

ERWC (Common App) Narrative Prompts

📌 REMINDERS

- You will have a choice of one of the three options below.
- The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so.
- Audience: A College Admissions Officer who is interested in better understanding who you are, and what makes you tick.
- Writer: A contemplative student who after much thinking takes the opportunity to reveal what he or she discovers about him or herself, an explanation of your inner workings.
- Apply MLA Format
- Include proper headings. (your name, teacher name, course name, period #, due date)
- Use 12 font, Times New Roman, double space.
- Include a descriptive title. (a title that describes the topic of your experience.)
- Should develop some central conflict or challenge.
- May not describe a competition. (Soccer game, Piano Recital, Race etc.)
- **Once you have annotated and selected your prompt, delete the other choices, keep your prompt and submit your Google Assignment.**

Option 1: Common App Prompts:

Choose 1 of the following narrative prompts to respond to:

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 obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
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, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

Option 2: Narrative Interview:

In the style of Brady Dennis' 300-word feature stories, you will interview a classmate, a friend, or a family member, and write a narrative based on what they choose to tell you about their life. In order to do this, you will need to interview your person on a variety of topics and then choose a story or anecdote that best describes this person. Use the topics covered in the Brady Dennis essays, or from the other narratives we studied as a guide.

***Please do not ask your interviewee any questions that make them uncomfortable or are inappropriate. Your interviewee can choose not to answer any questions that you ask them. Please be courteous, respectful, and understanding of your interviewee.

Your narrative will need to use descriptive writing and your narrative sequencing must go beyond a basic structure of, "First, second, third, and so forth..." You will also need to include all aspects of narrative writing in your final feature story: [Character, Plot, Setting, Conflict, Point of View, Motive]

Option 3: UC Prompts:

You will have 8 questions to choose from. You must respond to only 4 of the 8 questions.

Each response is limited to a maximum of 350 words. Which questions you choose to answer is entirely up to you: But you should select questions that are most relevant to your experience and that best reflect your individual circumstances.

1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.
2. Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.
3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.
5. Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?
6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.
7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
8. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?