

Frederick Douglass Academy
Mr. Murphy
The College Essay
The Common Application Essay

Here are the Common Application Prompts for 2017:

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. (New Question)
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Section One

- Put the reader in the middle of the “action”.
- Be as specific as you can about a particular “moment” about your topic
- Show them, by telling the story, rather than “tell them” through description.
- Be sure that somewhere in this first section, you begin to make a transition to the next.



“Section Two”

- Here is where you give the reader the “back story”
- How did you get to this particular time and place
- Provide history of the people or events involved
- Be sure also to transition to the final section



Section Three

- This has to be where the “big idea” is presented.
- Your essay has lead to this point, where you close the deal.
- Be sure to always circle back to remind your reader where you began, because it has everything to do with where you are finishing.
- This does not have to be a “neat and tidy” ending.

Here is a clear a summary of the PowerPoint that I sent you on the College Essay:

1. Start the essay focusing on a specific moment; you place the reader in a specific time and place that will show them, not tell them, about you. Do not finish the moment here.
2. Second part of the essay takes your reader back in time; it explains a bit of your back-story, without making it your entire life story.
3. The final section brings the reader back to where you “left off” with the story, and here is where you bring the essay to some conclusion, without necessarily worrying about the “big message” or a happy ending.

Remember, your essay’s purpose is to show the admissions officer a side of you, your life, which they would not know by looking at your statistical data.

