

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

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SOUND FAMILIAR?



"I don't like to write."

"I don't like writing about myself."

"I don't know what to write about."

"Writing is not my strong suit."

"I haven't written anything like this since I applied to medical school."

"I'm having trouble getting started."

"I know what I want to say, I just don't know how to put it into words."

"I have a draft, but I don't think it's any good."



FORGET THESE, AND LET'S DIVE IN!

DON'T WORRY!

"MEET ME HALFWAY"

(WITH YOUR BEST ATTEMPT AT A DRAFT IN A TIMELY MANNER) AND I'LL ENSURE YOU HAVE A STATEMENT OF WHICH YOU WILL BE PROUD!

PERSONAL STATEMENT

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A ONE PAGE ESSAY OUTLINING YOUR MOTIVATING INTERESTS AND STRENGTHS AS THEY RELATE TO BEING A SUCCESSFUL RESIDENT IN YOUR CHOSEN SPECIALTY.



IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO:


- ❑ INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO THE SELECTION COMMITTEE BY EMPHASIZING YOUR UNIQUE STRENGTHS, CHARACTERISTICS, ENTHUSIASM, AND PERSONALITY.
- ❑ PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU WILL BRING TO THE PROGRAM / SPECIALTY - WHO IS THE PERSON BEHIND THE CV?
- ❑ PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT SOMETHING THAT IS NOT OBVIOUS IN YOUR CV, TRANSCRIPT, MSPE, OR ERAS APPLICATION. IT IS DISTINCT!
- ❑ PROVIDE A COMMON TOPIC FOR CONVERSATION DURING INTERVIEWS.

"Podcasts were brought up on almost every single interview I had..., which made my conversations so enjoyable." - Class of 2021 student



FORMAT / LENGTH

- ❑ START IN MS WORD
 - ❑ SET PAGE MARGINS TO 0.5" TO 1" ALL AROUND
 - ❑ SELECT A STANDARD FONT STYLE (ARIEL, TIMES ROMAN, GARAMOND)
 - ❑ USE 10 - 12 PT. FONT SIZE
 - ❑ SINGLE-SPACE

 - ❑ IF WELL WRITTEN, "SHORT & SWEET" HAS MUCH MORE IMPACT THAN "LONG AND WORDY"! KEEP IN MIND HOW MANY STATEMENTS PROGRAMS DIRECTORS READ IN A SHORT TIME FRAME! CUT THE:
- 
- ❑ TYPICALLY, BETWEEN 500 - 600 (+/-) WORDS* IS AN APPROPRIATE GOAL
→ (REMEMBER: QUALITY VS QUANTITY!)
- * THIS IS *NOT* A RULE OR REQUIREMENT, BUT AN EFFECTIVE LENGTH BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE.

“DON'Ts”



1) DON'T DEFINE THE SPECIALTY (THE PD KNOWS WHAT IT IS ABOUT!):

- “EM IS FAST PACED AND UNPREDICTABLE.”
- “AN ANESTHESIOLOGIST NEEDS TO ESTABLISH QUICK RAPPORT TO CALM ANXIOUS PATIENTS.”

2) DON'T WRITE MUCH (IF AT ALL) ABOUT HOW YOU “LOVE” OR “ENJOY” ASPECTS OF THE SPECIALTY. THIS IS IMPLIED; PLUS, YOU CAN DO SO ON YOUR INTERVIEWS:

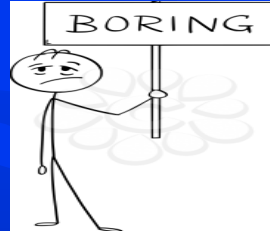
- “I’VE ALWAYS LOVED CHILDREN; THEREFORE, PEDIATRICS IS THE PERFECT FIT FOR ME.”
- “I ’M PASSIONATE ABOUT WOMEN’S HEALTH, SO I AM PURSUING OB/GYN.”

