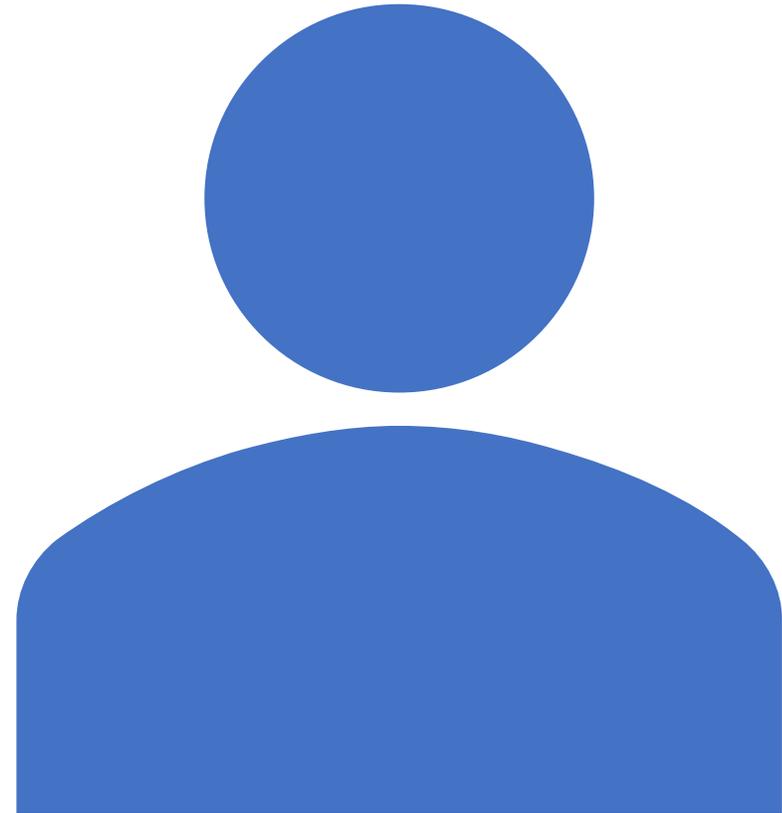
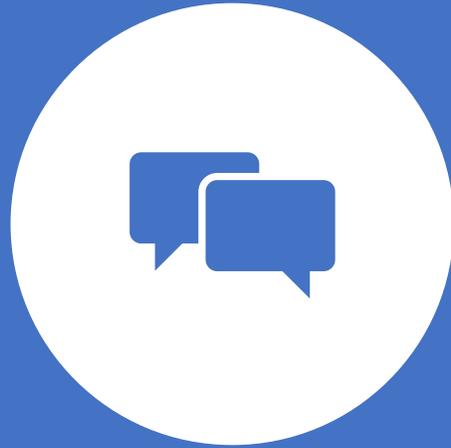


How to Write a Solid Personal Statement

The Bones and Basics with some Tips!





Ice Breaker

Tell us your name and what degree you're currently in/hoping to pursue!



Personal Statement Basics (1/2)

- **Definition** – Your personal statement is any essay that you must write for your main application, such as the Common App Essay, University of California Essays, or Coalition Application Essay. This type of essay focuses on your unique experiences, ideas, or beliefs that may not be discussed throughout the rest of your application.
- **Purpose** - A personal statement supports your application to study at a university or college. It's a chance for you to articulate why you'd like to study a particular course or subject, and what skills and experience you possess that show your passion for your chosen field.

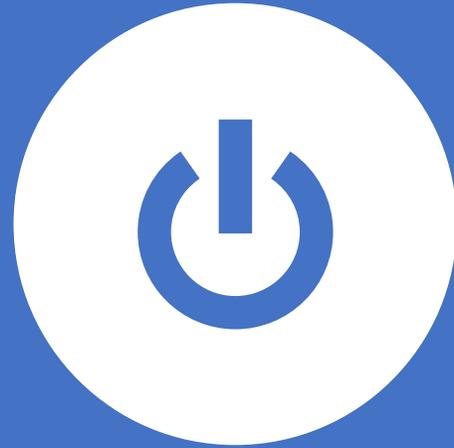


Personal Statement Basics (2/2)

In your personal statement, there are two key elements you want to tell the admissions counselor (i.e. the reader):

- **Impactful Person/Story** – You want to have a story because this is where you allow the school to see two things: 1) Who/what you value in life and whether or not those values align with the institution's, and 2) how you apply life lessons to be proactive when reaching your goals.
- **Degree Usage** – What is the degree for? Why are you choosing this institution in particular? How will you use what you learned in the program?

Sounds easy enough, right? So let's see what that looks like in action with a thesis statement that got its writer into a program at North Central College for a Master of Arts in Higher Education Leadership.



Dissecting and Workshopping a Personal Statement

“My Memaw always makes sure I never forget to be someone’s light by extending a helping hand to others for them to better themselves and break barriers. I branded myself with her message and mentored and guided restaurant staff and students in academia for the past seven years. By being someone’s light as their professional development pilot, I exercise my skills in student service, strategic planning, and conflict resolution. With such skills, I’m destined to serve students as I aspire to be a vice president of student affairs at an innovative institution. I want to take the entirety of students’ life circumstances and academic results into account when spearheading equitable practices, procedures and policies to improve retention rates. To acquire such a dream, I must study about how to proportionately nurture and lead future community and global leaders.”

