

1. Time to be a bit introspective. Ask yourself these questions?

<p><i>Who am I as a Person? What are my strongest character traits?</i></p>	<p><i>What experiences can I remember that have influenced who I have become? It's important to be incredibly specific as you describe events from your life that have molded you into the person you are. DO NOT TELL GENERALIZED STORIES.</i></p>

2. Talk to more than one person (friend, family, mentor, teacher, etc.) you know and trust. Ask them the following questions and then fill in the chart.

<p><i>Based on Your Experience with Me, Who am I as a Person?</i></p>	<p><i>Describe specific events that have moved you think of me as you do? It's important to be incredibly specific as you describe events that you recall as exhibiting this individual's character. DO NOT TELL GENERALIZED STORIES.</i></p>

3. Consider the stories of your past that have influenced your current character. Try to map out how the particular story or correlated stories have transformed you over time. Fill in the transitional graphics below. It's important to recognize your growth because this is going to allow you to write about a shift in your character. Remember: good writers give a shift!

Initial Character Trait

- *Describe what happens at the beginning of your story.*

Changes in Character (if you can articulate it)

- *Describe the development of the story when you begin to change in some important way. (This can be more than one box)*

Final Character Development

- *Finish the story by focusing on your new revelation about yourself.*

Contentment

- *One day my sister, her boyfriend, my best friend, and I were sitting in a mall food court while eating Auntie Anne's pretzels and minding our own business*

Annoyance

- *While we were eating, a group of older teens came over and sat behind us. They began to verbally antagonize us, which was really becoming obnoxious. We tried to ignore them, but they wouldn't let up.*

Anger and Weakness

- *I stepped out for a few moments, and when I came back one of the older teens was holding a chair. My sister told me that the kid had threatened to hit them with the chair. I was starting to get increasingly angry, especially because we weren't doing anything. I also felt a bit defeated because, well, I didn't feel like we, or specifically I, could do anything about the situation.*

Rage

- *Once I sat down, the group started making fun of my shirt. (It was a Ninja Turtles shirt, by the way.) Now, I was incredibly enraged because these kids wouldn't leave us alone.*

Maturation and Empowerment

- *I turned around and looked at the group of kids and asked them if there was honestly a problem. The asked if we wanted to go outside and fight about the issue. I responded, "Why would I want to fight you? I don't even know you." To this, they all stood up and approached me, one of the kids patted me on the shoulder, and simply said, "Wow. You are a really good kid." He and his friends then apologized for agitating us, and walked away.*

Choose a prompt:

<https://www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts>

1. Some students have a **background**, **identity**, **interest**, or **talent** so **meaningful** they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, 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 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** 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.