

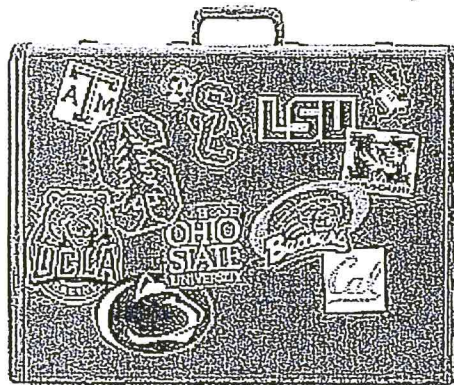
# Junior Year Timeline

## Preparation for College Applications

Checkpoint	Date(s)
<i>Attend Junior Info Night at ASTI</i>	September/October
<i>Sign up and take PSAT at ASTI</i>	October
<i>PSAT Results Arrive</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess results and consult with family/counselor to determine appropriate SAT preparation plan</li> </ul>	December
<i>SAT Preparation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free SAT Prep with Khan Academy when PSAT scores return</li> </ul>	January through March
<i>Register for college entrance exams</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SAT with Essay or ACT with Writing</li> <li>SAT Subject Tests (optional for UC's—recommended or required by some private colleges and/or majors)</li> </ul>	Spring (April/May/June)
<i>Schedule initial college planning meeting with counselor</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop college list</li> <li>Discuss remaining graduation and A-G requirements</li> </ul>	February/March
<i>Research colleges with fervor</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend college fairs</li> <li>Schedule college visits, if possible</li> <li>Revise and modify college list</li> </ul>	March/April
<i>Begin asking teachers/professors and counselor for letters of recommendation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain letter of recommendation planning sheet from counselor</li> <li>Create letter of recommendation packets for recommenders</li> </ul>	April/May
<i>Research and apply for summer internship and/or summer school</i>	January-April
<i>Begin drafting UC Insight Questions and college essays</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with counselor if need help getting started</li> </ul>	April/May

## Things to Do on a College Visit

- Take a campus tour led by a current student.
  - Attend a group information session.
  - Fill out a visitor card at the admissions office and pick up a catalogue, view book, and/or application.
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- Have lunch in the student union. While there, scan the postings on the bulletin boards and pick up a copy of the student newspaper. Browse the bookstore.
  - Walk through the library. Does it look like a comfortable place to study?
  - Check out the recreational facilities that interest you.
  - Sit in on a class (may need to be arranged in advance).
  - Stay overnight in a dorm with a current student (some colleges/universities offer fly-in programs—check with the campus's admissions office for more information).
  - Inquire with the admissions office about arranging a formal interview.
  - Meet with a faculty member in your area of interest (arrange in advance).
  - Ask students you meet what they like best about the campus and what they would change if they could.
  - Explore the nearest town and transportation options.
  - Sit on a bench and watch students walk by. Can you imagine yourself happily among them?





# 10 Tips to Create a Balanced College List!

You may have heard counselors or other students talking about how important it is to create a balanced college list. Are you wondering what they mean? Having a balanced college list means that there are colleges on your list from all of the following categories: *reach, target and safety*. These categories refer to how likely it is that you will be accepted to a college based on your GPA and test scores. You must apply to colleges from each category. *It is recommended that you apply to 8-10 colleges.*

## **Step 1: Get Started.**

Select 5 key college characteristics that are most important to you. For example:

- Location: New York City, New England, beach town, Southern California, the South
- College type: public, private, out-of-state public, liberal arts college
- Campus size: large, medium, or small campus
- Campus setting: Rural, suburban, or urban
- Major/Program
- Extracurricular Activities: Greek Life, athletics, music groups, etc.

## **Step 2: Use College Search Engines.**

Once you have a better idea of what college characteristics you want, use a college search engine, such as College Board BigFuture or College Greenlight, to discover new colleges based on your desired college characteristics.

