

Dear Junior Student:

In the fall, many of you will apply to college. To help you prepare for this often stressful process, your ECR senior English teacher will collect your typed personal statement on the very first day of school and provide helpful feedback within the first few weeks of school. It will count as one of your first grades in your new class and should help you complete the college application process with greater confidence. Please adhere to the following guidelines from the University of California website for how to go about this exciting process. Note that the UC prompts will help all incoming seniors address important California state standards for writing and are thus universally appropriate, regardless of individual student plans for the following year.

### **The Personal Statement**

In reading your application, we want to get to know you as well as we can. There's a limit to what grades and test scores can tell us so we ask you to write a personal statement.

Your personal statement is your chance to tell us who you are and what's important to you. Think of it as your opportunity to introduce yourself to the admissions and scholarship officers reading your application. Be open, be honest, be real. What you tell us in your personal statement gives readers the context to better understand the rest of the information you've provided in your application.

**A couple of tips:** Read each prompt carefully and be sure to respond to all parts. Use specific, concrete examples to support the points you want to make. Finally, relax. This is one of many pieces of information we consider in reviewing your application; an admission decision will not be based on your personal statement alone.

### **Instructions and Prompts**

1. Respond to both prompts, using a maximum of 1,000 words total.
2. You may allocate the word count as you wish. If you choose to respond to one prompt at greater length, we suggest your shorter answer be no less than 250 words.
3. Stay within the word limit as closely as you can. A little over — 1,012 words, for example — is fine.

#### **Prompt #1**

Describe the world you come from — for example, your family, community or school — and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

#### **Prompt #2**

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

## **Tips and Techniques**

### **Start early.**

Allow time for reflection, thoughtful preparation and revision.

### **Choose a topic for each essay.**

Look critically at the information in your application: your grades, awards, activities and work experience, family and income. Anticipate questions an admissions evaluator will have after reading your application. The personal statement is your opportunity to answer those questions.

### **Write in a natural style.**

Present your information and ideas in a focused, thoughtful and meaningful manner. Support your ideas with specific examples. A personal statement that is simply a list of qualities or accomplishments is usually not persuasive.

### **Proofread.**

In addition to checking your spelling, be sure your grammar is correct and your essays read smoothly.

### **Solicit feedback.**

Your personal statement should reflect your own ideas and be written by you alone, but others--family and teachers--can offer valuable suggestions.

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**Ask advice of whomever you like, but do not plagiarize from sources in print or online, and do not use anyone's published words but your own.**

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### *California State Standards*

Using the writing strategies of grades eleven and twelve outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

- a. Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience.
- b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.
- c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.
- d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.
- e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

2.3 Write reflective compositions:

- a. Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns by using rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion).
- b. Draw comparisons between specific incidents and broader themes that illustrate the writer's important beliefs or generalizations about life.
- c. Maintain a balance in describing individual incidents and relate those incidents to more general and abstract ideas.