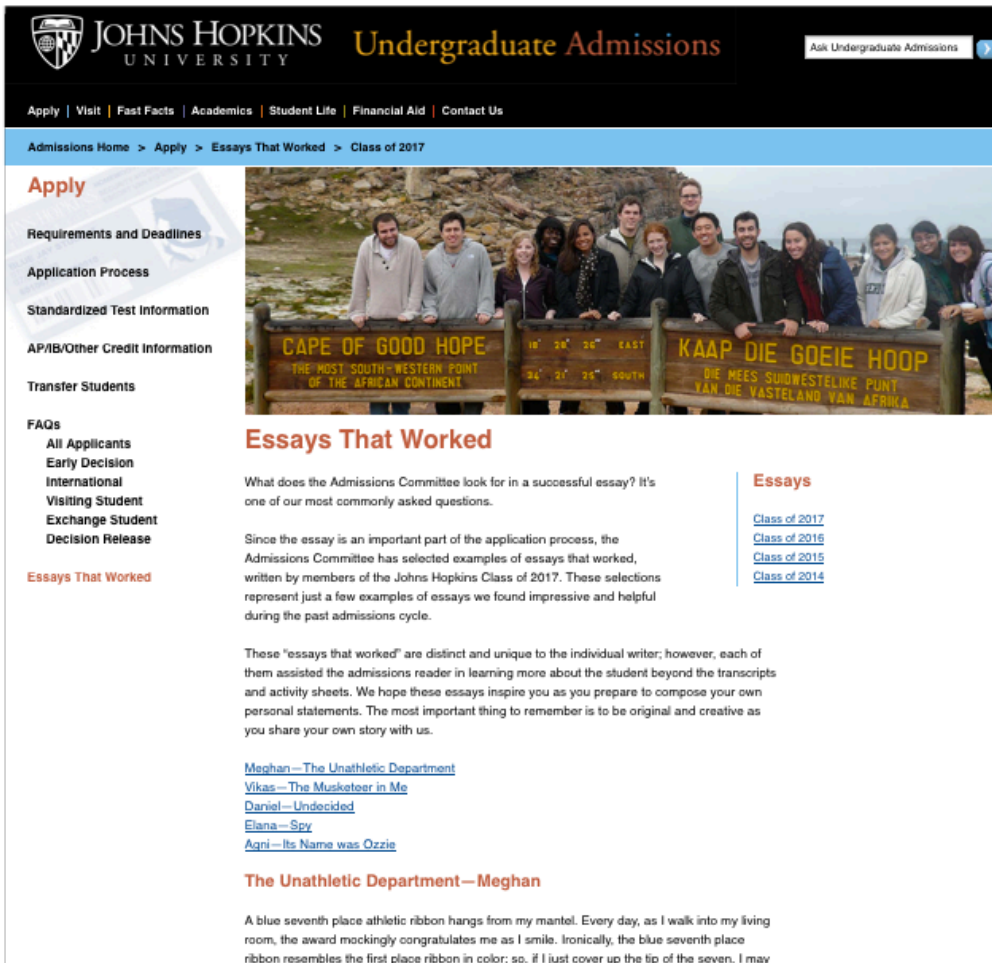


Essays That Worked

College Essays from John Hopkins



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- Standardized Test Information
- AP/IB/Other Credit Information
- Transfer Students

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- All Applicants
- Early Decision
- International
- Visiting Student
- Exchange Student
- Decision Release

Essays That Worked

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What does the Admissions Committee look for in a successful essay? It's one of our most commonly asked questions.

Since the essay is an important part of the application process, the Admissions Committee has selected examples of essays that worked, written by members of the Johns Hopkins Class of 2017. These selections represent just a few examples of essays we found impressive and helpful during the past admissions cycle.

These "essays that worked" are distinct and unique to the individual writer; however, each of them assisted the admissions reader in learning more about the student beyond the transcripts and activity sheets. We hope these essays inspire you as you prepare to compose your own personal statements. The most important thing to remember is to be original and creative as you share your own story with us.

[Meghan—The Unathletic Department](#)
[Vikas—The Musketeer in Me](#)
[Daniel—Undecided](#)
[Elana—Spy](#)
[Aqri—Its Name was Ozzie](#)

The Unathletic Department—Meghan

A blue seventh place athletic ribbon hangs from my mantel. Every day, as I walk into my living room, the award mockingly congratulates me as I smile. Ironically, the blue seventh place ribbon resembles the first place ribbon in color; so, if I just cover up the tip of the seven, I may

The Unathletic Department—Meghan

A blue seventh place athletic ribbon hangs from my mantel. Every day, as I walk into my living room, the award mockingly congratulates me as I smile. Ironically, the blue seventh place ribbon resembles the first place ribbon in color; so, if I just cover up the tip of the seven, I may convince myself that I championed the fourth heat. But, I never dare to wipe away the memory of my seventh place swim; I need that daily reminder of my imperfection. I need that seventh place.

Two years ago, I joined the no-cut swim team. That winter, my coach unexpectedly assigned me to swim the 500 freestyle. After stressing for hours about swimming 20 laps in a competition, I mounted the blocks, took my mark, and swam. Around lap 14, I looked around at the other lanes and did not see anyone. "I must be winning!" I thought to myself. However, as I finally completed my race and lifted my arms up in victory to the eager applause of the fans, I looked up at the score board. I had finished my race in last place. In fact, I left the pool two minutes after the second-to-last competitor, who now stood with her friends, wearing all her clothes.

The blue for the first loser went to me.

However, as I walked back to my team, carrying the seventh place blue, listening to the splash of the new event's swimmers, I could not help but smile. I could smile because despite my loss, life continued; the next event began. I realized that I could accept this failure, because I should not take everything in life so seriously. Why should I not laugh at the image of myself, raising my arms up in victory only to have finished last? I certainly did not challenge the school record, but that did not mean I could not enjoy the swim.

So, the blue seventh place ribbon sits there, on my mantel, for the world to see. I feel no shame in that. In fact, my memorable 20 laps mean more to me than an award because over time, the blue of the seventh place ribbon fades, and I become more colorful by embracing my imperfections and gaining resilience-but not athleticism.

"The first thing that stands out about this essay is the catchy title, which effectively sets up an essay that is charmingly self-deprecating. The author goes on to use subtle humor throughout the essay to highlight one of her weaknesses but at the same time reveals how she turned what some might have considered a negative event into a positive learning experience. Not only is this essay well-written and enjoyable to read, but it reveals some important personal qualities about the author that we might not have learned about her through other components of her application. We get a glimpse of how she constructively deals with challenge and failure, which is sure to be a useful life skill she will need in the real world, starting with her four years in college."

—Senior Assistant Director Janice Heitsenrath

6+1 Traits of Writing

Voice

<http://apply.jhu.edu/apply/essays/>