

The background of the slide features a large, faded seal of the University of California. The seal is circular with a gold border containing the text 'THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA' and the year '1868'. In the center is a shield with an open book, a sun, and a star, with the motto 'LET THERE BE LIGHT' on a banner below.

Writing the UC Transfer Essays

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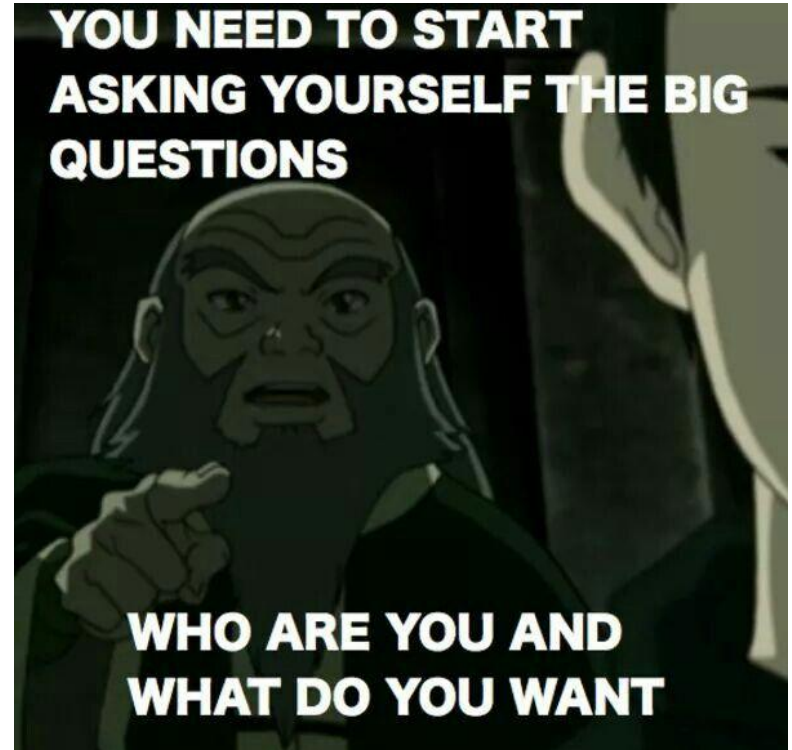
UC Transfer Essay Overview

- Required question: Please describe how you have prepared for your intended major, including your readiness to succeed in your upper-division courses once you enroll at the university.
- Select three out of the seven remaining prompts
- University of California website has a nice breakdown
- Word count: 350



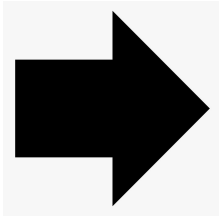
How Universities Use the Essay

- What are they really asking?
 - Who are you as a person?
 - Hundreds of people have the same grades, what makes you, you?
 - If you are persistent, altruistic, and can manage yourself (including self-care), show that!



How the Student Should Use the Essay

Explain how events, people, and ideas make you who you are today



UC Transfer Essay Overview

- **Required question: Please describe how you have prepared for your intended major, including your readiness to succeed in your upper-division courses once you enroll at the university.**
- Why are you interested in your major? Where did this interest come from?
- It can come from anywhere. What matters is that it's genuine.
- Pick times in your life when you felt that interest develop, then write about like a short story. Could be an “aha” moment.
- Specifically describe what happened, how you felt, and how it made you interested in studying this. How has this interest changed you? Where do you want to take this in the future?



Additional Prompts

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.

- Tell a story. Think about a time[s] you were a leader, no matter how big or small. Specifically describe what you did and what you did to accomplish it, very specifically.
- What did you feel? How did it change you?

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.

- How are you creative? It can be as simple as making a meal, drawing, or being able to talk your way out of situations.
- Write about how you express it, like you're telling a story about yourself. Describe your process, what it looks like, what it feels like, from start to finish. Then write how has it changed you as a person.

