Personal Statement

**Introduction:**

A personal statement is your chance to showcase your motivation for continuing your studies. It’s a unique document where you can let your personality shine, highlight your qualities, and explain the impact you hope to make in the future. Through your personal statement, you have the opportunity to show admissions teams what drives you and how you envision your role in your chosen field.

**Basic Structure:**

**Motivation Section**

The “Motivation” section of your personal statement is where you can share the spark that ignited your interest in your field of study. It doesn’t have to be a monumental moment—just an experience that influenced your path and inspired you to pursue this journey. This is your chance to reflect on what led you to your academic interests and why you began your education in this area.

Questions to Ask Yourself

* What was the first experience that made me interested in this subject or career?
* How did that experience change my views or introduce me to the subject?
* Why was this experience important to my career development?

**Qualities and Experiences Section**

The "Qualities and Experiences" section is an opportunity to highlight how your experiences have shaped you and developed the qualities and skills that will contribute to your future success. Rather than summarizing your resume, use this section to reflect on these experiences' impact on your personal and professional growth. Discuss specific ways in which challenges, achievements, or unique opportunities have enhanced your abilities, shaped your values, and prepared you for future endeavors. This section is about connecting your experiences to your development, showing how they’ve prepared you to excel in the path ahead.

Questions to Ask Yourself

* What skills, qualities, or strengths did I develop from this experience?
* How did this experience impact me?
* Why is this experience important to talk about?

**Future Goals Section**

The “Future Plans” section is where you can reflect on the purpose you envision for yourself: the type of person you want to be in your desired field, the changes you hope to make, and the contributions you aim to offer. It’s not about knowing an exact job title—it’s about sharing your vision for the impact you want to have on the community you’ll serve and how you plan to shape your field for the better.

Questions to Ask Yourself

* What do I want to do after I graduate?
* How do I want to impact my community and the people I will work with?
* Why is graduate school important to my future?

**School Choice**

The “School Choice” section varies based on your application type. If you’re applying through a common app, focus on how graduate school will help you reach your goals and why pursuing a program is crucial for your future. For a specific school application, explain why that program is the perfect fit for you. Highlight aspects like coursework, faculty research, and unique opportunities that align with your goals. You can also share what drew you to this program and how it will support your aspirations.

Questions to Ask Yourself

* What are the factors that drew me to this program?
* How is this program going to help me reach my goals?
* Why am I the right fit for this program?

**Developing Paragraphs:**

**Content**

* Are you answering the actual questions given in the prompt?
* Is your essay within the word/page limit?
* How does your introduction grab the reader's attention?
* Will your essay help you stand out from other applicants?

**Structure**

* Do your paragraphs flow smoothly?
* Have you written transition sentences?
* Does each paragraph have an overarching theme?
* Are you telling a story?
* Are you being repetitive?

**Best Practices**

* Be truthful
* Keep it positive
* Give details about your experiences
* Be authentic to your personality

**Adding Reflection**

* What impact did the person/situation have on you?
* What did you learn from your experiences?
* How did the experience change you, help you grow, or make you think differently?
* What do you hope to contribute?