

English Transcript for *The Second Question*

The second question a university tries to answer when reviewing your application will be, is this student a good fit for our university? Thinking back to the list of eight pieces that make your completed application, There are certain pieces where they will look at more heavily to answer this question. That includes your application form, your essay, your letters of recommendation, your activity list, and that other category which will depend on each university's specific application requirements. Unlike the first question, this is not a simple yes or no answer. Students can fit in different ways. And some students are a better fit than others. So what are some of the ways that fit can be measured? Fit can be academic. For some schools, being a hard worker and getting good grades is enough. But for other schools, good grades are not enough. They want to see a passion for knowledge. A love of learning. An intellectual curiosity. But none of those show up on a transcript. A transcript is simply classes and grades, but it cannot help a university measure some of these intangibles. Let's say your letter of recommendation mentions that along with being smart and wonderful. You're usually pretty quiet in class. You don't ask a lot of questions, and maybe you don't contribute as much to the discussion going on in the classroom. How would that be viewed at a University where most of their classes have less than 20 students per class? What about a school where their classes, many of their classes, have more than 100 students? At certain schools, being quiet and not contributing in class could be detrimental or hurt your application. Fit can also be based on personality. If a school values collaboration among students and uses group projects regularly as a class assignment, how will a recommendation that identifies you as an independent learner be evaluated. After reading your application, how will an admissions officer answer questions like. What kind of roommate will you be? What will you bring to the campus community? And do I like you? Yes. Admission officers will ask that question. Fit can also be based on something called institutional priorities. Institutional priorities means, what does a university need? For example, the university tennis team needs a player and you happen to be internationally, an internationally ranked tennis champion. You fulfill an institutional priority. Let's just say a university has just created a new major, which happens to be the major that you're applying for. You fulfill an institutional priority. The difficulty about institutional priorities is that they're very hard for someone outside of the university to identify. Now, fit comes in a thousand different forms. The easiest way to think about it is by looking at your friends. You probably have best friends, friends, and acquaintances. What's the difference between those three? Well, you're a better fit with your best friends than you are with your acquaintances. You probably have a lot more in common, and your personalities match. You have a distinct personality, and so does each University in the United States. You're going to be best friends with some universities. And you're going to be acquaintances with other universities. And fit this idea of, are you a good match with the university? This is the reason why some academically qualified students are not accepted at highly selective schools. [BLANK_AUDIO]