

Personal Statement

Purposes: When applying to colleges, usually the 4-year colleges, a personal statement is required with the application. Sometimes a personal statement or short essay is required when applying to scholarships as well. The Hawaii DOE would like all students ready with a personal statement by their senior year should one be needed.

A personal statement is also one piece of evidence demonstrating the writing skills a student has developed throughout his/her education. Depending on the type of career you pursue, you may be asked to show your writing skills for a potential job.

What to write about:

Select a prompt from the Common Application list or the Pauahi Scholarship list. A personal statement should show a little of who you are, your thoughts, feelings, and opinions. It is not a report on a topic. It is not a story of someone else.

Common Application Essay Prompts

The Common Application (Common App) is used by many colleges. Students may submit one application for many colleges, thus saving time. For this reason, the Common App Essay prompts would meet the requirements of most colleges.

Word count: Essays will not be accepted if under 250 words or over 650 words.

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?
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?

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.

Pauahi (Kamehameha) Scholarship Prompts

Length of essay: 3,000 character count

1. What career do you see yourself in 10-15 years and what life experience(s) has helped you realize this career goal?
2. Provide the month/year of a community service opportunity you participated in or helped organize. Briefly describe the service and explain what kind of impact it has made on you and how it has helped you recognize your career/life goal.
3. Give a short description of a challenging event you have personally experienced, then explain how you overcame it and grown from the experience.

Castle HS	PERSONAL STATEMENT RUBRIC (page 1 of 2) Essay needs to be 3 or better in ALL categories.				
Categories	5	4	3 (MEETS)	2	1
Ideas: The text introduces the event/conflict, characters, and setting and provides specific details/evidence to get to the significance of the event/conflict.	The text creatively engages the reader by setting out a well-developed conflict, situation, or observation and its significance.	The text engages and orients the reader by setting out a conflict, situation, or observation and its significance.	The text orients the reader by setting out a conflict, situation, or observation and its significance.	The text provides a setting with a vague conflict, situation, or observation with an unclear point of view.	The text provides a setting that is unclear with a vague conflict, situation, or observation.
Organization & Cohesion: The text follows a logical sequence of events	The text creates a seamless progression of events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. These techniques build toward a crafted tone and outcome.	The text creates a smooth progression of events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. These techniques build toward a clear tone and outcome.	The text creates a logical progression of events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole. These techniques build toward a particular tone and outcome	The text creates a progression of events. The text lacks an identifiable tone and/or outcome.	The text lacks a progression of events or presents an illogical sequence of events. The text lacks an identifiable tone and/or outcome.

<p>Use of Language: The text uses sensory language and details to create a vivid picture of the writer.</p> <p>The grammar and conventions adhere to a professional tone and appearance.</p>	<p>The text uses eloquent words and phrases, showing details and rich sensory language and mood to convey a realistic picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. There are 1-2 minor errors in grammar/conv entions.</p>	<p>The text uses precise words and phrases, showing details and controlled sensory language and mood to convey a realistic picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. There are 3-4 minor errors in grammar/conv entions.</p>	<p>The text uses words and phrases, telling details and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. There are a few minor errors and/or one major error in grammar/ conventions.</p>	<p>The text uses words and phrases, telling details to convey experiences, events, settings, and/or characters. It does not appear that the writer used a grammar or spell checker.</p>	<p>The text merely tells experiences, events, settings, and/or characters. It does not appear that the writer used a grammar or spell checker.</p>
<p>Conclusion: Conclusion that follows from the course of the narrative. The conclusion provides a reflection on or resolution of events.</p>	<p>The text moves to a conclusion that artfully follows from and thoughtfully reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</p>	<p>The text builds to a conclusion that logically follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</p>	<p>The text provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</p>	<p>The text provides a conclusion that follows from what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</p>	<p>The text may provide a conclusion to the events of the narrative.</p>
<p>Categories</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>3 (MEETS)</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Word Count</p>	<p>Word count is between 250 and 650.</p>			<p>Word count is below 250 or above 650.</p>	