

# Personal Statement

## Introduction

When creating your personal statement or essay for your graduate school application, it is of most importance to read and understand the guidelines given. Some schools will require as little as one or two paragraphs, while others may want lengthy or multiple essays with specific questions. Always note these directions before beginning to draft your essay with the following tips.

### DO:

Use readable fonts (such as Times New Roman), as well as conventional formatting (margins and spacing).

Be concise. Always make sure that each sentence is written clearly and with purpose. Avoid wordiness if possible.

Be unique while still being yourself. What sets you apart from the other applicants? Do not try to mold yourself into what you believe may be the “ideal” candidate. Always stay true to yourself.

Be positive. If you do have what could be considered blemishes on your application, explain them or make an addendum. If you can, turn a weakness into a positive.

Show rather than tell. If you are responsible and driven, do not simply state it, but also prove it with examples.

Say what you can do for the university, not just what the university can do for you.

Proofread carefully for grammar, punctuation and word use.

### DO NOT:

Restate what is already on your resume or application, unless you absolutely must expand on it or explain it. (For example, if you must note why you had poor grade or semester.)

Complain. If you have suffered through obstacles you feel you should mention, always give them a positive spin and explain what you have learned from them.

Go over the page/word limit. This shows you cannot follow directions, and it may cause your essay to go unread.

Talk about controversial topics.

Use third person. This essay is about YOU!