

The Common Application 2023-2024 Essay Prompts

Juniors can now begin the Common App at any time prior to the start of their senior year, and the information will roll over when the new Common App is released (typically August 1). The only pieces that may not roll over are college specific questions, questions that have been changed or removed, or recommender information. To help you get started on your essay, see the SHS [College Essay Tips](#) we've compiled, as well as our SHS Junior College Night workshop on [Writing Your Personal Essay and Supplements](#).

For the main essay (several schools will require shorter supplemental essays), the maximum length is 650 words. Anything beyond 650 words will be cut off!

From Common App:

Students who are ready to start exploring the application can create their Common App account prior to August 1. With [account rollover](#), we will retain any responses to questions on the Common App tab, including the personal essay.

Below is the full set of essay prompts for 2023-2024.

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. 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 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.

We will retain the [optional community disruption](#) question within the Writing section. Additionally, we are closely following the Supreme Court case on the use of race in admissions. Depending on the outcome, we stand ready to create resources that will help students speak about their lived experiences.