

# 5 Biggest Mistakes Students Make When Writing Their UC PIQs

## 1. Talking about a topic instead of yourself

UC wants to read about you, not your take on the meaning of leadership or the reason it's important for people to reduce their carbon footprints. While information you learned might have motivated you to act, be sure every sentence of each Personal Insight Question is focused on your own personal experiences and actions.

## 2. Writing narrative stories or using experimental formats

You aren't being evaluated on your writing ability but on your actions, growth as a student and person, motivations to attend college (or UC in particular), and ability to succeed on campus. So, avoid in-the-moment details or storytelling techniques that serve to set a tone or convey an emotion and forgo writing poems to "show" the Admissions Officers how creative you are. Stick to providing clear, concrete information about you that showcases your strengths.

## 3. Not writing about situations relevant to UC

You may have a great time cooking or knitting with your grandma, but UC is ultimately looking for evidence you will succeed academically and persist through all 4 years of college. This does *not* mean you shouldn't write about topics that don't have a clear academic connection. You just need to connect any experience you write about to characteristics UC cares about and your ability to succeed academically. For example, maybe learning to knit taught you to be persistent, which helped you in challenging classes when you didn't understand the material right away.

## 4. Talking about experiences that happened before high school

Since the UC Admissions Officers are trying to get to know who you are now and who you'll become in the future, all your essays should focus on examples that occurred in high school. Although you can briefly talk about occurrences before high school to give context, the focus should be on high school experiences.

## 5. Not admitting your mistakes

It's okay to admit you made mistakes or had circumstances that prevented you from doing what you wanted to. UC wants to see students who are self-aware, can learn and grow from hardship and mistakes, and have a focused desire to learn and reach future goals. That means owning up to your weaknesses (*and explaining how you are working on improving them or have improved them*), as well as celebrating your successes.

Want more help? Go to [Euphonycoaching.com](http://Euphonycoaching.com) or email [angiebates@euphonycoaching.com](mailto:angiebates@euphonycoaching.com) to book a service or ask a question!