

COLLEGE ESSAYS · SCORECARD

Supplemental Essay Scorecard

One scorecard for Why-Us, community, activity, and short-answer prompts. Five categories, two points each, ten points total. Score each supplemental on its own.

2 — Ready

1 — Getting there

0 — Not yet

Answers the Prompt Does the essay answer the question this school actually asked?	Specificity & Research Are the details named and real — courses, people, places, moments?	Voice Does it sound like the student, even at this length?	Adds Something New Does it tell the reader something the rest of the application doesn't?	No Wasted Words Does every sentence earn its place in the word limit?
2 · READY Every part of the prompt gets a direct answer, in the order a reader would look for it.	2 · READY Specifics are named and verifiable — a course, a professor, a community, a moment — and each one supports the answer.	2 · READY The essay sounds like the same student as the rest of the application — plain, direct, and recognizably theirs.	2 · READY The essay covers ground the personal statement and activity list don't — a new side of the student.	2 · READY Every sentence earns its place. Cutting any of them would lose something.
1 · GETTING THERE The essay mostly answers the prompt, but skims one part or drifts toward a different question.	1 · GETTING THERE Some real specifics, but generic praise ("prestigious," "amazing community") still does part of the work.	1 · GETTING THERE The student is in there, but the voice flattens into application-speak in places.	1 · GETTING THERE The essay overlaps with other parts of the application but adds at least one new angle.	1 · GETTING THERE The essay fits the limit but spends words on windup or repetition.
0 · NOT YET A repurposed essay that never quite answers this school's question.	0 · NOT YET The essay could be sent to another school, or written by another student, without changes.	0 · NOT YET The essay reads like a formal cover letter, not a student.	0 · NOT YET The essay repeats the personal statement or activity list in different words.	0 · NOT YET The essay runs long, pads to fill space, or spends most of its length on setup.
SCORE ____ / 2	SCORE ____ / 2	SCORE ____ / 2	SCORE ____ / 2	SCORE ____ / 2
TOTAL ____ / 10	9–10 Ready to submit A final read-aloud against the prompt, then done.	6–8 Close One focused pass on the lowest category — usually specifics or wasted words.	3–5 Working draft Check the prompt first: most supplemental problems start with the question, not the writing.	0–2 Early draft Restart from the prompt and the school research, not from the current draft.