ENC1101 – P. Garrett Essay #2 - College Admission/Scholarship Essay

**“*An essay that shows careful thought, superior writing skills, and meticulous preparation will increase your chances for admission.”*** (Georgia Tech)

Tips from *The College Application Essay* published by The College Board:

1. Remember that good writing has a natural, easy-to-read quality. Keep the language and structure simple, direct, and clear. Don’t hide lazy thinking behind elaborate language. Use the fewest words possible.

2. Avoid clichés and sentences that sound good but don’t mean anything. Make every sentence count.

3. Avoid worn-out literary sources. Forget “To thine own self be true.” Over-used quotations, old saws, and familiar maxims

will sap the freshness of your essay.

4. Use active verbs and vigorous expressions. Instead of “Due to my parents’ coaxing, I decided to try once more,” say “My

parents coaxed me to try again.” Instead of “My interest in sports was encouraged by my father,” say “My father

encouraged my football career.”

5. Strike a balance between a personal and a formal tone. In a choice between a long, fancy word and a short, simple one,

choose the simple word. Avoid the thesaurus; be yourself, and don’t substitute a stuffy style for substance.

6. Remember that your audience is the Admissions Committee, not the English faculty’s Poet-in-Residence or chairman of the

Chemistry department. Be intelligent and knowledgeable, but above all, be yourself.

7. Avoid empty words and phrases like *really, special, unique, interesting, each and every,* and *meaningful.*

8. Avoid vague and predictable conclusions: “I learned a lot.” “I interacted with others different from myself.” “I benefited

from the love and support of my family.” “I learned to work with others.”

9. Proofread, proofread, proofread. The essay that began, “If there is one word that can describe me, that word is

‘profectionist,’” did not make a favorable impression on the Admissions Committee. Essays are read as an indication of

writing skill.

\*\***Note:** You must produce at least 500 words for this assignment. If your first-choice college has a smaller word count, then do that essay **and** another essay for a different college.

**Option #1:**

Many of you are considering applying to colleges that require an essay as part of the admission process. In an attempt to help, Essay #2 will focus on college admission topics.

For those of you who have already selected a school, *use the actual essay topic on the college’s application*. Simply follow the directions on the admission form. Submit your essay as a typed paper, not on the form itself. In that way, you can use the feedback you receive from the grader and me to modify and improve the final product that you actually submit to the college.

**Note:** Please type the topic and college on the title page of your essay.

**2018-2019 Coalition Application Essay Prompts**

Many of the colleges and universities that accept the Coalition application require you to submit at least one essay as part of your application. You can start working on these essays at any time and save drafts in your MyCoalition Locker. While there is no perfect length for an essay, we recommend that you aim for 500 to 550 words. For more information on specific application requirements, please consult the website for each institution to which you are applying, as requirements often vary.

**The prompts for the 2017-19 application years are:**

1. Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.

2. Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus.

3. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.

4. Has there been a time when you’ve had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your beliefs?

5. What is the hardest part of being a teenager now? What’s the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend (assuming they would listen to you)?

6. Submit an essay on a topic of your choice.

**2019-2020 Common Application Essay Prompts** More and more schools are using the Common Application. Writing on one of these topics is the “safest bet” if you are undecided at this point.   
  
1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.   
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?   
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?   
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.   
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.   
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more? 7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

**Option #2:**

For those who have not decided up a college or do not need to submit an essay, use this opportunity to apply for a scholarship. Almost all scholarships require an essay in the application process. *An essay contest would also fulfill this assignment*. Again, if you have a scholarship already targeted for application, use it. Leon's Guidance Dept. web page contains a list of available scholarships.

**Note:** Please include scholarship and essay directions on the title page of your essay.

**Option #3:**

If none of the above situations are applicable, chose one of the essay topics from the following list.

