

# STOP PROCRASTINATING WRITE YOUR COLLEGE ESSAYS

10 Sample Essays To Get You Started!



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# Importance of the

# ESSAY

## 1. The Reality:

Which colleges you apply to will be determined by your Academic Qualities (AQs): grades, test scores, and rigor of curriculum. And, while your hard work has earned you the right to apply to selective, and in some cases, highly selective institutions, everyone else in that same applicant pool has the same AQs. Your academic accomplishments are NOT what will get you admitted.

What will? The Personal Qualities (PQs) revealed in your essays.

## 2. Limited Space:

In a college application you have up to five essays to unwrap short stories about YOU. The opportunity to shed light on who you are, where you come from, and what you value comes with only 600 words – 1600 words. That's it.

## 3. The GOAL Of The Essay:

The goal is simple: get the reader to want to learn more about YOU. Period. The way to do that is to create essays that are interesting, engaging, and compelling.

While many teenagers reveal their life story in interesting, engaging, and compelling photos, most do not know how to capture their story in written word.

## 4. The College Essay Is NOT:

Do not make the mistake in believing the essay is an English or research paper, a test of your vocabulary, or a regurgitation of your transcript and resume. Your writing should reveal something I cannot find anywhere else in your application.

## 5. The Essay Can Maximize or Minimize Your College Choices:

Each year College Admission Officers read thousands of applications from thousands of high schools. It is no wonder that they all begin to look and sound the same. The role of the essay, when done well, is to maximize your college options. Each of your essays is an opportunity to convince the reader to advocate for you and ultimately admit you.

**There are No Do-Overs in this process. When it comes to the college essay, it is critical to get it right the first time.**

# Stop Procrastinating! You Got This!

## WHERE WILL MY TOPIC COME FROM?

**EVERY TEENAGER WILL WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING THAT COMES FROM ONE OF THESE 7 CATEGORIES.**

### People

There are people in your lives that may have had great influence – friends, parents, grand parents, mentors, coaches, teachers, siblings, other family members, etc.

### Places

Places can be as simple as the pink beanbag in your bedroom, the pitching mound, the stage, dance studio, or basketball court. It may be a vacation spot, a sports venue, church, a concert, restaurant, or your favorite city in the world.

### Leadership

You might be President, Captain, Editor, Gold Award, Eagle Scout, etc. But, leadership does not necessarily come in a title. It is likely that you are a leader in some area of your life, small or large.

### Experience

Where do you come from? Big city, small town? Rural area? Who do you live with? Both parents? Foster home? Single Parent home? Who are you? Religious? Bi-Racial? Feminist? LGBTQ? Adopted? What have you experienced? Death? Divorce? Were you raised on a farm? Are you a part of a military family?

### Co-Curriculars/ Hobbies

How do you spend your time when you are not doing homework and writing papers? School Organizations, Sports, Community Service, Clubs, etc. What about just for fun? Like surfing, bee keeping, alpaca farming, spear fishing, or rock climbing.

### Objects

There are tangible things that have meaning in your life. Is it a baseball card collection, ticket stubs, music, funky shoes, piece of jewelry, or the old car that you and dad worked on together?

### Work Experience

Do not discount your work experience and/or internships. Whether it was paid or unpaid – there are life lessons you have learned while working. Bravo!

**ARE YOU READY FOR SOME SAMPLE ESSAYS? I KNOW YOU ARE.  
THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF ESSAYS.**

# Essay Type #1

## WHO AM I?

**This essay sheds light on your family, culture, background, and offers context of who you are. Here are two examples.**

### Every Sunday at Church

Day 4, Draft 4 – Short version (335 words)

I eye my brother on the men's side of the church, pass the line of women, slide into my pew, and remove the scarf over my hair. Daniel shuffles in and whispers, "Let's go." With the sound the Coptic hymn, we dash out on our weekly mission. We pass latecomers, smile at mothers and babies, and dodge familiar faces, racing to get the best "orban."

With a crowd already waiting, I worry that we won't be so lucky this week. The smell of the freshly baked bread lingers and finally the volunteer hands me more than one piece. I grab an old Egyptian newspaper to wrap the warm orban and deliver it to Mom for our weekly routine.

