**Personal Narrative/College Application Essay Prompts**

**Common Application Essay Prompts 2017-2018**

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.
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 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.
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.

**Other Topic Suggestions:**

1. The ancient Romans started it when they coined the phrase "Carpe diem." Jonathan Larson proclaimed "No day but today!" and most recently, Drake explained You Only Live Once (YOLO). Have you ever seized the day? Lived like there was no tomorrow? Or perhaps you plan to shout YOLO while jumping into something in the future. What does #YOLO mean to you?
2. How did you get caught? (Or not caught, as the case may be.)
3. People often think of language as a connector, something that brings people together by helping them share experiences, feelings, ideas, etc. We, however, are interested in how language sets people apart. Start with the peculiarities of your own personal language—the voice you use when speaking most intimately to yourself, the vocabulary that spills out when you’re startled, or special phrases and gestures that no one else seems to use or even understand—and tell us how your language makes you unique. You may want to think about subtle riffs or idiosyncrasies based on cadence, rhythm, rhyme, or (mis)pronunciation.
4. Albert Einstein once said, “The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.” Propose your own original theory to explain one of the 16 mysteries below. Your theory does not need to be testable or even probable; however, it should provide some laws, principles, and/or causes to explain the facts, phenomena, or existence of one of these mysteries. You can make your theory artistic, scientific, conspiracy-driven, quantum, fanciful, or otherwise ingenious—but be sure it is your own and gives us an impression of how you think about the world.

Love, Non-Dairy Creamer, Sleep and Dreams, Gray, Crop Circles, The Platypus, The Beginning of Everything, Art, Time Travel, Language, The End of Everything, The Roanoke Colony, Numbers, Mona Lisa’s Smile, The College Rankings in *U.S. News and World Report*, Consciousness

1. How do you feel about Wednesdays?

**Instructions:**

Prewriting step 1: Select a topic

To generate ideas before picking your final topic, choose three topics from the list of prompts that interest you the most. Ultimately, you’ll choose your best/favorite one and write between 250-500 words on it, so make sure you can develop it enough to fulfill the requirements. Fill at least half a page of ideas under each of the three.

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