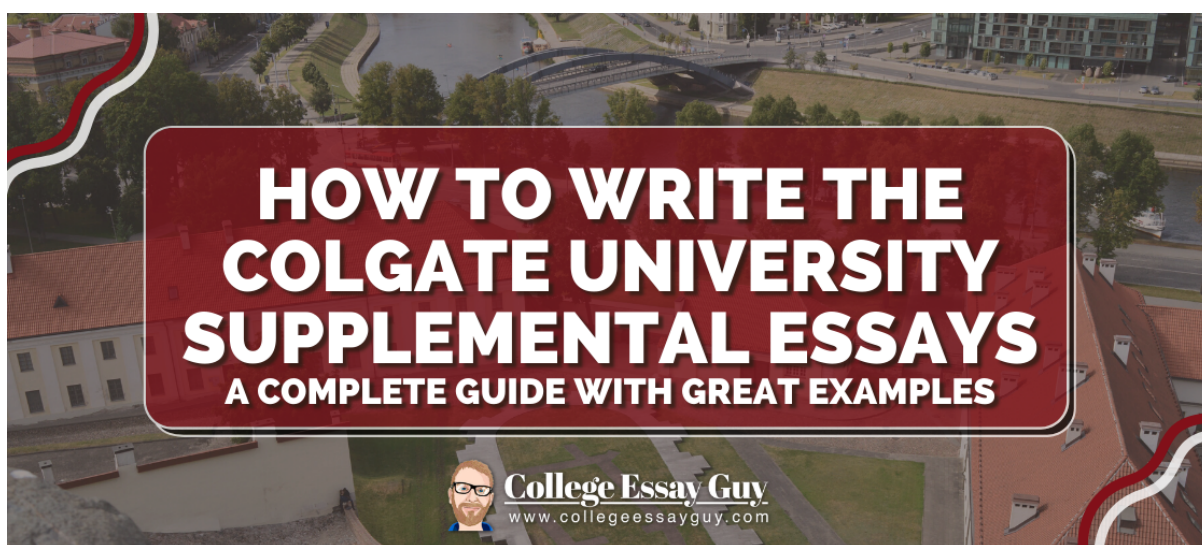


How to Write the Colgate Supplemental Essays: Examples + Guide 2022/2023



A small liberal arts college with a strong collegiate spirit and a faithful network of alumni, Colgate University is a popular option for students with diverse interests and a longing for that “college atmosphere”—something Colgate itself takes pride in (peep the “traditions” section of the college site for a full rundown of “Colgate Songs” you’ll have memorized by the end of orientation).

Want to get a better sense of what Colgate is looking for in its supplemental essay prompts?

You’ll find an extensive, by-the-numbers look at its offerings, from enrollment and tuition statistics to student life and financial aid information, on its [Common Data Set](#). For deep insights into how this private liberal arts college envisions its role and how it wants to grow and evolve, read its [academic strategic plan](#). Reading through this will give you a strong idea of what Colgate values.

Note: If you’re applying directly through Colgate’s application portal, you’ll notice these prompts are all listed as optional. We recommend you answer the prompts,

though! After all, don't you want another opportunity to display your skills, qualities, values, and interests to a school you love? (And note to folks applying to Colgate via Common App—you won't see these prompts at all unless you select specific majors)

WHAT ARE THE COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPTS?

COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #1

On Colgate's campus, students engage with individuals from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, and perspectives during the course of their educational and social experiences. In 200-250 words, please share the benefits you see in engaging with a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff as part of your Colgate experience.

COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #2

Colgate students immerse themselves in social and intellectual pursuits that inspire them. Tell us in 200-250 words what inspires you and why you want to pursue that at Colgate.

COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #3

Please complete the following so we can learn a bit more about you. Each response should be no more than 13 words.

