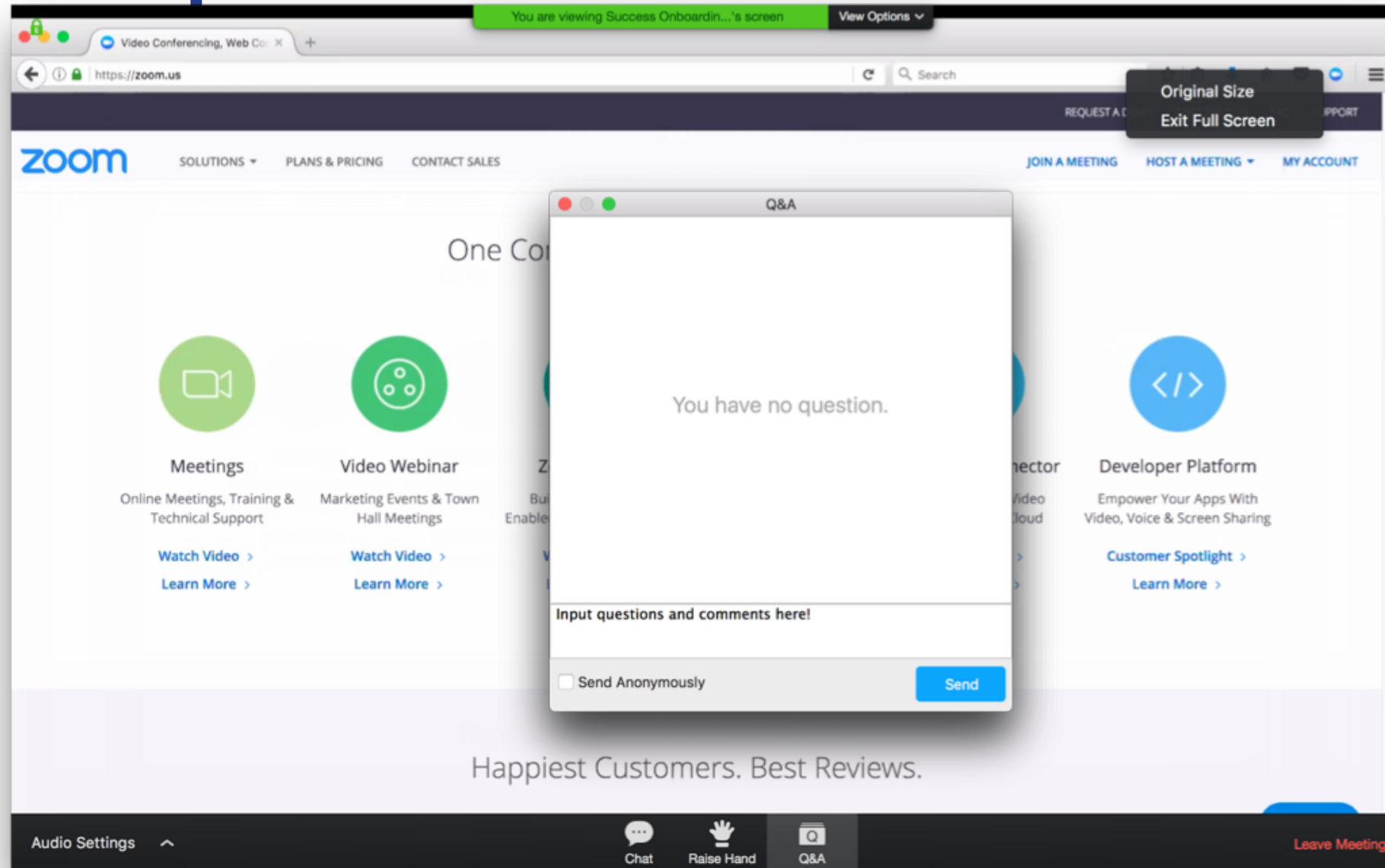


Essays, Writing Samples and Resumes

April Monthly Webinar

Participation & Interaction

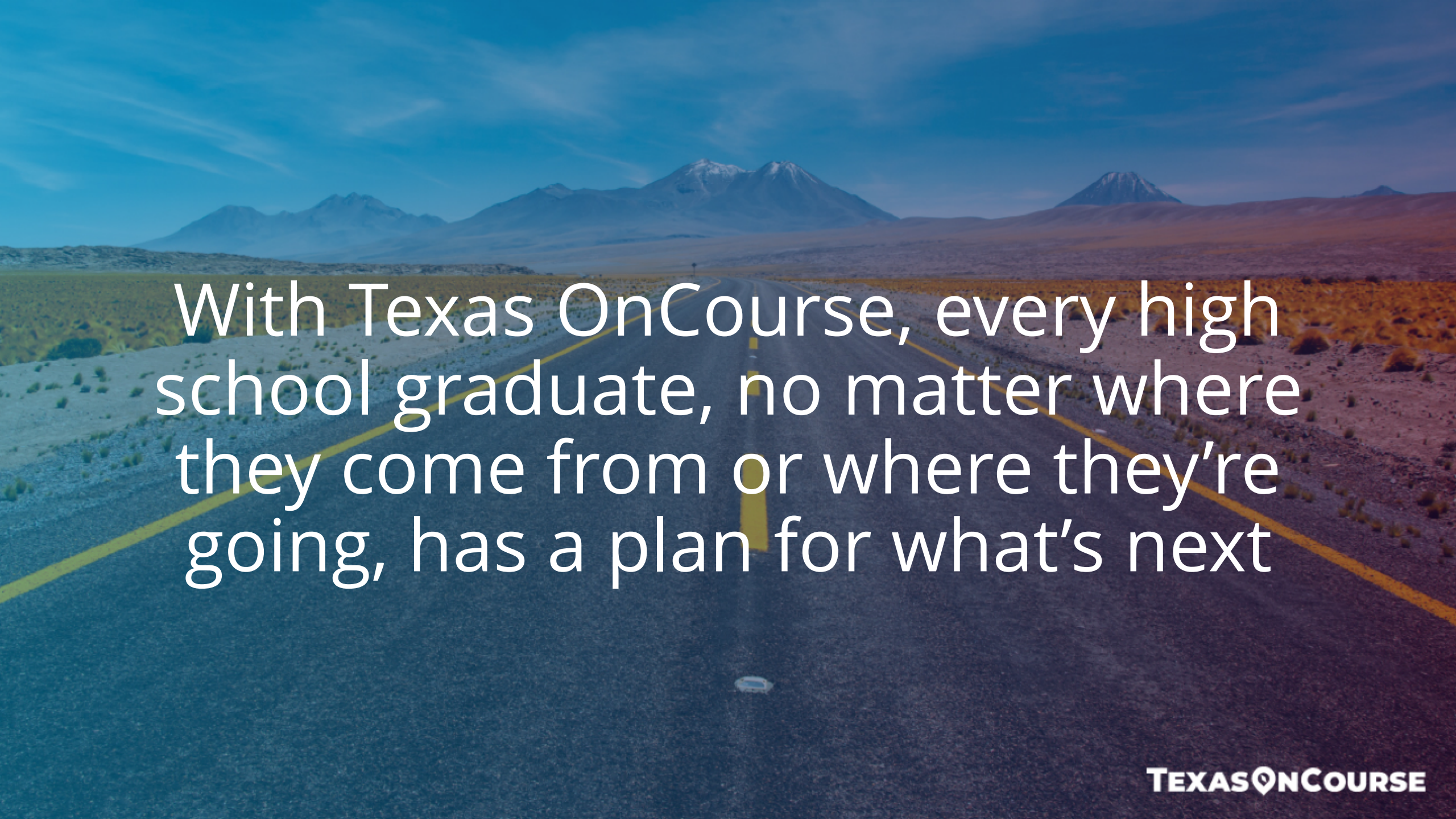




Who We Are

Texas OnCourse is a collaborative effort of UT Austin, TEA, TWC and THECB

TEXASONCOURSE

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape. A two-lane asphalt road with yellow dashed center lines stretches from the foreground into the distance, leading the eye towards a range of mountains. The mountains in the background have patches of snow on their peaks. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue with a few wispy clouds. The foreground and middle ground show dry, scrubby vegetation typical of a desert.

With Texas OnCourse, every high school graduate, no matter where they come from or where they're going, has a plan for what's next



2,500

COUNSELORS AND ADVISERS HELPED
BUILD TEXAS ONCOURSE



11,152

EDUCATORS USE TEXAS ONCOURSE



926

DISTRICTS USE TEXAS ONCOURSE
(OVER 65% OF THE DISTRICTS IN
TEXAS)



WILL SERVE

100%

OF DISTRICTS IN TEXAS



WILL SERVE

10,000+

EDUCATORS ACROSS TEXAS



WILL HELP

2.3 mil+

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
PLAN FOR WHAT'S NEXT

**When educators use Texas OnCourse, they report that their
confidence in their knowledge doubles.**

WELCOME TEXAS ONCOURSE USERS!

