



Personal Statement

LEARN

A personal statement is an essay with a unique reflection of ourselves. It uses the written word to tell our story, and it reflects our thoughts, feelings, and insights based on our own personal experiences.

In college applications, personal statements are an opportunity to tell admissions officers a unique story about yourself. They provide a chance to teach the reader something about you that can't be learned by reading the other parts of your application. For this reason, it is important to spend time on your personal statement so it showcases you as much as possible!

CREATE

Work your way through the following Writing Process Checklist as you develop your own personal statement:

Pre-Write

To kick off the writing process, reflect on what makes you unique by jotting down responses to some of these questions. Start by choosing at least 6 questions and write them down on separate index cards. Then, write a response to each question on the back of each of the cards:

- What is one thing you wish more people knew about you?
- Describe a moment you overcame fear.
- Describe a moment when you felt successful.
- Describe a moment where you felt failure.
- What current issue are you passionate about?
- Describe a moment or an experience that changed your perspective on the world.
- Describe a moment when you stood up for someone or something.
- Describe a moment when you felt like you didn't belong.
- Describe a moment where you felt like you were a part of something great.
- Choose a book that made you think deeply or challenged you positively. What effect has it had on your life? Why?
- Describe a hobby or activity that helped you through a difficult time in your life. How did engaging in this hobby or activity help you?

Draft

Reflect on the answers to some of the questions in the Pre-Write phase. This is an important step before you begin writing your personal statement! Now that you have reviewed your answers, it's time to begin your personal statement!

It's important to note that colleges and universities have various requirements when it comes to personal statements. Many (but not all) use the Common App essay prompts or similar prompts tailored to their respective college application, which can be

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CAREER FINDER (CONTINUED)



accessed at commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts.

Take a moment to review the Common App prompts or read through the prompt(s) required by another college of your choice. Then select one prompt that is meaningful to you and would allow you to tell an important part of your story.

Once you have a prompt selected, grab a computer, tablet, or a piece of paper and pencil (however you write best!) and begin your first draft. Remember, your audience is comprised of college admissions professionals whom you have not met, so your essay should be clear for someone who does not already know you.

As you write, keep the following tips in mind:

- Make sure you answer the prompt!
- Share your story and what makes you unique.
- Provide enough background so that your essay is clear to people who don't already know you.
- You aren't looking for perfection with the first draft! It's just a starting point.

Revise

When your first draft is complete, reread what you have written as you consider how to make it stronger and more impactful. Add, substitute, delete, clarify thoughts, and/or move ideas and words around as you rework your piece. Be sure to consider if you:

- Effectively address the prompt question.
- Wrote the opening in a way that captures the audience's attention.
- Use powerful words, descriptive imagery, and concrete details to make your piece come alive.
- Vary the lengths of your sentences in order to keep things interesting.
- Make sure there is a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Let your personality shine through! Ensure the statement is true to your voice and gives the reader a clear picture of who you are.

Edit

Editing is the process of polishing your piece. For this phase, it can be helpful to get a second opinion to make sure there are no errors that you overlooked. You could reach out to a peer, family member, mentor, teacher, or other trusted adult to help review your work. You can work together to give your personal statement a couple more thorough reviews in order to make sure it:

- Meets all of the application's requirements.
- Flows smoothly and logically from one idea to the next.
- Is free of mechanical, grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- Showcases your story as clearly and concisely as possible.

Submit

Once you have completed all the writing stages and you are proud of your work, you have successfully finished your first personal statement! Whenever you are ready, add it to the rest of your application. You are now one step closer to hitting "submit" and officially applying to college!

For more information about the admissions process, check out [College Blueprint](#), a free self-paced module on [TGR EDU: Explore!](#)