

Organization For Comprehensive Personal Statement

To write a personal statement, let's begin with a general, comprehensive approach. This means that rather than develop your statement for a specific purpose, you will consider how you would respond to the three main personal statement types in general.

The Hook

A personal statement needs a hook, just like any other type of writing. In fact, a personal statement is almost more in need of getting the reader's attention early because you want to be memorable among the many statements the reviewers will see. While this can be done in the usual ways you have learned for writing hooks, one of the most common types is the use of an anecdote. An **anecdote** is simply an interesting and relevant true story. A personal statement often uses a specific story to illustrate important attributes or to create an organization for highlighting experience.

The Thesis

Your personal statement should have a clear sentence that directly expresses your purpose. Your goal should be abundantly clear in this sentence and all other points in your personal statement need to

support this main idea.

Supporting Ideas

The remainder of your personal statement should focus on clearly establishing your qualifications and experience, demonstrating your character and personal qualities, and indicating your potential for growth. This may be done with a variety of examples or one extended description that highlights all of the necessary traits that set you apart.

Conclusion

Finally, your comprehensive statement should have a concluding sentence that recommends you to the reader. This final sentence should be memorable and emphasize your purpose in sending this information.

1 Exercise: Storytelling

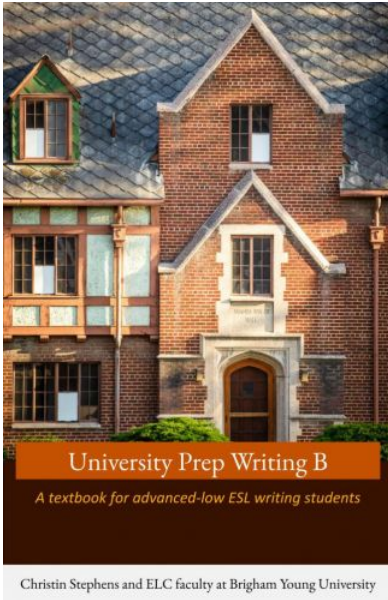
Personal stories are a useful tool for showing your points rather than listing them. Look at the list of points below and write a short story (5 sentences or less) that illustrates your character, skills, or potential. Try to start your story with a strong hook to pull the reader into the story and clearly relate it to the desired qualifications.

1. Meeting deadlines
2. Teamwork
3. Critical thinking
4. Technical knowledge
5. Training

Writing a Comprehensive Personal Statement

Here are some things to keep in mind as you write this general form of a personal statement.

1. The terms *general* and *comprehensive* here are about purpose, not content. This version is meant to be a starting point for you to use when you are called on to provide a personal statement. Therefore, the examples, reasons, and descriptions should be powerful, clear, and detailed. Once you have a comprehensive statement you are happy with, it will be easier to make adjustments to it for a specific situation.
2. Because it is a *personal* statement, remember to focus on yourself and present yourself honestly and fully. You do not need to adhere to the same rigid writing style as the typical academic writing.
3. Your writing should be full of energy. You want to present the best version of yourself in the writing. If you think of this as a preliminary interview, you can imagine the combination of positivity and professionalism you would want to present. Especially if you are sharing an experience that had some negative aspects, remember to focus on the positive side and the lessons learned.
4. Make it stand out! Imagine sitting in an office for hours looking at short essay after short essay. You are trying to narrow down the search for a new employee. As a writer, you need to pop off of the page and share something that will stay with the reader.



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