



Sample College Admissions Essays

We have prepared this handout of actual essays written by current Harvard students who attended secondary schools in the UK (with names changed for anonymity) in order to provide some guidance to schools and applicants. Because the university admissions processes in the US and the UK are markedly different, we have received requests for some sample essays and tips for writing them and hope they will be helpful.

Here is the official description of the personal essay requirement:

Please write an essay (250 words minimum) on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below. This personal essay helps us become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself.

1. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
4. Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
5. A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
6. Topic of your choice.

Your essay for a US university *might* be the same one you would write for the UCAS system, but perhaps not. We are interested in your academic successes and future plans, but also want to understand what makes you tick as a person. What are your hopes, dreams and fears?

Our advice is to think of two or three possible topics, write a quick first draft of each essay and then show them to your best friend, mother, teacher or anyone who knows you well. Ask that person if your voice and personality come through in the essays and which one sounds the most like you. Then take that essay and polish it off!

As you will see from the following sample essays, these students have written about learning to ride a bike, culture shock at coming to the UK, music, public service, and a favourite book. What will you write about?

Sample Harvard Admissions Essays

Jiyuan Zhang



Sample Harvard Admissions Essays:

50 Successful Harvard Application Essays, 5th Edition Staff of the Harvard Crimson, 2017-05-09 With talented applicants coming from the top high schools as well as the pressure to succeed from family and friends it's no wonder that writing college application essays is one of the most stressful tasks high schoolers face. Add in how hard it is to get started or brag about accomplishments or order stories for maximum effect and it's a wonder that any ever get written. To help this completely new edition of 50 Successful Harvard Application Essays edited by the staff of the Harvard Crimson gives readers the most inspiring approaches both conventional and creative that won over admissions officers at Harvard University the nation's top ranked college. From chronicling personal achievements to detailing unique talents the topics covered in these essays open applicants up to new techniques to put their best foot forward. It teaches students how to Get started Stand out Structure the best possible essay Avoid common pitfalls. Each essay in this collection is from a Harvard student who made the cut and is followed by analysis by the staff of The Harvard Crimson where strengths and weakness are detailed to show readers how they can approach their own stories and ultimately write their own high caliber essay. 50 Successful Harvard Application Essays all new essays and straightforward advice make it the first stop for applicants who are looking to craft essays that get them accepted to the school of their dreams.

50 Successful Harvard Application Essays, Fourth Edition Staff of the Harvard Crimson, 2014-07-08 Each essay in this collection is from a Harvard student who made the cut and is followed by analysis by the staff of The Harvard Crimson where strengths and weakness are detailed to show you how you can approach your stories and ultimately write your own winning essay. *50 Successful Harvard Application Essays* Harvard Crimson, 1999-07-02 This helpful collection of successful samples completed by Harvard students compiled by the student run newspaper The Harvard Crimson analyses each essay to point out effective and diverse ways to write an essay and the common pitfalls to avoid.

55 Successful Harvard Law School Application Essays The Staff of the Harvard Crimson, 2025-10-16 Fifty five all new essays that got their authors into Harvard showing what worked what didn't and how you can do it too. Harvard Law School is one of the premier law schools in the world. It as well as other top schools draws thousands of applicants from the best colleges and companies. With only a limited number of slots for so many talented applicants the admissions officers have become more and more selective every year the competition has become fierce and even the best and brightest could use an edge. This completely new edition of 55 Successful Harvard Law School Application Essays is the best resource for anyone looking for that edge. Through the most up to date sample essays from the Harvard Law School students who made the cut and insightful analysis from the staff at The Harvard Crimson it shows you how best to Argue your case effectively Arrange your accomplishments for maximum impact Avoid common pitfalls. 55 Successful Harvard Law School Application Essays guides you toward writing essays that do more than simply list your background and accomplishments. These are essays that reveal your passion for the law as well as the discipline you bring to this demanding

profession and will help you impress any admissions department The all new essays and straightforward and time saving advice will give you all the insider tips you ll need to write the essays that will get you into the best law schools in the world

100 Successful College Application Essays ,2002 An updated guide to college applications essays offers one hundred complete essays that helped gain students admission to the country s top schools as well as provides helpful advice from admissions officers Original *55 Successful Harvard Law School Application Essays* Staff of the Harvard Crimson,2014-07-08 Harvard Law School is the premier law school in America It as well as other top schools draw thousands of applicants from the best colleges and best companies from around the world As the admissions departments become more and more selective every year the competition becomes even fiercer and even the best and brightest need an edge 55 Successful Harvard Law School Application Essays is the best book for anyone looking for that edge Through the most up to date sample essays from the Harvard Law School students who made the cut and the most insightful critiques advice from the staff at The Harvard Crimson it teaches applicants how to Stand out Argue their case effectively Arrange their accomplishments for maximum impact Avoid common pitfalls 55 Successful Harvard Law School Application Essays guides applicants toward writing essays that reveal their passion for the law the discipline they bring to this demanding profession and the strength of character they possess for the ethical and moral challenges that lie ahead The no nonsense advice and all new essays give applicants all the help they ll need to write the essays that will get them in to the best law schools in the world *Examining in Harvard College : a Collection of Essays by Members of the Harvard Faculty* ,1963 **Real Essays for College & Grad School** Anne McKinney,2000 Colleges and universities place great emphasis on essays written as part of the process for admission and scholarships This guide to constructing essays includes essays that have worked for real people plus dozens of other actual samples **100 Successful College Application Essays** The Harvard Independent,2013-07-03 The Largest Collection of Successful College Application Essays Available in One Volume These are the essays that helped their authors gain admission to Harvard Yale Brown Columbia Wellesley Pomona and other outstanding schools followed by invaluable comments by experts in admissions placement and college counseling at some of the best learning institutions around the country This helpful guide includes 100 complete essays with professional commentary Examples of essays on common topics family background athletics work experience as well as the more offbeat Essays on the immigrant experience by foreign born students A section of drawing and cartoon essays Insider advice from a Princeton Dean of Admission And more Compiled by members of The Harvard Independent the weekly newsmagazine of Harvard University this revised and updated edition is an invaluable resource for students who want to write the best possible essay and improve their chances of admission to the best possible school *The Admissions Essay* Helen W. Power,Robert DiAntonio,1998 This book dispels the mystery and dread often associated with writing an application essay guiding students painlessly through the process

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