

# Sample Scholarship Essay Prompt

Every year the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) Scholarship asks students to write two essays on the following topics. You might see similar essay topics used in a number of other scholarships. The topics help the scholarship review committee get to know the applicant better and hear their story.

1) Reflect your personal point of view on your **most significant challenge or accomplishment** and its value to your life. Limit to one page 250-350 words.

2) Reflect your personal point of view on your **long-range goals** and what you need to learn to achieve them. Limit to one page, 250-350 words.

## **\* Sample College Essay Questions \* What Do Colleges Want to Know?**

Generally, there are three types of questions: The "you," the "why us," and the "creative." Here are tips and actual sample questions for each type. Don't assume that the questions are currently being used by a college (most colleges adjust questions annually).

### **The "You" Question**

Many colleges ask for an essay that boils down to, "Tell us about yourself." The school just wants to know you better and see how you'll introduce yourself. For example:

- "Please complete a one-page personal statement and submit it with your application." (James Madison University)
- "How would you describe yourself as a human being? What quality do you like best in yourself and what do you like least? What quality would you most like to see flourish and which would you like to see wither?" (Bates College)

### **Your Approach**

This direct question offers a chance to reveal your personality, insight, and commitment. The danger is that it's open-ended, so you need to focus. Find just one or two things that will reveal your best qualities, and avoid the urge to spill everything.

### **The "Why Us" Question**

Some schools ask for an essay about your choice of a school or career. They're looking for information about your goals, and about how serious your commitment is to this particular school. For example:

- "Why is UVM a good college choice for you?" (University of Vermont)
- "Please tell us about your career goals and any plans you may have for graduate study." (Westfield State College)

### **Your Approach**

The focus is provided: Why did you choose this school or path. This should be pretty clear to you, since you probably went through some kind of selection process. Make sure you know your subject well. For example, if you say you want to attend Smith College to major in dance, the school will be able to tell how carefully you've chosen (Smith doesn't have a dance major).