

Senior Summer Writing Project

Over the summer, you will write a rough draft for your college application essay. Respond to **one** of the seven prompts on page 2 with a multi-paragraph essay of 250-650 words.

*****Your rough draft will be collected on the first day of school in the fall and will count as a grade.*****

These essay prompts are taken from the Common Application. It is not a school-specific essay, and many colleges and universities accept the Common App.

If you apply to a college that does not accept the Common App , you can still use information from this essay and revise it as needed. These prompts can easily be adapted for any college application essay.

Some tips:

- Some students have trouble getting started because they think there is nothing particularly “earth shattering” about their lives so far. The story you choose to write about doesn’t have to be a groundbreaking, life-altering thing. It can be as simple as something you learned about yourself by having to take the bus to school everyday.
- Do not just restate information already provided in your college application. This essay is your opportunity to share something about yourself that goes beyond your clubs, sports, GPA, etc. Don’t just tick off statistics about yourself. Tell a story!
- Focus on yourself, not others. Students sometimes talk about their heritage and end up dedicating half of their essay to their great-grandparents’ life stories. It’s okay to mention others (like family, friends), but 99% of the essay should be focused on your life, your experiences.

A special note:

- Application essays have always been very important, but colleges may pay even closer attention to them this year since some of you will be applying without a test score, if you choose to apply to test-optional schools. Therefore, this essay is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your writing and critical thinking abilities. Show them that you are an intelligent, thoughtful young woman!

Common App Essay Choices

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, 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. 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 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.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging 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.