the activity, use present-tense verbs. If you're not, use past-tense verbs.
- Want a huge list of verbs you can use to perfectly describe your experiences? Boom, here you go .
- Need help thinking about your experiences?
- Sit down with a parent, guardian, teacher who knows you well, or good friend, and ask them to help you remember what you've done.
- Note that "experiences" can include lots of things. Don't sell yourself short; even taking care of your younger siblings could count (if you've spent significant time and energy!).
- Other ideas for your Experiences section:
 - Taking care of an elderly neighbor.
 - Volunteering at your house of worship.
 - Organizing weekly pick-up basketball in your neighborhood.
 - Working on your parent's/friend's car.
 - Organizing a fantasy football league in your class.
 - Serving on the board or council for an organization/group.
 - Taking summer art classes.
 - Selling homemade crafts on eBay.
 - Teaching your little sister to play the guitar.
 - Writing a regular blog about baking cakes.
 - Showing pigs through your local 4-H troupe.
 - Competing in local beauty pageants.
- Click here for a list of other activities you may not have considered — but that count.
- Think of this section as your trophy case on paper. Maybe your essay last year received second prize in the school-wide writing competition, or your science fair project or miniature pony got you best-in-show. Maybe you're an Eagle Scout and you earned all 137 merit badges (yes, it's possible!). Maybe your ball-handling skillz got you Most Improved Player on your JV basketball team.
- Get this: you can also include if you were selected for something. (Examples: "1 of 200 students selected to serve as student/admin liaison" or "1 of 4 students chosen to represent our school at the national conference.")
- And, as with the Experiences section, take the time to give a brief, specific summary that captures just how awesome you are. Make sure to do this:
 - Include the name of the award and, if it's obscure—or only someone from your town would recognize it—briefly describe what it is.
 - List the organizations involved, your position and the date you received the award (month and year works).
- Be specific and use numbers. First place out of how many schools/teams/participants?
- Avoid using "I."
- This final section should be short and sweet, like a toddler eating a cupcake.
- What are skills? Anything you can do that could be relevant for college or your major. If you're hoping to study theater and you can do the Daffy Duck voice or know how to swing dance, include a few gems! These often create great conversation starters for an interview, for example.
- Tips for writing the Skills section of your college resume:
 - Avoid clichés like "punctual," "passionate," "organized," "hard-working," "team-player." These days everyone and their mother is a punctual, passionate, organized, hard-working team-player.
 - Instead, focus especially on computer and language skills. Modern employers lurve 'em

- If you're a Google Drive maven, add "Google Apps for Work"
- If you can rock Word, Powerpoint and Excel, add "Microsoft Office Suite"
- If you know how to hack or code, include it.
- If you've taken Spanish I, include it. If you're studying Arabic through Rosetta Stone, or High Valyrian through Duolingo, include it!
- Some examples of other skills you might include:
- Sports-related skills
- Technical skills (welding, fixing cars, construction, computer repair, etc.)
- Data analysis skills
- Communication or teaching skills
- Writing skills (Maybe you can create comics, or write screenplays or newspaper articles; maybe you know AP style or APA style like the back of your hand—include it!)
- Speech and debate skills
- Artistic skills (Which mediums can you work with? With which types of paint do you thrive?)
- Interpretation/translation skills (This goes beyond just speaking a language!)
- Musical proficiencies (Can you read music? Play five instruments? Sight-read?)
- Keep going on the Skills section until it starts to feel ridiculous. Or until you've listed, say, 8-10 max, whichever comes first. How do you know if it's starting to get ridiculous? Give it to at least one person (but no more than three) to edit before you send it out.
- Save your resume as a PDF with a professional, clear title. Include your name and the word "Resume." Avoid titles like "asdjks.pdf" or "Resume.pdf," which can come across as unprofessional or confusing. Remember, details matter.
- Example: JohnSmith_NYU_Resume.pdf
- Don't write, "References available on request." It sounds nice, but whoever reads your resume knows to contact you if he or she needs references, so it's just wasted space.
- Don't include an "Objective." They know your objective is to get into college, get a job/scholarship/internship. Anything more specific will come across in your essays and interviews.
- You've got a slick digital resume. Now what?
- If you've decided it makes sense to share your resume with colleges beyond what you're sharing in your resume, you can typically do so within each school's application system.
- The Common App typically lets schools decide whether or not to offer an upload function within each colleges individual supplemental section.
- If you can afford it and plan to do interviews in person, go to your local office supply store and buy some thick, white or off-white resume paper. Grab a professional-looking folder while you're at it (no folders with kittens or polka-dots). Print 10 or so copies to keep on hand. When you ask teachers for letters of recommendation, give them a copy. When you walk into an interview, whether it's for college or a job, bring a copy for every interviewer. Hand one to your significant other's parents! J/K.
- Finally, keep your resume updated. As you gain new experience, skills and awards, add them! If you stay on top of your resume, sending it out in will be a snap (after all, you'll be in college—you've got better things to do).
- Already written your Activities List and want to turn it into a resume? Here's how .
- Want to see some other college resume templates? Feast your eyes .
- Tagged: college resume template

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Andrew Simpson](#)
- [August 1, 2020](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to Write a College Resume \(+ Example Templates\)](#)
- [Andrew Simpson](#)
- [August 1, 2020](#)

- College Admissions
- Student Resources
-
- Alexis Allison
- College Essay Guy Team
- How Important is the College Resume?
- How Do I Pick a College Resume Template?
- What Are The Most Important Parts of a College Resume Template?
- Contact Information
- Education
- Experience
- Awards and Honors
- Skills
- Finishing Touches
- What do I do With My College Resume?
-
- UT Austin's policies for certain programs
-
- UVA's FAQ section.
- this post
- this resume template
- College Resume Template #1: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
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- College Resume Template #3: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- College Resume Template #4: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- College Resume Template #5: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- College Resume Template #6: Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Canva's ready-to-use, customizable resume templates
- here you go
- Click here for a list of other activities you may not have considered
- but that count.
-
- NEXT STEP: STAY AHEAD BY GETTING FAMILIAR WITH COLLEGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- [When you walk into an interview](#)
- [Here's how](#)
- [Feast your eyes](#)
- [Check out my free one-hour guide](#)
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You've Decided Where You'll Attend College in the U.S., Now What?

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/international-students/admitted-into-college-now-what>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- Hopefully, you've already spent time reviewing your financial aid package as part of your process of deciding which university you'd like to attend. A final step that you can consider taking is to appeal your financial aid award. It's a good idea to consider this if your award doesn't meet all your financial needs or your financial circumstances have changed since you applied. When appealing, it's important to understand whether your school offers merit or need based aid (or both) to international students. This step-by-step financial aid guide for international students explains more about the financial aid appeals process. If you do decide to appeal, keep in mind that your appeal may not be successful, but it's worth a shot!
- Submit an enrollment deposit to your chosen university by the May 1 deadline. The deposit lets the university know you definitely plan to enroll. The admissions website for the university will explain how to go about submitting your deposit. If you have high financial need, you may be able to get a deposit fee waiver from the university.
- As a former university staff member, I can't stress this one enough! All of the most important information and resources you need will be sent to your university email account throughout the summer. Some emails will be time-sensitive and require immediate attention. Others will provide critical information to help you prepare for your first semester. If you find that you're forgetting to check the university email, try setting it up to forward to your personal email or set a reminder on your phone to check your university email every Monday and Thursday, for example.
- Before you book your flight, keep the following in mind: 1) You can enter the United States up to 30 days before the start date on your immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019). The start date on your document will vary from one university to another, so make sure you look at the start date for the university you plan to attend when booking travel. 2) Usually, the start date listed on the immigration document is the date you're expected to arrive on campus, but you should confirm this by reviewing both the general orientation website and the international student orientation website for your university.
- Move-in day. Course add/drop deadlines. Tuition payment dates. Family Weekend. Fall break. End of semester. Find a calendaring or tracking system that works for you, and make sure you look at it every day or set reminders so you're notified in advance for important dates .
- Acknowledge the teachers and counselors who have supported you throughout the year with the college application and high school process. Handwritten notes are very appreciated but a personalized email can also suffice.
- Look for an immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019) from the university, and reach out to the international student office with any questions/concerns.
- Once you've selected the university you plan to attend and you've received an immigration document (F-1 I-20 or J-1 DS-2019), you can start preparing for the visa application process. Read more about the visa process here .
- Pay close attention to emails or other communications from the international office at your university!
- Wait to do this until you've heard back about your financial aid reconsideration request, if applicable.
- Work out a payment plan for remaining tuition and other balances on your account after your financial aid awards. Reach out to the financial aid office about payment schedules and options.
- This might include classes to take, GPA to maintain, if you need to reapply, etc.
- Identify banks that can provide free/low-cost banking options for college students that include access to checking accounts and ATM options. If you'll be receiving international wire transfers from your family, check with the bank to ask about fees for international transactions. Sometimes, banks will try to tell you that you need a Social Security Number in order to open a bank account. It's not required, but if they insist, ask them whether a letter from the international office at your university will help in opening a bank account.

- Make a budget so you know how much you can spend on entertainment, etc., each week or month. In order to make a budget, it's important that you understand the true cost of attending college. You can start by reviewing the estimate of expenses provided by your university on its financial aid homepage. This should include cost-of-living estimates.
- If you're interested in working, summer is a great time to look for on-campus jobs. You can start by looking at the Human Resources (or student employment) website and also contact specific offices of interest to you, such as the library or student recreation center. Remember that international students aren't eligible for work-study jobs. Off-campus jobs are also off limits, typically, for new international students depending on your visa type and how long you've been in the United States. Check with the international office if you have questions about off-campus jobs.
- Pursue all options that may be helpful in paying for college, including scholarships. Read more about paying for college here .
- Remember that your admission is still conditional, meaning the school can still take back its offer, until you've proven you've passed your classes with the same grades with which you've applied and you've officially graduated. (Remember that it's your job to verify that the college received those transcripts. Usually, they're due June 30, July 1, or July 15).
- Again, it's your job to verify that they're received.
- You can choose to do this now and then again later, if you've taken AP tests this spring, or you can wait until your AP test scores come in July and send them all together.
- Sign up for any placement tests that might be required, such as foreign language placement . If you're a STEM student, you might have to take a calculus readiness exam. Take any practice tests or review any practice materials before you take each placement exam to maximize your scores. International students are sometimes exempted from the foreign language requirement. Check with your university if its policy on that isn't clear.
- Review the school's course catalog to find out all the policies, classes you'll need to take, and general education requirements.
- Register for classes at orientation (or at another time depending on the process at your university). Bring with you a copy of your high school transcript, AP scores, college transcripts, or placement test scores to make sure you end up in the right classes. Your advisor can better advise you on classes this way. If registration takes place in the summer, international students are usually given an option to meet with their advisor virtually. Be on the lookout for an email about this, and reach out to the advising office if you don't hear anything before summer registration begins.
- Bring any questions you have about classes, classes you need for your major, etc., to this meeting. Sometimes, you'll have both a major advisor and a general academic advisor. It's a good idea to meet with both.
- Be aware of drop/withdrawal deadlines for classes, in case you need to rework your schedule so you don't get punished for dropping a class later. Read up in the course catalog for the rules on dropping a class.
- Schedule an appointment with the learning differences center or similar center on campus. Have any paperwork ready to submit to them. Don't be afraid to ask questions and advocate for yourself. If you've never gotten an assessment, but you suspect that you may have a learning difference, the center can explain options for getting an assessment.
- If you want a bit more support to help you transition into college life and/or get a few credits out of the way, take a look at these options if they're available. International students are sometimes given such an option—consider joining as an opportunity to settle in, make some friends, learn about U.S. culture, etc., before classes begin.
- Look first for used options and/or renting options to save money. (Hint: Wait for your professor to provide the course syllabus to determine how often a book will be used in the course. This could save money if the book isn't required reading.)
- Don't assume you know everything about the topic, as new students often get confused by some of the rules. For example, some students are surprised to learn that if you write content for a paper in one class, you can't necessarily use it for a paper in another class, even though it's your writing and not someone else's. Also, different cultures have different rules for academic honesty. Don't assume you understand everything about the rules, and pay close attention to discussions about academic integrity and plagiarism during orientation or anywhere else that information is provided, such as on your class syllabi.
- U.S. academic culture is learner-centered, with a focus on individual expression, personal responsibility, and freedom of choice. Learner-centered classrooms emphasize learning how to apply concepts through participation and classroom discussion among peers. Also, international students often remark on the informal feel of U.S. classrooms and their relationships with their professors. If your current learning

environment is more formal and/or teacher-centered, you may need some time to adapt to U.S. academic expectations. Your professors will be a great resource in helping you do this and attending your professors' office hours is one of the best ways to get such support.

- Pay particular attention to housing deadlines, lists for what you can bring and can't bring, and deposit information. Don't be afraid to call the housing office to ask questions. Bonus tip: Be honest on your roommate matching survey. If you're not a morning person, say so. Once you find out who your roommate is, consider reaching out to them to introduce yourself and start building your relationship. If you do have a conflict with your roommate, keep in mind that U.S. conflict styles emphasize direct communication, which may be quite different from what you're used to, depending on your cultural background.
- Some may have information sessions over the summer. Consider contacting organizations you're especially interested in ahead of the semester since you'll be busy once you arrive on campus. Over the years, I've observed that the international students who get involved in student orgs have an easier time adjusting to U.S. culture. As well, campus involvement helps provide balance to your academics, which can often lead to greater personal and academic success.
- This is something that I always emphasized at international student orientation. Many international students don't take advantage of the support resources available to them. U.S. universities are highly invested in your success. Take advantage of that! Learn to ask for the help you need - you'll find that faculty and staff are ready to offer their support. You can start with looking up some of the following resources on your college's website and reading through what they offer:
 - Career center
 - Health center
 - Counseling center
 - Financial aid office
 - Writing center/tutoring center
 - Disability services center (if you need accommodations)
 - International student services office
 - Support resources (First Gen Center, LGBTQI Advocacy Center, Women's Center, various cultural, racial, religious advocacy offices/groups, etc.)
- If you use social media, follow student club and support offices of interest to you so you're informed about any welcome activities they may have at the beginning of the semester.
- Most freshmen are required to purchase a dining plan from the university because your room won't typically have a kitchen. Some dining halls have communal kitchens. Select a meal plan based on how frequently you think you'll eat in the dining hall (for example, you might decide to eat breakfast in your room and only eat lunch and dinner on your dining plan).
- Many universities have separate health insurance requirements for international students, and they can be a major source of confusion. Why? In order to protect international students who are studying in an unfamiliar healthcare environment in the United States, many universities require you to purchase their university health insurance policy. They may not allow you to apply for a waiver to use your own insurance from your home country, or they may have very strict requirements for waiving out of it. Ensure you understand the rules for enrolling or waiving out of your university's health insurance policy, depending on which option you're interested in. Read more about health insurance [here](#).
- Most universities also have specific immunization requirements and exceptions for international students. Some immunizations may not be available for you to receive in your home country, while others may be more easily accessible and cheaper to get at home before you leave for college. It's best to take care of this before you attend orientation and register for classes. If you don't, a hold may be placed on your record preventing you from registering for classes.
- Create a list of allergies, past conditions that a doctor should know about, etc. Take a photo of this list, and store it on your phone or in Google Drive, so you always have access to it. Carry a copy of your insurance card in your wallet.
- Universities in the United States are focused on promoting the overall health of their students. Overall health involves finding balance and well-being in all areas of your life, not just your academics. Take advantage of the many resources provided to support your well-being, including counseling, mindfulness programs, physical activity, social clubs, etc.
- Think about how you'd like to spend your last months at home. It may be many years before you live at home again (if ever), so think about how you want to make the most of that time with your family and friends (saying goodbye, intention-setting, etc.).
- In addition to the usual items that you'll be bringing, such as clothes, etc., the following items will be helpful to pack:

- Money: Bring enough accessible money (approximately U.S. \$900) in cash or debit cards for initial living expenses such as food, household items, and transportation.
- Your driver's license/international driver's license: These can be used as alternative forms of ID.
- Photographs, souvenirs, music, crafts, videos, picture books, recipes, and clothing from your home country: You can use these items to share your culture with your friends and during campus festivals.
- Living in a culture that's different from your own can be both an exciting adventure and a challenging process. Regardless of which country you're from, it's common to go through a period of cultural adjustment. Understanding that this adjustment process is normal and getting support with the transition will help you to have a more fulfilling experience, both academically and personally.
- Below are some ideas to help you prepare:
- Learn about U.S. culture before you leave home. A great resource for this is a website called " What's Up With Culture ". See section 1.5.
- Stay connected: family and friends will want to stay in touch . Find a balance of connection back home and building new relationships in the U.S.
- Think about what has helped you with other transitions in your life. Plan to do whatever works for you (exercise, sleep, eating well, talk to a friend, etc.)
- Be patient with yourself and others as you navigate this transition.
- Think about how much you plan to find a balance between adapting to U.S. culture and holding on to aspects of your own culture and identity
- The majority of international students traveling through U.S. airports have a smooth experience. However, it's important to be prepared and know your rights . Preparation includes carrying your immigration documents (passport, visa, I-20/DS-2019, proof of SEVIS fee payment) and letter of acceptance from your university with you along with the number for your university's international office in case you need to reach them. If an immigration officer asks you questions, remain calm and remember you are a valued member of your university's community.
- Some universities will offer a ride from the airport or some kind of assistance when you first arrive. Others, especially in more urban areas, will expect you to use public transport to arrive from the airport. If your university does offer a welcome service, take advantage of it. What a relief it is to see friendly faces after a long journey!
- If there's one thing I hope you take away from this article, it's that international student orientation is an essential part of your success as an international student. In my time as the Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars, I saw students who didn't attend orientation struggle more than those who did. Don't skip it! It's an opportunity to meet the international student advisors who will support you throughout your time at the university, as well as your peers and older students, who often work as orientation assistants. Plus, you'll get important information about maintaining your immigration status and other matters essential to your success.
- The U.S. government requires your university to report key information about your immigration status. It's important that you complete any immigration requirements asked of you, especially at the beginning of the semester. Typically, this will involve uploading copies of your passport, visa, and I-20 or DS-2019, as well as inputting your U.S. address. Make sure you do this by the deadline given to you!
- FERPA (Family Educational and Rights to Privacy Act) Release Form/Waiver : The FERPA release/waiver form is provided to students (18 years or older) who want their designated family members to have access to their academic records, including their transcript, grade reports, financial accounts, or if they want to speak to their academic advisor. You are neither required nor expected to sign the waiver, and it's not necessary for family members to have access to this information. However, the college will only speak to a family about certain matters if this release form is signed and included in your academic file. Colleges will provide the form if it's needed.
- HIPAA (Health Information Privacy) Authorization : Oftentimes, colleges will ask for this form to be filed when you choose to use the college's health and wellness resources like the Health Center or Counseling Center. This signed authorization will allow a family member to inquire about any medical issues that might come up and give access to speak to your medical care providers in case of an emergency. If you're attending college out-of-state, it's best to fill out the HIPAA form for both states. Colleges will provide the form if it's needed.
- Psychiatric Advance Directive : If you're under psychiatric care at the time you're attending college, it's recommended that family members get a directive in case you have a psychiatric emergency. This will allow a designated person to make healthcare decisions on your behalf. The directive empowers you to determine your care team in case you face a crisis and need support.
- Medical Power of Attorney (Healthcare Proxy) : This will allow a parent/family member to make medical decisions for you in case of a medical emergency if you're unable to help in your own medical care. If

you're attending college out-of-state, a healthcare proxy form should be available for the home state and the state where your college is located (available online or in consultation with legal aid).

- Durable Power of Attorney : This form allows a designated person to access your bank accounts, credit cards, file a tax return, or handle other financial matters. Both this form and the medical power of attorney are helpful to have available in case of emergency. If you're provided the opportunity to travel during college, especially overseas, documents like these are very important to have (available online or in consultation with legal aid).

- Living Will : If you have assets or play a fundamental role in the care of younger family members and you've been designated as a guardian of a minor, having a legal document that states who should receive the assets and/or how the minor child/children should be cared for in case of death is very important. There are templates available online that can be filled out, but they must be notarized in order for them to be considered legally valid.

- Special thanks to Dana Ponsky for contributing to this blog post.

- Written by Kristy Magner, IEC and founder of Magner Consulting . Kristy has worked with international students for over 20 years, most recently as the Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars at Tulane University. Aside from her professional experience, she personally knows the challenges and rewards that come with moving to a new place, having lived and traveled abroad extensively, and she works closely with her students to ease their transition to college. Outside of work, one of Kristy's greatest sources of joy is playing and listening to music and, luckily for her, she lives in one of the world's most musical places: New Orleans, LA.

- Tagged: international student , international students

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [June 9, 2022](#)

- [International Students](#)

- [You've Decided Where You'll Attend College in the U.S., Now What? \(Guide for International Students\)](#)

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

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- Magner Consulting
- international student
- international students

A How-To Guide for the Short Answer Questions for Highly-Selective Colleges

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/a-brief-how-to-guide-for-the-short-answer-questions-for-highly-selective-colleges>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- You know those Common App short answer questions required by USC, Princeton, Columbia, Stanford, Yale, and a bunch of other schools?
- Apparently I've got a lot to say about them. How do I know?
- Because, as I was editing a student's short answers this week, I realized that, as with the Activities List and "Why us" essays, I was repeating myself.
- Time to create a guide, I thought.
- This is that guide.
- With 11 tips.
- In a Dos and Dont's format.
- Consider that each of your short answers, no matter how short, is a tiny window into your soul. Make sure the reader finds something inside that's awesome and different from the window before (like a cool sparkly horse instead of a piece of cheap, melted chocolate).
- Can you do that in fifteen words? You can. How?
- You're often given space for thirteen words for an answer that could easily be one or two words. So consider using it up! In other words, answer "Why," even if the prompt doesn't ask you to. Do this because your core values may be hard to express in 1-2 words.
- Here's an example question: What's your favorite food?
- If you just say "tacos," what does this reveal about you? Maybe that you live in Austin?
- A better answer might be:
- My abuela's birria tacos—the recipe has been passed down for generations.
- This answer reveals connections to family, culture, and even goats! (Because that's what birria is: goats. #themoreyouknow)
- Here's another example of a just-okay answer: Who is your role model? Louis Zamperini
- The admissions officer might read this and think: "Great, no idea who that is." Don't make your readers Google your answer. They won't.
- Instead, expand just a bit:
- Olympic athlete Louis Zamperini, who survived concentration camps and overcame severe alcoholism.
- IMPORTANT EXCEPTION: If the prompt asks you to describe yourself in five words (ahem, Stanford), then give them five words.
- Bad example: What's your favorite website?
- A: Instagram (social media photo-sharing site)
- Yup. That's... pretty much what Instagram is. Thanks for telling me zero about you.
- Another bad example: What historical moment or event do you wish you could have witnessed?
- A: The Big Bang. It was the beginning of our universe and it would have been amazing to see that.
- Yup, that's... what that was. (Also, FYI, many students write "The Big Bang" for this question.)
- Better answer:
- A: I want to watch George Washington go shopping. I have an obsession with presidential trivia, and the ivory-gummed general is far and away my favorite. Great leaders aren't necessarily defined by their moments under pressure; sometimes tiny decisions are most telling--like knickers or pantaloons?
- Q: What inspires you?
- Non-specific answer:
- Documentaries. They are my favorite source of inspiration.
- (Side note: Don't. Sound. Like. A robot.) (Also: using contractions, in this case "they're," is fine)
- Better answer:
- Documentaries. "Forks over Knives" made me go vegan; "Born into Brothels" inspired my Gold Award.

- Cheesy examples include:
- "Life is what you make of it." (or)
- "Dreams are X" (or) "Always follow your dreams" (or)
- "Life is like a dream and dreams are like life are dreams dreams life life dreams." (You get the idea.)
- Pretty much anything with "life" or "dreams.")
- Why not? Again, they don't tell us much.
- And what are the Top 50 adjectives? You can probably guess them.
- Examples: adventurous, friendly, compassionate, passionate, empathetic, passionate (yeah, I'm making a point here).
- Think beyond the generic adjectives.
- In fact, don't use adjectives at all. One of my favorite answers for this was "Mulan."
- Yeah, that Mulan.
- Examples: motivated, hardworking, determined.
- Yup. You and every other student with a great GPA.
- Which reminds me:
- In the example above, they all basically mean the same thing. So make sure they reveal something interesting about you. Tell me whom you'd rather meet:
- Someone who is "passionate, persistent, and extroverted?"
- Or would you rather meet an "ardent, panglossian visionary?"
- Or maybe the "gregarious horse-whispering philosopher queen?"
- I have questions for that last girl.
- Oh, and hey:
- I'm doing that in this guide, using sarcasm and phrases like "pissing people off."
- Let me clarify: Students often ask me, "Is [this] okay? Is [that] okay? I don't want them to think that I'm too [blank]."
- Oh, you mean you don't want them to think that you have a personality.
- I encourage students to take (calculated) risks on these. To push boundaries. To be, I don't know, funny? Human? Compare, for example, the following answers:
- (Yale) What's something you can't live without?
- Play-it-safe answer:
- Me: Zzzzzz.
- Better answer:
- The Tony Stark-made arc reactor in my chest.
- Me: YESSS, LOVE IT.
- Which reminds me:
- If you're funny in life, feel free to be funny in your short answers. If you're not funny, no need to start now.
- Irony is one of the best ways to demonstrate intelligence and sensitivity to nuance.
- Check out these just-okay and better examples, all for Yale 2015:
- Just Okay Answers:
- The two qualities I most admire in other people are... ambition and drive (SMH. Same thing, bro.)
- I am most proud of... my passion . (There's that word again. Also, it's too abstract in this context. Show, don't tell.)
- I couldn't live without... my cell phone . (Yup, you and everyone else.)
- Who or what inspires you... the sunset . (Seriously?)
- What do you wish you were better at being or doing? Answering these questions . (Heads-up: meta answers are pretty common.)
- Most Yale freshmen live in suites of four to six students. What would you contribute to the dynamic of your suite? Good times and great conversation . (Oh look I'm asleep again.)
- Better Answers: (written by a student who was accepted to Yale in 2015):
- The two qualities I most admire in other people are... Spock's logic & Kirk's passion
- I am most proud of... Only cried once during The Notebook (maybe twice)
- I couldn't live without... The Tony Stark-made arc reactor in my chest
- Who or what inspires you? Shia LaBeouf yelling "Just Do It"
- What do you wish you were better at being or doing? Dancing-especially like Drake, Hotline Bling style
- Most Yale freshmen live in suites of four to six students. What would you contribute to the dynamic of your suite? A Magical Mystery Tour of Beatles keyboard songs
- You totally want to meet this guy, right?
- Make the reader totally want to meet you.
- A few final tips:

- If you love science and wrote a supplemental essay about science, don't answer with 20 journals, websites, or publications you've read on... science.
- Show your interest not in astrophysics but also literature, philosophy, Star Trek, programming, and Godfather 1 and 2 (but not 3).
- Here's one more great set of short answers (for the Columbia supplemental essays):
- List a few words or phrases that describe your ideal college community. (150 words or less):
- One that allows me to fearlessly voice my opinions and act on my values with organizations such as Students for Human Rights.
- A community that encourages me to explore foreign nations and religions through travel programs to foreign nations such as Israel through Columbia Hillel.
- One that advances research in international medical practice through publications such as the Journal of Global Health.
- A community where importance is given to the arts, with an entire buffet of dance organizations for me to choose from.
- One that gives due importance to heartfelt (and cheesy in a good way) traditions such as the Tree Lighting Ceremony.
- One that would take the care to distract me from an organic chemistry final with a band concert in the library.
- Most importantly, one that is in extremely close proximity to New York pizza.
- List the titles of the books you read for pleasure that you enjoyed most in the past year. (150 words or less)
- Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad; Turtles All The Way Down, John Green; Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen; To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee; Unfinished Gestures: Devadasis, Memory, and Modernity in South India, Daves Soneji; Pachinko, Min Jin Lee; 1984, George Orwell; The Noonday Demon, Andrew Solomon; Natyasastra and National Unity, Padma Subrahmanyam
- In short, use the other parts of your application to show you are hard-working and responsible. Once you've done that, you can have a little fun here.
- Another great resource: How to Write the Stanford Roommate Essay
- Tagged: DOs and DON'Ts , short answers , stanford , common app , yale

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [December 20, 2016](#)
- [Supplemental Essays](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [A How-To Guide for the Short Answer Questions for Highly-Selective Colleges](#)
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- [December 20, 2016](#)
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- [College Admissions](#)
- [Activities List](#)
- ["Why us" essays](#)
- [How to Write the Stanford Roommate Essay](#)
- ['HOW TO apply to college'](#)
-

- DOs and DON'Ts
- short answers
- stanford
- common app
- yale

The "Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List: A Brainstorm Exercise

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/2014/12/2/the-everything-i-want-colleges-to-know-about-me-list-a-brainstorm-exercise>

■ Mục đích chính:

- This exercise is simple, but extremely effective.
- Step 1: Make a list of all the things you want colleges to know about you.
- How? You can do this either:
 - in a bulletpoint format (organized, easy to read)
 - on a blank sheet of paper (with drawings, get creative)
 - on a timeline (see drawing below)
- Note: I don't recommend a stream-of-consciousness free-write because this tends to get a little messy. By "messy" I mean that this tends to bring forth a lot of words but not a lot of specific, bullet-pointable qualities that will help you get into college.
- And that's the point of this list: to provide your counselor (or yourself) with a solid list of qualities, values and cool stuff that will help get you into college.
- Reason #1 that this list is a good idea : It generates a list of details and possible topics for your personal statement, supplements, activities list and additional info section.
- Tips for creating a great list:
 - Have fun. This doesn't have to be a chore. It's you basically making a list of everything that's awesome about who you are and what you've done, which can be pretty darn affirming.
 - Create the list with a parent or friend . Say to him/her: "Hey, I'm trying to make a list of all the reasons why any college should love me as much as you do—can you help?"
 - Back up general stuff with specific examples . If, for instance, you're like, "I can motivate people!" or "I stick with things I'm passionate about!" provide a specific example that backs up your claim--or better yet, both claims! (Like the fact that you helped raise debate membership from 19 to 96 at your school over four years.)
- Step 2: Once you've created your list:
 - If it's a bullet-pointed list, upload it to a Google doc and...
 - If it's a drawing or timeline, take a photo of it, email it to yourself, upload it to Google a doc and...
 - SHARE the Google doc with your friend/parent/counselor (whoever is helping you with your applications and ask that person: "Can you help me make sure that all this stuff makes it into my application?"
 - Wait, can I do this once my application is almost finished? Absolutely. In fact, this will provide a checklist for making sure all the important parts of you are represented somewhere in the application.
- Step 3: Decide with your counselor where the information should go in your application.
- Some options include your:
 - Main Statement
 - Activities List
 - Additional Info section
 - Extracurricular essay (required only for some schools)
 - Another supplemental essay (required only for some schools)
 - Pop Quiz: Which of the following details would you NOT include on your application? Which details would you DEFINITELY include? For those details you'd include, on which part of the application do you think each one should go?
 - I am half Filipino and half Egyptian
 - I travel a lot (have been to countless countries such as Egypt, the Philippines, Netherlands, Italy, Jamaica, Bahamas, Mexico, Guam, etc....)
 - I have played the violin for over 11 years and I LOVE IT
 - I can also play the piano

- I do canoe paddling year round. We once saw dolphins swimming by us as we paddled out deep in the ocean.
- I have an entrepreneurial mind. I made \$300 in a week selling coffee at my dad's office when I was 7. I named the booth the "Coffee Cafe" and had my own menu with various drinks as well as a bean grinder. I ended up donating all of the profits to my missionary friend Kate who was leaving for India. When I was 12 I made \$70 selling online ebooks about basketball that I wrote. I painted curb address numbers for neighbors when I was 11 and made about \$100 off of that.
- I like weightlifting. I also sell supplements to my friends at school. I buy them in bulk online and mix some, for example, whey with creatine, and re-brand them (not FDA approved, uh-oh) and sell them for profit.
- I tend to bypass the system (and get away with it a lot) such as sending money to paypal directly from VISA (even though they say it isn't possible) or finding a way to get past the school's online filter
- I love reading (my bookshelf is stacked)
- Note: there's no "right" answer for where each of these details should go. No magic formula. Your goal is to make sure your application shows you off in the most complete way possible.
- In case you're curious, my list might have looked something like this when I was 17:
- I moved around a lot as a kid and lived in several different countries.
- I'm a theater nerd and have won some awards for doing theater. Have also won some speech and debate awards. (I basically see speech and debate as a chance to do more theater.)
- I would love to travel at some point while I'm in college (study abroad, maybe).
- I'm looking for a school that will allow me to produce my own theatrical works.
- I'm excited to be in an environment that has other motivated people who love words (I feel like I don't know too many of those people in my high school—most of my friends who love poetry I've met online).
- I'm excited for changing seasons (in Miami it's basically just hot and humid).
- I'm excited to be able to make my own schedule in college.
- I'm excited to say up late talking with other people about Big Ideas.
- I'm excited to live in a dorm.
- I'm not sure what I want to do when I grow up, but I think it has something to do with writing and/or performing.
- My grades were impacted by my switching schools (didn't have access to certain Honors and AP courses), so I don't feel like they are an accurate reflection of my potential.
- I've worked on some student films in college and am currently working on my first feature-length screenplay (to be filmed this summer).
- I love films and consider myself a (kind of) aficionado on 90s films (mostly because I work at a video store).
- I love being inspired and inspiring others.
- I've had a few leadership roles in high school, but the most meaningful has been in Theater.
- I'm a huge chess fan and often will play on my free time (at lunch, after school), and sometimes in class once I've finished all my work.
- I attended a private missionary kid school in 9th grade, a private Christian school in Miami for 10th grade, then moved to public school in 11th grade for more opportunities (gifted program, more opportunities to do theater), but also just to meet more people.
- I love helping people—usually this means teaching my younger siblings things—but also through community service (Special Olympics, volunteering through church, etc.).
- I love reading and writing poetry. I also love creative writing and won an award from my English teacher for my essays.
- I'm excited to go out of state for college. My parents have been cool, but I'm looking forward to the adventure.
- For more tips, including how to develop your college list and save \$3,480, go [here](#) .
- Tagged: brainstorming , get inspired , additional info , personal statement

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [December 3, 2014](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)

- [The "Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me" List: A Brainstorm Exercise](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [December 3, 2014](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [The 21 Details Exercise](#)
- [go here](#)
- [Twelve Ways to Get Inspired Right Now](#)
- [my course](#)
- [brainstorming](#)
- [get inspired](#)
- [additional info](#)
- [personal statement](#)

10 Must-Know Application Requirements Before You Apply to College in the U.S.

Website:

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/international-students/us-college-application-requirements>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by Kristy Magner, IEC and founder of Magner Consulting .
- Applying to college is hard enough without all the extra requirements you have as an international student. Then, once you're admitted, your work isn't done—you have even more requirements to meet in order to get your visa. ■
- But we've got you. In this post, we'll cover a ton of admission and immigration requirements for international students, including:
 - Proof of English proficiency
 - Transcripts
 - Standardized testing
 - The Certification of Finances
 - Conditional admission
 - The visa process
 - Health insurance
 - Immunization requirements
- —Disclaimer: The below information was written for international students who require a student visa to study in the United States, but many of the requirements also apply to other students who'll study in the United States from abroad who do not need visas (because they're U.S. Citizens living abroad).
- You might think that admission departments around the United States make a decision based on plotting your test scores and GPA, and if you're in range, you're admitted, and if you're out of range, you're denied. However, one of the biggest differences between admission to most American universities as opposed to other universities is something called holistic review.
- Holistic review is the process of looking at many facets of who you are as a student and figuring out how you'd fit into a class, as opposed to just scholastic assessment (yay!), and it means the vast majority of American universities require a plethora of admission documents.
- Why? Because universities are just as interested in finding out who you are as they are in finding out how you'll perform inside the classroom. These documents are reviewed by admission counselors as they go through the process of selecting and forming a class.
- The required admission documents for you, as an international student, will vary by university. Below is a brief list of the most common items required (in addition to the actual application), as well as an explanation of why they're important to an admission committee.
- OK. Let's do this.
- Almost all U.S. universities require you to show proof of English proficiency; however, what they accept can vary widely. For example, some universities do not require proof of English proficiency if your high school's primary language of instruction is English, while others will only waive proof of proficiency if you attend high school in a country whose dominant language is English.
- It's crucial, as you shape your college list, to look up the university's specific policy. Universities generally post the minimum score they require for international students to be admitted. If you test below those thresholds or are right around the posted minimum, you can still be admitted, but you may be offered conditional admission (which we'll discuss later in this article).
- The emphasis on speaking and writing is important to admission counselors. Going back to holistic review, it's important to remember that your English proficiency is being assessed not only to understand your ability to communicate in the classroom, but also your ability to be an active part of campus activities and social life.

- If you have strong oral (speaking and listening) skills, you may have an advantage if the university you're applying to accepts a third-party English interview. The two most popular are Vericant and InitialView .
- These interviews are not graded and are not usually required, but they can be played by an admission counselor in their entirety and can be one of the most effective tools an admission counselor has in judging an applicant's English fluency.
- If everything else in your application seems to be in range for the university you're applying to except your English proficiency, you should be aware of a practice called "conditional admittance." It's possible that a university will accept you with the requirement that you complete an ELL or scholastically-focused summer program. If you attend (and pass) the summer program, the university will then admit you into the freshman class. Here's a good breakdown of conditional admittance .
- Next step: Once you know you'll be applying to U.S. universities, it's a good idea to start preparing to meet each school's English proficiency requirement. Read more about how to prepare here .
- Transcripts seem like they'd be the most straightforward part of your application. However, universities use transcripts to not only find out your academic ability, but also to have conversations about how hard you push yourself in subjects that you may not be interested in and to see if you're challenging yourself within the context of your school.
- Your high school counselor is usually the one who sends your transcripts to an admission office, although an increasing number of universities are accepting self-reported transcripts. As always, it's important to check the specific policies of the universities you're applying to.
- When submitting your transcript as part of the application process, you should know that universities will convert your grades from your education system to the U.S. education system, and they'll almost certainly recalculate your GPA . So do not convert them yourself!
- Your high school may weigh your IB and AP classes, but the university you're applying to may not. Don't let that discourage you, though, as admission counselors are also looking at the classes you selected, and they understand that a B in a higher-level class is not necessarily worse than an A in a lower-level class.
- A huge difference between secondary education in the United States and many other countries are the years counted as "high school." Many universities require four years of transcripts, even though high school is often only three years in other countries. Be prepared, if that's your situation, to get your ninth-grade transcripts. University admission offices may be forced to deny admission to students who are otherwise qualified, but have incomplete applications because they can't get their ninth-grade transcripts.
- Finally, if your transcript is not in English, the university may request that you get your transcript evaluated by a third-party company. It's a good idea to check which evaluators will be accepted, but WES is often considered the gold standard.
- Keep in mind that some universities, especially those without large international populations, may require all international transcripts be evaluated even if they're in English. As always, remember that each U.S. university has its own policy and there's no overarching rule.
- Next step: In order to ensure that your transcripts will be ready to send as part of your application, speak ahead of time to the college counselor (or whomever will help you send the transcripts) at your high school and let them know you'll be applying to college in the United States. Be sure, when speaking with them, to let them know about application deadlines.
- The SAT and ACT tests are general aptitude tests, and a multitude of tutoring services and study guides are available. Kaplan is one of the most common and often the most easily accessed test prep service, but there are plenty of other great options.
- Ten years ago, this may have been the most straightforward part of applying to U.S. universities. Most schools required either an ACT or SAT, and the score was sent directly to the schools.
- Not so much anymore. In the past few years, many schools have made these tests optional, and some won't even accept them if sent. COVID-19 has continued this trend with many more universities going test optional , but it's unclear what universities will require in the future. So, once again, be sure to check the specific requirements for the college you're applying to (tired of that yet?).
- If you're an international student from a non-English-speaking country, it's important to note that schools will look at your section scores. For example, not all 1,400s on the SAT are the same. A 700 on each section is different than an 800 in math and a 600 on the reading and language section.
- If you want to understand how your scores compare to other applicants, most schools share the middle 50% score of admitted students on their Common Data Set . If your score is in that range or higher, that's a good sign. But don't lose hope just because your test scores aren't perfect. Holistic review means that, every year, students with higher test scores than the average are denied and students with lower-than-average test scores are admitted.
- Also, in the test-optional era, most average test scores have skewed higher because a majority of students who are now choosing to submit have exceptional scores, while many other students opt against

submitting their scores. Schools are aware of these phenomena and are taking them into consideration when looking at test scores.

- So what do you do? First, figure out whether there are other reasons you'll need to submit test scores, such as an institutional scholarship that requires a test score to apply. Then, consider all the pros and cons of submitting or not. This podcast episode is a great resource for learning more about the test-optional phenomenon.
- And, remember that many students stress about test scores, but an advantage of holistic review is that they only make up part of the application. You are not your test score!
- Next step: Research whether the universities on your list require a standardized test score. Even if it's not required, you may still want to take standardized tests to see what score you get. You can then decide whether or not to submit based on the strength of the other elements of your application. Having the test score available to submit provides an option that you won't have if you opt out of taking the test altogether.
- Some schools require proof of financial support as an admission document called a "certification of finances," which shows how much your family is able to contribute to your college education. Each university has slightly different forms and policies around what they require. You can find the ones specific to the universities you're applying to in the international student section of their admission page.
- Questions on the certification of finances form typically include sponsor names, contact information, the amount of money they have in savings, an attestation that they'll pay for your schooling throughout your studies, and proof of their ability to pay for your education in the form of bank statements or signed letters from the bank. Your financial sponsors are typically your parents, but they could also be other relatives or friends. It's important that you fill this form out as accurately as possible—find out what the colleges on your list require by reading the international student section of the admission webpage.
- Some, but not all, admission offices require the certification of finances as part of the admission process because they don't want to admit a student who'll be unable to get a visa due to financial reasons. To get a student visa in the United States, you'll have to prove that, between your personal financial support and any financial aid given to you by the university, you'll be able to support yourself. Speaking of visas, you can read more about how certification of finances are part of the visa process in the immigration requirements section below.
- Requiring proof of financial support during the admission process means that even if you later receive merit-based or need-based financial aid from a university, you may be required to show that you can cover all the costs of attendance.
- One exception to this is universities that are need-blind for international students during the admission process. To read more about the certification of finances and financial aid, check out [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#).
- Next step: Talk to your parents about this requirement for studying in the United States, and once you know where you're applying, find out whether the universities will require it as part of the admission process.
- Don't listen to your friends or what people say online. Once you've decided where you'd like to attend college, the international office at that university should be your number one resource for information and guidance about immigration requirements and the visa application. They are there for you: Contact the international office any time you have any questions or encounter any challenges.
- Note: You only need to apply once for a visa, even if you're admitted to multiple universities and/or you change your mind about which university you'd like to attend.
- The first step in your immigration process is to figure out which type of visa you need. Once you know that, you can start preparing for your visa application.
- You'll likely need an F-1 visa, as it's the most common visa type for international students. The F-1 visa category was created for students who plan to study in the United States on a full-time basis.
- If you meet all admission requirements, you'll receive an immigration document via email called an I-20 from each university that admits you. Important note: You can apply for a visa with an I-20 form from any of the universities where you get admitted, but it's best to wait, if you can, to receive the I-20 for the university you plan to attend.
- If you receive government or organizational funding, the appropriate visa type for you may be the J-1. The U.S. State Department created the J-1 visa as a form of diplomacy (i.e., the U.S. government wants J-1 visa holders to enjoy their time here and learn about U.S. culture so they can then return home and share their positive experiences with their friends and families).
- Other visa types
- Some students are in the United States as a dependent of their parents who are working here, so they'd typically need the H-4 visa, L-2 visa, or similar document.

