



UPROOTED
ACADEMY

WEEK 5

ESSAY

WRITING



WELCOME TO WEEK 5:

Essay Writing



Agenda

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Essay Types in College Applications
- ✓ Common App and UC Essay Prompts
- ✓ Choosing Your Essay Topic
- ✓ Essay Examples
- ✓ Writing Supplemental Essays

- ✓ Essay Writing Tips
- ✓ Revising and Finalizing Essays
- ✓ Key Takeaways and Next Steps
- ✓ Breakout Sessions
- ✓ Q&A



YOUR COLLEGE PERSONAL ESSAY

Why It's Important



- ✓ **Beyond the Numbers**
Share who you are, not just your grades.
- ✓ **It's All You**
This is your chance to steer the narrative.
- ✓ **Your Journey Matters**
Colleges want to hear about your personal growth.



TYPES OF ESSAYS

Colleges See

Personal Essay

- Common App Personal Essay
- UC Application Personal Insight Questions (PIQs)
- Other Application Essays (MIT, Georgetown, etc.)

Supplemental Essays



COMMON APPLICATION

Personal 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.**

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

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?**

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.



UC ESSAY PROMPTS

Personal Insight Questions



1

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

2

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.

3

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

4

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

5

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?

6

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

7

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

8

Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?



SELECTING YOUR COLLEGE Essay Topic



It doesn't matter which topic the student chooses, as long as it is meaningful to them.



Center the essay on personal growth —what challenges were faced, lessons learned, and wisdom gained.



Encourage students to think of themselves as the main 'character'— their unique perspective is what will make the essay stand out.

COLLEGE ESSAY TOPIC

Examples



How a student who struggled with public speaking volunteered to lead a group project, learning to overcome their fear to successfully present their findings.



How a teacher's encouragement in a writing class helped a student discover a love for creative writing.



How coping with a significant family change, such as a move, taught valuable lessons in adaptability and empathy.

WRITING SUPPLEMENTAL Essays



- ✓ Shorter than the personal essay but equally important.
- ✓ Talk about what makes each college special for you, from clubs to courses. This is your chance to show the college why you're a perfect match!
- ✓ Give yourself plenty of time to write and revise.



SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY Questions

1

The Why?

“Why us?” or “Why this college?”

Why are you interested in attending Columbia University? We encourage you to consider the aspect(s) that you find unique and compelling about Columbia. (150 words or fewer.)

“Why this college major?”

What academic areas most pique your curiosity, and how do the programs offered at Princeton suit your particular interests? (Please respond in 250 words or fewer.)