3) LAST, BUT NOT LEAST...DON'T WRITE YOUR STATEMENT LIKE A “CASE REPORT.” THIS IS ABOUT YOU, NOT THE PATIENTS YOU HAVE MET.

- “MRS. X. PRESENTED TO THE FAMILY MEDICINE CLINIC WITH SYMPTOMS OF...”
- “NOTICING THAT MR. Y’S A1C WAS ELEVATED, I DISCUSSED WITH HIM...”

'IN DEFENSE OF THE PERSONAL STATEMENT'
TURI MCNAMEE, MD – UNIVERSITY OF MO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

THE...MAJORITY OF PERSONAL STATEMENTS ARE EXCRUCIATINGLY



THERE'S...LITTLE THAT'S PERSONAL ABOUT THEM. THE MAJOR THING THEY'VE TOLD ME...IS THAT THEY ARE VERY MUCH LIKE 90% OF THE OTHER CANDIDATES FOR MY PROGRAM.

STUDENTS NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED TO BRING THEMSELVES TO LIFE IN THEIR PERSONAL STATEMENTS. THEY NEED TO FIND SOMETHING - ANYTHING - THAT DESCRIBES THEM AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

ENCOURAGE THEM TO SHARE THEIR LOVE OF DOGS, THEIR FEAR OF CLOWNS, THEIR CULINARY SUCCESSES, AND THEIR CAMPING NIGHTMARES. I WANT TO HEAR FROM THE CANDIDATE WHO...WON THE WORLD CLOGGING CHAMPIONSHIPS AT THE AGE OF 12, OR THE ONE WHO WORKED HARD AT BECOMING A VARSITY FOOTBALL PLAYER BUT ENDED UP HANDING OUT TOWELS ON THE BENCH.

THESE ARE THE ONES THAT DEMONSTRATE A FEATURE...KEY TO BEING A DOCTOR: HUMANITY. HOW ELSE ARE WE TO KNOW ABOUT THIS SIDE OF OUR CANDIDATES IF NOT FOR THEIR PERSONAL STATEMENTS?

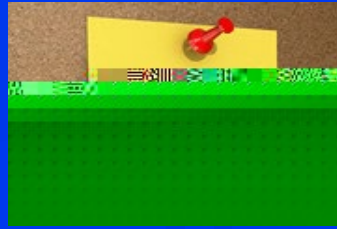
Look at this *range* of themes / topics written about by previous students!

This is just a sampling!

THEATER
SOCCER
SCUBA
PIANO
GOLF
TENNIS
ORIGAMI
ZUMBA
BILLIARDS
CHESS
PUZZLES
HIKING
COOKING
PAGEANTRY
PHOTOGRAPHY
RAFTING
HIKING
GARDENING
FENCING
SURFING
SCOUTING
COUPONING
BACKPACKING
WRESTLING
WOODWORKING
VIDEO GAMES
VIRTUAL REALITY



TEACHING / TUTORING
RUNNING / MARATHONS
SINGING / NOTE-O-CHORDS
SKIING / SNOWBOARDING
KNITTING / SEWING
BALLET / DANCE
LIFEGUARDING
SONG WRITING
TOUR GUIDING
CAMP COUNSELING
HORSEBACK RIDING
MARTIAL ARTS
STANDUP COMEDY
AUTO MECHANICS
ENGINEERING
PHILOSOPHY
ART MUSEUMS
NYITCOM'S ROCK STEADY
STUDY ABROAD / TRAVEL
MEDICAL MISSIONS TRIP
JOB OUTSIDE OF MEDICINE
A FAMILY MEMBER'S INFLUENCE
LOSS OF A FAMILY MEMBER
UPBRINGING / CHILDHOOD
OVERCOMING AN OBSTACLE
FAVORITE BOOK CHARACTER
MEANINGFUL CO-CURRICULAR
(FROM NYITCOM OR UNDERGRAD)



1) **SELECT AN OVERALL THEME THAT BEST REFLECTS WHO YOU ARE. DON'T CHOOSE IT BECAUSE YOU THINK IT "SOUNDS" IMPRESSIVE. WHATEVER THE TOPIC IS, REMEMBER YOU WILL DISCUSS IT DURING ALL, OR MOST, OF YOUR INTERVIEWS.**

2) **VERY IMPORTANT:**

**CATCH THE READER'S ATTENTION WITH A "BOLD" OPENING!
COMPEL THE READER TO KEEP READING!**

❖ *"What's wrong with her?"*

I asked my father with the candor of a curious child.

