

While most students understandably concentrate most of their time and energy on writing a strong Common App essay, supplemental essays for colleges that require them are just as important. These essays allow students to provide even more insight into who they are, what drives them, how they have formed their goals, what they have learned about themselves, and more. Supplemental essays give students more “real estate” with which to convey meaningful insights into their characters, accomplishments, struggles, goals, etc. As such, students should invest in ample time for reflection and brainstorming, research when required, and drafting/ revising to most effectively utilize this added real estate to their advantage in augmenting their applications.

In some cases, what might seem to be a “routine” supplemental essay can even be more important to the admissions committees at certain colleges, especially the ubiquitous “Why This College” essay that many schools require. When a college features this essay prompt, it is not looking for students to simply parrot back the “Greatest Hits” about that program – facts and figures, rankings, etc. Instead, the admissions committee is seeking to determine if students have truly done their homework about the school, engaged in personal reflection, and determined WHY that school is the best fit and WHAT it offers that aligns with a student’s interests, needs, and goals. While most students take care to invest abundant thought and care into crafting their main essays, they can expose a red flag in their applications if they do not approach this and other supplemental essay prompts with the same level of preparation and attention.

For this reason, it is imperative to develop a systematic approach to brainstorming topics/content and writing the most insightful supplemental essays possible. Understanding WHAT a school is truly trying to learn about a student via each supplemental essay prompt is the first vital step. Take the case of the “Why This College” prompt. While it might seem like the admissions committee members want to know why their college is well-regarded in general, they actually want to know how and why a student has determined that their college is specifically ideal FOR THAT PARTICULAR STUDENT. Other types of prompts are also seeking to



# Building an Extracurricular Resume

reveal a deeper understanding of the student through the content and insights that the student chooses to share.

While many students are good writers, they often do not innately know how to determine what to address in a supplemental essay. The same can be said for well-meaning adults who seek to advise them. Our professional essay coaches at LGC not only know how to guide students through a productive process that enables them to identify and utilize their authentic voices in their essays, but also ensures students understand the objective of each essay prior to embarking on the process of developing it.

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