Content Areas

Career Pathways ▶



Financial Aid ▶



Postsecondary Pathways ▶



Specialties ▶



AGENDA

- Introductions
- Texas OnCourse Resource Spot Light
- Sarah Simmons, College & Career Counselor
Charles Akins High School, Austin ISD
- Allegra Villarreal, Director of Professional
Development
Catch The Next, Austin Community College
- Q & A and Wrap up
- Webinars 2018-2019



Lara Gueguen

Senior Partnerships Coordinator, Texas OnCourse



Jaslyn Greene

Associate Director of Content and Resources, Texas OnCourse

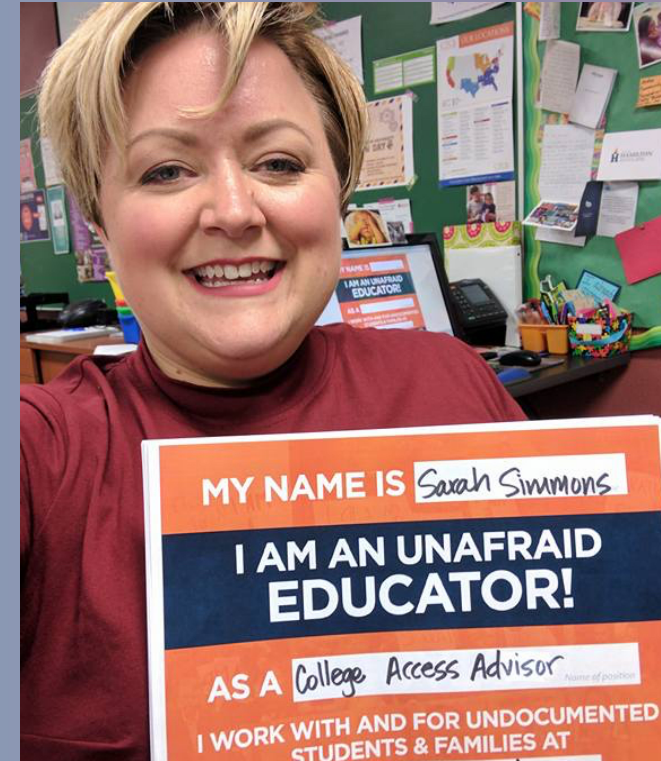
Allegra Villarreal

Director of Professional Development
Catch the Next, Austin Community College



Sarah Simmons

College and Career Coordinator
Charles Akins High School
Austin Independent School District



A group of students are sitting on a wooden bench in a classroom or library setting. They are focused on their work, with some using laptops and others notebooks. The image has a soft, warm-toned overlay.

RESOURCES SPOT LIGHT

Essay Writing Tips

Essay Writing Tips

Explore the tips below and share with students and families to help with essay writing for college or scholarship applications and entrance exam essays. These tips are not exhaustive and can vary among types of essays.

Type of Essay	Tips
College Applications	Some college application systems, such as ApplyTexas, post their writing prompts for the next academic year prior to the opening date of the application. Encourage students to use those prompts to begin writing their drafts before and during summer. Students should always have their essays proofread by a counselor, teacher, mentor, or other school official. Remind students that a college application essay shouldn't feel like homework or a research paper; they should be telling their story.
Scholarship Applications	Essays are often one element of scholarship applications. It's helpful to have prewritten statements on goals, achievements, and financial need, though students must make sure to tailor their responses to address the specific topic.
Entrance Exam Essays	Encourage students to visit the College Board's Sample Questions page and ACT's Writing Sample Essays page for writing prompts to use as practice before the day of the exam. Students and their families can also search for more writing prompts through reliable sources like Khan Academy or the Princeton Review.

A group of students are sitting on bleachers in a school setting. They are holding laptops and looking at their screens. The image has a blue and green color overlay. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

COMMON COLLEGE APP ESSAYS

ApplyTexas

Common Application

Writing Techniques and Tips

2019 – 20 Essay Prompts ApplyTexas

- Topic A: What was the environment in which you were raised? Describe your family, home, neighborhood, or community, and explain how it has shaped you as a person.
- Topic B: Most students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. Tell us about yourself.
- Topic C: You've got a ticket in your hand - Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?

2020 – 21 Essay Prompts ApplyTexas

- Topic A: Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?
- Topic B: Most students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. Tell us about yourself.
- Topic C: You've got a ticket in your hand – Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?

2019 – 20 Essay Prompts Common App

- 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 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?
- 3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

2019 – 20 Essay Prompts Common App

- 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, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- 6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that 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?