- 1. I am fascinated by*
- 2. My favorite book, movie, or television show is...*
- 3. My role model is...*
- 4. In the future, I hope to ...*
- 5. One historical figure I would like to meet is...*
- 6. My favorite food is...*
- 7. One thing I would change is...*
- 8. I am most challenged by...*
- 9. My favorite place is...*
- 10. I am drawn to Colgate University because...*

HOW TO WRITE EACH SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT FOR COLGATE

HOW TO WRITE COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #1

On Colgate's campus, students engage with individuals from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, and perspectives during the course of their educational and social experiences. In 200-250 words, please share the benefits you see in engaging with a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff as part of your Colgate experience.

Writing a "diversity essay" can be challenging, so let's start with a few definitions.

"Diversity" refers to a group that possesses a wide range of traits and characteristics. Diversity can be defined along lines of culture, race, class, ethnic background, religion, age, marital status, ability, citizenship, sex, gender, or sexual orientation (and really, the infinite number of ways we are different). In essence, "diversity" is about representation. Colgate wants its student body to be representative of all people.

"Inclusion" is defined as the social norms, customs, and behaviors that welcome people from many walks of life. Think about the clothes people wear and the way they talk. Think about the types of food people eat, what music they listen to, and what holidays they celebrate. Looking deeper, inclusion refers to the way institutions permit or punish certain groups for certain behaviors.

In this way, inclusion takes things one step further than diversity. Colgate is saying that it's not enough to just *have* students from varying backgrounds on campus; it wants to make sure the culture of the campus actually works for everyone, and its admission officials want to know how you'll be a part of it.

Let's face it—in the United States, most of our communities haven't been inclusive. Considering how you participate in or fight against oppressive systems is a lifelong process. Here are a few more tips along these lines:

Don't assume that "difference" only refers to race or social class.

There are so many ways to define "difference." Consider all the communities you're a part of and all the ways they are different before picking a topic. This doesn't mean you can't write about race or class—and if either speaks to you, you should—but you may want to explore other aspects of difference before immediately writing about those. This is especially true if your writing about race or class would fall into any of the clichés described below.

Consider how your school or community has (or hasn't) encouraged diversity and inclusion.

Does the population of your school match the population of your town or city? What kinds of music are played at community events? In school? What types of food are available? Does your community celebrate holidays for many religions and cultures? Does your community celebrate PRIDE? What holidays get time off from work or school? Does your community have a "poor" or "bad" part of town? How are the people living there different? Are they treated differently?

Avoid stereotyping.

Not all black people act one way. Not all gay people look or act like the folks on *Queer Eye*. Not all older people are "angry boomers," and not all people with disabilities think or feel the same way about their disability. Be considerate in the way you describe individuals within these groups, especially if you're a person of privilege. Address any and all nuance to a person or group's experience.

Avoid privilege clichés.

A common essay on diversity/privilege goes something like this: The author passes someone on the street. They notice the person, whose skin is darker than theirs, wears worn-out shoes (or no shoes at all). The author describes a mix of shame and gratitude for their privileged position. They either give the person food or money (which feels good, but also bad because they want to do more) or neglect to give the person food or money (and they just feel bad). These kinds of stories have several problems:

Because the interaction has been so minimal, compelling insights are unlikely to occur. As a result, these essays often end up expressing a common theme along the lines of "I realized I have so much to be grateful for."

Realizing privilege in an essay runs the risk of showcasing unflattering or downright negative qualities like naïveté and ignorance.

This applies to the typical "mission trip" essay, where someone from privilege travels to a country and meets folks who come from relatively less privilege, and they build a house/share a meal/are welcomed into their homes and, lo and behold, their lives change. If you're a white person, be aware of posing yourself as the "white savior." While these essays, in many cases, describe awesome moments in your growth as a person, they have become extremely common in the

college admission world. We'd recommend avoiding them unless you can identify an insight that is uncommon.

Instead, consider writing about a person or group you have spent time with and know relatively well.

Tips for Brainstorming the “Diversity” Essay

Can you think of a situation or activity where you collaborated with people who are different from you?

If so, what did you do together? What kinds of problems did you solve? Here's a [brainstorm chart](#).

Can you write about someone you've known for a while?

If so, you may find that you have a lot more to say than if you write about someone you met once.

Pick a structure: narrative (for a challenge-based essay) or montage (if you're not describing a challenge)

If you *are* writing about a challenge in your essay, follow these steps for the Narrative Structure:

- Make sure the challenge/question of the essay is clear and compelling.

