

Writing a Personal Statement

What is most important is **what** you say and **how** you say it.

You are often limited to two double-spaced typed pages. **BE SELECTIVE!**

Answer the question(s) the admissions committee is asking. Avoid “guessing” what they are looking for or what “they” want to hear - **BE HONEST!**

Prepare for your statement. Determine what is most important for the committee to know about you. What is **UNIQUE** about you?

When appropriate, **find an angle and tell a story** about yourself.

Remember, this is a personal statement. It may be appropriate to include **INTERESTING/UNIQUE** items of a personal nature. As a reminder, stress is placed on the word **appropriate**. High school stories may be perceived as sophomoric. Issues relating to religion, politics and unusual views are controversial and should be avoided.

The opening paragraph should **grab the reader’s attention**. Prepare for your statement by reviewing your life. Be sure to include all relevant information. Get help from family and friends. The tone should be **upbeat and positive**.

The **style must be clear and concise**. Remember your limitations and stick to them. Now is not the time to experiment.

Perfection is the goal. Spell-check and have others proofread your statement. Have family members and friends read your statement and answer the question, “Does this sound like me?”

Consider the **content** and share what you know! Research different schools. Share what you like about the curriculum. Think about what you are saying. Is it interesting and relevant? Is this new information or is it available elsewhere on the application? Do not duplicate information and lose a chance to “showcase” yourself. Avoid obvious cliches such as, “I’m good at science and want to help people.”

Just as in the job search, graduate and professional school candidates need to have a **clear sense of DIRECTION**. Admissions committees want students with clear career goals, not students who may be looking for an extension to postpone life.