

WRITING A WINNING PERSONAL STATEMENT



CAREER CONNECTION



TWO CATEGORIES OF PERSONAL STATEMENTS

1) **General, Comprehensive Statements**

- Allows the applicant latitude in terms of what he/she writes.

2) **Response to a specific question**

- Less latitude in terms of content of your essay, but is still prudent to compose a well-considered and persuasive response.



SAMPLE QUESTIONS

"The unexamined life is not worth living."
-Plato.

- In light of the above quotation, please discuss a decision you have made which, in retrospect, has had a profound influence on your present circumstances. In hindsight, would you have made a different decision? Please explain. (*Haas School/Berkeley*)
- How would you characterize the effects of your contributions to the groups or organizations in which you have participated? (*Yale*)



THE DO'S FOR YOUR STATEMENT 😊

- Give it a theme, a thesis
- Choose what you want to discuss *before* you start writing
- Use concrete examples of your life experiences to distinguish yourself from others
- Write about what interests you, excites you

THE DO'S FOR YOUR STATEMENT 😊

- Begin your essay with an attention-grabbing lead and get to the point early on
- Use direct, straightforward writing that tells about your experience and what it means to you
- Form conclusions that explain value and meaning of your experience, such as what you learned about yourself and your field, your future goals, and your future plans



THE DO'S FOR YOUR STATEMENT 😊

- End by referring back to your lead and restate your thesis
- Revise at *least* THREE times
- Ask someone else to critique your statement



THE DO'S FOR YOUR STATEMENT 😊

- Proofread your statement by reading it out loud
- Write clearly, concisely, and objectively
- Limit your statement's length to about two pages

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE ☹️

- **Generally, references to experiences or accomplishments during your high school years or earlier**
- **Subjects that are potentially controversial**
- **Any views that might be interpreted as strange or highly unconventional**
- **Information pulled “out of left field” - something that doesn’t fit into the story you are telling or the case you’re trying to build**
- **An autobiography, resume or itinerary**

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE ☹️

- **Vocabulary words that you don't know**
- **Generic statements about the field or yourself: "Communication skills are important in this field."**
- **Made up things, false experiences**
- **"What I did with my life" and "I've always wanted to be a" approaches**



TIPS ON WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Determine your **PURPOSE** in writing the statement
- Determine the **CONTENT** of your statement:
 - 1) State your *purpose* in graduate study**
 - **How and when your interest in the program and career developed**
 - **Significant role models that have influenced and encouraged your career goals**
 - **How you have pursued this interest in college**



TIPS ON WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

2.) Above all, this statement should contain information about you as a person

- Personal background
- What distinguishes you as a person?
- What are significant experiences that tell us something about your value system or types of challenges you like to meet?



TIPS ON WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

3.) Speak to the area of study in which you wish to specialize

- Describe experiences that helped you explore your career interests and decide to pursue it
- Special research, academic work, employment, volunteer experience, etc.
- What insight did you gain about yourself and the way you relate to the profession?
- Special skills that demonstrate the depth of your experience in the field; *how* will this be applicable?



TIPS ON WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT

4.) Address intended future use of your graduate study

- Future goals within the profession
- Setting you'd like to work in
- Area of specialization? Why?

5.) Your special preparation and fitness for your study in the field

- Why this program?
- Research the program and explain its appeal to you
- Refer to specific aspects of the program that match your interests (philosophy, curriculum, etc.)



TIPS ON WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT


6.) Any special conditions that are not revealed elsewhere in the application

- Be open obstacles that you may have encountered and overcome at this point (illness, family tragedy, 35 hour/week workload outside of school, etc.)
- Inconsistencies in grades or admission test scores? Explain them in brief, factual, non-apologetic, non-defensive manner

7.) Conclusion

- Summarize and unite key elements of your statement

QUESTIONS?



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