



# **QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE ANSWERING COMMON SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPTS**

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There are certain common patterns in supplemental essay questions that you might recognize across different colleges. Many admissions officers want to know why you're interested specifically in their university. Others might want to know about the impact you've made in your community. To help guide you through the different types of questions, I've outlined the categories of common supplemental essay prompts and questions you can ask yourself to get started on the brainstorming process.

## WHY SCHOOL ESSAY

1. When did you first learn about the school?
  2. How long have you been interested in the college?
  3. What are your top 3 reasons for applying to the school?
  4. What can this college provide you with that no other school can?
  5. Do you have any classes you're excited to take?
  6. Is there any professor whose mentorship would be perfect for you?
  7. Have you gone on a campus visit? What stood out to you?
  8. What student organizations would you join?
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## WHY MAJOR ESSAY

1. What's your main academic area of interest?
2. Why does this matter to you?
3. When did this interest first start to matter to you? Was there a specific event that sparked your interest?
4. How did your interest evolve over time?
5. Did you ever face a really big challenge in continuing to learn about or study this topic?
6. Was this challenge the result of your gender, race, or religion?
7. Was this challenge the result of your family's socio-economic background or the result of the culture of the place you lived?
8. Would you still pursue this academic interest if you earned a very small income with your future job in this area?

## **ACTIVITIES ESSAY**

1. What's an extracurricular activity you do that's incredibly rare?
  2. What's an extracurricular activity that has shaped your personality and character?
  3. Why does this activity matter so much to you?
  4. When did this activity first start to matter to you? Was there a specific event that sparked your interest?
  5. How did your interest in and commitment to this activity evolve over time?
  6. Have you done something with this activity that no one else you know has done?
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## **ESSAYS ABOUT YOUR IDENTITY/BACKGROUND**

1. Is there something you've done or experienced that changed you forever in a positive way?
  2. How did this event make you more mature, compassionate, self-aware, determined, or strong?
  3. Is there a day from your life that you reflect on often? Why is this day so memorable to you?
  4. Are you similar to or different from your parents/siblings? What made you this way?
  5. When did you feel like you didn't fit in with a group of people? What made you different than others?
  6. Is there something (non-academic/extracurricular) that you devote A LOT of time to? Why do you do this?
  7. What have you done that didn't earn you praise, attention, or success?
  8. What makes you feel like your life is meaningful and important to you?
  9. What is one thing that you would never change about yourself or your life experiences?
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These prompts are designed to help colleges understand why you're a perfect fit for their institution. Take advantage of the common question patterns to understand what schools look for from the different prompts, then convey how you would uniquely contribute to campus and make the most of the school's resources.