



PERSONAL STATEMENT Pre-Writing Exercises

Exercise #1: Storytelling

Step 1: List several experiences that relate to the field or profession you want to study.

Step 2: From the list, choose the experience that best encapsulates your interest in the field or profession and which would give the admissions committee a complete picture of you and your passion and potential for this field or profession.

Step 3: Then answer the following questions.

How does the story explain your personality?

Where in the story does the reader get a sense of your passions? Your dreams/goals?

Where in your story do you explain why you have chosen to study this particular field? Try to add this if there is not clear explanation of this?

In what ways does the story describe potential research interests (for Ph.D. programs) or a specific focus you are interested in pursuing during graduate and professional school (for MA and some professional programs)?

Where in your story do you address why you are a good candidate for the program you are applying to, considering its values and approach to education?

How well does the story convey that you are prepared to begin studying this field?

How does this story illustrate/relate to your long-term professional goals or career path? If it doesn't, please try to add that.

Step 4: Share the story or important themes in your personal statement. Explain the significance of the story or how the themes relate to the career field you are pursuing.

Exercise #2: Research Your Schools & Prompts

TASK: Make a list of the schools and programs you are applying to. Put them in order starting with your top 3 choices. Then, look up the statement of purpose prompts for those schools. What is the graduate admissions office specifically looking for? Most schools have a similar format; however, some will differ. For instance, some schools will ask that the statement of purpose and personal statement be intertwined into one big document, whereas others will ask you to answer specific questions.

Rank	Schools	Program	Prompts What is the graduate admissions specifically looking for?
1st Choice			
2nd Choice			
3rd Choice			
4th Choice			
5th Choice			

Exercise #3: (Part 1) List of Skills and Traits

Highlight the skills and traits in each category of skills that you feel you possess and would like to emphasize in your personal statement. Then, go on to Part 2, the Attribute Map.

COMMUNICATION:

Editing
Explaining
Influencing
Interpreting
Listening

Mediating
Discussing
Speaking
Translating
Writing

HUMAN RELATIONS:

Advising
Assisting
Counseling
Empathizing
Facilitating

Guiding
Understanding
Motivating
Representing
Serving

RESEARCH:

Assessing
Calculating
Collecting
Diagnosing
Evaluating

Examining
Extrapolating
Interviewing
Investigating
Synthesizing

CREATIVE:

Creating
Designing
Developing
Establishing
Illustrating

Imagining
Improvising
Inventing
Performing
Visualizing

TECHNICAL:

Adjusting
Aligning
Assembling
Drafting
Engineering

Installing
Observing
Operating
Programming
Repairing

TRAINING:

Adapting
Communicating
Demonstrating
Enabling
Encouraging

Evaluating
Clarifying
Instructing
Planning
Stimulating

LEADERSHIP:

Motivating
Negotiating
Planning
Assigning
Directing

Educating
Self-motivating
Mediating problems
Empowering others

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Conducting
Informing
Researching

Presenting
Promoting
Representing

MANAGEMENT:

Communicating
Consulting
Coordinating
Delegating

Appraising
Leading
Negotiating
Persuading

PROBLEM SOLVING:

Analyzing
Diagnosing
Executing
Recognizing

Planning
Proving
Reasoning

FINANCIAL:

Accounting
Administering
Allocating
Auditing
Balancing

Calculating
Forecasting
Investing
Projecting

CLERICAL:

Classifying
Observing

Com

Exercise #3: (Part 2) Attribute Map

Step 1: Choose one of the skills you have highlighted above and connect it to a significant experience or situation.

Step 2: Brainstorm additional skills or attributes gained from the specific experience.

Step 3: Repeat the process and make connections between experiences with shared skills.

Step 4: Decide on experiences and skills you can confidently discuss in your personal statement and which would illustrate your passion and suitability for graduate or professional study.

Example:

