

Getting Started:

Choosing your topic can be the hardest part.

Use the prompts from the Common Application as a jumping off point.

(Or you can use whatever prompt you've brought for the workshop.)

Prompts:

Please write about...

- A. ... a time or incident when you **experienced failure**. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- B. ... a time when you **challenged a belief or idea**. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again? How did it feel?
- C. ... an event or experience that marked your **transition from childhood to adulthood** within your culture, community, or family. When did you realize you were becoming an adult? What changed?
- D. ... a **problem you've encountered and 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. Why is it significant to you? What steps could (or did) you take to solve it?
- E. ... a **background, identity, interest, or talent** that is so meaningful to you that your application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

Reminders:

- Make sure this is a story YOU want to be telling.
- Make sure it's real.
- Make sure it shows growth or transformation, and highlights your positive attributes.

Getting Started: Brainstorming Ideas

Use this page to help you generate ideas in response to some or all of the prompts.

Prompt:	Brainstorm Ideas Here:
... a time when you experienced failure.	
... a time when you challenged a belief or idea.	
... an event or experience that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood.	
... a problem you've encountered and solved , or a problem you'd like to solve.	
... a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful to you that your application would be incomplete without it.	

Getting Started: Story Notes

Use this page to help outline your essay as a story.

Introduction:	
<p>What's your hook? A hook can be an anecdote that frames your story, or a statement, fact, definition, or question that grabs the readers' interest. Start in the action!</p> <p>Make sure you set the scene. Where were you? How old were you? Provide information.</p>	
Thesis:	
State your thesis (what you learned, or how the event is significant to you):	
Body Paragraph 1: Beginning Action	
Beginning Action: This is how your narrative begins and builds.	
Brainstorm powerful details that relate to the beginning action: Smells? Sounds? Touch? Light? Other?	
Body Paragraph 2: Middle Action	
Middle Action: This is the main conflict or climax of your story.	
Brainstorm powerful details that relate to the middle action: Smells? Sounds? Touch? Light? Other?	
Body Paragraph 3: End Action	
End Action: This is how the story resolves.	
Brainstorm powerful details that relate to the end action: Smells? Sounds? Touch? Light? Other?	
Conclusion:	
Analyze and reflect on the actions in your story. How did you change? What did you learn? Revisit your stakes: why is this important now?	

Getting Started: Continued

Going Beyond

Note:

Your responses to these questions might end up in your story or they might remain implicit. But thinking about them could help you strengthen your essay.

Is there anything else that changed for you because of this story?
Or is there anything else you learned about yourself/others/the world?

Do you have any regrets? Hopes for next time? Wishes?

Are there any other reasons that this story matters a lot to you?

What do you want the reader to learn about you?