- Next step: There are pros and cons to each visa type, and some universities default to assuming you need an F-1 visa. If you think the J-1 might be appropriate for you, it's best to check with the international office at the university you'll be attending to get their advice.
- Once you've selected the university you plan to attend and you've received an immigration document (F-1 I-20 or J-1 DS-2019), you can start preparing for the visa application process by following the steps below.
- A great resource for supporting you with the visa application process is your local EducationUSA office .
- Note: You can be issued a visa up to 120 days before your program start date listed on your immigration document, but you can start the process outlined below before the 120-day mark.
- Read 10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa . This will help you understand what consular officers are looking for when reviewing your application and during the visa interview itself.
- Pay the I-901 SEVIS Fee : The SEVIS fee is a one-time fee (don't pay it again if you've already paid it previously) and is required for anyone studying on an F or J visa.
- Complete the DS-160 visa application : Make sure you have and are ready to upload a photo that meets visa requirements .
- Schedule a visa interview: Each consulate/embassy has its own specific visa interview requirements. Visit usembassy.gov to find your local embassy/consulate and schedule your interview. Note: Your visa appointment cannot be more than 120 days before the start date on your immigration document, but it's important to try to schedule your interview as soon as you've filled out the DS-160 form because some locations have long wait times (especially during COVID-19). You can check wait times for getting an appointment at your local embassy or consulate.
- Pay the visa fee: Each embassy or consulate website will explain its process for fee payment.
- Gather required documentation: This will be listed on your local embassy/consulate website, but it generally includes:
 - A passport valid for six months from the time you intend to arrive in the United States
 - A valid immigration document (I-20 or DS-2019)
 - Submission of the DS-160 form
 - Proof of SEVIS fee payment
 - Proof of visa fee payment
 - Proof of financial support (this is explained above in the admission section)
- Attend the visa interview: Read 10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa again in order to prepare for the interview.
- After the interview: The consular officer will place a visa stamp in your passport and notify you that it's ready for you to pick up (you can also check wait times for visa processing). Check the visa to make sure your name and SEVIS number match your name and SEVIS number as listed on your I-20 or DS-2019.
- Once you go through the admission and visa process, you still aren't done yet! Make sure to pay attention to emails from the university about a wide variety of topics. Like all other admitted students, you'll be required to take steps related to housing, orientation, your fall semester courses, etc. Also, universities often have specific requirements for you as an international student.
- Two areas where it's helpful to plan ahead are related to health insurance and immunizations.
- Many universities have separate health insurance requirements for international students, and they can be a major source of confusion.
- Why? In order to protect international students who are studying in an unfamiliar healthcare environment in the United States , many universities require you to purchase their university health insurance policy. They may not allow you to apply for a waiver to use your own insurance from your home country, or they may have very strict requirements for waiving out of it.
- Next steps:
 - Most universities also have specific immunization requirements and exceptions for international students. Some immunizations may not be available for you to receive in your home country, while others may be more easily accessible and cheaper to get at home before you leave for college.
 - Universities will let you know what their immunization requirements are after you've been admitted, but you can proactively find this information by searching for your university's campus health center website.
 - Try to get any immunizations you can while at home as they'll likely be cheaper to get there and it'll be one less thing you need to do when you arrive on campus.
 - If you need an immunization but you can't get it at home, make sure you get the shot once you arrive on campus or apply for a waiver from receiving the immunization by the appropriate deadline. If you don't do this, a hold may be placed on your record preventing you from registering for classes.
 - If your university requires proof of immunization, make sure you turn it in by the required deadline. If you don't do this, a hold may be placed on your record preventing you from registering for classes.

- Check with the Student Health Center on campus if you have any questions about the immunization requirement.
- Written by Kristy Magner, IEC and founder of Magner Consulting . Kristy has worked with international students for over 20 years, most recently as the Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars at Tulane University. Aside from her professional experience, she personally knows the challenges and rewards that come with moving to a new place, having lived and traveled abroad extensively, and she works closely with her students to ease their transition to college. Outside of work, one of Kristy's greatest sources of joy is playing and listening to music and, luckily for her, she lives in one of the world's most musical places: New Orleans, LA.
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , foundation program

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [February 3, 2022](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [10 Must-Know Application Requirements Before You Apply to College in the U.S.](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [February 3, 2022](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Magner Consulting](#)
- [Vericant](#)
- [InitialView](#)
- [conditional admittance](#)
- [here](#)
- [recalculate your GPA](#)
- [WES](#)
- [Kaplan](#)
- [going test optional](#)
- [Common Data Set](#)
- [podcast episode](#)
- [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
- [EducationUSA office](#)

- 10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa
- I-901 SEVIS Fee
- DS-160 visa application
- photo that meets visa requirements
- usembassy.gov
- check wait times
- embassy or consulate website
- 10 Points to Remember When Applying for a Student Visa
- wait times for visa processing
- unfamiliar healthcare environment in the United States
- Magner Consulting
-
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- international students
- foundation program

The Feelings & Needs Exercise | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/feelings-needs-exercise>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Time: 15-20 minutes
- This is one of the most effective exercises I've ever come across.
- All you need is a blank sheet of paper and a pen.
- My advice: take your time with this exercise, pausing the video when you need to.
- Instructions: Take out a blank sheet of paper and turn it sideways (landscape view) and write along the top these words:
 - 1. In the "Challenges" column, list any major obstacles you've faced in your life--anything from major health or family issues to experiencing racism or violence.
 - Spend at least 3-4 minutes on this first column. The more these challenges affected you, the more productive this exercise can be.
 - 2. In the second column, list the Effects (aka repercussions) that you experienced as a result of each challenge you've listed.
 - How did each challenge impact you?
 - Important: Don't yet name the emotions you felt as the result of the challenge, as those will go in the next column. Instead, simply list how your world changed due to the item in the first column. Try to isolate the specific external factors that prompted an emotional response Here's an example. "Moved around a lot growing up" might go in your challenge column. You might label the effects as "hard to make friends" or "didn't speak the local language. Save the feelings you had about not making friends or not speaking the language for the next column.
 - The purpose of this column is to differentiate your experience of the challenge you named in the first column (e.g., divorce or moving around a lot) from anyone else who might have experienced a similar challenge.
 - Spend at least 3-4 minutes on this column. See if you can write down 3-4 effects for each challenge.
 - 3. In the third column, name the Feelings that each effect elicited.
 - You can name the main emotion you felt or several different emotions. If you had difficulty making friends, for example, maybe you felt afraid, isolated, or vulnerable. Maybe some part of you even felt relieved. Don't worry if the feelings you write down contradict. Mixed emotions are normal and noting them can actually make for a more interesting, nuanced personal statement.
 - What did you feel? Spend 3-4 minutes on this column. See if you can list 3-4 feelings for each challenge you experienced.
 - And, because it can be difficult to think of feelings on the spot, here's a list to give you some ideas.
 - 4. In the fourth column, write the word "Needs."
 - Consider that each emotion you feel has an underlying need that can help you understand why you feel what you feel. Ask yourself what need may have been underneath each feeling you wrote down. Perhaps underneath a feeling of isolation, for example, was a need for connection, or beneath a feeling of vulnerability was a need for safety. Spend a little extra time with this column, as it's the heart of this exercise.
 - Based on the emotions you've listed, what need was or is underneath each one?
 - And, again, because it can be difficult to think of needs (for some of us it's something we rarely think about), here is a list of needs.
 - 5. For the fifth column, "What I did about it," consider the steps you took to meet the needs you wrote down.
 - Maybe to meet your need for connection for example, you decided to join cross country or the robotics club. Or maybe to meet your need for safety you shared your feelings with your parents or a counselor and that helped you feel better; so you'd write down "talked to a counselor."
 - I know this is a big question, but ask yourself: Why do I do Activity X? What deeper need is it meeting for me? If you're still in process (i.e., haven't done anything yet to meet those needs), what could you do?
 - Spend 3-4 minutes on this column.

- 6. In the sixth column, “Lessons, Skills, & Values,” ask yourself: What did I learn from all this?
- And what did that lesson lead to, if anything? Maybe, for example, you joined cross country (what you did about it) and that taught you to value your health and nutrition (values), which led you to start a blog (outcome). Or maybe joining robotics taught you to code (skill), which led you to create your own board game (outcome).
- For ideas of what to put in this column, take a look at this list of “Values.”
- List 3-4 values you’ve developed based on each of the activities you’ve listed in the previous column.
- Spend 3-4 minutes on this. Normally this column ends up being really full.
- Hello, World!
- 6. The final column, “Future or Career” is optional, but can be interesting to consider.
- Here, write down the name of something you’d like to do in the future. This could be career-focused, like “doctor” or “engineer.” It can also be more broad, like “fight injustice” or “be an amazing mother.” Then write down some of the values and skills you’ve gained that you believe will serve you in making these goals happen.
- Tagged: Feelings and Needs , personal statement , brainstorming , on-hour guide

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 23, 2016](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [The Feelings & Needs Exercise](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 23, 2016](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [Download the Feelings & Needs Worksheet »](#)
- [here's a list](#)
- [here is a list of needs](#)
- [this list of “Values.”](#)
- [my course](#)
- [Feelings and Needs](#)
- [personal statement](#)
- [brainstorming](#)
- [on-hour guide](#)

Learn How to Write Great Supplemental College Essays – College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/supplemental-essays>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Supplemental Essay Guides
- Supplemental essays are additional pieces of writing required by many highly-selective universities, and they can be just as revealing and important as your personal statement. Read on for how-to guides with essay examples & analysis on tackling these essays for some of the most popular colleges and universities.
- I've developed a pretty simple, step-by-step process to help you see which essay prompts can overlap. Follow my lead and it may not only save you dozens of hours of writing, it could improve the quality of those essays.
- Seems pretty natural that a school wants to know why you chose them, right? Read this step-by-step guide on writing the infamous "Why Us" essay.
- In this post, I'll share some practical tips for how to write about your extracurricular involvement in your college essays.
- Tons of colleges require a supplemental essay that asks something like, "Why did you choose your major?"
- These essays are a chance to say: "Here's how I connect with folks in my community. And if accepted to your college, I'll probably be active in getting involved with that same community and others on your college campus."
- Dive into eleven do's and don'ts for how to ensure your short answer questions are doing their job of highlighting your genius, your experience, your talents, and your personality.
- This is a must read for anybody writing the Stanford roommate essay: included is an example essay, a detailed breakdown, helpful tips along the way, and a section on how to revise your essay too.

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [American University](#)
- [Amherst College](#)
- [Babson College](#)
- [Barnard College](#)
- [Boston College](#)
- [Boston University](#)
- [Bowdoin College](#)
- [Brandeis University](#)
- [Brown University](#)
- [Bucknell University](#)
- [University of California \(UCs\)](#)
- [Caltech](#)

- Carnegie Mellon University
- Case Western
- Chapman University
- University of Chicago
- Claremont McKenna College
- Colgate University
- University of Colorado - Boulder
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College
- Duke University
- Emory University
- Florida AM University
- University of Florida
- Fordham University
- The George Washington University
- University of Georgia
- Georgetown University
- Georgia Tech
- Harvard University
- Harvey Mudd College
- Haverford College
- Howard University
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Johns Hopkins University
- Loyola Marymount
- Lehigh University
- UMass Amherst
- University of Maryland
- University of Michigan
- University of Miami
- MIT
- UNC Chapel Hill

- Northwestern University
- University of Notre Dame
- NYU
- University of Pennsylvania
- Penn State University
- Pepperdine University
- Pomona College
- Princeton University
- Purdue University
- Reed College
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Rice University
- University of Richmond
- University of Rochester
- University of San Diego
- Santa Clara University
- University of Southern California (USC)
- Spelman College
- Stanford University
- SUNY Stony Brook University
- Swarthmore College
- Syracuse University
- Texas A&M University
- Tufts University
- Tulane University
- Tuskegee University
- University of Texas - Austin
- Vanderbilt University
- Vassar College
- Villanova University
- University of Virginia (UVA)
- Virginia Tech

- [Wake Forest University](#)
- [University of Washington](#)
- [Washington University in St. Louis](#)
- [Wellesley College](#)
- [William and Mary](#)
- [University of Wisconsin - Madison](#)
- [Worcester Polytechnic Institute](#)
- [Yale University](#)
- [How to Combine Your College Essay Prompts \(To Save 20+ Writing Hours\)](#)
- [The "Why This College" Essay](#)
- [The "Extracurricular Activity" Essay](#)
- [The "Why X Major" Essay](#)
- [The Community Essay](#)
- [the Short Answer Questions](#)
- [How to Write the Stanford Roommate Essay](#)

Schools That Are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/cheap-universities-international-students>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by Independent Educational Consultants:
- Kristen Karovic
- Alina Aksiyote
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson
- A note from the authors: The content of this article won't help every applicant: every situation is sensitive and unique, and education is continuously changing. However, we want to be transparent that our goals are to give you context, steps, and tools for further research so you can be empowered in your next decisions.
- Can you study a full Bachelor's degree—in English—for less than 10,000 USD total per year? You bet! With an open mind and increased awareness, you can find colleges and universities around the world that:
- Have a total cost of attendance below 10,000 USD/year: that includes tuition, fees, living costs (housing and meals), transportation, and more (check out "How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College? A Guide for International Students" for more insight). Remember that there are scholarships available to get the total cost down to even less.
- Give generous scholarships to cut down the total cost of attendance to 10,000 USD /year.
- Before you look at the list of schools and suggestions below, we strongly recommend reading this article to gain a better idea of what you're looking for in a college: How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S. .
- But we know you're eager to see your options. So, let's get started!
- A little disclaimer: this list is by no means comprehensive! The universities listed here are also focused exclusively on English-language programs. Remember that you will need to demonstrate your English language proficiency through your schooling, citizenship, or an exam such as TOEFL, IELTS or DuoLingo, depending on the university's policy.
- If you speak another language, we recommend you consider affordable options with instruction in that language as well. For example, if you speak German, German public universities, with free tuition for both domestic and international students, are a phenomenal option!
- There is also the option to learn a foreign language in order to take advantage of low living costs, such as spending a year in Ukraine learning Ukrainian in order to then apply to complete a degree in Ukrainian, or fully paid incentives to learn a language such as Korean and Japanese to then complete an undergraduate degree.
- It's also important to note that each country's educational system may vary in important ways from your own. For example, you may have certain ideas about the advantages of a private university over a public university, when those same ideas may no longer hold in another country. While public schools are underfunded in some countries, in others they are prioritized and outdo private schools in both quality of education and access to opportunities.
- Instead, focus on finding an accredited university that not only fits your budget but also supports students coming from abroad . We recommend that you check if there is a designated office for international students to help with your transition, offering services such as extracurriculars, medical support, and intramural sports.
- With an open mind and a little research, you'll be able to find lots of affordable study options around the globe.
- Are you ready? Here is a list of 5 countries with colleges that, on average, cost less than 10,000 USD total per year.
- Bulgaria is one of the least expensive countries in Europe! It has a handful of public and private universities offering programs in English and is known for its programs in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Engineering.

- Many universities are located in Sofia, the capital and largest city in Bulgaria. Sofia is an international city known for the friendliness of the people and a high percentage of the population speaks English. Living costs average around 625 USD/month. And since it's an EU member state, your diploma will be recognized all throughout the EU without having to sit additional exams!
- Highlighted Universities:
- American University of Bulgaria: Students pay USD 7,250 on average for tuition, on-campus housing and meals are USD 2,090/year. Even better, this past year, a quarter of students received full scholarships and 74% received some sort of financial support. For a U.S. education and degree while living in the EU, this is a great deal. Listen in on this conversation with AUBG for more details.
- New Bulgarian University: New Bulgaria University is a modern, private university; English-language programs include Philosophy, Business Economics, Anthropology, Politics & Society, and Psychology. Tuition is USD 3,650/year.
- Sofia University : Sofia University offers a number of English-language programs, including Nuclear and Particle Physics, Accounting, African Studies, and Philosophy. Tuition varies depending on the discipline but ranges from USD 2,200 to USD 7,700/year. Note, though, that Bulgarian courses may be obligatory for first and second-year international students. Check out more about applying as an international student [here](#) .
- Technical University of Sofia English-language programs include Mechatronic Systems, Electronic Engineering, Computer Science & Engineering, and Industrial Engineering. The annual tuition is USD 3,567.
- Both public and private universities have their own applications. Please check out their websites for entry requirements. Depending on the program, you'll likely have to demonstrate English proficiency and may have to sit an admissions exam. Compared to other countries in the EU, though, Bulgaria generally has less rigorous entry requirements. For a more general overview of what could be required, check out [studyinbulgaria.com](#) . This link about scholarships in Bulgaria also provides good insight.
- As a non-EU student, you would be looking into a visa type D. To be able to obtain this visa you do need to demonstrate you have medical insurance, a plan for housing, and enough funds to pay for basic living expenses. Check in with the Bulgarian embassy in your country for specific requirements and the legal limits for working while studying.
- The Czech Republic (also called Czechia) offers high-quality higher education options in a country known for being both affordable and safe. Bachelor's Degrees in English can be well under USD 5000/year (and last 3 years instead of 4!). And if you're really committed, higher education at public and state institutions is free of charge for you if you study in Czech ! Estimated USD 350-750/month for living costs, including meals, accommodation, public transport, and culture.
- Highlighted Universities:
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague : CZU is one of the Top 10 Public Universities in the Czech Republic. Students can study ecology, natural resources, business, technology, informatics, and more on CZU's green and modern university campus. In the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, students can take advantage of studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels that emphasize sustainability and responsibility. Tuition can be as low as about USD 400/year for a major such as Environmental Engineering, and there are wonderfully supportive opportunities to engage in research and exchanges abroad as the Faculty of Environmental Sciences is a member of the Euroleague for Life Sciences . At CZU, there are 2500 international students (15% of total student population) and supportive activities to help with your integration as an international student. Learn more about programs and student life in this [interview](#).
- Charles University in Prague : Over 20% of the students at Charles University are international students and Prague itself is a vibrant and international city. The university offers at least 10 English-language programs , among them Computer Science, Liberal Arts and Humanities, and Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Tuition varies depending on the program but generally ranges between USD 2,400 and USD 6,500/year.
- Prague City University (PCU): PCU is a small specialist university in the heart of Prague offering both British and Czech-accredited degrees. PCU enjoys a diverse and inclusive community of students and faculty, drawn from over 90 countries. All programmes are taught in English and available at Foundation, Professional Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's levels across four schools; the School of Art & Design, the School of Business, the School of Education and the School of Media & IT. Tuition ranges from USD 6,000 to USD 8,900/year.
- Anglo-American University : An international university located in Prague with small classes and students from over 80 different countries. Anglo-American University offers a diverse array of programs in Business, Journalism, Law, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities. Tuition for a year is roughly USD 8,400.

- **Prague University of Economics and Business:** If you're looking for an affordable way to study Business or Econ, this is a great option! They offer four English-language Bachelor's degrees: Business Administration, Economics, International and Diplomatic Studies, and International Business. Tuition is around USD 4,800/year.

- **Masaryk University:** Masaryk has over 6,000 international students and Brno is a very student-friendly city. And it's even more affordable than Prague! Masaryk's English-language options include English Language and Literature, Business Management and Finance, and Economics and Public Policy. Tuition costs are between USD 2,400 and USD 4,200/year, depending on the faculty.

- **Czech Technical University in Prague :** CTU has 20% international students and offers several programs taught in English , including Civil Engineering and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. Tuition is generally around USD 5,000/year. They offer scholarships for particular disciplines and for students from developing countries.

- As a general timeline, applications are usually due between February and April if you wish to start in the fall. For a general run-down on what the application process may be like for universities in the Czech Republic, check out this step-by-step guide . Remember, however, that each university will have its own deadlines and entry requirements. Some, for example, may require an entrance exam that you would need to take online or in person in the Czech Republic. Others may ask you for a certification (vysvědčení) from the Czech government, verifying that your international high school diploma is officially recognized. This process is called *nostrifikace*. Click here for more information on "nostrification."

- The Italian higher educational system prides its equitability for scholarships (with some of the lowest fees in Europe), high quality programs and institutions, and safety (aligned with the country's goals for sustainable development, access to universal healthcare, and innovation during the pandemic) (*Fondazione CRUI*).

- Italy has several options for continuing your higher education in English, with public universities maxing out at about 4800 USD/year in tuition. Shared rooms and apartments can help bring living costs to below USD 1000/month and there are great incentives for accommodation grants to cover your cost of housing. See pages 40-43 in the NACAC Guide to International University Admission for more details . You also want to keep in mind that for certain degrees, an entrance exam will be required , and most Italian universities will require an entrance exam such as the TOLC , an orientation and evaluation test to determine your aptitude and preparation.

- **Highlighted Universities:**

- **Università Ca' Foscari Venezia :** Located on the Grand Canal of picturesque Venice, students have the opportunity to earn degrees taught in English , Italian and English/Italian at the Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels. Degrees are offered in Humanities, Economics, Sciences, and Foreign Languages. Students with citizenship in countries with low economic development have tuition reduced from 2500 USD/year to 840 USD/year to Ca' Foscari's undergraduate programs in Venice, Italy. You can definitely budget to live under USD 1000/month for the academic year in a shared apartment or in one of the student residences as Venice is a very student-friendly city to accommodate varying budgets. Check out photos and updates from Kristen's visit here .

- **Politecnico di Torino :** This is Italy's oldest technical university, and "forms part of the alliance UNITE! (University Network for Innovation, Technology and Engineering), a project to create a trans-European campus, to introduce trans-European curricula, to promote scientific cooperation between the members and to strengthen knowledge transfer between the countries" (*Wikipedia*). Bachelor's Degrees in English are offered in Engineering and Architecture. Tuition for international students is based on country of citizenship and ranges from 193 USD to 4,837 USD/year (check out this neat map about fees!).

- **Sapienza Università di Roma :** This research university on the outskirts of Rome offers 16 Bachelor's Degrees in English in medicine, engineering, and humanities (and 50+ programs in English at the Master's level). Total tuition ranges from 600 USD to 1200 USD per year based on your citizenship/foreign income, and there are scholarships for accommodations and even internships amounting to 1095€/month.

- While the low tuition rates and accommodation grants are tempting, non-EU citizens will still need to show proof of financial support (at least € 448,07 per month (539 USD/month) for the academic year, a total of 6356.49 USD per year).

- What about focusing on an English-speaking country that borderlines the USD 10,000 mark and offers incentives for need- and merit-based aid to bring down the price point? There are 875 universities in India , giving you a range of options of research-based institutions, liberal arts curricula, and more. Focus on coursework, alumni success, and student support services for international students.

- **Highlighted Universities:**

- **Ashoka University :** Ashoka is a small liberal arts and sciences university with a growing international student population, currently representing 18 countries. Students will take Foundation Courses, Major

Courses, Co-Curricular Courses, and credits for an elective, minor or concentration during their three years total of undergraduate study. Students can also opt to spend an additional year to further in-depth research. Tuition, housing and meals add up to USD 13,500 total/year, with need-based financial aid available to bring down the total cost.

- Krea University . Krea is also a liberal arts and sciences university that focuses on building an interdisciplinary foundation before choosing one of their 13 majors in Humanities and Social Sciences, Sciences and/or Literature and the Arts. Tuition is USD 9,786/year and living expenses are estimated at USD 2,205/year, subject to revision every year as specified in their fee structure . There is need-/merit-based aid to help bring down expenses in order to meet your educational aspirations, which can easily bring down the total cost of attendance to under USD 10,000/year.
- This content was contributed by Kavita Chandran, University Counselor at UWC Changshu (and from Malaysia!)
- Malaysia, known for its “Truly Asia” tagline, is well known as a popular tourist destination in Asia. A leader in industrial growth and political stability for decades, Malaysia is also one of the top study destinations for students seeking to obtain an internationally renowned education. It is strategically located, making it easy for domestic and international travel to other parts of Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas, and international students can easily mingle with domestic students of diverse backgrounds.
- Most universities are located in the city center of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital. English is commonly used not only in education, but also in this multicultural country: in fact, it is possible to live in urban areas of Malaysia only knowing English. Malaysia hosts 100+ globally recognized public and private institutions, including foreign branches of reputable universities from the U.K, Australia, and Ireland - some have their own overseas branch or work in partnership with a Malaysian institution.
- Annual tuition fees for undergraduate programs range from USD 4,000 to 6,000. Cost of living is also affordable in such a cosmopolitan city, with an estimated range of 400-600 USD per month to live really comfortably as a student.
- This multicultural country gives a chance for international students to meet domestic students. Students have the option to study in English at the undergraduate and graduate levels both at private and public institutions. Malaysia is also a great and affordable place to pursue a medical degree: students can enroll right after finishing high school, and the degree is recognized in a lot of countries around the world.
- The universities below are recommended from professional experience; they are institutions that are well known to best support international students and are reputable outside of the Asia region.
- Highlighted Universities:
 - Universiti Malaya : Located in Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Malaya is a public research university and Malaysia's oldest and highest ranked university. Notable alumni include three Malaysian prime ministers! It offers a wide variety of Bachelor's degrees, ranging from Dentistry to Education to Economics and Administration. Universiti Malaya offers a multicultural and multinational learning environment with over 27,000 students (14,000 of whom are undergraduates) who hail from over 80 countries.
 - Universiti Sains Malaysia : USM is a public research institution in Penang, Malaysia with extensive English-language offerings in the Sciences, Arts, Engineering, and Health Sciences. USM was chosen by the Malaysian Minister of Higher Education to implement the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) and is leading initiatives to integrate sustainable development into the educational system in Malaysia.
 - Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia : UKM, also known as the National University of Malaysia, is a public university located in Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor, south of Kuala Lumpur. UKM is a highly ranked university and has roughly 17,000 students. They offer a number of programs for international students , including programs in the Faculties of Law, Education, Information Science and Technology, and Medicine. They have particularly strong programs in the fields of education, politics, engineering, law and mathematics.
 - Sunway University: A relatively young, private university based in Sunway City. Undergraduate programs range from Business Studies to Computer Science to Digital Film Production and generally last three years. Sunway has a special partnership with Lancaster University and graduates of many of their degrees also receive a degree from Lancaster University. The university has an international atmosphere with 2,000 international students from over 80 countries and even offers a few scholarships particularly for international students .
 - Xiamen University Malaysia : A branch of the Chinese university, Xiamen University offers all of its courses in English, with the exception of Chinese Language and Chinese Medicine. Programs include Engineering, Arts, Sciences, and Management, among others. Tuition is around USD 5,800/year and some merit scholarships are available. Accommodation on-campus is available to students for around USD 80 - USD 90/month for a twin room.

- Swinburne University Malaysia : A branch of the Australian university and a great, cost-effective way to get an Australian degree. Swinburne University's Sarawak campus has 4,000 students from over 40 countries and prides itself on its diverse and vibrant community. The university offers Bachelor's degrees in Business, Engineering, Design, Science and Computing and students have the option to spend a semester at their Melbourne campus. Tuition costs range from USD 7,600 to USD 10,200/year and there are a number of diverse scholarships available .
- You might be tempted by low tuition fees in several locations around the globe, but research how much it will actually cost to live in that city. For example, you might find attractive tuition prices for colleges in Switzerland that keep you within the <10K budget, but it's recommended to budget 2000 USD/month to meet your living expenses . There are wonderful programs in Barcelona, but remember to budget about 1000 USD/month on average just in accommodation, food, transport, and personal expenses. In Sweden, you would also need to budget about 1000 USD/month to cover food, accommodation, local travel, phone/internet, and other personal expenses.
- While you look into ways to make your education affordable, consider the high cost of living (notably, housing, and meals) of certain cities and countries that can make it very challenging to live off of 1000 USD/month. Here's the scoop about The 25 Most Expensive Countries to Live in, Ranked to use as a guideline in your research.
- Even if you went home for the holidays and had everything paid for your stay while at home, you would still need around 9,000 USD for a nine-month academic school year—plus enough money to cover your flights home.
- So, in these circumstances, ask yourself: will you have enough money to cover your tuition and your living expenses, especially if you're spending about 10,000 USD per year just on living expenses?
- If you're very attached to a particular country or city with a cost of living outside your budget, have a concrete plan for how you might cover these expenses. Can you find a very affordable homestay? Can you find scholarships that will lower your tuition cost so you can focus just on your living expenses?
- Remember that you need to be able to support yourself outside of your home country in the event you're not given an accommodation grant and also possibly for visa purposes (see above in notes about Italy), not just take into account low tuition costs.
- Wow—that was a lot of information.
- We know. And it will take a lot of time to evaluate the quantity of options you have. So here are a few action steps for you to keep you on track:
- Have some fun and watch a few videos about the countries that piqued your interest. The “ Study in ____ Country ” links are a great place to start. Then:
- Check with EducationUSA in each country you are interested in
- Check in your home country + other country's Ministry of Education website to see about country-specific scholarships. Many countries have cross-reciprocal opportunities.
- Read, if you haven't already:
- How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.
- How to Research Universities Outside of the U.S.: Tips & Resources
- Are you still wondering if it's realistic to get a full scholarship to a U.S. school as an international (“nonresident alien”) student? You're going to want to read this article .
- Bookmark The Almost to Full-Ride Scholarship List for International Students for even more options.
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , financial aid , college costs , college admissions , college cost international students , cheap schools international students , cheap universities

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 20, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

- International Students
- Schools That Are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year
- Ethan Sawyer
- May 20, 2021
- Student Resources
- International Students
- Kristen Karovic
- Alina Aksiyote
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson
- total cost of attendance
- How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College? A Guide for International Students
- How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.
- your English language proficiency
- Korean
- Japanese
- 1. Bulgaria
- American University of Bulgaria:
- Listen in on this conversation with AUBG for more details.
- New Bulgarian University:
- Sofia University
- Bulgarian courses may be obligatory
- here
- Technical University of Sofia
- studyinbulgaria.com
- link about scholarships in Bulgaria
- 2. Czech Republic
- Czechia
- Bachelor's Degrees in English can be well under USD 5000/year
- study in Czech
- USD 350-750/month
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
- Euroleague for Life Sciences
- supportive activities

- this interview.
- Charles University in Prague
- at least 10 English-language programs
- Prague City University (PCU):
- Anglo-American University
- Prague University of Economics and Business:
- Masaryk University:
- Czech Technical University in Prague
- several programs taught in English
- this step-by-step guide
- Click here
- 3. Italy
- Fondazione CRUI
- 4800 USD/year
- See pages 40-43 in the NACAC Guide to International University Admission for more details
- for certain degrees, an entrance exam will be required
- TOLC
- Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
- earn degrees taught in English
- countries with low economic development
- tuition reduced from 2500 USD/year to 840 USD/year to Ca' Foscari's undergraduate programs in Venice, Italy.
- a shared apartment or in one of the student residences
- here
- Politecnico di Torino
- Wikipedia
- Bachelor's Degrees in English
- check out this neat map about fees!
- Sapienza Università di Roma
- 16 Bachelor's Degrees in English
- 50+ programs in English at the Master's level
- tuition ranges from 600 USD to 1200 USD per year

- will still need to show proof of financial support (at least € 448,07 per month (539 USD/month) for the academic year, a total of 6356.49 USD per year).

- 4. India

- There are 875 universities in India

- Ashoka University

- Krea University

- as specified in their fee structure

- 5. Malaysia

- UWC Changshu

- Universiti Malaya

- Universiti Sains Malaysia

- Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

- programs for international students

- Undergraduate programs

- scholarships particularly for international students

- Xiamen University Malaysia

- Swinburne University Malaysia

- scholarships available

- it's recommended to budget 2000 USD/month to meet your living expenses

- remember to budget about 1000 USD/month on average

- you would also need to budget about 1000 USD/month

- The 25 Most Expensive Countries to Live in, Ranked

- Study in ____ Country

- How to Develop a Great University List When Applying Outside the U.S.

- How to Research Universities Outside of the U.S.: Tips & Resources

- want to read this article

- The Almost to Full-Ride Scholarship List for International Students

-

- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students

- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)

- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)

- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students

- international students

- financial aid
- college costs
- college admissions
- college cost international students
- cheap schools international students
- cheap universities

The Essence Objects Exercise - College Essay Brainstorming

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/2016/8/18/the-objects-exercise-video-walkthrough>

■ Mục đích chính:

- This is one of my favorite brainstorming activities. Why?
- It's one of the most efficient ways I know to help generate a TON of content for your personal statement and also add texture to bring your essay to life.
- Also, it's just fun to do and a great way to reflect.
- Ready to do it?
- Below are some questions to help you with the exercise. Then, watch the video below.
- What's an object that reminds you of home?
- What object makes you feel safe?
- What's a food that reminds you of your family?
- What object represents a challenge you've faced?
- What's a dream or goal you have for the future?
- What's something about you that sometimes surprises people?
- Who are you with and what are you doing when you feel most like yourself?
- What brings you joy?
- What's hanging on your bedroom walls?
- What are you proud of?
- What action or gesture represents love to you?
- What do you like to do that does not involve technology?
- What will you save for your child someday?
- What's the most memorable meal you've ever eaten or made?
- What's in your bag right now? Anything that's always there?
- What do you like to collect?
- What have you kept from a trip?
- What's something that people associate with you?
- What's one of your essence objects? Share it in the comments below and tell us what it represents to you.
- Check out the one-hour guide to the personal statement for more brainstorming exercises.
- Want step-by-step help writing your personal statement?
- Check out my course below.
- Tagged: essence objects , objects exercise , brainstorming , personal statement

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [August 18, 2016](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [The Essence Objects Exercise - College Essay Brainstorming](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [August 18, 2016](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)

- [Download a copy of the Essence Object Exercise Questions Here](#)
- [one-hour guide to the personal statement](#)
- [my course](#)
- [essence objects](#)
- [objects exercise](#)
- [brainstorming](#)
- [personal statement](#)

How to Write a Financial Aid Appeal Letter | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/financial-aid-appeal-letter>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- So you've been accepted to a great college (yay!) only to find out the school isn't giving you enough money (womp womp). What do you do? Accept your fate? Resign yourself to attending your back-up school? Start a GoFundMe campaign?
- Maybe. But first...
- You gotta' wonder: Is this ALL the money the school can offer me? Could it be that, if you ask nicely and write a financial aid letter request, then the school just might give you a little more?
- True story: When I asked Northwestern for more money, the school gave me more money, AND THAT LED TO FOUR OF THE BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE. In fact, I only spent about \$4,000 per year. Important caveat: I had a zero EFC (Estimated Family Contribution), so much of it was need-based aid, but still! If I hadn't asked, I wouldn't have gotten more money and probably wouldn't have gone there.
- Real-talk: Asking people for money is hard. I get weird sometimes just asking friends to chip in for pizza. And it can be especially difficult when your college future is on the line .
- But consider doing it. Because, well, your college future might be on the line.
- TABLE OF CONTENTS Why Write A Financial Aid Appeal Letter? Financial Appeal Letter Example #1 Analysis of Example Letter #1 Financial Appeal Letter Example #2 Financial Appeal Letter Example #3 Five Financial Aid Resources You Don't Want to Miss
- Begin with who you are and where you are from, how grateful you are to have been accepted and that you are excited about the school
- Be direct about what the letter is for (financial aid)
- Briefly talk about why the school is a great fit for you and why you need the money in a straightforward and respectful way.
- Provide concise details regarding your specific financial situation, even if you gave these details in your original application. Give them real numbers so that, when they do the math, they can see what you see: there just isn't enough money.
- Include any details about yourself that show you are a hardworking student and have succeeded in the past.
- Keep it short and to the point. Once you are done, sign off respectfully.
- Wanna see these steps in action? Keep reading. But first:
- Why should you consider writing a financial aid letter request? Because...
- you can write a financial aid appeal letter in like an hour, and
- it may be the fastest \$2,000 (or \$8,000) you ever make
- if you don't ask, you'll never know.
- When should I make a financial aid appeal letter request? As soon as you can. Because when the money's gone, it's gone. So, like, now.
- How do I write one? I'm about to tell you. But before I do I thought I'd bring in some help.
- In Episode 103 of the College Essay Guy podcast I spoke with Jodi Okun , financial aid guru and author of the Amazon bestseller Secrets of a Financial Aid Pro.
- We talked about everything from whether or not to include house and retirement when reporting assets on the FAFSA to how decisions are sometimes made in a financial aid office. But the main topic of our conversation was appeal letters—what they are, who should write one, and what to literally say to a financial aid officer when calling to make an appeal. Here's one of my favorite bits of advice from Jodi on the importance of allowing for a pause in conversation when appealing to a financial aid officer:
 - "Parents have an agenda about what they want to say, but financial aid offices have a process they have to follow with every folder on their desk," Jodi says. "You may think the next step is one thing but they may give you another step which might get you further in your appeal."

- Below you'll find a few great financial aid request letter samples—one from my former student and a couple from families Jodi worked with—with analysis and suggestions on how to write your own appeal letter. Underneath that you'll find some links to some financial aid resources you don't want to miss.
- Click here to hear my complete interview about how to win a financial aid appeal letter with financial aid expert Jodi Okun, who has helped thousands of families navigate the college financial planning process and contributed one of the financial aid request letter samples in this post.
- To the Financial Aid Office at UCLA:
- My name is Sara Martinez and I am a 12th grader currently enrolled at Los Angeles Academy. First, I would like to say that I am very honored to have been admitted into this fine school, as University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) is my number one choice.
- There is a problem, however, and it is a financial one.
- I'd love to attend UCLA—it's near home, which would allow me to be closer to my family, and the Bio department is phenomenal. But, as a low-income Hispanic student, I simply don't feel I can afford it. I'm writing to respectfully request an adjustment of my financial aid award.
- Here are some more details of my financial situation. Currently, my father works as an assistant supervisor for American Apparel Co. and he is the only source of income for my family of five, while my mother is a housewife. The income my father receives weekly barely meets paying the bills.
- My family's overall income: Father's average weekly gross pay: \$493.30 Father's adjusted gross income: \$27,022
- Our household expenses: Rent: \$850 Legal Services: \$200 Car payment: \$230.32
- My parents cannot afford to have medical insurance, so they do not have a medical bill. My father's average monthly income is an estimate of \$1,973.20 (see attached pay stub). When household expenses such as rent, car payment, legal services, gas bill, and electricity bill are added together the cost is of \$1,402.70. Other payments such as the phone bill, internet bill, and groceries also add to the list. But in order to make ends meet my father usually works overtime and tailors clothes for people in our neighborhood.
- My family is on an extremely tight budget and unfortunately cannot afford to pay for my schooling. I have worked my way up and was recently awarded Valedictorian for the class of 2014. My goals and my aspiration of becoming a nutritionist have helped me push forward. I appreciate your time in reconsidering my financial aid award. I'm looking forward to becoming a Bruin.
- Sara Martinez
- Here's why this financial aid appeal letter is so fantastic:
- To the Financial Aid Office at UCLA:
- My name is Sara Martinez and I am a 12th grader currently enrolled at Los Angeles Academy. First, I would like to say that I am much honored to have been admitted into this fine school, as University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) is my number one choice.
- There is a problem, however, and it is a financial one.
- I'd love to attend UCLA—it's near home, which would allow me to be closer to my family, and the Bio department is phenomenal. But, as a low-income Hispanic student, I simply don't feel I can afford it. I'm writing to respectfully request an adjustment of my financial aid award.
- Here are some more details of my financial situation. Currently, my father works as an assistant supervisor for American Apparel Co. and he is the only source of income for my family of five, while my mother is a housewife. The income my father receives weekly barely meets paying the bills.
- My family's overall income: Father's average weekly gross pay: \$493.30 Father's adjusted gross income: \$27,022
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- My family is on an extremely tight budget and unfortunately cannot afford to pay for my schooling. I have worked my way up and was recently awarded Valedictorian for the class of 2014. My goals and my aspiration of becoming a nutritionist have helped me push forward. I appreciate your time in reconsidering my financial aid award. I'm looking forward to becoming a Bruin.
- Sara Martinez
- Here's another (much shorter) appeal written by one of Jodi's former clients:
- Dear Financial Aid Director

- After submitting the FAFSA for the 2017-2018 school year, I realized that you are using the same tax year (2015) that was used for my son's freshman year. I am writing to you because my income for this year (2016) has declined and this fact will not be represented when you examine the FAFSA for 2017-2018 – let me explain why. I am a freelance graphic artist and only work when I receive a call for a project and am offered the job. In other words, I only receive a pay check when I work. This could be for one day or several days, but I do not have steady or guaranteed income. In addition, it is not a job in the traditional sense, where I go to work at the same place every day, I may work for several different companies. I have been very fortunate in that I have been working my craft for a long time and get a fair number of calls but some years are better than others. Unfortunately, this year (2016) I am on track to make approximately \$15,000 to \$18,000 less than I did in the 2015 calendar year.
- Thank you for your consideration, John Ogilve
- Here's one more financial aid request letter sample:
- Dear Financial Aid Office,
- We appreciate you offering our son Paul a scholarship, but even with your help we can not afford the tuition. We have asked his grandparents and uncles to help, but they unfortunately are not able to help pay the tuition. I would use our retirement money for him to attend your school, if we had any retirement fund. We honestly don't know how to make this happen without your help. Next month I will be having a necessary hysterectomy and I will be out of commission for a couple of months and can not work. I am a first grade teacher at a small church school with a very small income and we can barely make ends meet.
- I like to share with you a little bit about our son. I know you know how talented he is or he wouldn't have gotten into your school. I know you only accept 22 % and he was one of the lucky few you let in. He has been working on his craft his whole life. He is one of the kindest and friendliest young men. He is genuine, not at all phony. He will walk down the halls of his school smile or say hi to anyone, teachers and students. He was voted Homecoming Court two years in a row.
- Your school is the only school Paul wants to attend. He said to us he will not go to college if he can not go to The New School. None of the other schools offer what The New School can offer him. He has always wanted to be an actor, writer and director ever since he was five years old. Not only will Paul benefit from attending your school but you will also benefit. If you can offer us more financial help, Paul will be able to attend and graduate as one of your success stories.
- Thank you in advance for taking the time to reconsider the amount you have offered Paul.
- Sincerely, Gina and Tom Atamian
- Studentaid.edu.gov
- Jodi's Blog: College Financial Aid Advisors
- Net Price Calculator
- Financial Aid 101
- We discuss all these resources on the podcast with Jodi, and much more, including:
- What to literally say to a financial aid officer when calling to make an appeal [13:40]
- How to be prepared for the financial aid appeal conversation [22:50]
- How often parents are speaking with the person who could be the decision-maker [17:10]
- An inside look inside how decisions are sometimes made in a financial aid office [18:00]
- Listen to the whole podcast and check out the rest of the show notes (with times stamps, so you can fast forward to the part you want!) here .

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 1, 2020](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to Write a Financial Aid Appeal Letter \(+ Examples\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 1, 2020](#)

- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [GoFundMe](#)
- [Northwestern](#)
- [college future is on the line](#)
- [Why Write A Financial Aid Appeal Letter?](#)
- [Financial Appeal Letter Example #1](#)
- [Analysis of Example Letter #1](#)
- [Financial Appeal Letter Example #2](#)
- [Financial Appeal Letter Example #3](#)
- [Five Financial Aid Resources You Don't Want to Miss](#)
- [Episode 103](#)
- [Jodi Okun](#)
- [Secrets of a Financial Aid Pro.](#)
- [Click here](#)
- [THE MATCHLIGHTERS SCHOLARSHIP IS JUST RIGHT FOR YOU— LEARN MORE & APPLY TODAY.](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [give me more money](#)
- [examine the FAFSA](#)
- [How to Write a Successful Transfer Essay: A Brief Guide](#)
- [Studentaid.edu.gov](#)
- [Jodi's Blog: College Financial Aid Advisors](#)
- [Net Price Calculator](#)
- [Financial Aid 101](#)
- [FAFSA](#)
- [here](#)
- [Listen to the episode](#)
- [my course](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)

How Can I Convert My GPA (for U.S. College Applications)? | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/convert-gpa>

■ M■c ■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Emily Dobson, Educator, College Counselor, Administrator, Mom, and Access Warrior at EDGE College Consultants, LLC and the Caribbean and Latin America Network
- Are you an international student applying to college right now and trying to understand how to reconfigure your grades/marks/notes so that they fit the context of a university in a country where grading is different? (Like, say, for a college in the United States?).
- Wondering if you should convert your 12 or 7 point scale to the 4 point scale, or your Indian GPA to a US GPA?
- You don't need to use a GPA conversion calculator.
- In fact, you don't need to convert your GPA at all—and the admissions representatives do not expect you to.
- The fine details: Higher education institutions across the globe agree that it is their job, not the student's, to understand international students' documents within a greater context. They will take the time to convert your grades/marks/notes into a grading system that works for them. Not only that, but they'll also consider country context, university program requirements, high school rigor, recommendations/personal statements, and more.
- A set of fantastic universities from the UK, Europe, and the United States—both public and private—kindly agreed to answer a survey and demystify some of the most frequently asked questions/comments they get from international students about grades.
- Hmmmm. Unlikely. In fact, not a chance.
- Universities have been welcoming international students, in many places, for centuries. Somewhere along the line, they developed a set of resources dedicated to understanding international applicants.
- There are admissions representatives that travel across the globe getting to know regions and schools so they know how to 'read' the students better; there are courses, conferences, and literature by specialists such as ACCRAO Edge, NCAA, and WES iGPA calculator ; UK Naric and the British Council and the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation; many more reach out directly to the high schools, local EducationUSA offices, a country's ministry of education, colleagues, and local counselors for more context when needed. In other words, this is their job—and they are good at it.
- There are admissions representatives that travel across the globe getting to know regions and schools so they know how to 'read' the students better. This includes:
 - Courses, conferences, and literature by specialists such as ACCRAO Edge, NCAA, and WES iGPA calculator
 - UK Naric and the British Council and the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation
 - Input from local high schools, local EducationUSA offices, a country's ministry of education, colleagues, and local counselors
 - In other words, this is their job—and they are good at it.
- Straight from the source: what admissions officers want to share with you about recalculating grades:
- Out of the schools surveyed, at least half of them said that they have an internal system of recalculating grades and finding an overall GPA and it is specific to each university. The other half simply said recalculation wasn't part of their process, so no one, applicants nor admissions staff, needed to be taking out their calculators.
- Let's remember that the idea of a GPA is a very US-based system, and it is also a little outdated. Even US domestic students have a curriculum that extends beyond what the usual 4.0 scale used to be, and colleges have adapted to that in the same way they have to international students—they have educated themselves by reviewing the context.

