



Supplemental Essays

Supplemental questions continue to gain importance in college admission decisions. Be certain to carefully craft these responses. Common supplemental questions include:

What do you want to major in and why is it a good fit for you?

Be sure to include any efforts you have made to explore the major and potential careers such as participating in an informational interview with a professional in your field of interest, listening to guest speakers, and/or job-shadowing or interning opportunities. Don't forget to describe any academic coursework or other educational opportunities you have taken advantage of such as Ted Talks, Ted.com, online Coursera courses, or books related to your field of interest.

Why do you want to attend this college?

Be specific — this will require that you do some research. Be sure to mention if you have visited the campus either physically or through a virtual tour, talked to a student who attends the school, or explored a specific major. College admissions officers don't like to hear generic answers such as, "The campus is pretty and I love your location near the beach!"

Additional Information?

Most college applications have a place to express anything else about yourself that you were not able to convey in the main application. This space should be used wisely. Students frequently use this space to explain an illness, family situation, or other situation that may have impacted the student's grades or attendance in high school. Ideally, the student will explain the situation, exactly how it impacted his or her academic performance, and the steps taken to move forward. Additionally, students might use this space to give further detail on a particularly impressive accomplishment or experience — information that might not have fit in the previous essay or activity sections of the application. This is also a good place to disclose any physical or learning limitations if the student chooses. The goal should be to explain the limitation and how the student manages the condition.

A few common sense tips about this section: It's not a place for excuses or complaints about teachers, it's not a continuation of your very long essay, and it's not a replication of anything you've already mentioned in the application.

Use this page to answer a few key questions that frequently show up on applications.

What do you want to major in _____?

Why do you want to attend _____?

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