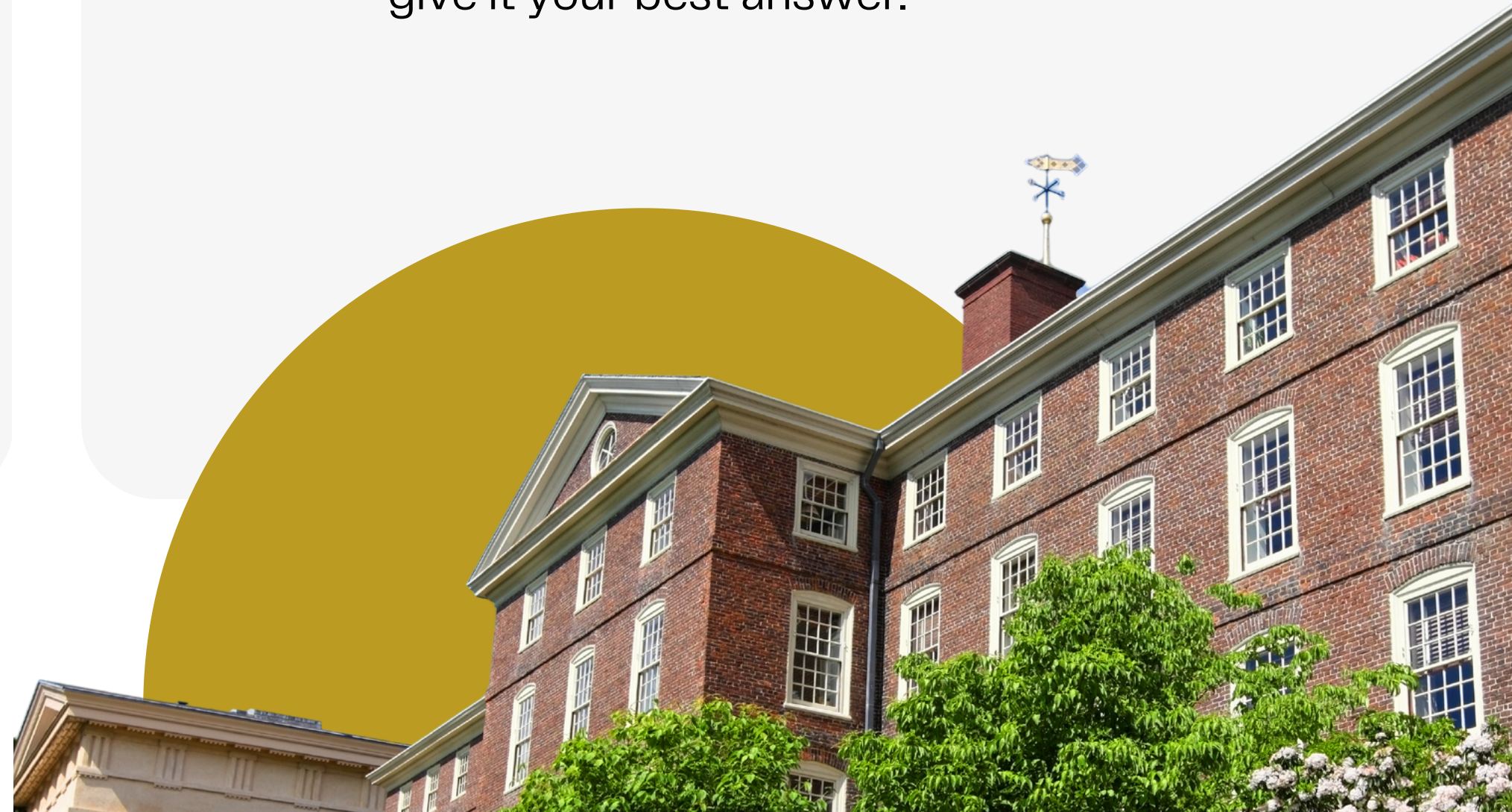
2

The Creative

“Where have all the flowers gone?”

– Pete Seeger.

Pick a question from a song title or lyric and give it your best answer.



EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING TIPS

Show, Don't Tell: Provide Specific Examples



Tell: I am hardworking and curious

Show: After devouring hours of CNN and every New York Times article on the election, I decided to get involved with local politics in my community. For the month leading up to the election in 2012, I spent two hours per day knocking on doors with a local non-profit, registering neighbors to vote and get involved.

Tell: I love to dance, and I'm good at it!

Show: I won my first dance competition when I was twelve. After years of practice and studying with renowned ballet schools across the country, I began a pre-professional dance program at the School of American Ballet.

Source: Regional Admissions Counselors of California (RACC)

EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING TIPS

Using vivid details and descriptive language



Sight

"The morning sun glaring off the cafeteria's linoleum floor, casting long shadows of empty chairs."



Touch

"The rough texture of the tree bark scraped against my palm."



Sound

"The rhythmic tapping of pencils, the low hum of a projector, and whispered ideas during group work in class."



Taste

"The tangy sweetness of wild berries burst on my tongue."



Smell

"The blend of fresh paint and sawdust lingered in the air of the newly renovated art room."



COMMON MISTAKES

To Avoid

1 Topics to avoid

2 Focus on a defining moment,
not your entire life history

3 Don't repeat information found
elsewhere in the application



BEST PRACTICES

for Revisions

- ✓ Revise multiple times
- ✓ Seek feedback and constructive criticism
- ✓ **Proofread:** check for grammar, spelling, clarity and flow



KEY TAKEAWAYS AND NEXT STEPS



Key Takeaways

- ✓ Recognized the significance of the personal essay in revealing the student's unique character beyond grades and test scores.
- ✓ Learned how to approach and respond to various essay prompts, focusing on personal growth and individual experiences.
- ✓ Developed strategies for storytelling in essays, including the use of vivid details and descriptive language for impact.
- ✓ Identified common essay writing mistakes and discussed how to avoid them, ensuring a focused and authentic narrative.



Next Steps

- ✓ Encourage your child to start brainstorming and discussing potential essay topics, reflecting their personal journey and growth.



Next Session Preview

- ✓ Join us next time for a College Admissions Panel

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout Sessions

Group discussions to exchange ideas, challenges, and personal experiences in essay writing.



Q&A

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Address specific concerns or questions about the essay writing process.





THANK YOU

Lets Change The World, Together

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