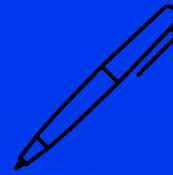
❖ *The lights are blinding, and the sweat on my palms is causing the microphone to slip in my hands.*

❖ *The plane rattled wildly.*

❖ *I never would have imagined that I would find my calling while driving through a flooded street in rural El Salvador to reach a clinic full of patients.*

**BEGIN AND END STATEMENT IN A STRONG, POSITIVE, AND ENGAGING MANNER –
TIE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION TOGETHER!**

EXCERPTS



MEMBERS OF PREVIOUS CLASSES - WHO WROTE OUTSTANDING STATEMENTS - GRANTED PERMISSION TO SHOW EXCERPTS TO "SPARK" IDEAS. COPYING / PLAGIARISM IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED! THESE SENTENCES ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE A SENSE OF THE TYPE OF TOPICS ABOUT WHICH YOU CAN WRITE.

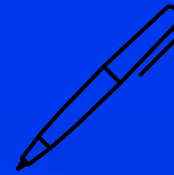
A MEDICAL MISSIONS TRIP

HIKING THROUGH DEEP FOREST BRUSH AND ACROSS REMOTE STREAMS IN THE MIDDAY HEAT OF THE EL SALVADORAN SAN FERNANDO VALLEY WAS NOT A TYPICAL DAY FOR MOST SINGLE MOTHERS OF THREE FROM LONG ISLAND. TREKKING FROM ONE WOODEN HUT TO ANOTHER AND DRAWING BLOOD SAMPLES TO INVESTIGATE LOCAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL TRENDS ON POPULATIONS AFFLICTED WITH CHAGAS DISEASE, I WAS ALLOWED INTO THE LIVES OF MULTIPLE FAMILIES VIA A LANGUAGE WHICH WAS NOT MY OWN BUT ONE WHICH I WAS BECOMING RATHER COMFORTABLE USING.

AN INFLUENTIAL PERSON

[MY BROTHER] HAS MOTIVATED ME TO FOLLOW MY DREAM TO BECOME A PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGIST AND USE MY LIFELONG SKILL OF QUICKLY ESTABLISHING TRUST AND RAPPORT, PARTICULARLY WITH THE MOST VULNERABLE PATIENTS. [HE] HAS ALSO INFLUENCED THE TYPE OF PHYSICIAN I WILL BE; ONE WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING BY SEEING BEYOND DISEASE OR DISABILITY AND TREATING THE WHOLE PERSON WITH RESPECT, EMPATHY, AND COMPASSION.

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A CREATIVE ENDEAVOR

SIMILAR TO HOW I TRY TO CONVEY A SONG'S MESSAGE TO THE AUDIENCE, I CAN EFFICIENTLY RELAY INFORMATION BY FORMING A RELATIONSHIP BUILT ON TRUST AND EMPATHY. I LOOK FORWARD TO IMPLEMENTING THE PERFORMANCE SKILLS I HAVE ACQUIRED TO THE CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE - JUST AS THE STAGE SERVES AS A DYNAMIC PLATFORM FOR SHARING EMOTIONS THROUGH SONG - MEDICINE IS A MEDIUM FOR STRONG DOCTOR PATIENT RELATIONSHIPS.

