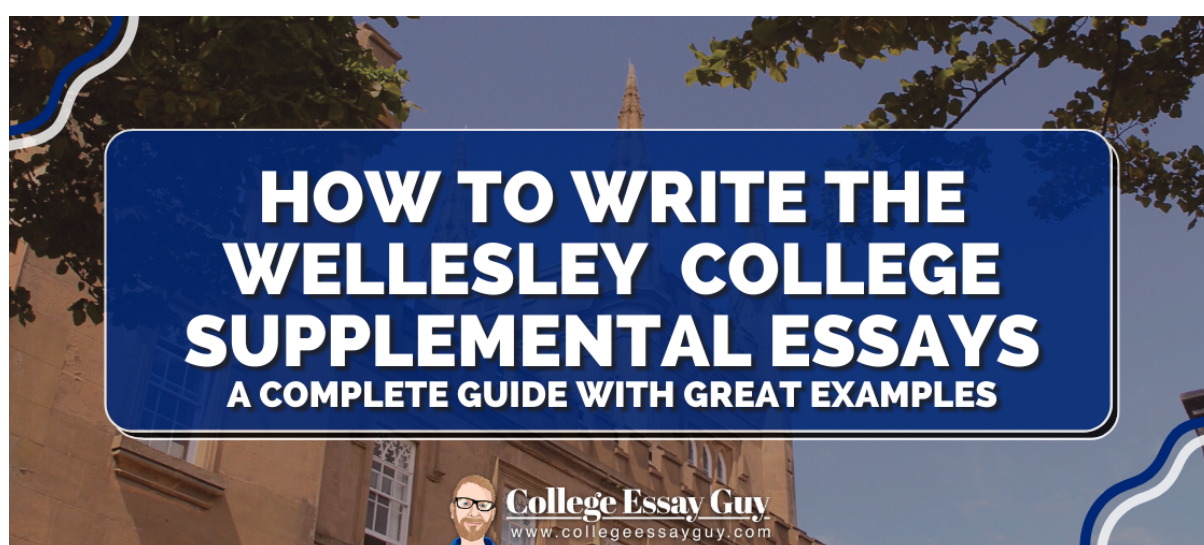


How to Write the Wellesley College Supplemental Essay: Examples + Guide 2022/2023



Wellesley College is one of the best colleges in the country, boasting trailblazing alumni like Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright. Its academically rigorous environment is complemented by an emphasis on collaboration and discourse among the strong, independent, driven, female-identifying students populating its campus. If this tight-knit and self-driven sisterhood appeals to you, we have some tips on how to approach Wellesley's supplemental essay prompt.

But before we dive into the prompt, check out Wellesley's website to get a better sense of what it's looking for. You'll find an extensive, by-the-numbers look at Wellesley's offerings, from enrollment and tuition statistics to student life and financial aid information, on its [Common Data Set](#). For insights into its values, read [its mission statement](#) to learn more about how the school envisions its role and how it wants to grow and evolve.

WHAT IS THE WELLESLEY COLLEGE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT?

WELLESLEY COLLEGE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #1

When choosing a college community, you are choosing a place where you believe that you can live, learn, and flourish. Generations of inspiring women have thrived in the Wellesley community, and we want to know what aspects of this community inspire you to consider Wellesley. We know that there are more than 100 reasons to choose Wellesley, but the “Wellesley 100” is a good place to start. Visit [The Wellesley 100](#) and let us know, in two well-developed paragraphs, which two items most attract, inspire, or energize you and why. (Not-so-secret tip: The “why” matters to us.) (250-400 words)

HOW TO WRITE THE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT FOR WELLESLEY COLLEGE

HOW TO WRITE WELLESLEY SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #1

When choosing a college community, you are choosing a place where you believe that you can live, learn, and flourish. Generations of inspiring women have thrived in the Wellesley community, and we want to know what aspects of this community inspire you to consider Wellesley. We know that there are more than 100 reasons to choose Wellesley, but the “Wellesley 100” is a good place to start. Visit [The Wellesley 100](#) and let us know, in two well-developed paragraphs, which two items most attract, inspire, or energize you and why. (Not-so-secret tip: The “why” matters to us.) (250-400 words)

This prompt is your classic “Why us?” essay, with a couple of Wellesley-specific details thrown in. Unlike the more typical “Why us?” essay, this prompt actually gives you a list of reasons to choose from by linking to the Wellesley 100. Note that school officials also ask that your essay be two paragraphs long, so they clearly want you to use one paragraph to discuss each reason that appeals to you, choosing from the list they’ve provided. This isn’t the time to try to make a statement by writing 10 small 2-3 sentence paragraphs about a bunch of different reasons you want to go to Wellesley. And we’d advise against trying to come up with a reason that’s not on the list.

That said, don’t let the two-paragraph format or the Wellesley 100 list make you feel like your essay will automatically blend in. Hundreds of applicants could choose #35 of the Wellesley 100 (Acorns) and have totally different reasons for why it appeals to them. The important part of your essay is not *what* you choose

but *why* you connect to it. The best essays make interesting and uncommon connections between items on the list and your own values/life experiences. If you maybe have a broader sense of your values, but haven't spent time specifically naming them, try our quick brainstorming [Values Exercise](#).

