

Good College Essay Example

My favorite book has no author. It has no chapters and little text. Some would say this book has no plot and no characters, but I know otherwise. This book actually reflects the physical and political history of our world, covers hundreds of nations, thousands of ethnic groups, and billions of people.

This book is the 1987 Rand McNally Universal World Atlas, a tall green volume with a worn cover and loose binding. I am enamored of almost all atlases and even individual maps, but what makes this particular atlas so special is the impact it had on me as a young child. I vividly remember discovering it for the first time on a bookshelf in our house. When I opened it, I discovered pages upon pages of maps – maps of every region and country in the world and every U.S. state and Canadian province. I was entranced. I spent hours pouring over the pages of the atlas that first day. I wanted know more about where I fit in the world.

As my interest in geography grew, I amassed a collection of atlases and other books related to geography. My other favorite was a world factbook that had a small dossier on each country. I remember discovering, much to my surprise, that various country borders shown in the 1998 factbook were different from the ones in my 1987 atlas. Germany was no longer divided, Czechoslovakia no longer united, and a tiny country called Eritrea had popped up on what used to be Ethiopia's coastline. My curiosity about these changes led me to begin reading history books, and I soon learned the two fields complemented each other well. When I read about the American Civil War, I often would open my atlas to the map of Virginia. And when our family visited Gettysburg, Antietam, and other Civil War battlefields, I intensely studied the maps of these battles.

*I also began to notice how geography shaped current world events. Every four years, I tracked the presidential electoral votes on a map of my own, and every two years I made lists of the key congressional districts and Senate seats. I started following the progress of the American campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq in my atlas. To find out more about world events, I began to voraciously read *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Economist*. My interest in geography also stimulated my interest in languages. After discovering that so many places had Spanish as their native tongue, I decided learning the language was a necessity. And when I read about the increasing economic and political power of China in *The Economist*, I realized that knowledge of Mandarin Chinese would be a valuable skill in our globalizing world, so I endeavored to learn Mandarin as well.*

Ever since I was very young, I loved reading. I have read many powerful and influential books (fiction and non-fiction) that have helped shaped the way I look at the world, but none had been more important than my first atlas. I still return to it regularly and imagine I always will.

Weak College Essay Example

I believe the Trinity College of Arts and Sciences at Duke is an excellent match for me. I believe college should not be merely a gateway to the work force; it should educate the student in a variety of subjects and prepare him or her for the range of challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in life. I have always been a curious person and enjoy reading all kinds of literature and nonfiction. In high school I excelled in history, English, AP psychology, and other liberal arts subjects. I have not yet decided on a major, but when I do, it will almost certainly be in the liberal arts, such as history or political science. I know that Trinity College is very strong in these areas. But regardless of my major, I want to receive a broad education that spans a variety of areas in the liberal arts, so that I will graduate as not only a viable job prospect, but also as a well-rounded and learned adult who can make diverse and valuable contributions to my community. I believe Duke's Trinity College will help me grow and become that kind of person.