**Prompt:** Most colleges and scholarships require students to submit a personal essay. Often, students can choose from a variety of prompts. I have included the prompts from this year’s Common Application below. OR, if you like, you can seek out your own prompt, either from a college you actually intend to apply to (but for which you have not yet written an essay) or from the University of Chicago website which is renowned for its unique prompts: (<https://collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu/apply/uchicago-supplemental-essay-questions>)

* Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.
* 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?
* Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
* 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 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.
* Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
* Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging 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?
* 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.

**Requirements:**

* Write 250-650 words (put the word count in the bottom right hand corner of the final page of the essay, please.)
* MLA formatting (1” margins, Times New Roman 12 font, double spaced, header, heading information, etc.—check Purdue Online Writing lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>).

**Helpful Hints:**

* Focus on a *specific* moment in time and reflect on this moment.
* This is a college admissions essay—your audience is college admissions officers
* This is a college admissions essay—understand your **purpose** (to show yourself off!)
* Your thesis may be explicit or implicit.
* Include rich, *specific* details to create an interesting, authentic picture for the reader.
* Use accurate and consistent verb tenses.
* Vary sentence structure.

**Deadline: First draft due the first day of school!**