Daniel and I find our parents with the usual group of family friends. The group instinctively moves towards the door and the Sunday afternoon light is an overwhelming contrast to the dim, incense-filled church. With no need for instructions, everyone chats along our usual route to the nearby Starbucks.

At Starbucks we head to the long table in the corner next to the window. My parents and their friends speak in a combined Arabic-English, and my brother and I easily follow their conversations. I'm always amazed hearing about their older kids' lives, remembering how once joined us at Starbucks on Sundays, and now hearing about their college degrees or their own children.

This is our family. We're not related by blood, but with all the time we've spent together on Sundays like these and the memories we've created, it feels like we are. Starbucks after Sunday mass is a timeless tradition; my family has grown, even though the actual group has shrunk with each child growing up and starting their own adventures. We've grown up together.

Even as a young adult, I still cherish the Sundays I spend with my extended family. Going to church does not only emphasize my commitment to God, but I am also reminded of the wonderful support system in my church community.

## Divorce

### Final Draft – Long Version (615 words)

My mother held my small hand as I gripped the stuffed bear my father had given me, and walked down the checkered corridor. As we took a seat I smiled and waved to my father but he did not respond. Instead, he turned beside himself and held hands with an unfamiliar lady. My grip on the stuffed bear loosened as I turned to look at my mother. She looked into my eyes and I knew that he not only hurt one heart, but there were two broken hearts. I asked, "How come Daddy is not sitting with us?" She took a deep breath, "Daddy lives with that lady now. We're moving into different homes and he might not come over any more."

The judge asked the three of us to step forward. The judge, Mom, and Daddy talked while I wiped my tears on her skirt. My father never glanced in my direction. It took one hour to officially break up my family. We retreated from the judge's bench and Mom led me back down that same checkered corridor and into the car. She sat down next to me and whispered, "You mean the world to me and that's all that matters, honey."

But as my seventeenth birthday approached, that wasn't all that mattered to me. Twelve years later, I still yearned for what I believed every girl should know, her father's love. As the lunch meeting with my father was scheduled, feelings of insecurity arose and attacked my self-esteem. But the breakdown occurred when I was all by myself in the parking lot of the coffee shop that we were to meet at. I fought to hold back the tears that had been stored in my heart for twelve years, but the tears streamed down my warm cheeks. I thought that I was strong enough without him and that he wasn't important in my life, but within those few minutes, none of that seemed true anymore.

I finally wiped off the wet tears that had streamed down my face and walked towards the coffee shop. As I walked down the sidewalk, I smiled at every middle aged man in hopes that maybe he was my father. I opened the door and saw a man walk right towards me. Smiling, I said hello to him as he walked past me and to his car. My face and ears burned red as I turned to walk back out of the door. But just then, I noticed a man staring at me from a corner seat. He walked up to me and smiled warmly. I knew it was my father. My heart started racing and my mouth could not form words. This is what I had been waiting for throughout my life. We sat and talked over coffee while I asked him questions about why he left me and about why he never told his new family about me. But it seemed that all the questions in the world could not fulfill the time that he had been missing in my life.

The tears that I had shed over him within those twelve years had burned my heart but earned me strength. His strength had been diminished because he had run away from someone who could have loved him more than anyone else. I was the one who dealt and fought off the criticism of being fatherless over those years. And at that moment, I realized that what my mother told me twelve years ago in the car was true. I didn't need him in my life to prove anything because I already had the strength to go on with out him and "that's all that mattered."

## Essay Type #2

# WHAT AM I GOOD AT?

**This essay is about something you do in school, a leadership role, sports, performing arts. This is “your thang” “your jam.” Here are two examples.**

### Song-Leader Captain

Day 4, Draft 6 FINAL – Long Version (642 Words)

I was immediately greeted by the rude athletic director, ruthless cheer coach, and innocent Vice Principal. This was not going to be good. With his two bodyguards, the Vice Principal announced to all 7 Varsity members, “We are canceling Varsity Song this year.” A bomb was just dropped and so did my jaw. “But tryouts are in two weeks and there are freshman coming here for the song team,” Briana protested. The AD muffled some excuse, while I knew the cheer coach was only trying to get revenge on us. The song team always took a back seat to her precious yell squad. I turned to my team with my index finger over my mouth and pointed to the door. We walked out in a straight line both speechless and heartbroken. A river of tears came rushing down our defeated faces. I kept asking myself, “What is going to be my next move?”