- Consider using this structure:

- Challenge(s)

- What I/we did about it

- What I/we learned

If you *are not* writing about a challenge in your essay, follow these steps for the Montage Structure:

- Use the chart above to generate ideas for your essay.

- Pay special attention to the “What I Learned” column and use the [Values Exercise](#) to identify “so what” moments of insight that are somewhat uncommon.

4. Make sure the essay is primarily about you. Either: how your perspective changed, how your values changed/developed, or, ideally, both.

Now, let's explore an example (written for a slightly different version of this Colgate prompt), and why it works.

Example 1:

When I joined the Huntsville Youth Commission, a group of students chosen to represent youth interests within local government, I met Jack. Jack told me his cousin's body had been stuffed into the trunk of a car after he was killed by a gang. After that, my notion of normal would never be the same.

A melting pot of ideologies, skins, socio-economic classes, faiths, and educations, the HYC is a unique collaborative enterprise. Each member adds to our community's network of stories, that weave, bump, and diverge in unexpected ways. Jack talked about his cousin's broken body, Witnessa educated us about "food deserts," supervisor Evelyn Scott explained that girls get ten-day school suspensions for simply stepping on another student's sneakers, and I shared how my family's blending of Jewish tradition and Chinese culture bridges disparate worlds. As a person who was born in Tokyo, lived in London, and grew up in the South, I realize difference doesn't have to be an obstacle to understanding. My ability to listen empathetically helped us envision multifaceted solutions to issues facing 21st-century youth.

My experience in this space of affirmation and engagement has made me a more thoughtful person and listener. I want to continue this effort and be the woman who both expands perspectives and takes action after hearing people's stories. Reconciling disparate lifestyles and backgrounds in the Commission has prepared me to become a compassionate leader, eager to both expand perspectives and take collaborative action.

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Tips + Analysis

Show collaborative work done across differences rather than simply describing a single act to help a single person. This author didn't just meet a person different from her and then do a single thing. She's part of a group of diverse young people working together to "envision multifaceted solutions to issues facing 21st century youth." This helps us see that she's acting from a place of empathy and collaboration, not sympathy and guilt.

Focus less on the interaction with someone who is different and more on what was done to spark change. Note that this essay isn't about the conversation with Jack; it's about the interactions among group members that led to this conversation and the work they're doing together.

Provide specific take-aways. This author mentions empathic listening, envisioning solutions—skills that will serve her well at Colgate and as a representative of Colgate after she graduates.

Show what those take-aways look like in action at Colgate. This student wants to be a “compassionate leader” who converts stories and perspectives into “collaborative action.” Weaving values of leadership, empathy, and activism into her diversity essay projects her as a valuable member of the Colgate community.

Here’s an example essay in which the author defines “diversity” in a different way.

Colgate Essay Example: Is Josh okay?

My whole family is sitting around the living room on a lazy Sunday afternoon when we suddenly hear sirens. Lots of sirens. Everyone stops. My dad peers out the window, trying to get a glimpse of the highway. My mom gets up and goes to the phone. After a few stressful rings, the person on the other line answers. My mom bursts out, “Is Josh ok?”

Josh is my fourteen year old cousin, and he lives less than a mile from my house. Whenever we hear sirens, my mom will give their house a call or shoot my aunt a text, just in case. Josh was born with a syndrome which affected the formation of the bones of his head and face. As a result, his hearing, vision, breathing and some of his brain structures are compromised. He’s unable to do athletics, his tracheostomy always provides a possibility of disaster, and an unwieldy head brace used to grace his head.

Living so close to Josh, we have had the opportunity to interact daily. We go on vacations together, I drive Josh to school twice a week, at every holiday we either go down to their house or they come up to my family’s house, we play wiffle ball in the yard behind their house, and one of my favorite activities is board games with him—Risk, Monopoly, Settlers of Catan, we play it all. Last Christmas, there were endless laughs when, prompted by our fathers’ nostalgia, we constructed a slot car track and raced those miniature cars around tight turns and short straightaways. This game was perfect for Josh, as he could stay in a comfortable seat and still experience speed and excitement that he is usually barred from.

