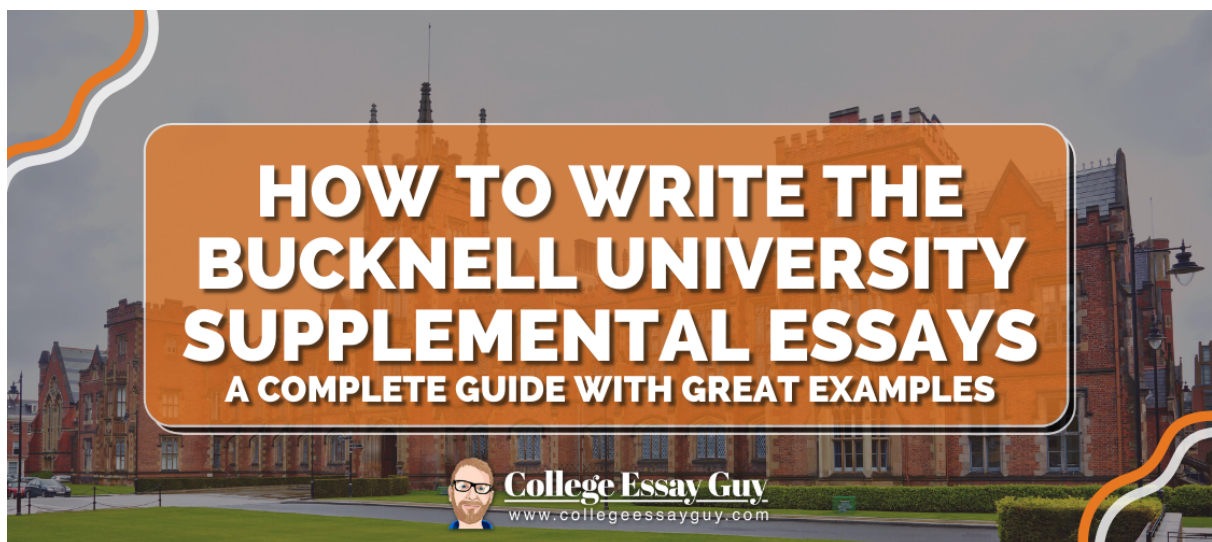


# How to Write the Bucknell University Supplemental Essay: Examples + Guide 2022/2023



If you're looking for a university that truly believes in education for all, Bucknell's your school. University officials are rightfully proud of their long history of pushing the boundaries of education—opening the Female Institute in 1852, graduating Bucknell's first international student in 1864, and celebrating its first African American student's graduation in 1875—while using their liberal arts offerings to shape the world far beyond Lewisburg, Penn.

On campus, Bucknell focuses on developing critical thinkers—students who aren't reluctant to challenge the status quo, commit to intellectual exploration, and use their education to serve the common good while working toward justice and equality.

Want an even better sense of what Bucknell is looking for and how it's shaping tomorrow's leaders? You'll find an extensive, by-the-numbers look at Bucknell's

offerings, from enrollment, testing, and tuition statistics to student life and financial-aid information, on its [Common Data Set](#). To learn how the university plans to thrive in the coming decade, distinguish itself from its peers, and conquer today's (and tomorrow's) challenges in higher education, read [its most recent strategic plan](#), "The Plan for Bucknell 2025."

## WHAT IS THE BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT?

### PROMPT #1

*Please explain your interest in your first-choice major/undecided status and your second-choice major (should you opt to list one) and why you would choose Bucknell University to pursue your interest(s). (250 words)*

## HOW TO WRITE THE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT FOR BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

### HOW TO WRITE BUCKNELL SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #1

Please explain your interest in your first-choice major/undecided status and your second-choice major (should you opt to list one) and why you would choose Bucknell University to pursue your interest(s). (250 words)

Like good things that come in small packages, great essays can come from small word counts. But with just 250 words available to you for packing in content, you've got your work cut out for you. Fear not, aspiring Bucknell Bison. We've got just the strategy to help you crush this essay.

The good news about this prompt (besides the short word count) is that it's straightforward: If you've chosen a major, Bucknell wants to know why you've picked that field of interest. Undeclared? No problem. Admission officers still want to know more about your academic interests. And if you've shown an interest in a second major, here's your chance to elaborate on it.

Whatever field of study you choose to talk about, the big question you'll want to address is "why?" And, quite honestly, this is a *great* question to be asking—for both the essays and life in and after college.

This prompt is part “[Why Major](#)” and part “[Why us?](#)”—for full guides to those types of prompts, head to those links (where you’ll find a ton of examples). If you want a quick version for this prompt, it’s easier if you break the big question down into some smaller, more manageable ones, like:

What academic subjects have I enjoyed in high school? What did I like about them? How did I pursue them?

Were there any projects, personal experiences, internships, or extracurricular activities that excited me in high school and made me want to know more about a subject?

What question do I find myself contemplating often? How would I go about finding its answer?

What skill sets do I want to develop? How might I use those skills once I learn them?

What resources, research opportunities, or classes at Bucknell look interesting or exciting to me?

Which Bucknell professors would I like to work with or get to know better?

Here’s a great example of a prior-year Bucknell essay that addresses some of these bite-sized questions, with tips and analysis below for how you could take a similar approach, followed by a bonus sample (without analysis, but just to demonstrate a slightly different approach).

