

Writing the Personal Statement Tips



What should your personal statement do?

- ✓ Showcase your educational history and aspirations
- ✓ Paint a bigger picture of your academic background/journey
- ✓ Give context to your other accomplishments
- ✓ Explain adversity and or obstacles and how you have overcome these barriers
- ✓ Help the admissions committee understand why you are choosing the school and why you want to study your major there

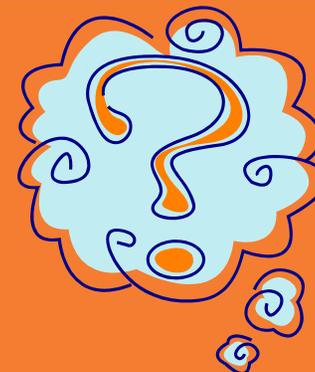
Where do I start?

- ✓ Be yourself (tell us who you are, even though you are writing about a given topic, think of ways to personalize your answer within the context of the prompt)
- ✓ Show diversity
- ✓ Do research and tailor each essay accordingly (address the prompt or topic that is required)
- ✓ Be concise and follow directions (be aware of essay formats and or suggested word length)
- ✓ Go beyond your resume, GPA and test scores
- ✓ Tell us your story (explain your achievements and choices, your passion and commitments, your goals and challenges)

What is the personal statement?

The personal statement is your opportunity to sell yourself in the application process. It is your chance to distinguish yourself, to make your personal experiences really count and to document how you have triumphed over adversity. Many colleges are relying on personal statements more heavily in their admissions decisions than on transcripts or test scores-use this to your advantage.

Almost every school will ask a specific question (or questions) for their personal statement. It is essential that you in some way reference that question so they know you are writing specifically for them and not just generally for any school (unless you are writing for the Common Application).



Questions to ask yourself before you write:

- What's special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?
- What details of your life (personal or family problems, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants?
- When did you become interested in this field and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?
- How have you learned about this field—through classes, readings, seminars, work or other experiences, or conversations with people already in the field?
- If you have worked a lot during your college years, what have you learned (leadership or managerial skills, for example), and how has that work contributed to your growth?
- What are your career goals?
- Are there any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record that you should explain (for example a distinct upward pattern to your GPA if it was only average in the beginning)?

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The Writing Process

- ✓ Start Early
- ✓ Write an Outline
- ✓ Write your First Draft
- ✓ Organize your statement
- ✓ Read your drafts out loud
- ✓ Be aware of spelling, grammar and syntax.
- ✓ Edit, edit and edit. Ask your peers, professors, advisors and different set of eyes to edit and provide you feedback.
- ✓ Give yourself plenty of time to work on your statement
- ✓ Visit the Writing Center on campus (*Building 26, Room 319*)
- ✓ Attend Transfer Center Workshops such as *How to Write a Winning Personal Statement*



Like your general admissions personal statement you must go through the writing process. The hardest part is always starting!

Departmental Personal Statement

The departmental personal statement is different than the general personal statement as it focuses on your specific department admissions.

Often, business, engineering, nursing departments and graduate school applications **ask specific questions, and your statement should respond specifically to the question being asked.**

It is your opportunity to describe who you are and why you are uniquely qualified for a career within the department you are applying to, beyond GPA, transcript information and standardized test results.

For more personal statement tips and examples, see *Accepted! 50 Successful College Admissions Essays* (available through the library as an E-book).

References

Albert, Leah. "Take Control of Your Transfer Essay." *Private Colleges & Universities* 2014: 22-23. Web. 5 Nov. 2014.

Morgan, Alexis. "6 Tips for Writing Great Personal Statements." *USA TODAY College*. N.p., 9 Jan. 2012. Web. 05 Nov. 2014.

"Welcome to the Purdue OWL." *Purdue OWL: Writing the Personal Statement*. N.p., 8 May 2012. Web. 05 Nov. 2014

Questions to ask yourself before you write continued...:

- Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (for example, economic, familial, or physical) in your life?
- What personal characteristics (for example, integrity, compassion, and/or persistence) do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in the field or profession? Is there a way to demonstrate or document that you have these characteristics?
- What skills (for example, leadership, communicative, analytical) do you possess?
- Why might you be a stronger candidate and more successful and effective in the profession or field than other applicants?



Transfer Center

Check the Transfer Center Website for current office hours.

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