

Writing Your Personal Statement

There is no one way to write a personal statement, but there are some best practices and core elements of personal statements. Use some of this information to start writing; consider attending a personal statement workshop or setting up an individual appointment with your Career Consultant to fine-tune your statement.

Structuring Your Statement

Organize your Personal Statement just like you would any other essay: introduction, body, conclusion. Each body paragraph should be structured using PEEL:

- P** **Point**– topic sentence– what is the point you want to make?
- E** **Evidence**– make your point– what evidence supports your point?
- E** **Explanation**– explain your point– why is this relevant to the program you are pursuing?
- L** **Link**– link your point to the next paragraph.

Do's & Don'ts

- DO:** Tell a story, find an angle, be specific.
- DO:** Write well & proofread!
- DO:** Use a clean, professional format.
- DO:** Stay within the word/character limit.



- DON'T:** Speak in clichés or generalities.
- DON'T:** Preach, whine, condescend, or repeat info from your resume.
- DON'T:** Submit supplemental materials unless they are requested.



4 Key Components of Your Statement

1. Motivation

Why do you want to pursue this career? Think about your initial aspiration and your ongoing preparation.

2. Fit

How do you know this is the right career for you? Think about the values and personal qualities you possess that make you a good fit for this career. Consider how they match the profession.

3. Capacity

How do you know that you have what it takes to be successful in this field? Assess your skills, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. Put them in context of this profession.

4. Vision

How do you want to impact the profession? Consider broad and specific goals.

Top 10 Tips for Writing Success

- 1. Plan ahead – time and content.** Give yourself more time than you think you need to write your document. Identify the main points you wish to include before you start writing.
- 2. Narrow your purpose.** Be sure you understand the directions you were given, and choose a narrow focus. Each sentence and paragraph should support your purpose and consider your audience.
- 3. Start in the middle.** Introductions and conclusions often prove to be challenging to write. Start in the middle and just begin writing.
- 4. Embrace terrible first drafts.** Allow yourself to make mistakes. Just write, knowing that you may throw out drafts entirely or make significant revisions. Remember that writing is a process.
- 5. Use strong action verbs.** Limit state of being verbs (“is,” “are,” “was”) to only two or three per paragraph. Instead, use strong action verbs to make your writing more interesting.
- 6. Write in active voice.** Using active voice instead of passive voice makes your writing easier to read. For example, write “I used Adobe InDesign to create engaging and creative publications” instead of “Adobe InDesign was used to create engaging and creative publications.”
- 7. Streamline your words.** Avoid clutter, ensuring that each word adds to your purpose. At times, fewer words lead to strong sentences. For instance, “There are many people who are affected by a fear of public speaking” could be improved by writing “Many people fear public speaking.”
- 8. Use variety of sentence structures and lengths.** Using the same sentence structure and length over and over again leads to dull writing. Instead of writing “I went to the grocery store. I bought some delicious chocolate chip cookies.” Try “I went to the grocery store and bought some delicious chocolate chip cookies.”
- 9. Use transitional words and phrases.** Transitions ensure that your sentences and paragraphs flow nicely for the reader. Simply repeating select words from one paragraph to the next serves as a useful transitional tool. Words like “additionally,” “however,” “therefore” and “consequently” can help with transitional flow as well.
- 10. Start and end strong.** Capture your reader’s attention with an interesting opening that introduces your topic and supports your purpose of writing. A strong conclusion sums up your purpose and leaves the reader with a positive impression.



Reflective Writing Prompts



Use these prompts to practice writing personal content with details and structure.

1. If I could talk to my childhood self, the one thing I would say is...
 2. What surprised you most about your life or life in general?
 3. Write about a moment in your life you wish you could freeze and preserve.
 4. Imagine living the day as someone else.
 5. Write about a promise you want to make to yourself and keep.
 6. I feel most energized when...
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