

RECOMMENDED ESSAY FORMAT PPHI Humanities Internship

*Send your polished draft for review to Professor Arana by _____
for feedback and advice.*

The application essay is the cornerstone of your application. It is here that both the Montgomery College Selection Committee and the supervisors at our participating institutions get to know you as a person and as a professional. It must reflect your interest in the particular institution, your interests and abilities as an honor student as well as *who you are at your academic best*. Read these instructions carefully and address each item.

Essay Research / Preparation:

Before writing your essay (500 – 1,000 words), visit the websites of the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) or other institutions that interest you, to determine which institution best fits your interests and needs. Once you have determined which of these you will be applying to, knowledge of the website will enable you to make specific references in your essay to aspects of the institution that you find appealing and meaningful. Cite the website at the end of your essay.

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

Library of Congress: www.loc.gov

US Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org

Other (Ask for help identifying other appropriate institutions.)

Considerations for Preparing Your Application Essay:

- Your application should demonstrate familiarity with the mission and ongoing projects or initiatives of the institution that interests you. Do you have ideas about how you might be able to support these initiatives or how you can be a part of this? **Note:** *Be aware that you are applying to assist with programs rather than running them. For example, you should refer to yourself as seeking to be an assistant to a researcher rather than a researcher (someone who probably has a PhD).* .
- Describe your intellectual development at Montgomery College. What kinds of things have you enjoyed studying? About what kinds of things are you intellectually curious?
- Describe skills gained from recent academic experience, how you have developed as a student. Keep any discussion of high school very brief--or leave it out altogether, if possible, (this will depend on how recently you graduated from high school).
- You may wish to talk about *significant* life experiences and how these affected you – such as studying abroad or working with Habitat for Humanity.
- *Demonstrate flexibility.* If you are especially interested in a particular project or kind of work, do say so. *Be sure to express your willingness to try other things as well.* This is an appealing attribute of a prospective worker and also will make it easier to find placements when your application is shopped around the institution, whether that us SI, LOC, and/or USHMM.

- For the USHMM, let them know not only what you have to give (interests, skills, personal attributes), but what you hope to gain from your internship. Most of our interns at the USHMM are placed in capacities where they meet and work with the public. If this is strength of yours, keep it in mind as you write your essay.
- **For the SI**, be sure that you indicate that you have done your research on what they offer in terms of internship opportunities and that you indicate clearly what area of the institution you are most interested in. *Be specific as we need to know which to which department we should send your application.* **Also for the SI, note their four “Grand Challenges:”** understanding the bio-diverse planet, unlocking the universe, diverse cultures, and the U.S. as part of the global picture. They also have an *interdisciplinary* focus.
- **This is a formal writing piece. Employ excellent college-standard English in your essay.** It must be well-constructed and ready to be read by professionals who are at the top of their fields. Have the essay proofread for content and grammar.
- **Make use of MLA style formatting to document sources** you quote or paraphrase in your essay.

Suggested Essay Structure:

A good essay will have an introduction, essay body and conclusion. The information that you might include in these sections is noted below. **Do not display the roman numerals in your essay;** they appear below simply to help you “see” the structure.

I. Introduction

Write a brief introduction. Introduce yourself and explain why you are applying. **Refer to the institution’s mission and vision. Think about how you can be a part of this vision and/or why you want to be. Use the language of the institution that you have read about on their website. Be sure that the reader knows that you want to make a contribution to, and learn from, the institution you are applying to.** (Use quotations marks, when needed.)

II. Essay Body

A. Section One

1. **In the first paragraph in this section, talk about yourself. Be brief, concise and specific.** What are your interests and passions? How do these things relate to the humanities and the work that these institutions do? How might the institution benefit from your background and experiences?
2. **In the second paragraph, talk about your experience as it relates to your studies and/or academic pursuits.** What kinds of papers have you written about what topics? Have you won awards or other recognition for your work?? What is your academic background? What skills do you possess as a scholar, eg, research, organizing collections, writing analytically or creatively, speaking a second language? What types of jobs have you held? What tasks did you perform? What experiences have you had on the job?

B. Section Two

In this paragraph, *tell how you think you can contribute* to the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, or Holocaust Museum through an internship opportunity. How can your experiences and knowledge add to the work already being done there? What skills/languages do you possess? How might they be used? Are you creative? Are you a self-starter? Do you have an eye for details? Are you a hard worker? Give examples.

III. Conclusion

Finish up with a brief conclusion, about three sentences, summing up why you want to be an intern and your hopes for being selected. Let the reader know that you appreciate the opportunity to apply to be an intern.

IV Polishing your essay

1. Reread your essay. Have you indicated your interests, indicated your skills – tutoring, public speaking in presenting papers before an audience, ability to speak other languages, statistical and other mathematic skills, ability to use specific data bases and multiple formatting styles (MLA etc.), field work in specific fields eg. anthropology, archeology, architecture etc.; have you indicated how you would like to use your abilities to help scholars and staff at the organization and why?

2, Check for these errors:

Lack of organization. Does your essay flow smoothly from one idea to another? Is it written with proper usage of verb tenses and pronoun reference? Read your paper aloud to check or get someone to proof it for you before you submit the paper.

Calling yourself a researcher – you have been trained to do research, but researchers are generally people working on their PhDs or writing books in their fields. Indicate that you would like to assist a scholar with research in an area (law, history etc.) instead.

Only talking about yourself and what you want. Your essay is part of an application for a job, not a college application. You need to clarify what skills you would like to offer the organization, as well as what you hope to gain from the experience. It is also useful to indicate that you are flexible.

3. Spell and grammar-checked the paper. Have you

Used academic language?

Used quotes without giving credit to your source? If you have accredited your source, have you used proper MLA style?

4. Have you indicated that you are pleased to have the opportunity to apply for the internship at?

If you can check all of these items off, you have done well! All of these are skills you will use as an intern and as a scholar along your academic path and in your future career!