

YOUR GUIDE TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

MODULE 5:

# SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS



# WORKBOOK

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A PUBLICATION OF THE ADMISSIONS ANGLE

# INTRODUCTION

## HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Supplemental essays are best pursued with a plan. The more information you can collect prior to drafting your essay, the more efficient you will be throughout this process.

## MEANINGFUL RESEARCH

- In your corresponding manual, we explain the particulars of each of the following essay archetypes:
  - The Why Us Essay
  - The Why Major Essay
  - The Community Essay
  - The Diversity Essay
  - The Extracurricular Activity Essay
  - Other types of essays
- While the manual is helpful in supporting the video content from Module 5, the workbook gives you the space to answer the research questions with a pen and paper.
- If pen and paper doesn't work for you, we suggest building a table or spreadsheet in Google docs to manage your research. However, make sure that you are still taking care to answer the questions outlined here.

## KNOW WHERE YOU ARE APPLYING

- Before you begin engaging in this research, you must know where you are applying. Every school asks for different supplemental essays, and there is no need to go through the research process for an essay that you will never write.
- Think smarter, not harder! Applying to colleges is time consuming enough without unnecessary work.
- If you haven't yet established your college list, refer back to module 3 for support.

## THE WHY US ESSAY

The WHY US Essay asks students a simple question: Why do you want to go to THIS school and not THAT school?

### EXAMPLE PROMPTS:

- Please tell us what you value most about Columbia and why. (300 words or less)
- Use this space to share something you'd like the admissions committee to know about you (your interests, your background, your identity, or your community), and how it has shaped what you want to get out of your college experience at Johns Hopkins. (300-400 words)
- In 300 words or less, help us understand how you might engage specific resources, opportunities, and/or communities here. We are curious about what these specifics are, as well as how they may enrich your time at Northwestern and beyond.



**NOTE:** Five spaces for colleges are provided for you. If you need more space, you can print out more pages, but we also recommend building a document or spreadsheet on your computer.

**SCHOOL NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

*University of Notre Dame*

**LOCATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Notre Dame, Indiana (outside South Bend)*

- School Mascot: *The Fighting Irish*
- What is the school's honor code? What are the central characteristics?

*"...Together, we work to create, "an environment of teaching and learning that fosters the development in its students of those disciplined habits of mind, body, and spirit that characterize educated, skilled, and free human beings." Also emphasized are tradition and integrity.*

- What are some campus landmarks and what traditions are associated with them? If you visited the campus, what was your impression of it?

*Grotto, Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Main Building (the Golden Dome), and the Hesburgh Library ("Touchdown Jesus"), The Notre Dame Stadium*

- What are some interesting and quirky facts about the school?
  - *The Golden Dome on the Main Building is covered in 23.9-karat gold leaf. Students often find flakes of gold in the surrounding grass during a re-gilding.*
  - *Students don't walk up the steps of the Main Building-- the superstition says that if you do, you won't graduate.*
- What are some notable opportunities that the school offers, such as special centers, institutes, technologies, or partnerships?
  - *The Center for Social Concerns*
  - *No Greek life -- instead, the residence hall is the focus of social, religious, and intramural athletic activities*
  - *Other opportunities will vary by major*
- What extracurricular opportunities does the school offer that you are interested in exploring?

*Your answers here will depend on the academic path you have chosen, but also consider athletics, service opportunities, and interesting social opportunities.*

- Who are some notable alumni from the school, and why do they inspire you?

*Condoleeza Rice, Regis Philbin*

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# WHY MAJOR

## THE WHY MAJOR ESSAY

The WHY MAJOR Essay asks students why they are applying for a particular major or department, and how a degree in this field will support their future career.

### EXAMPLE PROMPTS:

- Please explain why you wish to study in the academic areas you selected at Rice University. (150 words)
- Brown's Open Curriculum allows students to explore broadly while also diving deeply into their academic pursuits. Tell us about an academic interest (or interests) that excites you, and how you might use the Open Curriculum to pursue it. (250 words)



**NOTE:** Your choice of major will depend on the school that you are applying to. We encourage students to choose less obvious majors, which may be unique or particular to a school. Use these spaces to research up the majors you are considering.

**NAME OF SCHOOL:** Middlebury College

**MAJOR:** Global Environmental Change

**DEPARTMENT:** International and Global Studies

Who are two professors within the department whose work you admire?

- *Kemi Fuentes-George - "Between preservation and exploitation: Transnational advocacy networks and conservation in developing countries"*
- *Tamar Mayer - research on national identity*

What are a few courses that you look forward to taking?

- *ECON 0228 Economics of Agricultural Transition*
- *GEOG 0210 Geographic Perspectives on International Development*
- *ENVS 0442 Transnational Feminist Conservation*

What are some student organizations that are connected to the major?

- *Feminist Action at Middlebury*
- *Globemed - focused on global health inequity*
- *Middlebury language schools and Language Pledge*

What internships or extracurricular opportunities are offered in conjunction with the major?

