



## Writing Center

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### TIPS:

Visit <http://owl.english.purdue.edu> for personal statement examples and advice from members of application committees. Credit goes to them for the development of this handout.

To learn more about what makes an effective opening paragraph, refer to your *Scott Foresman Handbook*. Introductions are discussed on pages 246-250. Be sure to practice writing an introduction in Exercise 16.1.

Make an appointment with the Writing Center by calling 372-2221 or email us at [writers@bgnnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:writers@bgnnet.bgsu.edu) if you have any more questions about your writing!

Created by Amanda McGuire

### Moseley Lab Hours:

Mon & Thurs 10-5  
Tues & Wed 9-8  
Fri 10-2

### Bromfield Satellite Hours:

Sun & Mon 6-10pm

### MacDonald Satellite Hours:

Sun & Tues 6-10pm

### H. S. R. C. Satellite Hours:

Sun & Tues 6-11pm  
Mon & Wed 6-10pm

# Personal Statements

## 1. Write the Right Personal Statement.

- There are two kinds of personal statements. The general, comprehensive personal statement and the response to specific questions. Be sure you know which is required of you before you begin writing.

## 2. Pre-write *Before* You Begin Writing.

- Start by asking yourself several questions; When did you become interested in this field?; What experiences, jobs, and/or volunteer work have helped you prepare for this field?; What insights have you gained from those experiences, jobs, volunteer work?; and What sets you apart from other applicants?
- Begin by making lists or clusters of your ideas/inventions. Include specific reasons, examples, skills, career goals, awards, etc.

## 3. Answer The Questions Being Asked.

- You may discover similarities between questions in each application's personal statement requirements. It's important to remember to **NOT** use the same statement for all of your applications, though. In each of statements, make sure you are answering the questions being asked.

## 4. Grab Your Reader's Attention.

- You want to avoid boring the admissions committee. Do this by writing a unique statement that showcases your skills and abilities.
- Begin your statement with a relevant story of how you became interested in the field. Find a quote that pertains to your field or work philosophy. In other words, find an angle that hooks your reader's attention.
- Be sure to concentrate on your opening paragraph. It is the key to grabbing your reader's attention and to helping you organize the rest of your statement.

## 5. Be Specific.

- Don't write blanket statements, such as, "I'd make the best lawyer ever."
- Do explain to your readers why the committee should consider your application. For instance, if this is a medical school personal statement, you might want to give specific reasons for why your internship with a local doctor led you to applying to law school.
- Being specific involves giving examples of your experiences and telling your life story. Remember, though, that the stories should be concise and relevant to the field. Your goal is to sell yourself in the application, not to sell your life story.

**6. Tell What You Know.**

- The middle section of your personal statement should discuss your interest in the field as well as your knowledge of the field. Relate your experience to what you know about the field. Compare how your qualities and abilities are similar to those in the field.
- Be specific. Use the vocabulary of the field when conveying what you've learned about and experienced in the field thus far.
- Refer to books, classes, conferences, seminars, articles, conversations, and other specific resources about the field that would convey your interest in and knowledge of the field to your readers.

**7. Do Some Research.**

- Find out why you want to apply to a certain school, and include this information in your personal statement. Schools want to know that you know about their reputation, standards, and achievements. Basically, they want to know what sets them apart from other schools you might choose.
- If necessary, explain why a geographical or cultural change is important to you or your reasons for choosing the field you want to enter.

**8. Avoid Clichés.**

- Don't say you want to be a doctor because you're good at science. Statements like these are tired and unoriginal and are often not well regarded by admissions committees. Show readers that you know how to express original thoughts.

**9. Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.**

- Command of language shows you know how to communicate clearly and intelligently—something admission committees are looking for. Strive for perfection. Type carefully. Proofread several times.

**10. Come to BGSU's Writing Center for Help.**

- BGSU's Writing Center's Writing Consultants are experienced and friendly. They can help you during any stage of your writing process. They can help you brainstorm or proofread an essay. Call 372-2221 to make an appointment.

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This mini-lesson was created by Amanda McGuire with help from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

**Works Cited**

“Writing the Personal Statement.” OWL. Purdue University Online

Writing Lab. 14 Oct. 2004

<[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p\\_perstate.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_perstate.html)>.