

Writing Your Personal Statement

Applying for a college means a lot of time and a lot of forms to be filled out, especially if you plan on applying for multiple locations. The most important part of any college application – the part that will make or break your ability to enter your top choice college – is the personal statement essay.

Often referred to as the “application essay” or “statement of purpose,” the personal statement will need to be the most refined part of your college application. You could be a C-average student, but if your personal statement wows the application committee, you could easily be walking through the halls of an Ivy League university.

Personal statement essays generally ask the question, “Why should you be accepted to _____ College/University?” although graduate and professional schools may ask more specific questions that need to be answered. You will need to answer these questions as precise as you can without boring the college’s application committee. These committees are looking for what makes you stand out against a crowd of thousands of other applicants. They want to know about you, where you’ve been and what you’ve used around you to grow. They expect you to be able to do this with a handle on writing and making it flow, as well.

When planning your college application essay, you will want to start well in advance. Starting only a few days before the application is due will only set you up for failure. Leaving a big gap between when you start writing and when you will submit your application along with your essay leaves you time for revision, a quintessential part of the college application essay.

Writing your personal statement essay needs to read as if you are completely passionate about joining a college’s ranks. You will want to write about why you want to do so. Tell the application committee why your eyes are set on their specific college, and what you have to learn from them. If you met a professor that teaches at the college, tell them why you look up to him or how his words touched you. Tell a story about an alumnus you know that graduated from there. Tell them why you are excited to be with them. Avoid boring, long-winded paragraphs about what they already know and really knock the committee out with fluid writing filled with enthusiasm.

The most important thing you will need to focus on in your personal statement is of course you. What has made you the person you are today? Where do you see yourself going after you graduate from college, and what have you done to take steps to get there already? You are attempting to make yourself unique amongst thousands of other applications so you will need to state what makes you so within the essay. Let the application committee know what are the most important and unique aspects about you and your life that they should know.

Finally, you will need to revise your essay. If you don’t think you are a great writer, find someone you know who is. This might be a friend, parent or even your high school English teacher or counselor, but whoever it is make sure you get insight into how you can better write your essay. If you need to do research, don’t falter at not taking that step. These are the pages that will get you into college, so take every step necessary to make your personal statement essay perfect.