

**BACKGROUND/PURPOSE:** As we begin working together, it's important for me to get to know you as a person and as a student. To that end, I am asking you to answer 2 of the personal insight questions required for the UC transfer application for your first essay. I hope this assignment will be useful to both of us. (Keep in mind, this writing can be used for your transfer applications, or adapted for scholarship applications, job applications, etc.)

**TASK:** For this essay, you must choose any TWO personal insight questions from the UC transfer application, following the UC guidelines (see page2). **Keep each answer separate (see example essay).**

**The UC prompt asks you to choose from these 6 optional questions:**

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 to resolve an important dispute at your school, church in your community or an organization? And your leadership role doesn't 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're proud of, this is the time to share it. You don't necessarily have to be recognized or have received awards for your talent (although if you did and you want to talk about, feel free to do so). Why is this talent or skill 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's 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 you've faced, how did you overcome or strived 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've faced and what you've learned from the experience. Did you have support from someone else or did you handle it alone? If you're 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. 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?

**PLEASE TURN OVER FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**FORMAT: Your final draft must not exceed the 350 word limit per question, but your rough draft must be longer (at least 400 words per question).** Type out the questions you are answering in your essay before each response. Do not include this in your word count. [An example essay is posted on Canvas so you can see the format.](#)

**Why these different lengths?** Because in my experience working with students on this type of writing, it is better to “draft long and revise short.” Often the best material doesn’t come out right away; you have to ramble on for a while before you find it! Then you want to zoom in on the great parts and cut the rest.

**REQUIRED, GRADED, STEPS:** See Canvas for due dates and detailed instructions.

Step 1: Pre-writing/Brainstorm due in class. Week 3.

Step 2: Rough draft: **write at least 400 words in response to each question** (for a total of 800 words or more). Printed copy due in class for peer review. Week 3.

Step 3: Peer review in class. You can only earn this credit if you are in class that day with your draft.

Step 4: revise and proofread. After receiving feedback, revise and shorten your responses to be 300-350 words each (total word count for both answers is 600-700), organized into focused paragraphs that address each chosen question. (The number of paragraphs per question is up to you). Your final draft cannot be less than 600 words total (including both questions) in MLA format. **Final draft is due Week 4 and must be submitted to Canvas before the start of class.**

**GRADING GUIDELINES:** UC’s “[Writing Tips](#)” are copied and pasted below. I will be using these to evaluate your work. **Be sure to also look at the box called “Avoid Common Mistakes” on the link above.**

1. *Start early.* Give yourself plenty of time for preparation, careful composition and revisions.
2. *Write persuasively.* Making a list of accomplishments, activities, awards or work will lessen the impact of your words. Expand on a topic by using **specific, concrete examples** to support the points you want to make.
3. *Use “I” statements.* Talk about yourself so that we can get to know your personality, talents, accomplishments and potential for success on a UC campus. Use “I” and “my” statements in your responses.
4. *Solicit feedback.* Your answers should reflect your own ideas and be written by you alone, but others — family, teachers and friends — can offer valuable suggestions. 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.
5. *Proofread and edit.* Although you will not be evaluated on grammar, spelling or sentence structure, you should proofread your work and make sure your writing is clear. Grammatical and spelling errors can be distracting to the reader and get in the way of what you’re trying to communicate.

**GRADING RUBRIC:** These are general parameters I will use for this assignment. I use +/- variations to fine tune the overall grade. I always write comments to help you understand how I arrived at your grade. I am also happy to meet during office hours to discuss the paper and the grade with you.

- An A essay follows all the instructions, demonstrates careful proofreading and editing, and addresses each question directly and with plenty of concrete and specific details, giving me a clear insight into who you are as an unique individual.
- A B essay is still strong, but may need more concrete and specific details or has only one strong response while the other loses focus or lacks specific details and development. In addition, the essay overall may not demonstrate careful proofreading and editing.
- A C essay answers the questions, but both responses lack sufficient concrete or specific details, or one response does not answer the question and the other response could use more development and specific details. The responses do not give me a clear insight into who you are as a unique individual. In addition, it may not be carefully proofread.
- A D essay does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment. (For example only one question is answered, or both questions do not meet the 600 total word requirement).