- I'm aware that when this question comes up, international applicants can feel anxious. So, I asked the college admissions counselors for advice, and here is what they said:
- Almost 60% said, "If not mandatory, leave it blank and we will figure it out."
- 30% said, "Do your best estimate and we will figure it out OR just write something, anything, and we can figure it out."
- And from the Netherlands? Asking for a GPA actually goes against educational access (so don't worry about that question for those universities)
- For the most part, you can be certain that any university requiring grades for admission is looking at them—but through whatever lens they choose and with the tools they need to use as we covered above. Remember that some universities only look at certain years of high school grades; others recalculate/isolate grades focusing on the courses you wish to take in college; and many have a holistic approach—which means looking at the applicant as a person and not just a set of numbers.
- There are a few learning points that can be taken from this piece that every international student needs to remember:
 - International admissions readers are trained to read your application and understand you within your context. You do not need to change your coursework, grades or anything else into another curriculum to be accepted to a university.
 - An applicant must focus on what they can control. Some examples may be: what grades they receive, what type of statements/essays they write, the perceptions they send to others (think letters of recommendation and interviews) and how they choose to use their time and opportunities, to name a few.
 - It is a university's job to understand how an applicant's academics will match up to what is going on at the university coursework level. Therefore, an applicant must also trust that the admissions officers have a certain way of seeing the information that may not be public information.
 - International applicants do not need to recalculate who they are to get admitted, but they can recalibrate how they understand the process. Take a look at other helpful hints on the International Hub !
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Five Important Tips for International Students Who Need U.S. Financial Aid
- How Much Does it ACTUALLY Cost to go to College in the U.S.?
- Schools That Are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year
- The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the U.S. for International Students
- Tagged: international students , international student , gpa

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [October 26, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Should You Convert Your GPA if You Attend School Outside the U.S.?](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [October 26, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [ACCRAO](#)
- [WES iGPA calculator](#)
- [EducationUSA](#)
- [ACCRAO](#)

- [WES iGPA calculator](#)
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- [The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the U.S. for International Students](#)
- [international students](#)
- [international student](#)
- [gpa](#)

How to Decide Whether to Apply Early Action (EA) or Early Decision (ED)

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/early-action-early-decision-colleges>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- As counselors, we joke that the answer to every college admission question begins with “It depends...” This feels especially true for the Early Decision question.
- This post outlines answers to the most common questions on this topic:
- What are my options for applying early?
- What is early Early Decision, and who is it best for in general?
- What is Early Action, and who is it best for?
- How do I decide to apply Early Action, Early Decision, or neither?
- What are my application options?
- Early Decision (ED) : This is legally binding and you can only apply to one school ED. If you get in, you have to withdraw all your other applications and attend your Early Decision College. ED applications are usually due in November, though a few schools’ have earlier deadlines. Some colleges have two rounds of EDI and EDII (fall and winter).
- Students sign a contract (not a legal document) saying they will abide by the ED restrictions and schools are very serious about this. For students considering applications to universities in countries outside the United States, you may have some flexibility about holding an ED offer in the US and conditional offers from universities outside the US. Talk to your school counselor about this.
- Early Action (EA) : This is non-binding. You can apply to several colleges via Early Action. Even if you’re accepted, you’re not obligated to attend. Early Action college applications are also usually due in November, though a few schools have earlier deadlines.
- Restrictive Early Action (REA) : This is also non-binding but these colleges don’t want you applying to any binding programs at the same time. Like EA and ED, REA applications (sometimes called Single-choice Early Action) are typically due in November.
- Important exception: REA means students cannot apply ED/EA to other schools, except to state universities. This exception allows families to hear back from lower-tuition public schools. It also gives students leeway to consider several EA offers.
- Regular Decision (RD) : This is non-binding. You can apply to as many colleges as you want (though I recommend 8-10). Deadlines range from mid-October to late winter.
- Rolling Admissions : This means that the college will review applications as they become complete with all the required elements (as opposed to waiting until a certain date to do everything). Heads-up: Apply early because once those spots are full, they’re full! (I know this because I applied to a rolling admission school my senior year and I didn’t get in- although I probably should have- because I applied too late. Womp womp.)
- Note about EDII: The addition of the ED II option is a growing trend and basically plays clean up for all of the students who got dinged by one of the more selective colleges during ED I. More importantly, it also gives students a great opportunity to improve their academic trend, GPA, and test scores and still be able to choose their favorite college and show the strongest level of interest possible. Finally, ED II gives students more time to research, visit colleges, discuss finances with family members, and obtain recommendations from teachers that might have proved challenging in October.
- It’s hard to say in general. As I said, it depends. On what? Three things:
- 1. It depends on you. If you can check all these boxes, you might consider applying early decision:
 - I am totally in love with this college and I would absolutely attend if accepted.
 - I have done thorough research and can name at least five clear, specific reasons why this college is a perfect match for me.
 - I’ve visited the campus and know I could be happy there. Or if I haven’t visited the campus, I know enough about it to know that I could be happy there.
 - If the school requires test scores, mine are in the range of other students who have been accepted--or at least they’re about as good as they’re going to get.
 - My grades, extracurricular activity profile, and the support from my school (or “hooks,” if applicable) are so

good that I (and my counselor, if I have one) feel I have a reasonable chance of getting in.

- ■ I'm a recruited athlete and the coach loves me and has let me know--either in person or in writing--that I'm an official recruit who will have their full support in the admission process (and you may even be asked to submit your application through the coach). It's a good idea to have your school counselor contact admissions to make sure that everyone is on the same page (admissions, coach, and student). It's also a good idea to have visited the campus and spent some quality time with your future coach and teammates.
- 2. It depends on money. Why? If you're accepted Early Decision, the college will put together a financial aid package and send your family a bill and that can get, well, complicated. So ask:
 - ■ Can your family afford to pay the Estimated Family Contribution or EFC that was determined by your FAFSA application or Net Price Calculator (or can they pay whatever the college tells you to)?
- 3. It depends on the school. Why? Some schools value ED more than others. How do we know? Some schools fill a good portion (over 50%) of their class in the early application rounds. Further, if you compare the Regular Decision acceptance rate to that of Early Decision acceptance rates, some schools have way different numbers. For example, the Regular Decision acceptance rate for one school last year was around 10%, while their Early Decision acceptance rate was around 30%. That's three times higher! (Interesting, huh?)
 - But not every school's ED rate is three times higher than its RD rate. And wouldn't it be nice to know the statistics for all schools? In fact, wouldn't it be cool if someone assembled an Excel spreadsheet that compared the Early Decision and Regular Decision acceptance rates for hundreds of colleges?
 - Fortunately, someone has. Well, two someones. You can check out this spreadsheet compiled by Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy that aggregates the Early Decision and Regular Decision data for over 300 schools . This spreadsheet also includes the percentage of the class filled during the Early Decision round.
 - Here's a flowchart that maps all this out:
 - Shout-out to my friend and colleague Susan Dabbar from Admission Smarts for putting this chart together.
- What About Early Action?
- Applying EA may or may not increase your chances of admission, but it can't hurt unless you need: more time to write a really great application, higher test scores, or to count senior year grades. If you need more time to do these things, you may want to apply Regular Decision.
- Getting an early acceptance in your senior year reduces stress and may shorten your college list. The downside? You may get bad news earlier in your senior year before you get any good news. This can be important feedback, however, since you may have overestimated your chances of being admitted to the colleges on your list. Accept it as a reality check and adjust your college list accordingly. Also, know that you may be accepted in, say, December but have to wait until March for your financial aid award.
- So how do I decide whether to apply ED, EA, or RD? (A Brief Step-by-Step Guide)
- First, do your research. Go through the college search process described on our post , which means you should:
 - Go through a process of self-discovery to learn what you want,
 - Research a bunch of colleges,
 - Check to see if one college is perfect for you, and then,
 - Generate a long list of at least five reasons why this is so.
 - I'd recommend doing Step 4 whether you're writing a "Why us" essay for that school or not, as your ability to articulate your "why" will serve you during your interview (if the college has one).
 - Make sure you can check ALL the boxes under " Who is Early Decision best for in general? "
 - Run the Net Price Calculator to make sure you can afford it.
 - Learn how much demonstrated interest matters to the school by consulting Jennie and Jeff's chart and notice: 1.) Do the college's ED and RD acceptance rates differ significantly? 2.) Does the school fill a large percentage of its class via Early Decision? (I'd say 60% counts as a "large" percentage of students, whereas ten percent is not.)
 - And just in case this wasn't already obvious: I'm not saying you should apply ED to a school simply because a chart tells you that you may have a better chance of getting in. Steps 1-6 will be essential.
 - Does all that feel like too much to do on your own? If so:
 - Talk to your counselor.
 - In fact, do this even if you do all the steps above. Your counselor (if you have one) will be able to advise you based on both your academic profile and their knowledge of how students from your school have fared in recent years during early application rounds for the school(s) you're considering. But, again, don't base your decision *only* on this information. Weigh your counselor's advice in the context of all the other factors you're weighing and make sure you're clear on how that school will help you explore and expand upon your core values.

- Oh, you thought you'd get out of this post without me mentioning the V word? Oh well.
- Wondering what to do next? Explore the wonderful world of demonstrated interest.
- But wait! That was a lot.
- You deserve a break.
- Stretch. Make a sandwich. Do a little dance. Or just think how great it'll be a year from now when you're at college.
- Tagged: early action colleges , early decision colleges , early application , single choice early action , restricted early action , early decision acceptance rates

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [August 2, 2020](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [How to Decide Whether to Apply Early Action \(EA\) or Early Decision \(ED\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [August 2, 2020](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [this spreadsheet compiled by Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy that aggregates the Early Decision and Regular Decision data for over 300 schools](#)
- [on our post](#)
- [Who is Early Decision best for in general?](#)
- [Net Price Calculator](#)
- [demonstrated interest.](#)
- [early action colleges](#)
- [early decision colleges](#)
- [early application](#)
- [single choice early action](#)
- [restricted early action](#)
- [early decision acceptance rates](#)

How to Write a College Essay Step-by-Step

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-write-a-college-essay>

■ Mục l■c n■i dung chính:

- One way to think of your college essay is as the heart of your application—as in, it helps an admissions officer see who you are, what you value, and what you bring to their campus and community.
- And before we talk you through how to write your college essay, we want to acknowledge something fairly strange about this process: namely, that this is a kind of writing that you’ve maybe never been asked to do before.
- In that sense, college essays are a bizarre bait-and-switch—in high school, you’re taught a few different ways to write (e.g., maybe some historical analysis, or how to analyze literature, or creative writing), and then to apply to college, you’re asked to write something fairly different (or maybe completely different) from any of the things you’ve been asked to write in high school.
- So first we’ll talk you through
 - the purpose of your college essay
 - and the degree to which it is important in your application (preview: it won’t be as important for some people as for others)
 - and then we’ll walk you step-by-step through how to write an essay that can help you stand out in the application process.
- Let’s dive in.
- TABLE OF CONTENTS (Click to scroll) Brainstorming your college essay topic How to structure & outline a college essay How to write a college essay using Montage structure The difference between a boring and a stand-out personal statement A quick word on “common” or “cliché” topics The “home” essay: a quick college essay case study Five (more) ways to find a thematic thread for your personal statement Montage essay structure FAQ’s How to write a college essay using Narrative structure Narrative essay structure FAQ’s
- This is your main essay. Your application centerpiece. The part of your application you’re likely to spend the most time on.
- Assuming you’re applying via the Common App (here’s our how-to guide for that), the personal statement is likely to be 500-650 words long (so about a page) and many of the colleges you’re applying to will require it. (If you’re applying to the UCs, you’ll need to write some totally different essays .)
- What’s a college essay’s purpose?
- Jennifer Blask, Executive Director for International Admissions at the University of Rochester, puts it beautifully: “So much of the college application is a recounting of things past—past grades, old classes, activities the student has participated in over several years. The essay is a chance for the student to share who they are now and what they will bring to our campus communities.”
- Basically, college admission officers are looking for three takeaways in your college essay:
 - Who is this person?
 - Will this person contribute something of value to our campus?
 - Can this person write?
- If you want to dig deeper into how admissions officers are thinking during the admissions process , or into what colleges look for in students , check out those two guides.
- That really depends on a lot of factors, but two of the biggest are the schools you’re applying to, and your academic profile. Here’s one way to think of the importance of essays:
 - Essays are less important if
 - You’re applying to “selective” colleges (around a 15-50% acceptance rate) and your academic profile is stronger than other applicants’
 - You’re applying in-state to large colleges, and/or to less competitive programs (e.g. you live in Sacramento and are applying to UC Riverside as an English major)
 - Essays are more important if
 - You’re applying to “highly-selective” aka “highly rejective”) colleges, meaning they have a less than 15% acceptance rate

- You're applying to "selective" colleges (around a 15-50% acceptance rate) but your academic profile isn't as strong as other applicants'
- You're applying to really competitive programs (for example, engineering and computer science at some schools have way, way more applicants than spots) and/or you're applying out-of-state to a state school system (e.g. you live in Montana and want to go to school at the University of Washington, and/or you want to study CS at UW).
- To illustrate further—CEG's Tom Campbell, who used to be an Assistant Dean of Admissions at Pomona, puts it this way: around 80% of the applicants to Pomona in a given year when he worked there were academically admissible. Meaning at schools like Pomona (with its 7ish% acceptance rate), grades and test scores don't really get you in—they just get your foot in the door.
- And an important thing to understand on that last note: if you get rejected from the "highly rejective" schools, it will tend to have a lot more to do with things like institutional priorities —some things in this process are out of your control.
- Below are the five exercises I have every student complete before I meet with them:
- Essence Objects Exercise : 12 min.
- Values Exercise : 4 min.
- 21 Details Exercise : 20 min.
- Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me Exercise : 20 min.
- The Feelings and Needs Exercise : 15-20 min.
- I recommend recording all the content from your exercises in one document to keep things neat. If you've been working as you go, you've already completed these, so make sure to do this step now. You can use our downloadable Google doc with these exercises if you'd like.
- At the start of the essay process, I ask students two questions:
- Have you faced significant challenges in your life?
- Do you want to write about them?
- Because here's an important qualifier:
- Even if you've faced challenges, you do not have to write about them in your personal statement.
- I mention this now because, in my experience, many students are under the impression that they have to write about challenges—that it's either expected, or that it's somehow better to do so.
- Neither is true. (And to be sure it's clear: you do not have to write about trauma in your college essay to stand out .)
- I've seen many, many incredible essays—ones that got students into every school you're hoping to get into—that had no central challenge.
- If your answer is "Maybe ... ?" because you're not sure what qualifies as a challenge, it's useful to think of challenges as being on a spectrum.
- On the weaker end of the spectrum would be things like getting a bad grade or not making X sports team. On the strong end of the spectrum would be things like escaping war. Being extremely shy but being responsible for translating for your family might be around a 3 or 4 out of 10. (Check this out if you want to read more about college essay topics to maybe avoid .)
- It's possible to use Narrative Structure to write about a challenge anywhere on the spectrum, but it's much, much harder to write an outstanding essay about a weaker challenge.
- Sometimes students pick the hardest challenge they've been through and try to make it sound worse than it actually was. Beware of pushing yourself to write about a challenge merely because you think these types of essays are inherently "better." Focusing myopically on one experience can sideline other brilliant and beautiful elements of your character.
- If you're still uncertain, don't worry. I'll help you decide what to focus on. But, for the sake of this blog post, answer those first two questions with a gut-level response.
- In the sections that follow, I'll introduce you to two structures: Narrative Structure, which works well for describing challenges, and Montage Structure, which works well for essays that aren't about challenges.
- Heads-up: Some students who have faced challenges find after reading that they prefer Montage Structure to Narrative Structure. Or vice versa. If you're uncertain which approach is best for you, I generally recommend experimenting with montage first; you can always go back and play with narrative.
- A montage is, simply put, a series of moments or story events connected by a common thematic thread.
- Well-known examples from movies include "training" montages, like those from *Mulan*, *Rocky*, or *Footloose*, or the "falling in love" montage from most romantic comedies. Or remember the opening to the Pixar movie *Up*? In just a few minutes, we learn the entire history of Carl and Ellie's relationship. One purpose is to communicate a lot of information fast. Another is to allow you to share a lot of different kinds of information, as the example essay below shows.
- Narrative Structure vs. Montage Structure explained in two sentences:

- In Narrative Structure, story events connect chronologically.
- In Montage Structure, story events connect thematically.
- Here's a metaphor to illustrate a montage approach:
- Imagine that each different part of you is a bead and that a select few will show up in your essay. They're not the kind of beads you'd find on a store-bought bracelet; they're more like the hand-painted beads on a bracelet your little brother made for you.
- The theme of your essay is the thread that connects your beads.
- You can find a thread in many, many different ways. One way we've seen students find great montage threads is by using the 5 Things Exercise . I'll get detailed on this a little bit later, but essentially, are there 5 thematically connected things that thread together different experiences/moments/events in your life? For example, are there 5 T-shirts you collected, or 5 homes or identities, or 5 entries in your Happiness Spreadsheet .
- And to clarify, your essay may end up using only 4 of the 5 things. Or maybe 8. But 5 is a nice number to aim for initially.
- Note the huge range of possible essay threads. To illustrate, here are some different "thread" examples that have worked well:
- Sports have had a powerful influence on me, from my understanding of history, to numbers, to my relationships, extracurricular activities, and even my career choice.
- I lived with 5 different families as an exchange student, and each one taught me something valuable that I'll carry with me to college.
- Crassulaceae plants, which can reproduce via stem or leaf fragments, are a great analogy for not only how I make art, but how I choose to live each day.
- Binary star systems are a metaphor for my relationship with my parents.
- I am "trans" in so many ways ... let me describe a few.
- To understand who I am, you must understand how I cook.
- Pranks have shaped my life in a variety of ways.
- The number 12 has influenced so much in my life, from my relationship to sports, to how I write, to my self-esteem.
- All of these threads stemmed from the brainstorming exercises in this post.
- We'll look at an example essay in a minute, but before we do, a word (well, a bunch of words) on how to build a stronger montage (and the basic concept here also applies to building stronger narratives).
- Imagine you're interviewing for a position as a fashion designer, and your interviewer asks you what qualities make you right for this position. Oh, and heads-up: That imaginary interviewer has already interviewed a hundred people today, so you'd best not roll up with, "because I've always loved clothes" or "because fashion helps me express my creativity." Why shouldn't you say those things? Because that's what everyone says.
- Many students are the same in their personal statements—they name cliché qualities/skills/values and don't push their reflections much further.
- Why is this a bad idea?
- Let me frame it this way:
- A boring personal statement chooses a common topic, makes common connections, and uses common language.
- A stand-out personal statement chooses an un common topic, makes un common connections, and uses un common language.
- Boring personal statement: I want to be a doctor (common topic) because I'm empathetic and I love helping people (common connections) and I really want to make the world a better place (common language).
- Better personal statement: I want to run a tech-startup (more uncommon topic) because I value humor, "leading from the battlefield," and stuff that makes me cry (uncommon connections for an essay on this topic), and because my journey to this place took me from being a scrawny 12-year-old kid to a scrawny 12-year-old man (uncommon language).
- Important: I'm not saying you should pick a weird topic/thread just so it'll help you stand out more on your essay. Be honest. But consider this: The more common your topic is ... the more un common your connections need to be if you want to stand out.
- What do I mean?
- For example, tons of students write doctor/lawyer/engineer essays; if you want to stand out, you need to say a few things that others don't tend to say.
- How do you figure out what to say? By making uncommon connections.
- They're the key to a stand-out essay.

- The following two-part exercise will help you do this.
- 2-minute exercise: Start with the cliché version of your essay.
- What would the cliché version of your essay focus on?
- If you're writing a "Why I want to be an engineer" essay, for example, what 3-5 common "engineering" values might other students have mentioned in connection with engineering? Use the Values Exercise for ideas.
- Collaboration? Efficiency? Hands-on work? Probably yes to all three.
- Once you've spent 2 minutes thinking up some common/cliché values, move onto the next step.
- 8-Minute Exercise: Brainstorm uncommon connections.
- For example, if your thread is "food" (which can lead to great essays, but is also a really common topic), push yourself beyond the common value of "health" and strive for unexpected values. How has cooking taught you about "accountability," for example, or "social change"? Why do this? We've already read the essay on how cooking helped the author become more aware of their health. An essay on how cooking allowed the author to become more accountable or socially aware would be less common.
- In a minute, we'll look at the "Laptop Stickers" essay. One thing that author discusses is activism. A typical "activist" essay might discuss public speaking or how the author learned to find their voice. A stand-out essay would go further, demonstrating, say, how a sense of humor supports activism. Perhaps it would describe a childhood community that prioritized culture-creation over culture-consumption, reflecting on how these experiences shaped the author's political views.
- And before you beg me for an "uncommon values" resource, I implore you to use your brilliant brain to dream up these connections. Plus, you aren't looking for uncommon values in general ; you're looking for values uncommonly associated with your topic/thread .
- Don't get me wrong ... I'm not saying you shouldn't list any common values, since some common values may be an important part of your story! In fact, the great essay examples throughout this book sometimes make use of common connections. I'm simply encouraging you to go beyond the obvious.
- Also note that a somewhat-common lesson (e.g., "I found my voice") can still appear in a stand-out essay. But if you choose this path, you'll likely need to use either an uncommon structure or next-level craft to create a stand-out essay.
- Where can you find ideas for uncommon qualities/skills/values?
- Here are four places:
- 1. The Values Exercise
- This is basically a huge list of qualities/skills/values that could serve you in a future career.
- 2. O*Net Online
- Go to www.onetonline.org and use the "occupation quick search" feature to search for your career. Once you do, a huge list will appear containing knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for your career. This is one of my favorite resources for this exercise.
- 3. School websites
- Go to a college's website and click on a major or group of majors that interest you. Sometimes they'll briefly summarize a major in terms of what skills it'll impart or what jobs it might lead to. Students are often surprised to discover how broadly major-related skills can apply.
- 4. Real humans
- Ask 3 people in this profession what unexpected qualities, values, or skills prepared them for their careers. Please don't simply use their answers as your own; allow their replies to inspire your brainstorming process.
- Once you've got a list of, say, 7-10 qualities, move on to the next step.
- Common personal statement topics include extracurricular activities (sports or musical instruments), service trips to foreign countries (aka the "mission trip" essay where the author realizes their privilege), sports injuries, family illnesses, deaths, divorce, the "meta" essay (e.g., "As I sit down to write my college essays, I think about..."), or someone who inspired you (common mistake: This usually ends up being more about them than you).
- While I won't say you should never write about these topics, if you do decide to write about one of these topics, the degree of difficulty goes way up. What do I mean? Essentially, you have to be one of the best "soccer" essays or "mission trip" essays among the hundreds the admission officer has likely read (and depending on the school, maybe the hundreds they've read this year). So it makes it much more difficult to stand out.
- How do you stand out? A cliché is all in how you tell the story. So, if you do choose a common topic, work to make uncommon connections (i.e., offer unexpected narrative turns or connections to values), provide uncommon insights (i.e., say stuff we don't expect you to say) or uncommon language (i.e., phrase things in a way we haven't heard before).

- Or explore a different topic. You are infinitely complex and imaginative.
- My laptop is like a passport. It is plastered with stickers all over the outside, inside, and bottom. Each sticker is a stamp, representing a place I've been, a passion I've pursued, or community I've belonged to. These stickers make for an untraditional first impression at a meeting or presentation, but it's one I'm proud of. Let me take you on a quick tour:
- "We <3 Design ," bottom left corner. Art has been a constant for me for as long as I can remember. Today my primary engagement with art is through design. I've spent entire weekends designing websites and social media graphics for my companies. Design means more to me than just branding and marketing; it gives me the opportunity to experiment with texture, perspective, and contrast, helping me refine my professional style.
- "Common Threads ," bottom right corner. A rectangular black and red sticker displaying the theme of the 2017 TEDxYouth@Austin event. For years I've been interested in the street artists and musicians in downtown Austin who are so unapologetically themselves. As a result, I've become more open-minded and appreciative of unconventional lifestyles. TED gives me the opportunity to help other youth understand new perspectives, by exposing them to the diversity of Austin where culture is created, not just consumed.
- Poop emoji , middle right. My 13-year-old brother often sends his messages with the poop emoji 'echo effect,' so whenever I open a new message from him, hundreds of poops elegantly cascade across my screen. He brings out my goofy side, but also helps me think rationally when I am overwhelmed. We don't have the typical "I hate you, don't talk to me" siblinghood (although occasionally it would be nice to get away from him); we're each other's best friends. Or at least he's mine.
- "Lol ur not Harry Styles ," upper left corner. Bought in seventh grade and transferred from my old laptop, this sticker is torn but persevering with layers of tape. Despite conveying my fangirl-y infatuation with Harry Styles' boyband, One Direction, for me Styles embodies an artist-activist who uses his privilege for the betterment of society. As a \$42K donor to the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, a hair donor to the Little Princess Trust, and promoter of LGBTQ+ equality, he has motivated me to be a more public activist instead of internalizing my beliefs.
- "Catapult ," middle right. This is the logo of a startup incubator where I launched my first company, Threading Twine. I learned that business can provide others access to fundamental human needs, such as economic empowerment of minorities and education. In my career, I hope to be a corporate advocate for the empowerment of women, creating large-scale impact and deconstructing institutional boundaries that obstruct women from working in high-level positions. Working as a women's rights activist will allow me to engage in creating lasting movements for equality, rather than contributing to a cycle that elevates the stances of wealthy individuals.
- "Thank God it's Monday ," sneakily nestled in the upper right corner. Although I attempt to love all my stickers equally (haha), this is one of my favorites. I always want my association with work to be positive.
- And there are many others, including the horizontal, yellow stripes of the Human Rights Campaign ; "The Team ," a sticker from the Model G20 Economics Summit where I collaborated with youth from around the globe; and stickers from "Kode with Klossy ," a community of girls working to promote women's involvement in underrepresented fields.
- When my computer dies (hopefully not for another few years), it will be like my passport expiring. It'll be difficult leaving these moments and memories behind, but I probably won't want these stickers in my 20s anyways (except Harry Styles, that's never leaving). My next set of stickers will reveal my next set of aspirations. They hold the key to future paths I will navigate, knowledge I will gain, and connections I will make.
- Cool, huh? And see what I mean about how you can write a strong personal statement without focusing on challenges you've faced?
- Going back to that "thread and beads" metaphor with the "My Laptop Sticker" essay:
- The "beads" are the different experiences that link to the values of creativity, open-mindedness, humor, courage, and entrepreneurialism.
- The "thread" (i.e., the theme that ties everything together) is her laptop stickers. Each one represents a quality of the author's personality. Actually, there's a second thematic thread: Those qualities will also serve her in her women's rights activism. Bonus!
- The outline that got her there
- Here's the outline for the "My Laptop Stickers" essay. Notice how each bullet point discusses a value or values, connected to different experiences via her thread, and sets up the insights she could explore. (Insight, though, is the toughest part of the writing process, and will probably take the most revision, so it's fine if you don't have great insights in an outline or first draft. But you'll want to get to them by your final draft.)

- She found this thread essentially by using The Five Things Exercise in conjunction with the other brainstorming exercises.
- Thread = Laptop Stickers
- We <3 Design → art, design, experimentation
- Details: spent weekend designing websites, graphics for my companies
- Possible insight: Developed my own style
- Common Threads → authenticity, open-mindedness
- Details: Street artists, musicians in Austin
- Possible insight: Creating not just consuming culture
- Poop emoji → family, goofy side
- Details: Brother, interactions, thinking rationally
- Possible insight: Connection/vulnerability
- Lol ur not Harry Styles → equality, activism, confidence
- Details: Various activism as motivation/reminder to act vs just internalize
- Possible insight: My growth with acting/speaking up
- Catapult → entrepreneurship, social justice, awareness, meaningful work
- Details: Threaded Twine, women's rights, breaking cycles
- Possible insight: Discovered my career
- Thank God it's Monday → enjoyable work
- Possible insight: Importance of experience/framing
- Possible insight: Want work to always be this way
- The Team → collaboration
- Details: Model G20 Econ Summit, group collaboration
- Kode with Klossy → community, social justice
- Details: Promoting women in underrepresented fields
- Okay, so if you're on board so far, here's what you need:
- Some stuff to write about (ideally 4-10 things) that will make up the "beads" of your essay, and
- Something to connect all the different "beads" (like a connective theme or thread)
- First, let's talk about ...
- How to generate lots of 'stuff' to write about (aka the beads for your bracelet)
- Complete all the brainstorming exercises.
- Already did that? Great! Move on!
- Didn't do that? Go back, complete the exercises, and then ...
- Case study: How to find a theme for your personal statement (aka the thread that connects the beads of your bracelet)
- Let's look at an example of how I helped one student find her essay thread, then I'll offer you some exercises to help you find your own.
- First, take a look at this student's Essence Objects and 21 Details:
- My Essence Objects
- Bojangle's Tailgate Special/Iced Tea
- Light blue fuzzy blanket
- A box containing my baby tooth
- Gold bracelet from my grandfather
- Orange, worn Nike Free Run Sneakers
- Duke basketball game ticket
- Palestine flag rubber wristband/ISEF Lanyard
- Friendship bracelet
- A pair of headphones
- Yin-yang symbol
- Worn, green Governor's School East lanyard
- My 21 Details
- I've been known to have terrible spatial awareness despite being a dancer. Just last week, my shoelace got caught in an escalator and I tripped about 20 people.
- Zumba and kickboxing are my favorite forms of exercise and I'm hopefully going to become certified to teach Zumba soon.
- I have misophonia--sometimes I even have to eat dinner in a different room from my family.
- My go-to drinks are Hi-C and Sweet Tea.
- I became a pescatarian this year to avoid fried chicken, and I can honestly get a life's worth of meat out of cod, salmon, tilapia, shrimp, you name it.

- I collect funky socks--at this point, I have socks with tacos, snowmen, Santa, and even animals wearing glasses.
- I've gotten different Myers-Briggs personality types every time I took the test. The most recent ones are ENFJ and ENFP.
- I have no immediate relatives in America besides my mom, dad, and sister.
- I am a diehard Duke basketball fan, and I can identify all of the Duke basketball fans at my high school on one hand.
- I love discussing psychology, but sometimes I psychoanalyze.
- Singing while driving is honestly one of my favorite pastimes.
- My alarm for school every morning is at 5:42 am.
- I hope to complete a half and full marathon within the next four years, despite not having run a 5k yet.
- I realized the tooth fairy wasn't real after I lost my second tooth, but I pretended that I still believed in it until I was in 5th grade for the tooth fairy's "gifts".
- I could eat fruits for every single meal.
- I don't do well with confrontation.
- Airports are hands-down my favorite place to be, but I hate airplanes.
- If I'm not busy or working, you can usually find me in my hammock in the backyard.
- I find that I form the deepest connections with people after 12am.
- Sometimes, I like TV spoilers.
- How this author found her thematic thread
- When I met with this student for the first time, I began asking questions about her objects and details: "What's up with the Bojangle's Iced Tea? What's meaningful to you about the Governor's School East lanyard? Tell me about your relationship to dance ..."
- We were thread-finding ... searching for an invisible connective [something] that would allow her to talk about different parts of her life.
- Heads-up: Some people are really good at this—counselors are often great at this—while some folks have a more difficult time. Good news: When you practice the skill of thread-finding, you can become better at it rather quickly.
- You should also know that sometimes it takes minutes to find a thread and sometimes it can take weeks. With this student, it took less than an hour.
- I noticed in our conversation that she kept coming back to things that made her feel comfortable. She also repeated the word "home" several times. When I pointed this out, she asked me, "Do you think I could use 'home' as a thread for my essay?"
- "I think you could," I said.
- Read her essay below, then I'll share more about how you can find your own thematic thread.
- As I enter the double doors, the smell of freshly rolled biscuits hits me almost instantly. I trace the fan blades as they swing above me, emitting a low, repetitive hum resembling a faint melody. After bringing our usual order, the "Tailgate Special," to the table, my father begins discussing the recent performance of Apple stock with my mother, myself, and my older eleven year old sister. Bojangle's, a Southern establishment well known for its fried chicken and reliable fast food, is my family's Friday night restaurant, often accompanied by trips to Eva Perry, the nearby library. With one hand on my breaded chicken and the other on Nancy Drew: Mystery of Crocodile Island, I can barely sit still as the thriller unfolds. They're imprisoned! Reptiles! Not the enemy's boat! As I delve into the narrative with a sip of sweet tea, I feel at home.
- "Five, six, seven, eight!" As I shout the counts, nineteen dancers grab and begin to spin the tassels attached to their swords while walking heel-to-toe to the next formation of the classical Chinese sword dance. A glance at my notebook reveals a collection of worn pages covered with meticulously planned formations, counts, and movements. Through sharing videos of my performances with my relatives or discovering and choreographing the nuances of certain regional dances and their reflection on the region's distinct culture, I deepen my relationship with my parents, heritage, and community. When I step on stage, the hours I've spent choreographing, creating poses, teaching, and polishing are all worthwhile, and the stage becomes my home.
- Set temperature. Calibrate. Integrate. Analyze. Set temperature. Calibrate. Integrate. Analyze. This pulse mimics the beating of my heart, a subtle rhythm that persists each day I come into the lab. Whether I am working under the fume hood with platinum nanoparticles, manipulating raw integration data, or spraying a thin platinum film over pieces of copper, it is in Lab 304 in Hudson Hall that I first feel the distinct sensation, and I'm home. After spending several weeks attempting to synthesize platinum nanoparticles with a diameter between 10 and 16 nm, I finally achieve nanoparticles with a diameter of 14.6 nm after carefully monitoring the sulfuric acid bath. That unmistakable tingling sensation dances up my arm as I

scribble into my notebook: I am overcome with a feeling of unbridled joy.

- Styled in a t-shirt, shorts, and a worn, dark green lanyard, I sprint across the quad from the elective 'Speaking Arabic through the Rassias Method' to 'Knitting Nirvana'. This afternoon is just one of many at Governor's School East, where I have been transformed from a high school student into a philosopher, a thinker, and an avid learner. While I attend GS at Meredith College for Natural Science, the lessons learned and experiences gained extend far beyond physics concepts, serial dilutions, and toxicity. I learn to trust myself to have difficult yet necessary conversations about the political and economic climate. Governor's School breeds a culture of inclusivity and multidimensionality, and I am transformed from "girl who is hardworking" or "science girl" to someone who indulges in the sciences, debates about psychology and the economy, and loves to swing and salsa dance. As I form a slip knot and cast on, I'm at home.
- My home is a dynamic and eclectic entity. Although I've lived in the same house in Cary, North Carolina for 10 years, I have found and carved homes and communities that are filled with and enriched by tradition, artists, researchers, and intellectuals. While I may not always live within a 5 mile radius of a Bojangle's or in close proximity to Lab 304, learning to become a more perceptive daughter and sister, to share the beauty of my heritage, and to take risks and redefine scientific and personal expectations will continue to impact my sense of home.
- Rad essay, huh?
- But here's the question I get most often about this technique: How do I find my thematic thread?
- 1. The "Bead-Making" Exercise (5-8 min.)
- In the example above, we started with the beads, and then we searched for a thread. This exercise asks you to start with the thread of something you know well and then create the beads. Here's how it works:
- Step 1: On a blank sheet of paper, make a list of five or six things you know a lot about.
- For example, I know a lot about ...
- Words/language
- Productivity
- Voices/accents
- Self-help books
- If you can only think of 3 or 4, that's okay.
- Step 2: Pick one of the things you wrote down, flip your paper over, and write it at the top of your paper, like this:
- This is your thread, or a potential thread.
- Step 3: Underneath what you wrote down, name 5-6 values you could connect to this. These will serve as the beads of your essay. You can even draw a thread connecting your beads, if you want, like this:
- Step 4: For each value, write down a specific example, memory, image, or essence object that connects to that value. Example:
- My thread: Games
- My beads: Connection, creativity, fun/laughter, family, competition, knowledge
- Here are my examples/memories/images/essence objects:
- Connection: One memory I have is playing "I love" in a circle at camp with 20 friends and strangers. I still marvel at how quickly it helped us bond.
- Creativity: After I understand how a game works, I like to try to improve it by tweaking the rules. Two examples: 1) I remember when I was young trying to find the right amount of money for the Free Parking space in Monopoly, and 2) recently, I learned the game Guesstimation is so much better if you add wagers. I see my 4-year-old daughter tweaks games too, which drives my wife crazy, as she likes to play by the rules of the game.
- Fun/laughter: As I've aged, so much of my life has become planned/programmed, but I can still enjoy losing track of time with board games. Two weeks ago, for example, I laughed so hard I cried while playing Drawful with Lisa, Andy, and Sage.
- Family: We played games like Charades and Jeopardy when I was young. (My dad was the Game Master who would come up with the categories. As I grew older, I took over the role of Game Master.)
- Competition: People don't know this about me because I seem so chill, but I am incredibly competitive. Things I rarely lose at: ping pong, Tetris, foosball, and corn hole. I've gotten much better over the years at hiding my competitive side, but it's still there.
- Knowledge: Can't really think of much on this one—maybe something related to Jeopardy?
- This is an actual brainstorm I did using this exercise.
- And, as I write these things down, I notice a theme of youth/old age emerging. Games have changed for me as I've gotten older. Note that I couldn't come up with something for the last one, "knowledge," which is fine.

- The point is this: If you know a thing well, odds are good you'll be able to make a lot of connections to your values. And if you can find specific examples for each value, that can make for interesting paragraphs in your personal statement.
- If you're willing to spend a few more minutes, ask "so what?" of each example to see if a specific insight emerges.
- And, in case you want a formula for what I'm describing, here you go:
- Once you've written down the values and at least one example (e.g., a memory, image, essence object) for each bead, see if you have enough content for an essay.
- Still haven't found your theme? Here are ...
- 2. The "Five Things" Exercise
- (Special thanks to my colleague, Dori Middlebrook, for this one.)
- I mentioned this when we first started talking about Montage Structure. Similar to the "bead-making" exercise above, you identify the thread first and then develop the beads.
- Step 1: Write down 5 similar things that are meaningful to you in different ways.
- Examples: Five Pairs of Shoes I've Worn, Five Houses I've Lived In, Five Photographs in My Room, Five Ways Cooking Has Influenced Me, etc.
- Step 2: Begin by simply naming the 5 different items.
- Example: High-top tennis shoes, flip-flops, heels, cleats, bunny slippers
- Step 3: Add physical details so we can visualize each one.
- Step 4: Add more details. Maybe tell a story for each.
- Pro tip: Try connecting each of the 5 to a different value.
- Step 5: Expand on each description further and start to connect the ideas to develop them into an essay draft.
- 3. Thread-finding with a partner
- Grab someone who knows you well (e.g., a counselor, friend, family member). Share all your brainstorming content with them and ask them to mirror back to you what they're seeing. It can be helpful if they use reflective language and ask lots of questions. An example of a reflective observation is: "I'm hearing that 'building' has been pretty important in your life ... is that right?" You're hunting together for a thematic thread—something that might connect different parts of your life and self.
- 4. Thread-finding with photographs
- Pick 10 of your favorite photos or social media posts and write a short paragraph on each one. Why'd you pick these photos? What do they say about you? Then ask yourself, "What are some things these photos have in common?" Bonus points: Can you find one thing that connects all of them?
- 5. Reading lots of montage example essays that work
- You'll find some here , here , and here . While you may be tempted to steal those thematic threads, don't. Try finding your own. Have the courage to be original. You can do it.
- Q: How do I work in extracurricular activities in a tasteful way (so it doesn't seem like I'm bragging)?
- A: Some counselors caution, with good reason, against naming extracurricular activities/experiences in your personal statement. (It can feel redundant with your Activities List.) You actually can mention them , just make sure you do so in context of your essay's theme. Take another look at the eighth paragraph of the "My Laptop Stickers" essay above, for example:
- And there are many [other stickers], including the horizontal, yellow stripes of the Human Rights Campaign; "The Team," a sticker from the Model G20 Economics Summit where I collaborated with youth from around the globe; and stickers from "Kode with Klossy," a community of girls working to promote women's involvement in underrepresented fields.
- A description of these extracurricular activities may have sounded like a laundry list of the author's accomplishments. But because she's naming other stickers (which connects them to the essay's thematic thread), she basically gets to name-drop those activities while showing other parts of her life. Nice.
- One more way to emphasize a value is to combine or disguise it with humor. Example: "Nothing teaches patience (and how to tie shoes really fast) like trying to wrangle 30 first-graders by yourself for 10 hours per week," or "I've worked three jobs, but I've never had to take more crap from my bosses than I did this past summer while working at my local veterinarian's office."
- In each of these examples, the little bit of humor covers the brag. Each is basically pointing out that the author had to work a lot and it wasn't always fun. No need to push this humor thing, though. Essays don't need to be funny to be relatable, and if the joke doesn't come naturally, it might come across as trying too hard.
- Q: How do I transition between examples so my essay "flows" well?
- A: The transitions are the toughest part of this essay type. Fine-tuning them will take some time, so be patient. One exercise I love is called Revising Your Essay in 5 Steps , and it basically works like this:

- Highlight the first sentence of each of your paragraphs in bold, then read each one aloud in order. Do they connect, creating a short version of your essay? If not:
- Rewrite the bold sentences so that they do connect (i.e., flow) together. Once you've done that ...
- Rewrite each paragraph so it flows from those bolded sentences.
- Read them aloud again. Wash, rinse, repeat until the ideas flow together.
- This is a great way to figure out the "bones" (i.e., structure) of your essay.
- Q: What am I looking for again?
- A: You're looking for two things:
- Parts of yourself that are essential to who you are (e.g., values or "islands of your personality"), and
- A theme that connects them all.
- Your theme could be something mundane (like your desk) or something everyone can relate to (like the concept of home), but make sure that it is elastic (i.e. can connect to many different parts of you) and visual, as storytelling made richer with images.
- Each of the values creates an island of your personality and a paragraph for your essay.
- Montage step-by-step recap:
- Review your brainstorming exercises and look for threads that connect 4-7 different values through 4-7 different experiences.
- Choose an order for your examples. Consider describing one example per paragraph.
- Create an outline.
- Write a first draft. Once you do ...
- Consider using the Revising Your Essay in 5 Steps Exercise to clarify your transitions.
- Q: This is hard! I'm not finding it yet and I want to give up. What should I do?
- A: Don't give up! Remember: be patient. This takes time. If you need inspiration, or assurance that you're on the right track, check out Elizabeth Gilbert's TED Talk, "Your Elusive Creative Genius."
- All right, moving on.
- If you answered "yes" to both questions at the beginning of this guide, I recommend exploring Narrative Structure. I'll explain this in more detail below.
- My favorite content-generating exercise for Narrative Structure is the Feelings and Needs Exercise. It takes about 20 minutes (but do feel free to take longer—more time brainstorming and outlining leads to better, faster writing). Here's how it works:
- Time : 15-20 minutes
- Instructions : You'll find them here.
- If you haven't completed the exercise, please do it now.
- (And this is a dramatic pause before I tell you the coolest thing about what you just did.)
- You may notice that your completed Feelings and Needs chart maps out a potential structure for your personal statement. If you're not seeing it, try turning your paper so that the challenges are at the top of your page and the effects are below them.
- Voila. A rough outline for a narrative essay.
- To clarify, this isn't a perfect way to outline an essay. You may not want to spend an entire paragraph describing your feelings, for example, or you may choose to describe your needs in just one sentence. And now that you see how it frames the story, you may want to expand on certain columns. However, the sideways Feelings and Needs chart can help you think about how the chronology of your experiences might translate into a personal statement.
- Here's an essay that one student wrote after completing this exercise:
- It was the first Sunday of April. My siblings and I were sitting at the dinner table giggling and spelling out words in our alphabet soup. The phone rang and my mother answered. It was my father; he was calling from prison in Oregon.
- My father had been stopped by immigration on his way to Yakima, Washington, where he'd gone in search of work. He wanted to fulfill a promise he'd made to my family of owning our own house with a nice little porch and a dog.
- Fortunately, my father was bailed out of prison by a family friend in Yakima. Unfortunately, though, most of our life savings was spent on his bail. We moved into a rented house, and though we did have a porch, it wasn't ours. My father went from being a costurero (sewing worker) to being a water-filter salesman, mosaic tile maker, lemon deliverer, and butcher.
- Money became an issue at home, so I started helping out more. After school I'd rush home to clean up and make dinner. My parents refused to let me have a "real" job, so on Saturday afternoons I'd go to the park with my older brother to collect soda cans. Sundays and summertime were spent cleaning houses with my mother.

- I worked twice as hard in school. I helped clean my church, joined the choir, and tutored my younger sister in math. As tensions eased at home, I returned to cheerleading, joined a school club called Step Up , and got involved in my school's urban farm, where I learned the value of healthy eating. Slowly, life improved. Then I received some life-changing news.
- My father's case was still pending and, due to a form he'd signed when he was released in Yakima, it was not only him that was now in danger of being deported, it was my entire family. My father's lawyer informed me that I'd have to testify in court and in fact our stay in the US was now dependent on my testimony.
- The lawyer had an idea: I had outstanding grades and recommendation letters. If we could show the judge the importance of my family remaining here to support my education, perhaps we had a chance. So I testified.
- My father won his case and was granted residency.
- Living in a low-income immigrant household has taught me to appreciate all I've been given. Testifying in court helped me grow as a person, has made me more open-minded and aware of the problems facing my community. And my involvement in the urban farm has led me to consider a career as a nutritionist.
- Though neither of my parents attended college, they understand that college is a key factor to a bright future and therefore have been very supportive. And though we don't yet have the house with the small porch and the dog, we're still holding out hope.
- I believe college can help.
- I share this essay with you not only because it's a super awesome essay that illustrates how the Feelings and Needs Exercise can structure an essay, but also because it offers a beautiful example of...
- You can think of a narrative essay as having three basic sections: Challenges + Effects ; What I Did About It ; What I Learned . Your word count will be pretty evenly split between the three, so for a 650-word personal statement, 200ish each.
- To get a little more nuanced, within those three basic sections, a narrative often has a few specific story beats. There are plenty of narratives that employ different elements (for example, collectivist societies often tell stories in which there isn't one central main character/hero, but it seems hard to write a college personal statement that way, since you're the focus here). You've seen these beats before—most Hollywood films use elements of this structure, for example.
- Status Quo : The starting point of the story. This briefly describes the life or world of the main character (in your essay, that's you).
- The Inciting Incident : The event that disrupts the Status Quo. Often it's the worst thing that could happen to the main character. It gets us to wonder: Uh-oh ... what will they do next? or How will they solve this problem?
- Raising the Stakes/Rising Action : Builds suspense. The situation becomes more and more tense, decisions become more important, and our main character has more and more to lose.
- Moment of Truth : The climax. Often this is when our main character must make a choice.
- New Status Quo : The denouement or falling action. This often tells us why the story matters or what our main character has learned. Think of these insights or lessons as the answer to the big "so what?" question.
- For example, take a look at "The Little Porch and a Dog" essay above.
- Notice that roughly the first third focuses on the challenges she faced and the effects of those challenges.
- Roughly the next third focuses on actions she took regarding those challenges. (Though she also sprinkles in lessons and insight here.)
- The final third contains lessons and insights she learned through those actions, reflecting on how her experiences have shaped her. (Again, with the caveat that What She Did and What She Learned are somewhat interwoven, and yours likely will be as well. But the middle third is more heavily focused on actions, and the final third more heavily focused on insight.)
- And within those three sections, notice the beats of her story: Status Quo, The Inciting Incident, Raising the Stakes/Rising Action, Moment of Truth, New Status Quo.
- How does the Feelings and Needs Exercise map onto those sections?
- Pretty directly.
- At the risk of stating the blatantly obvious, The Challenges and Effects columns of the Feelings and Needs Exercise ... are the Challenges + Effects portion of your essay. Same with What I Did and What I Learned.
- The details in your Feelings and Needs columns can be spread throughout the essay. And it's important to note that it's useful to discuss some of your feelings and needs directly, but some will be implied.
- For example, here's the Feelings and Needs Exercise map of the "Little Porch and a Dog" essay. And I know I just mentioned this, but I want you to notice something that's so important, I'm writing it in bold: The

author doesn't explicitly name every single effect, feeling, or need in her essay . Why not? First, she's working within a 650-word limit. Second, she makes room for her reader's inferences, which can often make a story more powerful. Take a look:

- Challenge 1 : Her father is arrested.
- Challenge 2 : Her family faces financial difficulties.
- Effects : Loss of life savings. Move into rented house. Father had to jump from job to job.
- Feelings : Fear of potential impacts on father's deportation. Desire to help support family. Anxiety around testifying.
- Needs : As I read this essay, I can imagine the author needed safety, order, love, respect, reassurance, connection, and many more. But these are implied by the story events and need not be explicitly stated. In fact, spelling these things out might have made the essay sound weird. Imagine if she'd said, "I needed safety and order" at the end of the first paragraph and "I needed respect, reassurance, and connection" at the end of the second paragraph. That might sound awkward or too obvious, right? While identifying your needs is a great tool for understanding your story (and self) on a deeper level, there's no need to explicitly state them at each juncture.
- What She Did About It : Lots of things: collected soda cans, cleaned houses, worked hard in school, cleaned church, joined choir, tutored younger sister, joined Step Up , urban farmed, testified in court.
- What She's Learned/Gained : She found a sense of purpose and appreciation, became more open-minded and community focused, developed a potential career interest in nutrition.
- Cool. Here's another narrative example:
- At six years old, I stood locked away in the restroom. I held tightly to a tube of toothpaste because I'd been sent to brush my teeth to distract me from the commotion. Regardless, I knew what was happening: my dad was being put under arrest for domestic abuse. He'd hurt my mom physically and mentally, and my brother Jose and I had shared the mental strain. It's what had to be done.
- Living without a father meant money was tight, mom worked two jobs, and my brother and I took care of each other when she worked. For a brief period of time the quality of our lives slowly started to improve as our soon-to-be step-dad became an integral part of our family. He paid attention to the needs of my mom, my brother, and me. But our prosperity was short-lived as my step dad's chronic alcoholism became more and more recurrent. When I was eight, my younger brother Fernando's birth complicated things even further. As my step-dad slipped away, my mom continued working, and Fernando's care was left to Jose and me. I cooked, Jose cleaned, I dressed Fernando, Jose put him to bed. We did what we had to do.
- As undocumented immigrants and with little to no family around us, we had to rely on each other. Fearing that any disclosure of our status would risk deportation, we kept to ourselves when dealing with any financial and medical issues. I avoided going on certain school trips, and at times I was discouraged to even meet new people. I felt isolated and at times disillusioned; my grades started to slip.
- Over time, however, I grew determined to improve the quality of life for my family and myself.
- Without a father figure to teach me the things a father could, I became my own teacher. I learned how to fix a bike, how to swim, and even how to talk to girls. I became resourceful, fixing shoes with strips of duct tape, and I even found a job to help pay bills. I became as independent as I could to lessen the time and money mom had to spend raising me.
- I also worked to apply myself constructively in other ways. I worked hard and took my grades from Bs and Cs to consecutive straight A's. I shattered my school's 100M breaststroke record, and learned how to play the clarinet, saxophone, and the oboe. Plus, I not only became the first student in my school to pass the AP Physics 1 exam, I'm currently pioneering my school's first AP Physics 2 course ever.
- These changes inspired me to help others. I became president of the California Scholarship Federation, providing students with information to prepare them for college, while creating opportunities for my peers to play a bigger part in our community. I began tutoring kids, teens, and adults on a variety of subjects ranging from basic English to home improvement and even Calculus. As the captain of the water polo and swim team I've led practices crafted to individually push my comrades to their limits, and I've counseled friends through circumstances similar to mine. I've done tons, and I can finally say I'm proud of that.
- But I'm excited to say that there's so much I have yet to do. I haven't danced the tango, solved a Rubix Cube, explored how perpetual motion might fuel space exploration, or seen the World Trade Center. And I have yet to see the person that Fernando will become.
- I'll do as much as I can from now on. Not because I have to. Because I choose to.
- There's so much to love about this essay.
- Here's a behind-the-scenes look at how the author wrote this essay so you can figure out how to write yours:
- First, the author brainstormed the content of his essay using the Feelings and Needs Exercise.
- Did you spot the elements of that exercise? If not, here they are:

- Challenges: Domestic abuse, alcoholic step-dad, little brother Fernando's birth, family's undocumented status
- Effects: Author and his brother shared the mental strain, father was arrested, funds were tight, mom worked two jobs, brothers took care of one another, they kept to themselves when dealing with financial and medical issues, avoided going on certain school trips, at times author was discouraged from meeting new people, grades started to slip
- Feelings: Confused yet understanding, anxious, worried, relieved, alone, lost, vulnerable, lonely, disconnected, alone, heartbroken, ashamed, disillusioned
- Needs: Order, autonomy, reassurance, growth, safety, understanding, empathy, hope, support, self-acceptance
- What He Did About It: Took care of his youngest brother; became his own teacher; learned how to fix a bike, swim, socialize; found a job to help pay bills; improved his grades; broke a school swimming record; learned to play instruments; became the first student in his school to pass the AP Physics 1 exam; took a leadership role in clubs; and tutored and counseled friends and peers
- What He Learned: He's proud of what he's done, but wants to do more: dance the tango, solve a Rubix Cube, explore perpetual motion, see the World Trade Center, see his little brother grow up ... and do you notice the value here? Hunger . That was his number one value, by the way. And he ends by saying he'll do these things not because he has to, but because he chooses to. This sounds like autonomy . Another one of his top values.
- That's why I love beginning with this exercise. With just 15-20 minutes of focused work, you can map out your whole story.
- Next, the author used Narrative Structure to give shape to his essay.
- Did you spot the Narrative Structure elements? If not, here they are:
- Inciting Incident: While the author is brushing his teeth, his father is arrested for domestic abuse.
- Status Quo: His father had hurt his mom physically and mentally, and the author and his brother had shared the mental strain. "It's what had to be done," he writes.
- Raising the Stakes: The entire second and third paragraphs, which describe how living without a father meant money was tight. Things improved for a while after his mother remarried, but his stepdad's chronic alcoholism (raise the stakes) plus a new little brother (raise the stakes again) made things even tougher. As if that weren't enough, the author raises the stakes even further by revealing that his family was undocumented at the time.
- Moment of Truth: At his lowest point, he decides to do something about it. "I grew determined to improve the quality of life for my family and myself," he writes, then goes on to tell us all the amazing things he taught himself, the skills he learned, and interests he pursued. It's inspiring.
- New Status Quo: Remember that the initial Status Quo was the author doing "what had to be done." Not so, by the end of the essay. In the final lines, he writes, "I'll do as much as I can from now on. Not because I have to. Because I choose to."
- And again, notice that those fit within the framework of:
- ■: Challenges he faced and their impacts on him
- ■: What he did to work through them
- ■: What he learned through the process
- Q: Are there any situations where I may not want to write about my life struggles?
- A: Yes. Sometimes it can be too difficult to discuss them. Or you may be actively dealing with a challenge. If this is the case, reach out to your counselor, a trusted mentor, or, if possible, a therapist.
- If money is an issue (i.e., you feel you can't afford a therapist) and you don't feel comfortable sharing your struggles with your counselor, ask them if they can refer you to a therapist or counselor who works on a sliding scale. Many mental health professionals work with clients at low rates or for free.
- You may also choose to write about the struggles you've faced without getting into all the details. Saying, for example, that you experienced verbal abuse from your father, for example, may be enough; you don't necessarily need to share the specifics.
- Q: Should I write about mental health challenges?
- A: Mental health can be very difficult to write about for a few reasons:
- If a student is still very much struggling through the challenges they describe, the admission reader may wonder if the student is ready for college.
- In some cases, the admission officer may feel that a student is ready for college, but their institution may not be adequately equipped to help them thrive (not all colleges have the same kinds of resources, unfortunately).
- Unfortunately, mental health challenges have become so common these days that many students write personal statements about them, and so it can be difficult to stand out. If you're feeling compelled to write

about a mental health challenge, consider brainstorming some uncommon connections .

- Questions to ask yourself if you're considering writing about mental health challenges:
- Do I have any other topics I could write on? Are there other interesting parts of myself I'd like to share that could reveal important skills, qualities, and values? Or must I write about this? (Beware the trap discussed earlier of feeling like you must write about a challenge to write a great personal statement—it's not true! The authors of the " My Laptop Stickers" essay the "Home" essay were students who faced challenges but chose not to write about them.)
- Have I truly worked through this? Am I able to devote the middle third of my essay to actions I've taken to work through the challenge and the final third to what I've learned? (You may not know the answers to these questions until you've done some writing. Maybe run your challenge through the Feelings and Needs Exercise to see what surfaces. Even if this doesn't end up being your personal statement topic, you might learn something important about yourself.)
- If I were an admission officer reading this essay, would I feel like this student has their situation handled and they are truly ready for college? (If you're unsure, it's a great idea to have 2-3 folks read it who have a good understanding of what colleges are looking for.)
- Could the mental health challenge be a brief explanation in the Additional Info section? To see if this might work for you, see how briefly you can describe your mental health challenge using factual bullet points. Devote one bullet point to the challenge, another bullet point to what you've done about it, and a final bullet point describing briefly what you've learned.
- Important: If you have a counselor, I strongly recommend consulting with them as you decide whether to discuss a mental health challenge in your personal statement. If your counselor is writing a letter on your behalf, some of the information you'd like to share may already be accounted for. Talk to them and find out.
- Q: Are there any situations where I may not want to write about my career in my personal statement ... even if I know what it is?
- A: For sure. Say you're interested in becoming a doctor, but you're applying to a medical program with a supplemental prompt asking why you want to become a doctor. If you want to avoid repetition, you might not explicitly mention becoming a doctor at the end of your personal statement (you don't have to discuss your career at all in a personal statement; many students are unsure.). Instead, you might describe how you've developed qualities that will equip you for a career as a doctor (e.g., creativity, for example, or the ability to lead a team).
- Narrative Structure step-by-step recap :
- Complete the brainstorming exercises, as these will help no matter which structure you choose. Take special care to complete the Feelings and Needs Exercise, as it will help you outline your essay.
- Create an outline using the Narrative Structure described above.
- Write a first draft.
- Check out my blog for more Narrative Structure examples.
- Tagged: college essay tips , how to write a college essay

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [March 17, 2020](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [How to Write a College Essay: The Ultimate Step-by-Step Guide](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [March 17, 2020](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
-
- [Brainstorming your college essay topic](#)

- [How to structure & outline a college essay](#)
- [How to write a college essay using Montage structure](#)
- [The difference between a boring and a stand-out personal statement](#)
- [A quick word on “common” or “cliché” topics](#)
- [The “home” essay: a quick college essay case study](#)
- [Five \(more\) ways to find a thematic thread for your personal statement](#)
- [Montage essay structure FAQ's](#)
- [How to write a college essay using Narrative structure](#)
- [Narrative essay structure FAQ's](#)
- [Common App](#)
- [applying to the UCs, you'll need to write some totally different essays](#)
- [how admissions officers are thinking during the admissions process](#)
- [what colleges look for in students](#)
- [Pomona](#)
- [institutional priorities](#)
- [Essence Objects Exercise](#)
- [Values Exercise](#)
- [21 Details Exercise](#)
- [Everything I Want Colleges to Know About Me Exercise](#)
- [The Feelings and Needs Exercise](#)
- [Download a Copy of the Brainstorming Doc](#)
- [you do not have to write about trauma in your college essay to stand out](#)
- [read more about college essay topics to maybe avoid](#)
- [5 Things Exercise](#)
- [Happiness Spreadsheet](#)
- [Values Exercise](#)
- [The Values Exercise](#)
- [www.onetonline.org](#)
- [Go back](#)
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- [here](#)
- [here](#)
- [Revising Your Essay in 5 Steps](#)
- [like the concept of home](#)
- [here](#)
- [Elizabeth Gilbert's TED Talk](#)
- [here](#)
- [You'll find them here.](#)
- [here](#)
- [some uncommon connections](#)
- [“](#)
- [My Laptop Stickers” essay](#)
- [here](#)
- ["Home" essay](#)
- [Narrative Structure](#)
- [college essay tips](#)
- [how to write a college essay](#)

How to Research Colleges Without Visiting a Campus

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-research-colleges-without-visiting-a-campus>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Emily Dobson, Certified Educational Planner, Administrator, Mom, and Access Warrior at EDGE College Consultants, LLC and the Caribbean and Latin America Network
- Developing a great list of colleges takes time, research, and a whole lot of self-reflection.
- And if it's hard for you to visit a school in person, knowing how to research colleges can be even tougher.
- But is it impossible? Not at all.
- In fact, given the costs associated with visiting colleges (flights, hotels, gas, time off from school or work), visiting campuses isn't realistic for everyone.
- Keep in mind that thousands of students develop balanced college lists and even commit to attending their college without ever stepping foot on campus.
- Like students from around the world with a multitude of backgrounds, the college counseling arena and the practitioners who fill it are a cornucopia of experience, perspectives and bandwidth—from the school based guidance counselor overseeing emotional wellness (sometimes with caseloads of 100s of students) to the cooperative counselor (also known as an independent educational counselor) overseeing students and schools across entire regions.
- No matter who you are, it all begins with understanding the research process . And learning to do that alone? Well, it can seem daunting (and is downright terrifying at times). But it doesn't have to be. There are many groups out there to support the research process—and even some basic questions that anyone, especially the international community, can keep in mind.
- Counselors should look for ways to get educated on the basics of college research through programs such as the University of California's College Counseling Certificate programs or CollegeBoard's annual International Counselor Workshop. These programs (amongst others) put the student first by requiring the educator to demonstrate ethical practices steeped in a proven knowledge base.
- Counselors can also look for educational opportunities through counseling associations such as:
- Students who are looking for certified college counselors should check for affiliation to at least one of the above associations, especially since members are held to ethical standards of practice .
- Other great sources for research for educators and applicants alike include EducationUSA , a global study abroad resource overseen by advisers trained by the US Department of State network. Many of these sites have free access curated by experts in the field.
- One way to start researching is to know who has researched before you, thereby confirming that the information received is credible. The American Institute of Certified Educational Planners (AICEP) has developed an exam to test both institutional and professional knowledge, and regardless of its 'American' name, the institutional questions are incredibly valuable for international applicants. Seeing as this is the only way to get a credential in the field, the exam's simple questions seem like a suitable way to start research— especially when we cannot travel to a campus and see everything for ourselves .
- Let's call the following AICEP prompts the 5-Question Framework; applying these questions as well as the ones they inspire, we have an excellent source for ANY counselor, any administrator, any coordinator, any trustworthy supporting adult, or any self-guided student ANYWHERE in the world, to capture the right information during the college search.
- What type of student might be happy and best served at this institution?
- What are the standout features or attributes of this institution?
- Describe the physical facility and the influences of the surrounding communities and consider the influence of the college/university/school/program.
- In general, what are the admission criteria?
- Research two or three examples of similar institutions and describe the reason for the similarities—would those also be on the list for the right reasons?
- Here are just a few ways we can start to answer these questions:

- Universities will do a pretty good job sending you communications—and some of them are pretty helpful. Taking the time to go to the admissions page to sign up for the mailing list often allows applicants to get tailored information about specific programs, advanced registration opportunities for webinar events and sometimes even fee waivers for applications. Links to connect may be found either on the admissions page OR searching the keywords (“mailing list”) and the institution name.
- Actually read what they say—note it down. You may be surprised by the information that you find. What makes you curious? What excites you? What are the admissions requirements? Write. Them. Down. (Oh, and be ready to make folders for the influx of incoming mail. Gmail, and other servers, all have tips on how to make folders and filters .)
- Be sure to check the requirements specific to your situation: reach out to the university admissions office when in doubt. Source.
- Next, take time to go on virtual tours. Lucky for those of us in other time zones, these accessible online options are usually available at any hour of the day or night—and can be interactive, video recorded, simple images or even a ‘text tours’, a dedicated set of information collected about a school written out. An affordable option, touring campuses online will allow for a self-paced, note-taking adventure. How can you find an online campus tour? Here are a few ways:
 - Directly on the university’s website
 - CampusTours
 - YouTube (type the college’s name + “tour”)
 - Instagram/Facebook for a university’s Admissions Office
- Campuses vary in size, style, location and more: what you need to research is how do the physical structures on campus appeal to me? What are the more remarkable features of this institution?
- For example, can you imagine yourself standing in the science labs or reading in the library? Walking across busy New York streets to your dorm or biking through a small town in the Netherlands to your apartment? The environment you are in is part of your learning, your mood and the overall experience. Being new to a country or a location, it’s important to consider not just physical features and special attributes but the surrounding community .
- Neighborhoods and cities are big contributors to a university experience—from businesses that have college partnerships and reflect types of courses/internships offered to the urban or suburban or rural layout that can dictate the pace/type of lifestyle. Many institutional websites are now offering peeks of what goes on outside their campus, but you can also try Google Earth’s Street View .
- Social media is a great way to engage from more than one angle, and explore more than one point of view. As you peruse, ask yourself what noticeable attributes and unique features make this college special and what type of student seems to fit in at this school. Asking the college what type of student is happiest at their university is part of YOUR requirements. You want to be happy where you study.
- Another perk is that many accounts, officially or not officially related to the university, may have student voices behind them, which adds another level to the type of information shared. I recommend checking out Unigo , Induck , StudentCrowd , WhatUni , UniBuddy , and numerous official and unofficial YouTube videos about international student life as part of your research.
- Some institutions offer multiple outlets, so think creatively . There may be several subcategories to the main account. For example, ‘international admissions’, ‘student life’, and some get even more specific like Miami University’s (with research you will come to know that it is actually in Ohio, not Florida) Psychology Department’s Instagram account, @MiamiOhPsyc .
- All of these can act as stepping stones to having an intelligent conversation with someone from the school—whether it is an applicant’s regional admission officer , a student ambassador or an alum (or all three!).
- In today’s digital world, live contact still assumes a greater impact on our decisions. Hearing from reliable parties about how the international student body is created, nurtured, and involved on campus is a very significant part of choosing the right college.
- In closing, what can feel like busy work at the start, actually sets you, the student-researcher, up to be a composed, critical thinking, risk-taker whose knowledge will become more apparent throughout the process. When an international student unabashedly asks admissions representatives to describe the type of student best served at the institution, how the surrounding community plays a part in the institution’s environment, or even goes as far as fact-checking their own college list by asking them to share suggestions of similar institutions —they are building a foundation to their own success through self-advocacy.
- Confidence stemming from thoughtful investigation can translate into more assertive and informed essays/statements, interviews, letters of recommendation and, ultimately, can create more space for making the tough decision of which offer to accept at the end.

- Are you ready to build your research foundation?
- Check out some of these other sources that help you consider the framework:
- How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.
- How to Research Colleges Outside of the U.S.
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- Already accepted to a few colleges and bummed you can't visit anymore?
- These resources will help you too:
- A Practical Guide to Creating a Great College List : Start here. It's got tons of resources and takes you step by step through a process to figure out:
- What do I want out of my college experience?
- Where should I start researching?
- How do I organize all my research?
- Virtual College Tours Master Spreadsheet : This awesome resource includes links to tons of virtual tours for over a thousand colleges. It's a great quick-reference resource that links to schools' official YouTube channels, plus CampusReel, YOUiversityTV, and YouVisit pages for hundreds of colleges. Plus, you'll find key info on size, location, and whether or not schools are offering virtual info session. (Many thanks to Rebecca Chabrow for pulling this together.)
- CampusReel.org : Lots of college virtual tours can be a bit, well, just okay. You'll get insight into how one particular college's biology program is ranked number whatever in the United States, or hear about its 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio. But CampusReel tours are led by current students, usually on their phone (selfie-style), so you get invited right into their dorm room, classroom, or dining hall. If you're looking for a more authentic peek into the student experience, CampusReel is a great place to start.
- So there you have it. Throw on some headphones, put on your favorite playlist, and get lost.
- Happy researching.
- Resources mentioned in this article:
- StudentCrowd
- CampusTours
- Google Earth's Street View

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [April 16, 2020](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [Parent Resources](#)
- [How to Research Colleges Without Visiting a Campus](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [April 16, 2020](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [Parent Resources](#)
- [develop balanced college lists](#)
- [CollegeBoard's](#)
- [InterACAC](#)
- [NACAC](#)
- [HECA](#)
- [IECA](#)

- AICEP
- ethical standards of practice
- EducationUSA
- The American Institute of Certified Educational Planners
- folders
- filters
- Source.
- YouVisit
- CampusTours
- Google Earth's Street View
- student voices
- Unigo
- Induck
- StudentCrowd
- WhatUni
- UniBuddy
- @MiamiOhPsyc
- regional admission officer
- student ambassador
- alum
- How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.
- How to Research Colleges Outside of the U.S.
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- A Practical Guide to Creating a Great College List
- Virtual College Tours Master Spreadsheet
- CampusReel.org
- Unigo
- Induck
- StudentCrowd
- WhatUni
- YouVisit
- CampusTours
- Google Earth's Street View

Revising Your College Essay in 5 Steps | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/5-steps-revising-your-college-essay>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- So I figured something out recently. I was looking back at a couple of my favorite student essays and I realized that the structure of a couple of those essays is ridiculously sound. Rock solid. And not only is it rock solid, it's teachable. Take a look at this essay, for example:
- Shared with permission of student author, P.N.:
- As a kid I was always curious. I was unafraid to ask questions and didn't worry how dumb they would make me sound. In second grade I enrolled in a summer science program and built a solar-powered oven that baked real cookies. I remember obsessing over the smallest details: Should I paint the oven black to absorb more heat? What about its shape? A spherical shape would allow for more volume, but would it trap heat as well as conventional rectangular ovens? Even then I was obsessed with the details of design.
- And it didn't stop in second grade.
- A few years later I designed my first pair of shoes , working for hours to perfect each detail, including whether the laces should be mineral white or diamond white . Even then I sensed that minor differences in tonality could make a huge impact and that different colors could evoke different responses.
- In high school I moved on to more advanced projects , teaching myself how to take apart, repair, and customize cell phones . Whether I was adjusting the flex cords that connect the IPS LCD to the iPhone motherboard, or replacing the vibrator motor, I loved discovering the many engineering feats Apple overcame in its efforts to combine form with function.
- And once I obtained my driver's license, I began working on cars. Many nights you'll find me in the garage replacing standard chrome trim with an elegant piano black finish or changing the threads on the stitching of the seats to add a personal touch, as I believe a few small changes can transform a generic product into a personalized work of art.
- My love of details applies to my schoolwork too.
- I'm the math geek who marvels at the fundamental theorems of Calculus , or who sees beauty in $A=(s(s-a)(s-b)(s-c))^{1/2}$. Again, it's in the details: one bracket off or one digit missing and the whole equation collapses. And details are more than details, they can mean the difference between negative and positive infinity, an impossible range of solutions.
- I also love sharing this appreciation with others and have taken it upon myself to personally eradicate mathonumophobiconfundosis, my Calculus teacher's term for "extreme fear of Math." A small group of other students and I have devoted our after-school time to tutoring our peers in everything from Pre-Algebra to AP Calculus B/C and I believe my fluency in Hebrew and Farsi has helped me connect with some of my school's Israeli and Iranian students. There's nothing better than seeing a student solve a difficult problem without me saying anything.
- You probably think I want to be a designer. Or perhaps an engineer?
- Wrong. Well, kind of.
- Actually, I want to study Endodontics , which is (I'll save you the Wikipedia look-up) a branch of dentistry that deals with the tooth pulp and the tissues surrounding the root of a tooth . As an Endodontist, I'll be working to repair damaged teeth by performing precision root canals and implementing dental crowns. Sound exciting? It is to me.
- The fact is, it's not unlike the work I've been doing repairing cellphone circuits and modifying cars, though there is one small difference. In the future I'll still be working to repair machines, but this machine is one of the most sophisticated machines ever created: the human body. Here, my obsession with details will be as crucial as ever. A one millimeter difference can mean the difference between a successful root canal and a lawsuit.
- The question is: will the toothbrushes I hand out be mineral white or diamond white?
- You might notice the first lines are all in bold. Why? Because if you just read those lines in bold the essay still makes sense. It's like a mini-essay. Kind of awesome.

- How can this information help you write a better essay? Do this:
- Go through your essay and highlight the first lines of each paragraph in bold (as I've done above).
- Read the bolded lines aloud . (Side note: I once read that Chekhov used to read all his work aloud to his wife to check for sense and errors--it's a great practice. Even if you have no wife.)
- As you read, you'll probably notice that some parts make sense and some parts don't. So
- Write a new outline in which all the lines flow together . Like a mini version of your essay. Essentially, what you'll be writing is the skeleton of the essay. (Think of the lines that follow in each paragraph the meat that fleshes out the essay. Kind of a gross image but whatever.)
- IMPORTANT NOTE: the new outline that you create does not have to precisely reflect what's currently in your essay—it can be aspirational , in other words, what you want the paragraphs to say. Once you've written this new outline, paste the bolded lines onto a brand new blank document and
- Rewrite your paragraphs so that each paragraph fleshes out the topic sentence . This may not sound like a very romantic/creative way of writing an essay, but it works. It'll also help you clarify what you're trying to say. "Foggy writing is foggy thinking," one of my writing teachers used to say.
- And why do I suggest you paste the new outline onto a new document and start over? Because, in short, it'll take longer if you don't. Chances are you'll have fallen in love with some old way that you've phrased something but, once you've written the new outline, that old way of phrasing it is dead . And if you're trying to create a new and living thing out of old, dead parts, you're no better than Dr. Frankenstein. And we all know what happened to him. (Spoiler alert.)
- Step away from the essay for at least 30 minutes. Go for a walk, get something to eat, do something else to clear your mind. Come back to it and read it aloud. When you come back:
- Put the first sentence of each paragraph in bold .
- Read them aloud in order to see if they tell a very short version of your essay. (If not, rewrite them.) If they do,
- Read the whole essay aloud, checking to see if what's in each paragraph supports the essay in bold .
- If so, you should have a very solid revision, maybe even one that's ready for feedback.
- Here's a really lovely piece of writing from my friend Chris that demonstrates how putting your first lines in bold can help the reader follow your story.
- For more essay tips, go here .
- Tagged: Revise , college essay , personal emphasis , writer's voice , topic sentence

■ Danh sách các bài vi■t và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [November 18, 2013](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [Revising Your College Essay in 5 Simple Steps](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [November 18, 2013](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [The Great College Essay Test](#)
- [we all know what happened to him.](#)
- [a really lovely piece of writing](#)
- [here](#)

- How am I a Genius?
- my course
-
- Revise
- college essay
- personal emphasis
- writer's voice
- topic sentence

The Great College Essay Test | College Essay Guy

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/tgcet>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Is your college essay... great? The criteria below will help you decide.
- Quick context (feel free to skip): Years ago, I created a Great College Essay Test that was published in my book, College Essay Essentials. But you know what it was missing? A more robust inclusion of qualities colleges look for. So consider this: The Great College Essay Test 2.0... with (more of) of what colleges are looking for.
- I believe a great college essay should take into account both:
 - Qualities that colleges are seeking
 - Qualities of a great personal essay
- Without including qualities that college admission officers are seeking, a piece risks being a great piece of writing... but not a great college essay. Alternately, an essay might include qualities colleges are looking for... but not be a great piece of writing.
- Ideally, a college essay should have both.
- Five Qualities Colleges Like to See
- Recently, my team and I researched 300+ college and university websites to see if we could determine a set of overlapping qualities — things that, pretty reliably, admission officers like to see in essays and applications. We read through hundreds of mission statements, strategic plans, and pages like this one from Caltech .
- The result: our list of five college admission “nutrients.”
- Important: We don’t want these to become like a Ten (or Five!) Commandments of College Applications! Think of these more like ingredients of a healthy application (aka “nutrients”).
- In no particular order, then, here they are...
- Intellectual curiosity
- Service to others / Community impact
- Leadership or initiative
- Collaboration
- Consistent engagement
- Learn more about each of those on this blog .
- Ooh, and I recorded a 6-part podcast with admission officers that breaks down what each of these looks at + why they’re important in high school, college, and life.
- How to Use These Five Qualities:
 - Scan your personal statement and ask yourself, “Do these qualities show up in my essay? Or not so much?”
 - If yes, highlight where specifically.
 - If not so much, where might you include the quality... or how could the quality be made even more clear in the essay?
- Note: Not ALL of these qualities need to come through in your personal statement—it could be that the qualities come through in another part of your application. Something like “consistent engagement,” for instance, might be evident in your activities list. Or a teacher recommendation letter might speak to your “intellectual curiosity” or “collaboration.” But it’s a not a bad idea to scan for these qualities and specific examples from your life that show them.
- But remember: We want a great piece of personal writing too. So let’s turn our attention to...
- Four Qualities of a Great Personal Essay
- Below are four qualities that are consistently present in personal statements that have been successful over the years.
 - They are (again, in no particular order):
 - Core Values (aka Information)
 - Vulnerability
 - “So what” moments (aka Important & interesting connections)

- How might you use these criteria? Read your essay aloud, or have someone else read it aloud, then ask these questions:
- Core Values (aka Information). Can you name at least 4-5 of the author's core values? Do you detect a variety of values, or do the values repeat?
- Examples of NOT varied values: hard work, determination, perseverance
- Examples of more varied values: autonomy, resourcefulness, healthy boundaries, diversity
- Vulnerability. Does the essay sound like it's mostly analytical or like it's coming from a deeper, more vulnerable place?
- Another way of asking this: Does it sound like the author wrote it using mostly their head (intellect) or their heart and gut?
- After reading the essay, do you know more about the author AND feel closer to him or her?
- "So what" moments (aka Important & interesting connections). Can you identify at least 3-5 "so what" moments of insight in the essay?
- Are these moments kind of predictable, or are they truly illuminating?
- Craft. Do the ideas in the essay connect in a way that is logical, but not too obvious (aka boring)?
- Can you tell that the essay represents a series of carefully considered choices and that the author spent a lot of time revising the essay over the course of several drafts?
- Is it interesting and succinct throughout? If not, where do you lose interest?
- Where could words be cut or which part isn't revealing as much as it could be?
- Anticipated FAQ: How many of these traits do you need to "pass the test?"
- Aim for a majority— so, 3 out of 4, if possible . For most students, the area that may or may not be as explicitly folded into your personal statement is vulnerability . Think of this as a quality that can, in some cases, help you establish a personal connection with your reader (whom may never meet!).
- That said, it is still entirely possible to write a personal statement that helps you get into a great college and isn't explicitly anchored in these qualities, or doesn't feel particularly "vulnerable." These have just served as some guidelines for students we've worked with over the years. If you're feeling bold... Give your essay to someone else and ask them to evaluate it based on both the five nutrients and the four qualities. And yes, nine qualities is a lot, but hey we can do hard things.
- Want more college essay and application resources? Check out my College Application Hub for the latest and greatest of my admissions resources.
- Want to work with a coach to see if your essay passes the Great College Essay Test? CEG offers one-on-one essay coaching. Click here to schedule a free call to find out more. And there's no cost barrier; low-income students can apply for support here .
- Tagged: college essay test , brainstorm , get inspired

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 23, 2016](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [The Great College Essay Test](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 23, 2016](#)
- [Personal Statement](#)
- [Brainstorm](#)
- [this one from Caltech](#)
- [Learn more about each of those on this blog](#)
- [6-part podcast](#)

- [College Application Hub](#)
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- [Feelings & Needs Exercise to make your essay, Like, deep](#)
- [my course](#)
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14 Scholarship Essay Examples That Won Thousands 2025/2026

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/scholarship-essay-examples>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- Winning a big scholarship can be life-changing, particularly for those with financial need.
- BUT people often forget that winning lots of small scholarship applications can be life-changing too. The scholarship essay examples (and our strategy) below can take you from planning your college plans and career goals to living them.
- A common problem soon-to-be college students face: Paying for college. They qualify for many scholarships but are daunted by the task of writing five to ten to fifteen (or more) essays. It can be a struggle to even start writing, particularly for those “why I deserve the scholarship” prompts.
- One solution for how to write a scholarship essay for many topics at once: Pick topics that have overlapping subject matter and write an essay or two that fit lots of these essays at once. Below, we’ve given some more information about how to successfully earn scholarship opportunities with this technique and how to end a scholarship essay.
- These scholarship winners earned thousands in financial aid from writing these essays.
- The key to many of these essays is that they describe a story or an aspect of the student’s life in a way that is dynamic: It reflects many of their values, strengths, interests, volunteer work, and life experiences.
- Many of these essays also demonstrate vulnerability. Scholarship committees reading your responses will want to know who this money will benefit and why it’s important that you receive this money. In other words, they want to better understand how your values, qualities, and skills will flourish in college--and how good your writing skills are. In fact, we’ve written a guide to what colleges look for that can help you skillfully write vulnerable scholarship essays.
- Whether it’s a scholarship essay about yourself, a creative writing scholarship, or an essay about why you deserve the scholarship, the sample scholarship essays below can help you better understand what can result from following a scholarship essay format or applying tips for how to write a scholarship essay.
- But first! If you’re an international student (not from the United States) applying to scholarships, don’t forget to consider some common mistakes international students make when applying to college.
- Want to save a lot of time during the process?
- Write a great college essay and re-use it when writing scholarship essays for similar prompts. Why? Combining essay prompts will not only save you time, it’ll actually result in a better essay.
- We sometimes like to call these “Super Essays” because the added benefit of writing a multi-purpose essay is that it makes the essay stronger overall. We have a whole guide for how to do that here.
- This makes scholarship essays similar to supplemental essays because many supplemental essays also overlap. We know many students will be writing both types of essays at once! To help, we’ve put together a supplemental essays course on how to tackle the daunting supplemental essays, including many skills that help with writing those “Super” scholarship essays too.
- Kang Foundation Scholarship (\$1000), Kingdom Dreamer Scholarship Fund Scholarship through Sarang Church (\$2000), and the national contest from the Lamber Goodnow legal team (\$1000) by Peter Kang.
- Prompt: Open topic.
- Fedora? Check. Apron? Check. Tires pumped? Check. Biking the thirty-five minutes each evening to the cafe and back to work a six-hour shift was exhausting, but my family’s encouragement and gratitude for the extra income was worth it.
- A few years earlier, my family of nine had been evicted from the home we had been living in for the past ten years. With nowhere else to go, we moved into our church’s back room for three months, where I shamefully tried to hide our toothbrushes and extra shoes from other church members. Right then I made a commitment to my family to contribute financially in whatever way I could. My sacrifice translated to a closer bond with my siblings and deeper conversations with my parents, helping me understand the true meaning of a unified family and the valuable part I play in that.

- With the financial stability that my part-time jobs provided my mother could stay home to raise seven children, my learning-disabled older sister could attend college, my younger sister could go on a mission trip to Korea, and my twin siblings could compete in national math competitions. I've seen that even as a high school student, I have so much potential to impact my family and beyond -- how one small act can go a long way.
- Through the successes of my efforts, I also realized that poverty was just a societal limitation. I was low-income, not poor. I was still flourishing in school, leading faith-based activities and taking an active role in community service. My low-income status was not a barrier but a launching pad to motivate and propel my success.
- To additionally earn more money as a young teen, I began flipping bicycles for profit on craigslist. Small adjustments in the brake and gears, plus a wash, could be the difference between a \$50 piece of trash and a \$200 steal. Seeing how a single inch could disarrange the lining of gears not only taught me the importance of detail but also sparked my fascination with fixing things.
- When I was sixteen I moved on to a larger project: my clunker of a car. I had purchased my 2002 Elantra with my own savings, but it was long past its prime. With some instruction from a mechanic, I began to learn the components of an engine motor and the engineering behind it. I repaired my brake light, replaced my battery, and made adjustments to the power-steering hose. Engineering was no longer just a nerdy pursuit of robotics kids; it was a medium to a solution. It could be a way to a career, doing the things I love. I was inspired to learn more.
- Last summer, to continue exploring my interest in engineering, I interned at Boeing. Although I spent long hours researching and working in the lab for the inertial navigation of submarines, I learned most from the little things.
- From the way my mentors and I began working two hours earlier than required to meet deadlines, I learned that engineering is the commitment of long hours. From the respect and humility embodied within our team, I learned the value of unity at the workplace. Like my own family at home, our unity and communal commitment to working led to excellent results for everyone and a closer connection within the group.
- What most intrigues me about engineering is not just the math or the technology, but the practical application. It is through engineering that I can fix up my car... and facilitate submarine navigation. Engineering, in fact, is a lifestyle -- instead of lingering over hardships, I work to solve them and learn from them. Whether the challenge is naval defense or family finances or even just a flat tire on my bike before another night shift, I will be solving these problems and will always be looking to keep rolling on.
- Success is triumphing over hardships -- willing yourself over anything and everything to achieve the best for yourself and your family. With this scholarship, I will use it to continue focusing on my studies in math and engineering, instead of worrying about making money and sending more back home. It will be an investment into myself for my family.
- New York University College of Arts and Science \$39,500 Scholarship by Ana
- Prompt: Explain something that made a big impact in your life.
- "If you can't live off of it, it is useless." My parents were talking about ice skating: my passion. I started skating as a ten-year-old in Spain, admiring how difficulty and grace intertwine to create beautiful programs, but no one imagined I would still be on the ice seven years and one country later. Even more unimaginable was the thought that ice skating might become one of the most useful parts of my life.
- I was born in Mexico to two Spanish speakers; thus, Spanish was my first language. We then moved to Spain when I was six, before finally arriving in California around my thirteenth birthday. Each change introduced countless challenges, but the hardest part of moving to America, for me, was learning English. Laminated index cards, color-coded and full of vocabulary, became part of my daily life. As someone who loves to engage in a conversation, it was very hard to feel as if my tongue was cut off. Only at the ice rink could I be myself; the feeling of the cold rink breeze embracing me, the ripping sound of blades touching the ice, even the occasional ice burning my skin as I fell—these were my few constants. I did not need to worry about mispronouncing "axel" as "aksal." Rather, I just needed to glide and deliver the jump.
- From its good-natured bruise-counting competitions to its culture of hard work and perseverance, ice skating provided the nurturing environment that made my other challenges worthwhile. Knowing that each moment on the ice represented a financial sacrifice for my family, I cherished every second I got. Often this meant waking up every morning at 4 a.m. to practice what I had learned in my few precious minutes of coaching. It meant assisting in group lessons to earn extra skating time and taking my conditioning off-ice by joining my high school varsity running teams. Even as I began to make friends and lose my fear of speaking, the rink was my sanctuary. Eventually, however, the only way to keep improving was to pay for more coaching, which my family could not afford. And so I started tutoring Spanish.

- Now, the biggest passion of my life is supported by my most natural ability. I have had over thirty Spanish students, ranging in age from three to forty and spanning many ethnic backgrounds. I currently work with fifteen students each week, each with different needs and ways of learning. Drawing on my own experiences as both a second language-learner and a figure skater, I assign personal, interactive exercises, make jokes to keep my students' mindset positive, and never give away right answers. When I first started learning my axel jump, my coach told me I would have to fall at least 500 times (about a year of falls!) in order to land it. Likewise, I have my students embrace every detail of a mistake until they can begin to recognize new errors when they see them. I encourage them to expand their horizons and take pride in preparing them for new interactions and opportunities.
- Although I agree that I will never live off of ice skating, the education and skills I have gained from it have opened countless doors. Ice skating has given me the resilience, work ethic, and inspiration to develop as a teacher and an English speaker. It has improved my academic performance by teaching me rhythm, health, and routine. It also reminds me that a passion does not have to produce money in order for it to hold immense value. Ceramics, for instance, challenges me to experiment with the messy and unexpected. While painting reminds me to be adventurous and patient with my forms of self-expression. I don't know yet what I will live off of from day to day as I mature; however, the skills my passions have provided me are life-long and irreplaceable.
- North Coast Section Foundation Scholarship for \$1000 by Christine Fung
- As a child of immigrant parents, I learned to take responsibilities for my family and myself at a very young age. Although my parents spoke English, they constantly worked in order to financially support my little brother and I. Meanwhile, my grandparents barely knew English so I became their translator for medical appointments and in every single interaction with English speakers. Even until now, I still translate for them and I teach my grandparents conversational English. The more involved I became with my family, the more I knew what I wanted to be in the future.
- Since I was five, my parents pushed me to value education because they were born in Vietnam and had limited education. Because of this disadvantage, I learned to take everything I do seriously and to put in all of my effort to complete tasks such as becoming the founder of my school's Badminton Club in my sophomore year and Red Cross Club this year. Before creating these clubs, I created a vision for these clubs so I can organize my responsibilities better as a leader. The more involved I became, the more I learned as a leader and as a person. As a leader, I carried the same behavior I portrayed towards my younger cousins and sibling. My family members stressed the importance of being a good influence; as I adapted this behavior, I utilized this in my leadership positions. I learned to become a good role model by teaching my younger family members proper manners and guiding them in their academics so that they can do well. In school, I guide my peers in organizing team uniform designs and in networking with a nonprofit organization for service events.
- Asides from my values, I'm truly passionate in the medical field. I always wanted to be a pediatrician since I was fourteen. My strong interest in the medical field allowed me to open up my shell in certain situations— when I became sociable to patients in the hospital as a volunteer, when I became friendly and approachable to children in my job at Kumon Math and Reading Center, and when I portrayed compassion and empathy towards my teammates in the badminton team. However, when I participated in the 2017 Kaiser Summer Volunteer Program at Richmond Medical Center, I realized that I didn't only want to be a pediatrician. This program opened my eye to numerous opportunities in different fields of medicine and in different approaches in working in the medicine industry. While I may have a strong love for the medical field, my interest in business immensely grew as I soon discovered that I didn't only have to take the practical approach in the medical field. With this interest, I plan to also become a part of a medical facility management team.
- In the future, I hope to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor by attaining an MD, and to double major in Managerial Economics. I intend to study at UC Davis as a Biological Sciences major, where I anticipate to become extremely involved with the student community. After graduation, I plan to develop a strong network relationship with Kaiser Permanente as I've started last year in my internship. By developing a network with them, I hope to work in one of their facilities some day. Based on my values, interests, and planned future, I'm applying for the NCS Foundation scholarship because not only will it financially help me, but it can give motivation for me to academically push myself. I hope to use this scholarship in applying for a study abroad program, where I can learn about other cultures' customs while conducting research there.
- Fund for Education Abroad Rainbow Scholarship \$7,500 by Steven Fisher
- Prompt: The Fund for Education Abroad is committed to diversifying education abroad by providing funding to students who are typically under-represented in study abroad. Please describe how you and/or your plans for study abroad could be viewed as under-represented.

