



UW FRESHMAN APPLICATION WRITING SECTION

The information below is from the UW Admissions website at <https://admit.washington.edu/apply/freshman/how-to-apply/writing-section/>. Go to this website for more tips about how to successfully compose your application writing samples.

At the UW, we consider the college essay as our opportunity to see the person behind the transcripts and the numbers. Some of the best statements are written as personal stories. In general, concise, straightforward writing is best, and good essays are often 300-400 words in length.

Essay prompt [required]

Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.

Maximum length: 650 words

Short response [required]

Our families and communities often define us and our individual worlds. Community might refer to your cultural group, extended family, religious group, neighborhood or school, sports team or club, co-workers, etc. Describe the world you come from and how you, as a product of it, might add to the diversity of the UW.

Maximum length: 300 words

Tip: Keep in mind that the UW strives to create a community of students richly diverse in cultural backgrounds, experiences, values and viewpoints.

Additional information about yourself or your circumstances [optional]

You are not required to write anything in this section, but you may include additional information if something has particular significance to you. For example, you may use this space if:

- You have experienced personal hardships in attaining your education
- Your activities have been limited because of work or family obligations
- You have experienced unusual limitations or opportunities unique to the schools you attended

Maximum length: 200 words



Format for the essays

- Content is important, but spelling, grammar and punctuation are also considered.
- We recommend composing in advance, then copying and pasting into the application. Double-spacing, italics and other formatting will be lost, but this will not affect the evaluation of your application.
- We've observed most students write a polished formal essay, yet submit a more casual short response. Give every part of the writing responses your best effort, presenting yourself in standard, formal English.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread!

Tip: Write like it matters, not like you're texting. This is an application for college, not a message to your friend. Get some hints in the video: <https://youtu.be/mETHMplqw1Q>

Activities & Achievements (Required)

Identify up to 8 of your most significant activities or achievements during grades 9-10 (you may include activities that began in middle school, as long as they have continued into your high school years). Please only include one specific activity or achievement per entry (e.g. do not list "Music" as an activity and then include symphony orchestra, concert band, and state competition. Instead, list orchestra, band, and competition as separate activities.)

In a few bullets or sentences, indicate 1) what the activity is, 2) any leadership role you had, 3) at what level the achievement or activity was (local, regional, state, national, international) and 4) how long the activity or achievement lasted.

You may include specific activities, skills, achievements, or qualities from any of the following general categories:

- Leadership in or outside of school (e.g., athletics, student government, cultural clubs, band, scouting, community service, employment)
- Activities in which you have worked to better your school or community
- Exceptional achievement in an academic field or artistic pursuit
- Personal endeavors (e.g., independent research, reading or learning; dance or music lessons; weekend language, culture or religious schooling)
- Family obligations such as taking care of siblings, caring for a family member, working a job to help support your family, or other relevant experiences

(Maximum length: 50 words for each activity)



UW Academy Application Essay and Portfolio Piece (required)

In addition to these general application essays, all UW Academy applicants must also complete the required 1) **UW Academy Application Essay** and 2) **Portfolio Piece**. These help us to understand your motivations and preparation for seeking out early college entrance. Use them to explain and demonstrate your reasons for applying and your readiness for this accelerated path in ways that other parts of your application did not.

- 1) UW Academy Application Essay Prompt: *We assume that the prospect of starting college early or getting a head start on future career plans is exciting for all our applicants. We are interested in understanding your specific need or reason to leave High School now and come to UW early. How will the undergraduate experience at UW best serve your needs at this point in your educational journey?*

Tips:

- Use this essay to tell us more about yourself. When writing your UW Academy Application Essay, make sure that your topic and examples are distinct from the personal statement and short essay you wrote for the UW Freshman Application.
- You may want to write about a variety of areas: academic, social, cultural, personal, or all of the above. Show us that you can think critically and creatively about what it means to enter college early.
- You may decide to talk about challenges you have faced in the past. This is a fine choice for this essay, but if you talk about challenges or struggles, be sure to also explain what strategies you have used to respond to them.

Maximum length: 500 words.

2) PORTFOLIO:

Step 1: Submit one piece of evidence of your work that demonstrates your preparation for college-level learning and engagement. Submission may include one of the following: graded assignment or writing sample (2 page limit, may be an excerpt of a longer piece); creative/artistic work (pdf, web link, YouTube video clip of no more than 3 mins); website (1 page); description of a self-designed project that can be evaluated within 2 mins (pdf or web link).

Note: we are not evaluating the quality or expertise of your submission but rather how it helps to demonstrate your readiness for college learning and engagement.

Step 2: Explain the reason for the chosen submission and what you want us to notice that provides evidence of your preparation for college-level learning and engagement. If you are submitting a group project, be sure to talk about the particular parts you worked on.



The following are examples of what a portfolio piece could consist of:

- A self-designed project that involves research or long-term commitment
- A project that involves a leadership role with prolonged group engagement
- A project that involves identifying a community need and creating a robust solution that is put into action
- A demonstration of long-term self study or learning a new skill
- An exceptional performance on a summative assessment at school (e.g., a midterm exam, final project, paper, or recital)
- A creative project that demonstrates practice and learning over time

Maximum length: 300 words.

All writing in the application, including your essay/personal statement and short responses, must be your own work. Do not use another writer's work and do not use artificial intelligence software (ChatGPT, Bard, etc.) to assist or write your statement.

Per [Washington state law](#) and [University of Washington policy](#), all admissions staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. Any statements in written materials that give admissions staff reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect of someone under the age of 18 may have occurred must be reported to Child Protective Services or the police. Learn more about [University reporting requirements](#).

If you or someone you know is a survivor of sexual assault or other sexual misconduct, [RAINN](#) is a national hotline that provides support and referrals. Call 800.656.4673 or visit the website for a chat option. For individuals who have experienced domestic violence or intimate partner violence, the [National DV Hotline](#) offers phone, chat, and text options for support.