

1998 COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY ESSAY APPLICATION TOPICS

College:

Questions:

Barnard

This essay is an opportunity for you to discuss an idea that matters to you, to write about a person who has influenced you, or to describe an experience that has helped shape who you are. The committee is also interested in how you think and how you express yourself.

Boston University

Write an essay of no more than 500 words on any subject that interests you.

What experiences have led you to select your professional field and objective?

Bowdoin

Who is the secondary school teacher who has had the greatest positive impact on your development? Please describe the ways in which this teacher has influenced you.

Brown

Tell us about those individual activities and awards which you believe best represent your greatest achievement and interests (activities and organizations to which you have been a frequent contributor; athletic teams on which you have played; community activities in which you have been involved; creative work, hobbies, or special training to which you have devoted substantial time; prizes, honors, or special recognition you have won; travel experience).

Tell us something more about yourself that would help you toward a sense of who you are, how you think, and what issues and ideas interest you the most.

Bryn Mawr

Title and describe a course you believe should be part of a liberal arts education.

To learn to think is to learn to question. Discuss a matter you once thought you knew "for sure" that you have since learned to question.

Use your own acquaintance with modern advances to discuss a particular instance of the balancing of advantages and disadvantages.

Imagine that the college is compiling the stories of past, present, and future alumnae for an anthology called *The Bryn Mawr Book of Women's Lives*. Write a convincing letter to the editor with the purpose of convincing her to include your story in the anthology. Be sure to articulate to her why your experiences--those which you have and/or those which you imagine having--would make for compelling reading.

University of California

Describe the qualities and accomplishments you would bring to the undergraduate student body at the University of California.

Describe any unusual circumstances or challenges you have faced and discuss the way you responded.

Describe one of your intellectual achievements--such as a paper, project, production or performance. Explain not only the achievement, but what you gained from it, as well.

Carleton College

What do you see as the turning point(s) or important events in your life and why do you view them as such?

Who are the people who have done the most to influence your personal development and in what ways were they influential?

If you could have lunch with any one person (living, dead, or fictional), who would it be and what would you discuss?

How have you taken something you have learned in the classroom and integrated it into your life?

Ask and answer the one important question which you wish we had asked.

Case Western Reserve Univ.

Choose a work on which you have already spent quality time. Examples: essay from another college application, a personal statement, or other creative effort that provides insight into your personality. Not recommended: original poetry, literary criticism, research papers, etc.

Colorado College

Discuss some creative work that has been meaningful to you or has changed or affected the way you view the world and how it has done so. This creative work may be a novel, film, scientific theory, painting, or other art form.

Describe your experience with a person, culture, or belief system different from what is familiar to you. Discuss how that experience affected you.

Choose one issue of international, national, or local concern that is of special interest to you. Describe your position on the issue, any personal involvement, and how you would resolve it.

Cornell University

"The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action."

(Herbert Spencer, English philosopher, 1820-1903) Discuss a situation in your life outside of school in which you put into action what you learned in the classroom. How did you benefit from this experience? What has the situation led you to believe about what education should or should not do?

Tell us about a person who has had an important influence on you. What qualities in that person do you most admire, and how have you grown from knowing that person?

Ask, and then answer, an important question you would have liked us to ask.

Dartmouth

You have been asked many questions of this application all asked by someone else. If you yourself were in a position to ask a thought provoking and revealing question of college applicants, what would that be? Answer it.

Which academic subject is most meaningful to you? Why?

Please indicate which activity is most meaningful. Why?

What was the highlight of your summer?

Earham

You may choose to explore an issue of importance to you--such as world hunger, an environmental problem, a national health concern, or peace and justice at home and abroad. Or, you may write autobiographically about a significant experience or valued relationship.

Choose a significant book, piece of writing, or research article that you have read in the past year. Explain the author's thesis and discuss how she or he proves or argues that thesis. Explain why you think the work is significant.

H.L. Mencken wrote the following assertion in his *Minority Report Notebook*. He summarized what for many scientists is a genuine dilemma, whether Christian faith can exist within a scientific framework. Drawing on your knowledge of scientific inquiry, support or refute Mencken's assertion. Include in your argument both personal and historical examples. "There is no

possibility whatsoever of reconciling science and theology, at least in Christendom. Either Jesus rose from the dead or he didn't. If he did, then Christianity becomes plausible; if he did not, then it is sheer nonsense. I defy any genuine scientist to say that he believes in the Resurrection, or indeed in any other cardinal dogma of the Christian system."

