

Essays

One of the Best Strategic Tools to Get You into
The Best Suitable College or University

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The Nature of College Essays

As part of the application package, the most selective colleges require their applicants to submit at least one writing sample: the college essay(s) or a personal statement.

The application essay prompts are broad and open-ended, because the writing could give so much insight into who the applicant is as a person that the college is looking for.

The Nature of College Essays (continued)

The college essay offers you, the applicant, an opportunity to tell admissions officers a bit about you and demonstrate why you'd be a good fit for their student body.

Writing your essay is a time for learning, reflecting, and planning.

You should be the one who is writing the essay(s) telling your own stories and displaying your strength.

The Importance of Essays/ Personal Statements

- Colleges are not looking for a homogenous student body, but rather a diverse one so that students could learn with and from each other.
- Essay writing demonstrates how unique you are.
- In a huge application pool with similar academic performances, admission officers are looking for those who may contribute further and differently to its student body.
- A well-written essay or personal statement could make you stand out in that crowded pool.

Now, let's look at some examples of essay questions!

- MIT
- University of California
 - 10 campuses
- Common Application
 - 1,000 colleges and universities



MIT looks for more than a Techie

In 2022-23, MIT requests applicants to write 5 essays, 100 to 250 word each:

Fun side of you. We know you lead a busy life, full of activities, many of which are required of you. Tell us about something you do simply for the pleasure of it.

Background. Describe the world you come from (for example, your family, school, community, city, or town). How has that world shaped your dreams and aspirations?

Diversity. MIT brings people with diverse backgrounds and experiences together to better the lives of others. Our students work to improve their communities in different ways, from tackling the world's biggest challenges to being a good friend. Describe one way you have collaborated with people who are different from you to contribute to your community.

Challenges and solutions. Tell us about a significant challenge you've faced (that you feel comfortable sharing) or something that didn't go according to plan. How did you manage the situation?

Open-ended. Plus one final, open-ended, additional information where you can tell us anything else you think we really ought to know.

University of California (UC) Wants a Well-Rounded Person

Select 4 out of 7 prompts below and write up to 350 words each

Leadership. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.

Creativity. 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.

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

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

Challenges. 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?

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

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

Being Unique. 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?

2022-23 Common Application Essay Prompts

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.

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?

Reflect on a time when you **questioned or challenged a belief or idea**. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

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?

Discuss an **accomplishment**, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

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?

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.

Essay Writing Strategic Guidelines

Do some self-exploration. Your essay is all about showcasing yourself.

Read the instructions and follow them. Be conscious of any length limits (50, 200, 350, 650 words, etc.).

Be honest. The point of college essay is to show who you are, not who you wish you were. Stick to what you know and your true personality will shine through.

Essay Writing Strategic Guidelines (continued)

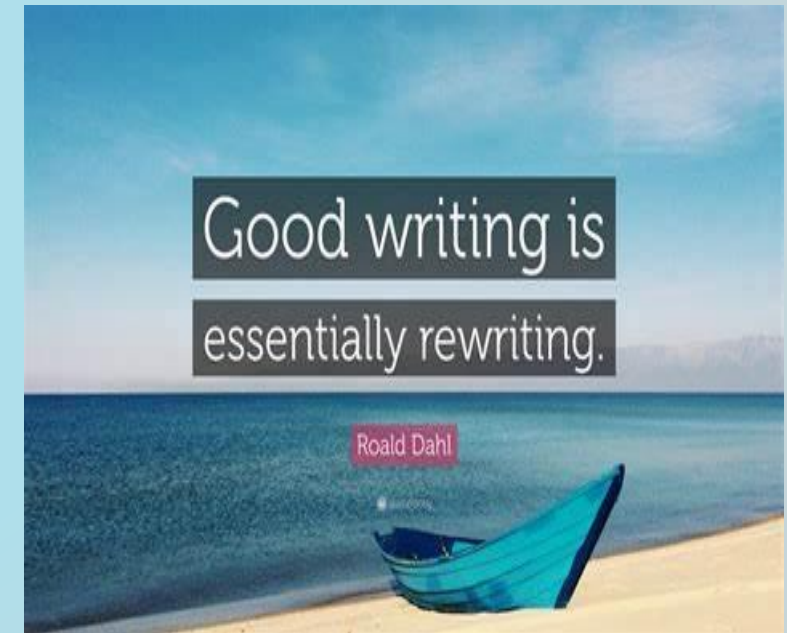
Use your own voice. Don't use big words that you are not familiar with. They can distract from the essay when misused. Remember, this essay is about you, so use words you normally use.

Don't use slang words. Generally speaking, using slang words in formal writing may imply that you are unpolished, uncaring or not that serious.

Essay Writing Strategic Guidelines (continued)

HigherEdUSA will offer you more effective and efficient strategies to write your essay(s), including: How to

- select questions/prompts
- decide on optional questions
- cover all aspects of the question
- focus on yourself
- be positive and original
- edit, proofread, and submit



Essays Summary

A well-written essay/personal statement needs excellent writing skills and practice.

Being able to write well will not only help you to get in, but also become successful at the college/university of your choice, and beyond.

For colleges use Common Application, in addition to essays required by Common App, individual colleges require their own supplemental essay questions. Don't miss them!

Best wishes to your college application and graduation as well!