



Is Your Essay Recyclable?

By Kevin McMullin, Collegewise Founder and President

If you watch the presidential debates, you'll see both candidates sometimes so intent on driving home their talking points in a response that they never actually answer the question. This isn't specific to one party or even one election cycle. It's just an example of a candidate (1) identifying an idea or accomplishment that they're comfortable with or proud of, and then (2) expressing it at all costs, even if it doesn't actually answer the question.

Many students do the same thing with their college essays.

Some students write one essay that they're proud of and then try to wedge it into every application possible. That instinct isn't inherently bad—great stories tend to lend themselves to more than one response.

But your essay still has to answer what's being asked. If it doesn't, it will be pretty obvious to the reader that you either didn't bother to read the question, or more likely, you're just reusing an essay from another school without worrying about whether or not it addresses the prompt. Neither one of those conclusions works in your favor.

You can only recycle what's recyclable.

Here's a [past post](#) with more on this.

Want more expert essay tips from Kevin? Check out his blog at wiselikeus.com.

