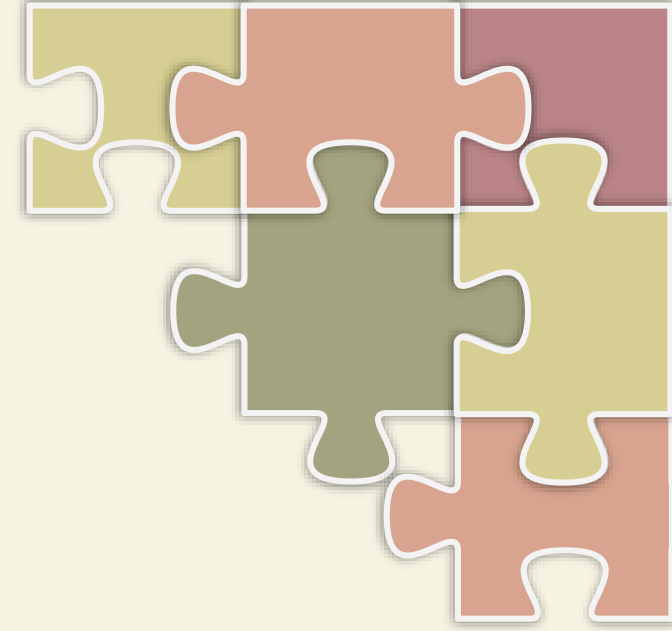


WHERE ARE WE??

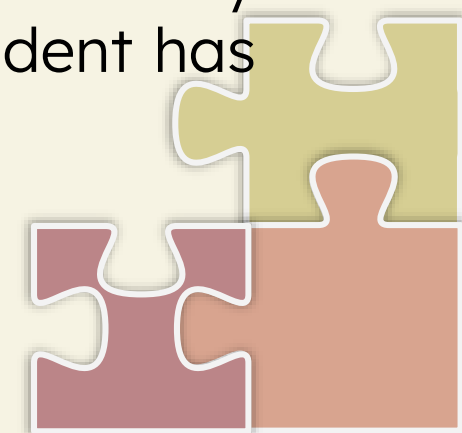
- **Finished essay, polishing and cleaning up**
- **Have a draft essay, needs a lot of work**
- **Have a solid idea but have not started writing**
- **Have read the prompts but have no ideas**
- **Don't know the prompts, no idea what's going on**





The College Essay

Almost all colleges require at least one essay and will use your writing for two different purposes. First of all, they want to see that you can write; effective communication skills are valued in all career fields and are requisite for college success. Additionally, the essay provides you with an opportunity to personalize your application and to convey to the college what you want them to know about you apart from your grades, scores, and activities. The essay is the place where you can come alive and distinguish yourself as a unique individual, not just an accumulation of accomplishments. The essay is the only component of the application over which the student has complete control.



The College Essay

Writing a
strong college
admissions essay

Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Brown University



Khan Academy

2023-2024 Common App Essay Prompts

- 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.
- 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?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- 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?
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- 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?
- 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.

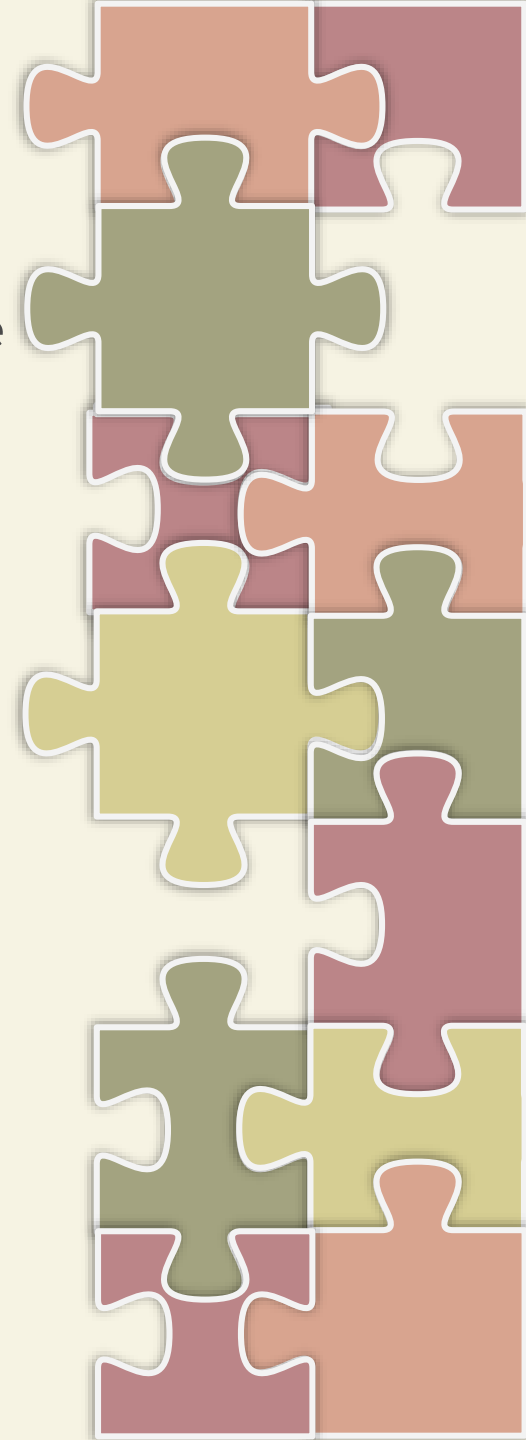


The “COVID Essay”

This question is not intended to be an extra essay. There’s also no need to describe how your school responded to these events. Your counselor will have an opportunity to discuss impacts like closures, online instruction, and grading policies. Instead, consider how these events may have impacted you, your family, and your learning environment.

