

Choosing the topic for a personal narrative can be daunting. Ordinarily, students must probe hundreds of experiences in search of a story that carries some significant perspective or point of view, but you're given several choices, which will help to filter specific topics. All prompts ask you to choose to discuss a personal experience that yields a central idea, or *thesis*.

Read the following prompts. As you read, you may find that you begin to think of memorable or challenging experiences that would make good responses to each of the prompts. If one prompt “speaks” to you more than others, you may have found the right prompt for you.

Narrative Writing Prompts:

1. 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?
2. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
3. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
4. 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.

Choose a single experience. The prewrite may be as simple as telling the story through a composition. This experience doesn't necessarily have to fit any prompt, and it doesn't necessarily have to have a central idea yet. You simply want to write about the event to determine if it's a proper match for the prompt and for the assignment. Remember that a personal narrative should be meaningful in that you've learned something from it, you believe you've learned something, and the experience may have changed you in some way. A prewrite may even give you the opportunity to find meaning in an experience that you never really considered.

So, let's prewrite. Tell your story in the space below: