Instructions. The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. (The Common App won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.)

* Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
* Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
* Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
* Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?
* Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.