2019 – 20 Essay Prompts Common App

- 7. 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.
- Most popular 2018 – 19 app year:
 - 7: 24.7%
 - 5: 23.7%
 - 2: 21.1%

Writing Techniques and Tips

- Pose a question the reader wants answered
- Don't focus exclusively on the past
- Open up
- Experiment with the unexpected
- Don't summarize

A group of students are sitting on bleachers in a school setting. They are using various electronic devices, including laptops and smartphones. The image has a blue and purple color overlay. The text 'ADDITIONAL RESOURCES' is prominently displayed in white, bold, uppercase letters on the left side of the image.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

College Board
Khan Academy

8 Tips for Crafting Your Best College Essays

College essays are important because they let you reveal your personality. Learn how brainstorming and planning can help you write your best college essays.

[Start slide show](#)

Tips for Writing an Effective Application Essay

Trying to write a college application essay and running into writer's block? These tips will help you take on the essay with confidence.

[Read article](#)

Where can you get ideas for the application essay?



Marty O'Connell, Executive Director, Colleges That Change Lives

Sample College Application Essay 1

Read this example of a college application essay. Analyze how it could be improved, and then compare your suggestions with ours.

[Read article](#)

Students Speak: How I Conquered the Application Essay

Writing the essay can be one of the biggest challenges in the application process. Learn how these students approached their college essays.

[Read article](#)



What do colleges look for in an application essay?

Mike Sexton, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Santa Clara University (CA)

3 Ways to Approach Common College Essay Questions

College applications usually contain one of three types of essay questions. Find out what they are and learn the best strategies for answering them.

[Start slide show](#)



Experts share tips on application essays

College Board

BigFuture

Admissions essays

Learn



Writing a strong college admissions essay



Avoiding common admissions essay mistakes



Brainstorming tips for your college essay



How formal should the tone of your college essay be?



Taking your college essay to the next level



Sample essay 1 with admissions feedback



Sample essay 2 with admissions feedback



Student story: Admissions essay about a formative experience



Student story: Admissions essay about personal identity

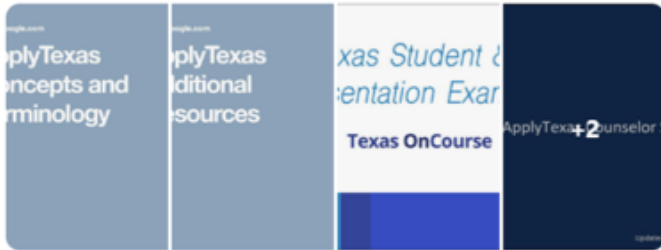
Khan Academy

ApplyTexas

2 sections · 13 Pins · 144 followers

The ApplyTexas college application system was created through a collaborative effort between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the colleges and universities represented on the website. The goal is to offer a centralized means for both Texas and non-Texas students to apply to the many outstanding postsecondary institutions available in Texas.

PDF Downloads



Videos

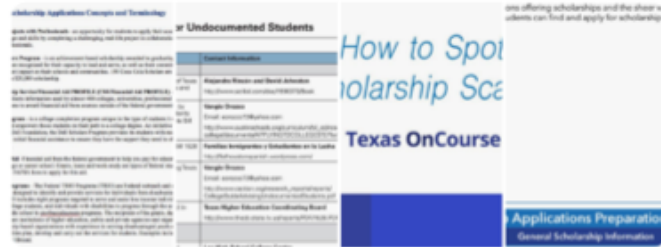


Scholarship Applications

2 sections · 22 Pins · 144 followers

Applying for and receiving financial aid is an important part of the college admission process. If students are unable to pay their tuition, they are much less likely to go to the college they are interested in, or even attend college at all. Students should be reading up on as many scholarship opportunities as possible to find out if they qualify or not.

PDF Downloads



Videos



<https://www.pinterest.com/texasoncourse/>

When Story is the Deciding Factor: Crafting Persuasive Personal Statements

Allegra Villarreal

Director of Professional Development,

Catch the Next

Austin Community College

College Essay: Forms

What makes this form unique (and so challenging?)

Narrative with a *clear purpose*....

What's the purpose?

- **To persuade/argue for admission to a university.**
 - **Pathos:** *Establish an emotional connection*
 - narrative storytelling, controlling the tone (honesty)
 - **Ethos:** *Establish credibility through quality of the writing + research*
 - Craft essays carefully, and make sure to research institution/program
 - **Logos:** *Establish a pattern of goal setting → achievement;*
 - Include “evidence” – GPA, extracurricular activities, employment history, recommendation letters.

