

Personal Statement Questions (courtesy of the UC)

What do you want us to know about you? Here is your chance to tell us in your own words.

Directions

- You will have 8 questions to choose from. **You must respond to only 1 of the 8 questions.**
- Your response is limited to a **maximum of 350 words.**
- Which question you choose to answer is entirely up to you, but you should **select a question that is the most relevant to your experience** and that best reflects your individual circumstances.
- Your **response must be typed** in a size 12 font, double-spaced, and have 1 inch margins.

Keep in Mind

There is no right or wrong way to answer these questions. It is about getting to know your personality, background, interests, and/or achievements in your own unique voice.

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.

Things to consider: A leadership role can mean more than just a title. It can mean being a mentor to others, acting as the person in charge of a specific task, or taking the lead role in organizing an event or project. Think about your accomplishments and what you learned from the experience. What were your responsibilities?

Did you lead a team? How did your experience change your perspective on leading others? Did you help resolve an important dispute at your school, your church, your community, or in an organization? And your leadership role does not necessarily have to be limited to school activities. For example, do you help out or take care of your family?

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.

Things to consider: What does creativity mean to you? Do you have a creative skill that is important to you? What have you been able to do with that skill? If you used creativity to solve a problem, what was your solution? What are the steps you took to solve the problem?

How does your creativity influence your decisions inside or outside the classroom? Does your creativity relate to your major or a future career?

3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?

Things to consider: If there's a talent or skill that you are proud of, this is the time to share it. You do not necessarily have to be recognized or have received awards for your talent (although if you did and you want to talk about it, feel free to do so). Why is this talent or skill so meaningful to you? Does the talent come naturally or have you worked hard to develop this skill or talent? Does your talent or skill allow you opportunities in or outside the classroom? If so, what are they and how do they fit into your schedule?

4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.

Things to consider: An educational opportunity can be anything that has added value to your educational experience and better prepared you for college. For example, participation in an honors or academic enrichment program, or enrollment in an academy that is geared toward an

occupation or a major, or taking advanced courses that interest you—just to name a few.

If you choose to write about educational barriers that you have faced, how did you overcome or strive to overcome them? What personal characteristics or skills did you call on to overcome this challenge? How did overcoming this barrier help shape who you are today?

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?

Things to consider: A challenge could be personal, or something you have faced in your community or school. Why was the challenge significant to you? This is a good opportunity to talk about any obstacles you have faced and what you have learned from the experience. Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone?

If you are currently working your way through a challenge, what are you doing now, and does that affect different aspects of your life? For example, ask yourself, "How has my life changed at home, at my school, with my friends, or with my family?"

6. Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you.

Things to consider: Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had inside and outside the classroom – such as volunteer work, summer programs, participation in student organizations and/or activities – and what you have gained from your involvement.

Has your interest in the subject influenced you in choosing a major and/or career? Have you been able to pursue coursework at a higher level in this subject (honors, AP, IB, college or university work)?

7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

Things to consider: Think of community as a term that can encompass a group, team, or a place – like your high school, hometown, or home. You can define community as you see fit, just make sure you talk about your role in that community. Was there a problem that you wanted to fix in your community? Why were you inspired to act? What did you learn from your effort? How did your actions benefit others, the wider community, or both? Did you work alone or with others to initiate change in your community?

8. What is the one thing that you think sets you apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?

Things to consider: Do not be afraid to brag a little. Even if you do not think you are unique, you are – remember, there is only one of you in the world. From your point of view, what do you feel makes you belong on one of UC's campuses? When looking at your life, what does a stranger need to understand in order to know you? What have you not shared with us that will highlight a skill, talent, challenge, or opportunity that you think will help us know you better? We are not necessarily looking for what makes you unique compared to others, but what makes you, YOU.