

English Transcript for *Connecting Themes*

Aristotle famously said, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. And your application for admission, is a great illustration of this quote. Your application, is far greater than the eight pieces that make it up. Each piece says a little about you, but only when these pieces are put together, is the picture of who you are truly clear. The question is, what does that picture look like? Is it a picture of a soccer-playing poet? Is it a picture of a small village resident whose leadership is blazing a path to big dreams? What are you wearing in the picture? A lab coat, a theater costume, a business suit? Is there anyone else in the picture with you? Your family, your friends, your enemies, your heroes? Is there anything else in the picture? A paintbrush, a robot, a book, a goal. For weeks, we've been talking about the idea of themes. The themes you are going to put into your application, are going to create the picture of who you are. Now that you understand each of the eight pieces individually, you have to think about how to include your themes in each piece of the application. More importantly, you have to understand how the pieces come together, to give your themes strength. The pieces of your application need to connect with each other. The hard part, is connecting without repeating. For instance, if one of your themes is a love of science, you don't need to include information you won the Science Fair in six different places. If it is on your activity's list, and in your recommendation letters, and in your essay it might be a little too much. While these pieces might mention your achievement, they should focus on different aspects of the theme of your love of science. Maybe the science fair stays on your activity list. But maybe, your recommendation letter, talks about your outstanding academic abilities in science. And how you helped tutor classmates who were struggling. Maybe your essay talks about how you discovered your passion for research. Perhaps even while conducting research for your Science Fair project. Winning the Science Fair, does not demonstrate your love of science. It is the result of your love of science. Your love of science, however, is a theme. Think about, how the pieces can connect without repeating, to reinforce your themes. While trying not to repeat, you also have to make sure the pieces do not contradict or disagree with each other. If a theme of your application is your love of science. But some of your science grades are low. Or you have low SAT math scores or ACT science scores. Or your letter of recommendation from your science teacher says you were interested but not passionate about science. Then that disagreement is going to be a problem. If the pieces of your application disagree with the theme you're trying to establish, you're going to confuse, and potentially annoy an admission officer. And as you know by now, that's not a good thing to do when trying to get accepted. Think carefully about your themes. Think carefully about your pieces. And think carefully, about how your themes and pieces connect. Remember that at the center of all these pieces is you. The pieces are floating around you, connected together by themes. But the themes are all connected to you in the center of it all. You are the most important piece of your application. You are greater than the sum of your parts. Think about a rock. If you throw a rock at a window, what happens? Now, if you break the rock into smaller pieces, and you throw each little pebble at the window, what happens? That's right, the pebbles simply bounce off. They don't have the same impact as the rock. By the way, please do not throw any rocks at any windows. This is all figurative. Colleges and universities, are looking for students who will have an impact. So don't give admission counselors a bunch of pebbles. Give them a rock. By connecting your pieces and themes, you will show them, that you are a student who will have an impact. [BLANK_AUDIO]