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*We really get a sense of Elijah’s personality—the essay is light-hearted, but still does a good job of highlighting his interest in robotics in a descriptive and entertaining way  by comparing it to his fascination with Iron Man. He ties his interests back to opportunities at JHU like the freedom to combine multiple academic fields, research in the LCSR lab, and the a cappella scene. As you are reading his essay, you picture someone who will explore academic programs, student groups, and opportunities on and off campus—you picture a dynamic member of our Hopkins community.*

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*Joanna’s voice definitely came through in this essay. She cleverly incorporated two types of ‘string’ into her writing, and it really showed her ability to overcome a challenge, as well as her quirky sense of humor. She also used the space effectively to tell me a lot about who she is—her love of music and science, her dedication to a part-time job, and her ability to put things in perspective. Even though the actual topic itself—learning to tie string around bakery orders—seems narrow in scope, it allowed me to really get to know her through her writing.*

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*Morley’s structure for the essay is measured with each paragraph transitioning to a different personal quality. He starts off setting the scene at the Woodrow Wilson Skateboard Park and articulates that it was a physical and mental space for him to grow up as an adolescent. The scene and characters are set, and now he shifts into the meat of the essay, writing about how a specific incident with a skater named ‘Temper’ epitomizes the park experience. The essay beautifully ties in Morley’s personality with his experiences at Woodrow Wilson. His focus is always on developing how the park has shaped HIM. After reading the essay, I have a much better understanding of who Morley is and what qualities he will bring to Hopkins.*

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*One thing that works so well with Quan’s essay is that it is relatable. Whether you or your family members immigrated to the U.S., or you have struggled to connect with relatives from a different generation, or you are an artist who sees your art as an important vehicle to convey emotion, this essay can resonate with just about anyone who reads it. Quan succinctly provides us with a window into some of what he values most in life: family, his cultural heritage, and music. We may not have picked up on these qualities elsewhere in his application, had he not communicated them in his essay. And these qualities are important for us to know about, as they give us a sense of what he will potentially contribute to our community.*

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*Noah’s essay is well-crafted. It does a great job of demonstrating his writing skills, his intellectual capacity, his diverse interests, and his personality. His writing is an impressive balance of formal and casual—it connects with the reader while remaining professional. His descriptive writing about the composers shows how deep his passion really goes. This is someone you want to have a conversation with. You can hear his voice in the writing. For much of his time, he’s busy and productive. But those 15 minutes a day, where he takes time to enjoy something he loves, are extremely important to him as well. We are particularly impressed with the way he can write about a love of classical music without coming across as supercilious. Rather, he’s funny and likable. Making the larger point in the end of the essay, he shows that he has a great approach to a work-life balance that is necessary at a rigorous university.*

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*We often read essays where the student writes about someone who has influenced their life. Admissions officers want to get a better understanding of YOU. These essays can be tricky because there is a tendency to focus on the person who has influenced you, instead of focusing on how you have been changed. Jacqueline did a fantastic job of focusing on how her brother has shaped HER life. Her writing style is personable with vivid parallels and divergences between herself and her twin. The reader feels like they are on a journey through Jacqueline’s life in just a few hundred words. This essay captivated me with details that would not have shown up at any other point in the application.*

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*What was most impressive about Jodie’s essay was not the accomplishment of making 1,000 paper cranes, but how much we were able to learn about her through this simple anecdote. We determined she is someone who perseveres, as seen through the personal growth that arrived from her initial failure and eventual completion of a goal on top of the demands of high school. We learned she is kind and caring—traits exemplified through sharing cranes with friends having bad days and those made to commemorate people she lost. Her essay also showed us she is curious and willing to experiment, like testing out how small she could make cranes. These characteristics stood out and gave us an idea of how Jodie will contribute to our community, which is important in a holistic process where we try to learn about the whole student.*

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*Meghna effectively connected her academic and extracurricular interests with opportunities available at Hopkins. It was clear she understands what the Hopkins experience could look like for her. The most exciting thing about this essay was the way she elaborated on her academic interests while also telling us something about her that we couldn’t learn through any other part of her application—her favorite food.*

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*Many high school students become hyper-focused on attaining school leadership positions with flashy titles, but Isaac’s essay showed how he made a positive impact in his community in a less expected way. Isaac’s essay was light-hearted, comical, and fun to read. Most importantly, it gave us insight into his personality and hinted at the type of presence he’s likely to have on our campus. It also told us about what day-to-day life is like in his hometown and school, which provided more context for the rest of his application.*

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*Seena’s essay not only provided us with background on his academic interest—mechanical engineering—it also gave us a sense of the kind of student he would be on the Homewood campus. His account of successfully growing strawberries in his locker showcased his ingenuity, sense of humor, and, most crucially, enthusiasm for collaborative work. Seena lets the details of his story illustrate that he’s team player, which is much more powerful than merely telling us directly. The combination of personal and intellectual anecdotes made it easy to imagine how Seena will contribute to life at Hopkins both in the lab and in the residence halls, which is exactly what the committee looks to the personal statement to do.*

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*Tan’s essay effectively connected his interest in and experiences with robotics with specific coursework and opportunities available to undergraduates here. It showed us why he wants to pursue these things specifically at Hopkins. He was able to talk about the flexible curriculum, ways to work beyond the classroom through research opportunities like SPUR, student government, and the Alternative Learning Coaches program. As a whole, it was clear why Tan would be a strong member of the Hopkins community both in and outside the classroom.*