## **Step 3: Make A List.**

Compile a list of schools that stand out to you. It's okay if you have a lot of schools on your list; don't limit yourself yet. You can narrow down this list later.

## **Step 4: Review College Websites.**

As you learn about colleges that may be a good fit for you, explore each college's website to learn more about the campus and programs available. See how the school's characteristics match up against what you are looking for in a school.

## **Step 5: Compare Your Stats.**

Research each college on your list and find out how your GPA and test scores match up with the school's admissions criteria. **Most colleges list the average GPA and SAT/ACT scores for admitted students. This helps you see if the college is a "reach," "target," or "safety" college for you.** Some colleges with low admit rates will be a reach for all applicants. Remember that most schools consider other factors when they review your application (essays, class rigor, letters of recommendation, and extracurriculars).

## **Step 6: Create Your Balanced List.**

As you compare your stats, make sure that you don't only have "reach" schools on your list or only have "safety" options. It helps to aim for at least 3 of each (3 reach, 3 target, and 3 safety).

- What is a "Safety" College? A "safety" college means that your test scores/GPA are above 50% of the students who were admitted, and the overall admit rate is higher.
- What is a "Target" College? A "target" college means that your test scores/GPA match the middle test scores/GPA of students who were admitted.
- What is a "Reach" College? A "reach" college means that your test scores/GPA are below 50% of the students who were admitted. A college is a reach if it has a lower admit rate (Stanford and Harvard are reaches for everyone).

## **Step 7: Keep Updating.**

Your list should be a work in progress. You can update, add, or delete colleges as you learn more about different options.

**Step 8: Be Happy About Your List.**

You want to be excited about ALL of the colleges on your list. Avoid adding “safety” schools without researching. Your college list should represent colleges that you would be thrilled to attend.

**Step 9: Be Open-Minded.**

Many students talk about a brand-name “dream” college because it's popular, or because they feel pressure to apply from family and friends. However, there are AMAZING colleges across the country you should consider that you may not have heard of. Check in on the Hub and with your high school counselor about colleges that you may be unaware of that could be a good fit for you..

**Step 10: Connect.**

Once you have a good idea about the colleges you're interested in, make connections with each school. Check to see if they have fly-in programs or if they will be at a college fair in your local area. Find out if they have college visits scheduled on your high school campus.

**Helpful Resources:**

College Board Big Future: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

College Navigator: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

College Greenlight: <https://www.collegegreenlight.com/>

Colleges That Change Lives: <https://ctcl.org/>

College Scorecard: <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

ScholarMatcher: <http://scholarmatcher.scholarmatch.org/>

## Letters of Recommendation (Teacher/Professor)

*Educators have many responsibilities—teaching, grading, planning lessons, attending meetings, etc. They enjoy writing letters of recommendation, but it does impact their schedules. The easier and more enjoyable you make the experience for your letter writer, the better letter you will receive.*

**Step 1: Ask yourself “what kind of student was I when I interacted with this educator?”** In any recommendation letter, educators have a moral obligation to be honest. Educators will write exception letters for students, but only if they had exceptional interactions with the student. Ask yourself these questions:

- Did I put forth my best effort on a daily basis?
- Did I participate in class with insightful comments/questions?
- Did I contribute to the class in a positive manner?
- Did I show genuine interest?
- Did I get to know this educator enough so that s(he) could write an entire letter about me?

**\*Note:** Don't just consider your grade when thinking about your interaction with the educator. It goes beyond that.

**Step 2: Ask the educator** if s(he) can write you a strong letter. If you did Step 1 correctly, then the answer should be “yes!” However, if you are still confused, ask your educator for an honest answer. Honesty is better than receiving a bad letter and jeopardizing your application.

- ✓ Waive your right to view recommendation letters on your application forms. Admission officers will trust them more if you haven't seen them.

