



Common Application Essay

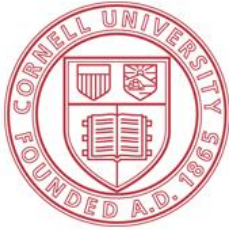
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About Me



Cornell University



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Common Application

900+
colleges

Recommendations

Grades &
Transcript

Main
Essay

Activities &
Awards

Additional
Info

Supplemental
Essays

Purpose of Main Essay



1. Your Story

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. Challenge

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. Changing Your Mind

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

4. Solving a Problem

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 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. Accomplishment/Growth

Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

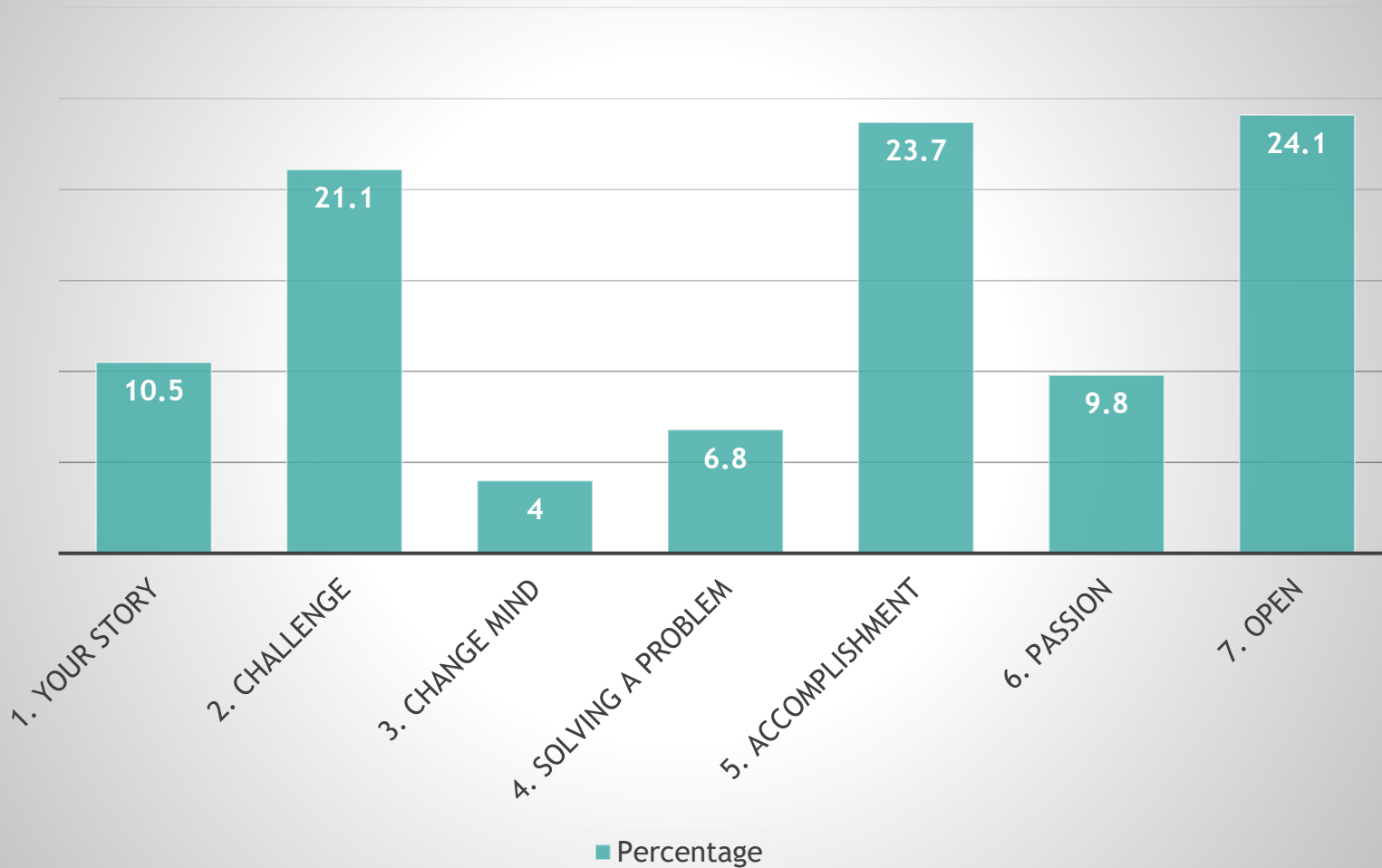
6. Passion

Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging 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. Open

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.

Prompt by Popularity



Do's

- ▶ Brainstorm
- ▶ Write, write, write
- ▶ Engaging opening
- ▶ Focus on the small
- ▶ Entertain
- ▶ Give examples
- ▶ Be Memorable
- ▶ Re-read and edit

Don'ts

- ▶ Clichés
- ▶ Academics
- ▶ Complaining
- ▶ Controversial
- ▶ Judge your writing too early
- ▶ Copy



Questions?

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