### **Example:**

*My love for chemistry started with nail polish. As a twelve-year-old girl, I loved its vibrant colors and glossy shine. I would research different methods of nail-painting, and one day I discovered a technique called water marbling. My eyes sparkled while watching the nail polish glide across water, and I was desperate to understand why it floated. To find an answer, I conducted tests with nail polish, dish soap, and toothpaste to see which of the additives would float.*

*My curiosity with chemistry continued through baking. Watching the yeast rise in my brioche dough left me puzzled. What was causing the loaf to grow? After some preliminary research, I ran to my 10th grade chemistry teacher and begged him to explain everything about yeast fermentation. Hearing his lesson on anaerobic respiration ignited the same sparkly eyes that my twelve-year-old nail polish obsessed self knew too well. From that moment on, I knew that chemistry was the right major for me.*

*At Bucknell University, I hope to fuel my new passion of biochemistry through the cutting edge facilities and inspiring professors. After taking biology and organic*

*chemistry this year, I've discovered that I enjoy studying human cells. I would love to continue my studies in Bucknell's technologically advanced labs, and to initiate research under Bucknell's biochemistry professors like Professor Rovnyak. With all of the enriching opportunities that Bucknell offers, I hope to have the best four years of my life inside and outside of a lab. (245 words)*

— — —

## Tips + Analysis

**Don't be afraid to be a little unconventional.** Have an unusual origin story for your educational interests? Let's hear it. Often, those make for strong starts to essays and are like a breath of fresh air to admission officers. This student chose to open her chemistry-focused essay with a novel story about nail polish and marbling instead of leading with her second paragraph—a far-more-common baking-as-a-chemistry-experiment anecdote.

**Go deep, not wide.** It might seem tempting to try to show off several different sides of your academic curiosity—majors and minors and concentrations, oh my! But with this short word count, instead, it probably makes more sense to choose to go deep and show several major-related interests and experiences. Through her focus on biochemistry as a major, this student showed her interest in experimentation, her love of learning, and a plan for the future.

**Not having a major is OK. Really.** We know the feeling: It's intimidating to respond to an essay that's asking you about your first *and* second majors, when you're still struggling with the pressure of selecting a first. Math. No, business. Wait, psychology. Breathe. It's perfectly fine (and entirely expected) to not know what you want to major in. Bucknell thinks so too, which is why "undecided status" is specifically included as an option in the prompt. College is a time for experimentation, and we expect you'll explore lots of new interests during your four years. So if you're not confident in your major (or even potential major), you can just as effectively discuss an academic area you're interested in learning more about. We'd bet you can't tell whether the student above is a confident biochemistry major or simply a student who enjoys testing her theories on the world around her. Either way, the essay works.

**Show how you fit together.** There's no one right answer in terms of how much you should focus on the backstory of how and why you became interested in an academic field, and how much "Why us?" detail you include—roughly half and half is fine, or you could lean more toward one than the other. But be sure to add some classes, programs, and professors

that are specific to Bucknell and that align with your interests and values. In this essay, the author uses her conclusion as a place to discuss what her college experience at Bucknell might look like, with a few specific details related to Bucknell. Showing curiosity and enthusiasm, she convinces us she's had solid past experiences and is well-prepared for her future.

Here's an example essay (written for UPenn, and thus over word count for Bucknell) that includes more "Why us?" details, just so you can see a different balance and level of specificity.

**Bonus example essay:**

*In essence, I am a woman of two personas: the first, a young Muslim determined to combat government corruption and the second, an aspiring, unbounded traveler and global citizen whose identity transcends her nationality. Whether it's justifying my choice to don the hijab or debating over the global refugee crisis, politics has always stood at the center of who I am.*

*Set on advancing change within my own community, I joined the NJ Help Center. There I worked with immigrant families, translating applications for housing aid and health insurance while immersing myself in the stories of their escapes from war-torn countries and crippling economies. It wasn't until I came across it myself did these extraordinary tales become a striking reality.*

*Through my travels, a fascination with international studies and human rights sparked. After witnessing the maltreatment of migrant workers in the Middle East, I found my calling: laborers left at sunrise in desert mountains with nothing but a broom, a bottle of water, and a single meal to last them the day. How is that humane?*

*At Penn, these are the kinds of questions I want to pursue in courses like Professor Simmons' International Law. But I don't just want to ask questions, I want to understand the complexities of attaining much needed innovations within our complicated society. I look forward to delving into topics ranging from reproductive rights to genocide prevention and even prison reform. In LGST 224, I'll figure out the effects of globalization on civil liberties. I believe that Penn will provide me a platform to speak on issues within our very own communities through initiatives like SWAIR, where I can work alongside my peers to advocate for immigrants in the wider Philadelphia area. At the Penn International Development Conference, I can gain knowledge on 21st century issues impeding worldwide development through speakers from the US Department of State, World Bank, and more.*

*But I would be incomplete if I didn't also study linguistics at Penn. Growing up, language played a key role within my life. Surrounded by a diverse group of individuals, I was exposed to Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Korean, Arabic, Pashto, and French. I am intrigued to not only learn new languages but to discover their roots, historical context, their properties, and influence they have on society.*

*And some day, in addition to being a world voyager and language enthusiast, I will become the first hijabi United States Ambassador to the United Nations, a journey I embarked on at Penn.*