How to Create a Compelling College Application & Supplemental Essays

April 8 - April 29, 2025
Foundational Track

This training is the second half of my Counselor Training Program. I recommend taking the courses consecutively, as they complement one another, but you're welcome to join for just one.

What Is This Course?
This course provides a values-based, step-by-step approach to helping students a) understand how all the written components of the college application fit together, and b) write stand-out supplemental essays, activities lists, and additional information sections.

How the Course Works
Each week you'll watch a set of short video lessons and, at the end of each week, we'll meet for a live 90-minute session to discuss the content & best practices, review essays, and hold Q&A.

Important: I know counselors are busy people, so all the homework for this course is optional.

Can't make a live session? No worries; you'll have the recordings so you can catch up later, and you'll have access to this course forever. Recordings are uploaded to the course within 1-2 business days after each live session.

To join the live sessions, you'll receive two reminder emails: one email will be sent 24 hours prior to the session and another an hour before the session. Both emails will contain the link to the live video session.

Questions? Email help@collegeessayguy.com
Haven't registered? [You can do that here.](#)
Ready to begin? [Log in to your account here.](#)

Course Overview

We'll begin by exploring brainstorming exercises designed to help your students discover essay topics that can be used for multiple prompts (what I call a "Super Essay"), then we'll dive into techniques for upleveling the activities list, additional info section, and "Why us?" essay.

On each live session, we'll do a quick homework review, after which I'll lead a mini-lesson on a topic relevant to that week's theme (i.e., The "Why us" essay), then segue into a lengthy Q&A (usually 30+ questions answered).

Live Session Dates and Times
- April 8th: The College Application: Strategizing the Big Picture
- April 15th: The Activities List, Additional Information Section, and "Why us" Essay
- April 22nd: The Most Common Supplemental Essays
- April 29th: The Great College Application Test & Bringing it All Together

All live sessions will be held at 10-11:30am PT (1-2:30pm ET).

Important: We know counselors are busy people. That's why all the homework for this course is optional.

Week 1: The College Application

Live Session: April 8th at 10-11:30am PT (1-2:30pm ET)

Pre-work to complete before Session 1:
- Watch Modules 0 and 1
- Optional: Continue meeting with your partner to refine your personal statement

Total estimated time needed: 0 hrs - 2 hrs (0 because all the homework is optional, and 2 hours if you watch everything and meet with a partner)

Topics Covered in the Live Session:
- Weaving in the College Admission Nutrients (aka What I learned from analyzing hundreds of college websites "what we're looking for" statements)
- The Nuances and Complexities of Institutional Priorities
- How I Lead the First Two Sessions with a Student + Exercises & Tools I Use
- How to Create an Inspired Application and Supplemental Essays in Half the Time
  - The Overlapping Prompt Game & The Super Essay
  - A Sample Super Essay & The BEABIES Exercise
- Helping a Student Write or Revise Their "Application Logline" (aka How They Are a Multi-hyphenate)

Week 2: The Activities List, Additional Information Section, and "Why us" Essay

Live Session: April 15th at 10-11:30am PT (1-2:30pm ET)

Pre-work to complete before Session 2:
- Watch Module 2
- Optional: Continue meeting with your partner to refine your personal statement

Total estimated time needed: 0 hrs - 2 hrs (0 because all the homework is optional, and 2 hours if you watch everything and meet with a partner)

Topics Covered in the Module (and Reviewed During the Live Session):
- The Activities List: How and Why to Uplevel it in about an Hour
- The Additional Information Section: How, Why (and When) to Use it
- The "Why us" Essay: How to help students stand out
  - Guidance (and a brand new template) for effectively using Chat-GPT for research (but not writing!) purposes

Week 3: The Most Common Supplemental Essays

Live Session: April 22nd at 10-11:30am PT (1-2:30pm ET)

Pre-work to complete before Session 3:
- Watch Module 3
- Optional: Continue meeting with your partner to refine your personal statement

Total estimated time needed: 0 hrs - 2 hrs (0 because all the homework is optional, and 2 hours if you watch everything and meet with a partner)

Topics Covered in the Module (and Reviewed During the Live Session):
- What I Learned from Analyzing Hundreds of Supplemental Essay Prompts This Past Year
- The "How Will You Contribute?" or "Diversity" Essay
- The "Why major" Essay: Why every major is interdisciplinary (and how knowing that can help a student write a better essay)
- The "Community" Essay

Week 4: More Supplemental Essays + Bonus Content

Live Session: April 29th at 10-11:30am PT (1-2:30pm ET)

Pre-work to complete before Session 4:
- Watch Module 4
- Optional: Continue meeting with your partner to refine your personal statement

Total estimated time needed: 0 hrs - 2 hrs (0 because all the homework is optional, and 2 hours if you watch everything and meet with a partner)

Topics Covered in the Module (and Reviewed During the Live Session):
- The "Almost Done" process: What is it and what do we do at CEG?
- How do you know if an application is "doing its job"?
- Putting it all together: analyzing two final, full applications
- "Top 5" or maybe "top 8" exercises / resources to have in our toolkit for supplementals
- UC PIQ Crash Course
- Per request — an undecided Why Major essay
- "Navigating differences" examples
- Audience Choice (by vote, if time)

- Poking Holes in the Roles and Identities Framework: Why might this approach not work? What are its potential limitations or assumptions?
- A Framework for Testing Your Plans and Raising the Likelihood of Them Going Well
- An essay (or two) that are too good to share out publicly
- More on particular essays by request ("Community," "Extracurricular activity," "Intellectual idea," etc.)
- Extended Q&A Time