The following passage is taken from the *Earlham Community Code for Student Life*. "Earlham values individual freedom. It also encourages members to seek ways of building a mutually supportive, responsible, and accountable community. This requires osmellitalon of personal freedom, because building a community sometimes requires not doing what one would prefer to do. The College seeks to balance individual freedom, respect for the needs and consciences of others, and the wellbeing of the community as a whole. But beyond that, it seeks to lead persons to find a deeper freedom and personal satisfaction in being part of a larger community." How would you define a good balance of freedom and responsibility? How can this balance best be achieved. What are your experiences with exercising freedom with accountability? What are the rewards and costs?

George Fox University

As a Christian university, we are particularly interested in your spiritual journey and your philosophy of life. Because we want to know you as well as possible through this application, you may also discuss your interests, achievements, goals, experiences or anything else you may want us to know.

Gonzaga University

Explain a belief you held at one time and how you came to change your thinking about that belief. If given the opportunity, what decision or action would you change? Why?

What do you believe is the most significant challenge America faces as it moves into the third millennium and why?

Harvard

Evaluate a significant achievement or experience that has special meaning to you.

Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.

Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that significance.

Harvey Mudd

Tell us who you are. What makes you different? What do you like about yourself, and who or what has had significant impact on your valued, development, and/or character?

Georges Braque noted that "Art is meant to disturb. Science reassures." How would you describe the relationship between art and science.

Lewis and Clark

Describe a significant person or experience that has had a profound effect on your life, and describe that effect.

Discuss some issue of local, national or international concern and its importance to you.

Describe a specific situation or experience that led you to your values or change one of your strongly held opinions. How did you change as a result of the experience.

What character in a book you've read can you relate to best? How do you see yourself in this character?

Loyola of Chicago
Marquette University

What do you feel you will contribute to the Loyola community?

What do you believe is most important for us to know about you?

When you reflect on the past four years, what makes you most proud? How will that experience enhance your ability at Marquette University?

Write your own question and answer it.

Mills

What are your expectations of a college education?

In what ways do you hope to grow or change?

University of Minnesota

Write a unified and cohesive essay of about 500 words using one word from Group 1 and four words from Group 2 below. The intent is that the Group 1 word sets the general subject of the essay. We are looking for students ability to be creative, analytical, and original--there are no right or wrong responses. Group 1: ozone, ethics, environment, nuclear, corporate, global, hierarchy, ecosystem, myth, "Third World," universe, diversity, Hollywood, on-line

Group 2: hope, autonomy, cookie, concept, feeling, cool, investigate, quality, truth, future, complete, play, integrity, create

University of Montana

Why are you interested in attending The University of Montana?

What can you contribute as a student at The University of Montana?

Montana State

Identify the benefits of attending a college or university and explain the process you are using to determine which college or university you plan to attend.

What personal qualities do you possess that will help you succeed in college?

What goals have you set for yourself, and how do you plan to obtain them? If relevant, explain in terms of a planned major, if not, describe in terms of general education plans.

Northwestern
Notre Dame

On what subject do you disagree with most people and why?

Tell us how a particular book, play, film, piece of music, dance performance, scientific theory or experiment, or work of art has influenced you. If you choose a novel, film or play, assume we know the plot.

Reflect on these words of Dorothy Day: "No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless. There's too much work to do." What is the "work to be done" for your generation, and what impact does this have on your future as a leader? Write a creative, reflective, or provocative essay.

Oberlin College of Arts and
Sciences

A personal trait, interest or goal and how it affects who you are?

An experience that has deeply affected you.

A person whom you admire.

A change you have gone through and how it may affect your future.

A value you hold: how it developed and why it is important to you.

Oberlin Conservatory of Music

Write about your hopes and plans for your educational and professional development during the next ten years.

Oregon State University

What advice would you offer to a younger generation of students based on your own life experiences?

Pacific Lutheran University

Describe an academic experience that has significantly influenced your life.

If you could be any historical or fictional character for one day, whom would you be and why?

Pamona

The year is 2013. You have just received a patent for the results of your research. Describe for us your work and your hope for its

effects on society.

Pomona College defines diversity in broad terms including academic interests, ethnic background, educational opportunities, political views, socioeconomic environment, and personal pursuits among others. Reflect upon ways which you expect Pomona's diverse student body will affect your experiences inside and outside of the classroom.

Identify a real or fictional person or character who is a personal hero or heroine and describe the influence this person or character has had on you.