Examples might include:

- Illness or loss within your family or support network
- Employment or housing disruptions within your family
- Food insecurity
- Toll on mental and emotional health
- New obligations such as part-time work or care for siblings or family members
- Availability of computer or internet access required to continue your studies
- Access to a safe and quiet study space
- A new direction for your major or career interests

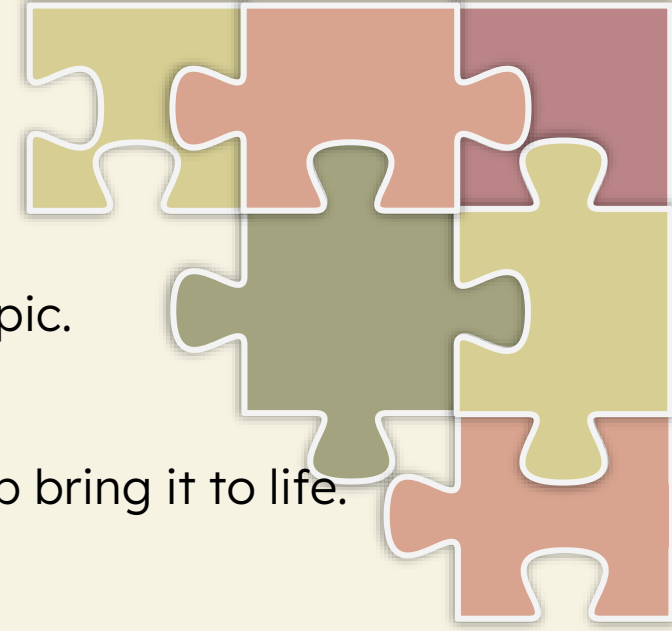


The “Why Us” Essay

- **Research:** Thoroughly research the specific college or university. Understand their mission, values, academic programs, and campus culture.
- **Personal Fit:** Explain how the college aligns with your academic and personal goals. Discuss specific resources, extracurricular activities, or opportunities that resonate with your interests and aspirations.
- **Campus Visit or Experience:** If applicable, mention any previous visits or experiences on campus that left a positive impression and contributed to your desire to attend.
- **Community and Culture:** Describe how you see yourself contributing to the campus community and benefiting from the environment. Mention any clubs, organizations, or initiatives that pique your interest.
- **Career Opportunities:** Explain how the college’s reputation and connections in your field of interest align with your long-term career goals. Highlight any internships, research opportunities, or career services that stand out.
- **Be Specific and Genuine:** Avoid generic or cliché statements. Instead, provide specific and honest reasons that genuinely resonate with you.
- **Remember, your response should reflect your authentic interests and aspirations. Tailor each answer to the specific institution you’re applying to, and showcase your enthusiasm for becoming a part of their academic community.**



Tips for Students: Writing the Essay



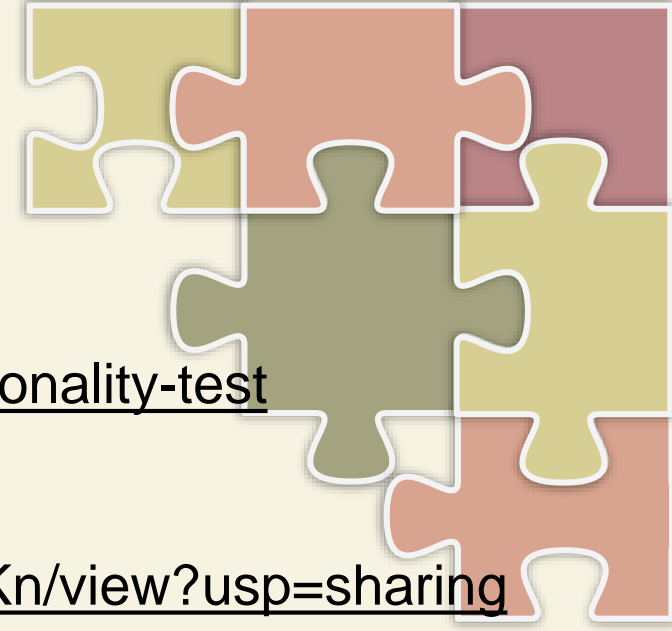
Please do:

- Answer the question asked – sounds simple, yet sometimes essays are off-topic.
- Think small and write about something you know.
- Reveal yourself in your writing.
- Show rather than tell. By giving examples and illustrating your topic, you help bring it to life. Include sights, sounds, smells, and textures.
- Write in your own “voice” and style.
- Make it personal.

Please don't:

- List your activities or accomplishments that are noted in other parts of your application.
- Write what you think others want to read.
- Exaggerate or write to impress.
- Use a flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.
- Neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
- Ramble – say what you have to say and conclude.
- Throw in “big words” to impress; it doesn't work.

Brainstorming Ideas



Personality Type Inventory <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>

Brainstorming Exercise Worksheet

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zo_rRVFszB5til_5fPpmNQsUAvmHMRKn/view?usp=sharing

Mind Mapping Exercise <https://www.pomona.edu/sites/default/files/mapping-out-the-personal-statement.pdf>

Freewriting - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x37rBdO4x1M>

Think: What do you want colleges to know about you?