

Why College X? Essays

Help students prepare by asking them to answer questions like these:

1. What is the prompt really asking?
2. What appeals to you about the college/university/program?
3. What do you want the readers to learn about you from reading your response?
4. Why are you compatible with this school/program?
5. What examples/illustrations can you share to demonstrate your compatibility?
6. Before drafting your essay, write out a simple paragraph or bullet points responding to this question: *When they are done reading this essay, what will readers know about me that they can't find out from the rest of my application?*

Prework:

For students who have already written a Why Us essay:

1. Note how this prompt is similar to or different from the other school's Why Us prompt.
2. Use your other essay(s) as a starting point for this one, but use examples for this school.
3. Make some notes about what you are interested in and what this school offers that address those interests (academic, social, intellectual, cultural, etc.)

For students who are writing a Why Us essay for the first time: Using this chart as an example, create a chart of your own with the same headings. Consider the different categories noted in the prompt (academic, social, intellectual, cultural, etc.)

The School (What attracts me to this university?)	Me (What do I want readers to know about me?)	Stories (How does what I know about the program mesh with what I want them to know about me?)
Survey classes supplemented by smaller learning opportunities	I am independent enough to make the most of large settings and also stay engaged in a small group	I took language courses at the community college last year. I had to keep my own schedule, turn in assignments without prompting, etc. For English, I took a junior/senior seminar at school, where every student had to participate in discussion and even lead the discussion sometimes. The day I lead our session on <i>She's Come Undone</i> was fun and invigorating.
Opportunity to explore areas I'm not familiar with	I am curious about so many things	I am always going to programs at the art museum, library, etc., whether they are about

		composting, poetry or investments.
--	--	------------------------------------

Sample Prompts

Barnard College

What factors influenced your decision to apply to Barnard College and why do you think the College would be a good match for you?

Northwestern University

What are the unique qualities of Northwestern – and of the specific undergraduate school(s) to which you are applying – that make you want to attend the University? In what ways do you hope to take advantage of the qualities you have identified?

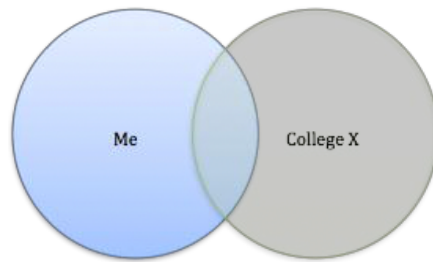
New York University

We would like to know more about your interest in NYU. We are particularly interested in knowing what motivated you to apply to NYU and more specifically, why you have applied or expressed interest in a particular campus, school, college, program, and/or area of study? If you have applied to more than one, please tell us why you are interested in each of the campuses, schools, colleges, or programs to which you have applied. You may be focused or undecided, or simply open to the options within NYU's global network; regardless, we want to understand – Why NYU?

Johns Hopkins University

Johns Hopkins University was founded in 1876 on a spirit of exploration and discovery. As a result, students can pursue a multi-dimensional undergraduate experience both in and outside of the classroom. Given the opportunities at Hopkins, please discuss your current interests – academic or extracurricular pursuits, personal passions, summer experiences, etc. – and how you will build upon them here.

You can use the illustration below as a thought-starter. As with all essays, focus on content before structure and polish. Make sure students understand the purpose of this type of essay.



UM-LSA <i>(What attracts me to this school/ program/major?)</i>	Me <i>(What do I want readers to know about me?)</i>	Stories <i>(How does what I know about the program mesh with what I want them to know about me?)</i>
Survey classes supplemented by smaller learning opportunities	I am independent enough to make the most of large settings and also stay engaged in a small group	I took language courses at the community college last year. I had to keep my own schedule, turn in assignments without prompting, etc. For English, I took a junior/senior seminar at school, where every student had to participate in discussion and even lead the discussion sometimes. The day I lead our session on <i>She's Come Undone</i> was fun and invigorating.
Opportunity to explore areas I'm not familiar with	I am curious about so many things	I am always going to programs at the art museum, library, etc., whether they are about composting, poetry or investments.