1. What is your favorite word and why? (University of Virginia)
2. Those of us in admissions are often asked: what are the two or three things in a student’s application to which we give the greatest weight. If you were in our shoes, what are the two or three things in an application to which you would give the greatest weight? Explain why. (Princeton)

4. If you were to develop a Mt. Rushmore representing the 20th century, whose faces would you select and why?

(William and Mary)

5. If you were to choose or create a quote or saying that defined you, what would it be and why? (University of North

Carolina, at Chapel Hill)

6. “Simplify, simplify, simplify,” intoned Thoreau. If you were to follow Thoreau’s advice and scale back your

possessions, what would you keep and why? (Stanford)

7. “The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.” (Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903) Discuss a situation in your life outside of school in which you put into action what you learned in the classroom. How did you benefit from this experience? What has the situation led you to believe about what education should or should not do? (Cornell)

8. Most people belong to many different communities--groups defined by shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong and

describe that community and your place in it. (University of Virginia)

9. You are hosting a brunch for historical, literary, or other disreputable persons (think: Mad Hatter’s Tea Party). What is your menu? Who are your guests? In answering this question, imagine a scenario. We want some exposition, serious or silly; we would accept some dialogue, and we are willing to trust you to respond in such a way that your brain power, your imagination, your sense of taste, and your capacity to tell story reveal something true about you.

(University of Chicago)

10. It’s easy to identify with the hero—the literary or historical figure who saves the day. Have you ever identified with a

figure who wasn’t a hero—a villain or a scapegoat, a bench-warmer or a bit player? If so, tell us why this figure

appealed to you—and if your opinion changed over time, tell us about that, too. (UNC, Chapel Hill)

11. St. Therese of Lisieux wrote in *Story of a Soul,* “The sun shines equally both on cedars and on every tiny flower.” She reminds us that beauty can be found in the great and the small, in the extraordinary and the mundane. Show us the magnificence of the simple in your life. (Notre Dame)

12. If you were given the opportunity to leave a time capsule for posterity (on the grounds of your high school), what one book, one mechanical object, and one other item of your choosing would you select as a statement about life early in 21st century and why? (University of Pennsylvania)

13. “A picture is worth a thousand words” as the adage goes. Sometimes a photo or picture can capture an object that you treasure, a person you admire or a place that you love; sometimes a photograph is simply your record of an experience or moment in your life. Imagine one photo or picture that you have, or would like to have, and tell us why it is meaningful to you. (Stanford)

14. What books have affected you the most. Select one and discuss how this book has impacted your life. Include a list

of the books you have read during the past twelve months. (Harvard)

15. You have been asked many questions on this application, all asked by someone else. If you yourself were in a position to ask a thought-provoking and revealing question of college applicants, what would that question be? Now that you have asked your ideal question, answer it. (Dartmouth)

16. We tend to spend our time doing the things we do well—running because we’re good runners or painting because we’re talented artists. Tell us about a time when you tried something for which you had no talent. How did it go?

(UNC, Chapel Hill)

17. If you were to describe yourself by a quotation, what would the quote be?

(Dartmouth)

**2018-19 U Chicago**

**Question 1*(Required)***

How does the University of Chicago, as you know it now, satisfy your desire for a particular kind of learning, community, and future? Please address with some specificity your own wishes and how they relate to UChicago.

**Question 2: Extended Essay *(Required; Choose one)***

***Essay Option 1***

In 2015, the city of Melbourne, Australia created a "tree-mail" service, in which all of the trees in the city received an email address so that residents could report any tree-related issues. As an unexpected result, people began to email their favorite trees sweet and occasionally humorous letters. Imagine this has been expanded to any object (tree or otherwise) in the world, and share with us the letter you’d send to your favorite. *-Inspired by Hannah Lu, Class of 2020*

***Essay Option 2***

You’re on a voyage in the thirteenth century, sailing across the tempestuous seas. What if, suddenly, you fell off the edge of the Earth? *-Inspired by Chandani Latey, AB'93*

***Essay Option 3***

The word floccinaucinihilipilification is the act or habit of describing or regarding something as unimportant or of having no value. It originated in the mid-18th century from the Latin words "floccus," "naucum," "nihilum," and "pilus"—all words meaning “of little use.” Coin your own word using parts from any language you choose, tell us its meaning, and describe the plausible (if only to you) scenarios in which it would be most appropriately used. *-Inspired by Ben Zhang, Class of 2022*

***Essay Option 4***

Lost your keys? Alohomora. Noisy roommate? Quietus. Feel the need to shatter windows for some reason? Finestra. Create your own spell, charm, jinx, or other means for magical mayhem. How is it enacted? Is there an incantation? Does it involve a potion or other magical object? If so, what's in it or what is it? What does it do? *-Inspired by Emma Sorkin, Class of 2021*