

Resumes

1. Resumes are a highlight reel, not an autobiography
 - a. Resumes are ONE PAGE no exception, until you've had at least 10 years of experience
 - b. A Resume is NOT a list of ALL of your awards, achievements, and involvements
 - i. Sometimes scholarships will actually ask for ALL, but they will say "list all of your awards" not "provide a resume", when applying for a job, it's always 1 page.
2. Design is important, but it should be simple
 - a. No fun colors, fancy fonts, or and be wary of pictures/symbols
 - b. Use bolds, italics, and different font sizes
 - c. Align text to the left (most of the time)
 - d. Do a 5 second scan. What do you read first? That's what they will read first.
3. BULLET POINTS
 - a. Here is where you can **really** stand out
 - b. Your goal isn't to list your duties, but instead your *impact*
 - c. Answer What you did, how you did it, and why you did it or the impact it had
 - d. Here's a great article on how to craft them:
<https://www.careereducation.columbia.edu/resources/resumes-impact-creating-strong-bullet-points>
4. Other tips
 - a. Include your city/state, not your full address
 - b. Exclude your "special skills" like "good leader, or good communicator"
 - i. This should be evident through your bullet points and interview questions
 - ii. Pertinent skills are okay like "Certified in Adobe Suite" except for Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel), unless your are REALLY good.
 - c. Ditch the objective statement. Usually you are applying for a specific position, so that clear, and your long term future goal will be revealed in the interview

Interviews

"So, Tell me about yourself."

3 things to include:

1. A few selected pieces of your past/upbringing
 - a. You don't need to tell your whole autobiography, and I probably don't need to know your siblings jobs or all of their names
2. Something you care about
 - a. This will eventually turn into sharing your purpose, but that word is really scary! Start here.

3. Why you want this position/opportunity

Then connect each of them to make a consistent flow!

“Tell me about a time when...”

S- Situation

T- Task

A- Action

R - Response

Scholarships

You can't win what you don't apply for.

Have a schedule that works for you. Use either an online or paper version that includes a list of scholarships with

1. Scholarship Name (and link if applicable)
2. Scholarship Amount
3. Scholarship Due Date
4. Special Scholarship needs (i.e 2 reference letters, an interesting question, etc.)
5. Progress (not started, started, needs special attention before moving forward, completed)
 - a. We recommend this be a color coded system (i.e green = done, yellow = started, orange - attention, etc.)
6. Won/didn't win (Y/N)
7. Is the Scholarship Renewable? (Y/N)

*****Then also put the due dates in your personal calendar!!!***

Essays are an ART! They should take time, and be reviewed and edited.

1. Be concise and effective
 - a. This is not time for hitting word counts like you do for homework. Each sentence should have a purpose and be necessary.
2. Really make sure you're answering the question(s) and your supporting stories don't distract from it
 - a. It's good to use stories so your essays feel personal, but they need to be the right story (see example #1)
3. Have second opinions!!!

- a. Start early so you have time to appropriately ask for proofreading!
4. Tell a story
 - a. People connect with stories and they are often great ways to convince someone you truly believe the point you are trying to convey.

From *CollegeVine.com*:

College Essay Examples and How They Could Be Improved

Please note: Looking at examples of real essays students have submitted to colleges can be very beneficial to get inspiration for your essays. You should never copy or plagiarize from these examples when writing your own essays. Colleges can tell when an essay isn't genuine and will not view students favorably if they plagiarized.

Essay Example #1

Prompt: *At MIT, we bring people together to better the lives of others. MIT students work to improve their communities in different ways, from tackling the world's biggest challenges to being a good friend. Describe one way in which you have contributed to your community, whether in your family, the classroom, your neighborhood, etc. (200-250 words)*

"Big Boy is back!" a child exclaimed excitedly, brandishing a marker and running towards me.

Having just walked into the room of the local nursery program at my church where I often volunteered, I couldn't help but be amused. No matter how many times I told the kids my real name, I would always be known as "Big Boy."

"Hey Sam! What are we doing today?" I asked enthusiastically, eyeing the chaotically moving marker that was inches away from my face.

"We're coloring angels, let me show you!" he responded. Looking at his multi-colored hands, I could only imagine the masterpieces he and the other kids had created.]

When I tell people I'm interested in pursuing engineering, the last place they expect me to be spending my Sunday mornings is at a church hanging out with a bunch of little kids. Yet, that's exactly where I'll be. After they get over their disbelief, they often ask why, of all places, I would want to spend my time at such a chaotic place. The answer is simple: kids are fun! They do the most adorable things, and they surprise you in the best ways. But beyond that, I do it because I feel I can make a difference. I've watched many of these kids grow up since I started in 7th grade, and they always tell me that I'm their role model. If I can have such an impact on the life of a child, then why shouldn't I continue?

Why This Essay Isn't Strong

At first glance you might think this essay is good—it has a surprising hook, it engages the reader with dialogue, and it includes the student's playful voice. The big issue with this essay is it barely addresses the prompt and the conversation with the kid has very little to do with the reflection the student provides at the end.

