

Name:

College Essay Workshop

Objective:

- Define values that describe me and what matters to me well for a college admissions audience
- Clarify expectations and requirements for a college admissions essay

Admissions Prompts

Common Application Prompts: One is required; it may not exceed 650 words.

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

UC Prompts: Four are required; each response should be no more than 350 words.

- Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.
- Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.
- What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
- Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.
- Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?
- Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.
- What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
- Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?

Refer to the UC Admissions site for guiding questions:

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/freshman/index.html>

Adjectives & Values

Values are...

What I want college representatives to know about me is that I am:

- _____
- _____
- _____

I have to show how I embody these values (with my actions, thoughts, reflections) through my essay.

Essay Structure

All essays (long or short response) have these three basic components:

- Introduction or set-up: _____
- Specific examples(s) or story: _____
- Reflection: _____

Good college essays usually have...

- A personal story that has shaped the student's life in a important way.
- An established main idea; what you want the reader to take away about you and your values. It may be stated towards the end as part of the reflection.
- Includes some of the student's internal monologue during the events of their "story"
- Descriptive details to bring the main story to life

- ***Which of these qualities does my essay have?***

Great college essays usually have...

- A personal story that has clearly shaped the student's life in a meaningful way.
- An embedded main idea; what you want the reader to take away about you and your values. It's not explicitly stated, it's actually built throughout.
- A balance between the student's thoughts as they lived the "story" and their thoughts about their actions/thoughts in retrospect (what you think about it now).
- Details that enhance their perspective— these details connect to the main idea too.
- Narrative techniques: strategic repetition, imagery, flashbacks, foreshadowing, figurative language.

- ***Which of these qualities does my essay have?***