

Personal Statement Prompts

What is a personal statement? Good question.

"Your personal statement should be exactly that — personal. This is your opportunity to tell [colleges/scholarships groups/teachers/counselors] about yourself — your hopes, ambitions, life experiences, inspirations. We encourage you to take your time on this assignment. Be open. Be reflective. Find your individual voice and express it honestly."

—the University of California's suggestion to students about personal statements

What are some examples of personal statement prompts?

Common Application instructions and prompts:

"The Common Application will retain the current set of first-year essay prompts for 2014-15, without any edits or additions. The essay length will continue to be capped at 650 words. The feedback received from member colleges and school counselors has been positive. The essay prompts will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to serve students and member colleges well."

The essay prompts are as follows:

- 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.
- Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
- Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?
- Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

-Information directly from:

<https://appsupport.commonapp.org/link/portal/33011/33013/Article/1694/2014-15-Common-Application-Essay-Prompts>

Want more examples? Run a web search for: personal statement prompts college