



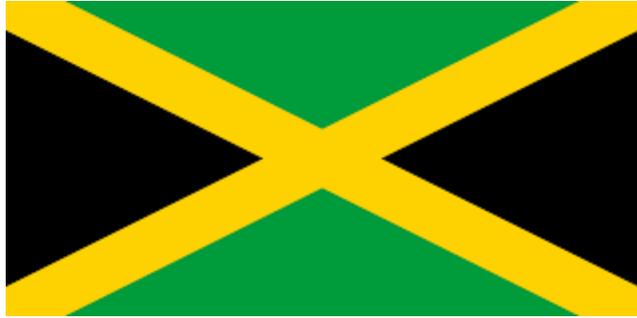
PERSONAL STATEMENT & COLLEGE ESSAY WORKSHOP

COLONIAL HIGH SCHOOL

2019-20

What makes a really good
college essay and personal
statement?

TELL
ADMISSIONS
SOMETHING THEY
DON'T KNOW



Proud to be
the
first
FIRST GENERATION



Personal statements

- ▶ Opportunity to share more about yourself
- ▶ Personal info beyond your academic achievements
- ▶ Colleges and scholarship donors want to know about you!
- ▶ Discuss passions, drive, past challenges, etc.
- ▶ Make yourself stand out! “CAFETERIA TEST”
- ▶ Always write an essay even if the college says it is optional



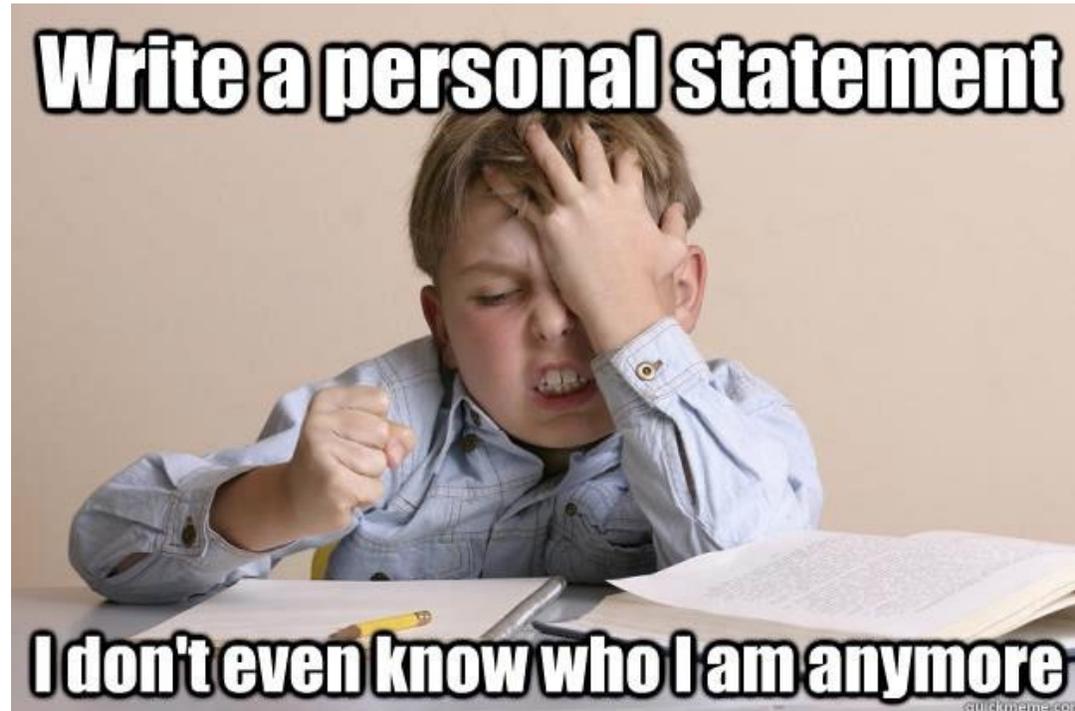
**KEEP
CALM
AND
WRITE
THE ESSAY**

Tips for writing a college essay



- ▶ Examine the topic choices carefully and choose the prompt that most applies to you.
- ▶ Be original. Avoid clichés and generic themes.
- ▶ Make yourself stand out as a unique individual with unique and meaningful experiences.
- ▶ Emphasize what you bring to the college campus: discuss specific contributions you have made to your school or community.
- ▶ Describe how you became who you are.
- ▶ Frame your essay as a narrative. What's your personal story?
- ▶ Don't use a thesaurus -- stick to your own voice and style. Keep it real!

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT...



WHEN WRITING YOUR ESSAY



- ▶ Analyze your prompt -- what questions is it asking? Does the prompt ask you to inform, support, defend, or expand upon something?
- ▶ Brainstorm -- reflect on your strengths, unique experiences & character traits.
- ▶ Create an outline of all the points, details, and examples you will cover. Shape your story so it has a beginning, middle, and end. Be strategic in how you will organize your ideas (e.g., quotations, anecdotes, rhetorical questions)
- ▶ Write your essay--let the ideas flow, but be clear, specific, and concise. Your essay should be between 500 - 650 words.
- ▶ Proofread, edit, and revise. You may also want to ask a teacher or family member to read your essay before you submit it.

What YOU SHOULD NOT you do in a Personal statement?

- ❑ Write about everyone but yourself
- ❑ Begin with “Hello my name is” or “I am going to write about”
- ❑ Duplicate information that can be found on your application
- ❑ Assume the reader knows about your experiences
- ❑ Treat it like an essay
- ❑ Be afraid to speak about your achievements
- ❑ Forget to support your opinions



What qualities make me unique?

- ▶ It's time to brainstorm!
- ▶ On a piece of paper, start writing down some of the unique things that you might write about in a college essay.
 - ❖ Skills
 - ❖ Talents
 - ❖ Experiences
 - ❖ Knowledge

Think Pair Share

- ❖ Now share your answers
- ❖ How many of your answers are the same as someone else's?
 - ❖ Think about identifying which of your answers are most unique to YOU... these will be the answers that will really bring attention to your application essay.

Start a Rough Draft

- ❖ The next slides have prompts to help you practice
- ❖ Common App
- ❖ Coalition for College
- ❖ Bridges to Success
- ❖ Choose a prompt and begin prewriting a response to that prompt!
- ❖ You may also use a prompt for a different college if you have plans to apply elsewhere.

2020-21 Common App 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 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. 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, 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.

2020-21 COALITION Prompts

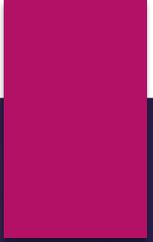
- ▶ Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.
- ▶ Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.
- ▶ Has there been a time when you've had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your beliefs?
- ▶ What is the hardest part of being a student now? What is the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend (assuming they would listen to you)?
- ▶ Submit an essay on a topic of your choice.
- ▶ [Tips to Answer Coalition Prompts](#)
- ▶ [Video Support](#)

Valencia Bridges to Success Prompts

- ▶ **Why do you want to be apart of the Bridges to Success Program?**
- ▶ **Describe a challenge or adversity you have experienced and how you overcame it. (Use steps)**
- ▶ **How will the Bridges Program help you in achieving your educational and career goals?**

Start a rough draft

- ❖ Ask questions as you begin prewriting and writing—we are here to help and advise with every step of this process!
- ❖ The fall college application season starts in September, so use the summer months to:
 - ❖ Write your essay
 - ❖ complete your Common Application profile
 - ❖ Request recommendations from teachers, coaches, and employers.
- ❖ Be sure to give people ample time to write recommendations. Teachers may not have time to write recommendation letters on short notice



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