One more tip! Even though you can only choose two reasons, don't let that limit you to only talking about two things that Wellesley has to offer. There are a lot of ways that Wellesley resources connect and intersect, so use your choices as jumping off points rather than as strict limits on what you can talk about (more tips on that later).

And take that "have fun with this" piece of advice to heart—meaning, use colorful details and specifics to show your enthusiasm for Wellesley. We'll show you what that looks like in the analyses below.

For more general tips about writing "Why Us?" essays, we recommend checking out this [complete guide on how to write the "Why us?" essay](#) and paying close attention to the "Why Cornell" and "Why Penn" examples, which are our favorites. If you're pressed for time, here's the SparkNotes version of how to write the Wellesley "Why us?" essay:

Spend 1 hr+ researching 10+ reasons why Wellesley might be a great fit for you (ideally 3-5 of the reasons will be unique to Wellesley *and* connect back to you).

Make a copy of [this chart](#) to map out your college research.

Create an outline for your essays based on either Approach 1, 2 (recommended), or 3 in the full guide above.

Write a first draft!

As you write, try to avoid these common mistakes:

Six Common Mistakes Students Make on "Why Us?" Essays

Mistake #1: Writing about the school's size, location, reputation, weather, or ranking

Mistake #2: Simply using emotional language to demonstrate fit

Mistake #3: Screwing up the mascot, stadium, team colors, or names of any important people or places on campus

Mistake #4: Parroting the brochures or website language

Mistake #5: Describing traditions the school is well-known for

Mistake #6: Thinking of this as only a "why them" essay

Here's a great example essay:

Example 1:

10. The neuroscience major

Springtime. My backyard bursts in a flame of color—clematis, lilacs, and Black-eyed susans blooming, and a garden patch with tomatoes, cucumbers, strawberries, and watermelons. There was never a time when I was not cultivating the gardens, working to make sure they were healthy. I worked to preserve life in other ways too, investing my time in research and innovation, and I believe Wellesley provides the ideal environment for me to continue sustaining life and growth. I am drawn to the unique opportunity for me to spark growth through the neuroscience major. I hope to work with Dr. Mike Wiest on analyzing how organisms indicate their perception of ideas and events. I am fascinated by the study of how organisms indicate perception physically versus how their neurons signal during perception. I would also love to work in the Beltz lab, perhaps performing detailed research on projects relating to subjects such as the hypothalamic neurogenic activity in organisms. My aim is to one day have discovered the unknown biomarker that will signal the onset of Parkinson's Disease and give patients more time to counter and slow down its symptoms. I am also excited by the Magnetic Resonance Micro-Imaging Facility with the Micro-MRI accessory that is even accessible to me as an undergraduate and will provide me the opportunity to develop vital skills with advanced technology before entering a career in medicine.

72. Flora and Fauna

Since I was four years old, visiting botanical gardens has been an invigorating experience for me. I have explored every butterfly garden, lake, and hiking trail near my house, and vacations have led me to places like Yellowstone and Acadia National Park. I am drawn to Wellesley's work in promoting the survival of different plant and animal species through its establishment of the Alexandra Botanic Gardens, the H.H. Hunnel Arboretum, and the Margaret C. Ferguson Greenhouses. Places like these entice me as both a photographer and a biologist. Having photographed dozens of wildflowers, I find that many of them play a role in the medicinal world. For example, one of the first specimens I ever recorded was the Indian paintbrush, a vibrant flower that had the ability to both treat rheumatism

and strengthen the immune system. Some flowers carry properties that surpass even those of developed medication. I hope to continue this at Wellesley, as I love encouraging the people around me to see the beauty in interacting with the environment. Because Wellesley's efforts are centered upon sustaining life and engaging people with the natural world, it will undoubtedly become a second home for me.

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Tips + Analysis

Balance personal and academic interests. This student does a great job of choosing items off the Wellesley 100 that highlight a broad sense of curiosity. Her first paragraph on neuroscience shows her clear passion for the subject. She makes it clear she's done her research by referencing specific professors, topics, and labs of interest. Second, she discusses her interest in the natural world, citing both her adventures before coming to college and the natural spaces she'd like to explore while at Wellesley. Although her interests in neuroscience and art/nature are clearly connected, they demonstrate how nuanced and multi-dimensional she is. Keep this in mind as you choose from the list. Try to find two reasons that overlap but are clearly distinct from each other. Given that this is the only supplemental prompt, try to elaborate as much as possible on details that matter to you. See each reason as an opportunity to say more rather than rehash what the reader can already glean from other areas of your application (like your Common App personal statement or Activities List).

Connect to Wellesley-specific resources. This applicant has clearly done her research. She doesn't just stop at the Wellesley 100; she dives deeper by making connections to other resources she's found on her own. Notice how, in each paragraph, she sticks to a similar structure. She explains the origin of her interests, touches on how Wellesley could help her further this interest, and expands upon how and why she'd make the most of the college's resources. This is a great structural approach because it shows us that she a) cares enough to delve into the details and b) has a clear sense of tangible ways her college experience would mesh with and enhance what she's already got going on. Remember, this isn't just a "why them" essay; the "Why us?" = "why you" + "why them," so make sure to incorporate both as much as you can.

