

Do...

Write it yourself.

Write it about yourself.

Provide any relevant information about yourself that you don't think is captured elsewhere in the application.

Write about experiences, accomplishments, etc. that occurred during or after high school.

Provide specific examples of your accomplishments or activities in which you've participated.

Keep your responses focused.

Have your responses checked by a teacher, counselor or other adviser for clarity.

Common Pitfalls

Not reading the instructions in the application.

Not writing about recent events.

Reiterating information listed elsewhere in the application.

Listing accomplishments without explanation or detail.

Using gimmicky writing techniques, such as poems.

Using clichés.

Writing more about an inspirational person than yourself (e.g. your mother, favorite uncle, etc).

Rambling, unfocused thoughts.

Being overly humorous, self-deprecating or glorifying.

University of California Freshman Personal Insight Questions

Freshman applicants **must respond to four short-answer prompts chosen from eight options**. There is no advantage or disadvantage to choosing certain prompts over others, and each response is limited to a **maximum of 350 words**.

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. Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.
7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
8. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?