

College Essay Guy's Interview Workbook

Note: This workbook is meant to accompany the [complete interview guide here](#).

Instructions: Above, click File > Make a copy > OK in order to make a copy that you can edit directly!

1.) Questions About Your Academic Interests

What subject areas are you most interested in?

My favorite subjects are...

-
-

Because...

-
-

Which connects to [item from message box] in that...

-
-

What do you plan to study in college?

I hope to study...

-
-

Because...

-
-

Which connects to [item from message box] in that...

-
-

OR IF YOU DON'T KNOW

I'm not yet sure what my major will be, but I'm very interested in...

-
-

Because...

-
-

Which connects to [item from message box] in that...

-
-

Do you know what career route you want to pursue yet?

I hope to be a...

-
-

Because...

-
-

Which connects to [item from message box] in that...

-
-

OR

I'm not yet sure what I want to be, but I'm very interested in...

-
-

Because...

-
-

Which connects to [item from message box] in that...

-
-

Part Two: Try applying the “So what” exercise to a few interview questions.

How would you rate your academic strengths and weaknesses? Are you better in some areas than others? Do you know why?

One of my strongest subjects is...

-

(So what?)

-

(So what?)

-

(So what?)

-

One of my weakest subjects is...

-

(So what?)

-

(So what?)

-

(So what?)

-

What's your favorite book? Why?

I really enjoyed reading....

-

-

(So what?)

-

(So what?)

-

(So what?)

-

You can play this game with a variety of questions and doing so can help you feel prepared, as though these are paths you've hiked before.

Below you'll find a big list of questions that you may or may not be asked in your interview. And, by the way, I want to emphasize that you may not be asked any of these questions, as many interviewers just like to start with a simple question and see where the conversation leads.

Playing "so what" with some of the questions below, though, will at least give you some stuff to talk about, but more importantly the skills and flexibility to handle a lot of different kinds of questions.

2.) Questions About Your Extracurricular Involvement

Tell me about your current extracurricular involvement.

I'm very involved in...

-
-
-

I really like it because (note that this is just a version of "so what")...

-
-
-

From this experience, I've learned (again, "so what")...

(You might focus on the [values and skills](#) you've developed)

-
-
-

Which activities do you hope to continue in college?

I hope to continue...

-
-
-

Because...

-
-
-

What have you done during the last few summers?

Last summer, I...

-
-
-

I learned...

(You might choose to connect these to some core values or skills you developed, like independence or time management—again, see the list of “values and skills” linked in the question above.)

-
-
-

The summer before that, I...

-
-
-

I learned...

-
-
-

What might you do with a year off between high school and college?

If I had a year off, I would...

(You might consider exploring certain subjects on your own, starting your own business or organization, or traveling abroad for a year. If your answer is “relaxing,” what does that look like to you, and why is rest so important to you?)

-
-
-

Questions About the University

Important: The best way to prepare for this portion is to write the Why Us? essay, even if they don't require it. Get some advice [here](#).

Why do you want to go to our school? (**Note:** There's a strong chance you will be asked this.)

I'm really interested in X University because...

(Discuss specific classes, teachers, programs, activities, or characteristics that are unique to the university.)

-
-
-
-
-

But don't focus *only* on the University—chances are your interviewer knows why his/her schools is amazing. Be sure to use the “so what” exercise to connect it back to you.

Example:

- I love that Northwestern has so many student theater groups.

(So what? Why? What does this say about you?)

- I've loved creating theater with my friends in high school and since I'm interested in a future in stage management I'm looking for the chance to get lots of experience—especially outside the classroom—creating shows with other students who are making art because they're passionate about it (and not just doing it for a grade).

See? Pretty straightforward. Now do this like 10 times for the school you're interviewing for—go back and forth between a) what's awesome about the school and b) what this has to do with you—and you'll have plenty to say.

Other questions you may be asked about a particular school:

What activities or programs do you hope to take advantage of at our school?

I hope to get involved in...

(Use names of specific clubs, organizations, and other opportunities that are unique to the university)

-
-
-
-

(Then answer “So what?” Connect it back to you. Because...)

-
-
-
-

What do you think you can contribute to X University?

I think I will provide...

(Again, look to that [values and skills](#) list and come up with a few, like curiosity or cultural awareness, for example. Be sure to explain the experiences that helped you develop these attributes, such as your experience founding and managing a school club, or experiences living in multiple countries. Use stories to illustrate them.)

- Contribution 1 and Example or Story -

- Contribution 2 and Example or Story -

What do you look forward to most about college?

I'm particularly excited about...

-
-
-
-

Because...

-
-
-
-
-

How well do you do with independence? Give an example of a problem or task or project you have dealt with that required you to demonstrate your independence.

When I was ... I learned how to...

(Use specific examples of camps, summer programs, or times in your life when you had to be independent.)

-
-
-

Personal Questions

Tell me about a challenge that you've overcome.

When I was ... I was challenged with..

(Challenge you faced)

-
-
-

To deal with this, I...

(How you overcame it)

-
-
-

So what?

-
-
-

What are your personal strengths? Weaknesses?

I think some of my strengths are...

-
-
-

So what?

-
-
-

Some of my weaknesses are...

-
-
-

So what?

(Be careful to not blame outside factors such as your teacher when explaining your weaknesses; focus on how you're working to improve them.)

-
-
-

What three words describe you?

-
-
-

People often describe me as...

-
-
-

Additional Sample Interview Questions

If you've mastered the questions above and have a set of questions ready to ask AND you want to be super duper extra prepared, try prepping with some of these...

1.) Questions About Your Academic Interests

What characteristics do you seek in your teachers?

- Teacher Characteristic #1:

-
-
-

- Teacher Characteristic #2:

-
-
-

If I were to wander into your school's faculty room and mention your name, what reaction would I get? How would your teachers characterize you? Do some teachers see you differently from how others do?

- Reaction 1:

-
-
-

- Reaction 2:

-
-
-

- Reaction 3:

-
-
-

How would you rate yourself as a writer? What was the most challenging writing assignment you've faced?

- As a writer:
 -
 -
 -

- Challenging writing assignment:
 -
 -
 -

2.) Questions About Your Extracurricular Involvement

Have you worked in a job or internship? If so, how did you get the job? What were the best/worst parts? What surprised you? What did you learn about yourself?

- -
 -
 -

- -
 -
 -

- -
 -
 -

3.) Miscellaneous Questions

Whom do you look up to? Why?

- -
 -
 -



- -
 -
 -

- -
 -
 -

What are your personal strengths? Weaknesses?

- Strengths:
 -
 -
 -

- (So what?)
 -
 -
 -

- Weaknesses:
 -
 -
 -

- (So what?)
 -
 -
 -

- Weaknesses:
 -
 -
 -

- (So what?)
 -
 -
 -



How do you want to be remembered?

- -
 -
 -

If you could meet anyone, dead or alive, who would it be? Why?

- -
 -
 -

(So what?)

-
-
-