

## Common App Essay Questions 2025-26

**Not all schools will require an essay. Some will require one and some more than one. Check your college's specific application requirements.**

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

This is the updated "Challenges and circumstances" question language students will see beginning August 1, 2025

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Sometimes a student's application and achievements may be impacted by challenges or other circumstances. This could involve:

- Access to a safe and quiet study space
- Access to reliable technology and internet
- Community disruption (violence, protests, teacher strikes, etc.)
- Discrimination
- Family disruptions (divorce, incarceration, job loss, health, loss of a family member, addiction, etc.)
- Family or other obligations (care-taking, financial support, etc.)
- Housing instability, displacement, or homelessness
- Military deployment or activation
- Natural disasters
- Physical health and mental well-being
- War, conflict, or other hardships

If you're comfortable sharing, this information can help colleges better understand the context of your application. Colleges may use this information to provide you and your fellow students with support and resources.

Would you like to share any details about challenges or other circumstances you've experienced?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please describe the challenges or circumstances and how they have impacted you.