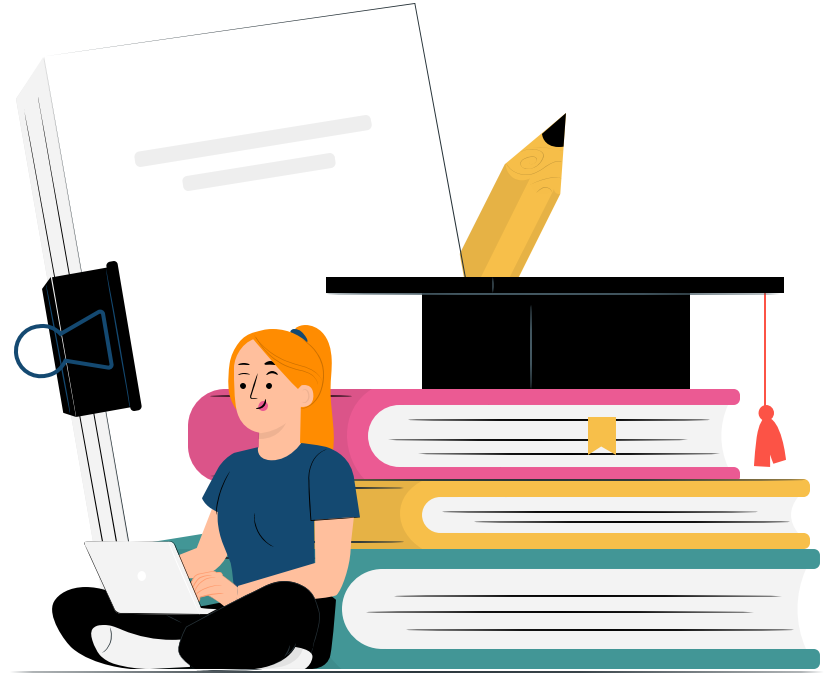


# College Knowledge Workshop for Juniors:

## Do's & Don'ts of College Essays

5/2/2022



# College Essays



Only some Colleges require College Essays

- CSU's do not
- UC's and many Private/Out-of-State Colleges do.

UC Essays are called Personal Insight Questions (PIQs).

- You will have 8 prompts. You will choose 4.
- Each response has a 350 word maximum

Private/Out of State Schools

- Most will use the Common Application
- Personal Statement
- Some will have Supplemental Essays

# Types of College Essays



1

What you know about the College

2

Essays that ask about you:

You, your life, and what you think about

3

Examples from Stanford's Essay Prompts

# Tips for Successful Essays

Let Your  
Personality  
Shine  
Through

1



Check  
Spelling and  
Grammar

2



Start Early  
and Revise,  
Revise, and  
Revise again

3



Bring  
the Reader  
into Your  
World

4



Have A  
Trusted  
Person Give  
Feedback

5



# More Tips



1

**Start with  
brainstorming/notes**

Write down all initial thoughts

2

**Tell a good story**

One that can only uniquely be yours

3

**Use a natural voice**

Keep the tone conversational, while remembering your audience

4

**Focus on a discrete moment  
in time**

Instead of a general story, focus on a poignant moment

5

**Write about something not  
evident elsewhere**

Use this opportunity to show something new about you

# Essays That Worked!

**Examples of Great Essays from John Hopkins  
University with Comments from Admissions Team**



# College Essay Topics to Avoid



[More Bad Essay Tips](#)



# Common Application Essay Prompts



250-600 words

1. 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, please share your story.
2. 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 did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. 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 Application Personal Insight Question Prompts



Out of 8 questions you choose 4. Up to 350 words per essay



1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.
2. 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.
3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.
5. 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?
6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.
7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
8. 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?

# Questions??

Please complete our brief survey

