

College Essay Questions - Examples for 2011-2012

Common App – www.commonapp.org

Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences in the space below. (space below contains 5 lines)

Please write an essay of 250 – 500 words on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below, and attach it to your application before submission. This personal essay helps us become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself.

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 (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.

Many Common App colleges also have a **supplement**. Following are examples of questions asked on supplements.

Harvard: Occasionally, students feel that college application forms do not provide sufficient opportunity to convey important information about themselves or their accomplishments. If you wish to include an additional essay, you may do so. **Possible Topics:**

- Unusual circumstances in your life
- Travel or living experiences in other countries
- Books that have most affected you
- An academic experience (course, project, paper or research topic) that has meant the most to you
- A list of books you have read during the past twelve months

Emory University offers students two academically equivalent, but geographically different options for beginning their undergraduate experience, Emory College of Arts and Sciences and Oxford College of Emory University. These individual campuses contribute to Emory University's uniqueness in higher education. Please respond to the essay or essays below. Question 1 is required, and Question 2 is optional. Essays should be no more than 250 words each.

1. 1. What are the unique qualities of Emory University, and the specific school(s) to which you are applying (Emory College, Oxford College, or both), that make you want to become part of Emory University? In what ways do you hope to take advantage of the qualities you have identified?
2. 2. What is your favorite ride at the amusement park? How does this reflect your approach to life?

Northwestern Statement (required) What are the unique qualities of Northwestern—and of the specific undergraduate school to which you are applying—that make you want to attend the University? In what ways do you hope to take advantage of the qualities you have identified?

Statement on Research (optional) If you have done research or independent study outside of school, please include an abstract or summary of your work on a separate sheet.

University of Virginia: Required Essays for First-Year Applicants

1. We are looking for passionate students to join our diverse community of scholars, researchers, and artists. Answer the question that corresponds to the school you selected above. Limit your answer to a half page or roughly 250 words.
 - College of Arts & Sciences:** What work of art, music, science, mathematics, or literature has surprised, unsettled, or challenged you, and in what way?
 - Engineering:** If you were given a \$10,000 budget and the opportunity to build a small team of talented, motivated individuals, what would you propose to accomplish?
 - Architecture:** Discuss an experience that led you to apply to the School of Architecture.
 - Nursing:** Discuss experiences that led you to choose the School of Nursing.
2. Answer one of the following questions in a half page or roughly 250 words:
 - What is your favorite word and why?
 - Describe the world you come from and how that world shaped who you are.
 - Discuss your favorite place to get lost. (This question was written by U.Va. students who live in one of residential colleges, Brown College at Monroe Hill.)
 - In *The Dumbest Generation*, Mark Bauerlein asserts that social media and youth culture undercut the skills necessary to be a global citizen when he writes: "We need a steady stream of rising men and women to replenish the institutions, to become strong military leaders and wise political leaders, dedicated journalists and demanding teachers, judges and muckrakers, scholars and critics and artists. We have the best schools to train them, but social and private environments have eroded." Do you agree with his assessment or not?

University of Florida

Your essay is a very important part of your application. What you provide helps the university know you as an individual, independent of grades, test scores and other objective data. Please submit one essay. Remember to keep within the 500-word maximum length. The topic is:

In the space provided, please write a concise narrative in which you describe a meaningful event, experience or accomplishment in your life and how it will affect your college experience or your contribution to the UF campus community. You may want to reflect on your ideas about student responsibility, academic integrity, campus citizenship or a call to service.

Florida State University

Florida State University is more than just a world-class academic institution preparing you for a future career. We are a caring community of well-rounded individuals who embrace leadership, learning, service, and global awareness. With this in mind, which of these characteristics appeal most to you, and why?

University of Central Florida

Although optional, the essay assists the Admissions Committee in knowing you as an individual, independent of test scores and other objective data. We ask that you respond to two of the topics below. Your responses should be no longer than a total of 500 words or 7,000 characters.

1. If there has been some obstacle or bump in the road in your academic or personal life, please explain the circumstances.
2. How has your family history, culture, or environment influenced who you are?
3. Why did you choose to apply to UCF?
4. What qualities or unique characteristics do you possess that will allow you to contribute to the UCF community?