**Step 3: Help the educator help you!**

- ✓ **Write a one to two page “letter” that will help the educator write you the excellent recommendation that you deserve.** This letter should include the following:
  - **How was the class/relationship for you?** Give the educator a sense of what you got out of the class or relationship.
  - **What are your long term goals for education and life?**
  - **What are 7 adjectives that describe your work and participation in the class/your interactions with the educator?**
  - **Describe any moments that really made the class/the relationship memorable or that made you stand out—for example, a great question, a conversation, an assignment, etc.**
  - **Describe one or more projects, events, examples of something in the class/interaction that you are proud of.**
  - **Are there any hardships you have faced that show your ability to overcome challenges in the class/relationship?**
  - **What grades did you receive in the class?** First semester grade, current grade. If necessary, explain why you think your grade is less than what you hoped for.
  - **Anything else that you think might help your educator right you a strong letter.** If there is something specific you would like the educator to mention in the letter, be sure to specifically address it.
- ✓ **Include a copy of your resume**
- ✓ **Include a copy of your transcript**
- ✓ **Include a list of colleges you are applying to with due dates**

**Step 4: Give the educator at least one month before the letter is due.** Two months is even better. If ample time is not given, it will seem more of a burden to the educator, and the educator might not be willing to write your letter.

**Step 5: Provide all of your materials (letter to educator, resume, transcript, list of college applying to with due dates) in a large manila envelope with your name. If you are using the Common Application or need your letters of recommendation submitted electronically, make sure you have the recommendation links emailed to your educator. Make sure you have your educator's correct email address!**

- ✓ If your letters must be mailed to the college, provide a self-addressed (use ASTI as the return address), stamped envelope to your letter writer.

**Step 6: Check in a week or two before your letter is due to make sure the educator sent the letter.**

**Step 7: Write a thank you card to the educator. This shows professionalism and gratitude!**



## Letter of Recommendation (Counselor School Report)

*When applying to private colleges and universities, your counselor must submit a School Report, which includes the ASTI School Profile, your transcript, a character/behavior evaluation, and a letter of recommendation. The counselor's letter of recommendation can be a very important piece to your college application. In order for your counselor to write a compelling, positive letter of recommendation, you should follow these steps.*

**Step 1: Ask your counselor to write you a letter of recommendation.** You must give the counselor at least one month to write your letter. During the fall semester of your 12<sup>th</sup> grade year, your counselor will be asked to write many letters of recommendation. Plan to ask your counselor for this letter of recommendation during the spring semester of your 11<sup>th</sup> grade year before the summer break starts.

- ✓ Waive your right to view recommendation letters on your application forms. Admission officers will trust them more if you haven't seen them.

**Step 2: Help your counselor help you!**

- ✓ **Write a letter to your counselor highlighting the following questions/topics.** Use as many details and examples as possible in your writing so that s(he) can draw upon these examples when writing your letter:
  - **What are 7-10 adjectives** you would use to describe yourself?
  - Describe an academic accomplishment (major paper, science experiment and/or artistic project) you are most proud of, and tell why you take pride in it.
  - What kind of learner are you? Which academic setting or assignments make you thrive? What interests you?
  - List your three most distinguishing or most admirable qualities. Explain each in several sentences.
  - What do you hope to accomplish in college and after? Consider your intended major (if you have one), career goals, and your broader goals.
  - What do you consider your most important activities outside of school? List jobs, paid or voluntary; religious activities; hobbies; travel; music; art; and/or drama. Include the number of years of your involvement and the amount of time you spent on the activity weekly, and explain why this activity was significant to you.
  - Are there any **hardships** you have faced that show your ability to overcome challenges? Provide examples, and discuss what you have learned as a result of these hardships/challenges.
  - Describe your **family background**—are you the first in your family to attend college? Do you hold any leadership responsibilities at home (caring for siblings, interpreting for parents, taking grandparents to doctor's appointments, etc.)?
  - Are your grades (9<sup>th</sup> grade-present) an accurate representation of who you are as a student? If not, explain. *Make sure you explain any D, F, or W grades.*
  - Do you think your SAT/ACT test scores are an accurate reflection of your abilities? Why or why not?
  - Are you receiving IGETC and/or an AA degree? If so, list the AA degrees you plan to complete.
  - Anything else you want the counselor to mention in your letter. *If there is something specific you would like the counselor to address in your letter, be sure to specifically address it.*
- ✓ **Include a copy of your resume**
- ✓ **Include a copy of your SAT/ACT scores**
- ✓ **Include a list of colleges you are applying to with due dates**

