

# The Common Application Announces 2016-2017 Essay Prompts

The Common Application has announced that the 2016-2017 personal statement essay prompts will be the same as the 2015-2016 prompts. By conducting a review process every other year, rather than annually, we can hear from admissions officers, as well as students, **parents**, and counselors, about the effectiveness of the essay prompts.

These prompts are designed to elicit information that will strengthen the other components of the application. "We want to make sure that every applicant can find a home within the essay prompts, and that they can use the prompts as a starting point to write an essay that is authentic and distinguishing," said Scott Anderson, former school counselor and current Senior Director for Programs and Partnerships for The Common Application.

Among the more than 800,000 unique applicants who have submitted a Common App so far during the 2015-2016 application cycle, 47 percent have chosen to write about their background, identity, interest, or talent - making it the most frequently selected prompt; 22 percent have chosen to write about an accomplishment, 17 percent about a lesson or failure, 10 percent about a problem solved, and four percent about an idea challenged.

With the release of the essay prompts and the announcement that student accounts created now will **roll over to 2016-2017**, counselors can introduce their juniors to the Common App now, or whenever they are **ready**.

## **2016-2017 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.
2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
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.
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.