AN ATHLETIC ENDEAVOR

AFTER FLYING THROUGH THE AIR FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY, MY HORSE LANDED FROM THE SUBSTANTIAL JUMP WITH A GRACEFUL THUD. THE MAGNANIMOUS APPLAUSE SENT A WARM SENSATION THROUGH MY CHEST AS I REALIZED THAT MY YEARS OF COMMITMENT HAD PAID OFF: I HAD CONQUERED THE HAMPTON CLASSIC, THE BIGGEST HORSE SHOW OF THE YEAR! THE JOURNEY THROUGH MEDICAL SCHOOL IS LIKE RIDING A HORSE BECAUSE BOTH REQUIRE STRENUOUS YEARS OF SELF-DISCIPLINE AND PERSONAL SACRIFICE. JUST AS A RIDER COMMITS HERSELF UNWAVERINGLY TO HER HORSE AS A UNIFIED TEAM, A DOCTOR MUST COMMIT TO HER PATIENTS AND TO THE ART OF MEDICINE. AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHEN YOU FALL HARD ON THE GROUND YOU MUST DUST YOURSELF OFF - WITHOUT HESITATION - AND GET BACK IN THE SADDLE.



PANICKED?!

DO THIS:

BRAINSTORM WITH ME:

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME OR ATTEND A VIRTUAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION! DETAILS TO FOLLOW.

JUST START WRITING*!!!

IN A "STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS" FASHION. INITIALLY, DO NOT WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING BUT PUTTING YOUR THOUGHTS ON PAPER. WRITE AS IF YOU ARE 'JOURNALING.'

* HELPFUL HINT:

SET A TIMER FOR 30 MINUTES AND WRITE WITHOUT STOPPING!
PREVIOUS STUDENTS HAVE SAID THAT THIS HELPS TO FORM A DRAFT!



EMAIL ME WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN:

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TO BE FAIR TO ALL STUDENTS



1.) THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT ADDITIONAL DRAFTS FOR 'SECOND' AND 'THIRD' SPECIALTIES TO WHICH YOU APPLY WILL BE REVIEWED (UNLESS YOU SUBMIT THEM *TOGETHER* BY THE DEADLINE).

2.) TO ENSURE ALL STUDENTS RECEIVE A DETAILED REVISION OF THEIR PERSONAL STATEMENT, ADHERENCE TO THE DEADLINE IS IMPERATIVE:

~ MONDAY, AUGUST 12 ~

THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION!

A final request...

"I DECIDED THAT I DIDN'T LIKE MY TOPIC, SO I RE-WROTE MY STATEMENT."

➤ **CAN YOU LOOK AT IT AGAIN?**

"MY SISTER SAID MY STATEMENT WASN'T EXCITING ENOUGH, SO I CHANGED IT."

➤ **CAN YOU READ IT AGAIN?**

"DR. (INSERT FACULTY MEMBER NAME) SUGGESTED I SHOULD ELABORATE ON MY LONG TERM GOALS, SO INCLUDED THEM AT THE END."

➤ **CAN YOU EDIT WHAT I ADDED?**

"MY RESIDENT THINKS I SHOULD INCORPORATE MY PHARMACOLOGY BACKGROUND, SO I DID THAT."

➤ **CAN YOU REVIEW IT AGAIN?**



"I SHOWED MY STATEMENT TO 14 FAMILY MEMBERS AT A WEDDING LAST WEEKEND, SO I RE-WROTE IT INCORPORATING THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS."

➤ **CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK?**

IF YOU PLAN TO SOLICIT OTHERS' ADVICE - AND INCLUDE IT IN YOUR STATEMENT - PLEASE DO SO BEFORE YOU SEND YOUR DRAFT FOR THE FIRST TIME. THERE'S A TENDENCY TO *UNNECESSARILY* "SECOND GUESS" AT THE LAST MINUTE.

IT IS UNLIKELY THAT I CAN ACCOMMODATE THESE REQUESTS AFTER AUGUST 12.

~ THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING! ~