- “Oh well look at that one,” my uncle leans over and says about my brother-in-law in the living room wearing a dress. “I’d always had my suspicions about him,” he jokes with a disapproving sneer and leans back in his chair, a plate of Southern-style Christmas dinner in his hand.
- I was hurt. Why would my own uncle say that like it’s such a terrible thing that my brother-in-law is wearing a dress? That it was the worst thing in the world if my brother-in-law were gay or effeminite.
- “I think he looks beautiful,” my oldest brother Ethan chimes in. At that moment, I wish I could have hugged Ethan. No, not because he was defending my brother-in-law (who actually isn’t gay, as my uncle was suggesting), but because Ethan was defending me. My uncle has no idea that I recognized earlier this past year that heterosexuality wasn’t meeting all of my needs for intimacy with other people and that I’ve come to define myself as queer. It all started when I took a hard look at how my upbringing in Miami had taught me that the only way that boys are supposed to connect with others is by having sex with “beautiful” girls – that intimacy with other guys or “ugly” girls isn’t as meaningful.
- After freeing up that block in my brain that told me that I shouldn’t look at guys in a certain way, I could embrace the fact that I’m attracted to men (and people in general) in a lot of different, new ways. My growth as a person was exponential. I rewrote so many areas of my life where I didn’t do things I wanted because of social conditioning. Within two months, my world expanded to include polyamory. I looked back on my past relationship with my girlfriend and realized that I wasn’t jealous (angry, yes. hurt, yes. But not jealous) when she cheated on me. I realized that people’s needs — whether they are for sex, someone to talk to, someone to engage intellectually — don’t necessarily all have to be met with one person. It can be easier sometimes with one person, absolutely. But that’s not the only way. As someone who is both polyamorous and queer, I feel like parts of my family and large parts of my community marginalize me for being different because society has told them to. I want to change that.
- Since I will be studying for an entire year in Prague, I will have the opportunity to attend the annual Mezipatra, an international film festival in November that screens around a hundred top-ranking films on lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and queer themes. I feel really connected to going to this event because I crave being in an environment of like-minded people who strive to do that same thing I want to: balance the images of people typically portrayed through cliché and stereotype.
- When I came out to my sister-in-law, she told me that people who are really set in their ways are more likely to be tolerant to different kinds of people after having relationships with these people. If my uncle can learn to love me, to learn to love one queer/poly person, he can learn to love them all. If I can be an example to my family, I can be an example to my classmates. If I can get the opportunity to travel abroad, I can be an example to the world. Not just through my relationships, but through my art. Give me a camera and a screen and I will carry the message of tolerance from the audiences of Mezipatra in Prague to my parent’s living room.
- Fade in: Two men with thick beards kiss – maybe for once they aren’t wearing colorful flamboyant clothing. Fade in: A woman leaves her house to go to her male best friend’s house and her husband honestly tells her to enjoy herself. Fade in: A college student wanting to study abroad tells his conservative parents the truth...
- Questbridge Finalist essay earning \$3,000 in application waivers plus \$3000 in local scholarships by Jordan Sanchez
- Prompt: 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.
- Recall the most cherished memory with your father figure. For some it may be when he taught you how to ride a bike, for others it may be memories of him taking you out for pizza when mom said the family has to eat healthy, for others it’s the ability to confide in somebody that won’t judge or stop loving you because of the mistakes you have made. When a child is born, he or she is given a birth certificate, which provides information such as name, date and place of birth, but most importantly it provides the names of the parents of the child. On my birth certificate I have the name the name of my beloved mother Lurvin, but right above her name is an empty space where my father’s name should be.
- As a child I would often compare my life to my peers; I would often go through all of these hypothetical scenarios in my mind thinking, “If my dad were around I could be like all of the other boys.” As the years went by I always had a sense of optimism that one day I would meet him and he would tell me “I love you and I’ll never leave your side again.” But when the time came and I met him on January 2014 I learned that a man can reject his only son not once, but twice.
- My father left when I was one year old and I will soon be turning 17; I did the math and found that for about 5900 days he has neglected me. He was able to sleep 5900 nights without knowing whether or not I was dead or alive. Even though he’s been gone for 5900 days, my life did not get put on hold. In those 5900 days I learned how to walk, talk, and I became a strong young man without the provider of my Y Chromosome because he is nothing more to me than that.

- In the past I believed that my father was necessary to rise but instead I found that false hope was an unnecessary accessory and now I refuse to let the fact that I am fatherless define the limits of the great things that I can accomplish.
- It's said that boys learn to be a man from their fathers, that they learn what it means to be a man that has values and can stand up for what's right. I, however, have found that grit can come from anywhere. When I was in middle school I was overweight and many other boys would call me names, and even after going to administration several times nothing changed and for several years I kept myself at bay because if I had done anything in return I would be no better than those guys who bullied me. I previously had this perception that somebody else would come to my rescue, that somebody else would provide the mental strength to combat the hardships that were sent my way. But as time passed I grew tired of waiting for help that was never going to come so I had to become my own hero. Since making that decision I have been liberated from the labels that previously confined me and I took back control of my own life.
- My ability to be self motivated has assisted me in becoming a leader in several of my extracurricular activities. I was one of the 4 male students of my school district that was selected as a delegate by the American Legion to participate at the Boy's State program and I am also the captain of my group in the Young Senator's Leadership Program that is run by California Senator Tony Mendoza. I also developed skills on the wrestling mat. On one occasion I wrestled the person who was ranked the 9th best wrestler in the state and although I did not win there was not a single second that I was afraid to fail because I knew I gave it my all. Similarly I have put the same effort into becoming a successful.
- My father's name is not on my birth certificate, but it is MY birth certificate. My origins are not the brightest but I was given a life that is mine to live and because "Life is made of two dates and a dash.." I have to "...Make most of the dash." I am not going to live forever but if I were to leave this world today I would feel content with the person I see in the mirror.
- I know the difficulty that latinos face in this day and age I can envision assisting other young latinos achieving their dreams. I believe the most valuable thing in this world is opportunity because sometimes all it takes for someone to be successful is a chance to do so. Consequently I would like to be part of that chance that can foster the growth of future success.
- Change a Life Foundation Scholarship Essay Examples by Isabella Mendez-Figueroa
- Prompt: Please explain a personal hardship or catastrophic life event that you have experienced. How did you manage to overcome this obstacle? What did you learn and how did you grow from it? This answer is critical to your application as Change a Life Foundation's vision is to assist individuals who have persevered and overcome a hardship/catastrophic life event.
- Filling out this application, and my college applications, has forced me to face head on the realities that I've grown up in. Looking back and describing my life I see all the ways in which I am disadvantaged due to my socioeconomic status. But I think it's important to note that I wasn't fully aware of any of it growing up. I knew that my parents couldn't buy me everything, but I also knew that they hardly ever said no. I was a very normal child, asking for chicken nuggets and looking at mom and dad any time I was scared or unsure of something. As I've grown I've learned to fight my own monsters but I now also battle the ones that frighten my parents, the monsters of a world that they weren't born into. Monsters of doubt and disadvantage that try to keep them stuck in a cycle of poverty; thriving in a world that casts them to the side and a society that, with its current political climate, doesn't welcome them with the warmest hello.
- The baby sitter, the house keeper, the driver, it's taken my dad 10+ years of night shifts to attain financial stability, and become an asset to his workplace. He's been one of the millions of people who has been laid off in the last couple of decades and has had to start over multiple times. But each time he's re-built himself with more resilience. I've grown up living in section 8 housing because my parents often found themselves living paycheck to paycheck, not by choice, but by circumstance. They've endured bankruptcy over credit card debt, have never owned a home, or been given access to resources that allow them to save. Every time we've readapted, we get struck by a new change. I currently live in Manchester Square, a ghost town, byproduct of the Los Angeles Airport expansion project. The 16 steps I have always known, soon to be demolished. My neighbors are empty lots, enclosed by fences. Homeless people's pitch tents, under the roar of airplanes. My home is soon to become an accommodation to an airport, soon to be nonexistent. Knowing that my family has to relocate as I'm applying to college makes me feel a tad guilty, because of my lack of resources, I fear it will become a barrier into my transition to college. My parents finances are not a secret, I know their struggles as I hear about them day after day. My parents now deal with the burden of relocating, no longer having subsidized housing and again, struck by yet another need to readjust and reassemble. Relocating a family of 5 in an area plagued by gentrification of stadiums and demolition is no simple task as rent prices are as high as mortgages. It's odd they don't want me to stress or have it become my problem but I know it is, and I want to do whatever I can to help.

- My older sister is the first in my family to go to college. I was always the shyer one. She's taught me through her efforts that the only limits you have are the ones you place on yourself. With my sister's example I have followed in the footsteps of never letting money become a reason why I can't or won't do something. If my sister can do it, I can do it. I see the leadership characteristic is genetic and it runs in my entire family. I witness my parents be leaders everyday as they tackle cultural obstacles in a country that wasn't the one they were born into, speaking a language that is not their own, and raising children to succeed in a system of higher education; one they never had the privilege to be part of. My family and I are one. We stack our efforts, and obstacles on top of each other to further our successes as a whole. When I think back to my family's story I'm amazed to think that my grandpa came to the US in the midst of WW2, a bracero, leaving his family to help feed millions of Americans in time of war. My grandpa, a man of the fields, paved the way so I could defy the odds with my prosperity.
- At home, the teacher role often switches within my family. I am responsible for translating documents to my parents and explaining procedures and concepts as I, myself, am learning them. I have had the responsibility of helping assist my younger sister who has a mild case of Cerebral Palsy. Due to her pre-existing condition, she is a slow learner. I have dedicated a lot of time this past year, helping her with her transition from elementary to middle school and helping her adapt to such a drastic change.
- Sometimes, I only sleep 4 hours as I wake up and rush out the door in order to make it on time to 6am tutoring. Having to manage my schoolwork and home responsibilities has been difficult but I've managed to maintain high academic achievement by managing my time correctly and being persistent. If I truly want something, I need to go after it, and I will get it done. Sometimes being tired isn't an option.
- Millennium Gates Last Dollar Scholarship and \$3,500 in Outside Scholarship Essay Examples by Famyrah Lafortune
- Prompt: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela. Describe a change you would like to make in the world. Tell us about how you would plan to make that change, and what obstacles you might encounter along the way. * (No more than 400 words)
- Nothing is more important to me than ending racial inequality and discrimination in America, as I do not want my younger siblings to face the discrimination Black people continue to face in our present society. After winning our fight to freedom and provoking the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, why do Black teens face higher poverty rates than Whites and are still four times more likely to be incarcerated? "That was such a long time ago. You really need to get over it," my White peers say when referring to racial inequalities. But, why then, in 7th grade, after winning Nazareth Academy's Spelling Bee competition, did my fellow White classmate state with a heavy dose of surprise, "You know...when I first saw you, I didn't think you were going to be smart?"
- I hope to contribute to ending racial discrimination by utilizing our present interconnectivity and running a social media campaign titled #It'sNotOver. #It'sNotOver aims to oppose the widespread misconception that, because racial inequality was legally outlawed, de facto racial inequality does not still persist in our society. Our recent presidential election may have brought life to a 'Divided America,' but it also exposed how influential social media is. By raising awareness of racial disparities that occur everywhere, I might encourage a new wave of change in our country like that of the present Time's Up movement. Furthermore, if I can access the influence of celebrities in my #It'sNotOver campaign, like that of Time's Up, I might similarly capture the attention of millions of people and inspire action against this issue across the globe.
- I know that social media can only do so much in addressing these issues as not everyone can afford the luxury of having internet access. However, I hope that my campaign can inspire all those who do have access to take it upon themselves to be the change by being inspired by the fact that we are globally united in this issue. Although I expect negativity and criticism from people who either do not believe that this issue exists or do not believe in our cause, I am willing to encounter it if it means our society as a whole irrevocably can grow to accept each other's differences.
- Prompt: "It is very important to know who you are. To make decisions. To show who you are." – Malala Yousafzai. Tell us three things that are important to you. How did you arrive at this list? Will these things be important to you in ten years? Why? * (No more than 400 words)
- The three things that are important to me are my family, being successful, and leaving a legacy. As a result of my past, I keep these three crucial things at the forefront of my mind every day to help myself be successful.
- Above all, my family is the most important thing in my life. The meaning of family may differ for everyone, but for me, my family is life. I almost died in the 2010 Haitian earthquake, as Jacmel was one of the worst damaged areas, had it not been for my grandmother and my mom. Later, if it was not for my uncle, my mom would not have been able to come to America to give me a better life. Without my family, I wouldn't be here. I am forever indebted to their sacrifices, and I am so grateful that I have their eternal love and

support.

- Success is also very important to me. I hope to accomplish many things in my life, but most importantly, I would like to make my family proud so that they know that all of their sacrifices were worth it. Success to me is having a career that I love and allows me to help my family members financially. I hope to no longer experience hardships such as homelessness, poverty, and economic difficulties, as I had in my young life.
- Ultimately, however, I would like to grow into someone who is loved and remembered by people who aren't my immediate family members and my friends. I do not wish to be glorified, but I want to be more than a nonentity in this big, vast world. I hope that if I can inspire the change that I want to make, I can leave a legacy that continues to influence and shape the landscape that follows me. After coming to the epiphany that if I died today, nothing would change except for the lives of those extremely close to me, I find myself unwilling to be just another Jane Doe. I want to leave a part of myself behind, whether it is a building or a popular hashtag, that is meaningful and permanent once I die.
- Prompt: "Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures." - Cesar Chavez. What does it mean to you to be part of a minority community? What challenges has it brought and how have you overcome them? What are the benefits? * (No more than 400 words)
- Being part of a minority is very conflicting for me as I feel both empowered as a part of a Haitian minority community but also disconnected from my non-immigrant peers. Coming from a background of poverty in Haiti, I knew that, even at a very young age, I had to be a good student in order to succeed. This work ethic--found throughout my Haitian community--has been very beneficial in my life as we all came here to pave ourselves a better future. As my mom held two jobs, went to college, and was temporarily homeless just to secure me a better future, I feel invigorated to be part of such an indefatigable community. And, it is because of this strong work ethic, central to my community's core values, that I am now the salutatorian of a class of 679 students.
- As I was so young when I came to the US, I didn't know how American society functioned, specifically elementary school. I was the only immigrant in a class of forty, barely spoke English, and had no friends because of these limitations. Every day of those first few years, I felt an almost physical divide between my peers and myself. I never experienced a sense of belonging, despite my efforts. Already a double minority as a woman and a Black person, I tried to relinquish my language and culture in favor of American language and values to better fit in the crowd. By doing this, however, I almost completely lost my cultural identity as both a Haitian and an immigrant, and also my language.
- It was in the halls of my first high school, International Studies Charter High School, that I realized the enormity of what I had lost. Where my peers retained their cultural identities and language, I had almost lost mine. It was there, I learned to embrace a part of me that was virtually buried inside, as I was encouraged to be more open: speaking Creole with my Haitian math teacher and peers. As a senior, I now volunteer weekly helping Haitian ESOL students with their homework. I am both a teacher and a student in that small classroom as I help them with their homework, and, in return, they help me in perfecting my use of Creole. They are my daily reminder of what unites us as Haitians—our ability to triumph in the face of adversity.
- Prompt: "The secret of our success is that we never, never give up." - Wilma Mankiller. Tell us about a time when you failed at something. What were the circumstances? How did you respond to failure? What lessons did you learn? * (No more than 400 words)
- I've danced ballet since I was seven-years-old. But, even after almost eight years, I could still barely extend my legs as high as my peers nor could do as many pirouettes as them. My flexibility was incredibly subpar and I easily wore out my Pointe shoes, making them unwearable after a couple of months. Where the average lifespans of my peers' pointe shoes extended into months, mine could barely last ten classes. I was the weakling of my class at Ballet Etudes, and I was too absorbed in my insecurities to do anything to better myself to become the dancer I aspired to be.
- After a humiliating recital, wherein my pointe shoe ribbons untied in the middle of our group performance, I all but gave up on dance. I was in the middle of doing a Changement de Pieds (Change of feet jumping step) when I glanced down in horror to see my beautiful ribbons untied as I forgot to tape them with clear tape as I usually did before my performances. Glancing to my right, I saw that my ballet teacher backstage had also taken note and was rushing me to get off the stage, her hands beckoning me in a frantic manner. After berating me for not having properly tied my laces, I was not allowed to finish my part. Later, I could barely get back on stage that evening for our final performance as I didn't want to fail myself and my team again. But, because of my move to Port Saint Lucie in the summer before sophomore year, I was able to rekindle my passion for ballet and pointe at South Florida Dance Company. South Florida Dance Company was my saving grace, a place where I was able to restart my experiences in dance and renew the joy I once felt in my art. It was an incredible feeling regaining my confidence and surety in my abilities, as a result of the additional help that I received from my dance teacher, Ms. Amanda.

- Presently, I always remind myself to be the best that I can be and to positively use my dance role models, like Misty Copeland, as encouragement to be a better dancer. From this experience, I learned that to overcome personal failures, I needed to move forward and think positively because change doesn't happen when you sit still.
- National Association of University Women Scholarship Essay Examples by Isabella Mendez-Figueroa
- Prompt: Please explain how your experience volunteering and participating in community service has shaped your perspective on humanity. Elaborate on how these experiences have influenced your future ambitions and career choice.
- I didn't really understand my community until I was forced to see it from the outside; sort of like when you see a picture of yourself someone else took that you weren't aware of. It took a 3,000 mile flight for me to gain a different perspective of the world, of my world. When I landed in Maine it was nothing like the place I called home. There was no traffic, there were lots of trees, and absolutely no Spanish to be heard anywhere. I missed my people, my home, and my community the most as I saw the ways in which other communities fostered creativity, advocacy, and community involvement.
- I talked about my community every chance I got, writing a public backlash to Donald Trump and reading out to the group of parents to show them my unique struggle. The election of Donald Trump has forced me to come to terms with the harsh realities of this world. The lack of respect he has for women, minority groups, and factual evidence are alarming. This presidency makes me want to prove wrong all of his perceptions of people like me, the poor, the immigrant, the woman. I left people in awe, leaving me empowered. I had people come up to me and explain that they can relate to my poem about not fitting in, being Mexican American and not feeling like you can consider yourself American or Mexican because you're both. I emphasized that I, like many others, am in between and we have the same platform that anyone else does to succeed. I explained that many of us, hold this pressure of first generation children of immigrants to prove that we are the proof that our parents sacrifices of restarting in a new country was worth it. I was the visible representation of a first generation child of immigrants, branching out into a new environment despite where I had come from and shocking everyone with my prosperity.
- If I was the only visible representation available, I was going to use my voice to echo the feelings of my entire community and make it known that we are all here-- all of our struggles, our efforts, and our passions, are not absent from places where we are not seen.
- Maine helped me branch out in my own community now as a Student Ambassador. From this experience, I've learned that I can represent my high school and have the responsibility to assist staff at events for prospective students and organize presentations for parents. I spend a lot of time interpreting for parents at meetings and explaining the current events that are ongoing and new educational opportunities that students should take advantage of. I have had the privilege to work alongside office staff and the Principal, where I get to positively dedicate my time to parents who have general questions regarding the schools upcoming events. By dedicating my time as a Student Ambassador, I have allowed myself to excel at communicating with others and improving my customer service skills. I want my education to change the negative stigmas surrounding my community, by showing that it's possible to expand your access to the world and allow you to leave, by choice, through receiving a post-secondary education. I am someone who has grown up in an area with limited resources fostering limited mindsets. My neighborhood has 4 elementary schools, 2 high schools, and a strip club feet away from a library. What message does that send to children? It's normal in my community to have pregnant classmates in high school. People aren't aware of the world outside, they aren't encouraged to ever leave.
- Through my experience as a volunteer that communicates a lot with parents, I have learned that the American Dream does not simply belong to first generation students like myself. I have found that our accomplishments are stacked upon the sacrifices of our parents. I used to think that growing up was like the passing of a baton where you're the next runner and it's your turn to run your best race, but I now see that this is a team effort, as you expand your horizons your family also gets to experience the benefits. I want to demonstrate to my community that there can be a female, bilingual, Latina doctor. I want to showcase that one's zip code, doesn't determine one's success. One of the most common questions I get at these parent meetings is "what's better college or university"? This question didn't make sense to me at first then I realized that parents wanted to know the difference between community college and a four year. Concepts like financial aid, grants, loans, are all foreign concepts as most of our parents never went to college. They want to be able to help but do not know where to begin. As a student ambassador I helped bridge that gap. We often held meetings where we explained to parents within our community what resources were out there and available and what the difference were among the different options for each student. Being the student face for Animo, I've learned that I as a student and daughter, can provide assistance to my own community through the knowledge that I have gained. I am the communication that is needed in my community that's necessary for further successes by using my personal knowledge and

experience to help uplift and educate others in similar situations.

- Prompt: Discuss in your essay any challenges or obstacles you have dealt with and overcome in life and how this will help you succeed in college and beyond. Describe how volunteer, community service or extra-curricular activities have shaped who you are today and what it has taught you. May also include future educational plans and career goals. [250-500 Words]

- I have encountered an emotional barrier making it difficult to manage my schoolwork, extracurricular activities and family responsibilities. I have had to deal with being viciously raped by a peer during my sophomore year, resulting in severe depression. I am no longer allowed to be alone for a long period of time, as I've attempted to commit suicide twice, but I do not regard those as true attempts to end my life. I just wanted someone to know how I felt and how much I needed help. My past has only made me more resilient, as I choose to prove to myself and those around me that I am more than the barriers I've encountered—but overcome.

- It took a 3,000- mile flight for me to gain a different perspective of my world. Landing in Maine was nothing like home. There was no traffic, lots of trees, and absolutely no Spanish to be heard anywhere. I was a 10th grader when I found myself at Coastal Studies for Girls, a marine science and leadership school; I would be there for a whole semester. I was surrounded by strangers who looked different, sounded different, and could recite tide pool specifics in casual conversation.

- I was the visible representation of a first-generation child of immigrants, branching out into a new environment. An environment where I wanted to prove wrong all perceptions of people like me, the poor, the immigrant, the brown woman. I used my voice to echo my community and make it known that, we, are here—all of our struggles, our efforts, and our passions, are not absent from places where we are not seen.

- Returning home, I had the privilege to work alongside school administrators as a student ambassador. I got to positively dedicate my time to parents who have general questions regarding the school and help translate information.

- I have learned that the American Dream does not simply belong to first generation students like myself, but I now see it is a team effort, as you expand, your family also gets to experience the benefits.

- One of the most common questions at parent meetings is “what’s better college or university”? This question did not make sense to me, I then realized that parents want to know the difference between community college and a four year. Concepts like financial aid, grants, loans, are all foreign concepts as most of our parents never went to college. As a student ambassador, I help bridge that gap. We often hold meetings where we explained resources available and different options for each student. I have learned, that as a student, I can provide assistance to my own community through my knowledge. I am the communication necessary for further successes, using my personal knowledge and experience to help uplift and educate others in similar situations. My pursuit is to not only go to college but thrive and come back ready and able to help students like myself that have to fight for their seat in the lecture hall.

- Fund for Education Abroad Rainbow Scholarship \$7,500 by Steven Fisher

- Prompt: The Rainbow Scholarship is awarded to a deserving LGBTQ student who aims to participate in a high-quality, rigorous education abroad program. If you would like to be considered, please explain why you would be a strong candidate for the Rainbow Scholarship. What will this scholarship enable you to achieve for yourself and your LGBTQ community?

- It is my life goal to make films that will change the way society see groups of people typically defined by stereotype and cliché. By immersing myself in Prague’s culture through the American Institute of Foreign Study year-long program, I will gain the cinematic and philosophic tools to create films that will help others to better understand the LGBTQ community. I've been making movies since I was old enough to hold a camera, but now I'd like to take it a step further.

- While abroad, I'll visit the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague. The Hollywood Reporter puts FAMU at the top of the list of best film schools in Europe. I put it at the top of my list of prospective graduate schools because it was the center of Czech filmmakers' during communist rule in the 1960s. FAMU was where rebellious film makers broke the bonds of censorship by creating films that depicted the perspectives of marginalized people. I want to do the same thing today. I ask: What can the Czechoslovak New Wave filmmakers and their struggle for social equality teach me about making films that will help to free the LGBTQ members in my own community? I will find my answers here:

- In November, the international film festival held in Prague called the Mezipatra will screen around a hundred top-ranking films on lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and queer themes. What better place for a queer filmmaker obsessed with Czech New Wave film to meet people to learn and collaborate with?

- I'd also like to volunteer to work on a photography project at the Lobkowicz Palace and Nelahozeves Castle, 15km from Prague, where I will find one of the world's largest private collections of world-famous artworks, artifacts, and a library of over 65,000 volumes. I hope to hone my skills with a camera and take a zoomed-in look at the Prague history. I'm going to wear my Canon t2i like a glove.

- And finally, I hope to better understand Czech culture as it pertains to film making by studying at Charles University and taking classes like “Central European Film: Search for Identity” and “Hollywood and Europe”. I will get more in touch with the performance and character elements of film by taking the theater class “Prague Theater Scene: Performance Analysis.” Finally, I’ll learn to better listen to what my community in Prague has to say (literally and figuratively) by taking Czech language classes in a two-week intensive course that includes two language-focused events where students engage with the local area.
- Through traveling abroad in Prague, I give myself to a new perspective and open myself up to influence. I want to use my experience to create films that will convince others to do the same—as a representative of the LGBTQ community, I want to send the message of acceptance and tolerance to the world, from the screens of Mezipatra in Prague to my conservative parents’ television sets.
- \$1,000 local school district scholarship by Amani Davis.
- Last February, I partook in a Divas in Defense workshop. Within this class, our group met a woman who was a survivor of domestic violence. She was also close to becoming a victim of sex trafficking. From this I learned that intimate partner violence is the leading cause of female homicide and injury-related deaths during pregnancy. Although it is not a common hot topic, many people go through it everyday. These people are not only women but men and children, too. Therefore, domestic violence is an issue that is under-discussed, yet extremely important.
- Every 1 in 4 women will be a victim of severe violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. This means our mothers, sisters, grandmothers or even daughters can be victims of domestic violence. We have to be the ones willing to initiate the conversation because many victims are scared. Everyday more people are speaking up about their own stories. Celebrities such as Bill Clinton, Rihanna, and Halle Berry have spoke about their personal accounts with domestic violence. Through these views, people are seeing domestic violence as a bigger issue and an issue that needs to be opened up about. All in all, domestic violence is all around us.
- Additionally, abuse can hurt people physically, mentally, and financially. Physical abuse results in injuries that cost money in order to be fixed. Many remain in or return to an abusive relationship because they lack the financial resources to live on their own. Also, children who grow up around domestic violence are 15 times more likely to be physically and/or sexually abused than the national average. In short, abuse can have various effects on those involved.
- To surmise, domestic violence is often kept quiet within minority communities. As a whole, we have to be proactive and reactive in order to fight the current problem with abuse. Nevertheless, we have to be the change we want to see. Ultimately, domestic violence is not an issue that can be completely rid of, but we can make a true difference through education and prevention. Some issues have to be dealt with in house before we see a major turn around.
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How to Write the UCAS Personal Statement

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/ucas-personal-statement-examples>

■ Mục l■c n■i dung chính:

- The primary author of this blog, David Hawkins, specializes in helping students navigate the UCAS process and applications to universities outside the U.S. (And he's a super great human.) To reach him, [click here](#).
- The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) Personal Statement is the main essay for your application to colleges and universities in Great Britain. UCAS gives a nice explanation [here](#), but in short, this is your chance to stand out against the crowd and show your knowledge and enthusiasm for your chosen area of study.
- You've got 4,000 characters and 47 line limit to show colleges what (ideally) gets you out of bed in the morning (As in, the thing you want to study at the college you're applying to).
- How long is that, really? Use your "word count" tool in Google or Word docs to check as you go along, but 4,000 characters is roughly 500 words or one page.
- The personal statement has changed from a single piece of text to three separate questions, though those questions essentially achieve the same purpose—they're built to guide you to include what colleges and universities want to see in your application.
- Think they're the same? Think again. Here are some key differences between the UCAS and the US Personal Statement:
- When you apply to UK schools, you're applying to one particular degree program, which you'll study for all, or almost all, your time at university. Your UCAS personal statement should focus less on cool/fun/quirky aspects of yourself and more on how you've prepared for your particular area of study.
- The UCAS Personal Statement will be read by someone looking for proof that you are academically capable of studying that subject for your entire degree. In some cases, it might be an actual professor reading your essay.
- You'll only write one response to the UCAS questions, which will be sent to all the universities you're applying to, and it's unlikely you'll be sending any additional (supplemental) essays. Your responses need to explain why you enjoy and are good at this subject, without reference to any particular university or type of university.
- Any extracurricular activities that are NOT connected to the subject you're applying for are mostly irrelevant, unless they illustrate relevant points about your study skills or attributes: for example, having a job outside of school shows time-management and people skills, or leading a sports team shows leadership and responsibility.
- Your personal statement will mostly focus on what you've done at high school, in class, and often in preparation for external exams. 80-90% of the content will be academic in nature.
- This may be obvious, but the first step to a great UCAS Personal Statement is to choose the subject you're applying for. This choice will be consistent across the (up to) five course choices you have. Often, when students struggle with a UCAS personal statement, it's because they are trying to make the statement work for a couple of different subjects. With a clear focus on one subject, your writing can do the job it is supposed to do. Keep in mind you're limited to 4000 characters, so this has to be concise.
- Here are the three personal statement questions you're responding to:
- Why do you want to study this course or subject?
- How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
- What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?
- To work out what information to include, my favourite brainstorming activity is the 'Courtroom Exercise'. Here's how it works:
- The Courtroom Exercise
- Imagine you're prosecuting a case in court, and the case is that you should be admitted to a university to study the subject you've chosen. You have to present your case to the judge, in a 4,000 character statement. The judge won't accept platitudes or points made without evidence--she needs to see evidence. What examples will you present in your statement?

- In a good statement, you'll make an opening and a closing point.
- To open your argument, can you sum up in one sentence why you wish to study this subject? Can you remember where your interest in that subject began? Do you have a story to tell that will engage the reader about your interest in that subject?
- Next, you'll present a number of pieces of evidence, laying out in detail why you're a good match for this subject. What activities have you done that prove you can study this subject at university?
- Most likely, you'll start with a class you took, a project you worked on, an internship you had, or a relevant extra-curricular activity you enjoyed. For each activity you discuss, structure a paragraph on each using the ABC approach:
- A: What is the Activity?
- B: How did it Benefit you as a potential student for this degree course?
- C: Link the benefit to the skills needed to be successful on this Course.
- With three or four paragraphs like these, each of about 9 or 10 lines, and you should have the bulk of your statement done. Typically two of these will be about classes you have taken at school, and two about relevant activities outside of school.
- In the last section, you need to demonstrate wider skills that you have, which you can probably do from your extracurricular activities. How could you demonstrate your time management, your ability to collaborate, or your creativity? Briefly list a few extracurricular activities you've taken part in and identify the relevant skills that are transferable to university study.
- Finally, close your argument in a way that doesn't repeat what you've already shared. Case closed!
- What if I'm not sure what I want to study? Should I still apply?
- There are a number of broader programs available at UK universities (sometimes called Liberal Arts or Flexible Combined Honours). However, you should still showcase two or three academic areas of interest. If you are looking for a broader range of subjects to study and can't choose one, then the UK might not be the best fit for you.
- What if I haven't done much, academically or via extracurriculars, to demonstrate that I'll be able to complete the coursework for my degree? Should I still apply?
- You certainly can, but you will need to be realistic about the strength of your application as a result. The most selective universities will want to see this evidence, but less selective ones will be more willing to account for your potential to grow in addition to what you've already achieved. You could also consider applying for a Foundation course or a 'Year 0' course, where you have an additional year pre-university to enable you to develop this range of evidence.
- If I'm not accepted into a particular major, can I be accepted into a different major?
- It's important to understand that we are not talking about a 'major,' as what you are accepted into is one entire course of study. Some universities may make you an 'alternative offer' for a similar but perhaps less popular course (for example you applied for Business but instead they offer you a place for Business with a Language). At others, you can indicate post-application that you would like to be considered for related courses. However, it's not going to be possible to switch between two completely unrelated academic areas.
- What other information is included in my application? Will they see my extracurricular activities, for example? Is there an Additional Information section where I can include more context on what I've done in high school?
- The application is very brief: the personal statement is where you put all the information. UCAS does not include an activities section or space for any other writing. The 4000 characters is all you have. Some universities might accept information if there are particularly important extenuating circumstances that must be conveyed. This can be done via email, but typically they don't want to see more than the UCAS statement and your school's reference provides.
- Now, let's take a look at some of my favorite UCAS personal statement examples with some analysis for why I think these are great.
- Important: Please note that these were all written for when the UCAS application was a single essay/question, rather than the three questions it is now. But each example below still illustrates how you want to approach your writing. (And you can easily see how they could be split to address the three current questions.)
- When I was ten, I saw a documentary on Chemistry that really fascinated me. Narrated by British theoretical physicist Jim Al-Khalili, it explained how the first elements were discovered and how Chemistry was born out of alchemy. I became fascinated with Chemistry and have remained so ever since. I love the subject because it has very theoretical components, for example quantum Chemistry, while also having huge practical applications.

- In this introduction, the student shows where his interest in Chemistry comes from. Adding some additional academic detail (in this case, the name of the scientist) helps guide the reader into more specific information on why this subject is interesting to him.
- This aspect of Chemistry is important to me. I have, for example, used machine learning to differentiate between approved and experimental drugs. On the first run, using drug molecules from the website Drug Bank, I calculated some molecular descriptors for them. I started with a simple logistic regression model and was shocked to find that it had apparently classified almost all molecules correctly. This result couldn't be right; it took me nearly a month to find the error. I accidentally normalized the molecular-descriptor data individually, rather than as a combined data set, thereby encoding the label into the input. On a second run, after fixing the error, I used real machine learning libraries. Here I actually got some performance with my new algorithm, which I could compare to professional researchers' papers. The highest accuracy I ever saw on my screen was 86 percent. The researchers' result was 85 percent; thanks to more modern machine learning methods, I narrowly beat them.
- I have also studied Mathematics and Physics at A Level and have been able to dive into areas beyond the A Level syllabus such as complex integration in math and the Schrödinger equation in Physics.
- This paragraph lays out a clear case for this student's aptitude for, and interest in, Chemistry. He explains in detail how he has explored his intended major, using academic terminology to show us he has studied the subject deeply. Knowing an admissions reader is looking for evidence that this student has a talent for Chemistry, this paragraph gives them the evidence they need to admit him.
- Additionally, I have worked on an undergraduate computer science course on MIT OpenCourseware, but found that the content followed fixed rules and did not require creativity. At the time I was interested in neural networks and listened to lectures by professor Geoffrey Hinton who serendipitously mentioned his students testing his techniques on 'Kaggle Competitions'. I quickly got interested and decided to compete on this platform. Kaggle allowed me to measure my machine learning skills against competitors with PhDs or who are professional data scientists at large corporations. With this kind of competition naturally I did not win any prizes, but I worked with the same tools and saw how others gradually perfected a script, something which has helped my A Level studies immensely.
- Introducing a new topic, the student again uses academic terminology to show how he has gone beyond the confines of his curriculum to explore the subject at a higher level. In this paragraph, he demonstrates that he has studied university-level Chemistry. Again, this helps the reader to see that this student is capable of studying a Chemistry degree.
- I have been keen to engage in activities beyond the classroom. For example, I have taken part in a range of extracurricular activities, including ballroom dancing, public speaking, trumpet, spoken Mandarin, and tennis, achieving a LAMDA distinction at level four for my public speaking. I have also participated in Kaggle competitions, as I'm extremely interested in machine learning. For example, I have used neural networks to determine the causes of Amazon deforestation from satellite pictures in the 'Planet: Understanding the Amazon from Space' competition. I believe that having worked on projects spanning several weeks or even months has allowed me to build a stamina that will be extremely useful when studying at university.
- This penultimate paragraph introduces the student's extracurricular interests, summing them up in a sentence. Those activities that can demonstrate skills which are transferable to the study of Chemistry are given a bit more explanation. The student's descriptions in each paragraph are very detailed, with lots of specific information about awards, classes and teachers.
- What I hope to gain from an undergraduate (and perhaps post-graduate) education in Chemistry is to deepen my knowledge of the subject and potentially have the ability to successfully launch a startup after university. I'm particularly interested in areas such as computational Chemistry and cheminformatics. However, I'm open to studying other areas in Chemistry, as it is a subject that truly captivates me.
- In the conclusion, the student touches on his future plans, using specific terminology which shows his knowledge of Chemistry. This also reveals that he aims to have a career in this field, which many admission readers find appealing as it demonstrates a level of commitment to the subject.
- This next statement has to accomplish a number of tasks, given the subject the student is applying for. As a vocational degree, applicants for veterinary medicine are committing to a career as well as a subject to study, so they need to give information that demonstrates they understand the reality of a career in this area. It also needs to explain their motivation for this interest, which quite often is demonstrated through work experience (something which is often a condition for entry into these programs). Finally, as this is a highly-academic subject to study at university, the author should include a good level of academic terminology and experiences in the statement.
- There is nothing more fascinating to me than experiencing animals in the wild, in their natural habitat where their behaviour is about the survival of their species. I was lucky enough to experience this when in

Tanzania. While observing animals hunting, I became intrigued by their musculature and inspired to work alongside these animals to help them when they are sick, as a veterinarian.

- In an efficient way, the applicant explains her motivation to become a vet, then squeezes in a bit of information about her experience with animals.
- As a horse rider and owner for nearly ten years, I have sought opportunities to learn as much as I can about caring for the animal. I helped around the yard with grooming and exercise, bringing horses in and out from the fields, putting on rugs, and mucking out. I have also been working at a small animal vet clinic every other Saturday for over 2.5 years. There, my responsibilities include restocking and sterilising equipment, watching procedures, and helping in consultations. Exposure to different cases has expanded my knowledge of various aspects, such as assisting with an emergency caesarean procedure. Due to a lack of staff on a Saturday, I was put in charge of anaesthesia while the puppies were being revived. I took on this task without hesitation and recorded heart and respiration rate, capillary refill time, and gum colour every five minutes. Other placements following an equine vet, working on a polo farm, and volunteering at a swan sanctuary have also broadened my experience with different species and how each possesses various requirements. During pre-vet summer courses, I was also introduced to farm animals such as pigs, cows, sheep and chicken. I spend some time milking dairy cows and removing clustered dust from chicken feet, as well as tipping sheep in order to inspect their teats.
- In this paragraph, she synthesizes personal experience with an academic understanding of vet medicine. She demonstrates that she is committed to animals (helping in the yard, regular Saturday work, assistance with procedures), that she has gained a variety of experiences, and that she understands some of the conditions (caesareans, clustered dust) that vets have to deal with. Note that she also briefly discusses 'pre-vet summer courses,' adding credibility to her level of experience.
- I have focused on HL Biology and HL Chemistry for my IB Diploma. I was particularly excited to study cell biology and body systems because these subjects allowed me to comprehend how the body works and are applicable to animal body functions. Topics like DNA replication as well as cell transcription and translation have helped me form a fundamental understanding of genetics and protein synthesis, both important topics when looking into hereditary diseases in animals. Learning about chemical reactions made me consider the importance of pharmaceutical aspects of veterinary medicine, such as the production of effective medicine. Vaccines are essential and by learning about the chemical reactions, I developed a more nuanced understanding about how they are made and work.
- Now the statement turns to academic matters, linking her IB subjects to the university studies she aspires to. She draws out one particular example that makes a clear link between school and university-level study.
- I have also written my Extended Essay discussing the consequences of breeding laws in the UK and South Australia in relation to the development of genetic abnormalities in pugs and German shepherds. This topic is important, as the growing brachycephalic aesthetic of pugs is causing them to suffer throughout their lifetime. Pedigree dogs, such as the German shepherd, have a very small gene pool and as a result, hereditary diseases can develop. This becomes an ethical discussion, because allowing German shepherds to suffer is not moral; however, as a breed, they aid the police and thus serve society.
- The IB Extended Essay (like an A Level EPQ or an Capstone project), is a great topic to discuss in a personal statement, as these activities are designed to allow students to explore subjects in greater detail.
- The first sentence here is a great example of what getting more specific looks like because it engages more directly with what the student is actually writing about in this particular paragraph then it extrapolates a more general point of advice from those specificities.
- By choosing to write her Extended Essay on a topic of relevance to veterinary medicine, she has given herself the opportunity to show the varied aspects of veterinary science. This paragraph proves to the reader that this student is capable and motivated to study veterinary medicine.
- I have learned that being a veterinarian requires diagnostic skills as well as excellent communication and leadership skills. I understand the importance and ethics of euthanasia decisions, and the sensitivity around discussing it with animal owners. I have developed teamwork and leadership skills when playing varsity football and basketball for four years. My communication skills have expanded through being a Model U.N. and Global Issues Network member.
- This small paragraph on her extracurricular activities links them clearly to her intended area of study, both in terms of related content and necessary skills. From this, the reader gains the impression that this student has a wide range of relevant interests.
- When I attend university, I not only hope to become a veterinarian, but also a leader in the field. I would like to research different aspects of veterinary medicine, such as diseases. As a vet, I would like to help work towards the One Health goal; allowing the maintenance of public health security. This affects vets because we are the ones working closely with animals every day.

- In the conclusion, she ties things together and looks ahead to her career. By introducing the concept of 'One Health', she also shows once again her knowledge of the field she is applying to.
- Standing inside a wind tunnel is not something every 17 year old aspires to, but for me the opportunity to do so last year confirmed my long-held desire to become a mechanical engineer.
- This introduction is efficient and provides a clear direction for the personal statement. Though it might seem that it should be more detailed, for a student applying to study a course that requires limited extended writing, being this matter-of-fact works fine.
- I enjoy the challenge of using the laws of Physics, complemented with Mathematical backing, in the context of everyday life, which helps me to visualise and understand where different topics can be applied. I explored the field of aeronautics, specifically in my work experience with Emirates Aviation University. I explored how engineers apply basic concepts of air resistance and drag when I had the opportunity to experiment with the wind tunnel, which allowed me to identify how different wing shapes behave at diverse air pressures. My interest with robotics has led me to take up a year-long internship with MakersBuilders, where I had the chance to explore physics and maths on a different plane. During my internship I educated young teenagers on a more fundamental stage of building and programming, in particular when we worked on building a small robot and programmed the infra-red sensor in order to create self-sufficient movement. This exposure allowed me to improve my communication and interpersonal skills.
- In this paragraph the student adds evidence to the initial assertion, that he enjoys seeing how Physics relates to everyday life. The descriptions of the work experiences he has had not only show his commitment to the subject, but also enable him to bring in some academic content to demonstrate his understanding of engineering and aeronautics.
- I'm interested in the mechanics side of Maths such as circular motion and projectiles; even Pure Maths has allowed me to easily see patterns when working and solving problems in Computer Science. During my A Level Maths and Further Maths, I have particularly enjoyed working with partial fractions as they show how reverse methodology can be used to solve addition of fractions, which ranges from simple addition to complex kinematics. Pure Maths has also enabled me to better understand how 3D modelling works with the use of volumes of revolution, especially when I learned how to apply the calculations to basic objects like calculating the amount of water in a bottle or the volume of a pencil.
- This paragraph brings in the academic content at school, which is important when applying for a subject such as engineering. This is because the admissions reader needs to be reassured that the student has covered the necessary foundational content to be able to cope with Year 1 of this course.
- In my Drone Club I have been able to apply several methods of wing formation, such as the number of blades used during a UAS flight. Drones can be used for purposes such as in Air-sea Rescue or transporting food to low income countries. I have taken on the responsibility of leading and sharing my skills with others, particularly in the Drone Club where I gained the certification to fly drones. In coding club, I participated in the global Google Code competition related to complex, real-life coding, such as a program that allows phones to send commands to another device using Bluetooth. My Cambridge summer course on math and engineering included the origins of a few of the most important equations and ideologies from many mathematicians such as, $E=mc^2$ from Einstein, I also got a head start at understanding matrices and their importance in kinematics. Last summer, I completed a course at UT Dallas on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. The course was intuitive and allowed me to understand a different perspective of how robots and AI will replace humans to do complex and labour-intensive activities, customer service, driverless cars and technical support.
- In this section, he demonstrates his commitment to the subject through a detailed list of extracurricular activities, all linked to engineering and aeronautics. The detail he gives about each one links to the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in these subjects at university.
- I have represented Model UN as a delegate and enjoyed working with others to solve problems. For my Duke of Edinburgh Award, I partook in several activities such as trekking and playing the drums. I enjoy music and I have reached grade 3 for percussion. I have also participated in a range of charitable activities, which include assisting during Ramadan and undertaking fun-runs to raise money for cancer research.
- As with the introduction, this is an efficient use of language, sharing a range of activities, each of which has taught him useful skills. The conclusion that follows is similarly efficient and to-the-point.
- I believe that engineering is a discipline that will offer me a chance to make a tangible difference in the world, and I am certain I will enjoy the process of integrating technology with our everyday life.
- Applying for a joint honours course presents a particular challenge of making the case that you are interested in the first subject, the second subject and (often overlooked) the combination of the two. In this example, the applicant uses her own academic studies and personal experiences to make her case.

