Tessa Marchetti - Common App and Wake Forest questions

Hickory, NC · tessa.marchetti.test@example.com · Applying to: Wake Forest undergraduate admission, 2026-27 (Regular Decision)

This is a fictional applicant, written for this PrepMyRound sample.

Profile

- Catawba Ridge High School, Hickory, North Carolina (public, about 1,250 students). Class of 2027.
- Lives with mother (dental hygienist), father (upholstery line lead at Hollins & Pryor Upholstery for 22 years) and sister Gia (age 13).
- Intended major: Economics. Also interested in Environment and Sustainability Studies and history.

Grades and tests

- GPA 3.82 unweighted, 4.41 weighted. Rank 41 of 312.
- Senior courses: AP Macroeconomics, AP Statistics, AP English Literature, AP Environmental Science, Honors Precalculus, Honors Spanish IV.
- Earlier APs: AP Human Geography (5), AP US History (4), AP English Language (4), AP Chemistry (2).
- SAT taken once (1310). Applying test-optional; not submitting.

Activities

1. **Server and cashier, Blue Ridge Biscuit Co.** (grades 10-12, 15 hrs/wk, paid). Saturday and Sunday breakfast shifts at a 60-seat restaurant; opens the register at 6:15 a.m.; trained 3 new servers.
2. **Founder, Chair Town Voices oral history project** (grades 11-12, 4 hrs/wk). Recorded 23 interviews with retired furniture workers; transcripts and audio donated to the local history room at Hickory's public library; gave a 20-minute talk there in April 2026 to about 45 people.
3. **Varsity soccer, center back** (grades 9-12, 12 hrs/wk in season). Tore my ACL in October 2024; served as team manager through rehab; returned to start 14 games in fall 2026.
4. **Volunteer, Catawba Valley Pantry Partners** (grades 10-12, 3 hrs/wk). Saturday afternoon distribution, about 110 households a week; rebuilt the intake spreadsheet so wait times dropped from about 50 to 30 minutes. After Hurricane Helene (fall 2024), helped pack 900 supply boxes over four weekends.
5. **Co-founder, Economics Club** (grades 11-12, 1 hr/wk). 14 members; ran a semester stock game and invited a local credit union manager to explain loans.
6. **Furniture refinishing** (grades 10-12, 3 hrs/wk). Buy broken thrift-store chairs and dressers, repair and refinish them in our carport; sold 11 pieces for $1,140 total.

7. **Family responsibilities** (grades 10-12, 6 hrs/wk). Drive my sister to volleyball and cover dinner when my mother works late.

Honors

- AP Scholar (2025)
- Western Piedmont Heritage Society Youth History Prize, first place (2026) for Chair Town Voices
- Conference All-Academic Team, soccer (2023, 2026)

Personal essay (prompt: share a story central to your identity)

There is a chair in our living room that nobody is allowed to sit in. My dad built it in 2004, his first year at Hollins & Pryor, as a test piece. One arm is a little higher than the other. He says it's the best mistake he ever made, because his supervisor, Mr. Royce Deal, made him explain exactly how it happened, and that conversation is why he still has his job.

I grew up thinking every town had a chair like that. Hickory used to call itself the furniture capital of the world, and when I was little I assumed that was still true. In AP Human Geography I learned what happened to most of those factories, and the map in our textbook had a gray dot right on top of my house. I went home and asked my dad why his plant survived when so many didn't. He said, "Ask Royce."

So I did. Mr. Deal is 81. I sat in his kitchen with my phone propped against a sugar bowl and he talked for two hours about lumber prices, about a company in the 1990s that moved its lines overseas in one week, about how the plants that stayed started doing custom work nobody else could ship fast enough. Then he gave me the names of six friends. That was the start of Chair Town Voices. Twenty-three interviews later, I have heard the same story from a dozen angles: a woman who lost her job at 52 and became a nurse at 55, a man who still won't buy anything with a foreign label, a former owner who cried because he had to choose between his workers and his bank.

The project happened during the worst year of my high school life. I tore my ACL in the fourth game of junior season, and for six months I couldn't drive, couldn't play, and got the only D of my life on a chemistry test I'd been too tired to study for. My AP Chemistry score shows it. What I had instead was time to sit in kitchens and listen. I learned that people say the most important thing about forty minutes in, after they've decided you're actually going to stay.

I want to study economics because nobody in those kitchens thought of their lives as economics, but every one of them was living inside a decision somebody made about trade, wages or debt. I want to understand those decisions well enough to explain them to Mr. Deal without making him feel small, and maybe someday to help a town like mine make better ones. I'm still not allowed to sit in the crooked chair. I'm fine with that. I'd rather know how it was made.

Wake Forest supplement

Why have you decided to apply to Wake Forest? (150 words)

I visited in April 2026 and sat in on an introductory economics class with about thirty students. The professor called on a quiet student by name and then argued with her answer, kindly, for five minutes. I want that. I've learned the most this year from adults who knew me well enough to push back. Wake is close enough to Hickory that I could keep interviewing for Chair Town Voices, but far enough to make me grow up. I'm drawn to pairing the economics major with Environment and Sustainability Studies, because the furniture story is also a story about forests and lumber. And I want to work with the Pro Humanitate Institute, because my best work has always been tied to real people a few miles from where I'm sitting.

List five books you have read that intrigued you. 1. *Factory Man*, Beth Macy 2. *Demon Copperhead*, Barbara Kingsolver (reading now) 3. *Hillbilly Elegy*, J.D. Vance (I disagreed with it in the margins) 4. *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien 5. *Poor Economics*, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo

Give us your top ten list (theme of your choice): Ten things I've learned working the breakfast shift 1. Regulars notice when you change your hair before your friends do. 2. Nobody is rude at 6:30 a.m.; they get rude at 9:45. 3. Sweet tea is a political topic. 4. A tip on a $6 order means more than one on a $60 order. 5. My boss Dina can run the whole floor with a sprained wrist. 6. Biscuits are math. 7. Sometimes a customer wants a conversation more than coffee. 8. My grandfather and I can argue about tariffs and still split a plate of gravy. 9. Refilling ketchup is meditative. 10. You can always tell who used to work in a factory: they stack their own plates.

Pro Humanitate means "for humanity." How have you lived it, and how would you continue at Wake? (250 words)

The Saturday after Hurricane Helene, the pantry line went down the block. Families from upriver had lost cars, freezers, jobs. We had paper intake forms and one clipboard. I spent that night building a spreadsheet so we could check people in by last name instead of making them repeat their whole story. It cut the wait by about twenty minutes, and it meant a woman who had already lost her house didn't have to explain it twice to strangers.

That's what "for humanity" means to me: noticing where a system makes people's worst day harder, and fixing the small part I can reach. It isn't heroic. It's a spreadsheet. But the same instinct runs through my oral histories, which exist so that people who built my town don't disappear from its story.

At Wake I'd like to volunteer with a Winston-Salem food access group, and I'd love to bring the oral history method to a class project, maybe interviewing former tobacco workers, since Winston-Salem has its own version of my town's story.