As a residential liberal arts institution, Pomona College places enormous value on the contributions of its individual members to the educational community. We are deeply interested in learning what we can about our prospective students and what they will bring to this community.

Rice

What do you think the people who know you would be surprised to learn about you?

What perspective do you feel that you will be able to share with others as a result of your own life experiences and background?

University of Portland

What are your personal and professional goals and how will attending Portland help you achieve these goals. -and-

Describe an individual or historical figure and how he/she has influenced you. -or- Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you. -or- Discuss the value of volunteer service, your participation, and how your involvement has personally affected you.

Pratt Institute

Why do you want to go to Pratt?

What benefits do you expect from your education at Pratt?

Princeton

If you were given the time and resources to develop one particular skill, or talent, or area of expertise, what would you choose and why?

What book that you've read in the past couple of years left the greatest impression on you? Explain why.

Chances are that you're going to have one or more roommates at some point in your college years. What sort of person would make a good match for you? Explain why.

Those of us in admissions are often asked what are the two or three in an application to which we give the greatest weight. If you were in our shoes, what are the two or three things in an application to which you would give the greatest weight? Explain why.

University of Puget Sound

How has your outlook on life been shaped by your hometown? Select an original work from anywhere, anytime, and discuss how it affected your thinking.

We live in a diverse and multicultural world. Discuss your experiences with diversity.

Describe a time in your life when humor diffused a difficult situation.

What are the responsibilities of an educated person?

What goal do you hope to accomplish in your lifetime? Why and how do you plan to achieve this goal?

Rice

What do you think the people who know you would be surprised to learn about you?

What perspective do you feel that you will be able to share with

Tulane	<p>about.</p> <p>Please write an essay discussing in detail some special interest, significant experience or achievement, or anything else that has special meaning to you or has a significant influence on you.</p>
Vassar	<p>Please write, in some detail, an achievement, a person, or a matter of particular significance to you.</p>
University of Washington	<p>The University would like you to discuss those aspects of your life that may not be apparent from information provided on your application or high school transcript. Consider each of the following and discuss those that are most applicable to you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your academic interests and educational goals at the UW. 2. Aspects of your background or experience that would enrich the diversity of the University community. 3. Your life experiences including such things as growing up in an unusual environment or overcoming personal and educational barriers. 4. Significant experiences in community service or employment. 5. Special talents in the fine or performing arts.
Washington State University	<p>All students are encouraged to attach a brief statement. This statement might describe educational goals, significant experiences, school and community activities, multicultural experiences, and/or include other information you deem relevant.</p>
Western Washington University	<p>All students are encouraged to write a brief statement to be considered for admission and scholarship purposes. This statement should address academic and career goals. It might also describe significant experiences, and/or other relevant information.</p>
Whitman	<p>Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.</p> <p>Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.</p> <p>Indicate a person who had a significant influence on you, and describe the influence.</p> <p>Your academic performance will be carefully reviewed by our Admission Committee. If you have a strong record, tell us about the academic accomplishment of which you are most proud. If, however, you feel that your transcript does not reflect your true abilities and accomplishment, please use this space to help us better understand your situation.</p>
Whitworth	<p>Please provide an analysis of a book, poem, work of art, or scientific theory of interest to you.</p> <p>What have you learned about Whitworth College that makes you think it would be a good college for you?</p> <p>Describe the significance of Whitworth's identity as a Christian liberal arts college in your decision to apply.</p> <p>Describe a significant experience in your life and how it shaped your definition of personal success.</p>
Willamette	<p>What has been your most positive education experience, formal or informal, and why was it so positive?</p> <p>Willamette's motto is Not unto ourselves alone are we born. What does this mean to you, and how will it apply when you're a student here?</p> <p>Describe what you were like in the sixth grade. In what ways are</p>

College

Santa Clara

Questions:

Santa Clara Leavey School of Business Professor Hersh Shefrin writes, "Without question, anticipation has value. Economist George Lowenstein (1987) reports an experiment where undergraduate students evaluated how much a kiss from a movie star of their choice was worth to them, depending on when the kiss was received. The students valued a kiss that would come in three days time as being worth more than a kiss received immediately, in three hours, or in one day. Why pay to wait? The opportunity to anticipate the experience. (Reprinted by permission of Harvard Business School Press from *Beyond Greed and Fear: Understanding Behavioral Finance and the Psychology of Investing*, 2000.) Tell us about a time when the anticipation of an experience outweighed the experience.

