

The Actual UC Essay Prompts

- #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?

How to Tell the UC Essay Prompts Apart

To help tell the UC personal statement prompts apart, sort them into big-picture categories, so when you're brainstorming ideas you can see where your event or life experience would fit:

- **Topics 1 and 7** are about your engagement with the people, things, and ideas around you. Consider the impact of the outside world on you and how you handled that impact.
- **Topics 2 and 6** are about your inner self, what defines you, and what makes you the person that you are. Consider your interior makeup, the characteristics of the inner you
- **Topics 3, 4, 5, and 8** are about your achievements. Consider what you've accomplished in life and what you are proud of doing

These very broad categories will help when you're brainstorming ideas and life experiences to write about for your essay. Of course, it's true that many of the stories you think of can be shaped to fit each of these prompts. **Still, think about what the experience most reveals about you.**

If it's an experience that shows how you have handled the people and places around you, it'll work better for questions in the first group. If it's a description of how you express yourself, it's a good match for questions in group two. If it's an experience that tells how you acted or what you did, it's probably a better fit for questions in group three.