**Senior Writing – College Admissions Essay (25 Writing Points)**

The Common Application offers a selection of prompts for you to generate an original work of writing. If you approach it correctly, it ought to reveal something about yourself which allows the reader to get a sense of your values and character.

Recommended length: approx. 1 ½ -2 pages double-spaced, standard font

**2017-2018 Common Application Essay 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. [No change]  
  
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? [Revised]  
  
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome? [Revised]  
  
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. [No change]  
  
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others. [Revised]  
  
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? [New]

Organization and Tips:  
There is no exact multi-paragraph format for these essays, but you want to stop and start new paragraphs with new ideas. These essays are quick and to the point. Every sentence should be strong and meaningful. The purpose isn't to tell a long story. Make the sale by getting to the major details quickly and moving on to your next interesting point.

College admissions counselors are looking for interesting individuals who contribute to the community on campus. They want to see self-honesty and a captivating personality. They appreciate humor and even a risqué take on life. Be original; avoid cliché ideas and topics. They aren't impressed with goody-goodies or stereotypical "perfect" students.

This paper is meant to reflect YOU, not someone or something else. Even if you write about Grandma, or basketball, or your trip to Costa Rica, the focus should be you, not the topic. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate your personality to someone who hasn't met you yet. The piece should reflect some unique aspects of your character and values.

Dangerous topics:

Romantic relationships, “Try Try Again” topics, purely academic classroom stories, religious topics, “dirty laundry” topics, overly negative topics without valuable reflection.

**When completed, submit your essay on turnitin.com.**