According to Santa Clara Religious Studies Professor William Spohn, "Compassion refers to the most active and engaged form of empathy, namely, that disposition directed particularly to those in great need or suffering. Compassion bridges the gap between perception and effective action." (*Go and do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics*, 1999.) As you describe a situation in which you extended compassion, tell us what compelled you to move from perception to action.

College

Keuka College

Questions

- If you could spend one hour with any historical figure, who would you choose, for what reason, and what would you hope to gain from your interview?
- Describe what you believe are the characteristics that define a true leader, and how do you hope to improve your leadership skills during your college years?
- What does the concept of social responsibility mean to you, and how can an individual really make a difference in improving the community in which they live?

University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill

- It is often said that students learn as much from each other as they do in the classroom. If you could recommend one work of fiction to your UNC classmates, what would you ask them to read and contemplate? Explain your selection.
- If you were president of the United States for a day, what one policy – whether serious or semi-serious – would you implement? Why?
- How is the person you know yourself to be different from the person your family and friends know you to be?
- The memoir has become an increasingly popular genre among American writers. For example, Carolina's own Charles Kuralt named his *Life on the Road*; Mia

Hamm called hers *Go for the Goal: A Champion's Guide to Winning in Soccer and Life*. If you were to write a memoir that covered your life from birth through high school, what would you choose for your life? Why?

Writing

Respond to Questions 1 *and* 2 by writing a paragraph or two for each question. Then choose *one of the five essay options* and respond to it in a page or two. Be sure to write your name on each of the sheets and attach them to the application form. This is your chance to speak to us and our chance to listen as you tell us about yourself, your tastes, and your ambitions. Each topic can be addressed with utter seriousness, complete fancy, or something in between—it's your choice. Play, analyze (don't agonize), create, compose—let us hear the result of your thinking about something that interests you, in a voice that is your own.

1. How does the University of Chicago, as you know it now, satisfy your desire for a particular kind of learning, community, and future? Your response should address with some particularity your own wishes and how they relate to Chicago.
2. Tell us about a few of your favorite books, poems, authors, films, plays, music, paintings, artists, magazines, or newspapers. Feel free to touch on one, some, or all of the categories listed or add a category of your own.

To develop this year's essay options, we emailed all students who had been admitted in April 2003 and asked them for topics. We received several hundred responses, many of which were eloquent, intriguing, or downright wacky. As you can see by the attributions, the questions below were inspired by submissions from your peers. So you can thank (or curse) them as you write your essay.

Essay Option 1

"One of the very nicest things about life," as Luciano Pavarotti once said, "is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating." Pavarotti, in all of his well-fed wisdom, suggests that eating and meals are a separate kind of activity—often a break from the work and play of life. Yet food and meals sustain our lives in many ways every day. Tell us about an ordinary food or meal that may seem mundane to the rest of the world but holds special meaning for you. Think about how the food is prepared, packaged, or served and by whom. Do you eat it in a distinctive manner? At a special time? In a certain place or with select company? Most importantly, explain how this everyday food sustains or satisfies you in a way that another food or meal could not.

Inspired by Sameera Kumar, a graduate of Huntington High School, Huntington, WV

Essay Option 2

If you could balance on a tightrope, over what landscape would you walk? (No net.)

Inspired by Emma Ross, a graduate of West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North, Plainsboro, NJ

Essay Option 3

In his autobiography *A Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela writes, "There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered." Tell us about an unchanging place to which you have returned. In what way has the place never changed? How does its constancy reveal changes in you?

Inspired by Anna Zawadzka, a graduate of Curie Metropolitan High School, Chicago, IL

Essay Option 4

Albert Einstein once said, "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." Propose your own original theory to explain one of the sixteen mysteries below. Your theory does not need to be testable or even probable; however, it should provide some laws, principles, and/or causes to explain the facts, phenomena, or existence of one of these mysteries. You can make your theory artistic, scientific, conspiracy-driven, quantum, fanciful, or otherwise ingenious—but be sure it is your own and gives us an impression of how you think about the world.

Love	Non-Dairy Creamer	Sleep and Dreams	Gray
Crop Circles	The Platypus	The Beginning of Everything	Art
Time Travel	Language	The End of Everything	The Roanoke Colony
Numbers	Mona Lisa's Smile	The College Rankings in <i>U.S. News & World Report</i>	Consciousness

Inspired by Akash Goel, a graduate of Saint Bede Academy, Peru, IL

Essay Option 5

Take as a model the students who inspired Options 1-4 as you pose and respond to an uncommon prompt of your own. If your prompt is original and thoughtful, then you should have little trouble writing a great essay. Draw on your best qualities as a writer, thinker, visionary, social critic, sage, sensible woman or man, citizen of the world, or future citizen of the University of Chicago; take a little risk and have fun.