- *Mandatory study abroad requirement and emphasis on foreign language*
- *Thesis research opportunities*

What are some long-term career goals that are supported by this major?

- *Research on global development*
- *Work for governments, MNCs, or non-profits*
- *Jobs focused on ramifications of climate change*

How have your academic and extracurricular activities supported your interest in this major?

- *This will depend on your experience, but an example would be cultural clubs, charitable efforts, Model UN or similar, and any sort of activism*

What makes this major unique at your chosen institution as opposed to other institutions?

- *This major is somewhat unique to Middlebury and it's very hands on with its study abroad requirement*

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**MAJOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEPARTMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

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What are a few courses that you look forward to taking?

What are some student organizations that are connected to the major?

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# COMMUNITY

## THE COMMUNITY ESSAY

The COMMUNITY Essay asks students: What can you contribute to the our school's community? What do you hope to gain from this community?

### EXAMPLE PROMPTS:

- At Brown, you will learn as much from your peers outside the classroom as in academic spaces. How will you contribute to the Brown community? (250 words)
- Columbia students take an active role in improving their community, whether in their residence hall, classes or throughout New York City. Their actions, small or large, work to positively impact the lives of others. Share one contribution that you have made to your family, school, friend group or another community that surrounds you. (200 words)



**NOTE:** The Community Essay is the perfect place to discuss your leadership positions within certain communities. Strike a balance between your past accomplishments and future goals.

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# THE COMMUNITY ESSAY

What official positions have you held within your school?

What official positions have you held within your community?

What leadership activities have you engaged with in your school?

How have these leadership experiences prepared you to participate in the college environment?

What does the ideal college environment look like to you, and what would you like your role within that environment to be?

What is the biggest challenge you have faced in a position of leadership?

What has been your biggest accomplishment related to a position of leadership?

What changes would you like to see in your community?

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## THE DIVERSITY ESSAY

The DIVERSITY Essay essentially says that at college, diversity is valued. How will you contribute to this vision?

### EXAMPLE PROMPTS:

- Rice is lauded for creating a collaborative atmosphere that enhances the quality of life for all members of our campus community. The Residential College System and undergraduate life are heavily influenced by the unique life experiences and cultural traditions each student brings. What life perspectives would you contribute to the Rice community? (500 words).
- Duke University seeks a talented, engaged student body that embodies the wide range of human experience; we believe that the diversity of our students makes our community stronger. If you'd like to share a perspective you bring or experiences you've had that would help us understand you better, perhaps a community you belong to or your family or cultural background, we encourage you to do so here. Real people are reading your application, and we want to do our best to understand and appreciate the real people applying to Duke. (250 words)

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# THE DIVERSITY ESSAY

What are all the activities or identities that have shaped who you are today? Where are the compelling intersections among those activities or identities?

How have your activities complemented one another?

What is something that you truly value that you want to work toward in college? How could this be of benefit to the school?

What are some significant challenges that you have encountered as a result of your interesting interests?

What do you think makes you unique? Why is this something that the college is looking for?

What do you think you can teach or demonstrate to other people?

How would your friends describe you?

# THE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ESSAY

The EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY Essay asks students to elaborate on an activity or work experience that was particularly meaningful.

## EXAMPLE PROMPTS:

- Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences. (Harvard, 50-150 words)
- Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences. (Vanderbilt, 200-400 words)

**NOTE:** The Extracurricular Activity Essay can go one of two ways: First, it could connect directly to your Admissions Angle, which is good if your personal statement does not. Alternatively, it could explore an unrelated activity to add dimension to your profile. In either case, choose an activity that you rank within your top 3-4 on the application.



ACTIVITY

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# THE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ESSAY

## CHOOSING AN ACTIVITY

What are the top four activities on your Common App? Consider the "What Makes an Extracurricular Activity Good?" criteria from the manual.

Which of these activities is not represented by your personal statement or Why Major essays?

Which of the remaining activities is the most impressive? Consider accomplishments, positions of leadership, and deliverables.

Of the remaining activities, which will add the most dimension to you as an applicant?

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# THE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ESSAY

## WRITING ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITY: PART 1

Why do you like the activity?

What have you accomplished in this activity?

What kind of hardship have you overcome in this activity?

How are you planning to extend with activity into your college career?

What opportunities opened up to you as a result of your participation in the activity?

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# THE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ESSAY

## WRITING ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITY: PART 2

What changed over the course of your participation in the activity?

When was a time that your activity particularly challenged you?

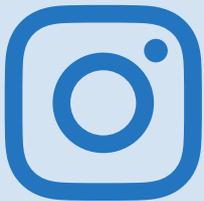
What does the school offer that is related to your activity?

How has your activity positively influenced other aspects of your life?

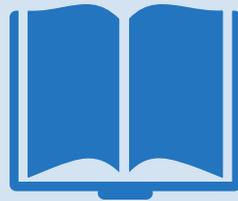
What character traits are necessary to be successful in this activity? In what ways do you embody those traits?

# @theadmissionsangle

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