

New York University

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 application won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.)

**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.**

The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

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 problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

***SEE BELOW***

I was watching a show one night at home with some friends on a cool fall evening when I got a text from her, “Can you please come over?” My mom needed me again.

Of course, I excused myself and left my friends to watch the latest episode of *Swordsmen*. It’s hard not to feel slightly annoyed in moments like that, but I was raised to respect my mom anyway. I put on my blue jacket with the metal zipper, not the fancy one, and trudged over to the convenience store. A customer had gotten upset and knocked over some stands of chips and packages of sweets before the police arrived and arrested him. The store was a mess.

I checked my phone an hour later only to see that my friends had left, texting their cheerful goodbyes in emoji. It was going to be a long evening, but it already had been for my mom.

My grandparents were well off since founding their own small business, but they made no secret they had wanted a different life for my mom. I’m told there was a time when things were different. When my mom was my age, she wanted to become an accountant and help people manage their money better. My older neighbors next door knew her as a young girl and commented to me once about how she was a fantastic student, full of energy and curiosity. When she took the Zhongkao exams though, she failed miserably. She never achieved entry into the main senior high school for advanced mathematics training. Instead, she stayed at home at the convenience store to help my grandparents. She faithfully stood behind that cash register, counting coins as people purchased packets of treats and other crunchy things.

I used to think that success was measured in money and prestige. Successful people make more cash than everyone else. Their lives seem effortless and automatic. My

mom does not dress in fancy clothes. She usually wears the same clothes to work, coming home with a tired expression on her face that signals another long day. She drives no luxury car. She does not have an accountant's certificate to proudly post on the white walls of our living room. When she asks me about my day, it isn't always easy to tell her everything I learned. I know she had a hard day.

She does have a warm and loving home, even though it is a little sticky tracking from the syrup boxes servicing the fountain drinks in the convenience store. She does care about me, probably more than I realize. I think she dreams that one day someone from our family will finally get a college degree.

In a few months, I will graduate from senior high. My mom will probably take some time off to get some nice thing as a gift and attend my graduation. After a summer, I will go to a new school and a new country to pursue a degree in accounting. Even when I'm calculating balance sheets, I know my mom will still be there at our store selling snacks and serving customers. Steady and constant, I know she will maintain our family as I work through school. Steady and constant, I know she'll be proud when I finish my degree.

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