

Typical College Admission Application Essay Questions

The Common Application:

Instructions: The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. (The application won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.) www.commonapp.org

2020-21 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 failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. Would you make the same decision again?
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 or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Linfield College:

The application essay will be based on one of the following essay prompts and can include previously submitted materials (such as work completed for a school essay or project). The essay should be a minimum of 250 words and will help us become acquainted with you as a student, apart from courses, grades, test scores and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself.

Essays may be submitted **online** at the Common Application website, emailed to admission@linfield.edu or mailed to the Office of Admission. If you submit your essay via email or postal mail, please make sure to include your full name, address and date of birth on your essay. *Please note: If you submit your application essay online, it should be the same for all colleges and not customized in any way.*

Topics

1. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
4. Describe character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
5. A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
6. Topic of your choice

Oregon State University

Insight Résumé (Written Experiential Assessment)

OSU would like to better understand your perspectives, contributions, qualifications, and diverse talents. Please address your experience in each category keeping in mind how you could contribute to the future community of excellence at OSU.

Respond to **all six** questions and limit answers to 100 words per question.

1. Leadership/Group contributions: Describe examples of your leadership experience in which you have significantly influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time. Consider responsibilities to initiatives taken in or out of school.
2. Knowledge in a field/creativity: Describe any of your special interests and how you have developed knowledge in these areas. Give examples of your creativity: the ability to see alternatives; take diverse perspectives; come up with many, varied, or original ideas; or willingness to try new things.
3. Dealing with adversity: Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to address this challenge. Include whether you turned to anyone in facing that challenge, the role that person played, and what you learned about yourself.
4. Community service: Explain what you have done to make your community a better place to live. Give examples of specific projects in which you have been involved over time.
5. Handling systemic challenges: Describe your experience facing or witnessing discrimination. Tell us how you responded and what you learned from those experiences and how they have prepared you to contribute to the OSU community.
6. Goals/task commitment: Articulate the goals you have established for yourself and your efforts to accomplish these. Give at least one specific example that demonstrates your work ethic/diligence.

University of Oregon

Application essay (required):

The UO is interested in learning more about you. Write an essay of 500 words or less that shares information that we cannot find elsewhere on your application. Any topic you choose is welcome. Some ideas you might consider include your future ambitions and goals, a special talent or unusual interest that sets you apart from your peers, or a significant experience that influenced your life. If you are applying to the UO's Robert D. Clark Honors College, feel free to resubmit your honors college application essay.

Explain personal circumstances (optional):

Advise us early in the admission process of any personal circumstances that affected your academic performance, especially if you do not meet one or more of the admission requirements. Include a statement with your application describing any personal challenges you've overcome and explain their impact on your education. Details of any serious illness, diagnosed disability, personal difficulties, or family circumstances that have affected your education are encouraged. Maximum statement length is 500 words. This statement is not required.