- I usually spend my summer breaks in Uttar Pradesh, India working at my grandparents' NGO which produces bio-fertilizers for the poor. While working, I speak to many of the villagers in the nearby villages like Barokhar and Dharampur and have found out about the various initiatives the Government has taken to improve the production of wheat and rice. I understand the hardships they undergo and speaking to them has shown me the importance of Social Policy and the role the government plays in improving the lives of people and inspired me to pursue my university studies in this field.
- In the introduction, this applicant explains where her interlinking experiences come from: she has personal experiences that demonstrate how economics impacts the most vulnerable in society. In doing so, she shows the admissions reader that she has a deep interest in this combination and can move on to discussing each subject in turn.
- My interest in these areas has been driven by the experiences I had at high school and beyond. I started attending Model United Nations in the 9th grade and have been to many conferences, discussing problems like the water crisis and a lack of sustainability in underdeveloped countries. These topics overlapped with my study of economics and exciting classroom discussions on what was going on how different events would impact economies, for instance how fluctuations in oil prices will affect standards of living. Studying Economics has expanded my knowledge about how countries are run and how macroeconomic policies shape the everyday experiences of individuals.
- Unusually, this applicant does not go straight into her classroom experiences but instead uses one of her extracurricular activities (Model United Nations) in her first paragraph. For students applying for subjects that are not often taught at school (Social Policy in this example), this can be a good idea, as it allows you to bring in material that you have self-studied to explain why you are capable of studying each subject at university. Here, she uses MUN discussions to show she understands some topics in social policy that are impacting the world.
- By taking up history as a subject in Grade 11 and 12, I have seen the challenges that people went through in the past, and how different ideas gained momentum in different parts of the world such as the growth of communism in Russia and China and how it spread to different countries during the Cold War. I learned about the different roles that governments played in times of hardships such as that which President Roosevelt's New Deal played during the Great Depression. From this, I gained analytical skills by scrutinizing how different social, political and economic forces have moulded societies in the past.
- In this paragraph, she then takes the nearest possible class to her interest in Social Policy and draws elements from it to add to her case for Social Policy. Taking some elements from her history classes enables her to add some content to this statement, before linking to the topic of economics.
- To explore my interest in Economics, I interned at Emirates National Bank of Dubai, one of the largest banks in the Middle East, and also at IBM. At Emirates NBD, I undertook a research project on Cash Management methods in competitor banks and had to present my findings at the end of the internship. I also interned at IBM where I had to analyze market trends and fluctuations in market opportunity in countries in the Middle East and Africa. I had to find relations between GDP and market opportunity and had to analyze how market opportunity could change over the next 5 years with changing geo-political situations. I have also attended Harvard University's Youth Lead the Change leadership conference where I was taught how to apply leadership skills to solve global problems such as gender inequality and poverty.
- Economics is explored again through extracurriculars, with some detail added to the general statement about the activities undertaken on this work experience. Though the level of academics here is a little thin because this student's high school did not offer any classes in Economics, she does as well as she can to bring in academic content.
- I have partaken in many extra-curricular activities which have helped me develop the skills necessary for this course. Being a part of the Press Club at school gave me an opportunity to hone my talent for the written word and gave me a platform to talk about global issues. Volunteering at a local library taught me how to be organized. I developed research and analytical skills by undertaking various research projects at school such as the sector-wide contribution of the Indian economy to the GDP in the previous year. As a member of the Business and Economic Awareness Council at school, I was instrumental in organizing many economics-based events such as the Business Fair and Innovation Mela. Being part of various Face to Faith conferences has provided me with an opportunity to interact with students in Sierra Leone, India and Korea and understand global perspectives on issues like malaria and human trafficking.
- The extracurricular activities are revisited here, with the first half of this paragraph showing how the applicant has some transferable skills from her activities that will help her with this course. She then revisits her interest in the course studies, before following up with a closing section that touches on her career goals:
- The prospect of pursuing these two subjects is one that I eagerly anticipate and I look forward to meeting the challenge of university. In the future, I wish to become an economist and work at a think tank where I

will be able to apply what I have learnt in studying such an exciting course.

- This applicant is also a joint-honours applicant, and again is applying for a subject that she has not been able to study at school. Thus, bringing in her own interest and knowledge of both subjects is crucial here.
- At the age of four, I remember an argument with my mother: I wanted to wear a pink ballerina dress with heels, made for eight-year-olds, which despite my difficulty in staying upright I was determined to wear. My mother persistently engaged in debate with me about why it was not ok to wear this ensemble in winter. After two hours of patiently explaining to me and listening to my responses she convinced me that I should wear something different, the first time I remember listening to reason. It has always been a natural instinct for me to discuss everything, since in the course of my upbringing I was never given a simple yes or no answer. Thus, when I began studying philosophy, I understood fully my passion for argument and dialogue.
- This is an unusual approach to start a UCAS Personal Statement, but it does serve to show how this student approaches the world and why this combination of subjects might work for her. Though it could perhaps be drawn out more explicitly, here she is combining an artistic issue (her clothes) with a philosophical concern (her debate with her mother) to lead the reader into the case she is making for admission into this program.
- This was first sparked academically when I was introduced to religious ethics; having a fairly Christian background my view on religion was immature. I never thought too much of the subject as I believed it was just something my grandparents did. However, when opened up to the arguments about god and religion, I was inclined to argue every side. After research and discussion, I was able to form my own view on religion without having to pick a distinctive side to which theory I would support. This is what makes me want to study philosophy: it gives an individual personal revelation towards matters into which they may not have given too much thought to.
- There is some good content here that discusses the applicant's interest in philosophy and her own motivation for this subject, though there is a lack of academic content here.
- Alongside this, taking IB Visual Arts HL has opened my artistic views through pushing me out of my comfort zone. Art being a very subjective course, I was forced to choose an opinion which only mattered to me, it had no analytical nor empirical rights or wrongs, it was just my taste in art. From studying the two subjects alongside each other, I found great value, acquiring a certain form of freedom in each individual with their dual focus on personalized opinion and taste in many areas, leading to self-improvement.
- In this section, she uses her IB Visual Arts class to explore how her interest in philosophy bleeds into her appreciation of art. Again, we are still awaiting the academic content, but the reader will by now be convinced that the student has a deep level of motivation for this subject. When we consider how rare this combination is, with very few courses for this combination available, the approach to take slightly longer to establish can work.
- For this reason, I find the work of Henry Moore fascinating. I am intrigued by his pieces, especially the essence of the 'Reclining Nude' model, as the empty holes inflicted on the abstract human body encouraged my enthusiasm for artistic interpretation. This has led me to contemplate the subtlety, complexity and merit of the role of an artist. Developing an art piece is just as complex and refined as writing a novel or developing a theory in Philosophy. For this reason, History of Art conjoins with Philosophy, as the philosophical approach towards an art piece is what adds context to the history as well as purpose behind it.
- Finally, we're given the academic content. Cleverly, the content links both the History of Art and Philosophy together through a discussion of the work of Henry Moore. Finding examples that conjoin the subjects that make up a joint-honours application is a great idea and works well here.
- Studying Philosophy has allowed me to apply real life abstractions to my art, as well as to glean a deeper critical analysis of art in its various mediums. My IB Extended Essay examined the 1900s Fauve movement, which made a huge breakthrough in France and Hungary simultaneously. This was the first artistic movement which was truly daring and outgoing with its vivid colours and bold brush strokes. My interest expanded to learning about the Hungarian artists in this movement led by Henri Matisse. Bela Czobor was one of the few who travelled to France to study but returned to Hungary, more specifically Nagybanya, to bestow what he had learned.
- Again in this paragraph, the author connects the subjects. Students who are able to undertake a research project in their high school studies (such as the IB Extended Essay here, or the A Level Extended Project or AP Capstone) can describe these in their UCAS personal statements, as this level of research in an area of academic study can enliven and add depth to the writing, as is the case here.
- As an international student with a multicultural background, I believe I can adapt to challenging or unfamiliar surroundings with ease. I spent two summers working at a nursery in Hungary as a junior Assistant Teacher, where I demonstrated leadership and teamwork skills that I had previously developed

through commitment to sports teams. I was a competitive swimmer for six years and have represented my school internationally as well as holding the school record for 100m backstroke. I was elected Deputy Head of my House, which further reflects my dedication, leadership, teamwork and diligence.

- As in the previous examples, this statement gives a good overview of the applicant's extracurricular activities, with a mention of skills that will be beneficial to her studies at university. She then concludes with a brief final sentence:

- I hope to carry these skills with me into my university studies, allowing me to enrich my knowledge and combine my artistic and philosophical interests.

- A good range of UK universities now offer courses called 'Liberal Arts' (or similar titles such as 'Flexible Combined Honours'), which allows students to study a broader topic of study--perhaps combining three or four subjects--than is typically available in the UK system.

- This presents a challenge in the personal statement, as within the 47 line / 4000 character limit, the applicant will have to show academic interest and knowledge in a range of subjects while also making the case to be admitted for this combined programme of study.

- As a child I disliked reading; however, when I was 8, there was one particular book that caught my attention: *The Little Prince*. From that moment onwards, my love for literature was ignited and I had entered into a whirlwind of fictional worlds. While studying and analysing the classics from *The Great Gatsby* to *Candide*, this has exposed me to a variety of novels. My French bilingualism allowed me to study, in great depth, different texts in their original language. This sparked a new passion of mine for poetry, and introduced me to the works of Arthur Rimbaud, who has greatly influenced me. Through both reading and analysing poetry I was able to decipher its meaning. Liberal Arts gives me the opportunity to continue to study a range of texts and authors from different periods in history, as well as related aspects of culture, economy and society.

- Here we have a slightly longer than usual opening paragraph, but given the nature of the course being applied for this works well. A personal story segueing from literature to modern languages to history and cultural studies shows that this student has a broad range of interests within the humanities and thus is well-suited to this course of study.

- Liberal Arts is a clear choice for me. Coming from the IB International Baccalaureate Diploma programme I have studied a wide range of subjects which has provided me with a breadth of knowledge. In Theatre, I have adapted classics such as *Othello* by Shakespeare, and playing the role of Desdemona forced me to compartmentalise her complex emotions behind the early-modern English text. Studying History has taught me a number of skills; understanding the reasons behind changes in society, evaluating sources, and considering conflicting interpretations. From my interdisciplinary education I am able to critically analyse the world around me. Through studying Theory of Knowledge, I have developed high quality analysis using key questions and a critical mindset by questioning how and why we think and why. By going beyond the common use of reason, I have been able to deepen and broaden my understanding and apply my ways of knowing in all subjects; for example in science I was creative in constructing my experiment (imagination) and used qualitative data (sense perception).

- Students who are taking the IB Diploma, with its strictures to retain a broad curriculum, are well-suited to the UK's Liberal Arts courses, as they have had practice seeing the links between subjects. In this paragraph, the applicant shows how she has done this, linking content from one subject to skills developed in another, and touching on the experience of IB Theory of Knowledge (an interdisciplinary class compulsory for all IB Diploma students) to show how she is able to see how different academic subjects overlap and share some common themes.

- Languages have always played an important role in my life. I was immersed into a French nursery even though my parents are not French speakers. I have always cherished the ability to speak another language; it is something I have never taken for granted, and it is how I individualise myself. Being bilingual has allowed me to engage with a different culture. As a result, I am more open minded and have a global outlook. This has fuelled my desire to travel, learn new languages and experience new cultures. This course would provide me with the opportunity to fulfil these desires. Having written my Extended Essay in French on the use of manipulative language used by a particular character from the French classic *Dangerous Liaisons* I have had to apply my skills of close contextual reading and analysing to sculpt this essay. These skills are perfectly applicable to the critical thinking that is demanded for the course.

- Within the humanities, this student has a particular background that makes her stand out, having become fluent in French while having no French background nor living in a French-speaking country. This is worth her exploring to develop her motivation for a broad course of study at university, which she does well here.

- Studying the Liberal Arts will allow me to further my knowledge in a variety of fields whilst living independently and meeting people from different backgrounds. The flexible skills I would achieve from

obtaining a liberal arts degree I believe would make me more desirable for future employment. I would thrive in this environment due to my self discipline and determination. During my school holidays I have undertaken working in a hotel as a chambermaid and this has made me appreciate the service sector in society and has taught me to work cohesively with others in an unfamiliar environment. I also took part in a creative writing course held at Keats House, where I learnt about romanticism. My commitment to extracurricular activities such as varsity football and basketball has shown me the importance of sportsmanship and camaraderie, while GIN (Global Issue Networking) has informed me of the values of community and the importance for charitable organisations.

- The extracurricular paragraph here draws out a range of skills the student will apply to this course. Knowing that taking a broader range of subjects at a UK university requires excellent organizational skills, the student takes time to explain how she can meet these, perhaps going into slightly more detail than would be necessary for a single-honours application to spell out that she is capable of managing her time well. She then broadens this at the end by touching on some activities that have relevance for her studies.
- My academic and personal preferences have always led me to the Liberal Arts; I feel as though the International Baccalaureate, my passion and self-discipline have prepared me for higher education. From the academics, extracurriculars and social aspects, I intend to embrace the entire experience of university.
- In the final section, the candidate restates how she matches this course.
- Overall, you can see how the key factor in a UCAS statement is the academic evidence, with students linking their engagement with a subject to the course of study that they are applying to. Using the courtroom exercise analogy, the judge here should be completely convinced that the case has been made, and will therefore issue an offer of admittance to that university.
- Tagged: student , supplemental essay , sample supplemental essay

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Do I Need to Take an English Proficiency Exam (When Applying to Universities)?

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/english-proficiency-exam>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kristen Karovic, IEC and Founder of College Bloom
- Alexandra Feinson, Deputy Director of University Counseling at UWC Changshu China
- A note from the authors: The content of this article won't help every applicant: every situation is sensitive and unique, and education is continuously changing. However, we want to be transparent that our goals are to give you context, steps, and tools for further research so you can be empowered in your next decisions. Reach out if you need clarification or guidance: we are educators here to support you.
- Depending on where you are from and where you go to school, answers to questions about your citizenship, language, or current curriculum can give colleges and universities the information they need about your proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. You might also need to demonstrate your knowledge of English as a requirement for a student visa, (for example, when applying to study in the UK).
- Here's what we'll cover in this post:
- The university perspective of English language requirements
- Common challenges students face
- Common options for English language exams: TOEFL, IELTS, Duolingo English Test, Cambridge, Pearson
- Free practice links for English proficiency exams
- Five questions to ask yourself to decide which test to take
- Three factors to help you decide when to take an exam
- Alternative tests to demonstrate English proficiency
- The best indicator if you should take an English language exam
- Options if you cannot take an English language proficiency exam
- Before you read any further, a warning:
- Cracking the code of English language requirements can feel like more of an art than a science. There will not be one perfect answer for every student, and you may even encounter obstacles (more on that below). But this article should help you understand the requirements and the strategy for English proficiency in the college application process.
- If you are an international student and studying in a national school, the answer is most likely, YES.
- Like many parts of the application process, understanding if you need to take an English exam requires reading the fine print: the details on a school website. Each college and university will use a different combination of the methods above, have different rules for what they think "proves" that you speak English well, and even require different levels of English proficiency. And the rules can change each year! That's why step one of this process is to always start with the admissions website.
- Here's an example from University College Utrecht in the Netherlands:
- ...and that's not even the whole list for this university! But you can see how a university website will guide you towards the requirements for your specific situation. For students applying from countries where English is not the official language, a major factor in the process is also how much of your high school studies are completed in English (if any).
- Remember that admission officers are ultimately looking to ensure that you will be able to successfully complete a university degree in English without barriers to the language. When in doubt about your specific situation, email or call the university directly, and the admission officer will be happy to clarify.
- The world is a beautifully complex place and university websites/policies are not always perfect in capturing this complexity when it comes to listing English requirements for your particular situation. Two common sources of confusion you may encounter are:

- Requirements for dual citizens: What if you have citizenship from an English-speaking country, but live and attend school in classes other than English? For example, you are a Canadian citizen taking high school classes in Spanish. Some colleges may not require an English exam (based on citizenship), while others may require an English exam (based on residence or language of instruction). When in doubt? After carefully reading the site, email them: asking the admissions office is the best way to get a clear answer.
- University doesn't readily recognize that English is the acknowledged primary language for your country: Sometimes, instead of saying: "English tests are not required for students in countries where English is an official language," university websites will say: "English tests are not required for students from these countries: A, B, C ..." This can be frustrating if you are reading this website while sitting in a country that is not on the list, but you know English is the primary language for your country (and most likely one of your native languages). Don't assume you have to take a test just because your country isn't listed ... ask first! Email the college to inquire whether your particular country/language background is sufficient to show your abilities in English. For many colleges, your outreach could lead to one less test you have to take. But also be prepared for the answer to be: "You are still required to submit an English proficiency test." If that is the college's official policy, for whatever reason, the choice is in your hands to either take a test or not apply to that school. The good news is that if English is your native language, but you are still required to take the exam, you should be able to handle the exam without meaningful preparation.
- It is important to note that each university establishes their own standards of who is required to take an English proficiency exam and also make a careful internal review of which exams they accept.
- Your first goal is to check each university's website that you are interested in to see which exams or certificates they accept. You might have already taken an exam or completed a certificate, so see if it is valid for your application.
- The table below shows five of the most common English language proficiency exams you will encounter, and you will most likely need to have completed one of them: TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), Duolingo English Test, Cambridge Exams, and Pearson PTE Academic.
- So many options! So many acronyms!
- *Scores can be considered valid for the date of application or for the date of enrollment. Please see the table below, as this can be a gap of 6-9 months, and always clarify with the university of your choice what exam dates (as well as which exam) they consider valid.
- You wouldn't go into a math test without studying, right? Even if you're advanced or fluent in English, you still need to familiarize yourself with the format for an English proficiency exam.
- The next step in understanding your options is taking advantage of practice questions and tests to acquaint yourself with how it feels to take each test. Practicing may lead to you preferring one style of test or realizing you can get your best score on a certain test.
- Good news: there are free resources online—offered by the same companies which create these exams—that will help you practice for each of the major English language exams. We recommend you first use the official practice material (specified in the chart above) before exploring other free resources online. There are many YouTube videos and websites which claim to have realistic test content when, in fact, they do not align with the questions or goals of these exams at all.
- There are also paid resources that can help you study for and simulate the exams, such as TOEFL practice exams from ETS and preparation packages from Pearson. Magoosh is also a popular platform to prepare for the TOEFL and IELTS (among other exams). Although you have to make an investment, these simulations can be extremely helpful in your preparation for the actual exam.
- Now, let's say you magically find time to practice ALL of these exams, and you are now sitting in front of a set of practice test results. As previewed in the chart above, the scores on each test are calculated VERY differently. If you received a 120 Duolingo English Test score and a 90 on the TOEFL, which is better?
- The internet to the rescue! Here are a couple of resources for comparing scores across test types:
- Duolingo English Test score interpretation
- TOEFL Essentials vs TOEFL iBT test
- Comparing TOEFL and IELTS
- Cambridge English score converter
- Pearson PTE score comparison
- Note: you will not have to worry about converting your practice test score yourself. The application requirements will specify overall scores, subscores, and/or individual program preferences for each exam that they accept. Check out this example from the University of Toronto.
- So now you are acquainted with each test. But as mentioned above, each college may give you multiple options! The answers to these five questions should help you narrow in on which test you should take:

- Does every school on your college list have one test in common? Make a list of which tests are accepted at each school on your college list. Is only one test accepted by all the schools? Take it! This is a great way to minimize the number of tests you have to take and focus your studying efforts.
- How much can you afford to pay for taking the test and sending your test scores? The Duolingo English Test is much less expensive than the other test options, and it's also the test that offers the most fee waivers. If cost is the overriding factor, this is probably your best option (unless some of your colleges don't accept the Duolingo Test, or require additional proof of proficiency, so you will have to choose another exam: see option 3). More and more colleges and universities are realizing that the cost of the Duolingo English Test leads to better access to who can take it; if it is not listed, be sure to advocate for yourself and highlight the convenient price point to this exam.
- Does the country/region where you are applying prefer one test over the others? While many countries accept multiple tests, you will find that certain tests are most common in certain areas. If you are applying to the U.S., the TOEFL, IELTS, and Duolingo English Test will be widely accepted. In the UK, the IELTS or Cambridge Exams may be preferred, and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand accept Pearson PTE (but also allow TOEFL and IELTS). The Duolingo English Test is accepted by these institutions around the world, and more and more higher education institutions continue to accept the Duolingo English Test, especially due to its low price point (and versatility - it can even count as an interview for some schools, such as Tulane University).
- Does one test's content come more easily to you? Using the practice resources shared above, you can start getting familiar with the formats of each test and the types of questions they will ask. Are you getting your best results on one particular test, or are you most comfortable with one format? Take that one!
- Where can you easily/safely take the test? Two of the tests we are discussing offer at-home testing: Duolingo English Test and TOEFL. Taking the test at home will mean setting up your room and computer to certain specifications, with stable internet, and being prepared to maintain eye contact with your screen. For the remaining test options, you will have to visit a testing center (look up the closest testing center on their websites), which might be suspended in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Remember that your health and safety is the utmost priority.
- - For example, Tulane University notes: "For non-native English speakers who have taken the SAT or ACT, a 600+ on the SAT reading/writing or 27+ on the ACT English waives your requirement for an English proficiency score." This would mean a student would not have to submit the TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo English Test. - Also keep in mind that some universities will accept the SAT/ACT for admission, but not for enrollment. For example: the University of Arkansas accepts a 500 on the SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Subscore or a 19 ACT English Subscore for admission. However, to enroll into English composition courses, "non-native speakers of English must submit an acceptable writing score." This writing score includes the exams listed in the table above, but also includes their own English Language Placement Test.
- These questions aren't going to get every student to the one perfect solution, but hopefully they will help you think about the most important factors to consider when picking an English exam: what's accepted by the school, what's most common in the region, what are the costs, and where will you test.
- Another factor to consider is when you will take your English exam during your high school career. The perfect timing is a balance of three factors:
 - Your scores will be valid at the time of application
 - You are ready to do your best
 - You've built in time to try again
- As you saw in the chart earlier, many of the English exam scores expire after two years. So finding the best time to take the test usually means a year or two before your enrollment, but not waiting until the last minute.
- You can always opt to take an exam for practice, even if it is not considered valid by the university due to its validity, or because you are considering repeating the exam at a later date. You can also take an exam the last few months of the application season—with a goal to improve a second time while also solidifying which exam will in fact fulfill the necessary requirements.
- When in doubt, ask the admission office at the college you are interested in directly so you can make sure your scores are valid. For some schools, it will depend on when you are applying; for other schools, it will depend on when you are enrolled in classes.
- Here is a table with university responses about the earliest date a student could take an English proficiency exam, specifically following the U.S. timeline for applications for fall semester enrollment. The question he emailed to each U.S. university admission office was: "What would be the earliest date my TOEFL score would be considered valid if I am applying to begin class in the fall?" (Note: he only sent an email requesting this information after he did not find it on their Admission Requirements webpages).

- After all, the longer you speak/learn in English, the better your English will be! But also keep in mind how much your English proficiency might change (or flatline) during the last two years of high school. Is it really necessary to wait until application time to take an English proficiency test?
- You need to plan ahead in case you are a nervous test taker or something goes wrong on test day. What if there is an issue at the test center? What if your proctor disqualifies your Duolingo English Test after you break one of their rules? Or you ran the ProctorU Equipment Check for the TOEFL test before test day and all was good, but on test day, you experience a problem?
- Using the practice resources linked above, you can identify your growth areas and make a study plan for whichever test you decide to take. Give yourself time to study the format, identify your strengths and weaknesses, improve those weaknesses, and replicate test conditions (with time!) so that you are ready to give your best performance. We recommend familiarizing yourself with requirements and options ahead of time, and starting to practice at least one year before the time your application is due, with the goal of taking the exam months before your application is even due.
- As with every step of this process, the answer is: it depends on the rules of that school. But it's a great idea to check and see if a test you are already taking might fulfill the English language requirement. Examples of other tests that could count include: SAT, ACT, AP English exam, IB English exam, or GCSE/IGCSE/GCE results.
- For example, at Cardiff University in Wales:
 - The University minimum requirement for English is grade C/4 at GCSE or IELTS (Academic) with 6.5 overall and a minimum of 5.5 in each of the subskills, or an accepted equivalent.
 - Usually, a college website will state whether these tests/exams are acceptable alternatives to an English language exam requirement. They might even offer their own English proficiency exam as an option. But if they don't mention alternatives on their website, it never hurts to ask.
 - Great question. Let's take a step back to the beginning, where we talked about why colleges require English language proficiency. Pursuing higher education in English means entering into a fast-paced environment with English-language instruction, English-speaking peers, and technical terminology in a language that may not be your first. (Shout out to all my Chemistry majors studying cycloalkanes!) Colleges have a sense of what this environment will be like, and they use English tests (and certain score cut-offs on those tests) to make sure they are setting you up for success by admitting you.
 - When you are researching English language requirements, you will definitely find schools where these tests are optional, or schools where you can request a waiver that will excuse you from having to submit a test result. Should you take this path?
 - To make your decision, ask yourself two questions:
 - How else are you demonstrating your English ability in your application?
 - Will taking an English proficiency exam highlight your capability to succeed in the language?
 - Let's break those down.
 - Colleges want you to succeed when you arrive. So, in your application, they will be looking for evidence that you are ready to thrive in an English-language environment. But that evidence doesn't necessarily need to come in the form of an exam. Is your personal statement really excellent? Is your English teacher writing you an awesome recommendation letter? Did you get to interview with the college in English?
 - Each of these pieces (or better yet, a combination of them) will showcase your English skills. Put yourself in the seat of the application reader and ask yourself: when they are evaluating my application, what evidence will prove that I will have a smooth transition in English to study and excel at their school and my program of choice?
 - These non-exam types of evidence are why some schools allow you to apply for a waiver to forgo the testing requirement. Here are examples of what might help qualify you for a waiver:
 - Test scores, such as from the SAT and ACT
 - Majority to all of your high school classes taught in English (accompanied by a letter from a school official verifying your proficiency in English)
 - A letter of proficiency from a high school official
 - If a university decides to accept evidence of your proficiency in English in alternative ways, then you will not have to take an additional exam in English.
 - The nice thing about potentially having SO many types of evidence at your fingertips is that you can ask yourself: which piece of evidence is my strongest? Colleges are looking for reasons to admit you, so you should pick evidence that makes you shine (and avoid evidence that would cause concern).
 - Here's an example:
 - Let's say you are deciding between taking the Duolingo English Test, doing an interview with the college, or asking for an English language test waiver because you have studied for four years of high school in an English curriculum. (And let's put aside for a minute that college interviews can be valuable for many other

reasons besides showing your English ability.)

- Are you a great test-taker? Why not find out by taking a free 15-minute Duolingo English Practice Test? How does that practice score compare to the requirements or averages of your favorite college?
- Are you a great interviewer? Try a practice interview with a counselor, teacher, or friend. Do you tend to get nervous and not speak clearly? Or are you confident and effusive.
- How is your English class grade? How are your grades in other classes that involve lots of writing and discussion? Does using those grades as evidence make you seem weaker or stronger when it comes to English proficiency?
- The great news is that if you are asking yourself “should I take an English exam,” you have options. If you are normally a great speaker, but you tense up in interviews, don’t pick that option. If your English grade isn’t your best, but you know you can do better, add the Duolingo English Test. Look at all of your options and pick the one or combination that will make you look strongest when it comes to listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.
- None of what we’ve discussed so far may be available to you. You may not have access to the required tests, may not be able to afford them, or may not be interested in schools that have these requirements. Maybe you are excited to go to college in English, but you are not yet prepared with your English language skills. You still have great options!
- There are pathways you can take to college and university undergraduate degrees in English, and these options serve to strengthen your proficiency skills to a university level. Many colleges and universities offer “bridge” programs to help with English, or partner with programs that could allow you to transition into an English-speaking education, without having to prove your English in the application process.
- For example:
 - Interested in studying in Canada? Check out the English Language Transition Programs at University of Toronto. Once you complete any of these programs you will meet the U of T English requirement.
 - Or maybe you are ready to study Down Under? The University of Melbourne partners with a language center to offer a pathway for international students into their undergraduate courses called the English Language Bridging Program .
 - Don’t leave out English-language programs in non-English speaking countries as an option. For example, John Cabot University (JCU) in Rome offers an Intensive English Language Program , both for students who want to earn a degree at JCU or at another English-speaking university.
 - For more information on these sorts of programs that fill the gap between your current level of education and the level needed to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in English, check out this article on Foundation Programs .
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , english proficiency exam , international students english proficiency exam

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 22, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Do I Need to Take an English Proficiency Exam \(When Applying to Universities\)?](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 22, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

- [International Students](#)
- [College Bloom](#)
- [UWC Changshu China](#)
- [applying to study in the UK](#)
- [whole list](#)
- [TOEFL](#)
- [IELTS](#)
- [Duolingo English Test](#)
- [Cambridge Exams](#)
- [Pearson PTE Academic](#)
- [TOEFL Practice Sets](#)
- [IELTS Practice Tests](#)
- [Duolingo Practice Test](#)
- [Cambridge Exam Preparation](#)
- [Pearson PTE](#)
- [TOEFL practice exams from ETS](#)
- [preparation packages from Pearson](#)
- [Magoosh](#)
- [Duolingo English Test score interpretation](#)
- [TOEFL Essentials vs TOEFL iBT test](#)
- [Comparing TOEFL and IELTS](#)
- [Cambridge English score converter](#)
- [Pearson PTE score comparison](#)
- [this example from the University of Toronto](#)
- [The Duolingo English Test is accepted by these institutions](#)
- [count as an interview](#)
- [certain specifications](#)
- [maintain eye contact](#)
- [U.S. timeline for applications](#)
- [you break one of their rules](#)
- [ProctorU Equipment Check for the TOEFL test](#)
- [Cardiff University](#)
- [college interviews](#)

- [English Language Transition Programs](#)
- [English Language Bridging Program](#)
- [English-language programs in non-English speaking countries](#)
- [Intensive English Language Program](#)
- [Foundation Programs](#)
- [English Language Programs](#)
- [Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students](#)
- [122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? \(International Version\)](#)
- [211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students \(and Their Counselors\)](#)
- [SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students](#)
- [international students](#)
- [english proficiency exam](#)
- [international students english proficiency exam](#)

How to choose which college to attend: Key factors to consider

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-decide-where-to-attend>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Choosing the right college to attend can feel pretty monumental, so it's completely normal to feel a bit overwhelmed.
- This post is inspired by a session called "Commitment Issues: Helping Your Student Decide On Their College Choice", (that's the video linked above) and aims to guide you through the key factors you should consider as you make this important decision.
- Below, we'll talk through key factors to consider when you're trying to decide which college to attend.
- Let's dive in.
- While the original video session offered tips for parents, these can be adapted to guide your own thinking:
 - Congratulate yourself for getting this far! Having multiple college options is a good position to be in.
 - Have honest financial conversations and understand support. Be realistic about what you and your family can afford. In particular, research things like average student loan debt for graduates—student loans are frequently more of a burden than students expect.
 - Resource: For more on how to pay for college, check out these modules
 - Resource: How to write a financial aid appeal letter
 - If possible, visit campuses. Experiencing the environment firsthand can be invaluable. If in-person visits aren't possible, explore virtual tours. Resources like the Fiske Guide or Colleges Worth Your Money can also provide insights.
 - Resource: How to get the most out of your college visit
 - Resource: 60+ possible questions to ask on a college tour
 - Prepare for your independence! College is a time of significant personal growth. Spend some time reflecting on the human being you want to be in five years. How does college help you on that path?
 - Don't rush your decision. Take your time to weigh the factors below.
 - And maybe the biggest, which we'll dive into below:
 - Think about best fit qualities, not simply prestige. Focus on what truly matters to you in a college experience. (College ranking systems like those of US News or Niche can be fairly poor indicators here, since many of the things that go into those rankings may not actually line up with what matters to you specifically.)
 - Susan Tree introduced six key "F's" to consider when determining college fit:
 - Focus: What are your academic and non-academic priorities? What are your "must-haves"?
 - Explore department websites at each college and look at faculty bios to see if there are experts in your specific areas of interest.
 - Read course guidebooks and find course syllabi to understand the curriculum.
 - Dabble in data! Look at four-to-six-year graduation rates, information on impacted majors, and professor accessibility. Consider the strength of academics in your intended major.
 - Think about other special programs like cross-registration, study abroad, co-ops, and honors programs.
 - Don't forget non-academic aspects like sports, food, dorms, location, and weather.
 - And keep in mind: something like 80% of students change majors at least once in college.
 - Fellowship: Who do you want to share your college experience with?
 - Consider if diversity and affinity are important to you. Do you want to be surrounded by similar voices, or different voices? Is there enough affirmation of your belief system or community? And conversely, is there enough challenge to your belief system and world view? (Since being challenged is an important part of college.)
 - Look at student reviews (with a critical eye!) on platforms like Niche and Unigo.
 - Engage with admitted student programming, whether face-to-face or virtual.
 - Explore social media and consider experiencing versus perceiving different college environments.

- Talk to actual humans! Reach out to admission webpages, yield resources, department websites, Instagram/TikTok DMs, and alumni from your high school (this can be very insightful!).
- Financial: Not all loans are created equal.
- Be aware of federal student loan limits. For example, the freshman year limit is \$5,500.
- Tread very lightly with private loans and Parent PLUS loans, as they can be dangerous, may not be subject to deferment, and cannot be discharged in bankruptcy.
- If you must take out private or parent loans, carefully evaluate if you are extending beyond your means.
- Remember that prestige is relative; debt is not.
- Utilize resources like College Essay Guy's Paying for College Guide, or if you prefer audio, podcasts about understanding financial aid packages.
- Important note regarding financial fit: We'd highly recommend filling out Amanda Miller's Award Letter Analyzer (go to that link, click "File" → "Make a copy") to calculate the bottom line for your first year at each school you're considering. Then multiply by four (because you'll be graduating in four years, right?).
- Is there a considerable difference?
- If yes, you'll have to weigh for yourself the benefits of choosing a more expensive school against the reality of likely living with less for longer after you graduate. Ask a counselor, parent, college financial aid officer, or other trusted adult to help make real how much of a difference \$10,000 (for example) in debt will make to your life after college. And if you're planning to attend graduate school, then you will want to look even more closely at how much you want to spend on your undergraduate education.
- Future: How successful is the college in supporting students' aspirations?
- Consider the programming and advising available. Who will coach you?
- Recognize that your student context and community will influence how you perceive the impact of your choice.
- Explore the college's alumni network and what they do. Use tools like LinkedIn's Alumni Tool.
- Look at college alumni reports and see if there are alumni Facebook groups or messaging boards. What types of issues and dialogues are happening? Are they in alignment with your values?
- Accreditation: Be sure the college is an accredited institution, since this impacts the validity of your degree.
- Family: Is anything happening in your family that takes priority at this time?
- Consider the distance from home and how it intersects with cultural priorities or family issues.
- Think about family circumstances like aging, ailing, or special needs family members.
- Are there any logistics you need to figure out? How will you get back and forth to campus on breaks, especially if there are multiple students in college at the same time?
- Consider the choice of an institution with a religious affiliation (or not), the choice of an HBCU school because of family preference, tradition, or ROI, proximity so family can attend events, and any legacy connections that are important to your family.
- Feeling: These are questions to ask yourself directly:
 - How do you feel on campus? Excited? Safe? Explorative?
 - Do you have a magnetic pull?
 - Are these your people?
 - Is there a gut feeling that this place is right or wrong?
 - What is the vibe, and does it match you?
 - How quickly?
- Ideally, you're giving yourself a good chunk of time (like, at least a few weeks?) to work through the six factors above (and their sub-factors) to assess both
 - Their relative importance to you, and
 - Their "scores" for each college you've been accepted to.
- But if you're pressed for time, here are three approaches you can use, depending on how pressed you are.
- All three of these exercises are designed to help you tap into feelings you maybe didn't know you had.
- Imagine for the next 24 hrs you're going to attend School A. If you have a sweatshirt or hat for that school, wear it. See how it feels. Repeat with School B, then C, etc (You do not have to buy hats for each school, just say to yourself, "I'm going to [name the school]" a few times throughout the day). You can also do this with several schools over the course of one day.
- Create a good old-fashioned pros and cons list. Ask: What's my true intention in going to college (i.e., what do I value most)?
- Gainful employment? Research the colleges' post-graduation placement rates and take a look at the college's office of career services website.

- Fulfilling student life experience? Find out what activities thrive on each campus and what portion of students study abroad, play sports or create art/music/theater through the student life office. Basically: will you get to do the stuff you love?
- Building a professional network? Find out through the career services office what industries recent alumni are involved in and how accessible they are to students.
- Enriching academic experiences? Look up faculty for departments you're interested in on RateMyProfessor.com. Compare course offerings in the major(s)/department(s) you're interested in. How do they measure up to other schools'?
- If you wanna' get fancy, rate each priority from 1-10 based on how important it is to you, then add up the points for each college. That'll give each college a numerical score. Once you do this, ask yourself, "How do I feel now?" You may be surprised that the highest "score" school isn't actually the one you wanted—in which case you have your decision.
- Flip a coin.
- Heads you go to one school, tails you go to another.
- Catch the coin and hide the result. Ask yourself "Which was I hoping would/wouldn't come up?" Then look at the coin and pay attention to how you feel. Repeat, as needed. This is actually how Ethan made his grad school decision and it helped him decide.
- Once you've done the work to evaluate your financial priorities and (this is important) you've talked to your parents and heard theirs, trust your gut. Then go all in—celebrate and get ready for this exciting next step.
- If you are a first-generation or low-income student, keep these additional points in mind:
- If you can't visit campus, remember that many colleges have virtual admitted student day programming .
- If affordability is the main criteria, make it a central focus of your decision. Look at the total cost of attendance and aim to keep loans to a minimum. Understand long-term financial commitments.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions about quality of life, diversity, safety, affinity, and support services.
- Connect with affinity groups in April.
- Look at average earnings for graduates in your major .
- Explore resources like Forbes' "How to Calculate the ROI of Your College Choice" Guide and Washington Monthly's college rankings (based on social mobility).
- Side note : If you're a first gen and/or low-income student and you're finding this post earlier in the college journey, we have resources on our FG/LI Resource Center that can help you understand the application process. (Though also note that the resources there are useful for any student in the process—they're just built with an FG/LI lens primarily in mind.)
- As you near your decision, consider these final steps:
- Create a pros and cons list. Make a list of your priorities and give each school a 1-5 rating on each of the Six Fit Dimensions.
- Look at the schools with the highest ratings. But remember, you don't have to pick number one. Don't discount your likely schools.
- Forget about waitlisted schools and do not factor them into your decision.
- Be sure to emphasize the non-negotiables when rating.
- Make a decision by the college's deadline.
- Choosing a college is a personal journey.
- By considering these factors and reflecting on what truly matters to you, you'll be well-equipped to make an informed decision and find the college that's the best fit for your future.
- Andrew Simpson , CEG's Editorial Director, has worked as an educator, consultant, and curriculum writer for the past 20 years, and earned degrees from Stanford in Political Science and Drama. He feels most at home on mountain tops and in oceans.
- Top Values: Insight/Growth | Truth | Integrity
- Tom Campbell (he/him) is an eternally extra Gemini who has spent the past seven years helping students and families navigate the college admissions process—one alliterative/assonant aphorism at a time. Prior to joining College Essay Guy, he worked as a college counselor at Lakeside School and an admissions officer at Pomona College and College of the Holy Cross (his alma mater). He stans em dashes and semicolons, Kacey Musgraves (all eras, not just star crossed and Golden Hour), superior breakfast burritos, and complaining about space tourism.
- Top Values: Authenticity | Fun | Vulnerability
- Renee Ferrerio
- With 30+ years of experience as a school and college counselor, including having been a Director of College Counseling at an independent school and the Department Chair of Counseling at a public school, Renee possesses a wealth of college admission knowledge. She has assisted hundreds of students in

pursuing colleges that best fit their goals and aspirations while remaining actively engaged in the field through regional and national professional organizations. Having visited 220 colleges in person, Renee approaches the art of guiding students with a blend of humor and meticulous research, exploring the expansive possibilities in the arena of post-secondary education. As a first-generation college graduate, Renee intimately understands the challenges that students face in navigating the intricate landscape of college admission.

• Tagged: guide , growth , development

■ Danh sách các bài viế■t và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [March 27, 2025](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to choose which college to attend: Key factors to consider](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [March 27, 2025](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [How to choose a college: Key tips for students](#)
- [The "Six F's" of college fit—factors for choosing a college to attend](#)
- [Additional Points for First-Generation and/or Low-Income Students](#)
- [Final Steps](#)
- [how to pay for college, check out these modules](#)
- [How to write a financial aid appeal letter](#)
- [How to get the most out of your college visit](#)
- [60+ possible questions to ask on a college tour](#)
- [Paying for College Guide](#)
- [podcasts about understanding financial aid packages](#)
- [Amanda Miller's Award Letter Analyzer](#)
- [HBCU school](#)
- [FG/LI Resource Center](#)
- [guide](#)
- [growth](#)
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Guide | 1.5 - Values Exercise

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/cwiab-student-15-values-exercise>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- Exercise: Select the 10 values you connect with most. Of those 10, choose 5. Then your top 3. Then #1.
- personal development
- recognition
- accountability
- inspiration
- helping others
- vulnerability
- global awareness
- productivity
- healthy boundaries
- second chances
- entrepreneurship
- health and fitness
- close relationships
- responsibility
- _____
- _____
- _____
- communication
- interdependence
- meaningful work
- self-expression
- rationality
- self-control
- adaptability
- independence
- _____
- _____
- _____
- cooperation
- authenticity
- practicality
- objectivity
- flexibility
- financial stability
- resourcefulness
- decisiveness
- collaboration
- spirituality
- social change
- mindfulness
- _____
- _____
- _____

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

-
- [College Essay Essentials](#)
- [Download a Printable Version of the Values List](#)
- [1.1 - Essay essentials](#)
- [1.2 - Agreements](#)
- [1.3 - Warm-up exercises](#)
- [1.4 - Brainstorming](#)
- [1.5 - Values exercise](#)
- [1.6 - Two approaches to structuring a college essay](#)
- [1.7 - Narrative structure](#)
- [1.8 - Montage structure](#)
- [2.1 - How to brainstorm a narrative essay \(optional\)](#)
- [2.2 - 8-minute break \(optional\)](#)
- [2.3 - Paired sharing \(optional\)](#)
- [2.4 - How to write a montage essay](#)
- [3.1 - Picking a topic, outlining, & writing a first draft](#)
- [3.2 - Giving and receiving feedback](#)
- [4.1 - Take the great college essay test](#)
- [4.2 - Finish your Common App](#)
- [4.3 - Write your supplemental essays](#)
- [← Previous: 1.4 - Essence Objects Exercise](#)
- [Next: 1.6 - Two approaches to structuring a college essay →](#)
-

Five Important Tips for International Students Who Need and Want U.S. Financial Aid

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/financial-aid-tips-international-students>

■ Mục lục chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kristen Karovic, Independent Educational Consultant and Founder of College Bloom
- A note from the author: The content of this article won't help every applicant: every situation is sensitive and unique, and education is continuously changing. However, I want to be transparent that my goals are to give you context, steps, and tools for further research so you can be empowered in your next decisions.
- —Disclaimer: For the purposes of this article, an "international student" is a student who is a "nonresident alien"—not a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or eligible non-resident, who has not passed the green card test or the substantial presence test—, regardless of where the student completed his/her high school education. "College" and "university" are also used interchangeably.
- Are you looking for financial support for college? This Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students is your go-to resource. You'll find that financial aid comes in several forms for international students: merit-based, need-based, or a combination of both. The tips below are suggested to help you maximize money available to you in all of these areas.
- Ok, here are five important things international students who want or need U.S. financial aid:
- Regardless if the total cost of attendance for college is 500 USD/year or 70,000 USD/year, your eligibility for financial support to college overseas will dramatically improve if you have made the most of your time in high school.
- Merit aid is defined by each university and often based on outstanding academic achievement, and engagement within an academic context: are you making the most of your classes? Exams available to you? Clubs? Relationships with your teachers? Engagement in the major you are interested in? Other scholarships rely on your involvement and interest in charity or school activities, contributing to positive community engagement. There are also scholarships that factor in a limited ability to pay for college with a cut-off above-average grade/grade point average (GPA) to be eligible; so, make your total qualification count.
- Remember: university admissions representatives are trained in context. That means each country, school, and student is read with the understanding of what opportunities the student is offered and what that student does with them. Admissions representatives are culturally sensitive—and they understand that not all students have access to service learning, for example. But students can also understand that activities can include anything building and deepening skills.
- Remember too that if you're applying to an undergraduate program abroad in English, utilize opportunities during high school to maximize the use of your English skills. If formal English training and preparation is unreachable for you, take simple steps, like changing subtitles to movies in English, installing Grammarly, and using the DuoLingo app.
- Before you search for colleges, discuss openly with your family what you can afford, and also what is comfortable/ideal for them to pay (sometimes, these are two different answers).
- Financial aid comes in several forms: this wonderfully detailed podcast— Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and their Counselors)—will help you understand more about the process. Learn about common mistakes and what you need to know about receiving financial support in the U.S. in particular. We highly recommend you take the 40 minutes to listen to this podcast before you dive into the rest of the tips listed in this article.
- It is also wise to learn how colleges evaluate your financial situation. Colleges normally want you to submit a letter from your bank, including your account balance as part of the International Student Certification of Finances (here's an example), tax returns (here's another example) and/or a Financial Aid Application (yet another example). In the U.S., some colleges will ask you for the College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE form.