My signature indicates that all information submitted is factually correct, complete, and honestly presented.

Signature _____ Name _____ Date _____
PRINT OR TYPE

The one hundred college application essay prompts below have been used by various universities in recent years. If you are required to write a "personal statement" for your college application, look through these questions for ideas. While these may not contain the exact question your college asks, many of them can generate ideas for you, especially if your essay is the generic, "Tell us something about yourself that we don't already know."

1. What work of art, music, science, mathematics, or literature has influenced your thinking, and in what way? (University of Virginia applicants to the College of Arts and Sciences)
2. Discuss how a particular work of music, literature, or art has inspired your life. (William and Mary)
3. Tell us how a particular book, play, film, piece of music, dance performance, scientific theory or experiment or work of art has influenced you. If you choose a novel, film or play, assume we know the plot. (University of Notre Dame)
4. Consider the books you have read in the last year or two either for school or for leisure. Please discuss the way in which one of them changed your understanding of the world, other people, or yourself. (Duke University)
5. Tell us about a situation where you have not been successful and what you have learned from the experience. (William and Mary)
6. First experiences can be defining. Cite a first experience that you have had and explain its impact on you. (University of Pennsylvania)
7. Recall an occasion when you took a risk that you now know was the right thing to do. (University of Pennsylvania)
8. Tell us what you think about a current scientific or social controversy. (William and Mary)
9. Most people belong to many different communities/groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. Limit your response to half a page, or approximately 250 words. (University of Virginia all applicants)
10. What can you contribute to a multi-cultural world? (William and Mary)
11. The quality of Rice's academic life and the residential college system is heavily influenced by the unique life experiences and cultural traditions each student brings. What perspective do you feel that you will be able to share with others as a result of your own life experiences and background? Cite a personal experience to illustrate this. Most applicants are able to respond successfully in two to three pages. (Rice University)
12. Northwestern is a community of individuals from diverse cultures and regions of the world and with a myriad of interests and talents. Is there a type of individual you have not had much contact with in your community whom you would like to meet on

campus? What do you think would be the outcome of that meeting, and what would be its effect on you? (Northwestern)

13. Respond to the question: How can I prepare educationally for a global society? (Hampton University)

14. Once you have completed your education, would you return to your hometown to begin your adult life? Why or why not? (William and Mary)

15. Names have a mysterious reality of their own. We may well feel an unexpected kinship with someone who shares our name, or may feel uneasy at the thought that our name is not as much our own as we imagined. Most of us do not choose our names; they come to us unbidden, sometimes with ungainly sounds and spellings, complicated family histories, allusions to people we never knew. Sometimes we have to make our peace with them, sometimes we bask in our names' associations. Ruminates on names and naming, your name, and your name's relationship to you. (University of Chicago)

16. The late William Burroughs once wrote that "language is a virus from outer space." We at the University of Chicago think he's right, of course, and this leaves us wondering what else came here with it. Could this finally explain such improbable features of modern life as the Federal Tax Code, non-dairy creamer, Dennis Rodman, and the art of mime? Name something that you assert cannot have originated any other way. Offer a thorough defense of your hypothesis for extraterrestrial origins, including alternate explanations and reasons for eliminating them from consideration. (University of Chicago)

17. What effect has any voluntary or independent research, reading or study, work in the arts, science project, etc. (outside of school), had on your intellectual and personal growth in recent years? Discuss what influence this involvement has had on your academic goals. (Northwestern)

18. What has been your most profound or surprising intellectual experience? (Duke University)

19. Anatole France said, "If 50 million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing." On what subject do you disagree with most people, and why? (Northwestern)

20. According to Stephen Carter, we can admire those with integrity even if we disagree with them. Are there people you admire even though you deeply disagree with them? What do you admire about them? How do you reconcile this apparent contradiction in your assessment? (Duke University)

21. Who is the secondary school teacher who has had the greatest positive impact on your development? Please describe the ways in which this teacher has influenced you. (Bowdoin College)

22. Reflect on these words of Dorothy Day: "No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless. There's too much work to do." What is "the work to be done" for your generation, and what impact does this have on your future as a leader? Write a creative, reflective, or provocative essay. (University of Notre Dame)