As captain, I felt obligated to take charge. Hours later I wrote an email to the Vice Principal asking for a second meeting without the presence of the Cheer Coach. He gladly gave us the opportunity to voice our concerns and ask questions. My song team had always felt neglected by the head coach as she had created a divide among the song and yell members. It was humorous to see such a face of shock on the vice principal and athletic director’s faces since they don’t really know what occurs in the cheer program. I gained confidence that there was a possibility that the song team would return.

I kept telling myself, “I need to convince them that the decision is both childish and arbitrary.” I decided to draft a petition. It was to be signed by strictly LHHS cheerleaders. By signing the petition, they agreed to show their support of the song team and that they believe it should remain for the upcoming year. I printed out 10 petitions and passed them out to different members that could help get as many signatures as possible. Within one day I was able to get 52 signatures out of 60 cheerleaders on the team. The following day, I marched up to the vice principal’s office and handed him a copy of the petition. He assured me that he would take it into consideration.

After countless emails from parents, the administration finally agreed to meet with them. Prior to walking into the room, I informed all of the parents on further details that had occurred and our plans of attack. Walking in one by one, each person had a sour facial expression on their face. I had never seen such a chaotic meeting occur in a school. All of the

dad's were shouting aggressively while the moms continued to shake their heads from left to right. Out of frustration, the parents and the songleaders were yelling over each other. The athletic director definitely seemed overwhelmed, however, he continued to come up with pathetic reasons as to why they were "moving in another direction." My dad asked, "What problem or conflict occurred this past year that is pushing you to eliminate the song team?" Crickets were chirping as everyone sat in silence. This is the question that stumped both the Principal and Vice Principal most of all. As the meeting was coming to a close, the parents had one more final remark, "If this issue is not resolved by tomorrow, we will take it to the district office."

The next day we all received an email stating, "Thank you again for your patience and input as we have continued to work through this process. For the upcoming 2019-2020 school year, the song team will remain under Coach Allison." Whether wearing my song uniform or not, I learned that being captain meant leading my team through the good times and tough times.

## National Percussion Competition

### Final Draft, Short Version (342 Words)

It was uncomfortably hot. Percussionists were buzzing with nervous energy, and the camera flashes from the audience was not helping. It was Finals Day in Dayton, Ohio for the WGI Nationals percussion competition. Here I stood with the rest of my ensemble members, agonizing over the delay in hearing our fate, "Will we make it to the top three?"

Just last year, I desperately wanted to spearhead my ensemble to victory at nationals. But it was not to be. Devastated by the announcement, "In fourth place, with a score of 94.125, 94.125, Arcadia High School," we had lost the medal by a hair, a tenth of a point to be exact. I vowed never to let it happen again; next year we would bring home a medal.

For the next 12 months we practiced even harder. Being in the World Line in Arcadia, also meant being one of the top school percussion ensembles in the entire world. With that kind of reputation came more intense and complicated music. Instead of just attending scheduled practices, we were expected to learn new music on our own time in order to learn our routines and choreography when we were together. Hours of practice caused the soft palms of my hands to break into painful calluses. Undaunted, I wrapped them in rolls of skin tape and played on. Long hours, sleep deprivation, and a few calluses seemed a small sacrifice to overcome that one tenth of a point.

Finals Day in Dayton could not come fast enough, and now here I was. My heart raced and all sounds faded around me as I focused on the announcer. I nearly cried with relief when a different school claimed fourth and then third place. His booming voice, "In second place, with a score of 96.813, 96.813, Arcadia High School!" I had dreamt of getting into the top three in the Scholastic World Line division and now I was holding the silver medal in my hands. It's been six months and we have gold on our minds. Stay tuned...