It goes without saying that Josh has not had an easy childhood. He has had to fight for his life in the hospital when his peers were learning how to multiply and divide in school or playing capture the flag on the beach. A large portion of his childhood has been arbitrarily taken from him. That is most obviously unfair.

At our high school, I see Josh every day walking from second period to third period, and every day I say hello and have a small conversation with him. One day I was walking with a few of my friends when I stopped to talk with him. During the

conversation, I made a little joke at Josh's expense. It wasn't at all relating to his disability, but to something completely independent of that—specifically, his Instagram habits. My friends were horrified, and chastised me as they saw appropriate.

My friends didn't understand. He is not some extremely delicate dandelion who falls apart at every breath that causes a slightly adverse situation. Everywhere he goes, he's the most popular guy in the room; people flock to him, surround him, pity him, overwhelm him. All Josh wants is to be treated like any other person. He is my cousin, and he is my friend, so I treat him as such. We joke, we make fun of each other, just as any other two friends do.

Josh has proved to me that people with disabilities are exactly that—people. As if that needed proving. But it's something that is too easily forgotten. It's hard to see anything except the handicap. A person's wheelchair or white cane inevitably trumps any other characteristic. It's a natural human reaction, but it too often leads to the dehumanizing of disabled people. One of my favorite people on Earth has lived a life of disability. And he plays a mean game of Monopoly.

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Tips + Analysis

If possible, describe someone you know relatively well. This can help you avoid some of the clichés mentioned above. And while this may not be possible for everyone, here's something anyone can do ...

Include at least one insight that is somewhat uncommon. Re-read the second to last paragraph to see how the author shared an uncommon insight. How can you do this? Keep asking yourself "so what?" until you arrive at something surprising.

Some Tips for Brainstorming the "Diversity" Essay

1. Can you think of a situation or activity where you collaborated with people who are different from you? If so, what did you do together? What kinds of problems did you solve? Here's a brainstorm chart:

Activity: [Name it here]				
WHAT WE DID	PROBLEMS WE ADDRESSED	LESSONS LEARNED/ SKILLS I GAINED	IMPACT WE HAD	HOW I APPLIED WHAT I LEARNED

<p>The key here is active verbs.</p> <p>Tip: Use the “Epic List of Activities List Verbs”</p>	<p>These problems could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal - Family - Local - Community - School - State-level - National - Global 	<p>Tip: Use the Values Exercise for this!</p>	<p>This is super important.</p> <p>Tip: If possible, use numbers and actual quotes to support your bullet points.</p>	<p>How did you apply lessons from the activity *beyond* the activity itself?</p> <p>See examples below.</p>
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2. Can you write about someone you’ve known for a while?

If so, you may find that you have a lot more to say than if you write about someone you met once.

3. Pick a structure: narrative (for a challenge-based essay) or montage (if you’re not describing a challenge)

If you *are* writing about a challenge in your essay, follow these steps for the Narrative Structure:

- A. Make sure the challenge/question of the essay is clear and compelling.
- B. Consider using this structure:
 - a. Challenge(s)
 - b. What I/we did about it
 - c. What I/we learned

If you *are not* writing about a challenge in your essay, follow these steps for the Montage Structure:

- A. Use the chart above to generate ideas for your essay.
- B. Pay special attention to the “What I Learned” column and use the **Values Exercise** to identify “so what” moments of insight that are somewhat uncommon.

4. Make sure the essay is primarily about you. Either: how your perspective changed, how your values changed/developed, or, ideally, both.

Now, let’s explore an example (written for a slightly different version of this Colgate prompt), and why it works.

On Colgate's campus, students engage with individuals from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, and perspectives during the course of their educational and social experiences. In 200-250 words, please share the benefits you see in engaging with a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff as part of your Colgate experience.

