

In the first step of the essay editing process, the student brings a draft of the application essay for review. The college admission counselor's responsibility is to shape this initial attempt into a well-written essay that impresses admissions officers. Below is a sample essay that the student brought for editing.

University of California: Prompt #6 – Original Draft

Prompt: Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.

My favorite subject in school is biology. Funny enough, my love for biology did not become apparent until my junior year. Like many high schoolers, I took biology in freshman year but I was indifferent towards the subject. My teacher didn't do much actual teaching and as a result, most of what I learned were from Bill Nye videos he showed us in class. In junior year, I enrolled into AP Biology despite not having much interest in biology, and as the year went on, I fell in love with the subject. I can still remember the unit that caused me to really begin to appreciate biology. The unit was ecology and a portion of the unit focuses on conservation biology. Although I had been aware that ecosystems on our planet are being destroyed, the fact didn't fully hit me until I started actually learning about it. The ecology unit taught me that all life on Earth is connected, which makes all life important; and in reality, humans are animals and are not any better than other forms of life. In fact, humans are the ones contributing to the destruction of life. Although we are destroying enormous amounts of life, it's not too late to try to conserve what is left; as humans, we carry that responsibility. This message resonated deeply within me and I truly began to appreciate the life forms around me, from the flowers in my backyard to the stray cats that wander around my neighborhood. Although these life forms may seem insignificant, they all contribute something to the biosphere that eventually affects us humans.

It was due to my increased interest in biology, specifically conservation biology, that I decided to begin volunteering at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley in the

summer of my junior year. The wildlife center takes in injured wild animals native to the area and attempt to rehabilitate them until the animals are ready to be released back into the wild. What I especially respect about this center is that it stresses the importance of not habituating these animals, because as adorable as they can be, these animals are needed in the wild to fill niches that are important for the sustainment of the ecosystem they live in. My experience at the Wildlife Center has been beneficial to me because instead of sitting around and preaching about the importance of every form of life on this planet, I am actually able to go out and help save the lives of animals. I am glad to be able to be part of an organization that feels as strongly about the significance of conserving the environment as I do.

In the second step, the college admissions counselor will provide feedback on the essay's content, organization and structure, and style. The counselor will advise the student on areas for improvement and work with the student to address those concerns. The comments provided here (in blue) are examples of the type of commentary given to the student.

University of California: Prompt #6 – Original Draft with Comments

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My favorite subject in school is biology. Funny enough, my love for biology did not become apparent until my junior year. Like many high schoolers, I took biology in freshman year but I was indifferent towards the subject. My teacher didn't do much actual teaching and as a result, most of what I learned were from Bill Nye videos he showed us in class. In junior year, I enrolled into AP Biology despite not having much interest in biology, and as the year went on, I fell in love with the subject. I can still remember the unit that caused me to really begin to appreciate biology. The unit was ecology and a portion of the unit focuses on conservation biology. Although I had been aware that ecosystems on our planet are being destroyed, the fact didn't fully hit me until I started actually learning about it. The ecology unit taught me that all life on Earth is connected, which makes all life important; and in reality, humans are animals and are not any better than other forms of life. In fact, humans are the ones contributing to the destruction of life. Although we are destroying enormous amounts of life, it's not too late to try to conserve what is left; as humans, we carry that responsibility. This message resonated deeply within me and I truly began to appreciate the life forms around me, from the flowers in my backyard to the stray cats that wander around my neighborhood. Although these life forms may seem insignificant, they all contribute something to the biosphere that eventually affects us humans.

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Comment [A1]: This opening sentence is too cliché. Do not answer the question in the first sentence. Lead into the main idea with an interesting hook or opening. Use imagery or a surprising anecdote.

Comment [A2]: Try to show which topics did hold your interest and why you didn't give up on biology all together.

Comment [A3]: Good use of Bill Nye. Add more descriptive details.

Comment [A4]: Discuss your motivation or reasoning.

Comment [A5]: show its impact on you through imagery and specific incidents

Comment [A6]: Did you study any concept in particular?

Comment [A7]: Good lessons - how did you incorporate them into your life? How did this shift in perspective affect you and through you, others around you?

Comment [A8]: What are you trying

Comment [A9]: Nice specifics.

Comment [A10]: Discuss the contributions you realized these other organisms make and the effects on you and humanity.

