

College Essays



What's the Right Filter?

Topic A

DESCRIBE & EXPLAIN

- ✓ Describe: family, home, neighborhood, or community
- ✓ Explain: how it has shaped you as a person



GOOD IDEA

- ✓ Use a narrative structure
 - ✓ Beginning, conflict, turning point, end

MUST!

- ✓ Tale of transformation
- ✓ Redemptive life story

Topic B

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

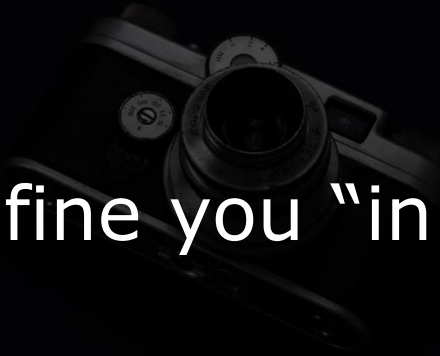
- ✓ Choose one: identify, interest, talent

EXPLAIN

- ✓ HOW does it define you "in an essential way?"

GOOD IDEA

- ✓ Find a way to connect it to your major/career



Topic C

WILD CARD

- ✓ Have fun

DON'T GET LOST...

- ✓ ...in details, gimmicks, or novelty

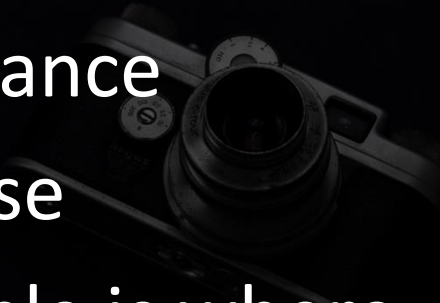
GOOD IDEA

- ✓ Use a narrative structure (tell a story)
- ✓ Find a way to connect it to your major/career
- ✓ End with something meaningful

Make it Great

How to write about conflicts/setbacks

- ✓ Find meaning in your obstacles
- ✓ Perspective / distance
- ✓ Blessing in disguise
- ✓ Where you stumble is where your treasure lies
- ✓ It was painful, but you're happier now
- ✓ You are happy with your current life



CAUTION

These things **contaminate** your essay

- ✓ Too harsh (on yourself and on others)
- ✓ Overly focused on the pain
- ✓ Can't find YOU
- ✓ Poor mental health
- ✓ No transformation / No victory

