

Tips on Writing Your Personal Statement

Your personal statement is an important component of your scholarship application. Your test scores and grades show us what you have achieved academically; your personal statement allows us to get to know you as an individual through your experiences and accomplishments.

Following Instructions

Read the instructions in the application packet carefully. The most common mistakes applicants make are to skim the instructions or to rely on information received from others.

Note: This information is a supplement, not a substitute, for the application instructions.

Writing a Successful Statement

Composing a personal statement can be intimidating; this may be the first time you have written anything that summarizes yourself in this way. Begin well before the deadline in order to take pressure off yourself and to improve the quality of the final draft. Read the application instructions carefully.

- Make a list of ideas.
- Provide details and examples of your personal experiences and accomplishments that can help you stand out from the crowd.
- Elaborate on insights you've gained, or on the ways someone or something has influenced your outlook, activities, commitment or goals.
- Avoid using literary theatrics or adopting an overly-humorous tone.
- Write a first draft, leave it for a day or two and return to make revisions. Write it yourself. An effective statement is well focused and written in a mature, thoughtful voice that avoids clichés. Read each draft aloud to catch inappropriate or awkward wording.
- In your final draft, correct any grammar and spelling errors; this contributes to a good personal statement. Keep in mind that it will be compared to those of other highly qualified students.
- Create your personal statement in a word processing program, then copy and paste it into the application.

What to Include

Your statement is an opportunity for you to share any significant talents, achievements or experiences that are not included in the application. We look for essays which illustrate your character and qualities that will help you succeed in college and enrich your learning community. The three questions offer you an opportunity to discuss your personal commitment to learning, any special talent, experience, contribution or personal quality you will bring to the university you attend and other information that is important for us to consider.

Additional Suggestions

- Write about recent events.
- Include accomplishments and elaborate on their significance. Don't just list them.
- Use an open, honest and truthful approach to your writing.
- Keep the main focus on yourself, even if you write about people who were influential to you
- Convey your thoughts in a clear and concise manner.
- Remember, there is no need to repeat information included elsewhere in your application.