

Writing Your College Admission Essays/ UC Personal Statements

Helpful Tips & Exercises



Writing the College Admission Essay/UC Personal Statements

As a transfer student, the essay is an important part of your admission application for the University of California and most private and out-of-state universities. The essay is not read in isolation but *with* all the information you provide in the application.

- ❖ It's your one chance to explain to college admissions readers why you are a good fit for their school.
- ❖ This is where you become more than just another name — it's where you become an individual, and where you can share your personality, your goals, your experiences, and where you can explain any opportunities or obstacles that have affected your academic record.
- ❖ Is an opportunity to provide information that gives readers context for your accomplishments.
- ❖ It allows you to add information that you couldn't work into the other parts of the application.
- ❖ It adds clarity, depth and meaning to information collected in other parts of your college application.
- ❖ It enables you to make the best possible case for admission.

Tips for Getting Started

1. Do not wait until the last minute to write your essay!
2. Doing the preparation work before you begin to write your essay will make a significant difference in the quality of your completed essay.
 - ❑ **Investigate and explore your audience.**
 - Find out as much as you can about the universities you are applying to and their admissions process.
 - What do the admissions officers want to find out about their applicants through the personal statement.
 - This information can usually be found in the application and also on the university's website (click on Admissions).
 - Completing the "Know Your Audience" exercise in this workbook will help you have a better understanding of the different universities you are applying to.
 - ❑ **Explore Yourself !**
 - The more you know about yourself the easier it will be to write a compelling, interesting, pertinent essay.
 - Do the Self Exploration Exercises in this workbook.
3. The "Knowing Your Audience Exercise" and the "Know Yourself, Exercises 1-4" contained in this workbook can be completed at any time.
4. Before you write your personal statement, complete the admission application. When you're finished, ask yourself questions about it. Completing the admission application instead of jumping right into the essays helps you identify key patterns in your academic record and extracurricular choices and anticipate the inferences that readers will make about your academic profile. **Use the information you provided in the application to help you.**

Know Your Audience Exercise

- Find out as much as you can about the universities you are applying to, your major at that university, and their admissions process.
- Understand what the admissions officers want to find out about their applicants through the college essay/personal statement.
- Answer the following questions for each of the universities that you will be applying to.

University	What about the major at this university will assist me in meeting my educational and career goals?	What opportunities outside the classroom will assist me in achieving my medium and long-term goals by attending this university?	What are the main criteria used in the admission decision?	What do the admissions officers want to find out about the applicant through the college essay/personal statement?

Know Yourself - Exercise 1 - Identify Your Key Personality Traits

Step 1

Under each column, list all the words that best describe. **Me** = How you describe yourself. **Best Friend** = How your best friend describes you. **Favorite Teacher/Professor** = How your Favorite Teacher/Professor would describe you. **Family** = How your Family would describe you.

Me	Best Friend	Favorite Teacher/Professor	Family

Now put a check mark by the words that came up most often.

Step 2

Pick the 3 words that came up most often and write each word in the boxes below. For each word, list the different situations where you have exhibited this trait/quality.

Key Word	Situations Where I Have Exhibited This Quality
1.	
2.	
3.	

Know Yourself - Exercise 2 – Your Accomplishments

On the chart below, write down everything that makes you proud or feel good about yourself. Don't limit your accomplishments to your academics only. If you have overcome a difficult obstacle/s, make sure to include that on the list. Don't worry how big or small the accomplishment is. If it pops into your head, write it down.

Age	Accomplishments	Why This Makes Me Proud/ Feel Good

Know Yourself - Exercise 3 – List Your Skills

List your accomplishments from the chart in Exercise 2. Using only 1 or 2 words, list the skills that it took for you to be able to achieve this accomplishment. Next, write down any additional situations, circumstances, or examples from your life when you have also used these skills. (Pages 11-12 have a partial list of skills you can review for assistance.)

Accomplishments	Skill/s That This Accomplishment Demonstrates	Additional Situations, Circumstances, Examples When I Have Used These Skills

Know Yourself – Exercise 4 - Significant Life Events

Before you start writing your college admission essays/UC Personal Statement, it's important that you understand what significant life events have helped shaped you and your unique educational journey. Use the exercise below to help develop this understanding.

Age	Significant Life Event	How does this event relate to your educational journey? Was it an obstacle or a benefit? How did your response to this event inform, inhibit, or enhance your education and subsequent educational goals and accomplishments?

