



WRITING PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Today's Presenters



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Today's Agenda



1. Why are personal statements important?
2. How can you get started?
3. Where can you find help?
4. Sample prompts
5. Ideas to get you started

Warm up



Choose one of the following and write as much as you can:

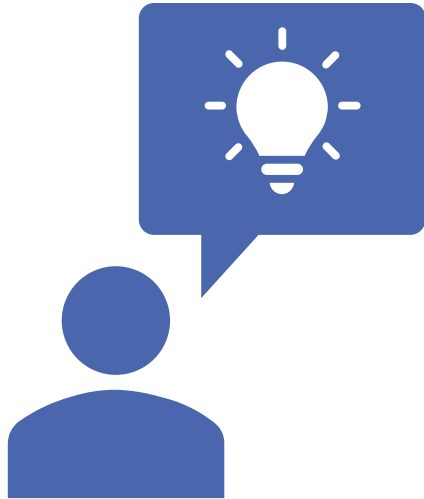
- What is the history of your name? What does it mean? Who gave it to you? What does it mean to you?
- Do you have a nickname? If so, tell the story of how you got it, what it means to you, etc.
- Choose one of the quotes about names and circle it onto your paper. Free-write about what it means to you.

Why write a personal essay?



- To learn more about yourself
- To connect with others
- To apply for a scholarship
- To apply to a 4-year university

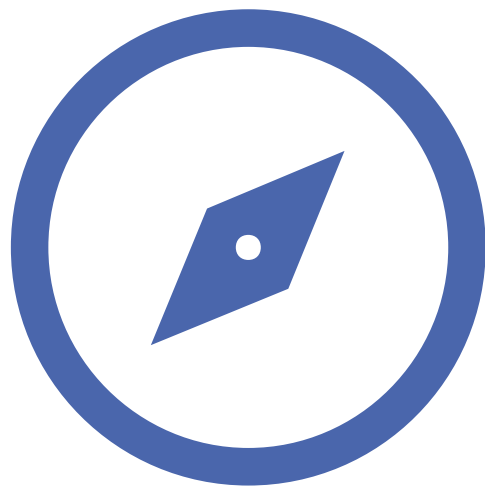
Overview



Personal Statements offer a rare challenge:

- You are the expert on you!
- But...it can be awkward to write about yourself
- Yes, recommenders can be good advocates and write great statements about your accomplishments and abilities
- But...read #1 again: you and only you can provide good insight, and this is the only way for reviewers to get to know who you are and why they should pick you...no pressure!

Essentially...



Most readers want to understand:

- Where you've been (think background, where you started, what challenges you experienced)
- Where you are now (what lessons have you learned, where you stand)
- Where you are headed (what your future holds, how will you get there, what do you need)
 - How the three are connected
- In the case of scholarships, how the money will help you achieve your goals & dreams

Foundation scholarships



What Foundations are looking for in an applicant's essay:

- Who you are - your history and current circumstances
- Your goals – the more concrete, the better
- Your financial need – why you need a scholarship
- Obstacles & difficulties that you have faced or are facing – and what you have done or are doing to overcome them
- Achievements and accomplishments

What should I write?



Four ways to get started:

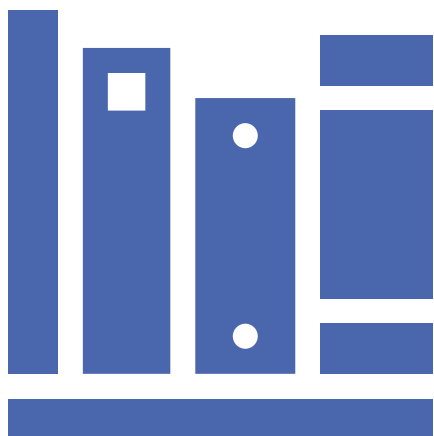
- Brainstorm/Free write
- Timeline of your life
- Short answers to lots of different prompts
- Think of a book, movie, podcast that inspired you. Think of ways to tell YOUR story in a similar way.

Some tips



- Spending time on multiple drafts is **SO SO SO** important!
- Reach out to a teacher, counselor, coach, supervisor for feedback on your draft.
- Visit [This I Believe Project](#) to see some examples to inspire you.

A few sample prompts to get you going...



- Jack Kent Cooke Scholars are committed to making the world a better place. They are inventing solutions, advocating for others, and giving back to their communities. However, most started with small steps. What steps, big or small, have you taken to make your own impact on the world?
- Discuss the subject about which you most love learning. What sparked your interest or passion in this subject?
- Tell us about a time when your curiosity led you someplace you were not expecting to go.
- Mr. Zimmer wanted to award students of good moral character with academic promise and loyal to Somewhere County, who have proven leadership or entrepreneurial spirit. Tell us why you are an ideal candidate for this award.

Exercises



Read through the example essays

Choose one that you liked the best. Write down what, specifically, you liked about it.



Look through your own photo albums

Write one paragraph about a picture that tells a story about your past, a trip, a lesson, a person who influenced you.



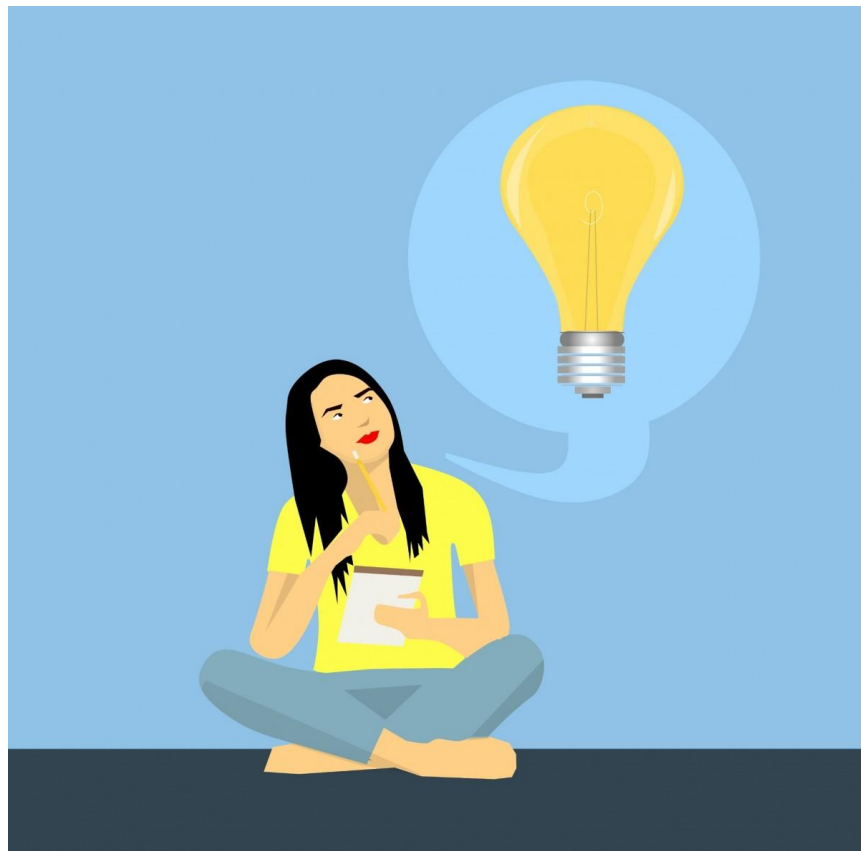
Read through obituaries

Write your own. Think about what you would like people to know about you, your life, your beliefs and your actions.



**GOOD
LUCK!**

Questions? Comments? **Help?**



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