# Essay Type#3

## YOUR “COOLNESS” FACTOR?

**What is something new, unexpected, or cool to you that may not be cool to anyone else? This essay adds personality to an otherwise typical application. Here are two examples.**

### The Famous Taco Bell Essay

Draft 8, Final Draft- Long Version (638 words)

Today I will be facing my biggest challenge: the Taco Bell menu. A place that can be compared only to Frankenstein’s laboratory for its reputation for the strangest menu in all of the fast food kingdom, I was both looking forward to, and apprehensive about, the adventure I was about to undertake. “You want to get that? Just don’t come crying to me when you have a stomach ache later tonight,” my dad responded with a smile and a familiar rustle of my hair as I made my demand: two Doritos locos tacos and an enchirito. “Are you sure you don’t just want a regular burrito or taco?” My silence gave him my answer.

Getting teased about my attraction to the strangest items in all of fast food wasn’t new in the slightest. Hooked from my very first bite of a Wienerschnitzel mini corn dog at the age of 5, I had made it my mission to try as much fast food as possible. My family didn’t seem to understand my obsession, but that didn’t matter to me. Fast food was my way to experiment with my developing taste buds as a kid. Spicy, sweet, sour, savory, a combination of it all; I craved the endless variety of flavors and choices listed out on each restaurant menu.

The sharp contrast between the crisp bun and soft, warm chili and cheese on a Wienerschnitzel chili dog, the juicy patties and the savory aroma of a Five Guys burger as its alluring aroma wafts past my nose; I can’t help but lick my lips as I describe some of my favorites. From scraping the bottom of the bowl trying to get every last bit of crispy lettuce from a Panera Bread salad to getting the last grain of rice hiding in the corner of a Chipotle burrito bowl in a hopeless attempt at trying to avoid my zealous fork, how could I choose a favorite? By the age of ten, I was looking for the most peculiar things to dig my mouth into, from fried mac n’ cheese to jalapeno-stuffed burgers. Discovering secret menus at twelve only increased these desires as I hunted for new flavors like a wolf. This continued trend greatly confused my family. As my appetite for the unique only increased, so did their joking. “The kid with the iron stomach” became an informal nickname attributed to my ability to eat virtually anything that was placed in front of me.

I found my fascination with the fast food kingdom to be my own unique way of being curious and adventurous, while also opening me up to trying new things. I perceived myself as a professional food critic, constantly in search of that perfect combination of flavors as I



visited countless fast food chains and ate all kinds of food. Even though my habits seemed strange to my family, I found joy in my personal experiments with the foods that I enjoy the most.

My love for fast food has not dwindled whatsoever at the age of seventeen. While I, the well-respected family fast food connoisseur, still love experimenting with new foods on a weekly basis, fast food is much more than just my favorite guilty pleasure. Over the years, fast food has become synonymous with being together with my family. Sharing an hour together in front of the television every Sunday evening, laughing and catching up over a good meal, I have fast food to thank for many of the warm memories I have of spending time with my loved ones. Nothing in the world can compare to enjoying a meal with those who care deeply about you and love you for who you are. From burgers and fries to soup and salad, fast food brought my family together in a way that no other food could.

## Tomboy Plays Playstation

### Final Draft 3 – Short Version (334 words)

I am a bonafide tomboy. Instead of wearing dresses and shopping, I enjoy the smell of grass while I score a goal, head banging to 7/11 by Beyoncé, or performing my heart out with the marching band. But I am happiest with the PS4 remote in my hands. What ties them all together? My father.

The beginning of our bond dates back when I was still wearing pink frills. I was seven years old when Dad thought to introduce his daughter to gaming through Resident Evil 5. I was sitting comfortably on a throne of pillows watching him defeat Albert Wesker in the boss battle. I probably missed 95% of the gameplay as I shielded my young eyes from the mutilated bodies of the infected. For years, my father sought a connection with me and once he introduced me to Playstation, I was hooked on the captivating adventures and characters that beat the odds in their journeys. I was now living in another dimension where I was controlling a harrowing journey, or solving the most complex crimes.