Introduction



It's Your Turn!

Brainstorm a person or story that impacted your work ethic, how you want to contribute to society/the world, and/or how that person/story made you the individual you are today.

Tip!

Only use a person or story that can help you give the reader a quick scope into what you intend to accomplish once you have your degree!

“My enthusiasm for education stemmed from my high school’s senior creative writing class. By being a creative writer, I’m adept at perspective-taking and seeing ideas from different angles to communicate uniquely and effectively. Then, after analyzing how my teacher fostered passion through his pedagogy, I realized how important it is to help someone be and exude their best self. Thus, after high school, I dedicated the rest of my academic and professional career to learning how to best coach and support individuals.”

Body 1



It's Your Turn!

It's okay if you don't have/want more than one person or story in your paper!

Now that you've told the reader why you're passionate about your goals, talk about the skills you've gained that aren't directly teachable. This shows the reader you are self-aware.

Tip!

Expand or avoid clichés. For example, instead of saying "I'm a hard worker", maybe use "I value the strength that comes with being knowledgeable of my craft".

“Throughout my education, I’ve recognized how nurturing others has become a deep passion of mine. I admire the process of someone coming to me with either their entire life planned out, or starting from square one, and watching them build themselves into real-world professionals. With the grace of learning to meet people where they are, my personal philosophy blossomed into respecting the value of self-efficacy, life-long learning, ethical and equitable practices, and advocating for and amplifying diverse student voices. Now, my mentoring ability relies on my strength of connecting with people; I pride myself on how I actively listen to and engage with teams and individuals when striving toward bettering student experiences. Therefore, by generating an environment that fosters the most productive, conducive, and inclusive coaching community, the maintained focal point of academic processes is student success.”

Body 2



It's Your Turn!

What about being able to follow your dreams gets you motivated?

Is it the process of it reaching completion?

Is it the finished product?

Is it the satisfaction you bring to people/a company?

Tip!

Keep it to 1 or 2 ideas – you want this element to **support** your declaration, not the focus!

“The Master of Arts in Higher Education Leadership program at North Central College will cue me in on the fundamentals of collegiate policies and practices for me to excel in my career growth of advising, supporting, and advocating for students. Resulting from my hard work and devotion to guiding others, I’m proud to say my foundational skills and philosophy allowed me to accept an offer to be a student support advisor at an accredited online learning institution. Although I’ve gotten through the door of my desired career, I still need the toolkit to help me grow and develop into the vice president I dream of being. I trust that, by partaking in North Central’s experiential master’s program, I will upskill my usage and understanding of an institution’s system functions and its consistently moving parts to be an effective student ally.”

Conclusion



It's Your Turn!

You want to speak highly of the institution AND the degree you wish to pursue. How will both help you get to your goals?

TIP!

Read course descriptions on the school's website for the program to use the same terminology in your paper and pull the admission's counselor in. If you talk like them, then they can see you as one of them!

Formatting

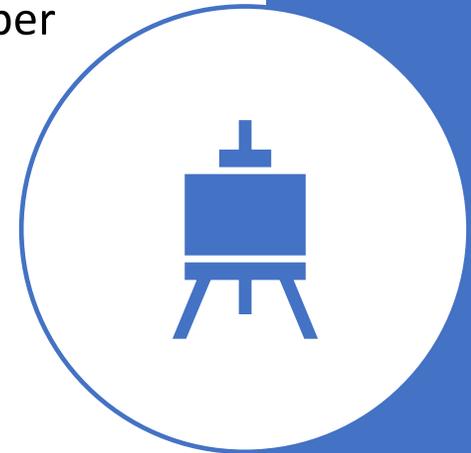
- Follow APA formatting to stay on the safe side (12-point font, 1-inch margins).
- Your word count depends on what the institution's guidelines are! (Sample was 497/500 words)
- A fun part, though – your font doesn't have to be Times New Roman, and your paper doesn't have to be double-spaced!
- Paragraph Spacing Option in Microsoft Word:

Spacing

Before:	0 pt	Line spacing:	At:
After:	8 pt	Multiple	1.08

Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style

- Font Options:
 - ✓ Times New Roman
 - ✓ Arial
 - ✓ Calibri (Body)
 - ✓ Stika Heading
 - ✓ Quire Sans
 - ✓ Source Sans Pro





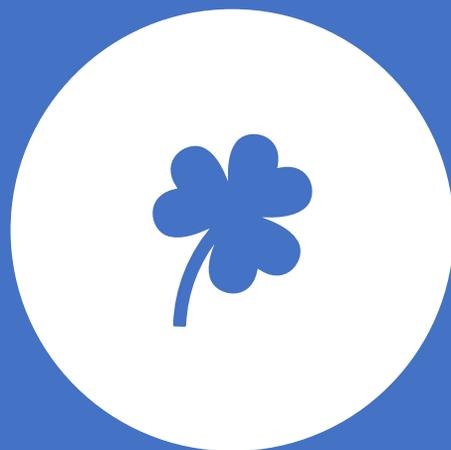
That's All There is to It!

Now you have the bones of a **personal declaration** showing an institution's admissions counselor – and maybe even yourself – why and how you deserve to be in a program that catapults you to your goals!

Tip!

Be sure to reread and check for any spelling and grammatical errors. Tweak your paper as needed so it can better represent who you are.

Any questions?



Best of luck!