**Step 3:** If you are using the Common Application or need your letters of recommendation submitted electronically, make sure you have the recommendation links emailed to your counselor. Make sure you have your counselor's correct email address!

**Ms. Jurkovich's email address: [kjurkovich@alamedaunified.org](mailto:kjurkovich@alamedaunified.org)**

**Step 4:** Check in one-two weeks before your letter is due to make sure your counselor submitted your letter.

# The SAT® and SAT Subject Tests™

## Calendar 2019-20

Deadlines expire at 11:59 p.m. U.S. ET.

Test Dates*	2019				2020		
	AUG 24	OCT 5	NOV 2	DEC 7	MAR 14	MAY 2	JUN 6
Domestic Registration Deadline	July 26	Sep 6	Oct 3	Nov 8	Feb 14	Apr 3	May 8
Domestic Late Registration Deadline							
Paper	Aug 6	Sep 17	Oct 15	Nov 19	Feb 25	Apr 14	May 19
Online and Phone	Aug 13	Sep 24	Oct 22	Nov 26	Mar 3	Apr 21	May 27
International Registration Deadline**	Not Available	Sep 6	Oct 3	Nov 8	Feb 14	Apr 3	May 8
International Early Registration Deadline		Aug 21	Sep 18	Oct 23	Jan 29	Mar 18	Apr 22

### The SAT

### The SAT Subject Tests

Biology E/M, Chemistry, Physics	📅	📅	📅	📅	SAT Subject Tests are not offered on this date.	📅	📅
Literature	📅	📅	📅	📅		📅	📅
Mathematics Levels I and II	📅	📅	📅	📅		📅	📅
United States (U.S.) History	📅	📅	📅	📅		📅	📅
World History	📅			📅			📅
Languages: Reading Only							
French, Spanish	📅	📅		📅		📅	📅
German, Italian, and Modern Hebrew							📅
Latin				📅			📅
Languages with Listening							
Students may take only one listening test on this date.							
Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish			📅				

