

## TOEFL Writing Topics

Topics in the following list may appear in your actual test. You should become familiar with this list before you take the computer-based TOEFL test. Remember that when you take the test you will not have a choice of topics. You must write only on the topic that is assigned to you.

<http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEFL/pdf/989563wt.pdf>

## UC Transfer Application Essay

use specific examples to illustrate experience and lessons learned:

### **Transfer applicant prompt**

What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field — such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.

### **Prompt for all applicants**

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?

## SJSU WST Sample Topic

<https://testing.sjsu.edu/wstsampletest.pdf>

**INSTRUCTIONS:** You will have 15 minutes to read and think about the following topic. You may make notes or outlines on the scratch paper provided. Remember, one way to have a good idea is to have many ideas. At the end of 15 minutes you will have 45 minutes to write your essay. Allow yourself at least five minutes to edit and proofread. Dictionaries may be used in this part of the examination.

It has been suggested that true happiness lies in liking those things we approve of and approving of the things we like. Most people spend a great deal of time and energy trying to harmonize the two, often without much success. Such attempts may be about something minor, such as eliminating a bad habit or cultivating a good one, or about something more important, such as choice of major, career, or mate. Some people, for example, struggle to give up smoking: they like to smoke but don't approve of smoking because it is dangerous to their health. Others become computer science majors, aiming for a successful career, but find they really don't like working with computers. Write a clear and fully-developed essay giving an example or examples, which demonstrate what this statement means:

"True happiness lies in liking those things we approve of and approving of those things we like." Your example(s) may be taken from your personal experiences or drawn from situations you have heard or read about. You should:

1. Describe your experience(s) or example(s) with specific details.
2. Explain why or how your example(s) or experience(s) show what the statement means.

# 100 College Admission Essay Topics:

[http://www.eduers.com/University/College\\_Admission\\_Essay\\_Topics.html](http://www.eduers.com/University/College_Admission_Essay_Topics.html)

The one hundred college application essay prompts (below) have been used by various universities in recent years. If you are required to write a "personal statement" for your college application, look through these questions for ideas. While these may not contain the exact question your college asks, many of them can generate ideas for you, especially if your essay is the generic, "Tell us something about yourself that we don't already know."

## EXAMPLES:

Tell us how a particular book, play, film, piece of music, dance performance, scientific theory or experiment or work of art has influenced you. If you choose a novel, film or play, assume we know the plot. (University of Notre Dame)

Tell us what you think about a current scientific or social controversy. (William and Mary)

Tell us about a situation where you have not been successful and what you have learned from the experience. (William and Mary)

First experiences can be defining. Cite a first experience that you have had and explain its impact on you. (University of Pennsylvania)

Most people belong to many different communities (groups defined by (among other things) shared geography, religion, ethnicity, income, cuisine, interest, race, ideology, or intellectual heritage. Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. Limit your response to half a page, or approximately 250 words. (University of Virginia all applicants)

What can you contribute to a multi-cultural world? (William and Mary)

Respond to the question: How can I prepare educationally for a global society? (Hampton University)

Once you have completed your education, would you return to your hometown to begin your adult life? Why or why not? (William and Mary)

## parknotes.com

<http://www.sparknotes.com/testprep/books/newsat/power tactics/essay/chapter7.rhtml>

## EXAMPLES:

### 1. Essay Prompt:

Think carefully about the following statement. Then read the assignment below it and plan and write your essay as directed.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same."

**Assignment:** Do you agree with this statement? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your position on this issue. Support your point of view with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

### 2. Essay Prompt:

Consider carefully the following statement. Then read the assignment below it and plan and write your essay as directed.

"It is as difficult to start things as it is to finish things."

**Assignment:** Do you agree with this statement? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your position on this issue. Support your point of view with reasoning and examples taken from

your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

### 3. Essay Prompt:

Consider carefully the following quotation. Then read the assignment below it and plan and write your essay as directed.

“All art is an imitation of nature.”

—Seneca, Roman philosopher, c. 4 B.C.–A.D. 65

**Assignment:** Do you agree with this statement? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your position on this issue. Support your point of view with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

## Over 200 expository essay prompts at Barnard:

<http://www2.asd.wednet.edu/pioneer/barnard/wri/exp.htm>

Explore and then revise to reflect college life and course content; essays reflect a variety of writing styles, including essays, letters, directions, and direct observations:

### EXAMPLES:

1. We are learning all the time. Some of our learning takes place in school and some outside of school. Write about something you have learned recently and how it has affected you.
2. Think of the ideal job for you when you grow up. Now think of reasons why this would be a good job for you. Write an essay to explain why this is your ideal job.
3. Think of a book that you have read and really enjoyed. Write an essay explaining why you really enjoyed that book.
4. Imagine that time travel to the past was possible. Think of where and when you would like to go for a visit. Write an essay telling where and when you would go in the past and explain why you choose to go there.
5. If your principal asked you to write your opinion about what needed to be changed in your school what would you write?
6. Your class has been studying ways of improving our environment. One of these ways is by recycling items you would normally throw away. This might be an empty paper towel roll, empty milk carton, or an old telephone book. Write 3 - 5 paragraphs for your teacher explaining how you can create or recycle something from a discarded item or throwaway. Before you start writing, think about what item you are going to recycle. Think about what new item you are going to create from it. Decide on the materials needed for this project. Think about the clear, step-by-step directions for making your recycled item. Decide how this recycled item will be useful. Now write a paragraph or more for your teacher explaining how you will create something new from a discarded item.
7. Describe a favorite place you have visited. Write 3 - 5 paragraphs or describing the place. Before you begin writing, think about the location of your favorite place. Think about when and why you like to visit this place. Think about the benefits of visiting this place. Now write a description of your favorite place.
8. Your friend wants to come to your house. Write directions telling how to get to your house from school. Before you start writing, think about the details you will need in your directions. Think about landmarks you pass and the order in which you pass them. Think about any roads you will need to travel. Consider having a map to illustrate your directions. Now write a paragraph or more explaining to your teacher how to get to your house from school.
9. A classmate of yours had an accident on the playground during recess and had to be taken to the doctor's office. Write 3 - 5 paragraphs for the principal explaining what you saw. Before you start to write, think about exactly where you were and when the accident took place. Think about the others who were involved in the accident. Consider (think about) any details that would be helpful in your report. Now write a paragraph or more to your principal explaining what you saw when your classmate had an accident on the playground.