

Directions

1. Annotate
 - Unknown words
 - Authors Purpose
 - Rhetorical Devices used to connect audience
 - Thoughts you have while reading
2. Answer questions at end of article

THE BLOG

150 Great Words and Phrases to Use During the College Admissions Process

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Who Are You? The Most Important Question in College Admissions!

At my first college admissions meetings with students, I ask parents to identify nouns, adjectives, phrases, and short stories that will help me know something about their son or daughter. Usually, one parent takes the lead, calling out a rapid-fire list of words: “Brilliant, tough as nails in sports, hard-working, a team player.” Then the other parent chimes in with more adjectives: “Caring, respectful, great with children.” I like to hear from both parents because moms and dads often have unique perspectives on their kids. To get a little deeper, I might also ask, “What was your son (or daughter) like when he (she) was a little boy (girl)?” Or, “How do you think your daughter’s (son’s) friends would describe her (him)?”

I take notes on what the parents say, and when they are finished with their verbal offerings, I ask students if they want to add anything. After the meeting, I email the list of the words to the student and parents, so they can keep adding words.

This exercise is the beginning of a process to come up with word messages students want colleges to “get” about them as they fill-out applications, write essays and have interviews. Figuring out how to communicate about what makes you “you” is one of the most important parts of applying to college.

Why do this? Well, last year’s Stanford application asked, “What five words best describe you?” As they complete the application School Report and Teacher Evaluation forms, high school counselors and teachers appreciate word lists to help them write about what makes students stand out. Just so you know, research suggests that knowing who you are is a first step in becoming a confident, effective adult.

A Word List Starting Point

Since I always encourage students to develop word lists, many ask me to provide examples of words that other applicant families have come up with. To give you some idea, here is a list of descriptive words and phrases I have collected over the years:

A: Academic, adventurous, an advocate, analytical, animal-lover, animated, articulate, artistic, assertive, astute, athletic, autonomous

B: Balanced, brilliant, business-oriented
C: Can-do attitude, capable, caring, cerebral, good with children, class clown, community service oriented, compassionate, competent, concerned about others, confident, conscientious, considerate, courageous, creative, curious
D: Daring, dependable, detail-oriented, diligent, disciplined, down-to-earth, driven
E: Empathetic, enthusiastic, an entrepreneur, ethical, an explorer
F: Fearless, a finisher, fitness-oriented, flexible, focused, a foodie, friendly, doesn't suffer fools, fun, funny
G: Generous, gentle, genuine, never gives up, goal-oriented, goes beyond what is expected, good natured, good with the elderly, gracious, grounded
H: Happy, hard-working, health-oriented, honest, humble, GREAT sense of humor
I: Imaginative, fiercely independent, inspirational, an intellectual, intelligent, interpersonal, involved
J: Jovial, joyful
K: Kind, has real know-how, knowledge-seeking
L: Good with languages, a leader, a fast learner, logical, loyal
M: Mature, mechanically oriented, methodical, modest, motivated, multi-lingual, musical
N: Natural, nonconformist
O: An "old-soul," optimistic, organized, original, outdoorsy, outgoing, his or her own person
P: Passionate, patient, persistent, poised, polite, popular, positive, has stage presence, a problem solver
Q: Quick, quirky
R: A reader, reliable, a researcher, resilient, resourceful, respected, respectful, responsible, a risk-taker
S: Scholarly, scientific, a self-starter, science-oriented, sensitive to others, sincere, sparkling, spiritual, a sponge for ideas, a sports nut, stands out from the crowd, social, strong-willed, studious, supportive
T: Take-charge person, talented, a natural teacher, a team player, techy, tenacious, deep thinker, thirsty for knowledge, loves to travel, trustworthy
U: Unafraid, unique, unpretentious, upfront
V: Vivacious
W: Willing to step up, worldly, beautiful writer
X: A xenophile (love of foreigners)
Z: Zealous

I encourage you to take a look at the words above and circle any that apply to you. If other words or phrases pop into your mind, write them down! Keep the list in an accessible place so that you can refer back to them summer/fall of your senior year, when you begin working on college application materials.

Questions:

On separate piece of paper

1. What five words would you use to describe yourself?
Examples of HOW/WHY you think this?
2. What five words do you think your friends would use to describe you?
Examples of HOW/WHY this is the case?