

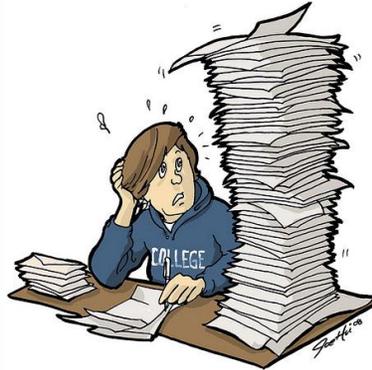
Name \_\_\_\_\_

English 12

Period 1

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The College Essay - Notes



Generally, there are three types of questions:

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Here are tips and actual sample questions for each type.

Don't assume that the questions are currently being used by a college (most colleges adjust questions annually).

The "You" Question

Many colleges ask for an essay that boils down to, "Tell us about yourself." The school just wants  
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- "Please complete a one-page personal statement and submit it with your application." (James Madison University)
- "How would you describe yourself as a human being? What quality do you like best in yourself and what do you like least? What quality would you most like to see flourish and which would you like to see wither?" (Bates College)

Your Approach

This direct question offers a chance to reveal your \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and your \_\_\_\_\_.

The danger is that it's \_\_\_\_\_, so you need to \_\_\_\_\_. Find just one or two things that will reveal your best qualities, and avoid the urge to spill everything.

## The "Why Us" Question

Some schools ask for an essay about your choice of a school or career. They're looking for information about \_\_\_\_\_, and about how serious your \_\_\_\_\_.

For example:

- "Why is UVM a good college choice for you?"
- "Please tell us about your career goals and any plans you may have for graduate study." (Westfield State College)

## Your Approach

The focus is provided: Why did you choose this school or path? This should be pretty clear to you, since you probably went through some kind of selection process. Make sure you know

\_\_\_\_\_. For example, if you say you want to attend Carleton College to major in agriculture, the school will be able to tell how carefully you've chosen (Carleton doesn't have an agriculture major).

## The "Creative" Question

Some colleges evaluate you through your choice of some \_\_\_\_\_: a national issue, a famous person, what you would put in a time capsule, a photograph. Here the school is looking at your

For example:

- "Do you believe there's a generation gap? Describe the differences between your generation and others." (Denison University)
- "Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence." (Common Application)

## Your approach

Again, you have something to react to, a way to show yourself and write about your real views. Just don't forget \_\_\_\_\_ . For example, don't write about a fantasy lunch with a famous writer and get the titles of her novels wrong. Also, when thinking about how creative to get, use common sense. Being creative to the point of wacky is a risk you may not want to take.