Over the years under his supervision we played each new game together and I played more female protagonists. Playing Chloe Frazer in The Lost Legacy or Jill Valentine in Resident Evil encouraged me to understand that I too could be a butt kicking female hero. I may not be able to jump from an exploding car or roundhouse kick a zombie in the face, but my father has taught me that there are always surprises in life. In order to survive, I must learn from my mistakes and stay determined. Patient and steadfast, Dad is always there for me; offering pointers on the soccer field, jamming out with me to music, supporting me at a band performance, or guiding me on PS4. If he had not been such a big influence in my life, who knows what pink frilly thing I'd be wearing right now. Instead, I'm a butt kicking superhero ready to take on the world.

## Essay Type #4

### FUTURE CONNECTION / ACADEMIC SUBJECT

**Can you pinpoint when you decided to pursue a specific major or career path? You can also write about a time when you struggled or shined in the classroom. Here are three examples.**

#### McDonald's Essay

Draft 5, Final – Short Version (274 words)

“Would you like nuts on your sundae, sir?” I waited for the customer’s reply. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the owner motioning for me to join him in the booth when I was done. All hot and sweaty, I came out from the back in my uniform and hat and sat down across from him. He wanted to go over the profit and loss statements with me. I had no idea what that was and could only see a giant binder full of rows and columns, listing every single expense of the restaurant. “You see this line here,” I nodded, “...this is how much the nuts on a sundae cost every month.” The list was seemingly endless and there were things I had never thought about like franchise fees and machine repairs. What the customer sees as a fourth pickle on their cheeseburger or nuts on the side of their sundae, he saw as \$100 a month. And, on the other hand, he is willing to break even on burgers, so more customers come in and add a drink to their order.

I asked him why he was spending that much on advertising or rent, and he showed me there was thought and purpose behind every number on that sheet because every penny added up. After our talk, I went back to work but everything seemed different. I was taking orders at the cash register and all I could think about were the little costs doubling and then tripling. That fascination compelled me to take economics and statistics my senior year. Now, I never add nuts to my sundae.

#### Medical Internship AND Love of Basketball

Day 4, Draft 5 - Long Version (523 words)

As I watch him fly through the air, Kobe is about to secure a fifth championship ring, having spent his entire career wearing purple and gold. His secret? The court is his temple where he worships the net. He is the first to arrive and last to leave, becoming the supreme basketball player of all time. Kobe inspires me to become the best doctor and one day conduct surgery with as much dexterity with my scalpel as he has with a basketball.

My excitement to be able to shadow a doctor, my Dad’s close friend, Dr. Anda, was as exciting as that game 7 in 2010. Seven years later, here I am in downtown Los Angeles at a hospital, ecstatic to see a surgery! Dr. Anda was someone that my father was very close to

and someone he admired as a person. Dr. Anda was skillful just like any other doctor, but he went above and beyond in the surgery room.

At 5 am my mother drops me off in the nearly empty parking lot to meet Dr. Anda. He in his dress slacks, I follow Dr. Anda to his work area, where he begins reviewing charts and inputting information into the computer. He is prepping for surgery on the liver of a person who had consumed too much alcohol. Now wearing his blue uniform and mask, Dr. Anda settles into his pregame rituals, gathering his teammates, checking his tools, and reviewing the patient. I too change into a borrowed set of scrubs getting ready to witness greatness, just like a basketball player would. Just as I watched game 7 from my couch, today I have the honor of becoming Dr. Anda's greatest fan while sitting in the stands. Dr. Anda dribbled, grasping his scalpel and shot the basketball into the net, all net, making an incision, starting to open the stomach. Passing the scalpel, a technical foul was committed by the first-year attendee so Dr. Anda, the great mind that he has, must rebound and revamp the incision. Back in the basket. 3 seconds left, Dr. Anda shoots a 3-pointer to win his game. All that's left is the celebration: delivering the good news to the patient. High-Fives all around!

No regular surgeon could achieve what Dr. Anda just did, after it was finished, he asked me what I thought and I told him it was more exciting than watching the game 7. Flattered by my comment, it is the first smile I've seen on his face. Dr. Anda has Kobe Bryant's work ethic, doing surgeries 12 hours long at times, and always the first and last to leave the surgery room.

