

ENGL 1301: Assignment 1: University Application Essay

Minimum Requirements

Length: 1 page long

Style: Essay needs to conform to MLA standards, including double spacing in Times New Roman font, and must include a Works Cited page with correct in-text (parenthetical) citations for all quotes, paraphrases, and/or summaries.

Sources: No outside source required.

Due Dates

Final Draft: Safe Assign on eCampus, date Friday, 9/11/2015

Purpose and Learning Objectives

To assist you in completing applications for post-secondary education. Even if you are not planning to continue your education in the next year, this will familiarize you with the process for the time when you do choose to continue your education. The purpose of this assignment is to practice analysis and critical thinking skills. You will engage in formal writing assignments that require utilization of all stages of the writing process.

Assignment Description

For this assignment, you must compose a university application essay: a personal statement used for selective college admissions.

Your essay should tell me about you. It should show me that you can write and support ideas with logical arguments. The essay should be compelling, powerful, and well-written. Be sure to include why you are choosing the college, what you plan to study at the college, some past accomplishments, and positive personal characteristics.

Process of Completion

The most terrifying college application essay is: WRITE ABOUT ANYTHING YOU WANT. That's when these topics will really come in handy for your own college applications. Read over the list of essay topics below. Choose one that appeal to you. The topics were chosen because they are interesting topics (pay no attention to the name of the college attached to the topic).

Topic List

1. Tell us about a situation where **you have not been successful**, and what you have learned from that experience (William and Mary College).
2. **Describe a risk** that you have taken and discuss its impact on your life (Kalamazoo College).
3. Tell us about **the neighborhood that you grew up in** and how it helped shape you into the kind of person you are today (Yale and the University of Chicago).

4. Relate a personal experience that caused you **to believe in something strongly** that perhaps you didn't believe in before (University of Virginia).
5. Describe a situation in which **your values or beliefs were challenged**. How did you react? (NYU)
6. What **invention would the world be better off without**, and why? (Kalamazoo College)
7. George Washington said, "Associate with men of good quality, if you esteem your own reputation; it is better to be alone than in bad company." About **which of your friends do you and your parents disagree?** Why do you feel that the continued company of this friend is a good thing? (Northwestern)
8. What is the **best advice** you ever received? Why? And did you follow it? What happened? (University of Pennsylvania)
9. Describe **an intellectual experience** of the past two years that has given you great satisfaction. Explain. (Amherst)
10. What **confuses** you most in life and why? Explain yourself fully. (University of Virginia)

Choose Topics That Will Highlight You

Don't focus on the great aspects of a particular college, the amount of dedication it takes to be a doctor or the number of extracurricular activities you took part in during high school.

Do share your personal story and thoughts, take a creative approach and highlight areas that aren't covered in other parts of the application, like your high school records.

Keep Your Focus Narrow and Personal

Don't try to cover too many topics. This will make the essay sound like a résumé that doesn't provide any details about you.

Do focus on one aspect of yourself so the readers can learn more about who you are. Remember that the readers must be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask a parent or teacher to read just your introduction and tell you what he or she thinks your essay is about.

Show, Don't Tell

Don't simply state a fact to get an idea across, such as "I like to surround myself with people with a variety of backgrounds and interests."

Do include specific details, examples, reasons and so on to develop your ideas. For the example above, describe a situation when you were surrounded by various types of people. What were you doing? Whom did you talk with? What did you take away from the experience?

Use Your Own Voice

Don't rely on phrases or ideas that people have used many times before. These could include statements like, "There is so much suffering in the world that I feel I have to help people." Avoid overly formal or business-like language, and don't use unnecessary words.

Do write in your own voice. For the above example, you could write about a real experience that you had and how it made you feel you had to take action. And note that admission officers will be able to tell if your essay was edited by an adult.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes failing to cite a direct quote with quotation marks and an in-text citation, borrowing someone else's work without a correct citation, bad paraphrasing (Safe Assign will not identify a good or fair paraphrase), purchasing a paper, having someone else write your essay, or turning in the same paper to two different classes. Any paper with plagiarism, even accidental (*I forgot to cite that!*), will receive a zero as a final grade. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to cite correctly. See both MLA citation PPTs on eCampus or visit Purdue OWL for more help <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>