

Make a copy of this document, review it, draft your PIQ responses, and share it with your college advisor or counselor for feedback!

For additional college planning information and resources, visit our resource page: <https://cep.berkeley.edu/resource-directory>

**Instructions:**

- Pick 1 (one) to respond to.
- 650 words max
- All private schools you apply to use the Common App will see this prompt.
- If you have already finalized UC PIQ responses, does one of your responses (favorite one to write, most meaningful for you) answer some of the options below?
- This is adapted from the [Common App Tool](#)

**You are ready to share your DRAFT with others if you can answer YES to all of the following questions:**

- ☐ Is there a clear TOPIC and 1-2 examples to support it?
- ☐ Am I telling a story? Did I get to level 3? Meaning and significance?
  - Level 1: Facts (*Introduce the topic that you will use to answer the question, and provide context*)
  - Level 2: Interpretation (*Provide details and examples you will use to answer the question*)
  - Level 3 - Meaning & Significance (*Why does it matter? What did you learn?*)
  - Example: Level 1 (topic: tutoring) to Level 2 (example: working with a particular student/event) to Level 3 (what you learned and how it influenced future plans)?
- ☐ Did I answer all parts of the questions?
- ☐ Does the response focus on me (using I statements)?
- ☐ Did I read it out loud to myself?

**Official Question #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.

**Think about:**

- Your community, environment, family, and culture
- What you're deeply curious about and how you spend your time
- What makes you proud
- People and experiences that have shaped your life

**Ask yourself:** What's missing from the rest of my application? Is there context to help colleges understand who I am?

*Respond here...*

**General Feedback:**  
*Add here*

**Official Question #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?

**Think about:**

- All obstacles: big, small, personal, and societal
- Hardships faced by family or friends that also impacted you?
- Unresolved challenges you're still struggling with

**Ask yourself:** How did I cope? How did I grow? Who helped me?

*Respond here...*

**General Feedback:**  
*Add here*

**Official Question #3:** Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

**Think about:**

- Anywhere you spend time: school, clubs, work, home, place of worship
- Everyone you interact with: friends, teammates, family, teachers, coaches

**Ask yourself:** Did the experience clarify or change my values? What was the impact on my relationships? Did I surprise myself—or anyone else?

*Respond here...*

**General Feedback:**  
*Add here*

**Official Question #4:** Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

**Think about:**

- All types of interaction: Compliments, criticism, gifts, advice, support
- People who know you well and people who don't

**Ask yourself:** What made the interaction surprising? How did I feel? How did I react?

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Respond here...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>General Feedback:</b><br>Add here |
| <b>Official Question #5:</b> Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.<br><b>Think about:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The full range of your achievements, both public and private</li> <li>• Small or everyday experiences that had a powerful impact on you</li> <li>• Times when you were surprised by what you learned or discovered</li> </ul> <b>Ask yourself:</b> How did I change? How can I continue to grow? How can I share what I learned with others? |                                      |
| Respond here...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>General Feedback:</b><br>Add here |
| <b>Official Question #6:</b> 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?<br><b>Think about:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How you choose to spend your free time</li> <li>• Your hobbies, your classes</li> <li>• What you read, what you write, what you create</li> </ul> <b>Ask yourself:</b> How did my curiosity start? What does this interest tell others about me? What does this interest tell me about myself?   |                                      |
| Respond here...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>General Feedback:</b><br>Add here |
| <b>Official Question #7:</b> Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.<br><b>Think about:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What you want to share, not what you think colleges want to hear</li> <li>• Topics that reveal who you are and what matters to you</li> </ul> <b>Ask yourself:</b> Does this essay provide new information to my colleges? Is there anything left unsaid in my application?                                                     |                                      |
| Respond here...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>General Feedback:</b><br>Add here |

**Optional Additional Information Question:** Sometimes a student's application and achievements may be impacted by challenges or other circumstances. This could involve:

- Access to a safe and quiet study space
- Access to reliable technology and internet
- Community disruption (violence, protests, teacher strikes, etc.)
- Discrimination
- Family disruptions (divorce, incarceration, job loss, health, loss of a family member, addiction, etc.)
- Family or other obligations (care-taking, financial support, etc.)
- Housing instability, displacement, or homelessness
- Military deployment or activation
- Natural disasters
- Physical health and mental well-being
- War, conflict, or other hardships

Please describe the challenges or circumstances and how they have impacted you.

Respond here...

**General Feedback:**

Add here

## WRITING SUPPLEMENTS

**College/University:**

**Writing Prompt:** type

**Response:**

type

**Writing Prompt:** type

**Response:**

type

**Writing Prompt:** type

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| <b>Response:</b><br><i>type</i>                                           |
| <b>College/University:</b>                                                |
| <b>Writing Prompt:</b> <i>type</i><br><br><b>Response:</b><br><i>type</i> |
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| <b>College/University:</b> <i>type</i>                                    |
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| <b>College/University:</b> <i>type</i>                                    |
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| <b>Response:</b><br><i>type</i>                                           |
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