

## Essay Prompt and Directions

2026 Application

[www.aso.org/tdp](http://www.aso.org/tdp)



*We want to get to know you as a musician and a person. Whether you choose to write an essay (300–500 words) or make a video (3–5 minutes), please make sure to answer all parts of the question below.*

### **Essay Prompt:**

Tell us the story of your journey in music so far. Share how you started, what inspires you, and where you hope to go next. Include your proudest moments, challenges you have faced, and how you've worked to overcome them. Finally, tell us how the Talent Development Program could help you reach your musical goals. We are looking for evidence that you have demonstrated resilience and determination in overcoming obstacles to your pursuit of learning classical music.

### **Your typed essay or video should:**

- Answer all parts of the question: your background, what inspired you, your favorite experiences, challenges, and goals.
- Be clear and organized so it's easy to follow.
- Share personal stories or examples, not just a list of facts.
- Show your passion for music and your commitment to learning.
- Explain how the Talent Development Program could help you reach your goals.

### **Tips:**

- Be yourself – we want to hear your voice and story.
- Give details to help us picture your experiences.
- Keep it within the time/word limit so we can see your best work.

- If submitting a video, begin by stating your name, then speak clearly and at a comfortable pace.

### Submission Instructions:

- Be sure to review your work before submitting to make sure it's complete and clearly represents you.
- Written essays should be typed and saved as a PDF using LastName\_FirstName\_essay (Example: Smith\_Avery\_essay)  
OR  
Video essays should be saved as LastName\_FirstName\_essay (Example: Smith\_Avery\_essay) and uploaded to YouTube as 'Unlisted'
- In designated area of the application, upload PDF or submit YouTube link.

### How to Upload Your Videos to YouTube

1. Record your video(s) using your phone, tablet, or camera.
2. Save the file(s) using the naming format above.
3. Upload to YouTube:
  - Sign in to YouTube.
  - Click the camera icon (Create -> Upload Video).
  - Select your file.
  - Set the video to Unlisted (only people with the link can view it).
4. Copy your video link(s) and paste them into the application form.