
The Storyteller: College Admission Essay Sample

I learned to write essays like prefabricated housing and sensible shoes—standardized, impeccable, identical. No flight of fancy dared disturb the military precision of my supporting arguments as they marched in brigades of four to five sentences, intent upon storming the fortress and seizing the A-plus as a trophy of war. Winning that war became so important that I forgot what drew me to books and poetry in the first place—not the letter grade, but the process of committing ideas to paper and the exhilaration of finally understanding.

The passion for storytelling that flourished through my younger years was battered by the onslaught of school and family responsibilities. It lay dormant until the night I read *Jane Eyre* for tenth grade English. Although my paper was due in two days, the book lay unopened on my desk, just another task on a seemingly endless list. I opened it expecting an indecipherable chain of subordinate clauses, but instead I found a heroine whose quiet grit and genuine self-respect made me want to know her. Her story absorbed me completely, transporting me the way that *A Little Princess* and *Anne of Green Gables* had in the time before all reading led to multiple-choice tests. It was like an old friend had come back to return something that I didn't remember losing.

Since then, I have reclaimed my identity as a reader, a writer, and a seeker. I'm the girl who loves history for its shadowy personages and bare-bones story lines ripe for retelling. After watching *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* one too many times, my best friend and I would exchange in-character letters as Elizabeth I and Mary, painting speculative pictures in intricate prose and sealing them with candle wax. Crossing over to contemporary fiction challenges me differently by forcing me to make familiar happenings new and engaging. No matter the genre, writing is important to me because it is both a source of escape and a source of insight. Although some of my work makes me cringe when I reread it, I keep writing because the little people who populate my imagination torment me if confined.

When I read, I take surreptitious glances between the lines, looking for the moments that go beyond being poignant and become profound. Although I'm apt to let details fly by me in my daily life, novels invite me to sit down and reflect. A good book goes beyond the surface and asks the tough questions, pushing me to explore the narrow side streets and secluded window seats of my own mind. When I use fiction as a tool to understand the world beyond myself, it becomes the tour guide who shares a local's perspective on a strange and exciting city. The best deal in the travel industry is hidden at the secondhand bookstore—enlightenment for ninety-five cents, no vaccinations required.

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I am grateful to have rediscovered the joy in reading and writing for my own fulfillment. I may never be a Kafka or an Austen, but I'll remain a storyteller and a keen observer, always running off down roads less traveled in the pursuit of some glimmer of truth.

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