The Bridge

What is the most important thing colleges need to know about you?

COMMITMENTS

What difference do you want to make in the world?

AMBITIONS

What do you plan to study? What else will you do in college? What are your plans after college?

ASPIRATIONS

What is the purpose of your life?

ACTIVITIES

What activities do you enjoy?

ATTRIBUTES

What words would you use to describe yourself?

INFLUENCES

Which people have shaped who you are today?
Which works of art, literature, or science have shaped you as a person? ¹

From: Barash, Carol. *Write Out Loud*. McGraw Hill, 2014.

The Bridge

What is the most important thing colleges need to know about you?

COMMITMENTS

What difference do you want to make in the world?

Self-actualization -
to be a better person
Stop racism
Educate people about life/
resilience.

AMBITIONS

What do you plan to study? What else will you do in college? What are your plans after college?

To get a better job -
pay off tuition advising -
get a house
travel!

ASPIRATIONS

What is the purpose of your life?

Living clean and
joyously.

ACTIVITIES

What activities do you enjoy?

- Helping people/mentoring
- Volunteering
- Teaching
- Journaling
- Dancing

ATTRIBUTES

What words would you use to describe yourself?

Passionate
Empathetic
Tenacious

INFLUENCES

Which people have shaped who you are today?
Which works of art, literature, or science have shaped you as a person? ¹

Patty God Music -
Jesse all of
Janice H. it

Prewriting 2: Life Map/Moments Method

- 1. Look at your “attributes” section. Pick 1 that you think is your most important/defining characteristic (the one colleges most need to know about you).*
- 2. Now, think of 10 or more moments from your life that were instrumental in developing that trait in you.*
- 3. Pick one “moment” and freewrite about that..*

Structuring an Effective Narrative

- **Magnet:** A story of a defining moment in your life.
- **Pivot:** How this story connects to your passion (for your major, or your future career)
- **Glow:** What role the community college has played in reaching your educational goals; what you plan to do at the college you're applying to/why that college.

***End with an "echo" of the story you began with.*

The Transfer Student Must Address

- Why *this* college – what does it offer to you? What can you offer it?
- Your academic journey so far—how has the community college helped you get to the point of transfer?
- Future career/study goals – in concrete terms.

College Essay Best Practices

Sarah Simmons

College and Career Coordinator

Charles Akins High School

Austin Independent School District



The College Essay

In general:

- Essay not for an English class
- Tone is more conversational/ like an interview
- No less than 1 page, but no more than 2 pages
- Focus is more on CONTENT and less on MECHANICS/GRAMMAR

OPPORTUNITY

- Stand out from the crowd
- Present elements of yourself not reflected in the general application

The College Essay

Tips:

- ✓ Know your audience (*change wording if needed*)
- ✓ Authenticity
 - Will the reader walk away feeling like they met you? Will they remember you?
 - Show some vulnerability - appropriately

Specificity

- Did you include details that reflect your knowledge of the school/program/major?
- Research the school's values, mission statements, success stories, etc.
- Answer the question: **WHY THIS SCHOOL/PROGRAM/MAJOR IN PARTICULAR?**

The college essay is like sneezing in public...

It starts off feeling all uncomfortable and weird in your head...what will people think?

You're nervous about how it's going to go down...

Just get it out!



Your advisor will be your tissue!

- Assure students you'll help them "clean it up."
- Take a risk
- Be authentic
- One chance



Risk vs. Reward

- Humor is hard to pull off
- Talking directly to the reader can be challenging
- Humility is best
- 3 R's:

REVISE

REVISIT

REVIEW



Resumes

- Keep design simple & clean
 - Limit to front of 1 page
 - Sections: **1) Contact info, 2) Education, 3) Experience** and **4) Highlights**
- Use ACTION verbs
 - Avoid passive BEING verbs
- Include highlights from last 4 or 5 years only
- Adjust for intent – *include a cover letter?*

We'll get there!



YOU'RE DOING GREAT

Recap on Best Practices

District and Campus

- Workshop essays and prompts with staff
- Share updates with core teachers
- Framework for revisions and editing
Peer editing, core content areas



Questions?

Type your question in the chat or Q & A box and we will discuss it!

WEBINARS IN 2018-2019

- MAY 7TH, 2019: College Readiness and the TSIA Exam
- JUNE 4TH, 2019: Advising Students with Unique Needs and Circumstances

COMING SOON.... 2019-2020 WEBINAR SERIES TOPICS!

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Thanks for joining us!

Austin ISD, Austin Community College, and attendees 😊