Example 1

You wouldn't think an American Asian Affinity Space would be diverse, after all its whole premise is centered around one specific identity. However, members of the affinity space at my high school come from several different grades, genders and ethnicities. The group included a sophomore from China, a junior from Pakistan, and members from Korea, Japan, and even Israel. We each had unique stories of living as an Asian-American, yet, we had all chosen to come to this affinity group. As we spent time together, we were able to find shared experiences, like our parents preparing packed lunches for us from our country and being too embarrassed to bring them to school. Whether eating humbow or biryani, we all knew what it was like to feel out of place.

My work with the AAAS got me thinking about what diversity can look like, and what it means to embrace diversity. On the one hand, you can find diversity even when people appear to be alike. By exploring our differences, we can continue learning from each other even when it seems we have shared backgrounds and values. At the same time, people who seem really different may have shared human experiences, feeling like the "other" or being embarrassed by their parents, that can bring them together. Moving forward, I want to learn about people's differences, hearing their stories and learning about their backgrounds while also creating spaces for people to have shared experiences that bring people together.

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Tips + Analysis

Get concrete and specific. The phrasing of the prompt—“*the benefits you see in engaging with a diverse body of students, faculty, and staff as part of your Colgate experience*”—might tempt some students to write using entirely hypothetical language, discussing why diversity in college seems generally like a good thing. We think this would probably lead to weaker writing (it's hard to write effectively about things that might occur). In the example above, the author does a nice job pointing out the diversity within a broader identity, and discussing some of their different and shared experiences.

Share why. As in, why have these experiences mattered to you? What are the lessons that you've drawn from your experiences of engaging with diverse groups of people? Things like are powerful: *"[b]y exploring our differences, we can continue learning from each other even when it seems we have shared backgrounds and values"* and *"[a]t the same time, people who seem really different may have shared human experiences, feeling like the "other" or being embarrassed by their parents, that can bring them together."* Doing this in your own essays can help your reader understand some of the insight you've gained regarding how diversity can shape and benefit a campus community.

Maybe show how you'll contribute to Colgate. While the prompt doesn't explicitly ask you to, it can be nice in an essay like this to show specific ways that, because of and linked to your past experiences with a diverse community, you want to engage with the school's community. One thing this student could have done, for example, is find an organization or two at Colgate that they're interested in connecting with that will allow them to actively contribute to Colgate's diversity.

Here's another sample essay, written by Lislye Ferreira, just so you can see a slightly different approach:

What demonstrates my commitment to inclusion and diversity is not an experience but a journey. In my school, we have a group made to support LGBTQ+ members in our community and the neighborhood ones. As the female leader of the group since 10th grade, we have made incredible things for students that did not have any support from their parents or school.

We have a tradition to go to schools around our community to promote discussions about diversity, seeking to help students that are passing through the difficult process of finding out their sexuality. During the visits, I try to offer the support that I did not have access to, and above all try to promote a healthy discussion about the LGBT community topics. Every time that we go into the schools, we end up helping many more people than we thought we could and learning amazing life lessons. In the hard cases, we end up finding centers housing LGBT people who have been expelled from their homes, and finding a home for them.

In our school, we have the "Diversity Week" where I contact the "Moms for the Diversity", a group with LGBTQ+ children, and bring them to school to talk about acceptance, trying to offer the family support that some of them can not have at home. Doing this, I work to offer better support for the students and offer the

possibility to find friends that are part of the community and make them feel accepted in the worst of the cases, at least at school.

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HOW TO WRITE COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #2

Colgate students immerse themselves in social and intellectual pursuits that inspire them. Tell us in 200-250 words what inspires you and why you want to pursue that at Colgate.

This is a combo “Why Major” and “Why us?” essay, but with a smaller word budget than that of some other schools. For a full “[Why Major](#)” guide, head there, and [here’s a complete guide on how to write the “Why us?” essay](#). Read through it and pay close attention to the “Why Cornell” and “Why Penn” examples (generally our favorites). This essay will be shorter than those examples, but you should be able to weave in at least 4-8 reasons why you and Colgate will be a great match.

Action Items:

Reflect on what you want out of your college experience. Not sure? Spend 10 minutes on [Corsava](#) and find out. Collect those insights using [this chart](#). Identifying specific or niche interests and needs will help you find equally specific resources at Colgate and make your “we’re a perfect match” case (see more on this in the “complete guide” link above) more compelling. Spend at least an hour researching 10+ reasons why Colgate might be a great fit for you, mapping them out in the third column of the chart.