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*Ansley’s interest in global health jumped out at us from the first sentence, and she carried this same theme through the entire essay. What her essay did particularly well, though, was show a clear path from passion to action. Rather than just talk about her interest in the field, we got the sense that she is motivated to take initiative and get engaged. Students at Johns Hopkins routinely display an entrepreneurial spirit in their pursuits, and Ansley demonstrated a similar approach in her fight to prevent additional outbreaks of Ebola in Africa.*

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*We were impressed by Kaylee’s ability to creatively relay important information about herself. The unique format of her essay suited the content and also showcased her passion for writing. What the essay did particularly well, though, was effectively explore experiences (both small and large) that shaped her growth as a person and writer. Her conclusion to write for herself, rather than to impress others, demonstrates her maturity and confidence. Through these anecdotes, we got a better idea of the kind of scholar she is outside the classroom—something not found anywhere else in the application.*

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*We were impressed by the unique format Ben chose to describe himself and the lessons learned through his interest in computer science. However, the essay’s creative style succeeds due to the strength of its content. Ben simulates electronic 20 questions to hook the reader’s attention while effectively bridging his academic interests and future aspirations. The essay showcases his versatile interests, from computer science to basketball to political debate, as concrete examples that demonstrate his personal philosophy of ‘practice and perseverance.’ The essay successfully tells us about Ben’s personality, academic and social interests, and future ambitions, showing us a competitive student who would thrive here.*

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*Justin’s essay describes how he juggles different identities, showcasing his adaptability and eagerness to combine interests, be they academic or social. He uses the theme of ambidexterity to convey his versatility as an individual and his ability to balance life as a student, athlete, employee, and friend. He also shows a sense of humor, revealing his character in addition to his academic goals. Justin’s anecdotes about other students’ perceptions of him and his penchant for ‘Risky Business’ enable us to get to know what kind of person Justin is—ambitious, curious, and flexible—and what kind of scholar he will be in college.*

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*Anna’s essay creatively illuminates personal characteristics about her as a student through a story about her parents’ coffee shop. She evolves from an observant spectator to an ambitious participant and advocate. Anna uses her observations about the world around her to formulate stories and theories that she is eager to explore further. Her essay about evolution of the self is applicable to the academic transition from high schooler to college student, from novice to scholar. The essay also demonstrates Anna’s interest in service and adventure—two important aspects of the college experience.*

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*Lukas’s essay effectively combines his passion for art and science, revealing his academic interests and potential. His enthusiasm around music, movement, and computer science offer insight into his potential as a student who is eager to take advantage of the technology and research opportunities here. His essay goes farther to describe how his academic curiosity will translate into new technology that will help individuals and communities. It’s clear that Lukas understands what the Hopkins experience can help him achieve.*

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*Jillian’s essay creatively uses the metaphor of imperfect vision to portray themes of different world views, acceptance, and individual growth. She talks about how the swastika as a symbol is perceived differently in various cultures. What her essay does particularly well is show a journey from interest to action to greater awareness. We get the sense that Jillian is motivated to take initiative, get engaged in a topic, and eager to broaden her mind. These are important qualities for a successful student, and qualities that we value as a research university with a liberal arts core.*

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*We liked Stephen’s essay because it catches your attention right away and continues to demonstrate critical thinking, initiative, and problem solving. His personality comes through as he naturally conveys humor. Through his anecdotes from growing up, we got a sense of how he might approach his studies here at Hopkins.*

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*Michaela showed her innate curiosity through a unique topic. The beginning of her essay is intriguing and makes you want to learn more. More importantly, she elaborates on an interesting aspect of her life outside of academics, yet still demonstrates the depth of her desire to be perpetually learning. It also gave us insight into how she responds when she is passionate about something.*

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*We liked this essay because it provides a clear and coherent explanation for Kyle’s interests in civil engineering, and how he plans to pursue that here at Hopkins. Throughout the essay, he uses specific examples of how he would take advantage of all Hopkins has to offer—programs, research positions, and professors. The real strength of the essay lies in how the writer talks about his engineering passions in relation to other fields like economics and environmental studies. He makes a good argument for interdisciplinary studies and why studying these things at Hopkins will aid his experience.*

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*This essay does a great job of providing background on Anna’s interest in environmental engineering and explaining why she wants to pursue the area as an undergraduate here. What stood out the most to us was Anna’s ability to connect with the way students learn at Johns Hopkins in a meaningful way by relating it to her own interests and passions. We could tell she has thought about why Hopkins is where she wants to pursue her intellectual passion.*

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*By transforming her bookshelf into a metaphor for her life, Neha’s essay is creative and shows an affinity for learning beyond textbooks. She writes about books in a way that demonstrates a process of self-reflection. We got a good sense of who she is and how she would participate in the intellectual community at Hopkins.*

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*Brontë’s essay does a great job of letting us know who she is. She successfully connects pieces of her life experiences (the concussion, work experience, and nuances about her family) in an interesting way that demonstrates an evolution of learning and reflection. By examining the story many times through different lenses, it’s clear she has the same kind of intellectual curiosity that Hopkins students embody.*

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*Kyla’s essay highlights her ability to think critically and conveys her true passion for service. As she wrestles with philosophical questions about how to make the greatest impact through service, it became clear to us she is a person who wants to make a meaningful impact in an area that really matters to her—an excellent quality of our student body here at Hopkins. Rather than simply stating that building schoolrooms in Malawi was something she did, she deeply considers her role in this service experience.*

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*Beyond being well-written and superbly descriptive, this essay really does a great job of illustrating Caroline’s appreciation for her heritage and the Italian language, as well as the desire to keep digging and learning more about it. She provides a clear story about how she arrived at her passion for Italian, how she pursues her passion currently, and how she plans on continuing to do so in the future. More importantly, she goes on to explain how it affects her view of the world.*