

Bates College application supplementary essay
by [Brian Tomasik](#)
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Note: My views on wilderness have changed since writing this essay – see “[Applied Welfare Biology and Why Wild-Animal Advocates Should Focus on Not Spreading Nature](#)”.

Topic: In addition to the Common Application essay, please respond in two or three paragraphs to the following question: Why, in particular, do you wish to attend Bates?

Bates is only one of a number of small liberal-arts colleges in the Northeast that offer first-rate facilities and resources, personal relationships with professors, and a diverse student body—but there are several distinguishing characteristics that make Bates College uniquely suited to my passions and values.

One is its radical heritage. Bates was founded in 1855 as a college open to students of all races, religions, and income levels, and it was the first coeducational college in New England. One hundred and fifty years later, that belief in equality continues, as is demonstrated by the close-knit nature of the student body and the widespread eschewal of competition for grades. (Attending a high school at which students constantly ask each other how they did on the last test or what they got on the last research paper, I am excited by the prospect of a college full of students who are instead motivated by the love of learning and the joy of challenge.) Bates also continues to live up to its abolitionist origins, through its strong sense of social justice and its commitment to environmental stewardship, the latter of which is clearly evinced by the college’s efforts at composting and its purchase of recycled copy paper and paper cups.

Perhaps the reason that Bates is so dedicated to the environment is that its students are very close to nature. The campus truly succeeds in capturing the sublime beauty of the natural world at which I have always felt a sense of rejuvenation and awe, partly because I was raised on an organic farm in the country. Moreover, the fact that the Bates outing club is one of the largest in the country means that I will not be alone in my love of wilderness. This desire to explore and

genuinely experience the real world has even made its way into the curriculum, in the form of many extraordinary activities undertaken during the Short Term.

It indeed seems that the characteristics that make Bates unique, from its progressive origins to its close connection with nature, are also the qualities that I am looking for in a college.