Remember: The best “Why us?” essays don’t simply celebrate how “x” school is the GREATEST SCHOOL OF ALL TIME. They’re more an explanation of why you and the school are the perfect match. Make sure to connect each of your ‘Gate examples to your goals and interests.

Create an outline based on either Approach 1, Approach 2 (recommended), or Approach 3 (as explained in the [“Why us?” guide](#)).

Note that this essay was written for an older prompt and is a bit longer than the one you’ll need to write.

Example 2:

As an Asian-American feminist with an interest in the intersectional representation of both identities in literature, as well as a commitment to service, I feel that

Colgate is a strong fit where I can contribute to the college and surrounding communities.

I want to explore how women are represented in multiple genres and cultures, and hope to study more progressive texts through the lens of how representation in literature reflects or drives the political climate it is written in. A lit class such as "Searching for Home in South Asian Literatures: Gender, Nation, Narration" will let me study the intersection between gender and Asian culture, something I am thoughtful about in my own life.

I believe in the power of civil discourse to create positive change. Colgate's Brown Bag series provides the opportunity for me to hear from speakers at the Center for Women's Studies so I can learn more about how women's representation has changed and how it can be improved. At Colgate, student voices are an essential part of campus discourse, TableTalk will allow me to hear opinions of other students and share my own about current events.

I am also intrigued by local and international service opportunities. The Colgate Hunger Outreach Program lets me interact directly with the people I am helping in the Madison County community.

At Colgate, I can build on my experiences in women's studies, literature, student discourse, and service work increasing my ability to have an impact on women's rights and helping the underprivileged.

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Tips + Analysis:

Share an organizing theme at the start. What kind of learner, citizen, scientist, educator, etc., do you want to be when you leave Colgate? This student makes it clear she wants to be a student who studies the intersection of gender and Asian-American culture. Making a similar statement at the start of your essay can give the rest of your 250-word supplement focus and structure. Want to be a global citizen? Highlight resources that connect Colgate to the rest of the world. Want to be a creative problem-solver in service of others? Highlight service opportunities, opportunities to push your creative boundaries, and professors who will help hone a sharp, critical mind.

Include a range of examples. This student plans to get analytical in "Searching for Home in South Asian Literatures," get inspired at the Center for Women's Studies, get discursive at TableTalk, and get practical at the

Hunger Outreach Program. In the prompt, Colgate emphasizes the fact that it's a liberal arts and sciences college, so take its lead and pitch yourself as a well-rounded contributor with a variety of interests.

Specifics, specifics, specifics. This student packs her essay with examples that demonstrate she has done her school research. Check out the types of specifics she offers (and the kinds of things you can include in your essay):

Classes: This student names *Searching for Home in South Asian Literatures: Gender, Nation, Narration*. Almost everyone will share specific classes in their "Why us?" essay, so while you'll want to include a class or two, make sure to include other Colgate-specific opportunities as well.

Academic programs: Citing the Brown Bag Series demonstrates that this student will arrive on campus with a plan, ready to make the most of Colgate's programs.

Unique campus resources: Many colleges have distinctive resources, buildings, and programs that most other schools do not. Colgate's TableTalk is precisely that kind of resource, and using the specific name makes it feel like the student is already a part of the Colgate community.

And so you can see an essay that uses more "Why Major" elements, here's a sample essay that does just that (written for UPenn, and thus over word count for Colgate):

Example 3:

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.

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HOW TO WRITE COLGATE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPT #3

Please complete the following so we can learn a bit more about you. Each response should be no more than 13 words.

I am fascinated by...

My favorite book, movie, or television show is...

My role model is...

In the future, I hope to ...

One historical figure I would like to meet is...

My favorite food is...

One thing I would change is...

I am most challenged by...

My favorite place is...

I am drawn to Colgate University because...

Here are 8 tips for how to answer the Colgate short-answer prompt:

Think of your short answers as an advent calendar. 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.

Feel free to use all or most of the space allotted to explain your answer.

