

IDEAS FOR YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Before you begin writing:

- Research the school, the graduate program, the faculty, and possible areas of focus within the graduate field of study and/or associated career field.
- Have a very clear understanding of why you want to go to graduate school, and why each school is a good fit with your background and interests.
- Think about what makes you unique. An experience or person in your life may have molded you or contributed to your desire to attend graduate school. Do you have a hobby or artistic ability about which you are passionate?
- Determine how you can express what distinguishes you from other applicants and how your goals or research interests match the program and its faculty.
- Be aware of your long-range goals, how an advanced degree will help you achieve those goals, and how you might use your degree in the future.
- Be ready to articulate the most compelling reasons for the school or program to accept your application.
- Consider referring to elements of the program that are a good fit for you.

Content

- Focus on your specific interests and goals as they pertain to academics
- Determine what questions are being asked and answer them fully, paying careful attention to those that have multiple parts
- Typically, graduate programs want to learn:
 - What your purpose is in choosing graduate studies
 - What your area of focus will be
 - How you will use your graduate studies in your career or future plans
 - How your academic and extracurricular experiences combine to make you a unique candidate
 - What problems or inconsistencies appear in your records/grades/scores, as well as what you have done to address these issues or specific positive qualities that may temper this information
 - What additional commitments/responsibilities you have that may present challenges (such as a significant workload outside of school) and (as above) what your plans are to address the situation and/or what positive qualities may serve to balance or temper this
 - What made you choose the specific institution to which you are applying
 - Who you are!

Style and Approach

The perfect style and approach to writing a personal statement is the one that best fits who you are as an individual. Beyond that, the style should be clear, well-organized, and specific with special attention given to transitions that facilitate the flow of the document.