



# Personal Statements for Graduate School

## **What is a personal statement? How personal is it?**

The personal statement is a chance for you to sum up all the things that make you an ideal candidate for this particular graduate program. You want to write about yourself, things you did, places you've been, jobs you've had **AS THEY RELATE TO YOUR PROSPECTIVE FIELD OF STUDY**. You might think of it as "Portrait of a Young \_\_\_\_\_" (Psychologist, Veterinarian, English Teacher, etc.).

## **What are appropriate things to include in a personal statement?**

Include any educational, job or other experience that relates to your future field. You might describe particular classes you took, and what you did in them. You might discuss particular books or articles you have read that inspired you or shaped your thinking about your field. You might summarize a paper that you wrote, that explains something about your perspective on your field of study. You might describe something that happened to you that made you decide to pursue this career.

## **Tell a good story**

Many candidates for your graduate program may have similar backgrounds, and similar aspirations. You want your essay to be filled with particulars that make you stand out. Many people want to be doctors in order to help people. That's a broad, general reason for wanting to pursue medical studies. A good personal statement might describe an incident where the candidate actually helped someone, or was helped by a doctor. Telling a story makes for more vivid writing, and can reveal your personality in a useful way.

## **Be specific about what you want to study**

You can be very detailed about what you want to study. This part of the essay can sound like a proposal for a research paper. You want to sound like you are already involved in your field, that graduate school is the logical outlet for your ongoing work in this area. Make sure that your prospective graduate program actually offers courses in your area. You need to do research on the program and its instructors.

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# Grad School continued

## **Edgewood College**

You might want to include some description of this college, why you picked it, how it stands out from other colleges. Don't assume that the person reading your essay knows anything about Edgewood. Explain that you took small classes with lots of contact with your professors, that you did a Human Issues project, that the setting of the campus influenced you...whatever you think makes this college unique and worthwhile.

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