



CONTINUING APPLICATION ESSAY QUESTION EXAMPLES

How to Answer Essay Questions or Prompts

We at the Caleb Scholars Program want to make sure that you are supported during this application process. Therefore, we are presenting some information about essay questions/prompts in general to help guide you and are providing specific example essays for our application's essay questions.

In responding to essay questions/prompts, it is always important to understand and note what a question is asking directly and indirectly. This is true in our scholarship's application materials as well as in other writing prompts you may encounter, such as job and scholarship applications and essay questions on exams.

Here are some tips that will help you effectively answer essay questions/prompts:

- Always read questions/prompts carefully and underline (circle, highlight, etc.) what specifically is being asked. Oftentimes, essay questions have multiple components.
- Think about what the “big picture” understanding that your essay is supposed to convey. Consider the purpose of the organization, job, or class, and what they may be trying to get at with their questions.
- For example, Caleb Scholars Program is specifically interested in supporting Inuit students who will advocate for and help with conservation issues in their chosen profession. Essays should answer the prompt *and* should give the Caleb Scholars Steering Committee a sense of how you in your chosen profession will help with conservation efforts.
- Make sure that all components you've identified (specific questions in prompts and “big picture”) are covered in your essay.
- Use language directly from the prompt to help set up your answer and to help situate your readers.
- Use specific examples to help support and contextualize your answers.
- Make sure to proofread your essay. If you have time, wait a few hours (or longer) after you've “completed” your essay and then re-read it to catch errors or places where your sentences or organization may be confusing. If you are able, read your essay aloud to catch awkward places in your writing.
- It is important that you respect word limits if they are given and follow all other instructions.

Example Responses for Short Answer and Essay Questions

Short Answer Questions (up to 100 words):

1. *What is something you are proud of accomplishing this last 6 months?*

This last year was hard. Having all of my classes switch to online and also quarantining meant that I didn't get out much and do the activities that I usually do. That, plus all the stress of everything else happening societally, caused some serious depression. This last semester I decided that I needed to prioritize my own wellness. I started journaling and reaching out to friends and family more. I also made time every day for taking a walk, even a short one, so that I would take a break from schoolwork and get outside. It helped a lot. (99 words)

2. *What is a meaningful connection that you made with your home community and/or the CSP community this last semester?*

I started using my old Facebook account again because a lot of my extended family in the villages in Alaska use Facebook a lot. I joined my Iñupiat family's Facebook group and started posting about what I was doing here at school and reading about and commenting on my family's posts about subsistence and their lives in the villages. I've learned so much about what my cousins' lives are like and the issues they face at home. The best part is that I have made my own connections to home rather than just the connections I had through my mom. (100 words)

Essay Question (100 - 300 words):

3. *How has your participation in the Caleb Scholars Program (e.g., Virtual Qargi, mentorship, etc.) helped you to learn more about Inuit-led conservation advocacy and your own role in advocacy work, especially as it relates to your chosen major, community service, cultural practice, profession, home region, and/or field?*

In our Virtual Qargi meetings I've learned a lot from hearing about what other Caleb Scholars are doing when it comes to conservation advocacy work. I'm usually a little shy, especially when it comes to speaking up when I see something happening that I don't agree with. However, meeting with all of these strong, Inuit Caleb Scholars has helped me to find my own voice.

For example, I work at my college dorm for my work-study job cleaning common rooms and other areas. Because of COVID-19 a lot of these indoor common rooms were closed even though there were students still living in the dorms. This was causing a lot of isolation in students and you could sense that morale was really low. I noticed that there were a lot of outdoor chairs stacked in the storage room as well as awnings. I remembered how in the Virtual Qargi I learned about how important it is to have a sense of community and to go outside. I thought we could use these chairs and awnings to make an outdoor space for people to hang out safely outside. In my mentor meeting,

I asked if my mentor would help me come up with a plan to ask about my idea. They helped me come up with “talking points” and even helped edit my email to my boss at facilities. They also validated my idea that connecting with one another and with the outdoors—even in a more urban setting—could be part of conservation advocacy.

I would have never had the courage to ask for something like this in the past and having the support from my Caleb Scholars cohort and mentor helped me to move past my fear and into action! My boss approved outdoor areas to be created at all dorms! (300 words)