



College App 2019/2020 Essay Prompt #1: *Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.*

When I was nine years old, my father bought me a drum set, and I started taking lessons. It sounds like the beginning of many other similar stories about picking up a hobby, but—thanks to my father, who is certainly anything but “normal”—my story has a very unique trajectory.

By the age of 12, our band “Scraps” was all I thought about. I was regularly playing gigs with my father on guitar/vocals and one of his friends on bass. We played local gatherings and events, sometimes a wedding and occasionally at a festival within a two- or three-hour drive. Our quirky lo-fi garage rock was a hit, and our catchy songs and videos began to rack up more and more views on YouTube.

I didn’t realize it at the time, but what I was experiencing was an education far beyond what school ever could give me. I was writing songs and singing backup vocals by 13, and soon after I began to naturally take more of a lead vocally. I found myself occupying the free time between songs with banter, making jokes with the crowd, jabbing humorous insults at my dad to keep things lively.

When I was 15, my father pulled me out of school for awhile. My teachers largely frowned on this; they didn’t understand how enlightening an experience it would be for me to tour Europe with a band. From Berlin and Frankfurt to Prague and Vienna, and even through Paris . . . geography and European history was no longer something in the textbooks.

We signed to Far Records, home to many bands that I had long admired. We toured more. I began to feel more at home on stage than on a couch, or in a desk, or really anywhere. Now 19, I recently took a year away from school after graduating from high school, in order to continue touring, writing songs, meeting other musicians, and experiencing new things.

So, as my friends will attest, it is impossible to talk about who I am without mentioning my role in Scraps. I can’t imagine life without this band, without all the gifts it has brought me. And I love, absolutely love, the music we have created.

It would be entirely normal, almost predictable, for someone in my position to eschew higher education and continue moving forward with music. This is what I have been thinking about every day for the past year. I have decided that just as my father pushed me out of my comfort zone and onto a stage at a young age, it is now time for me to push myself once again out of my comfort zone and focus on a more professional and “normal” type of skillset.

I will continue to put whatever free time I have into Scraps, and I imagine that I will be able to use this band to enhance my overall life as a university student. I look forward to eventually showing up at a local college pub, drumsticks in hand, and jumping on the stage to entertain my friends and classmates. I look forward to playing bigger and bigger festivals around the country during my summer vacations. And at the same time, I look forward to taking classes on business, anthropology, linguistics, history, and other fields that I am interested in learning more about.

My father gave me a tremendous gift on my ninth birthday. It was much more than a drum set. It has made me who I am today, and it will enable me to contribute a very unique viewpoint to your classes and campus life.