



Your personal essays give you the opportunity to tell us more about yourself. They provide insight into your challenges and triumphs in a way that transcripts and test scores simply cannot. When reading your essays, we are looking for sincerity and authenticity. It's easy to tell when a student's essay is something he or she cares deeply about, compared to a student who writes what he or she thinks we want to hear. A funny or interesting story doesn't hurt, either!

There are two required essays for freshman applicants. As you write your essays, consider reflecting on challenges that you've overcome, your family or cultural heritage, your academic or cocurricular achievements or specific moments that have defined your character. There are no "correct" answers to these questions; your responses should reflect the unique aspects and experiences of your life.

Freshman applicants: Complete personal essay and writing supplement listed below.

Personal Essay (required, 250–650 words): Choose one of the five essays from the Common Application.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. 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 that is 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.
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community or family.

Writing Supplement (required, 250–650 words): In addition to the Common Application essay, you are required to submit a CU Boulder writing supplement.

As a vibrant community of learners dedicated to inclusive excellence, the students, faculty and staff at the University of Colorado Boulder seek to be open and respectful of contrasting beliefs and opinions. Every student has a unique life experience and a set of circumstances by which they are shaped and influenced. Your background may have been shaped by family history, cultural traditions, race, ethnicity, religion, politics, income, ideology, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Reflect on your unique background and tell us about a time when you had to relate to someone whose life experience was very different from your own. How did you approach the difference? If put in a similar situation again today, would you respond differently? If so, how?