

OVERLAND 2011 ~ COLLEGE ESSAY PROGRAM PROMPTS

In preparation for your upcoming week with Overland, please spend about thirty minutes responding in a spiral bound notebook to each of the following prompts. Many have been drawn or adapted from the supplemental essay prompts you will encounter as you prepare your college admissions applications. Please bring the completed prompts with you when you travel to Williamstown. Your notebook will be collected the first day you are here and will help us to better direct you with your college essay. Include many details when you write. At this stage, do not worry about grammar or spelling. Write freely and honestly!

1. Think of two majors you might be interested in pursuing. What are they and how do your interests and related experiences connect to each one? (Cornell University)
2. Imagine looking through a window at any environment that is particularly significant to you. Describe and reflect on the scene. Pay close attention to the relation between what you are seeing and what is meaningful to you. (Williams College)
3. Ralph Waldo Emerson's observed: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." How do you respond? (Colby College)
4. Consider an academic experience (course, project, paper or research topic) that has meant a great deal to you and discuss why it has. (Harvard College)
5. Record a favorite quotation from an essay, book or poem you have read in the last three years. Explain why you value it and how it relates to who you are today. (Princeton University)
6. What would you do with a free afternoon? (Yale University)
7. French novelist Anatole France wrote: "An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't." What don't you know? (Brown University)
8. If you had the opportunity to bring any person—past or present, fictional or nonfictional—to a place that is special to you (your hometown or country, a favorite location, etc.), who would you bring and why? Tell us what you would share with that person. (New York University)
9. What experience in high school has mattered most to you? How do you see this experience influencing your decision-making in college? (Pomona College)
10. Select a topic about which you feel deeply passionate: a cause, an idea, a human quality, an activity, another human being, a favored locale, a treasured object, etc. Describe why the topic is meaningful to you, as you focus on the relationship between you and your topic. (Overland 2011)