



BEGINNING THE COLLEGE APPLICATIONS & THE COLLEGE ESSAY

MRS. BEDROSIAN
COLLEGE COUNSELOR

WHAT ARE THE COMMON APPLICATION ESSAY TOPICS?

WWW.COMMONAPP.ORG

*CREATE AN ACCOUNT

*START YOUR APPLICATION
NOW

*WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS ON
THE ESSAY PORTION IN THIS
SLIDESHOW

Create Account | Common App x +

← → ↻ apply.commonapp.org/createaccount

common app

Let's get started!

Welcome to the Common Application! Please tell us how you will use the system so we can prepare your account. If you are unsure, we encourage you to explore each option before you continue.

Already have an account? [Go to the login page.](#)

First year student ?

Transfer student ?

Education professional ?

Parent or other adult ?

https://www.commonapp.org

Type here to search

100% 1:34 PM 4/4/2020

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMON APPLICATION SECTIONS

The screenshot shows the Common App dashboard for a practice account. At the top, there's a red banner that says "PRACTICE ACCOUNT". Below that is the Common App logo and a user profile box for Kimberly, with a "Sign Out" button. A navigation bar contains tabs for "Dashboard", "My Colleges", "Common App", "College Search", and "Financial Aid Resources". The "My Colleges" tab is active, showing a list of colleges. Two colleges are visible: Drexel University and High Point University. Drexel University has a deadline of January 15, 2020, which has passed, and its application is in progress. High Point University's application is also in progress. On the right side, there's an "Instructions and Help" section with text about changing answers and adding colleges. The Windows taskbar is visible at the bottom.

Dashboard = Overview of all schools you are applying to

My Colleges = Breakdown by college and additional questions they ask.

Common App = 80% of the application- everything you complete in this section goes to all the colleges in your “My Colleges” section.

*****Where the essay questions are listed!**

College Search = How you add a school!
Add 5 schools in this tab to get started!

Financial Aid Resources = Scholarships, FAFSA, etc. information

AFTER CLICKING ON THE COMMON APP TAB, CLICK ON **WRITING**: THIS IS THE HOME OF THE PERSONAL ESSAY PROMPTS IN THE COMMON APPLICATION

The screenshot shows the Common App website interface. At the top, the browser address bar displays 'apply.commonapp.org/common/6/33'. The user's name 'CAID 18662899' and email 'kbedrosian@vjmhs.org' are visible in the top right corner. The navigation menu includes 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. The 'Common App' tab is selected, and the 'Writing' section is highlighted in the left sidebar. The main content area is titled 'Writing' and features a 'Preview' button and a 'View Writing Tutorial' link. Below this, the 'Personal Essay' section explains that some colleges require a personal essay and provides a checkbox for 'I understand'. A list of colleges is shown, categorized into 'Required' (Drexel University) and 'Not Required' (Marywood University). A right-hand sidebar contains 'Instructions and Help' with a question: 'I already submitted, can I change some of my answers?' and a 'Read more' link. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar and various application icons, with the system clock indicating 3:05 PM on 4/4/2020.

Common App | Common App

apply.commonapp.org/common/6/33

CAID 18662899
kbedrosian@vjmhs.org

Sign Out

Dashboard My Colleges **Common App** College Search Financial Aid Resources

Common Application

- Profile
- Family
- Education
- Testing
- Activities
- Writing**
- Courses & Grades
0 college(s) require

Writing Preview

[View Writing Tutorial](#)

Personal Essay

Some colleges require submission of the personal essay with your Common Application. You may submit a personal essay to any college, even if it is not required by that college. If not required by a college, you will be given the option during submission to include your essay or not for that college.*

I understand

Here is the current list of colleges on your Dashboard and whether they require the Personal Essay.

Required	Not Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Drexel University	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marywood University

Instructions and Help

I already submitted, can I change some of my answers?
You can return at any time and change your answer to any question in the Common App tab for future [Read more](#)

Type here to search

100%

3:05 PM
4/4/2020

ESSAY PROMPTS
500 TO 650
WORDS
RESPONSE TO
ONE OF THE
FOLLOWING
QUESTIONS:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying apply.commonapp.org/common/6/33. The page content consists of a list of seven radio button options for essay prompts. The first option is selected, indicated by a green dot in the radio button.

- 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.
- 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?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- 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.
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- 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?
- 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.

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Windows logo, a search bar with the text "Type here to search", and several application icons including Edge, File Explorer, and Chrome. The system tray on the right shows a 100% battery level, network and volume icons, and the date and time: 3:09 PM, 4/4/2020.



HELPFUL HINTS....

- PICK THE QUESTION THAT STANDS OUT TO YOU THE MOST
- START WITH JUST JOTTING DOWN SOME IDEAS ABOUT THAT TOPIC
- THEN, PICK ONE IDEA AND GO WITH A VERY ROUGH DRAFT
- GIVE YOURSELF A TIME LIMIT OF ABOUT 30 MINUTES AND SEE WHERE IT TAKES YOU
- READ OVER YOUR DRAFT. DOES THIS TELL THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE SOMETHING THEY CANNOT FIND ANYWHERE ELSE IN YOUR APPLICATION?
- TAKE A BREAK FROM YOUR DRAFT AND COME BACK TO IT IN A FEW DAYS
- REWORK IT AND HAVE SOMEONE ELSE READ IT (ENGLISH TEACHER, COUNSELOR, FRIEND, PARENTS, ETC.)

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND.....

- THIS IS NOT A RESEARCH PAPER
- REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE
- BE CAREFUL OF GRAMMAR AND SPELLING MISTAKES
- CATCH THE READER, BUT NOT IN A COMMONPLACE WAY
- WATCH CLICHE ESSAY TOPICS (i.e. “I WON THE GAME”)
- SHARE SOMETHING APPROPRIATE, BUT HELPFUL TO THE COMMITTEE
- **BE TRUE TO WHO YOU ARE-THEY WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU!**

For example, I was an education major applying to colleges, but my passion was theater. My essay described the first time I played a major role in a musical.



FINAL THOUGHTS...

- THIS MAY NOT BE YOUR FINAL COLLEGE ESSAY....THIS MIGHT BE USED FOR A SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY
- KEEP ALL OPTIONS AVAILABLE, AS YOU MIGHT NEED TO USE IT LATER ON IN THE PROCESS
- IT IS OKAY IF YOU DECIDE TO GO WITH ANOTHER TOPIC LATER ON, OR IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE OPTION TO WORK WITH
- BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE
- A GOOD PIECE OF WRITING TAKES MANY DRAFTS
- GOOD LUCK!

QUESTIONS? NEED A READER?

- You can always find me at: kbedrosian@vjmhs.org
- We will work on these in person, as well!
- I will be receiving resources and support from some admissions counselors to share with all of you, too! Check your email regularly!