23. Read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail." It can be found in several anthologies, most recently *King Remembered* (W.W Norton & Company, 1986). Drawing upon personal experience, write a creative, reflective or provocative essay. (University of Notre Dame)
24. What characteristics of Penn, and yourself, make the University a particularly good match for you? Briefly describe how you envision your first year in college. How will your presence be known on campus? (University of Pennsylvania)
25. Why did you first become interested in William and Mary? (William and Mary)
26. Why do you consider Duke a good match for you? Is there something in particular you anticipate contributing to the Duke community? If you are applying to the School of Engineering, you may discuss your interest in the field of engineering in general or your interest in Duke's program specifically. (Duke University)
27. You have just completed your 300-page autobiography. Please submit page 217. (University of Pennsylvania)
28. Imagine you have written a short story, film, or play about your last four years. Briefly describe the one moment or scene that your audience will most remember from this autobiographical piece. What will they learn about you from that moment? (Northwestern)
29. What do you think people who know you would be surprised to learn about you? Limit your response to one page.(Rice University)
30. "The instructor said, / Go home and write / a page tonight. / And let that page come out of you, / Then, it will be true." The second line of this poem by Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B," goes on to ask: "I wonder if it' s that simple?" We ask you here to write a truthful page about yourself, beginning where Hughes begins: "I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem. / I went to school there, then Durham, then here / to this college on the hill above Harlem. / I am the only colored student in my class." That is to say, each of us is at a certain stage of life and has a history. Each of us has lived somewhere and gone to school. We each are what we feel and see and hear, as the poem goes on to say. Begin there and see what happens. (University of Chicago)
31. Pose a question of your own, the answer to which you believe will display your best qualities as a writer, thinker, visionary, social critic, sage, sensible woman or man, citizen of the world, or future citizen of the University of Chicago. (University of Chicago)
32. Tell us the question you think a selective college should ask. Why? (William and Mary)
33. The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions is interested in learning more about you. Please use this essay to relay information about you that cannot be found elsewhere on your application. You may choose to write about your future ambitions and goals, a special talent or unusual interest that sets you apart from your peers, or a significant event or relationship that has influenced you during your life. (George Mason University / Virginia Tech)

34. Please submit a final piece of writing on any subject you choose. Limit your response to one page, or approximately 500 words. (University of Virginia all applicants)
35. Please write on a matter of importance to you. Any topic, and any form of written expression, is acceptable. If you have written something for another purpose—even an essay for another college—that you believe represents you particularly well, feel free to submit it here. As a guideline, remember that we are especially interested in issues of personal significance. (Duke University)
36. Which of the majors in the School of Architecture—architecture, architectural history, or urban and environmental planning—most appeals to you, and why? (University of Virginia applicants to the School of Architecture)
37. Please respond to each of the following: 1) What aspirations, experiences, or relationships have motivated you to pursue the study of architecture? 2) Outside of academics, what do you enjoy most or find most challenging? Responses should be one page each. (Rice University applicants to the School of Architecture)
38. Engineers will face many challenges over the next twenty years. Which of these challenges seems the most compelling to you, and how do you plan to help meet it? (University of Virginia applicants to the School of Engineering)
39. Select a creative work: a novel, a film, a poem, a musical piece, a painting or other work of art that has influenced the way you view the world and the way you view yourself. Discuss the work and its effect on you. (University of Virginia/William and Mary/NYU)
40. What book, poem, piece of music, or artwork has influenced you? Write down your thoughts and feelings about this work and write a dialogue in which the work responds to you.
41. Name one book you have read in the past year, describe your reason for considering this book significant and what you gained from reading it. (Lewis and Clark College)
42. Discuss how something you have read has affected you or changed your mind about something. 5. Tell us about the biggest mistake you've ever made, or heard of. (University of Virginia)
43. Describe a risk that you have taken and discuss its impact on your life. (Kalamazoo College)
44. At Colorado College, diversity is considered an integral component of every student's liberal arts education. Discuss your division of "diversity" and the ways in which you expect it to affect your college experience. (Colorado College)
45. Of all the activities you listed above, which one has proved to be the best, or the worst, use of your time, and why? Use one specific example to illustrate how this activity has, or has not, been worthwhile. (University of Virginia)

