

Common Application Essay Prompts for 2017-18

Your essay is your chance to share with your schools a side of you that they may not see in viewing the other “black and white” data. This is NOT a time to reiterate your resume, they have that information. There is no right or wrong essay because it’s about YOU, so don’t try to make yours look like someone else or copy their ideas. And don’t try to second guess what the colleges are “looking for” because they are not looking for anything except to get to know you better.

Don’t let your parents write your essay.

If you use general ideas make sure that you give them solid examples to support those general ideas. Make it personal! This is your time to tell someone about a side of you that makes you uniquely you.

Once you’ve done your rough draft submit it to your College Counselor for review. We will give you feedback and let you know when it’s ready to submit. It won’t be perfect on the first draft and that’s ok! This is a time consuming process, so utilize the summer to get your essay written.

Instructions: The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. *What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores?* Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay *of* no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. The application won’t accept a response shorter than 250 words.

2017-2018 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. [No change]
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? [Revised]
3. Reflect on a time when you *questioned* or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your *thinking*? What *was the outcome*? [Revised]
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. [No change]
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or *realization* that *sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others*. [Revised]
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?* [New]
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.* [New]