



## EMPOWERING YOUR VOICE: WRITING YOUR BEST COLLEGE ESSAY

At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, we believe that every student has a story to tell and that grades are only one piece of that story. Students who are admitted to UMass Amherst are not only academically motivated—they are creators, innovators, writers, researchers, and leaders. Our students come from all different backgrounds and have varying experiences, all of which make up the **whole** of who they are.

When you apply to UMass Amherst, the admissions team will review your application **holistically**, taking into consideration all of the components of your application: your completed Common Application, your transcript, your letter(s) of recommendation, your list of activities or résumé, and your essay.

Your essay is your opportunity to tell us **your story** from **your perspective**. This activity will help you start (or continue) your writing process to reveal your best college essay.

### LET'S START WITH SOME OF THE BASICS ABOUT YOU!

#### Writing Prompt Exercise 1:

- Take two minutes to write a list of words or phrases you would use to describe yourself. Don't be shy! You will not have to share.
  
- Take a look at your list and select one to three words that you would like to expand on. For example, if you say you are really social and like to meet new people, tell us more about that! What opportunities does that present? Does it expand your social network, which may lead to a cool internship, job, etc.? How does being social impact your life?

#### Writing Prompt Exercise 2:

- If you are home, take two minutes to look around and find an object or image that has significance to you (a childhood toy, a photo of a loved one, a piece of jewelry, a trophy, a favorite item of clothing, etc.) If you are not home, take a moment to think about something that is significant to you. Spend the next three minutes writing about it. Tell us what the item is and why it is special to you.

#### Writing Prompt Exercise 3:

- Select two of the five phrases below and complete each phrase about you personally. Be creative and honest!
  - If you really knew me, you'd know...
  - If I had an unlimited amount of money, my ultimate dream would be...
  - What would the title of your autobiography be? Why?
  - If you could have an unlimited supply of anything, what would it be and why?
  - If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Or, if you could be any superhero, who would you be and why?