Prompts Continued

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

- What are you good at? It can be sewing, basketball, being really good at resolving arguments, etc.
- Describe how you've developed it. Explain how through your life, using specific examples, you've used and improved it. What is your process? Then reflect, why is it important to you, and how has it changed you?

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

- Different for everyone. What matters is that it is something impacted your education, and something you had to act on.
- Describe it. Be specific. What you did to overcome/take advantage of it? That's where we learn about you. How has this changed you?

Prompts Continued

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?

- If you wrote about a challenge for the last one, then make sure it's different from this one.
- This can be any situation you have faced, in your life, that challenged you. Describe it like a story. What happened, how did you feel, what did you do to face it?
- Reflect on how it has changed you, personally and academically.

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

- Can be as small as a group project, to a beach cleanup, to volunteering. The idea is that it meant something to you.
- Talk about why you did it. Then describe what you did, and how you did it. What did it feel like, how it changed you moving forward?

Prompts Continued

7. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?

- Is there something about you that you haven't been able to get across?
- A personality trait or part of you they need to see to truly understand you? This is the place to share it.
- Fairly open ended, but same rules apply: show, don't tell. And reflect on what it means to you.



General Strategies

1. It can look hard...but just be honest and be you. Write from the heart.
2. Cheat code? Choose a personality trait/characteristic about yourself you want to convey
 - a. ex. I am someone who never gives up, kind, hard worker, ambitious, empathetic, etc.
3. Make a list of examples of events in your life/things that best show this trait. Then narrow the list to one or two specific things that really capture *you*.
4. Connect the desired personality trait + the example to one prompt. When looking back at your essay for revision, ask yourself: does this essay convey the personality trait I want to show?
5. Repeat this process for all four of the essays.

Talking Points

Accomplishments:

ER Volunteering

EMT Training

Amazon Mission

Psych Internship

Research Presentations

Personality-bases:

7 Going the Distance

Ignoring Boundaries

Getting Fit

Grinding Math

Learning for Learning

Support-class leadership

Resourceful Creativity

Being Stupid, for Now

Talking to People

Knowing the Unknown:
Learning about cognitive functions and wanting to know the deeper science behind them

Trouble in Triage:
Learning from egotistical and communicative/organizational mistakes to lead a team supportively

The Courage to Ask:
Gaining knowledge and opening doors by swallowing pride and fear through asking superiors about stuff

Make Way!:
Tales from the EMT classroom to rig

X Gon' Give it to ya (what):
How getting fit affected my work ethic and response to challenge

UC Prompts:

Major Prep
required

Leadership
Prompt #1

Talent/skill
Prompt #3

Educational Opportunity
Prompt #4

Being the GOAT
Prompt #7

Challenge
Prompt #5

Tips for Writing

- Action shows character
- Show, don't tell
- After saying what happened, say how it changed you.
- Nothing is off limits
- Doesn't have to be dramatic; has to be true



Tips for Writing [cont.]

- No right/wrong answer
- Talk about yourself
- These are just guidelines
- Nothing negative (unless it's turned into a positive)



Revisions

- **While writing:** don't focus on word count. Focus on telling them about you.
- **While revising:** focus on keeping the sentences that tell the most about you, and cut out all else.
- Be concise
- Active voice



Appeals

- Universities are often not very explicit in giving direction for this
 - Check the university's website
 - Look at online examples of successful appeals
- What are they looking for?
 - New academic and personal information
 - Extenuating circumstances



What Makes a Good Personal Insight Essay?

3 Components: “3 I’s” stand out in a good UC essay

- **Informative:** answers the prompt providing clear and concise information with descriptive examples. [external stuff]
- **Insightful:** provides insight into the motivations, goals, and character of the applicant. [internal stuff]
- **Individual:** is written in a way that conveys the applicant’s personality, creating a unique sense of individuality.

Questions

