

How to Write Your Personal Statement

First Think About Yourself

- Special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you
 - Details of your life that help the committee better understand you or help set you apart from other applicants
 - Overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships
 - Personal characteristics, for example, integrity, compassion, persistence
 - Skills, for example, leadership, communicative, analytical
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Find an Angle and Talk About Real Experiences

- Be specific
 - Make it interesting
 - Show or demonstrate through concrete experience
 - Write in a style that is fresh, lively, and different
 - Make yourself memorable
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Concentrate on Your Opening Paragraph

- Lead or opening paragraph generally the most important
 - Here you grab the reader's attention...or lose it
 - Becomes the framework for the rest of the statement
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Develop the Ideas and Stay Focused

- Detail your interests and experiences
 - Refer to experiences: work, classes, conversations with people, books you've read, volunteer work you've done, and so on
 - Don't stray away from your topic
 - Don't go into long narratives or stories
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Avoid Certain Subjects

- Controversial
 - Religion and Politics
 - Overly personal experiences and extreme hardships/family problems
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Write Well and Correctly

- Type and proofread your statement very carefully
 - Express yourself clearly and concisely
 - Stay close to the word limits
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Avoid Cliches

- Stay away from often-repeated or tired statements = **“I always keep my eyes on the road.”** or **“I want to be a doctor because I am good at science and want to help people.”**
 - **“My grandfather was an extremely significant part of my life. Without him, I would not have many of the advantages I have today.”** (These two sentences, though expressive and correct, have essentially said nothing.)
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Use Attention Grabbers

- **“During World War II, my grandfather flew fighter planes with the Tuskegee Airmen.”**
 - That's an attention-grabber that hooks the reader in
 - Thinking of a catchy opener is easier than you think.
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Real Statement Topic From the York Scholarship Page

(typewritten pages) as described, this statement should include the following:

1. Reasons you selected University
 2. Benefits you've received from any community service experience you have had.
 4. Contributions you feel you can make or are making as student
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