46. Who are the people who have done the most to influence your personal development and in what ways were they influential? (Carleton College)
47. If you were to protest something, for or against, what would it be and why? 19. Are you honorable? How do you know? (University of Virginia)
48. Relate a personal experience that caused you to discern or refine a value that you hold. (University of Virginia)
49. As a prospective 21st century college graduate, you will enter a workforce and live in a society with an increasingly global perspective. How will your current knowledge of international issues and cultures influence your undergraduate study? (NYU)
50. If you could invent something, what would it be, and why? (University of Virginia)
51. What invention would the world be better off without, and why? (Kalamazoo College)
52. If you were to write a book, on what theme or subject matter would it be based, and why? (Stanford)
53. What is your favorite word, and why? (University of Virginia)
54. What effect has any voluntary or independent research, reading or study, work in the arts, science project, etc., had on your intellectual and personal goals in recent years? Discuss what influence this involvement has had on your academic goals. (Northwestern)
55. Describe your most important academic accomplishment or intellectual experience to date. We don't want to know about test scores or course grades, rather we want to know about your creativity, your willingness to take intellectual risks or your affinity for scholarly endeavors. (MIT)
56. Describe an intellectual experience of the past two years that has given you great satisfaction. (Amherst)
57. Do you believe that your academic record accurately reflects your abilities? Explain. (University of Virginia)
58. George Washington said, "Associate with men of good quality, if you esteem your own reputation; it is better to be alone than in bad company." About which of your friends do you and your parents disagree? Why do you feel that the continued company of this friend is a good thing? (Northwestern)
59. Explain how your experiences as a teenager significantly differ from those of your friends. Include comparisons. (University of Puget Sound)
60. Imagine you have written a short story, film, or play about your last four years. Briefly describe the moment or scene that you think your audience will most remember after they have finished this autobiographical piece. What will they learn about you from that moment? (Northwestern)

61. If you were to look back on your high school years, what advice would you give to someone beginning their high school career? (Simmons)
62. Imagine that you are a "hero" or "heroine" for one day during any time period and under any circumstances. Write a creative essay describing your experience. (Notre Dame)
63. What is the best advice you ever received? Why? And did you follow it? (University of Pennsylvania)
64. Tell us about a conversation you've had that changed your perspective or was otherwise meaningful to you. (Stanford)
65. If we could only admit one more student to _____ University, why should it be you? (University of Pittsburgh)
66. Of all the things you hope or expect to gain from your college experience, which two or three would you place at the top of your list? Explain what you want to gain and why these experiences are most important to you.
67. You are about to write your future college roommate a letter. Please provide the roommate with a personal story that will give him/her some insight into your personality. (St. Mary's College, MD)
68. Tell one story about yourself that would best provide us, either directly or indirectly, with an insight into the kind of person you are. For example, the story can simply relate a personal experience, or a humorous anecdote; it can tell about an especially significant academic encounter or about an unusual test of character. The possibilities are unlimited (well, almost so). You choose. Just relax and write it. (Princeton)
69. Please provide information that you feel will give a more complete and accurate picture of yourself, e.g., background, personal philosophy or traits, goals, etc. Be sure to describe the influence of these factors. Please be concise and limit your response to one or two pages. (Pomona College)
70. What single adjective do you think would be most frequently used to describe you by those who know you best? Briefly explain. (Stanford)
71. If you were to describe yourself by a quotation, what would the quote be? Explain your answer. (Dartmouth)
72. Create a metaphor for yourself using something you would find in your kitchen or your garage. List as many similarities or relationships between yourself and this object as you can think of, then elaborate on this comparison in an essay. Why is this object a good representation of you? (adapted from U. of Chicago)
73. Discuss how some negative experience (disability, illness, failure) has had a positive influence on your life.
74. Describe a personal habit that helps to define you as a person.

75. Discuss how a specific place can be used to help illustrate your personality. 52.If you had to describe yourself as an animal, what animal would you select and why?
76. Describe a fictional character. Be sure to point out what you do or do not like about the character and relate these attributes to yourself.
77. What have you undertaken or done on your own in the last year or two that has nothing to do with academic work? (Northwestern)
78. Discuss how your travel experiences have affected you as a student and a citizen of the world.
79. If money and family obligations left you entirely free, how and where would you spend the summer before college?
80. If you were given the opportunity to spend one year in service on behalf of others, which area would you choose? Explain what you would do and why.
81. If you had a day to spend as you wish, how would you use your time? (Carleton College)
82. Imagine that you have the opportunity to travel back through time. At what point in history would you like to stop and why? (Swarthmore)
83. What do you think has been the most important social or political movement of the twentieth century? Do you share a personal identification with this cause? (Trinity College, CT)
84. History has recorded the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Sexual Revolution. Today we are witnessing a revolution in the way we receive information. What do you think will be the next great revolution, and what will be its impact on you and your society? (Northwestern)
85. If you were to develop a Mt. Rushmore representing the 20th century, whose faces would you select and why? (William and Mary) 63.If you could be a fly on the wall to observe any situation--historical, personal, or otherwise--describe what you would choose to observe and why. What would you hope to learn and how would it benefit you? (University of Pittsburgh)
86. If you could spend a year with any real or fictional person in the past, present, or future, whom would you choose? Why? (Kalamazoo College)
87. If you could hold a conversation with someone (living or deceased) you consider significant, who would you talk to and what would you talk about? Describe your conversation. (University of Oregon)
88. If you could meet any famous person, living or dead, who would it be? Write a dialogue between you and that person.
89. If you could become another person, real or fictional, for one day, who would you become and why?