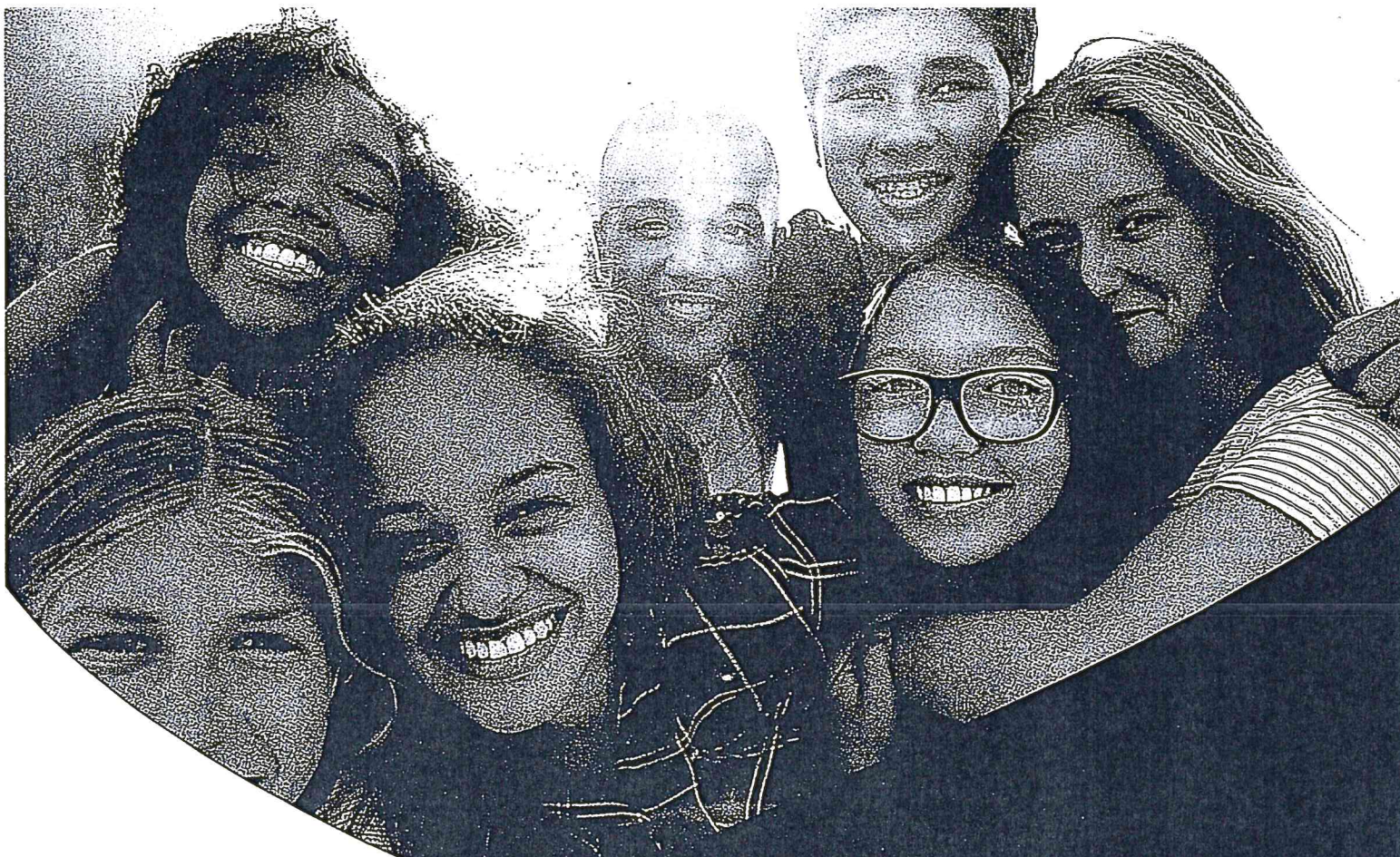
Domestic Registration: [sat.org/register](https://sat.org/register)  
Domestic Fees: [sat.org/us-fees](https://sat.org/us-fees)  
Fee Waivers: [sat.org/fee-waivers](https://sat.org/fee-waivers)

International Registration: [sat.org/international](https://sat.org/international)  
International Fees: [sat.org/intl-fees](https://sat.org/intl-fees)

\* Sunday tests are given the day after the Saturday test. Advise students to review the test calendar carefully because not all subjects are offered on every test date.

\*\*The SAT is offered internationally in October, December, March, and May. The SAT Subject Tests are offered internationally in October, November, December, May, and June. If registering through a representative, students need to submit by the early registration deadline.





The **ACT**<sup>®</sup>

## 2019-2020 TEST DATES

2019 Test Dates	SEP 14	OCT 26	DEC 14	Register at <b>act.org</b>
Registration Deadline	AUG 16	SEP 20	NOV 8	
**Late Registration Deadline	AUG 30	OCT 4	NOV 22	

2020 Test Dates	FEB 8	APR 4	JUN 13	JUL 18*
Registration Deadline	JAN 10	FEB 28	MAY 8	JUN 19
**Late Registration Deadline	JAN 17	MAR 13	MAY 22	JUN 26

\*No test centers are scheduled in California or New York for the July test date.

\*\*All material sent by mail must be RECEIVED by the late registration deadline, regardless of postmark date.



## 2019-2020 Common Application Essay Prompts

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, then 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 what 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. 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.
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 all 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.





## PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS: GUIDE FOR FRESHMAN APPLICANTS



4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

Feel free to speak about either an opportunity or a barrier. It's OK if you've experienced one and not the other.

### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

List any programs or additional classes that have better prepared you for college:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How did you find out about these programs or classes? How did you take what you learned and apply it to your schoolwork or other aspects of your life?

### EDUCATIONAL BARRIERS:

Have you faced any barriers or challenges related to school and/or your schoolwork? How did you overcome or strive to overcome them? List three personal characteristics or skills you had to call on to overcome this challenge:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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?

Have you had a difficult experience in your life? How did you get through it? What did you learn going through this experience? If you're currently working your way through a challenge, what are you doing now and does that affect different aspects of your life? For example, ask yourself, "How has my life changed at home, at my school, with my friends, or with my family?"

6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.

Think about all of the classes you've taken at school. Now fill in the blank: I would go to [class name] even if I didn't have to.

It doesn't have to be a class in which you've earned good grades – the important thing is you enjoyed the subject and it impacted you in some way.

(#6 continued)

Maybe there's a course you *haven't* taken at school that you wish you did take or are looking forward to taking in college. How have you pursued your interest in that subject outside of school?

7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

Did you contribute to a positive change at your school or in your community? What steps have you taken to accomplish this? Remember, even small changes can have a big impact. Why were you inspired to act? What did you learn from your effort?

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?

From your point of view, what do you feel makes you an excellent choice for UC? Don't be afraid to brag a little. Here are a few lists to help you get started.

What do you value in your life? What's important to you? List three of them here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are you passionate about?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

When you attend UC, what three things are you most looking forward to?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Does anything overlap? Is there anything from the lists that you want to expand on?

### Next steps

As you filled out the worksheet, were there any topics that seemed particularly interesting? You might consider answering those questions as part of your application. But the choice is yours! Take your time in selecting which questions to answer and how to answer them. For more information, visit our website at [ucal.us/personalquestions](http://ucal.us/personalquestions).

# PERSONAL INSIGHT QUESTIONS: GUIDE FOR FRESHMAN APPLICANTS



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## Getting started

This worksheet is designed to help freshman applicants start the writing process for the personal insight questions in the undergraduate admissions application. Additional hints and suggestions can be found on UC's admissions website at [ucal.us/personalquestions](http://ucal.us/personalquestions).

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### What are the personal insight questions?

These questions are about getting to know you better — your life experience, interests, ambitions and inspirations. Think of it as your interview with the admissions office. Be open. Be reflective. Find your individual voice and express it.

While this section of the application is just one part we consider when making our admission decision, it helps provide context for the rest of your application.

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### The basics

- You will have 8 questions to choose from. You must respond to any 4 of the 8 questions.
- Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words.
- Which questions you choose to answer is entirely up to you: But you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances.
- All questions are equal: All questions are given equal consideration in the application review process, which means there is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain questions over others.

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### Freshman questions & brainstorm exercise

The following exercises are suggestions to help you get started. Remember, you don't have to answer all eight questions – you only need to answer four. So if some questions aren't the right fit for you, that's OK. The important thing is expressing who are you, what matters to you and what you want to share with UC.

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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.

How do you define "leader"? List three words that you think describe what a leader is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Do any of these words apply to you? How? Is there a time in your life when you displayed any of these traits?

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.

Can you think of a time your viewpoint was unique compared to others? What was the issue or problem from your perspective? Now think of the same situation from the perspective of another person who was there with you. How was your approach different from that other person's?

Was there ever a problem where your imagination and intuition guided you to the solution?

Do you have a passion for music, theater, visual art, dance, etc.? What have you gained from it that has affected other parts of your life?

3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?

List three of your talents or skills:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Were these talents or skills the same a few years ago? What changed? What improved?

Which one of the three talents or skills you listed is the most meaningful or important to you and why? Does the talent come naturally or have you worked hard to develop this skill or talent?