



Common App

Prompts: Demystified

Prompt	Demystified
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.	<p>This is your chance to write about something unique to you and your experience. What about your history, personality, hobbies, or accomplishments might be worth highlighting for an admissions officer? This prompt is intentionally vague, so you may write about a family trip, your love of food, movies, animals, you name it.</p>
2) Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?	<p>This essay is a chance to explain to admissions officers how your struggles have shaped you for the better. Can be a powerful tool to demonstrate your resilience and grit.</p> <p>Be careful not to dwell on the problem, but rather write about the solution and your growth. Shy away from trivial challenges or ones that display your own poor judgement, unless they were transformative.</p>
3) Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?	<p>This prompt is asking the writer to delve into personal beliefs or ideology. The hope is that you can show mental plasticity and a willingness to change when exposed to information or experiences that differ from your world view. If you can accomplish this, it can be incredibly rewarding.</p> <p>There is risk in choosing a topic that is polarizing or distasteful for the admissions staff. In addition, it is far too easy to sound self-righteous when answering this type of prompt.</p>

Prompt	Demystified
<p>4) 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?</p>	<p>This prompt is asking you to discuss a time when you felt gratitude, an important consideration for incoming college students. Write about a time when you felt acknowledged, appreciated, and seen. Doing so depicts your ability to think introspectively and find purpose.</p> <p>Be conscious when you answer this prompt that the focus is still on YOU.</p>
<p>5) Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.</p>	<p>A simple prompt to demonstrate personal growth or enlightenment. Does not need to be formal or a major recognized event. It could be anything from going to a movie with your grandmother to winning a prestigious award. Highlight qualities of growth and insight that do not show up anywhere else in your application.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>This is a window for an admissions officer to peer into the type of learner that you are (and possibly the kind of college student that you will be). Are you self-motivated? What drives your passions and inspires you? This is your chance to explain what sparks your curiosity and what you do when those moments strike.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The choose-your adventure prompt. Share something that admissions officers could not learn from your application alone. Think: If you could speak to the admissions officer before they made their decision, what would you tell them about yourself? What unique characteristics would you bring to campus that no other student could provide?</p>