90. If you had the power to change three things in your community or in the world, what would you change and why? (Middle East Technical University in Turkey) 69.If you could change the course of a singular event in history, what event would you affect, and why? In addition, please provide insight on how you would implement your decision. (St. Mary's College, MD) 70.If you could go back and change one day in your life, what would you change and why? (Santa Clara University)

91. Please write a personal journal entry as if the date were Sept. 20, 2030. (St. Mary's College, MD.)

92. It has been said [by Andy Warhol] that in the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes. Describe your fifteen minutes. (New York University)

93. Recent developments in technology have revolutionized the way we gather information, communicate with one another, and even express ourselves as individuals. If there is a computer in your life, tell us how you use it. If there is not a computer in your life, tell us how you would. (William and Mary)

94. Select a technological innovation of this century and discuss its effects on your family, local community or nation. (Notre Dame)

95. Look through old family photos and pull out a few that remind you of important times or significant moments. (Remember that the impact of a moment is what makes it significant. A hike through the woods can sometimes be more significant than a birthday.) Choose one of these "Kodak Moment" to describe and explain its significance to you. Speak about the photograph and your feelings about what you see in it.

96. Attach a small photograph of something important to you and explain its significance. (Stanford)

97. You are on your dream vacation and have just finished shooting a roll of film. As you go to develop the film, the local merchant offers to make a postcard of one of your photos. Describe the photo, why you selected it and write a brief note to your friends back home. (Be sure to include where you are and what you have been doing there.) (University of the Pacific)

98. Elvis is alive! Okay, maybe not, but we have been persuaded that recent Elvis sightings in highway rest areas, grocery stores and laundromats are part of a wider conspiracy involving five of the following: the metric system, the Mall of America, the crash of the Hindenberg, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, lint, J.D. Salinger, and wax fruit. Construct your own theory of how and why five of these items are related. (University of Chicago)

99. The subject of food is never far from our minds here in College Admissions. It is a topic of serious conversation this year on campus, too, with the publication of a book called *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of our Nature*, by Leon Kass, M.D., a Chicago faculty member who teaches in the College. The book takes a philosophical look at what food, eating, and table manners have to tell us about our human estate. Compose an essay about a memorable meal you have eaten. We are especially interested in the details: the occasion, your company at this meal, its physical setting, the kinds of foods you ate, or their preparation. (University of Chicago)

100. Ask and answer the one important question which you wish we had asked.
(Carleton College)

OTHERS –

Tell us about the most embarrassing moment of your life. (Santa Clara University)

Tell us about the neighborhood that you grew up in and how it helped shape you into the kind of person you are today. (Yale and the University of Chicago)

Read Annie Dillard's "*An American Childhood*." Choose one of her observations or ideas and write a creative, reflective or provocative essay. (Notre Dame)

What are the responsibilities of an educated person? (University of Puget Sound).
Identity and culture are clearly intertwined. How has your experience of culture influenced the development of your own personal identity? (NYU)

Sartre said "Hell is other people," while Streisand sang, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world." With whom do you agree? (Amherst)

Discuss an important personal relationship you have had and explain how it has changed your life.

Defend your least conventional belief. (University of Virginia)

Relate an incident in your life in which honesty or character (or both) were at issue.
(University of Virginia)

Describe a situation in which your values or beliefs were challenged. How did you react? (NYU)

Using a piece of wire, a car window sticker, an egg carton, and any inexpensive hardware store item, create something that would solve a problem. Tell us about your creation, but don't worry: we won't require proof that it works. (Johns Hopkins)

What confuses you most in life, and why? (University of Virginia)