



“As someone who values creative innovation, I want a career in business entrepreneurship. I know I’ll succeed, because I am a great leader. I plan to go to the Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland.”

Problems:

1. Vague generalities
2. Not convincing
3. Not interesting

THREE PARTS TO WRITING THE ESSAY

1. Examining question or prompt;
2. Pre-writing response;
3. Creating first draft.

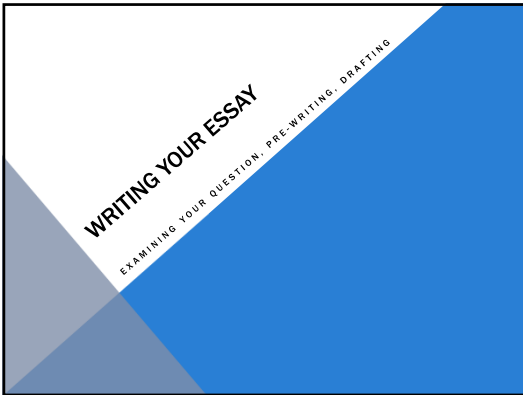
SITUATION: WHY ARE YOU WRITING THIS ESSAY?
Colleges and scholarship funders want to know your

VALUES

INTERESTS

STRENGTHS

GOALS



EXAMINE YOUR ESSAY QUESTION

Essential that you fully understand—and answer—your essay question or prompt!

For any question or prompt:

1. TASK(S);
2. SUBJECT(S) or TOPIC(S)
3. INSTRUCTIONS;
4. CONNECTIONS;
5. ASSUMPTIONS.

PROMPT FOR FREDERICK DOUGLASS SCHOLARSHIP TRANSFER ESSAY

Describe the neighborhood or community you grew up in. How has it shaped your dreams and aspirations, and how do you intend to use your educational and professional goals to impact the University of Maryland and beyond? (500 words max) (U. of Maryland)

What are the
TASKS AND TOPICS
INSTRUCTIONS
CONNECTIONS
ASSUMPTIONS

PREWRITING EXAMPLE: MAPPING IDEAS (CLUSTERING)



INTERACTIVE EXERCISES

#1: Type and enter your dreams and aspirations.

#2: If anything about the neighborhood or community you grew up in connects to your dreams and aspirations, type and enter that.

PREWRITING: MAPPING YOUR IDEAS (CLUSTERING)

- Write subject or topic phrase on paper.
- Draw a circle around that phrase.
- Jot down other ideas that come to mind, circle them, connect them to circles surrounding similar ideas.

PREWRITING: SEQUENCING YOUR IDEAS (OUTLINING)

PART ONE—What story will you tell about how your neighborhood or community shaped your dreams?

PART TWO—What educational and professional goals have you formed from your dreams and aspirations? How have you acted on these goals so far?

PART THREE—How will you use your goals to impact the University of Maryland and beyond?

CREATING THE FIRST DRAFT

INTRODUCTION: story from the past, connect to values

BODY: what you are learning and doing now.

CONCLUSION: what you plan to do in the future.

Your personal statement should communicate

1. Your **EXPERIENCE** and **INTERESTS**;
2. Your **GOALS**: what larger contribution you want to make;
3. How you **PLAN** to go from where you are to where you want to be.

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR WRITING

- Respond to the question posed.
- Don't worry about length or grammar in first draft.
- Write in your own voice.
- Be specific; avoid vague or overused phrases.
- Address supplemental questions.
- Don't restate your resume.

REVISIONS HAPPEN AT FOUR LEVELS

- Content;
- Organization;
- Sentence structure and word choice;
- Grammar and punctuation.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Fully answer the question?
- Express my unique story?
- Chronological: past to present to future?
- Thematic: examples illustrate theme?
- Show the reader who I am?
- Refer to Transfer/Scholarship Essay Checklist

REVISING YOUR ESSAY
FOUR LEVELS OF REVISIONS

DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

Text	Response
Your opening paragraph	Draw the reader in with a story or example?
Your second paragraph	Support content and flow?
Each succeeding paragraph	Support content and flow?
Your concluding paragraph	Conclude narrative? Fully answer the question?

CONTENT

- Highlights, key experiences. Don't duplicate information.
- Include *concrete examples*.
- Avoid generalizations.
- Avoid overusing quotations or dropping names.

MORE ON CONTENT

- Stay on *topic*; focus on question.
- Challenges: how you *met* them; failures: what you *learned*.
- *Humor*; be careful; perceived as sarcasm.
- Avoid *religious proselytizing*. Avoid *political rants*.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND WORD CHOICE

- Word and character limits.
- Avoid slang, colloquialisms.
- Vary length of sentences.

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE #3

Type and enter a shorter version of these sentences:

When I graduated from high school, I knew that I was just officially completing the very first part of an extremely long educational journey.

These really great essays were completed and presented by the students of Effie Slegel, professor of English.

Having read a totally awesome book on Innovation by Elon Musk, I knew I could blow everyone's minds by announcing my career choice of business entrepreneurship.

ORGANIZATION

- Unity and coherence; Read out loud.
- Topic sentences, unified paragraphs.
- Cohesion and transitions: Ideas, details flow smoothly.

STRATEGIES FOR CUTTING WORD COUNT

1. Take a break!
2. Essay prompt: understand all parts.
3. Paragraphs: does each one answer question?
4. Sentences: do they repeat information?
5. Sentences: vague generalizations?
6. Sentences: passive voice? Change to active.
7. Adverbs: necessary? Cut *really, very*.
8. Adjectives: necessary? Cut *good, bad*.
9. Prepositions: necessary?
10. Progressive verbs: necessary?
11. Read essay aloud or have it read to you.

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION

- Print out your essay; proofread several times.
- Write complete sentences.
- Avoid contractions, symbols, and abbreviations.
- Subject-verb agreement.
- Commas, semi-colons, colons.
- Trusted person: Writing Center tutor.