On this day Dr. Anda gave me a peek into what will one day become my temple. After witnessing this, I wanted more. I want to watch more surgeries. I am growing into that consummate worker. I might be a rookie, but I can't wait to learn the craft and hone the skill of the scalpel. I will figure out a way to surpass the most skilled of surgeons, and one day will wear my purple and gold lab coat!

## Calculus Class

### Draft 4, Final – Short (349 words)

For the first time, I felt as if I didn't belong in the class. I doubted my academic abilities. I recognized that Calculus would be the most challenging class I would take that year.

After school, prepared with daily questions, I plopped down next to my math teacher, Mr. Moore, trying to make sense of the graphs and derivatives. I reviewed each day's lesson until I finally started to grasp at the content. But, the next day I would walk confidently into class, only to see that we were building on yesterday's lesson. The numbers, letters, and equations jumped off the board, each one like a wave crashing over me, until I was drowning in an ocean of confusion.

Soon it came time to take the 2nd test. I was nervous. The embarrassment of my first exam score was still fresh in my brain. This time though, I acknowledged the countless hours after school I spent getting help, the nights when I stayed up till 2:30 am practicing problems and watching Khan Academy videos, and my teacher's motivational words.

Several days later, my teacher passed back our tests. He placed mine face down in front of me. I slowly lifted the corner of the page, and read 75%. I overheard my classmates, "I got a 98% how 'bout you?" "Oh i got a 100%". Yet I was satisfied; my individual growth and progress as a student were more valuable.

Months passed, and the AP test loomed. I remembered the feelings of defeat, the desire to give up. I told myself, that even though the grades mattered, my own progress held more significance. I finished the test confident in what I had done and proud of the long journey to that day.

The computer screen illuminates my face. The College Board website announces "AP scores released". I sign in and click "View". The tiny font reads "AP Calculus, Your Score: 4". Once again, tears fill my eyes, but this time out of elation. I saw how far I had come and my success because of my perseverance and hardwork.

# BONUS: Essay Type #5

## THE SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY

**The goal of this essay is to be as specific as possible about WHY YOU want this major and/or this institution. In other words, show evidence that you did your homework.**

### Why This Major and University?

Draft 3, Final (273 words)

My heart jumps as the guitar solo kicks in. Glowing a fluorescent blue, “LAW” stretches across the screen, preceded by a flash of black and white photographs. “ORDER” follows, lit by a luminous red; my mind all the while salivating, thirsty for my favorite television show, “Law and Order” to open its doors and reveal the awaiting crime. While “Law and Order” presents a fictionalized world of crime and justice, the show is a tunnel into the criminal science and law, an area I would love to pursue, both academically, as well as professionally. Boston University holds the key to turn that world into reality.

Boston University offers me an endless number of outlets and opportunities to achieve my academic goals in criminal justice and law. Under the umbrella of political science, such course as *The Legislative Process* in America will allow me to explore a more traditional field of law. Classes including *Psychology of Criminal Justice* will open sociology’s doors, allowing me to concentrate my studies even further.

Last spring, I traveled to the Boston area for the first time. Immediately, I was drawn to the city’s continuous buzz of college students, public transportation, and cannolis. The unique merge of a university and this eclectic city can be achieved only at an institute such as BU. As a lifelong resident of Los Angeles, I crave an urban atmosphere simmering with cultural enrichment and possibilities. Boston’s recipe of metropolitan spice and small-scale ambiance is exclusive to the city. I look forward to the opportunity to grow and contribute to the BU community and the city in which it is such an integral part.

# Your Personal

# ESSAY COACH

With my above tips, you are well on your way to writing and submitting your best college essays. However, you might be looking for more personalized guidance.

## IF YOU ARE READY TO:

- 1 – Stop Procrastinating.
- 2 – Brainstorm YOUR Cool Essay Topic.
- 3 – Start Writing.
- 4 – Increase Success.

Then you are the perfect candidate for my Essay Workshop and/or Essay Boot Camp.



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## PARENTS:

Don't delay. Leave the nagging to me. With me as the essay coach, it will get done. That's my promise to you.