The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate your **role** within a given community. We want to see (1)what your role is, (2)what it entails, (3)how the community has been affected, **and** hopefully (4)how you have been affected or changed because of your involvement. We know that this student's role is volunteering at a church nursery program(number 1), but that's about it.

While the final paragraph mentions "*I do it because I feel I can make a difference*", the rest of the essay doesn't address this at all. The student refers to themselves as "*their role model*" and yet the dialogue that encompasses half the essay doesn't show us how this student is a role model nor how they've watched kids grow up and witnessed their impact.

What Could Be Improved

This essay could easily be improved by tweaking the conversation with the little kid. Rather than making it about the student's nickname and coloring, they could have discussed a conversation they had about teaching kids to work through a disagreement or how they inspired a group to start a hobby this student loves themselves. The actual topic could vary but the important idea is conveying that this student is a role model and is making a difference in the lives of these children. Or, you could remove the conversation in brackets to allow more time to share numbers 2-4 from above.

It could also be nice to include details about older kids that they started working with a few years ago so the reader can actually see the impact of this student in the community. For example, maybe they use to kick a soccer ball around with a kid when they were in the program and now that kid is eight and they joined a local soccer team because they want to play varsity in high school like the student. An anecdote like that demonstrates a tangible impact this student had and makes it very easy to see how they are a role model.

Essay Example #2

Prompt: How did you discover your intellectual and academic interests, and how will you explore them at the University of Pennsylvania? (350-400 words)

My second grade accomplishment of being designated "Star of the Week" came with the requirement of filling out a poster about myself. Besides telling the world my favorite snack, I had to write down my favorite subject and why—a box I ended up cramming, in the smallest handwriting possible, full of every single subject we'd explored at age seven.

I have always been drawn to areas that allow me to combine my interdisciplinary passions. When I had the chance to promote school events in student council, I realized that Marketing is one such subject. So I started seeking more venues to learn about the field.

One of these opportunities came in the form of Penn's own Leadership in the Business World program. The RTAs-residential teaching assistants-helped me focus on the arena of marketing as I conducted research on target markets and branding strategies to apply to our team's startup. By the end of the program, I'd gotten a taste of the resources Penn has to offer to its undergraduate business students.

At Pennsylvania, I look forward to a varied curriculum that will enable me to pursue an interdisciplinary education which is strong in business and also offers a well-rounded General Education. Classes like “Creativity” and “Strategic Brand Management” will challenge me to learn and apply the diversity of technical and interpersonal skills required in the professional world.

I also look forward to the chances outside the classroom where I will be able to pursue my interest in Marketing. I can join the MUSE organization (maybe under the Creative agency), where upperclassmen and working professionals will mentor me in my education and career. I can look for opportunities to do research with professors like Dr. Kahn about brand loyalty or visual design. At the Wharton School, the resources-faculty, curriculum, network-are abundant and diverse, making it the perfect place for me to pursue my interest in Marketing.

Why This Essay Isn't Strong

This essay makes a good effort, but ultimately feels **flat and generic**. To begin with, the story at the beginning was a nice attempt to establish a personal, emotional connection with a callback to their student's childhood, but it doesn't serve the essay at all. The whole essay is about pursuing marketing, therefore an anecdote about them discovering marketing would have been a much stronger opening. Instead of casually mentioning the “*chance to promote school events as part of my school's Leadership program*”, they could have shown the reader what that program looked like and why it piqued their interest.

In the body of the essay, there are many places where the author falls short in making connections between their own interests and UPenn's unique resources. Highlighting Penn's “*interdisciplinary education which is strong in business*” is by no means a unique school-specific offering, and the classes this student chose are pretty generic business classes. This student tells us what they will get out of these classes, but not why they want to take them. What prior experiences drew them to a class about creativity?

The student also mentions a club they want to join and a professor who's research interests them, but again these aren't Penn specific and there is a lack of personal connection. Why is learning about brand loyalty and visual design so important to this student? The reader gets no insight to the deeper emotional connection this student has to marketing. This essay is a prime example of how name dropping school resources isn't enough.

How It Could Be Improved

The biggest change this essay could make would be to elaborate on their personal connection and fascination with marketing and UPenn. What would that look like?

To start, they would place us in the action at their school's leadership program: describing the project they were working on, the creative ideas running through their head, and the adrenaline coursing through their body as they watched their marketing campaign get launched.

The paragraph about Wharton's Business program would be reworked to put the emphasis on the student's startup and the process they went through to develop a marketing strategy, rather than what the program provided generally to all students.

When they discuss classes, clubs, and professors at Penn, the student would go into detail about why they are choosing this specific opportunity over anything else. How does it relate to their previous experiences? What skills are they hoping to develop and why? How will their future be impacted by participating in this particular opportunity? Each resource at Penn they mention has to drive home two points: the student will benefit from this opportunity and they could only have this at UPenn.

We can help!!

(Recognize we have lives, so give us plenty of time, but we are happy to proofread.)

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