Comment [A11]: Since this is the focus on the essay, I'd say try to condense the first paragraph and then come to this point sooner.

summer of my junior year. The wildlife center takes in injured wild animals native to the area and attempt to rehabilitate them until the animals are ready to be released back into the wild. What I especially respect about this center is that it stresses the importance of not habituating these animals, because as adorable as they can be, these animals are needed in the wild to fill niches that are important for the sustainment of the ecosystem they live in. My experience at the Wildlife Center has been beneficial to me because instead of sitting around and preaching about the importance of every form of life on this planet, I am actually able to go out and help save the lives of animals. I am glad to be able to be part of an organization that feels as strongly about the significance of conserving the environment as I do.

Comment [A12]: Good ideas - condense to save words that can be used to discuss more about your involvement.

Comment [A13]: Excellent point. Continue to discuss you role and why the hands-on aspect is important.

Comment [A14]: Overall, this essay ends rather abruptly. What you have written feels more like an introduction, rather than a completed essay. The focus should be shifted to your efforts at the wildlife center, the lessons you learned, and the ways in which the lessons helped cement your interest in wildlife biology

In the third step, the college admissions counselor completes a thorough edit and revision of the each essay draft, modifying structure and word choice to better express the student's ideas and overall message. An essay might take several edits to complete. Below is an example of ONE edit.

University of California: Prompt #6 – Edits

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Although I now love working with wildlife, I spent my~~My favorite subject in school is~~ biology. Funny enough, my love for biology did not become apparent until my junior year. Like many high schoolers, I took biology in~~freshman year~~ rather but I was~~indifferent to~~ biology and ecology~~wards the subject: m.~~My teacher Mr. Hentschke rarely lectured, preferring to show didn't do much actual teaching and as a result, most of what I learned were~~was~~ from~~Bill Nye videos.~~ However, he showed us in class. I~~In junior year, my I enrolled into~~ AP Biology ecology and conservation biology ~~despite not having much interest in biology, and as the year went on, I fell in love with the subject. I can still remember the unit that caused me to really begin to appreciate biology. The unit~~ taught me a new appreciation for the subject. We studied the interconnectedness of life and ecosystems, and the~~was ecology and a portion of the unit focuses on conservation biology. Although I had been aware that ecosystems on our planet are being destroyed, the fact didn't fully hit me until I started actually learning about it. The ecology unit taught me that all life on Earth is connected, which makes all life important~~ cet of each

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~~[transition/discuss duties] My experience at the Wildlife Center has been beneficial to me because instead of merely sitting around and preaching about the importance of every form of life/life form on this planet, I am actually able to go out and help save animals. the lives of animals. I am glad to be able to be part of an organization that feels as strongly about the significance of conserving the environment as I do. environmental conservation as I do.~~

~~315/440w~~

~~Save:~~

~~despite not having much interest in biology, and as the year went on, I fell in love with the subject. I can still remember the unit that caused me to really begin to appreciate biology. The and it our responsibility~~

The final essay has undergone many drafts and revisions before it is finally ready to be submitted. The final essay is now a compelling piece of the student's application, representing the student well and placing the student at best advantage for admission.

University of California: Prompt #6 – Final

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Although I now love working with wildlife, I spent my freshman year rather indifferent to biology and ecology: my teacher Mr. Hentschke rarely lectured, preferring to show Bill Nye videos. However, in junior year, my AP Biology ecology and conservation biology unit taught me a new appreciation for the subject. We studied the interconnectedness of life and ecosystems, and the importance of each organism. Despite the fact that humans have so greatly contributed to the destruction of life, it's not too late to try to conserve what is left. I truly began to appreciate the life forms around me, from my backyard's hydrangeas to the neighborhood's stray cats. Although these life forms may seem insignificant, they all contribute to the biosphere and eventually affects us humans.

My increased interest in biology, specifically conservation biology, led me to volunteer at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley last summer. I especially respect that the Center stresses the importance of not habituating these animals, because as adorable as they can be, these animals are needed in the wild to fill niches that are important for the sustainment of the ecosystem they live in. Instead of merely preaching about the importance of every life form on this planet, I am actually able to help save animals. I am glad to be able to be part of an organization that feels as strongly about environmental conservation as I do.

Just in case you already forget how the first draft looks like, below please find the first and final draft for comparison. Carefully check them: you will be amazed by how many changes are made in wording, content and structure.

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