



The UC Insight Questions

Antelope High School



EARLY ACADEMIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

What are the Personal Insight Questions

8 prompts — 4 responses

Students will select 4 prompts to highlight their readiness for a UC education.

Not an essay

The PIQs are short answers to help the UCs get to know the student on a *personal* level.

350 words maximum

350 words is not a lot! We want to make sure students select the right prompt and get to the point with purpose.

How and Why are PIQs used

How do UCs use the PIQs?

Each question aligns to one or more of the **comprehensive review** criteria that campuses consider in their admission decisions.

All questions have **equal value** in the admission selection process.

Yes – we read all responses! The UCs want to get to know the student **beyond** grades and extra-curricular activities.

Why do we use the PIQs?

This is the student's **conversation** with the UCs to show who they are and what matters to them the most.

We use the PIQs to better understand the student's **experience** and their **individual circumstances**.

It's about getting to know the student's personality, background, interests and achievements in their **own unique voice**.

Three Tips for a Strong Personal Essay

1. Not broad but in depth
2. Focus on the victory
3. Make this about you
4. More tips on the UC website:
<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/personal-questions/freshman/>

Build

- Writing strategies
 - Outline
 - Free write
 - Word web
 - Pretend you are answering an interview question
 - Record yourself answering out loud

Independent of the PIQs, have the student make a list of 4 things they think someone should know about them. Then use the prompts to highlight what is most important.

This will help students work backwards to fully answer the question with content that is relevant.

By knowing what they want to share, they will be able to answer questions naturally and easily.

Build

Using Artificial Intelligence

AI writing tools

If used thoughtfully, AI tools might assist in the early stages of the writing process. But students should ensure that their final PIQ responses are entirely their own in voice, substance, and reflection.

AI is not a replacement for a student's own words!

Encourage students to write authentically in their responses — we want to admit a human, not a robot!

It is possible that these tools may pull content from other sources (i.e., plagiarized content) which can result in cancellation due to plagiarism.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Common mistakes

- **Avoid common mistakes in Your Personal Insight Essays:**
- Talking about one campus: You're talking to all UC campuses you apply to in your responses
- Inappropriate use of humor
- Creative writing (poems, clichés)
- Quotations: We want to know your thoughts & words, not someone else's
- Generalities: Stick to facts and personal examples
- Repetition: Give us new info. we can't find in other sections of the application
- Asking philosophical questions: Get to the point and tell us what you mean
- Acronyms: Spell it out for us!

Examples

I exist as a musical piece, written by the greatest composer who ever lived. He knows nothing about music, doesn't play an instrument, and doesn't sing. Yet his song courses through my heart the same way that his blood does.

I am 11, and we are at a local music store. I am thrumming with intrigue, surrounded by walls of shiny instruments I would soon know like dear friends. My grandpa is at the counter, talking to a clerk and, unknowingly, rewriting my life. We walk out of the music store, him \$1300 poorer and me carrying what would become an extension of my soul.

Bringing that trombone into my life was the paradigm of my grandpa's composing abilities. While I play, I can very easily hear who is out of tune. I am a song that pushes moderately, peacefully, until I hear dissonance. A sour note is seldom unnoticed by me; a hateful person is seldom unfronted. Furthermore, I am a song blotted with fanfares. I will say what I believe, and if my fanfare is different from that of another, I will not hesitate to play it again with a polished melody. I remedy dissonance, I'm boisterous and brassy: this is how my grandpa composed me.

Examples

From the first beginnings of inspiration to the formation of ideas through and beyond the page, writing has always been my personal outlet for creativity. The written word provides the means of discussion on an infinite variety of issues that can seamlessly branch from one another. Since early schooling, writing assignments have always been an opportunity not only for a grade, but also for personal enjoyment and fulfillment. Writing represents a personal ability to express purpose in conjunction with individualistic ideas.

This outlet for personal creativity has been versatile. On various occasions it has allowed for a more in-depth examination on an assignment, regardless of whether the human geography teacher was expecting an eight page provisional layout for a hypothetical government when they assigned the “at least” one paragraph assignment. Beyond this further examination of topics, writing allowed for creativity when it came to the approach of a topic. This relationship was personally explored when given the chance to perform words, rather than writing them as I was accustomed to.

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Examples

When I was young I was hospitalized more times than I can count. I had high fevers every week, was in and out of school, even missing months at a time because of how sick I was. In 2005 I was admitted into the hospital after being sick for over a month but recovered quickly thanks to the doctors. Thankfully, that was my last hospitalization. As I look back now, I wouldn't be alive today if it weren't for them. These doctors gave me the greatest gift: life. When I started at Antelope High School, I had the chance to participate in Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Biomedical Sciences program which has made a big impact on my interest in becoming a doctor through its collection of medical classes. One class in particular has given me more than I could have ever asked for: the internship. I aspire to become a doctor so that I can give others the same gift of good health that I received.

I have participated in the PLTW Biomedical Sciences program each year of high school. The program has molded me to become a better and smarter student, giving me study skills that I've used in other high school classes, too. Each PLTW class is challenging which has made it difficult, but well worth it. PLTW is one of many classes I love. Participating in the internship has given me real world experience in health care and what it's like to work with patients. In addition, the internship provided me a new perspective on life and how precious it is. It has also powered my drive to reach my goal of becoming a doctor. I have always been fascinated with how our bodies work when I was so sick as child, which originally led me to this pathway. The educational opportunities the PLTW program has given me has deepened my interest in pursuing my goal of becoming a doctor.

UC Personal Insight Questions

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?

UC Personal Insight Questions

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.

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7. What have you done to make your school or 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?

Common Application Prompts

1. Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that 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 an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?

Common Application Prompts

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.

Common Application Prompts

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.

IMPORTANT DATES & WORKSHOPS

- <https://antelope.rjuhsd.us/services/counseling>

Date	Time	Event	Who Should Attend?
10/13	6-7:30pm	CSU Application Workshop	Students applying to a CSU *meet a-g, with a minimum 2.0 academic GPA
10/27	6-7:30pm	UC Application Workshop	Students applying to a UC *meet a-g, with a minimum 3.0 academic GPA
1/21	6-7:30pm	FAFSA/Dream Act Workshop	Everyone!