



## Brainstorming Tips

### Avoid researching example essays before you decide on your topic

- Better yet, do not look at other essays until you have completed your essay.
- Tips are great, but other people's stories may influence your brainstorming.

### Be honest about who you are

- Nobody knows exactly what colleges look for in applicants, so just be yourself.
- Admissions readers are very experienced and will recognize lies and inconsistencies.
- Everyone has a dream school, but enrolling into a school through a fake persona may translate to you not fitting in well at the school.

### Trauma can be ok to talk about

- However, be careful to not turn your essay into a sob story.
- Make sure to focus on how the experience has impacted your life and helped you grow.
- How did you overcome the challenge or what lessons did you learn?

### Having a role model or inspiration is ok, but

- Remember to keep the essay about you, not how great those who inspire you are.

### Questions to ask yourself for the Common App Personal Essay

- What do you feel like is integral to your character that the reader must know about?
- Do you have any life experiences that you feel really influenced who you are?
- What sets you apart from other students with similar experiences and backgrounds?
- What are you passionate about? What makes you lose track of time?
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced? How did you overcome it and grow?



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