



## Writing Real High School Application Essays

### *STRIPES: Self Awareness*

Please choose 1 of the very common high school application essay questions listed below and begin writing! These are real essay prompts from the 2013-2014 admissions season. These are incredible opportunities to showcase how self aware you are. Schools with strong academic cultures that promote college readiness and career exploration care deeply about your writing skills. Look at the checklist before and after writing your 1<sup>st</sup> draft.

#### Essential Checklist

- Be concise.** Essays should be 1-2 double-spaced pages (500 words).
- Be responsible.** Utilize great grammar and perfect punctuation. Always use spellcheck with caution. Edit yourself before sharing with anyone else.
- Be neat.** Your essays should always be typed. If handwritten, anyone should be able to read it.
- Be honest.** Don't exaggerate your achievements. Don't brag or boast.
- Be unique.** Make yourself stand out. Share your perspective, experience, and thoughts!
- Be coherent.** Don't try to cover everything in an essay. You don't want to sound busy, scattered, or superficial.
- Be vivid.** Provide descriptive details! Set the stage! Describe your characters! Help the reader visualize the story!
- Be likable.** Show them you're someone that would add positive to their community.
- Be cautious when using humor.** You never know who is reading your essay, and how they will respond.
- Be smart.** Schools are intellectual places. Describe what you love to learn about, what interests you in school.

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1. Describe a **special dedication, talent, or interest** in for the arts, technology, community service, an academic subject, or sports (from [Beacon High School](#), from [NYC iSchool](#))
  2. Write your **biography in 6 words**. Please explain. (from [independent day schools](#))
  3. What makes you the **interesting** person you are? (be sure to include the qualities you like best about yourself.) (from [independent boarding schools](#))
  4. *"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."* -John Quincy Adams. Using this quote, explain your own **experience as a leader** and **how you lead** the way Adams describes. (from [Frank McCourt High School](#))
  5. *"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something."* -Sandra Day O'Connor. What is Justice O'Connor saying about **teamwork**? Do you **agree or disagree**? Why / why not? (Be sure to use examples from your own experience on teams.) (from [Frank McCourt High School](#))
  6. *"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broad concerns of all humanity."* -Martin Luther King, Jr. Describe what it is that you have done to **"rise above"** and **help your community**. (from [Frank McCourt High School](#))



7. Tell us about a **difficult decision** that you made. Make sure that you: describe the situation and the decision, explain how you **resolved the situation** and what the consequences were, and let us know if you were faced with the same decision again, would you decide differently? (from [NYC iSchool](#))
8. **Describe a person you admire** or who has **influenced** you a great deal. (from [independent boarding schools](#))
9. Explain the **impact of an event or activity** that has **created a change** in your life or in your way of thinking. (from [independent boarding schools](#))

**Story oriented questions (to dig deeper):**

Keep going.

Tell me more.

Why?

You said this - describe that more deeply.

What do you like about...

How this relate to you.

Give us example.