



What should I write about in my college application essay?

This is your chance to let the admissions committee know who you are beyond the grades and test scores that are on your college and high school transcripts. Think about what is important for the admissions committee to know about you.

This is an opportunity to showcase who you are

Unless the school has a specific prompt, the essay can vary greatly. Students have written successful essays about everything from a solo hiking trip, volunteering with a youth program, to the academic program at the school they have an interest in.

There are several reasons why colleges may ask you to write an essay. For many, it is a chance to learn more about who you are beyond your transcript: your long-term goals, your writing style, or even how you fit into your desired program. Avoid negatives or placing blame on others. Show the reader how you have grown and learned from both your good and bad experiences. If you had a tough semester during your time here at MCC, this can be a great chance to discuss the work that you put in to successfully overcome that struggle.

For highly selective institutions, they want to know if are you the right fit based on your interests and goals for what the program offers. This is known as “academic fit.” You want to express why the school is a strong fit for you beyond repeating the advertising the school does for themselves.

Don't let ChatGPT do the work for you

Research the individual major and faculty so you can incorporate some specifics about the program you are applying to and how that relates to what interests you. What are you intellectually curious about? What recent research has been completed at the college that has you interested? Are there any books/papers that have been written by a faculty member that tie into what you want to study?

Also, make sure you refer to the program by its appropriate title. Don't refer to an academic area as the “School of Music” or “Music Department” if it is officially the “College of Performing Arts & Music.”

Research the program, know the program, and understand as much as you can about it before you start your essay. Plugging the prompt into Chat GPT will get you a generic essay that does not speak specifically to you, your desired program, and how the two connect in a meaningful way. Generic essays will not help you in the admission process.

Ask a few people to read your essay before you submit it. Try to have at least one person with a strong background in English review it carefully. Consider working with [Career Services](#) or the [Writing Consultants at the TAAC](#). Do not rely solely on spellcheck!

For more information, visit Purdue University Online Writing Lab's webpage on [writing application essays](#).