You're given space for 13 words for an answer that could easily be less. So use it up! In other words, you can 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.

Get specific. Don't just give a generic answer followed by a generic reason for your generic answer. Be creative and use details that give you a distinctive/memorable voice.

Feel free to take (calculated) risks on these. Get creative. Push boundaries (a little). To clarify, we don't mean shock for the sake of shock value; make sure you're still revealing core values (one of which might be humor, for instance). Speaking of which ...

Don't check your humor at the door. 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. ;)

Offer a variety of things you're interested in. If you love science and wrote a supplemental essay about science, maybe don't answer prompt #2 with a book, movie, or TV show on ... science. Show how you find joy in astrophysics but also literature, philosophy, Star Trek, programming, and Godfather 1 and 2 (but not 3.)

Note that there isn't, like, some magical key/code with these where, if you answer the right thing for your favorite website, then the door to Colgate will be magically opened to you (although imagine that). These are just a chance (well, 10 chances) for the school to get to know you better. So make the most of them by sharing values and insights, but don't over-obsess as though your life depends on them. 'Cuz it doesn't.

Don't make the short answer you provide super obvious. For example, a bad answer to the "I am fascinated by..." prompt would be "World history. What has happened in history is amazing." Yup, that's ... what that was. A better answer would be more in the direction of "I want to watch George Washington go shopping. Great leaders aren't necessarily defined by their moments under pressure; sometimes, tiny decisions are most telling—like knickers or pantaloons?"

Now let's take a look at a few examples, some from this year's prompts, and some from previous years (but which still give you a sense of what to aim for).

Example:

1. I am fascinated by...

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. Food from the sky? My dream come true. (73 characters)

2. I want to learn all I can about...

Conspiracy theory psychology. Are we all just living in a simulation? (69 characters)

3. My favorite book is...

Memory and Modernity in South India, Daves Soneji (50 characters)

4. My role model is...

Patrick the Starfish, a loyal friend and a shape like no other (62 characters)

5. In the future, I hope to...

Be on the Great British Baking Show—I've perfected my elderflower danishes (74 characters)

6. One thing I would change is...

The metaphysics of the fourth dimension. What if we could touch time? (69 characters)

7. I wish...

I could ask Charles Darwin which came first: the chicken or the egg? (68 characters)

8. I am most challenged by...

My relationship to land as a child of Chinese immigrants and diaspora (69 characters)

9. In 5 years I...

Will host a podcast about the psychology of sleep. What are dreams made of? (75 characters)

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Tips and Ideas:

Share an organizing theme at the start. What kind of learner, citizen, scientist, educator, etc., do you want to be when you leave Colgate? This student makes it clear she wants to be a student who studies the intersection of gender and Asian-American culture. Making a similar statement at the start of your essay can give the rest of your 250-word supplement focus and structure. Want to be a global citizen? Highlight resources that connect Colgate to the rest of the world. Want to be a creative problem-solver in service of others? Highlight service opportunities, opportunities to push your creative boundaries, and professors who will help hone a sharp, critical mind.

Include a range of examples. This student plans to get analytical in "Searching for Home in South Asian Literatures," get inspired at the Center for Women's Studies, get discursive at TableTalk, and get practical at the Hunger Outreach Program. In the prompt, Colgate emphasizes the fact that it's a liberal arts and sciences college, so take its lead and pitch yourself as a well-rounded contributor with a variety of interests.

Specifics, specifics, specifics. This student packs her essay with examples that demonstrate she has done her school research. Check out the types of specifics she offers (and the kinds of things you can include in your essay):

Classes: This student names *Searching for Home in South Asian Literatures: Gender, Nation, Narration*. Almost everyone will share specific classes in their "Why us?" essay, so while you'll want to include a class or two, make sure to include other Colgate-specific opportunities as well.

Academic programs: Citing the Brown Bag Series demonstrates that this student will arrive on campus with a plan, ready to make the most of Colgate's programs.

Unique campus resources: Many colleges have distinctive resources, buildings, and programs that most other schools do not. Colgate's TableTalk is precisely that kind of resource, and using the specific name makes it feel like the student is already a part of the Colgate community.