

It's All About You! Personal Insight Responses

In preparation for some of the most difficult writing of your life—responding to the college application/personal insight questions—you are going to complete a series of assignments to hopefully develop your ideas and focus your writing.



Assignment #1—The First Response

Before you consult with anyone else. Sit down and draft a response to the question:

What/who made you who you are today?

Consider experiences, people who have influenced you, choices you've made, opportunities you've seized and those you missed.

*Conclude this draft with a brief summation of your essential qualities based on the evidence you provided.

How long should this be? I haven't a clue. Some will be short; some will be long—the important thing is that you get it all out. *But it should be typed!*

How much does this count? Papers will be worth 20 pts and graded on the following criteria:

1. Thoroughly answers the question, "What made you who you are today?" and follows directions.
2. Provides ample concrete evidence to support claims
3. Is grammatically and stylistically sound

*Papers not following the MLA format or written in pencil will NOT receive credit

When is this due? _____

Assignment #2—the Interviews

Now it's time to assemble a team of experts in the field of "you". Interview three people about yourself:

1. Family member or close family friend (someone who's watched you grow up)
2. A high school friend (someone who's seen you in action at school)
3. A non-high school friend or acquaintance (consider neighbors, employers, co-workers, coaches, etc. Someone who knows you from outside the school realm)

You can write your own set of questions for the interviews or steal sample U.C. personal insight questions. Tailor your questions to fit the interviewee—be flexible!

Question #1: Describe an example of my leadership experience in which I have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.

Question #2: How have you seen me express my creative side? Can you describe an example?

Question #3: What would you say is my greatest talent or skill? How have you seen me develop and demonstrate that talent over time?

Question #4: How have you seen me take advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier I have faced?

Question #5: Describe the most significant challenge you have seen me face and the steps I have taken to overcome it. How has this challenge affected my academic achievement?

Question #6: What do you see as my favorite academic subject? How have you seen it influence me?

Question #7: What have you seen me do to make my school or your community a better place?

*Special thanks to Lynette Williamson and Audrey Leach for their contributions to this unit of study.

Question #8: What is one thing that you think sets me apart from other candidates applying to the University of California?

Take notes during the interviews. After the interviews are complete, write a concise, one-page summary describing the two responses that stand out most.

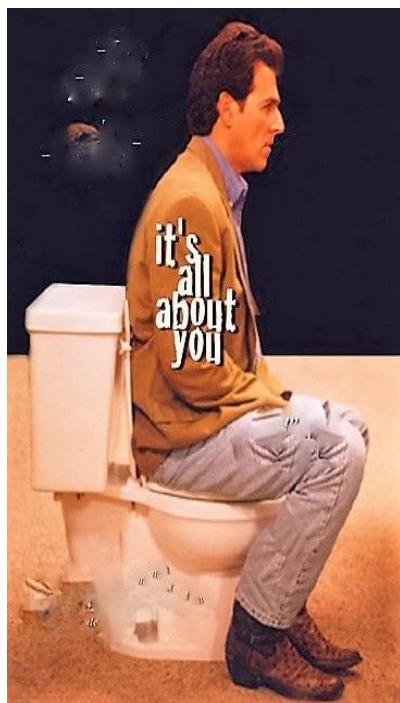
How long should this be? A one typed page or two hand-written pages, evidence-rich summary with your interview notes stapled to the back. *It will help to have it typed!*

How much does this count? Papers will be worth 25 pts and graded on the following criteria:

1. Thoroughly answers the question, "How do others see me??" and follows directions.
2. Provides ample concrete evidence to support claims
3. Is grammatically and stylistically sound
4. Includes notes from three separate interviews. Questions and answers need to be clearly noted.

*Papers not following the MLA format or written in pencil will NOT receive credit

When is this due? _____



Assignment#3—the Presentation

Now you've assembled your thoughts about what makes you tick and consulted others. It's time to incorporate all of this into a three-five minute presentation. In response to the question most asked at college and job interviews, "Tell us a little about yourself," you're going to do just that. Be prepared (with notes!). You may want to consult your first response, reflect on the interviewee's stories about you, or respond to the questions below.

How long should this be? Three-five minutes when presented (that's about two typed pages—but you will not be submitting any written work)

How much does this count? Presentations will be worth 30 pts and graded on the following criteria:

1. Provides ample concrete examples of who you are
2. Incorporates a variety of sources for defining who you are.
3. Captures the audience's attention in the introduction
4. Concludes strongly
5. Follows the basic guidelines for an extemporaneous speech:
 - a. Introduction and conclusion are planned but not canned (memorized but appears off-the-cuff).
 - b. Demonstrates confident poise, voice and eye contact
 - c. May reference notes

Question #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.

Question #2: Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many and ways: problem solving, original, and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.

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

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

***Consider the audience an admissions/hiring committee—this is NOT a therapy session!**

When is this due? _____

Assignment#4—the Personal Insight Questions

Based on the information you've gathered and the feedback you received from your presentation, you should have a more vivid picture of yourself—the strengths and qualities that define you even on your worst hair day.

Colleges know your scores, but they don't know you. The personal insight questions give you an opportunity to compose a vivid and memorable portrait of yourself that can't be conveyed through stats. **I am asking you to respond to TWO of the UC personal insight questions** — no more than a 350-word statement. (The U.C.'s will ask you to answer a total of FOUR questions in no more than 350 words each.)



Question #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.

Question #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.

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

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

Question #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?

Question #6: Describe your favorite academic subject and explain how it has influenced you?

Question #7: What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?

Question #8: What is one thing that you think sets you apart from the other candidates applying to the University of California?

How long should this be? Two entries of no more than 350 words (approximately 1.5 pages each)

How much does this count? Personal Insight Question Responses will be worth 50 pts each plus drafting and editing points.

Responses will be graded on a specific rubric that will be handed out two weeks prior to the deadline--but will include the following criteria:

- Provides a vivid, concrete example(s) of who you are
- Focuses information around a clear response to the question
- Demonstrates more dimension by making each response unique
 - do not write both responses on your summer mission trip
- Captures the audience's attention in the introduction, including a snazzy title
- Concludes strongly without repetition
- Incorporates class instruction and feedback into your final draft (vivid, economic revision!)

- Free of careless grammatical or spelling errors

When is this due? _____