College Personal Essay

Many colleges require you to write a personal essay, or personal statement, as a means of assessing not only your skills, but your personality and thought processes. How you respond to the essay prompts reveals much about your preparation, background and work ethic, and can often boost a student’s chances of admission to more competitive colleges.

Below are several essay questions from this year’s college applications, segregated by college. Choose ONE college or university, and respond to the respective questions in 500 words or less (two pages, typed, double spaced) unless the directions state something different. Remember, make these essays memorable. Tell a story about yourself, if you can, to answer the prompt.

Your rough draft is due by Monday; you’ll need it for an editing exercise. The final draft is due Friday October 5th.

University of Tennessee
Optional Personal Statement:
If you were having a personal interview with members of UT’s admissions staff, what information would you want them to know about you? Of particular importance are your academic interests and achievements. In addition, information concerning your involvement in school and community, important personal experiences, how you might bring diversity to campus, awards and recognitions, special talents, obstacles overcome, and other aspects of your background and experiences will be considered in the individualized, holistic review of your application.
No limit. One or more pages.

Washington State University, Eastern Washington University,
Answer each of the following questions in 100 words or less:
1. Describe examples of your leadership experience and share how you have significantly influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time. Consider responsibilities you have taken for initiatives in or out of school.
2. 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. 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. 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. Describe your experiences facing or witnessing discrimination. Tell us how you responded and what you learned from those experiences and how they prepared you to contribute to the WSU community.
6. Articulate the goals you have established for yourself and your efforts to accomplish them. Give at least one specific example that demonstrates your work ethic/diligence.

Evergreen State College
1. How have you prepared for Evergreen’s interdisciplinary learning community?
2. Tell us about a group project and your role in the activity. What did you learn about collaborating with others?
3. What are your educational goals? Why do you believe that Evergreen is the best college for you to achieve these goals?

Western Washington University
Answer any of the following questions. Respond to each question with 300 to 500 words, and you may answer one or all of the questions.
1. What are you looking for in a university? Why is Western a good fit?
2. Describe any special circumstances or hurdles that have challenged you personally or academically, and steps you have taken to move beyond those challenges.
3. Reflect on a meaningful family or multicultural experienced that has enriched your life.

University of Illinois
1. How have your past circumstances and experiences (such as your upbringing, community, and/or activities) impacted who you are, your future goals, and your choice of major? If you haven’t decided on a college major yet, briefly explain your intentions and aspirations for your first year at Illinois. Limit your response to 300 words.
2. In no more than 300 words, tell us something about yourself that isn’t covered elsewhere in this application, some interest or experience or yours that you think the University of Illinois should know about as part of the admissions review.

University of Washington
500-650 words:
1. Discuss how your family’s experience or cultural history enriched you or presented you with opportunities or challenges in pursuing your educational goals.

2. Tell us a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.

**The Common Application**

(An application used by many colleges and universities) Write an essay of at least 250 words. Choose any one of the topics below, or a topic of your choice.

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 a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (art, music, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
5. A range of academic interests, personal perspective, 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.
6. Any topic of your choice.

**Pacific University Oregon**

Required:
- Please write a detailed statement (at least 500 words) on how Pacific University fits your educational and career goals. This is your chance to share your thoughts with the Admissions Committee on how the university is a match for you, what your best assets are, and what contributions you would like to make in our campus community.

Optional
- Feel free to share with us additional information that will help us evaluate your application for admission

**Life Pacific College:**

1. Please attach a 1-2 page, type-written essay concerning your spiritual autobiography to this application. You must address each of the following:
   a. Your salvation experience
   b. Your Christian service experiences over the past five years
   c. Your present stage of spiritual maturity, and
   d. Your perceived direction in ministry

**Hawai`i Pacific University**

Write a statement providing any additional information you want the Admissions Committee to know about you.

**University of Oregon**

The UO is interested in learning more about you. Write an essay (500 words MAXIMUM) 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.

**Vanguard University**

Answer each question. Limit each response to 500 words.

**Christian Experience Statement:** Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior? Describe how you came to know Christ and explain how your relationship with Him, the church and ministry activities impact your daily life and morality, and how these experiences will strengthen the Vanguard community.

**Supplemental Academic Success Statement:** Describe any personal events or life circumstances that have impacted your academic performance in such a way that your record may not adequately reflect your potential for success, and what is your plan for academic success if admitted to Vanguard University?

**The American Musical and Dramatic Academy**

Answer all of the following questions, using as much space as necessary:

1. Describe a challenging experience in your life and what you learned from it.
2. What are your interests and career goals?
3. Choose two people whom you admire in the performing arts and explain why.