Clarify your reasons. This essay explicitly lists above each paragraph the student's two reasons of choice, along with the number from the Wellesley 100 list, to be super clear. This is nice because it doesn't waste a lot of

words and avoids confusing the reader, but it isn't a must. If you want to be more subtle about it, that's okay too. You can incorporate the reason into each paragraph if that feels more natural. Just be sure to be very clear regarding what Wellesley reasons you're focusing on while not spending too much of your word budget, as you want to spend the bulk of your essay elaborating on why you chose them, and their connections to you.

Here's another great example to check out:

Example 2:

I embody two souls: an untamed businesswoman and her introverted companion. I'm one of those people who talks to strangers at auctions for hours, but can't explain her feelings to friends. At the same time, I'm a leader in my own little universe: daughter, sister, self-reliant real estate magnate (so I'd like to think). In Wellesley, I see similar dichotomies: a campus that's its own alternate universe in one of America's most populated metropolitan areas; classic, but grounded in progressivism; a woman's college that empowers its students intellectually. At Wellesley, this confident entrepreneur who's still looking for her voice will thrive on competition. Business is my forte and math is my happy place. I look forward to designing an individualized major that focuses on Linguistics and Mathematics with the help of an all women community that cultivates confidence. My future peers at Wellesley's liberal, quirky campus also inspire me to spend the next four years of my life to get to know their euphoric, savvy selves while exploring The Vil as an extension to the classroom, a decisive factor in my choice to attend Wellesley.

Moreover, Wellesley's charismatic campus brings out my outdoorsy, intrepid fanaticism, and I know I'll discover the person I'm bound to become one day at Wellesley. My future is also firmly tied to my identity as a Muslim woman and my commitment to my faith. As I publicly become the person I am in private, I can see myself as a leader in Al-Muslimat, SCOOP, or Amnesty International. I also look forward to creating collaborative spaces with other like-minded folks in my "Economics of Food" club. Speaking of which, I've been a foodie since childhood, passionately consuming Mauritian Gato Pima, chicken feet, and the Bangladeshi delicacy Sweet Shemai. At Wellesley, I can begin my journey of becoming a great restaurant maven with classes like "The Ethics of Eating," and "Topics in Food and Environment." As a restaurateur and polyglot who loves to travel, I hope to add three or four languages to my arsenal, starting with "Intermediate Spanish," "ITAS 324: The Literature of Rights," and "French Language, Literatures, and Cultures." And someday, in addition to running my Bengali/French/Italian fusion restaurants, I

will become the next Naseem Dahod, my alumni inspiration, as I fight to break the glass ceiling for the next generation of ambitious young women, a journey I started at Wellesley. #FutureWellesleyWoman

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Tips + Analysis

Emphasize female power where appropriate. Having a strong sisterhood of powerful women is a huge part of the Wellesley ethos. This is often a big reason why people choose to apply, given that it's an all-women school. Note how this applicant does a great job of bringing up the unique aspects of her female identity in both paragraphs. In her first paragraph, she discusses the different roles she plays in the world around her ("an untamed businesswoman and her introverted companion" as well as "daughter, sister, self-reliant real estate magnate"). She stays humble but also strongly reinforces her place as a woman with impressive career goals and a strong sense of duty. In the second paragraph, she spends time discussing her cultural background and religious beliefs. She ultimately concludes this paragraph with a reassertion of her power as an "ambitious young woman." If you also plan to emphasize your appreciation for Wellesley's all-female population, try to do so in a way that's distinctive and stands out. Don't just say you like the idea of being in an all-female student body—explain why!

Don't be afraid to dream big. This applicant clearly has a lot of big dreams for her future. She wants to be a real estate magnate, a food entrepreneur, a religious leader, and so much more. There's a lot going on in these paragraphs, but that's what makes her essay so exciting. She's clearly a curious person who has a lot of overlapping interests. Her genuine enthusiasm comes through in the pacing and content of her response. Don't be afraid to share all the exciting things you feel you could do in the future. Don't shy away from opportunities or resources that may seem out of reach. This student does a great job of balancing humility with confidence in her own abilities. Nerd out a little bit here if you want. This essay isn't a commitment to accomplish every goal on your list. It's primarily a chance to show you care and are thinking about opportunities at a deeper level. That said, if you instead have one or two big dreams, or you're still sorting through what you want to do for a career, that's ok too. This is a nice-to-have, not a have-to-have.

Use as many personal details as you can. If you pick something like Wellesley's outdoor campus as your reason for wanting to attend, don't just talk about the campus for the whole paragraph. This student finds a way to

weave the campus into a whole set of other related reasons she likes Wellesley. She's able to seamlessly discuss her religious faith, foodie sensibilities, entrepreneurial spirit, and progressive political activism in that second paragraph. What starts off as a simple and relatively basic reason for wanting to attend Wellesley quickly becomes much more nuanced and interesting. You can do the same in your essay by working in lots of details about yourself. This example shows how you can write a short essay and still pack a big punch.