

Personal Statement Breakdown: Questions to Consider

The Spark

- When did you realize you wanted to pursue this career?
- Why is this a passion?
- Is there an event or multiple events that sparked your interest?
- Why is this your true calling?
- When did you first realize that this was for you?

Confirmation

- How did you learn more about the field?
- Is there a shadowing or internship experience that opened your eyes to confirm this passion?
- What skills have you gained that will help you in the professional field?
- Is there a specific moment that confirmed your decision?
- Did shadowing professionals in the industry help you see yourself in their shoes?
- By exploring this field, what skills did you identify that contributed to the success of a professional in this setting?

Now & Future

- What are you currently doing to develop transferable skills needed (ex: leadership, internships and research)?
- Do you understand why such transferable skills are relevant and can you articulate it to others?
- How would this school or program help you achieve your goals?
- How do your values and skills align with the industry? Why is that important to you?
- What personal characteristics do you possess (e.g. integrity, compassion, persistence) and, again, can you provide evidence to back up your claims?

Conclusion

- What factors are you considering in a professional program? How does this program align with such factors?
- What sets you apart from the other applicants?
- What are your future goals?
- How does this tie into your theme and next steps?

Tips and Tricks

Brainstorming & Outlining:

- During the outlining and brainstorming phase it is important to story bank, which means reflecting on past stories that can support your themes
- Theme Development: Once you have chosen your central topic you will incorporate it throughout your personal statement
- It is useful to create an outline of major events and experiences that have influenced your career path
- Timing: Make sure you start drafting your personal statement at least a month before the deadline
- As you brainstorm potential themes and topics for your personal statement be sure to record yourself so you can track the flow of ideas

The Intro:

- Use the introduction to give your audience background information about who you are and how it has led you to apply to this program and field of study
 - A. Use this piece to show your personality and creativity
- Start foreshadowing a theme you will talk about throughout your statement
- Make sure you are telling the reader “why”:
 - A. Why you are passionate
 - B. Why this program
 - C. Why you are a fit
- Remember the Intro is just an appetizer of your journey

The Body:

- Use this time to story tell and provide further details supporting your paragraph theme
- Go into details about your story and paint an elaborate picture for the reader regarding your journey to this goal
- Sell yourself and tell the reader how you are a fit for this industry
- Show case how all of your experiences make you a fit for that industry and how you have developed the skills you need to be successful
- Connect the dots between skills, values and knowledge needed and how you have lived up to such characteristics
- Use specific examples

The Conclusion:

- State your goals
- State how the program will benefit you
- Tie the conclusion back to the theme or story you have told
- Read your draft out loud to see if the message you want to give the reader makes sense
- Have someone review your grammar, spelling, and punctuation to ensure there are no errors on the document