
What's in a Name: College Admission Essay Sample

While I was on vacation several years ago, a girl about my age approached me while I was splashing around in the pool. She, like me, was probably an only child on a vacation with two lame parents who wanted to unwind and rest, not rush down slides or glide under waterfalls.

"What's your name?" she smiled and asked.

Should I tell her the truth and risk her calling me "Suzie" or asking me if I'm Chinese or struggling to pronounce my name several times until I give up and stop correcting her? "I'm...Sarah," I stammered out.

When strangers asked my name, I often invented a "normal" name. In most cases, people would struggle to pronounce Sook-Hee or question what it means. While I went to Korean school, the people there could easily enunciate every syllable; however, many of them noticed that I didn't look like them, sometimes telling me that I "don't belong at Korean school" or something lovely along those lines. I would then go back to elementary school, where some kids would tell me to "go back to China" or pull their eyes back into slits when they saw me.

Questioning where I belong or maybe even if I belonged anywhere was typical for me. Why was I eating kimchi and rice with mashed potatoes for dinner? But maybe I was never supposed to fit into one category of stereotypes. I know now that my fusion of Korean-European is something to celebrate, not to hide.

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