

What Do Colleges Look for in the Essay?

Characteristic	Description
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation, imagination
Intellectual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm for learning • Independent pursuit of knowledge
Exceptional Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prestigious or unusual honor, award, citation
Hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, educational, physical, familial ability to overcome as well as the degree of hardship
Initiative/Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going far beyond normal expectations in academics and/or extracurricular activities
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding, directing, taking responsibility, and following through
Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resoluteness, tenacity
Special Spark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extraordinary attribute(s) not described elsewhere on this list (could be unusual insight or maturity)
Substantial Experience With Other Racial/Cultural Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in or with another culture, resulting in distinguishable personal growth or insight • Highly unusual or extraordinary background/experience that adds to awareness
Rare Talents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncommon ability in the arts, sports, academics