



Tips for Personal Statements

DETERMINE YOUR PURPOSE IN WRITING THE STATEMENT

The purpose is to persuade the admissions committee that you should be chosen. Pay attention to the purpose throughout the statement and leave extraneous material out.

KNOW WHAT THE ADMISSIONS OFFICERS ARE SEEKING

Review the prompt thoroughly and plan your essay before writing to ensure that your essay is an effective and persuasive addition to your application package.

WHAT DOES THIS ESSAY TELL ME ABOUT THE PERSON?

Don't try to be something you aren't. Don't try to tell the admissions committee what you think they want to hear. Be honest and look inside yourself.

PERSONAL, PERSONAL, PERSONAL

Write about issues only if they relate specifically to your personal experiences. For example, "In Africa, a child dies every minute. This stark statistic prompted me to join an NGO aimed at providing nutrition and healthcare for children in Namibia."

FOCUS ON YOUR LIFE AFTER YOU BEGAN COLLEGE

Graduate programs are for professionals; writing about your childhood is more for an undergraduate essay. If you feel that you absolutely must include something from your childhood, use it as the starting sentence of your conclusion paragraph.

BE SPECIFIC AND CONCISE

Anyone can say that they are interested in law. Earn credibility by demonstrating this passion. Have you ever worked at a law firm or participated in student government? If the sentence is not essential to your thesis, remove it. Eliminate unnecessary words, such as "in order to," "I believe" and "the fact is."

CAREFULLY PROOFREAD AND REFINE

Seek help from your current/previous professors, the Writing Center and the Career Development Center.