- Here's another highly recommended podcast about Which Schools are Most Generous with Financial Aid (for students applying outside of the U.S.)
- Comb through the financial aid pages for the colleges you're interested in to know exactly how much they can match your demonstrated financial need combined with scholarships, and check if it matches the number you indicated that you can afford for college. You might find explicit information such as this: " We estimate that a student awarded a full-tuition scholarship must demonstrate a minimum financial contribution towards their education of \$14,000 annually to cover the expenses. " Or, you might have to do some digging around. Write the financial aid office directly if you have any questions, especially if you know you need a scholarship. You will find that financial aid officers are very helpful.
- Financial aid is extremely limited and competitive for non-U.S. students applying to U.S. schools. In addition, tuition, room and board in the U.S. for four-year colleges averages at about 40,000 USD/year , so finding full or partial scholarships to reduce the total cost of attendance can be very challenging.
- If you open up your options to studying outside of the U.S., you will be pleasantly surprised. You can find bachelor's (and even graduate) degrees in English in countries such as Estonia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Italy, and Poland (among others) starting at a total of 10,000 (USD) or less per year—that includes tuition and living expenses.
- We wrote a guide with 20 university options for you to consider in order to make your education more affordable. Check out: Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year . Speak another language such as French or Spanish? You can broaden your list to include degrees in languages other than English. In addition, you can find scholarships offered by the college based on need and/or merit to further reduce the total cost.
- Learn more about How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.
- Admissions to Non-US Universities: Tips and Benefits from the National Association of College Admissions Counseling gives an excellent country by country breakdown of popular destinations—Australia, Finland, Japan, Norway, and more—, including country profiles, admissions deadlines, tuition fees, housing details, visa information, and more.
- Remember to create a plan of applying to local universities, even if you are planning on applying outside of your home country. Make sure you take any entrance exams on time, and inform yourself thoroughly about the opportunities available to you. Also keep in mind that if your dream is to study abroad, it does not have to start and finish with an undergraduate degree. Work on forming a plan for graduate level studies outside of your home country by educating yourself as much as possible: you might find yourself surprised by the possibilities.
- EducationUSA has 400+ advising centers worldwide to assist you in accessing U.S. higher education opportunities. Most centers can connect you with university administrators, host college fairs, can speak to you in your native language, provide you with a computer with Internet access, advise you about financial aid, and more.
- Some countries offer foreign study funding for their own nationals through government organizations. This funding could be contingent upon being admitted to a specific institution, studying a specific track, and/or returning to your home country once you graduate to work in a certain field or within a certain organization.
- In addition, many countries have volunteer organizations to guide you through the college planning and admissions process, and can even support you with plane tickets, test fee waivers, and more. For example, Education Matters supports Zimbabwean students and BRASA aids students in Brazil.
- Virtually, The Matchlighters Scholarship offers free college application counseling for high-achieving, low-income students from experienced college counselors to students from the U.S. Acceptance to these programs is competitive though, and it is always recommended that you begin early.
- Value your citizenship. For example, there are wonderful EU Scholarships for Western Balkan Students , and students with citizenship in countries with low economic development have tuition reduced from 2500 USD/year to 840 USD/year to Ca' Foscari's undergraduate programs in Venice, Italy.
- The cost of attendance of a college typically includes tuition, room and board, and fees. Most times, there is another figure stated for "indirect costs," with items such as books, transportation, and personal expenses.
- However, there are additional expenses to consider in the college planning process while you're still in your home country as well as when you arrive at college. Take a look at this overview.
- Application (check your availability for a waiver)
- CSS Profile (for applicant to U.S. Schools)
- Standardized tests such as Duolingo, TOEFL, or IELTS (if needed for English proficiency); SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests as well as score report fees ; university entrance exams; language certifications/proficiency exams

- Transportation/lodging/food to take standardized exams, visit embassy, attend college fairs, etc.
- Visa/Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Fee
- Round-trip plane tickets
- Transportation from airport to college
- Health and medical insurance
- Local cell phone plan
- Food consumed outside of the meal plan
- Off-campus activities not sponsored by the college
- Winter clothing
- Computer (some universities specify preferred brands to make repairs easier)
- Ultimately, stay optimistic and proactive in your search for financial aid—and remember that the college will help you plan many of these aspects if you ask for guidance. With some creativity, proper planning, and outreach in the process, you can reach your goals.
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , financial aid , financial aid for international students

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 20, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Five Important Tips for International Students Who Need and Want U.S. Financial Aid](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 20, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [College Bloom](#)
- [nonresident alien](#)
- [non-resident](#)
- [Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
- [financial aid comes in several forms for international students](#)
- [the total cost of attendance for college is 500 USD/year](#)
- [building and deepening skills](#)
- [Grammarly](#)
- [DuoLingo app](#)

- [Financial Aid Tips for International Students \(and their Counselors\)](#)
- [here's an example](#)
- [here's another example](#)
- [yet another example](#)
- [College Scholarship Service \(CSS\)/Financial Aid PROFILE form](#)
- [Which Schools are Most Generous with Financial Aid \(for students applying outside of the U.S.](#)
- [We estimate that a student awarded a full-tuition scholarship must demonstrate a minimum financial contribution towards their education of \\$14,000 annually to cover the expenses.](#)
- [tuition, room and board in the U.S. for four-year colleges averages at about 40,000 USD/year](#)
- [Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year](#)
- [How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.](#)
- [Admissions to Non-US Universities: Tips and Benefits from the National Association of College Admissions Counseling](#)
- [EducationUSA](#)
- [Education Matters](#)
- [BRASA](#)
- [The Matchlighters Scholarship](#)
- [wonderful EU Scholarships for Western Balkan Students](#)
- [countries with low economic development](#)
- [tuition reduced from 2500 USD/year to 840 USD/year to Ca' Foscari's undergraduate programs in Venice, Italy.](#)
- ["indirect costs,"](#)
- [CSS Profile](#)
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-
- [Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students](#)
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- [SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students](#)
- [international students](#)
- [financial aid](#)
- [financial aid for international students](#)

What to Do When Your College Application is Deferred

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/deferred-college>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- If you've received a rejection or deferral letter from your EA/ED schools, there's a good chance you're a little bummed. I get it; it's tough news.
- So what should you do if you've been deferred? Here's a step-by-step guide to make sure you're doing the most you possibly can.
- First things first.
- 1.) Take a breath.
- It's just one of the many schools you've applied to. Right?
- WAIT: DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH LIKELY SCHOOLS ON YOUR LIST?
- If not, or you're not sure, read the section below. If you're sure you have 2-3 likelies (schools you can get into and LOVE), skip it.
- Fast forward six months: Can you imagine a situation where you don't get in (gulp) anywhere ?
- If so, pause reading this right now and write an email to your counselor with a list of all the schools you're definitely applying to with the email subject, "Do you think this is a balanced school list?" To make it even easier, split them into these categories:
- Wild Card (less than 10% admit rate--to find out Google the name of the school + "admit rate")
- If you're worried you may not get accepted anywhere, especially if you thought you had a good shot at your Early Action or Decision college and are concerned that you maybe overestimated your chances, ask your counselor if they can please recommend a few more likely schools. (Do this now.)
- Don't have access to a counselor? Check out this guide to creating a balanced college list and pay special attention to the part on how to Explore Colleges on CollegeXpress (it's in Part 2, Step 1). There I describe a quick way to find other potential likely schools to add to your list.
- Having said that, if you're pretty sure you have applied to enough likely schools, keep reading.
- It's true that some students each year are deferred from their first choice, then later admitted. But this tends to be the exception rather than the rule, as many students are NOT accepted after being deferred.
- You know what, though? Many of those students who didn't end up at their first choice school end up at another school that they end up loving and then go on to live happy and fulfilling lives. (Example: Me! I was devastated when I was rejected by my first choice. Then I ended up at Northwestern and it was an amazing fit. And my life is super fun.)
- But if you were deferred (or rejected) in the EA/ED round, does this mean you should totally throw out all your essays and rethink your whole approach? Please don't do that, or at least not yet. Why?
- Remember that your EA/ED school was likely one of your top choices, and was also likely a pretty competitive college in the first place. So a deferral is NOT a reason (on its own) to try and re-do everything. There are approx 237 (i.e. too many to list) possible reasons your application was deferred, and your essays are just one part of a large constellation of factors a school is considering--many of which have less to do with you and more to do with their institutional priorities.
- Okay, so rather than throw the baby of your application out with the bathwater of your deferral (what a weird sentence this is), instead...
- Ask yourself: Is my application doing its job?
- What's the job of your college application, you ask? To demonstrate a wide range of your skills, qualities, interests and values.
- And wouldn't it be great if you had a tool for measuring how much your application is doing this? We've got one.
- It's called the Values Scan and you can find it here .
- Most students feel (more) at ease after doing that. Try it and see.
- But let's say you've done that and are still feeling anxious.
- What can you do?
- 2.) Focus on what you can control.

- You know the Serenity Prayer? “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I can’t change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Right now...
- Things you cannot change = already submitted apps (for the most part--see #3 below for more)
- Things you can change = NOT already submitted apps (schools you’re still working on) + schools you haven’t even thought about applying to yet (see box above) + doing your best on final exams so your grades stay awesome.
- In other words: Move on.
- How? First, make sure you have enough likelies, then turn your attention to your remaining schools and ensure you have AWESOME supplemental essays written for any applications you have yet to submit.
- BUT WAIT, ETHAN, I THINK I HAVE TO DO SOME THINGS TO MAKE SURE I’M STILL BEING CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL THAT DEFERRED ME.
- Yes, yes, yes, I’m getting to that...
- 3.) Follow the school's instructions CLOSELY.
- Many schools, in their deferral letter or email, will state exactly what they want from you. If they don't state it in their deferral email, check out their website, sometimes found by Googling the school's name + “deferral” can help you find a page like the first link on this page. Note: Be sure that it's a link from the school's official admissions website.
- Here's an example of things schools sometimes request or expect:
- Fill out the defer response form as soon as you can.
- If they ask you to state if you’re still interested in being considered for RD admissions, let them know that you are as soon as you can.
- Remind your counselor to send your mid-year report and grades (if they sent your transcripts).
- Send any updated test scores (SAT, ACT, Subject Tests, TOEFL etc.), if available.
- If the school states that they do NOT want any additional information such as recommendations or letters, don't send them. Why? An inability to follow instructions could jeopardize your application. For example, schools like Michigan request that students do NOT submit any additional material. That’s pretty clear, right?
- 4.) Consider sending a letter of continued interest (LOCI) after January 1st, stating your intentions.
- If the school does not strictly prohibit sending additional information (and be sure to double check this), consider sending them a letter of continued interest.
- This letter should a) reaffirm that their school is your top choice, if true (usually for ED schools), and b) share any significant updated information such as new grades, updates in extracurricular involvement/achievements, or awards you’ve received.
- Here’s a separate guide on how to write a letter of continued interest (plus a nice example letter).
- If you’ve corresponded with your regional rep or a counselor in the admission office, send your email to them and CC the main admissions office email address. Thank them for their time and reviewing your applications, state your continued interest in the school, and move on.
- Oh, and if you haven't been opening all the emails the college has been sending you, start now! Many colleges track this and take it as a sign of your interest and dedication.
- More on demonstrated interest here .
- Okay, that's it!
- Keep Calm and Rock On.
- Tagged: student resources , college application , deferred

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [December 19, 2019](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [College Admissions](#)
- [What to Do When Your College Application is Deferred](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [December 19, 2019](#)

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- [College Admissions](#)
- [this guide to creating a balanced college list](#)
- [the Values Scan and you can find it here](#)
- [this](#)
- [Here's a separate guide](#)
- [More on demonstrated interest here](#)
- [student resources](#)
- [college application](#)
- [deferred](#)

Should I Complete a Foundation Program? | College Essay Guy

Website: <http://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/foundation-program>

■ M■c ■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson, an Independent Educational Consultant with Mosaico Mentors in Mexico City
- Maybe you've been scrolling through university websites and have come across the phrase "foundation program." But what exactly is a foundation program? And do you need to complete one?
- Foundation programs, also known as international foundation programs, are one-year programs completed prior to beginning university study. The goal: to prepare you with the skills and knowledge to succeed in university.
- Foundation programs are common in the UK, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand, among other countries. Since high school is a year longer in the UK than in many places and university is a year shorter (3 years), foundation programs are intended to bridge that gap. They are also meant to provide an alternative for students who only complete high school up until grade 11. This gives students the opportunity to do their International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) at their school and, in place of completing A-levels, they can save a year and go onto a foundation program, which are generally not as rigorous as the IB/A-Levels.
- There are three main reasons you need to complete an international foundation programme:
 - You don't yet have the level of English proficiency necessary
 - Your high school program is not accepted by the university
 - You don't have the academic qualifications necessary to enroll in a given university
- For example, many universities in the UK require international curricula like A-Levels or IB. If these programs weren't offered at your high school or you chose not to complete them, you may not meet the requirements for enrollment.
- Home-schooled students may run into a similar issue. While your home country may accredit your high school education, universities abroad may not recognize it. Check each universities' requirements to be sure if you meet them or not! And, if they're available, be sure to look at the requirements specific to your home country. When in doubt, you can always reach out to the admissions office or international admissions office to discuss the particulars of your situation.
- Foundation programs can open the door to phenomenal universities. In most cases, once you complete a foundation program, you're admitted directly to that university or can apply to other universities in the country.
- Nervous that you don't have the skills necessary to succeed in university? A foundation program gives you the opportunity to improve your study and language skills before starting an undergraduate program. They also give you time to acclimatize to a new culture and academic environment and are a great way to meet other international students.
- They can also give you an additional year to narrow in your interests. Maybe you know you're interested in the Social Sciences but aren't sure which course to take. Studying a foundation year in the Social Sciences may illuminate whether Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology, or another discipline is the best option for you.
- Additionally, students in foundation programs are usually fully registered students who have access to the university's facilities. As a foundation program student, you can join student clubs and attend campus events.
- The actual classes vary from program to program, but usually they'll fall into your general area of studies, with an extra emphasis on language and study skills. For example, the University of Greenwich offers five different foundation year options: Business and Management, Engineering, Science, Computing, and Social Sciences and Law. In addition to modules specific to your area of study, all foundation year students at the University of Greenwich take courses like English for Academic Purposes, Digital Literacy, and Project Study.

- It's important to remember that attending a foundation program means you're essentially paying for another year of university.
- Tuition and living costs vary from program to program. Some have the same cost as first-year tuition; others are more or less expensive. At the University of St. Andrews, for example, the tuition cost is around \$30,000, with roughly an additional \$10,000 for housing. At the Maastricht University, the international foundation programme costs € 14,000 (around \$16,500) or € 12,000 (around \$14,200), depending on your English level.
- Some foundation years do offer scholarships so, if cost is a determining factor for you, be sure to look into this.
- In certain countries, for example Australia and New Zealand, students who apply to a Bachelor's program and do not meet the requirements will be placed into a foundation year.
- In other countries, you'll want to apply directly to the foundation programs. You can apply to some foundation years in the UK through UCAS. Others have their own application portals. Generally, they'll ask for basic personal and educational information, your transcripts, and, sometimes, a personal statement. Check the individual websites to make sure you know everything you need to apply!
- Let's say you're looking at a university website and realize you don't meet the enrollment requirements. But maybe the cost for a foundation year is too high or the idea of a foundation year doesn't appeal to you.
- Another common alternative is to complete a year of university study in your home country. Many universities worldwide, but not all, accept a year of university study in your home country in place of completing a foundation year. Before pursuing this option, make sure that the university of interest to you would accept it.
- Further admission requirements can also include specific subjects that are required, minimum test scores, English language requirements, and more in lieu of a foundation year program. If the program is selective (such as engineering), requirements can also vary. Universities in the Netherlands, for example, differ per university and per program in their requirements and alternatives for a foundation program.
- Another great option is a year at a local branch of the university. Many universities in the UK and Australia have branch campuses in other regions of the world, particularly in Southeast Asia, which can be a much more cost-effective option. For example, Monash University, a top Australian university located in the city of Melbourne, has branches in Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. At Monash University Malaysia, students can complete a foundation year for 31,000 - 33,100 RM (roughly 7,500 - 8,000 USD), less than a third of the cost of a foundation year at their campus in Melbourne, which has a cost of 29,000 AUD (roughly 22,000 USD). Additionally, living costs will be significantly lower in Malaysia than in Australia.
- Foundation programs can be a great option, particularly if you don't meet enrollment requirements for the universities you're interested in. But they're not the only option! Research your options, keep an open mind, think about which path is the best for you!
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , foundation program

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- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 19, 2021](#)
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- [international students](#)
- [foundation program](#)

How to Understand Your Financial Aid Award Letter

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/financial-aid-award-letter>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- Written with Amanda Miller (financial aid advisor) and Jodi Okun (financial aid consultant at Occidental College and Pitzer College and author of Secrets of a Financial Aid Pro)
- In this post, we'll cover:
 - What a financial aid award letter is and why it's important
 - How to find your award letters if you don't already know where they are
 - How to read what's on your award letters and compare across schools (using a handy tool) to determine how affordable each college will be
 - Some last important tips about college affordability
 - How to write a financial aid appeal letter (if you need to)
 - You're in! Congratulations. You're in that sweet spot between the joy of acceptance and the reality of the college workload. Soak it in.
 - Ever since you received your acceptance you've been bombarded by your schools asking you to "submit your deposit." And while you definitely do not want to miss the May 1 deposit deadline (seriously, they will give away your spot), you generally don't need to commit to a school any earlier than May 1--and you definitely don't want to commit before you've got all the facts about financial aid.
 - Notable exceptions are those who applied Early Decision and athletes who've signed National Letters of Intent. Once you're in, that's where you go.
 - Also, beware about earlier housing deposit deadlines. (These are set by residence life, not the admissions office.) Many colleges will extend this deadline, if you ask them, though. And any deposit made before May 1 should be refundable if you ask for a refund on or before May 1.
- #OpenLineOfCommunication
 - So how do I figure out how much the schools I was accepted to are actually going to cost?
 - By April of your senior year, each college granting you admission and applied financial aid will send you a document called your Financial Aid Award Letter. This will arrive via email or snail mail. If you're unsure how to find it, call the college's Financial Aid Office to ask how they sent it. Better yet, ask them to guide you to it electronically while you're on the phone. Yay self-advocacy!
 - Pro Tip: Any time you speak with your college's financial aid office keep a record (in the Notes application on your laptop or somewhere else you won't lose it). Include the name of the person with whom you spoke, the date, and what they said to you. Most of the time you won't need this, but it's better to have insurance against bureaucratic kerfuffles just in case.
 - Did the financial aid office say they don't have an award letter ready for you because they're missing important financial documents or because you've been selected for "verification"? Yikes! This needs to be resolved ASAP so you know how much you're getting in time to decide before May 1!! Stop what you're doing and get on this, like, right now.
 - Almost every award letter looks different, which can make it difficult to compare across schools or even understand what the letter is actually saying. This is why a tool like the Analyzer is super helpful. You'll find a copy here , with line-by-line guiding tips below on how to fill it out.
 - Useful for college and good practice for filling out tax forms! #Adulting
 - Tuitions & Fees: Tuition is a given, though it may not appear on your award letter. If it doesn't, look it up for the upcoming school year. (Tuition generally increases a little every year.) Fees cover all those "free" amenities on campus: "free" athletic tickets, "free" gym, "free" tech support, "free" counseling center, "free" concerts, etc. There can also be extra lab fees for STEM classes. One fee you can generally get taken off is the health insurance fee, as long as you submit proof you are on your parents' insurance plan. Also, optional add-ons like parking stickers are usually not included.
 - Room & Board: These costs can have some flexibility. If you live in a suite or have a single room, your housing will be more expensive. Most colleges require those who live on campus to have a meal plan. My advice is to downgrade from the unlimited meal plan as soon as possible. No one needs that much food unless they are an athlete, only eat in the dining hall, or wake up every morning before class to eat a giant

stack of pancakes.

- Pro Tip: Many schools will let you apply for a resident advisor (RA) position after your first year. This can not only reduce housing costs; in some cases you can sometimes make money for living there. Consider becoming an RA if you enjoy organizing ice cream socials and don't mind politely policing other forms of recreation.
- Total Direct Costs: Add up your Tuition & Fees and Room & Board lines. This is how much your first year will cost before financial aid. (Gasp!) Colleges may completely omit cost information on the award letter. Or they may provide an exhaustive list, including indirect costs like travel (read: airfare/gas money to get there), personal expenses (movie tickets, deodorant, etc.), and books & supplies. While you do have to pay for those indirect costs, they will not be billed directly by the college.
- Pell Grant: A Pell Grant is a free federal grant you received because a) you filled out the FAFSA and b) you qualified. If you check your FAFSA Student Aid Report (SAR), you will either see Pell Grant with its amount listed or you will only see the standard federal loan.
- State Scholarships/Grants: These can be a little tricky to figure out, but don't sweat it. If the award letter says something about a "grant" or "scholarship" with the name of your state attached to it, it probably goes here. Again, the link to find out about your state's aid program is in the Treasure Trove. If you think you're eligible for something that's not on your award letter, check with your college's financial aid office. They may be waiting on the state for final numbers but can likely give you a solid estimate.
- Institutional Scholarships/Grants: Scholarships are the free money you're receiving from the college because you're awesome and they want your awesomeness at their school. Grants are the free money you're receiving from the college because they want to help you make their school more affordable. (We mostly see these from private colleges.) Either way, it's free money!
- Other Scholarships: Did you apply for and win any of those local scholarships through your high school? Or an online scholarship? Employers, unions, fraternal organizations, and community organizations are the most common sources of "outside" scholarships. Record all those outside scholarships and any other type of free funding you will receive outside your family here.
- Beware: Some colleges deduct outside scholarship dollars from your institutional aid! Be sure to ask your financial aid office if your outside scholarships will "stack" on top of the aid they've already given you.
- Total Gift Aid: Add up all your gift aid and put that amount here. Don't sweat whether you got the right things on the right lines within this category. The total will be the same. What is important to know is how you received the money and how to make sure you get the money again next year.
- Don't assume it will be the same each of your four years. Make sure by talking out any questions you have with your college's financial aid office. You'll be amazed how much heartache and confusion this will save later!
- Subsidized/Unsubsidized Federal Loans:
- Everyone who fills out a FAFSA is offered the option of taking out unsubsidized federal student loans. What can differ is whether or not you are offered a subsidized loan.
- What's the difference?
- A subsidized loan is a loan that the federal government pays the interest on while you're in college (and for a few months thereafter).
- An unsubsidized loan is a loan that accrues interest (gets bigger) while you're in college.
- The maximum loan (of both these types together) a student can take out for their first year is \$5,500. The maximum allowed increases each year.
- These loans are also typically "deferred" loans, which means you don't have to make payments on them until you're done with school. This includes graduate school, medical school, etc.
- Other Loans: Only a small percentage of student borrowers arrange for outside private loans from a bank or other institution because they tend to have higher interest rates and require a cosigner. Before getting an outside loan, check the lender's interest rate against the federal rate.
- Total Loans: Add up all your loans.
- Pro Tip: Loans aren't automatically dispersed. You can refuse them and pay the amount out-of-pocket instead. If you do decide to take out any federal loans, you'll need to do two things:
- Entrance Counseling: an online module to make sure you understand how loans work, and
- Sign a Master Promissory Note: a binding legal document saying that you, the student, will pay back this money after you graduate.
- You can complete both of these steps on the federal government's student loans website, conveniently named studentloans.gov.
- Now for some math. Don't worry. This is calculator-active.
- Equation #1: Total Direct Costs - Total Gift Aid = Total Billed Costs

- **Total Billed Costs:** This is how much you will eventually pay (with interest if you're taking a loan) for your first year at this college. Multiply by four and you'll get a ballpark of how much your college degree will cost at this school.
- Bear in mind, tuition tends to increase every year, and the percent of need met can decrease after first year for a number of reasons including not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) and a regressive policy that some colleges practice called "bait and switch."
- **Equation #2:** Total Billed Costs - Loans = Estimated Bill
- **Estimated Bill:** This is how much you have to pay (or arrange to pay) before the end of your first year of college. Typically, it's split into two payments: one due in August and one due in December/January.
- Families can set up monthly payment plans starting in the summer. Talk to your college's financial aid office to investigate this option by no later than June 30th before you start.
- **Bonus equation:** Divide your Total Billed Costs by 10. That's how many hours you'd have to work a \$10/hour job to pay for this one year. So don't skip class!
- Now for some odds and ends...
- **PLUS Loans:** These are federal loans that parents can apply for to help them pay for their child's college expenses. Most parents with decent credit are eligible, however, and just because it's listed on an award letter doesn't mean the money's guaranteed. The dangerous aspects of these loans are twofold. First, eligible parents can borrow enough to cover the cost of attendance minus your gift aid and student loans; but this is likely way more than you could possibly need to pay the bill. Second, the interest rate is higher than that of a student loan. These factors combined can get families into a lot of trouble if they don't have a clearly defined plan to repay the money. While these options may be okay for a little assistance, hopefully, this book has helped you find a college that doesn't place a heavy financial burden on you and your family.
- **My College Expenses:** Your college includes things like books, personal expenses, and transportation when they calculate the Cost of Attendance. Just because your college doesn't charge you for these things directly doesn't mean they don't cost money. Each college usually provides an estimate of these expenses, but these estimates may be way off for your situation. Add up for yourself (and maybe ask for parent advice about) how much you will need to budget for the following:
 - A new laptop/device and its accessories
 - Books & materials like pens, notebooks, etc.
 - Gas/airfare to get from your home to campus at least four times
 - Spending money
 - Toiletries (deodorant, shampoo, Tylenol, band-aids, and all those other items stocked under your bathroom sink)
 - Dorm room furnishings (a powerstrip, a light, a rug, those weird-sized sheets)
- Add all these expenses up. Be ready for the "you need a summer job" talk.
- **Work Study:** Federal work study is a government-funded program for students who qualify to work on campus in order to earn money for college. (How do you qualify? You guessed it. FAFSA.) If this isn't on your award letter, it doesn't mean you can't find a job on or around campus to fund your expenses from the previous section. It just means you won't be guaranteed an on-campus job when you get there. If this is on your award letter, it's important to know two things: 1) you need to make sure you figure out how to get connected to a job on campus as soon as you get there, and 2) Ninety-nine percent of the time, this money is deposited into your bank account (instead of being deducted from your college bill), meaning you can spend it one whatever you like...Be smart and save though, because that money can help pay for next semester.
- Did we miss something? Is there something on your award letter that doesn't seem to fall into any category described above? Call your financial aid office for clarification.
- Okay, so you've filled out your award letter analyzer...
- How does it look? Are your schools roughly equally affordable? Or are some way cheaper than others? Does this influence your decision about where you might go in the fall? Talk this over with your family to make sure everyone's on the same page.
- If you've completed the steps above, you now understand your award letters and how much you'll be paying for each school.
- But what if the school you've decided you want to go to most isn't financially feasible?
- Two options:
 - Rejoice that you put great fit financial safeties on your list and happily submit your housing deposit to one of those schools!
 - Write a financial aid award appeal letter to that first choice college asking for more aid. How? Like this:
- So you've been accepted to a great college (yay!) only to find out the school isn't giving you enough money (womp womp). What do you do? Accept your fate? Resign yourself to attending your back-up

school? Start a GoFundMe campaign?

- Maybe. But first...
- You gotta' wonder: Is this ALL the money the school can offer me? Could it be that, if you ask nicely, the school just might give you a little more? Did they miss something important in your aid application, for example, or did you fail to explain a change in circumstance adequately?
- True story: When I asked Northwestern for more money the school gave me more money and THAT LED TO THE BEST FOUR YEARS OF MY LIFE. In fact, I only spent about \$4,000 per year. Caveat: I had a zero EFC (Estimated Family Contribution), so much of it was need-based aid, but still! If I hadn't asked, I wouldn't have gotten more money and probably wouldn't have gone there.
- You should also go ahead and do it because:
 - you can write an appeal letter in like an hour
 - it may be the fastest \$2,000 (or \$8,000) you ever make
 - if you don't ask, you'll never know.
- When should you write an appeal letter?
- As soon as you receive your financial award letter. Because when the money's gone, it's gone. So, like, now.
- How do you write one? Like this:
 - To the Financial Aid Office at UCLA:
 - My name is Sara Martinez and I am a 12th grader currently enrolled at Los Angeles Academy. First, I would like to say that I am much honored to have been admitted into this fine school, as University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) is my number one choice.
 - Notice how she reiterates a) who she is and where she's from, b) how grateful she is to have been accepted and c) (most important) that UCLA is her number one choice... a school likes to know this if it's true.
 - There is a problem, however, and it is a financial one.
 - Notice how she uses her transition sentence to set up what this letter is going to be about. It's really straightforward and explicit. Your letter doesn't have to be fancy; it has to be clear.
 - I'd love to attend UCLA--it's near home, which would allow me to be closer to my family, and the Bio department is phenomenal. But, as a low-income Hispanic student, I simply don't feel I can afford it. I'm writing to respectfully request an adjustment of my financial aid award.
 - Great. First, she offers two specific reasons that UCLA is the right fit for her, so the financial aid officer understands why UCLA is her top choice. Next, she makes her request really clear: give me more money! And she does so in a straightforward and respectful way. She doesn't beg; she asks.
 - Here are some more details of my financial situation. Currently, my father works as an assistant supervisor for American Apparel Co. and he is the only source of income for my family of five, while my mother is a housewife. The income my father receives weekly barely meets paying the bills.
 - It helps to give details of your specific family situation even if you gave these details in your original application, since the financial aid officer may not have your entire application right in front of them at the moment. Save them the work!
 - My family's overall income:
 - Father's average weekly gross pay: \$493.30
 - Father's adjusted gross income: \$27,022
 - Our household expenses:
 - Legal Services: \$200
 - Car payment: \$230.32
 - Again, specifics. Don't be shy. Give them these numbers so that, when they do the math, that they can see what you see: there just isn't enough money.
 - My parents cannot afford to have medical insurance, so they do not have a bill that shows proof of medical insurance. My father's average monthly income is an estimate of \$1,973.20 (see attached pay stub). When household expenses such as rent, car payment, legal services, gas bill, and electricity bill are added together the cost is of \$1,402.70. Other payments such as the phone bill, internet bill, and groceries also add to the list. But in order to make ends meet my father usually works overtime and tailors clothes for people in our neighborhood.
 - Notice how she has already included her dad's pay stub which, again, saves time (and schools might ask for things like this to verify). Also, she briefly explains the other costs (keyword: briefly) and how her family is already doing everything it can.
 - My family is on an extremely tight budget and unfortunately cannot afford to pay for my schooling. I have worked my way up and was recently awarded Valedictorian for my class. My goals and my aspiration of becoming a nutritionist have helped me push forward. I appreciate your time in reconsidering my financial

aid award. I'm looking forward to becoming a Bruin.

- Bonus info: She is VALEDICTORIAN! This is also a mini-update, as she wouldn't have known this at the time she applied (November) but did know by the time she wrote the appeal. If you have 1-2 more updates to include, go ahead and include them here--but don't go too crazy. You don't want to seem desperate; you want to close strong with your most important updates.

- Sara Martinez

- No fancy ending, just your basic sign-off.

- You may be wondering:

- Is it okay for a parent to write a financial aid appeal letter?

- Yes. While college admission officers generally like to hear directly from students on a variety of things, sometimes a parent has information a student simply doesn't have. In those cases, it's okay for a parent to write the letter--in fact, sometimes it's better.

- Here's an example of an appeal letter written by a parent:

- Dear Financial Aid Office,

- We appreciate you offering our son Paul a scholarship, but even with your help we can not afford the tuition. We have asked his grandparents and uncles to help, but they too unfortunately are not able to help pay the tuition. I would use our retirement money for him to attend your school, if we had any retirement fund. We honestly don't know how to make this happen without your help. Next month I will be having a necessary hysterectomy and I will be out of commission for a couple of months and can not work. I am a first-grade teacher at a small church school with a very small income and we can barely make ends meet.

- Your school is the only school Paul wants to attend. He said to us he will not go to college if he can not go to The New School. None of the other schools offer what The New School can offer him. He has always wanted to be an actor, writer and director ever since he was five years old. Not only will Paul benefit from attending your school but you will also benefit. If you can offer us more financial help, Paul will be able to attend and graduate as one of your success stories.

- Thank you in advance for taking the time to reconsider the amount you have offered Paul.

- Gina and Tom Atamian

- Again, pretty straightforward. You may have thought that writing one of these appeals was going to involve some kind of added magic, but you know what the two more important qualities are when it comes to writing them?

- Information . Give the school the information it needs to make a new decision. Bullet point this so that you don't find yourself worrying about "how" to say it.

- Actually writing and submitting the letter . I've seen many students that could have appealed but didn't out of fear and ultimately they didn't submit a letter. Just write it. If you have reason to appeal, do so. I tell my students: you don't want to look back years from now and think, "I wonder what would've happened if..." Dispel those future doubts. Start with bullet points. (Yes, now.)

- Want more? My podcast interview with Jodi Okun covers everything from "The Pause" before the appeal (super important) to how financial aid offices make decisions. Find a link in the Treasure Trove.

- A downloadable copy of Amanda Miller's Simple Award Letter Analyzer

- The link to a site that "decodes" your award letter into three categories: grants/scholarships, work study, and loans.

- The link to find out more about your state's financial aid programs .

- Tagged: college admissions , college application , decision , acceptance , financial aid , award letter

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [March 30, 2020](#)

- [Financial Aid](#)

- [How to Understand Your Financial Aid Award Letter](#)

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)

- [March 30, 2020](#)

- [Financial Aid](#)

- [Award Letter Analyzer](#)
- [You'll find a copy here](#)
- [Award Letter Analyzer](#)
- studentloans.gov
- [My podcast interview with Jodi Okun](#)
- [A downloadable copy of Amanda Miller's Simple Award Letter Analyzer](#)
- [The link to a site that "decodes" your award letter](#)
- [find out more about your state's financial aid programs](#)
- [college admissions](#)
- [college application](#)
- [decision](#)
- [acceptance](#)
- [financial aid](#)
- [award letter](#)

10 Common Mistakes International Students Make When Applying to College (+ Mini Case Studies)

Website:

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/10-common-mistakes-international-students-applying-to-college>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kristen Karovic, IEC and Founder of College Bloom
- Alexandra Feinson, Deputy Director of University Counseling at UWC Changshu China
- —Disclaimer: For the purposes of this article, an “international student” is a student who is a “nonresident alien”—not a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or eligible non-resident, who has not passed the green card test or the substantial presence test—, regardless of where the student completed his/her high school education. “College” and “university” are also used interchangeably.
- So you’re thinking about college applications. You’re scrolling through college websites, making lists of pros and cons about different schools, researching enrollment requirements and tuition costs. Perhaps you’re starting to imagine yourself on a college campus — imagining what you’ll be studying and what your roommate will be like.
- It’s an exciting time—but overwhelming as well. Let’s face it: applying to college is hard! Too often, we see students make the same mistakes year after year.
- So, we’ve compiled this list: the 10 most common mistakes international students make during the planning and application processes, and our advice to make sure you don’t repeat them.
- Sandy had always dreamed of attending college in a big city. Growing up in a small town, they knew higher education was their chance to experience the excitement of urban life: restaurants, museums, public transit! So Sandy filled their college list accordingly: UCLA, King’s College London, University of Amsterdam, National University of Singapore, University of Sydney...the bigger the city, the better. Sandy’s family could afford to pay about USD 10,000 a year for their higher education, but Sandy was confident they would be able to find a way to pay.
- When it came time to receive decisions, Sandy was receiving some acceptances from schools on their list (schools that don’t factor in the family’s ability to afford the total cost of the education). But...they weren’t getting scholarship offers to reduce the total price, thereby matching their budget.
- Sandy hadn’t realized that many of the schools on their list didn’t offer financial aid, and expected students to find their own means to afford their education. So Sandy began scrambling to research external scholarships and found that many deadlines had passed in the locations they had been considering.
- Our advice : No matter how strong your applications are, it is not safe to plan on being “the one” student who is going to receive the full financial support you need to make your higher education financially possible. Research the actual costs of college before making your list: it is very important to have universities, both at home and abroad, that fit your total budget. You can also learn about what funding opportunities are available from the university, but also keep in mind how competitive it is to get those funds.
- Edgardo had an idea that his chances of being accepted at a U.S. school with a “full ride,” as much financial support as possible to cover all expenses of his higher education was a reach, but it was only when he went through the entire application season that he had learned the hard way. Cornell, Williams, Middlebury, and others, had all denied him an acceptance. Our advice : This situation is such a common struggle that we wrote an entire guide dedicated to The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the USA for International Students (Tips + Guide) . Take your time to read it carefully and work through the recommendations about how moving forward with your higher education can still be possible .
- Karla is from Guatemala. As she began the process of applying to colleges, she knew that cost was a limiting factor for her family. When she received some financial aid from Grinnell College in Iowa, she was excited and quickly began making a budget that included both the remaining cost of tuition and indirect costs for her first year. She calculated that if she worked 25 hours outside of classes, she’d be able to

cover the remaining tuition costs and her indirect costs. She knew this would be a heavy load, but she was up for the challenge.

- What Karla didn't realize is that, as an international student, there would be limitations on how much and where she could work. Karla would be limited to work-study opportunities and to working a maximum of 12 hours/week. Her student visa wouldn't allow her to get a job at a local café or restaurant to cover her remaining expenses.
- Our advice : If you're planning to work while in college, be sure to research the work restrictions that come along with your student visa. Many student visas allow students to either only work on-campus or to work up to 20 hours, but it will depend on the country's regulations. In addition, being a student is a huge time commitment. Even if you're legally able to work, be realistic about how much you can work while still prioritizing your academics.
- Giuseppe said he wanted to study medicine: his family suggested he would be good at it, and there was a university in his country that would support him. He passed the national exam and...he was in!
- But time passed. The coursework was rigorous, and semester after semester started to drag on for Giuseppe. He wasn't resonating with what he was studying, and working through his coursework became a chore. Had he wasted some time and energy? What should he do?
- Our advice : Research the coursework, number of years for the degree, and job and graduate school placements. Speak with students in the program/degree you are interested in before you apply or commit to a university. Ask about mentorship and support that the university can provide for you. Ask people who you know well about areas that they think you would be successful in: ask them where they see you in five years, and in 10 years. Research the flexibility you have to change programs or majors. Take career , personality, and/or interest inventory assessments before you apply to college and evaluate the results carefully.
- Ivan is from Ukraine and was on a gap year when he maxed out his Common Application with 20 schools. Although he's busy with his start up and has responsibilities at home with family and their small business, it took him three straight months to fill out his applications. In addition, he was applying to universities that were not on the Common Application, each with their own deadlines and applications. He was really stressed.
- Although it wasn't intentional, it was truly hard for him to thoroughly research and interact with each school, resulting in varied quality across his applications.
- He also didn't realize that the financial paperwork involved for each of his 20 schools would be so time-consuming, or that when he wanted to update his colleges with new information about his Duolingo score and then again regarding how his internship was cancelled after he had applied, each update would require more than 20 separate emails. His essays were recycled (which can be an awesome technique), but his ultimate message to each school varied in terms of quality, especially as deadlines approached.
- Our advice : Be intentional with your school list. Ask yourself how much time you really have to dedicate not only to the research needed, but also to the applications themselves. Start with a balanced U.S. / non-U.S. list of your favorite safeties, fits, and reaches (including affordable options). Make a plan to perhaps later add more schools based on the time you have to invest in each.
- Sofia was dreaming of attending college far from home: the university she chose had a strong culinary arts program—her program of interest—and was in a location that was accessible for her to fly back home rather easily. Her parents said they could afford it and only wanted to see her happy. Sofia felt happy with her choice.
- However, when Sofia arrived, there was not an Orientation Day or Week to get her settled in her new home, and no "Buddy System" with student ambassadors to meet new students. In addition, she was placed in a residence that was far from her classes, so it made it difficult to share meal times with other freshmen. It seemed that her classmates were all friends already, since most came from the surrounding area, and she found it hard to integrate. She hadn't looked up where students were from, if anyone spoke one of her native languages, and didn't think to ask about campus services, such as a counseling center. She felt very homesick.
- Our advice : Before you apply, ask to speak to current students on campus by connecting with the Admission Office to find someone who matches your background and interests. Look through student blogs and takeovers on social media to learn what students are like. Research what services the university of your dreams has to offer and evaluate what's important to you. Will it help you to be picked up from the airport? Will the housing offered (or not offered) help you meet other students easily? Where do students spend holidays: will they fly home or will there be other students on campus?
- Ultimately, who can you speak to both before and after you arrive to help support you?
- João wants to study outside of Brazil after high school. He has a tuition-free public university within a commutable distance, but he sets his focus on applying to only universities abroad. What opportunities

might he be missing out on?

- Our advice : Value the higher education possibilities that surround you. Ask yourself why you want to study in another country in the first place: what are your five year goals? Where do you see yourself in 10 years? Do you have to study outside of your home country? What if your Plan A falls apart? Consider alternative routes that could bring you to your ultimate goal.
- Instead of relying on hearsay, inform yourself of your local higher education options, any applicable entrance exams, deadlines for application, and total cost.
- Arturo is graduating with a high school diploma from Panama, which uses the 5.0 scale to report final grades to students. However, as he looks at U.S. university first year profiles and information about scholarships, he notices a term over and over again: “ grade point average ,” a number listed out of 4.0. The good math student that he is, Arturo decides to use cross multiplication to convert his 4.4 out of 5.0 grade point average to the 4.0 scale, giving him a 3.52 out of 4.0.
- Our advice : **DO NOT RECALCULATE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADES!** A university representative will always read your entire application, including your transcript with whatever grading scale is provided, in context and with their own internal matrices. If you aren’t certain if your grades in high school make you a great candidate for a university, specific program, or scholarship, reach out to the admission office directly and ask for clarification. They appreciate hearing from you and it’s a good way to begin building a connection.
- Zhang was feeling really good about his applications. They were excellent and finished way ahead of time. He’d already submitted his CSS profile or International Student Financial Aid Application (ISFAA) to every U.S. school on his list. Most of the financial terms were new to him, but he used Google translate when looking at finances with his parents. When April decisions came around, he was thrilled he had gotten into an institution that was going to meet 100% of his demonstrated need! When he looked at the financial aid package, though, he realized it was much lower than what he really needed. He thought he may have made a mistake on his financial aid forms and wrote a financial appeal letter to his university, using this guide . He also listened to Joan Liu’s podcast and realized he should have listed the universities he was applying to on his financial aid application in alphabetical order, that way avoiding any possibility of indicating his preferences to his universities.
- Our advice : Read this step-by-step financial aid guide and, if you can, try to get someone with expertise to carefully read your financial aid documents. If you don’t have someone who can help, reach out to your local EducationUSA office.
- Cho was feeling positive about her applications! She had followed the guidance for the non-US timeline and submitted all of her materials by each respective deadline. Now that the hard work of applying was over, Cho turned her attention back to her homework, school activities, and getting a little break from all this college “stuff.” Unfortunately, by putting college in the back of her mind during the waiting-to-hear-back period, Cho was missing emails from schools indicating that she was missing documents. She didn’t check all of her portals after applying either.
- The result? One U.S. school never received her Certificate of Finance form, while another in Canada reached out to her regarding an English language proficiency test . There was also a university in Singapore where Cho’s counselor had already sent her academic transcript, yet they seemed to be missing some grade information. When it came time to receive her decisions, Cho was surprised to see that her applications had been withdrawn or marked as incomplete for three of her universities.
- Our advice : Once you’ve submitted your applications you still have a job to do—check your email! Colleges and universities will alert you to missing documents via email or in your application portal on their website. Make sure you regularly check your “spam” or “junk” email too.
- What’s next? Keep reading, friends, so that you stay informed. We want you to have successful planning and application experiences.
- Start identifying your priorities and developing a school list. Take a look at [How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.](#) and [How to Research Colleges Outside of the U.S.](#) for lots of helpful guidance.
- If cost is a determining factor for you, talk with your family and be realistic about what’s feasible for you. Take a look at:
 - [How Realistic is it to get a Full Scholarship in the USA for Non-U.S. Students \(Tips + Guide\)](#)
 - [Five Things to Know for Non-U.S. Students Who Need and Want U.S. Financial Aid](#)
 - [Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year](#)
 - As you start applying to schools and for financial aid, carefully follow application instructions and make sure you have all documents you need (and any translations!). Check out [Non-U.S. College Application & Admissions Timeline](#) and, if you’ll be applying for financial aid in the US, [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#) .

- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , international students case study , common mistakes international students make when applying to college

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 22, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [10 Common Mistakes International Students Make When Applying to College \(+ Mini Case Studies\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 22, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
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- [How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.](#)
- [How to Research Colleges Outside of the U.S.](#)
- [How Realistic is it to get a Full Scholarship in the USA for Non-U.S. Students \(Tips + Guide\)](#)
- [Five Things to Know for Non-U.S. Students Who Need and Want U.S. Financial Aid](#)
- [Schools That are Actually Cheap: Affordable Options Under 10,000 USD/Year](#)
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- [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
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- [international students case study](#)
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Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/financial-aid-international-students>

■ Mục lục nội dung chính:

- This post was written by Tiffany Knight and co-authored by Emily Dobson especially for College Essay Guy.
- University Advisor at UWC ISAK Japan in Nagano, Japan
- Educator | Advocate | Access Warrior
- EDGE Direcionamiento Educacional in Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Mom | Educator | Executive Board InternationalACAC | Caribbean and Latin America Network Founder | Access Warrior
- What follows is a short (well, as short as we could get it) overview of the financial aid process and possibilities for international students, including those with dual U.S. citizenship. We created this guide to help you:
 - See that financial assistance comes from several sources (and you can get it before and during college)
 - Provide context to understand the terminology used
 - Become more familiar with some of the documentation often required to receive aid
 - (Hopefully) feel empowered by this information
 - Luckily, we had a crew of international student interns helping us out; so if you think this booklet is AMAZING, that's probably a major reason why.
 - Note: For the purpose of this guide, we will use "college" and "university" interchangeably. A definition is offered for each in the glossary section.
 - Before getting too deep into the research of what college or university you might want to attend, it's a good idea to understand the total cost of applying and then actually attending a university. This information is best used with the support of a university financial aid office or admission counselor, to help you accurately determine and categorize costs.
 - These are fees charged to subsidize the organizational costs of reading and evaluating applications. They are charged in a number of ways:
 - Centralized Application Fee: UC Application (UCLA, UC Irvine)
 - Individual Application Fee: The Common Application form, university-specific application
 - Centralized Fee with Individual Fee: Ontario system, UCAS
 - In the irony of all ironies, you may have to pay money just to tell universities that you don't have enough money to attend. In order to request financial assistance, many institutions use a common financial aid application called the CSS Profile, which costs between \$16-25 USD per school. The CSS Profile acts as a "financial aid calculator form." Found online, the form is filled out with information from federal and bank documents to accurately show how much money students have available to pay for college. When submitted, applicants can be applicable for need-based aid after a college reviews the (true and honest) account of finances.
 - If your university list requires tests like the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, ACT, TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo English Test, there will be a fee to take the exams. Once you are done testing, if you know the schools to which you will apply, on the day of testing you can choose to send the scores, free of charge, to four colleges and universities—one more reason to start researching and have a balanced college list. If your list is not researched at the time of the tests, score reports will need to be ordered and paid for individually. Pros? Free tests to colleges. The Score Choice option allows students to use scores from the sections they scored highest over multiple test dates. Something to consider? Be ready for the exam(s) after taking ample time to practice; once you decide to send the scores, they are sent and filed by the university. On that note, many colleges are test-optional; to find out which ones are, check out FairTest.org.
 - If your applications are not electronic, you may have to send materials through the post office. This is the case for many overseas universities.

- Note: Make sure you check the deadlines for your schools. Many have rules that state the application paperwork "must be stamped and dated/sent by" a specific deadline.
- Some universities might require that your credentials be verified or validated by a legal or government entity. In some cases, it might be necessary for your documents to include an official translation with your documents or even an apostille , which certifies from one country to another that the document has been signed by a notary public.
- After you have been accepted and decided upon a university, politely tell the others you will not be attending. You will be required to pay a deposit as a sign of commitment. The amount of this deposit varies from school to school and country to country. Even if you are a scholarship recipient, you may be required to pay a small, affordable enrollment fee to show your commitment to the school
- Netherland's Portal Studielink →\$100 USD
- Japan →\$2000~\$5000 USD
- Australia →\$90 USD
- Once you have been offered and have accepted a place at a university, you will go through the process of obtaining a visa to study for the country wherein you plan to attend university. Visa costs vary by country but can range from \$0 to \$550 USD. Universities are able to provide guidance with the visa process; contact your admission officer for support.
- As you are researching to plan for the total cost of attending college, look for a breakdown of fees from the beginning of enrollment and throughout the academic year.
- The cost of attendance will generally include:
- The COA can be broken down into two types of costs: direct cost (billed costs) and indirect costs (unbilled costs) . Direct or billable costs are the fixed fees that you have to pay to attend college. This will at least include tuition and general fees, but in some cases, it might include room and board (U.S. only). Additionally, when researching the potential cost of a university, consider all the indirect costs associated with attending. This could include a variety of expenses, such as books, personal expenses, and transportation to and from campus.
- Calculating indirect cost can be difficult. The type of college or university you select will impact these costs. For example, if you attend a university in the Netherlands, your indirect costs will include room and board in addition to other living and personal expenses. However, in the United States, indirect costs will vary depending on whether your plan is to attend a private college with mandatory residential programs or a community college.
- *Mandatory health insurance through the university or approved by the university costs \$2,500-\$4,000 USD per year. Often, this is not included in the charts due to varying costs and options; universities usually provide links with more information regarding health care.
- Tip: Have you searched all over the school website and can't find the cost of attendance ? Look at its Common Data Set ! Still can't find what you need? Reach out to an admission representative!
- Research is your biggest advantage in this process, along with knowledgeable adults. You are responsible for establishing your team, and now that you have a clearer understanding of the costs associated with attending college or university, it's time to think about how much you'll be responsible for and how much financial aid you may need.
- While some of the fees below can be waived or paid by universities, as a savings goal, it's best to keep all expenses in mind. The following is a list of potential expenses to help you establish savings goals to prepare you for your college adventure. Use the right column to note what expenses you are likely to have and add them up. Don't forget to include an additional 10% of the total as a budget for contingencies (i.e., costs you didn't or couldn't predict).
- College Budget Example:
- Click here for a downloadable template that you can copy and fill out for yourself.
- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is a term often used by U.S. universities to estimate, by analyzing certain documentation, an amount you and/or your family can contribute toward the cost of attending college. This is not a definitive number the family is expected to pay, but rather a starting point for the institutions to build from when creating financial-aid packages.
- EFC uses a formula that takes into account taxed and untaxed income, assets, savings, and benefits.
- Start with an honest financial inventory. To do that, you should have a conversation with your parents, relatives, potential contributors ... anyone who has a financial stake in your education. During this conversation, agree on a realistic annual Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) for each of the four years you will be in college. Remember, your EFC should represent the maximum contribution possible toward your college education , or what your family is able to pay, not what they want to pay.
- How much can my family contribute to my education? (total contribution, including airfare, personal expenses, health care, etc.)

- Does this school meet full demonstrated need ?
- Do financial-aid packages cover any indirect costs ?
- Is there a minimum EFC required to attend this college?
- What effect do merit scholarships have on need-based financial-aid packages?
- Do financial-aid packages for international students include loans?
- The goal of this process is to find the post-secondary pathway that is the best fit for you. Maybe that's going to college to study architecture, or maybe it's taking a gap year, or maybe it's taking a shot at starting your own business. Careful research will help you find the pathway to best match your goals.
- To find the best fit , you need to thoughtfully consider what you want and reflect, realistically, of what you are capable of. You also need to know what options are available to you out there in the world. That's where research comes in. EFC limitations should play a major role in guiding initial school search. High EFC affords more options. Low EFC requires more detailed research into the school's admission and aid award policies.
- The Common Data Set (CDS) initiative is a collaborative effort among data providers in the higher education community and publishers as represented by the College Board, Peterson's, and U.S. News & World Report . The goal of this collaboration is to improve the quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved in a student's transition into higher education, as well as to reduce the reporting burden on data providers. The CDS is an excellent tool for breaking down quantitative data for a university. Categories like: How much funding goes toward international students? What is the breakdown of the student body population? How does a school rank, in order of importance, parts of the application? All this information and more can be found in this document. Here are some sections of the CDS we find to be useful in the college/university research process:
 - This section breaks down general enrollment by categories such as cohort, gender, and racial/ethnic identity. If diversity is important to your college experience, this will be a useful section for you!
 - Reminder: Section G outlines the COA for the university. Understanding how and where the money goes is an important part of your research.
 - In this section, you can examine the average financial aid awarded to international students by the college/university. Out of the H categories, H6 is the most important: Aid to Undergraduate Degree-seeking Nonresident Aliens, also known more simply as: international students. Here you'll find the total number of international students receiving institutional financial aid, the average amount awarded, and the school's total budget. If the average financial aid award is significantly lower than your EFC, then this school is likely not a fit for you. Why? Because, even if you are accepted, you may end with a gap; gapping is when a college offers a financial aid award that does not meet a student's full financial need.
 - Let's review: From this Common Data Set , we can gather the following details about the school:
 - Average need-based aid package to international students is \$64,000 USD.
 - Total institutional aid awarded to international students is approximately \$38,000,000 USD.
 - International students make up approximately 13% of the student body
 - Total number of students receiving aid is 590, which likely means about 147 students per class are receiving some sort of aid. It can also be assumed that approximately the same number of incoming students are likely to receive a similar average financial-aid package.
 - Conclusion: This school will be extremely competitive for a high-need student.
 - Who said U.S. colleges were the best options for you and that post-secondary pathways had to be direct college pathways? There are myriad non-traditional or alternative pathway possibilities available for students. These are amazing confidence-building, skill-building, money-saving choices for students who have found that the structures of traditional education are not for them, or for students who maybe just aren't ready to dive into the college experience yet. Choosing this path might seem daunting, but with careful planning, you can find a successful path that's your "best fit." Here are some alternatives you can pursue:
 - Geoswerve © your applications
 - Community college
 - Studying in one's own country for a first degree, then leaving for a second
 - Entrepreneurship projects
 - Vocational training
 - Note: Geoswerve is a word coined by the Nepal Justice League counseling team. It means to geographically swerve applications to a country or location that may not be initially on one's radar. Typically refers to swerving to non-US universities. ©
 - Speaking of alternate pathways, here are a few hacks and tips for lesser-known ways to save some money:
 - Submit your SAT/ACT score in lieu of a proficiency test

- Duolingo English Test, when accepted, instead of TOEFL / IELTS /Cambridge or others
- Test Optional and Flexible Schools to avoid testing
- Use Your Four ACT/SAT Free Score Reports to avoid paying to send your scores
- Merit Award given automatically by universities
- Local Resources such as churches, private companies, the Rotary Club or a Ministry of Education
- Visualizing the road ahead is helpful in preparing you for your goals. Planning for college is no different. We like to start with a calendar and/or timeline of some sort, especially when it comes to financing your education, since there are many deadlines and opportunities that may make getting a post-secondary education more affordable. Take some time to write out a timeline of what your college application season should look like, aligned with your school system. Below is an example to give you an idea of what you can create! Remember, the application season runs for about 12 months total (each university having its own preferred deadlines), from August to August. To apply, you must be receiving a high school diploma or equivalent within the timeframe. Note: If you have matriculated to college already, it is important to get in touch with an admission representative to understand how this may change your application status and potential financial package .
- For a longer timeline guide outlining your junior and senior years, click here .
- The CSS Profile is a financial-aid application used to determine the need for institutional financial aid. Colleges use this application to:
 - See a larger picture of the family's finances
 - Understand the family's true financial need
 - Help award aid to students who truly need it
 - Distribute aid in an equitable manner
- The CSS Profile is a very in-depth form, so your family may be expected to provide additional documents with the application (e.g., recently completed tax returns, other records of current income, records of untaxed income and benefits, assets, and bank statements). Your family will report their income from two years prior to the year you plan to attend college. Also, the CSS Profile requires financial information from both parents and their spouses . You can report in your home currency.
- Create an account or log into your College Board account.
- Select the correct application year.
- Complete the application ... and pay the fee.
- Know what tax year information to prepare ahead of time (two years prior, "prior-prior year").
- Have your documents ready and available when you start filling out the application.
- The questions in this section are about you, not your parents/guardians. These questions are extremely important in setting the CSS Profile up to work correctly. A mistake in this area can impact your whole application!
- This section is a report of your parents/legal guardians — all of them : living parents, deceased parents, current stepparents, a parent's current partner, legal guardians, legal guardian's spouse. You can report up to four parents.
- This question references where your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) currently reside(s). Do not report their country of birth or citizenship here.
- In this section, you'll find the colleges and universities to which you plan to apply to. If your school lists a CSS code, be sure to input it here!
- Make sure to select the right college and program. For example, you should not select a graduate school, medical school, or law school. Selecting the wrong type of school could delay your application.
- Can't find your college or university? Make sure your college accepts the CSS Profile from undergraduate applicants. Some institutions have their own application or use the ISFAA.
- For many institutions, you must be a first-year student in order to apply for financial aid. You are considered a first-year student if you:
 - Earned college credits while in high school
 - Were enrolled in college courses while in high school
 - Family members living in the same household, but who are supporting themselves financially, do not need to be reported.
- If you have a noncustodial parent (a parent who doesn't have guardianship/custody of the student applicant), they will need to complete a separate CSS Profile account. This is technically "a student account" with your parent's information. Similar to the student's CSS Profile application, the parent will complete the student sections of the application with the student's information and the parent sections with the respective parent's information.
- Be sure to create this account using the parent's information, not the student's.

- If you have no contact with your noncustodial parent, you can request Non-Custodial Waivers directly from the school.
- Once you complete everything (listed before this), the CSS dashboard appears and lets you see the status of your applications, payment receipts, deadlines, and college information/details. Unfortunately, there is no CSS Profile fee waiver available. The CSS Profile costs \$25 USD to fill out and submit to one college, then \$16 USD for each additional choice.
- Missing the financial aid deadline means you will not qualify for any aid for your first year of school. To preempt this mistake, we highly recommend treating the college application deadline as the deadline for the financial-aid application.
- Once you submit your CSS Profile, you may need to send supporting documents to the school. This is where IDOC (Institutional Documentation Service) comes into play. Students who are required to submit documents will receive an email from the College Board with login details to IDOC provided. In IDOC, students will be asked to upload documents such as tax forms, bank statements, and/or other financial aid documents for you and your parents. Be sure to submit your documents by the set deadline!
- You will get an email from the College Board notifying you if you need to submit documents through IDOC. Until then, you cannot sign in.
- Institution-specific documents are found in the Get Forms link in IDOC. Most forms require a handwritten signature, which means the student should print and sign the form, scan, and then upload it to IDOC. Once a document is uploaded, you can find it in the Uploaded Documents section. Processing may take 3-5 days, so be patient.
- The ISFAA is a financial-aid application used to determine the need for institutional financial aid. Colleges use this application to:
 - Understand the family's financial need
 - Help award aid to students
- This is a free, paper-based application available for download on the respective school's website. Students are required to convert income and asset information into U.S. dollars (USD) and provide additional documents with the application. For example, recently completed tax returns, records of current income, records of untaxed income and benefits, assets, and bank statements could be required. Your family will report their income from one year prior to the year you plan to attend college with this application.
- For the ISFAA, "parents refers to custodial parents, or the parent or parents with whom you live." In this section is a chart to report all your family members (except for yourself) dependent on your parents' income.
- This section covers your family's financial information. Remember, for the ISFAA, you must report this data in USD. Any income your family is receiving goes here.
- You must report all income in your financial-aid applications. Income includes:
 - Money earned from work (wages)
 - Self-employment income
 - Business income
 - Income from investments, dividends or retirement payments
- Income plays an important factor in determining EFC.
- Most money and property owned by your family will be counted as an asset. In this section, write the value of assets and any debt counted against the asset at the time you complete this application.
- Assets include:
 - Business equity
 - Home equity
- Families are not expected to contribute all their assets toward their child's education. On the contrary, only a reasonable percentage of assets reported on your financial aid applications will be taken into account when determining EFC.
- In many cases, expenses are factored in when calculating a student's EFC. Why? Family expenses and other commitments impact your family's actual available income. You must use specific amounts for each category listed (if applicable). If you do not know the exact amounts, provide an estimate.
- In this section, identify the amount of money you and your family are able to contribute toward your education. You should never leave this section blank or put "zero" in each category if you are able to contribute. If you can contribute only \$500 USD per year toward your education expenses, then list it.
- These amounts may not be what you will be responsible for.
- Schools might compare their calculated EFC to your listed "expected support" to determine an appropriate contribution for your family.

- Families should include information in this if they have experienced unexpected and uncontrollable changes in their financial circumstances. Examples of these changes include:
 - Loss or change in employment
 - Loss due to recent natural disaster
 - High medical expenses
 - Unusual family expenses (e.g., eldercare)
- In both applications, there is a section for families to explain any special circumstances universities should consider when reviewing their application. In some cases, financial situations might change while the application is being processed. Or maybe you found an error in your application after you submitted. Always inform the colleges of any special circumstance and errors to give yourself the best chance at receiving aid. Because funding is limited, it is important you update the college with these changes as soon as possible.
- It's important to review your financial aid packages carefully in order to understand everything you're responsible for. You might get a full ride, which covers all billable expenses, leaving you responsible for expenses such as health care, books, and transportation costs. Look over your package line by line to see what's included. The package may also include merit loans, which have academic minimums you must maintain, or loans you must repay after graduation. Let's look at a few packages to understand how different universities distribute their funding.
- This award letter is very clear and breaks down the COA and award for the student. College C has awarded three scholarships: a Davis Foundation Scholarship, the International Student Scholarship, and the Dean's Scholarship, giving this student a total of \$57,424 USD in gift aid. There are no loans in this aid package. The student's work study is labeled "work aid" and totals \$2,320 USD.
- Putting your packages side by side in a chart really helps you compare what each school covers and what you are responsible for.
- If you're not clear about what's included in your package, reach out to your college counselor or admission counselor for help!
- Need more help?
- For a slightly longer guide to reading your Financial Aid Award Letters, including a downloadable template, [click here](#).
- While not guaranteed, it is sometimes possible to make a "Financial Aid Appeal" to a university and have your financial situation reexamined. Financial appeals should be made to the one school, if given the right financial aid package, you would definitely attend. Your appeal not only should ask the university for flexibility, but also show your flexibility regarding your family's contribution.
- How likely is it that colleges and universities consider an appeal? It usually depends on whether there are still funds remaining in their financial aid budget. This process will differ depending on the institution, so check the school's website or contact the financial aid office about the process for appeal.
- What is considered a reason for appeal?
 - Errors in original information
 - Recent change in employment or income
 - Change/increase in support of other family member(s)
 - Exceptional medical expense
- What's often not considered a reason for appeal?
 - Wanting more financial aid, not simply needing it
 - Using another institution's financial aid offer to try and negotiate
 - Fluctuations in exchange rates
- When you're appealing your financial-aid package, you should be ready to show why the original package did not meet your family's demonstrated need. This can be done by submitting supporting documents and explaining the situation in writing. To show your commitment to making this work, we recommend that you try to meet the school "half way." A sample letter can be found in the section below.
- Want to see an example?
- For a longer guide on how to write a letter of appeal, including examples, [click here](#).
- As you approach the end of the college application season, don't forget about grace and gratitude. Whoever had a hand in getting you to this finish line, show them your appreciation and thanks. Remember to take a moment to share your news (good or bad) with the people who wrote letters for you, who sat up late with you as you barely made that deadline, or who had a kind word for you when things felt complicated. With your mind and heart open, remember that a tactful show of appreciation can come in the form of a handwritten note, personalized email, a video chat, or even a face-to-face. Whatever you decide to do, do it with intention.
- Here is a sample letter from students to inspire you on your path to gratitude.

- Dear TEACHER/COORDINATOR/COUNSELOR:
- I hope this email finds you well. With my last milestone as a high school student finally over, I wanted to thank you personally for your support.
- Thank you for not only helping me with so many personal matters, such as figuring out what I want to be in the future, but reminding me of who I am during the process. While I am still not sure where exactly I would like to be in a couple of years, it is my firm belief that I hope to be a voice for those less privileged than I am.
- I am grateful I had such powerful educators such as yourself to support me throughout.
- Thank you again for everything. I hope to keep in touch with you.
- Tagged: international students , applying to the us , Financial Aid , scholarships , css profile

■ Danh sách các bài vi■t và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [September 28, 2020](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
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- [Cost of Attending \(COA\)](#)
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- [Understanding Estimated Family Contribution \(EFC\)](#)
- [College match/fit and list building](#)
- [Common Data set and how to use it](#)
- [Non-traditional or alternative pathways](#)

- What are the types of financial documents required?
- CSS profile
- Students demographic information
- Parent information
- Student academic status
- Income and assets of parents and students
- Household information
- Parent expense details
- Supplemental questions
- CSS profile for parent use
- CSS profile dashboard
- CSS profile and IDOC
- Forms and status of submitted documents
- International Student Financial Aid Form (ISFAA)
- Student information
- Parent information
- Financial information
- Asset information
- Expenses
- Expected support/offer
- Special circumstances
- Changes to your financial aid application
- What to do once you're accepted
- A brief guide to analyzing your financial aid award letters
- How to appeal your financial aid offer
- How do I show gratitude for those who made a difference in my college journey?
- What Does that Word Mean? (A Glossary)
- CSS Profile
- CSS Profile
- need-based aid
- TOEFL
- IELTS
- FairTest.org

- Apostille
- apostille
- Studielink
- Cost of Attending University (COA)
- cost of attendance
- I-20
- direct cost(billed costs)
- indirect costs(unbilled costs)
- Direct or billable costs
- indirect costs
- indirect cost
- indirect costs
- indirect costs
- cost of attendance
- Common Data Set
- SEVIS
- downloadable template
- indirect costs
- merit scholarships
- need-based financial-aid
- Common Data Set (CDS)
- Common Data Set
- need-based
- TOEFL
- IELTS
- Merit Award
- package
- click here
- CSS Profile
- CSS Profile
- both parents and their spouses
- Non-Custodial Waivers

- to IDOC
- merit loans
- [click here](#)
- [click here](#)
- direct costs
- indirect costs
- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs:
- Form I-20
- College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile:
- Curricular Practical Training (CPT):
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS):
- SEVP
- SEVP
- SEVP
- DS-160:
- DS-2019:
- J-1
- SEVIS
- EducationUSA:
- F-1:
- F-1
- M-1
- I-94:
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection website.
- SEVP
- International Baccalaureate (IB):
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS):
- J-1:
- M-1:
- Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB):
- Optional Practical Training (OPT):
- SEVP
- SEVP

- Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS):
- SEVP
- J-1
- I-20
- SEVP
- Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP):
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):
- U.S. Department of State:
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP):
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):
- international students
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- scholarships
- css profile

The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the USA for International Students (Tips + Guide)

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/full-scholarship-international-students>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by Independent Educational Consultants:
- Kristen Karovic, Founder of College Bloom
- Alina Aksiyote, Co-Founder of Mosaico Mentors
- A note from the authors: The content of this article won't help every applicant: every situation is sensitive and unique, and education is continuously changing. However, we want to be transparent that our goals are to give you context, steps, and tools for further research so you can be empowered in your next decisions.
- —Disclaimer: For the purposes of this article, an “international student” is a student who is a “nonresident alien”—not a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or eligible non-resident, who has not passed the green card test or the substantial presence test—, regardless of where the student completed his/her high school education. “College” and “university” are also used interchangeably.
- Here's the deal: it's really tough to get a full scholarship as an international student to a U.S. college or university. Funds are limited and competition is steep—really steep. But most of you know that.
- So, you're an international student applying to school in the U.S. While we would like to think of you as the unicorn—“the one” who is accepted with \$250,000+ in scholarships—there's a problem year after year: we don't always see international students accepted to those U.S. schools with full financial support.
- That makes the problem we encounter every year even bigger: students don't spend time and dedication into creating (and getting equally—if not more—excited about) other amazing universities and programs. Options that are actually inexpensive, with or without financial aid or a scholarship.
- What other options do you say? Check out Schools that are actually cheap: Affordable options under 10,000 USD .
- If you need a full ride or close to a full ride to be able to attend college, the most important step you need to take right now is to expand your options and apply to at least three schools that you...
- Can get into, including options in your home country when possible
- Would be happy going to
- Can actually afford, including undergraduate programs outside of the U.S.
- In this guide, we'll review:
- How much college in the U.S. actually costs
- Who is an international student
- What type of aid international students are eligible for
- Four factors that determine how much aid you can receive
- The effect of politics & the pandemic
- Affordable options
- What's next? 10 action items to get started on
- Remember: you can find solutions for your higher education that not only fit your family's budget but are a great fit for you socially and academically.
- This guide will show you how to be proactive and stay determined.
- According to US News, the average college tuition and fees in 2020-2021 was \$35,087 for private universities and \$21,184 for public universities. Tuition usually makes up 40-60% of what you'll need to pay for as a college student: it doesn't include the tens of thousands of additional dollars in indirect costs that international students face, including visa fees, room & board, books, supplies, insurance, personal expenses, and transportation.
- But hold up: I can get financial aid or a scholarship even though I'm an international student, right?
- Yes, you can!
- Do you actually know what “type” of student you are? It can be confusing, we know, as each college and university in the United States has its own definition of who is considered an international student.

- Pro-tip! Make sure to consult with each college/university directly about your citizenship.
- Are international students eligible for federal financial aid?
- Most international students will not be eligible for federal financial aid (such as Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, and Pell Grants). Check out this article from Federal Student Aid to understand your eligibility for federal student aid.
- If I'm not eligible for federal financial aid, how can I get financial support for studying in the U.S.?
- You can receive institutional aid (which is provided directly by many colleges and universities). You can also try to apply to outside scholarships often provided by governments or foundations. This website can be helpful to your search .
- The likelihood of getting the financial aid you need from a US school largely depends on four factors:
 - How much aid you need
 - How strong your application is
 - How good a fit you are for the school, program, or scholarship
 - How much financial aid is available and how many students are competing for it
- This can be surprisingly hard to figure out. There's also a difference between "needing" money and "wanting" money. Your first two steps in this process are:
 - Have an honest conversation with your parents and/or guardians about how much they can contribute toward your college education, coming up with a total contribution including indirect costs . There are also upfront expenses, such as translations, vaccinations, mailing services, trips to the Embassy, standardized tests, notarizations, and more that are incredibly important to budget.
 - You need to identify the amount a college will determine you and/or your family can contribute toward the cost of attending college. This is often referred to as an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC).
- Most Net Price Calculators are tailored to domestic applicants, but you can get a rough estimate of your EFC with this calculator for international students .
- Ask anyone who has gone through the process. Demonstrating your financials to colleges is a tedious process, and there are typically many speed bumps along the way. Reach out—ahead of time—directly to the Financial Aid Office at your dream school if you have any questions.
- If you've been browsing college websites, you may have seen a handful of schools that say they will meet 100% of demonstrated need for accepted international students. This means they will use their own EFC calculator to figure out how much your family can pay and cover the difference so that you can afford college.
- Wow — schools that meet 100% demonstrated need? That sounds great!
- Well, yes and no. It's important to note that even though a school says they will meet 100% of your demonstrated need if you are accepted, you also need to ask yourself if the school is need-aware or need-blind.
- Schools that are need-blind, do not take your financial need into account when making their admissions decision. However, only seven institutions in the U.S. are need-blind for international students and they all have low acceptance rates: Amherst, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, MIT, Minerva Schools at KGI, and the Curtis Institute of Music.
- Schools that are need-aware have limited funding and will take how much you can pay into account as one of their factors for admission. This means that your chances of getting accepted to a need-aware school will go down depending on how much financial aid you need. For these schools, it is much easier to receive a smaller need-based aid award than it is to receive a full ride (all expenses covered). A full ride is extremely competitive at any university, regardless of their stated admissions rate.
- Most U.S. colleges and universities have a holistic application process. This means that they look at the different aspects of your application as a whole and take academic and nonacademic factors into account. Recent Class Profiles and the Common Data Set can be helpful in guiding you to this knowledge.
- Unlike schools with a single admission test, as may be the case in your home country, there is a lot to think about when it comes to applying to colleges and universities in the US.
- This also means there's a lot you can do to stand out as an applicant: work hard to keep your grades up, register for the most rigorous classes your school offers, practice diligently for the SAT or ACT (when available) and your English proficiency test (if applicable), take on projects you're passionate about and commit to them long-term, demonstrate interest in the schools you're applying to (more on that here and here), connect with a mentor you can trust, explore your interests with research or an internship, look for meaningful summer experiences, get to know your teachers, start the process early and write essays that really speak to who you are, essays you can be proud of.
- You may also be wondering if your chances of getting accepted at a certain school increase if you apply Early Decision. For more on that, check out this podcast . You should keep in mind that admission officers tend to award aid to international students in the earlier rounds of the application process (Early Decision

I/II).

- Finally, in order to have a strong application, you're also going to need an advocate. Ideally, this would be a college counselor/administrator/trusted teacher who works at your school and has experience helping students apply to the U.S.
- But we also know this isn't always possible. If your school doesn't have a college counselor, try to find someone whom you trust (if possible, an English speaker) to support you with this process. If you're a student who needs full financial aid, check out this podcast with Joan Liu for guidance on how to help your advocate best assist you. Overall, it's very important to get to know your advocate. If you're using the Common App, this person will be responsible for submitting several documents, including (but not limited to) a recommendation letter, your transcript, a profile of your school, and a school report to contextualize your academic profile.
- And remember: if you are not accepted or offered aid at a particular school, it is most likely NOT a reflection of how qualified you are as an applicant. When it comes to applying for financial aid, hundreds—if not thousands—of other qualified applicants compete for very limited spots. This is particularly true for U.S. colleges and universities that offer "full rides" to international students. These institutions are among the most selective universities in the world, and you compete against hundreds to, in some cases, tens of thousands of applicants. Year after year, we see students work incredibly hard to put their best application forward and not get accepted to these highly selective schools. This is why we recommend keeping your options and mindset open, and expanding your options to universities outside of the U.S.
- You want to find schools that are a good fit not only financially, but also academically and socially.
- Year after year, students apply to institutions in the U.S. that offer full rides—trying to maximize their chances of affordability—when the college or university is not actually a great match nor fit for them (see: 10 Common Mistakes Students Make When Applying to College).
- The same goes for scholarships. It's very unlikely you'll be awarded a scholarship if you're not a good match (e.g., applying to a scholarship for outstanding community service when you have limited community service experience). School admissions officers notice when you're not actually interested in the school or program you're applying to, and are simply applying as they offer the potential to give you a "full ride."
- Depending on the amount of financial aid you need, your choices in the U.S. may be limited to schools that give the most financial aid. However, even with this limited list, you have choices ... and it is important to be intentional with these choices.
- If you want to take a reading break, we highly recommend this podcast with Ethan and Joan Liu: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors).
- If you're ready to number crunch (and will bookmark that podcast for later), you can get a sense of how competitive financial aid is at a certain school by looking at:
 - the percentage of international students who received aid
 - the average aid award they received
 - the acceptance rate (percentage of applicants accepted to the school)
- First, take a look at the Common Data Set for a university you're interested in (or any university you want to know more about). Remember to just type the university's name and "Common Data Set" on Google and you should be able to find it. Take a look specifically at "nonresident alien" (international student) sections: for example, how many nonresident aliens are in the first year (B2)? What's tuition (G1)? How much is the average dollar amount of institutional financial aid awarded to undergraduate degree-seeking nonresident aliens (H6)?
- Two independent educational consultants, Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy, work through numbers from the Common Data Set every year, in conjunction with speaking with admission offices directly to create some incredible resources. Check out their tables, especially the sheet about Financial Aid for Nonresident Alien Undergraduates. Want a walk-through from Jennie about how to use this table? Listen to this podcast.
- While using this helpful table, keep in mind that it does not indicate the maximum aid that a school provides to a student, so it is not a guarantee that the U.S. schools on the list above provide full financial aid.
- This is why we invite you to check out the Yale Young African Scholars List of United States Colleges & Universities that Give Financial Aid to International Students. As they mention in their article, the list is not comprehensive, but can serve as a starting point in your search.
- For more on merit- and need-based scholarships, check out this Scholarship List that is continuously updated by a team of Independent Educational Consultants. This page and this one can also be helpful for finding merit scholarships.

- The data available from U.S. colleges and universities that accept and grant full or generous financial aid packages to non-U.S. applicants is from the 2019-2020 application season and previous years.
- Although data for 2020-2021 is still rolling out, the number of international students applying to US institutions is increasing, particularly to highly selective schools (also known as those that give the most financial aid). Here's some figures for you:
- As of January 22, 2021, there has been a 9% increase in the number of international students applying through the Common App (Forbes)
- There has been a "record-breaking 17% increase" in the number of applications to "the nation's most selective four-year institutions, both public and private" (NYTimes, Feb. 20th, 2021)
- There has been an increase in the number of international applications received by individual colleges. Two notable examples are Middlebury with a 38% increase in international applicants and University of Pennsylvania with a 50% increase .
- There has been a change in the percentage of applicants applying from different countries. According to Forbes, "applications from China are down by 18%" but that is "more than offset" by increases in applicants in other countries such as India (+28%), Canada (+22%), Nigeria (+12%), Pakistan (+37%), the United Kingdom (+23%), and Brazil (+41%)."
- Here's a list of 10 action items:
- Use Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy's list to find U.S. schools that offer high average aid awards to a large % of international students. Research these schools and find which are the best fit for you.
- Start early and read up about the financial aid process:
- A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students
- Five Things to Know for Non-U.S. Students Who Need Financial Aid
- Independent Educational Consultants Association Financial Aid FAQs for International Students .
- Find and connect with your school official or identify a mentor who can advocate for you during this important process.
- Reach out to the experts! Message the college or university you are interested in and speak directly with an admission officer.
- Pour time, care, and effort into your grades and the message you want to communicate in your application.
- Read all the fine print on every college website! Plan ahead for deadlines, requirements, and fees.
- Understand the REAL cost of university. Read this article on hidden fees .
- Check out these scholarships at universities around the world.
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, make sure you have affordable options on your list, especially at non-U.S. universities, and carefully consider your options for staying in your home country.
- Do your best to avoid these 10 Common Mistakes Students Make When Applying to College .
- Additional CEG Resources for International Students
- Tips and Resources for Learning How to Apply to College in the USA for International Students
- 122: Which Schools Are the Most Generous With Financial Aid? (International Version)
- 211: Financial Aid Tips for International Students (and Their Counselors)
- SAT & ACT Optional Schools for International Students
- Tagged: international students , scholarships , scholarships for international students , international scholarships

■ Danh sách các bài viết và tài nguyên:

- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 21, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [The Hard Truth About Getting a Full Scholarship in the USA for International Students \(Tips + Guide\)](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 21, 2021](#)

- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [College Bloom](#)
- [Mosaico Mentors](#)
- [nonresident alien](#)
- [non-resident](#)
- [Schools that are actually cheap: Affordable options under 10,000 USD](#)
- [US News](#)
- [the tens of thousands of additional dollars](#)
- [Hidden Costs of College](#)
- [federal financial aid](#)
- [Check out this article from Federal Student Aid](#)
- [helpful to your search](#)
- [total contribution including indirect costs](#)
- [this calculator for international students](#)
- [here](#)
- [here](#)
- [here](#)
- [write essays](#)
- [check out this podcast](#)
- [this podcast with Joan Liu](#)
- [expanding your options to universities outside of the U.S.](#)
- [10 Common Mistakes Students Make When Applying to College](#)
- [How to Develop a Great College List When Applying to Schools Outside the U.S.](#)
- [Financial Aid Tips for International Students \(and Their Counselors\)](#)
- [Common Data Set](#)
- [Check out their tables](#)
- [Listen to this podcast](#)
- ["How to Use Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy's Financial Aid Info Excel Sheets."](#)
- [Yale Young African Scholars List of United States Colleges & Universities that Give Financial Aid to International Students](#)

- [out this Scholarship List](#)
- [This page](#)
- [this one](#)
- [Forbes](#)
- [Middlebury with a 38% increase](#)
- [University of Pennsylvania with a 50% increase](#)
- [A Step-by-Step Financial Aid Guide for International Students](#)
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How to Research Universities Outside of the U.S.: Tips & Resources

Website: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/researching-universities-outside-us>

■ M■c l■c n■i dung chính:

- This post was written especially for College Essay Guy by
- Kristen Karovic, Founder of College Bloom
- Rachel Ozer-Bearson, an Independent Educational Consultant with Mosaico Mentors in Mexico City
- Note: “College” and “university” are used interchangeably in this article.
- Researching universities can be a daunting task. You’re probably wondering, where should you even start?
- Before launching into research, we recommend you take some real time to reflect on what you’re looking for in your education. Take a look at How to Develop a Great University List for great questions to ponder and exercises to work through to better understand what you’re looking for in a school.
- Once you have clarity on what you’re looking for, it’s time to dive into the research process!
- Would you want to pay for schooling at a “fake university”? There are so many horror stories from all corners of the world.
- Wikipedia provides a dynamic list of unaccredited institutions of higher education from all over the world. This should not be your go-to source, but does give you an idea of how many thousands of universities around the world will not give you a degree recognized as valid by their government.
- Moral of the story? Be sure that the degree you are interested in at the university you are researching will grant you a diploma (not a certificate) that is recognized by the country’s Ministry of Education. When in doubt, ask the university directly.
- Here are some questions to keep in mind, although it is definitely not an exhaustive list:
- How will attending a university outside of my home country equip me with experiences and a skillset that I cannot obtain if I stay back home?
- Where do I see myself in 5 years? In 10 years? If I want to stay abroad, will I be supported to get a job as an international student after graduating with my undergraduate degree?
- What support does the university provide to international students?
- What is the length of the degree?
- How much is the total cost of attendance, including tuition, cost of living, and personal expenses?
- Do I need to declare my major when applying? Or can I declare it after a year or two at the university?
- How much flexibility does the program provide? Are most classes chosen for me or do I get to decide (is there a core curriculum, distribution requirements, or an open-choice model)?
- Will I be taking classes exclusively in my major or will I have the option to take other classes (and if so, for what period of time)? Ultimately, will these models suit my long term goals?
- What is the language or languages of instruction? Can I create different, but effective, options for myself if I study in a language other than English?
- What are the application deadlines?
- What is the school calendar like: does the first semester start in September or January?
- Do you meet the enrollment requirements? If not, is there an option to complete an international foundation year or study at a university in your home country for a year?
- One of our favorite resources to begin your research outside of the U.S. is National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Guide to International University Admission . In the guide, NACAC lists 15 destination countries overviewing full-degree opportunities for undergraduate study.
- Check out the carefully written country-by-country overviews, how to search for universities, insider tips, academic calendars, application procedures, deadlines, application fees, admission requirements, tuition and fees, housing options, and visa and permit information.
- We also created a guide with 4 additional countries to consider for admission —and believe it or not, these universities’ tuition plus living expenses in these countries are typically under 10,000 USD/year .

- You can also find helpful country-by-country information on the Common College Counseling Curriculum (C4) .
- In addition, most countries have a “Study in X” page, dedicated to promoting their study options for international students. Check out these resources, in addition to the NACAC guide, which include undergraduate degrees offered fully in English:
 - Czech Republic
 - European Union
 - New Zealand
- Remember: as you continue to dive into your research for credible sources, we recommend you use websites that are sponsored by the Ministry of Education rather than general search engines. We understand that there are so many websites out there: stick with trustworthy resources first.
- Too often we see students focusing their energy on only highly ranked universities or the handful of universities they’ve heard of in a given country. But here’s the issue with rankings. They’re based largely on a specific set of factors, like freshman retention rates, few of which will actually impact your experience as a student.
- Even more importantly, these factors have nothing to do with the priorities you’ve personally identified.
- If you’re interested in reading more, check out Malcolm Gladwell’s analysis of the U.S. News & World Report rankings here: [The Order of Things: What college rankings really tell us](#).
- You’ll be better off searching for schools that fit with what you’re looking for, not just universities and programs that are highly ranked. This can be a very difficult mental shift to make, and we understand that preconceived notions and the cultural and regional recognition of certain names of universities are important. But these familiar names are not as important as you might think: Frank Bruni’s *Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be* is an excellent read about the flaws in rankings.
- That being said, websites that rank schools can still be useful (but should NOT be the overriding factor), particularly as a jumping off point at the beginning of your university search. Remember not to fixate on the rankings themselves. Instead, check out the lists below to learn about universities you’ve never heard of before.
- Here are a few international rankings to look into:
 - QS World University includes universities from around the world, letting you restrict your search by subject, region, or country.
 - Times Higher Education World University Rankings include more than 1,500 universities in over 90 countries and provides rankings by subject and region, among other categories. They also feature Impact rankings, global performance tables that evaluate universities against the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. Spoiler alert: New Zealand and Australia are leading the list.
 - Complete University Guide has a UK-specific university search tool with school summaries, rankings, and links to virtual events like Open Days.
- You want to look into valuable information about the universities on their own websites, like read about what support systems they have for international students, where students attend graduate school, how soon they attain employment after graduation (and where!), the strength of the alumni network, and more.
- *College Beyond the States: European Schools That Will Change Your Life Without Breaking the Bank* is a book that describes both the possibilities and the limitations that going to college outside of the U.S. entails.
- *Liberal Arts Colleges in Europe* provides a lengthy list of liberal arts options in Europe. If you’re not so sure what you want to study or are looking for a broad education that will allow you to explore diverse interests, a liberal arts education may be a good option for you! Note that the Netherlands has a particularly well-developed program of University Colleges based on the liberal arts model.
- *American Universities Abroad* provides a helpful list of twelve American-style universities in the UK and Europe.
- College Board’s Big Future is far from a comprehensive list. But it does include over 200 international universities, along with helpful information about the majors offered and application deadlines.
- Additionally, CollegeXpress has several lists specific to international universities. Here’s a list of English-language universities and here’s a list of American universities with international campuses .
- SRT’s webinars and teaser classes are a great way to get more information on certain universities and/or educational systems around the world.
- David Hawkins from University Guys offers helpful podcasts, guides, blogs, and webinars about the USA, Canada, UK, and Europe.
- University websites themselves are an invaluable resource, particularly for looking into the nitty gritty details. For example, how do the Architecture requirements at Kingston University differ from those at University of Westminster?

- Vioo is a video platform to help you explore college and corporate life at 370+ universities: you can connect with current students, attend panels with university representatives, take personalized tours, and more.
- Connect with international student ambassadors in order to get a better understanding of university culture. You can check directly on the admission page of the university's website to see if there are volunteer students, or email the admission office to see how they can connect you with a current student from afar.
- If you're interested in any of these universities, check out Unibuddy. Unibuddy is a free app and webpage that connects university student ambassadors and future students virtually around the world. ZeeMee is another free app that lets you connect with students from over 100 universities. Note: some universities who do not have an ambassador system abide by privacy laws and cannot readily connect you. Nevertheless, see what options they can offer.
- Social media can help too! Follow colleges and universities on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook (do you use Facebook anymore?), and TikTok to stay up to date on campus news and events, and experience the school's vibe. But we don't recommend starting your research with social media: sorry, Gen Zers.
- And remember, don't be afraid to reach out to the universities themselves with questions if—and only if—you've searched their website and haven't found the info you're looking for.
- Best of luck and happy researching!
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- Tagged: international students, how to research universities

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- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 18, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
- [International Students](#)
- [How to Research Universities Outside of the U.S.: Tips & Resources](#)
- [Ethan Sawyer](#)
- [May 18, 2021](#)
- [Student Resources](#)
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- [Mosaico Mentors](#)
- [How to Develop a Great University List](#)
- [horror stories](#)
- [a dynamic list of unaccredited institutions of higher education](#)
- [international foundation year](#)
- [National Association for College Admission Counseling \(NACAC\) Guide to International University Admission](#)
- [a guide with 4 additional countries to consider for admission](#)

- Common College Counseling Curriculum (C4)
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- European Union
- Finland
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Latvia
- Malaysia
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- Slovakia
- Sweden
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- New Zealand
- The Order of Things: What college rankings really tell us.
- Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be
-
- QS World University
-
- Times Higher Education World University Rankings

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- [Complete University Guide](#)
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- [College Beyond the States: European Schools That Will Change Your Life Without Breaking the Bank](#)
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