

## College Admissions SAMPLE Essays: Compare & Contrast

Admissions essays are supposed to be as varied as the students they represent: no two should be exactly alike. However, it's also true that SOME qualities and characteristics are highly valued by the admissions officers who will be reading them.

Though we never know EXACTLY what will make a certain university happy, here are some essays that have been publicly (and legally) posted online for us to examine. Please DO NOT COPYCAT these essays too closely, as that can easily backfire; instead, observe what techniques “worked” and think about how to make them your own. *(Note that these essays had different prompts and word count maximums.)*

	Was this essay...	Write down your own observations of why this essay is “successful”. Be specific. <i>(Don't just repeat the list at left.)</i>
Essay #1: <a href="#">Jonathan Ababiy</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorable? <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging? <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional? <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous? <input type="checkbox"/> Successful at making this student seem appealing and college-ready? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it make a point/message?	
Essay #2: <a href="#">Just Keep Folding</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorable? <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging? <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional? <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous? <input type="checkbox"/> Successful at making this student seem appealing and college-ready? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it make a point/message?	
Essay #3: <a href="#">Papa John's Pizza</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorable? <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging? <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional? <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous? <input type="checkbox"/> Successful at making this student seem appealing and college-ready? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it make a point/message?	

**REFLECT:** How are these essays similar and different from the typical essays you write in school?

**College Admissions SAMPLE Essays: Compare & Contrast ANSWER KEY**

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Though we never know EXACTLY what will make a certain university happy, here are some essays that have been publicly (and legally) posted online for us to examine. Please DO NOT COPYCAT these essays too closely, as that can easily backfire; instead, observe what techniques “worked” and think about how to make them your own. *(Note that these essays had different prompts and word count maximums.)*

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Essay #2: <a href="#">Just Keep Folding</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorable? <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging? <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional? <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous? <input type="checkbox"/> Successful at making this student seem appealing and college-ready? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it make a point/message?	This one has a slow start – the crane folding story was a little too long/imbalanced for MY taste – but it does succeed in making us FEEL how LONG it took her to finish. Paragraph 4 is where she ingeniously transitions into making this about herself, and not just cranes. The second half does a great job of revealing her motivations, goals, and characteristics (like determination). The ending has a GREAT punchline.
Essay #3: <a href="#">Papa John’s Pizza</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorable? <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging? <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional? <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous? <input type="checkbox"/> Successful at making this student seem appealing and college-ready? <input type="checkbox"/> Does it make a point/message?	Given that this was a short, supplementary essay/question... this one is certainly unique; it doesn’t DIRECTLY reveal anything about her, BUT her writing style indirectly shows off her personality (and writing skills), which make her appealing. I personally wish she’d used more sentences to tell more about herself and not through the metaphor of pizza. (NOTE: If you read the full article and what Yale said to her, you’ll notice that she made herself seem passionate and likable... that CAN work, but doesn’t always guarantee admission.)

**REFLECT:** How are these essays similar and different from the typical essays you write in school? They’re not just “personal” (a vague word); they tell STORIES to get a point across in a more engaging way, revealing SOME element of the writer’s personality AND/OR goals.