

PERSONAL STATEMENTS: REVISING AND EDITING

Personal Statements are challenging to write because you're being asked to show who you are and why you're suitable for the program(s) you're applying to. The key to crafting an effective personal statement is to write, rewrite, proofread, edit, and keep editing.

REVISING AND EDITING

Once you are in the polishing stage, be merciless! Cross out paragraphs that don't work; rearrange ideas so that they make logical sense; watch out for redundancy, and make sure that your essay is entirely free of mechanical or grammar errors.

In addition:

- Consider your audience: put yourself in the shoes of the admissions committee. Is your essay engaging and unique?
- Cross off ideas that are too general, common, or cliché.
- Stay positive by turning your struggles into learning experiences.
- Show, don't tell
- Don't waste time or limited space by repeating information.
- Pay attention to the prompt and word count.
- Neither showing off nor groveling will get you anywhere.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER

Self-confidence vs. conceit: this is a fine line. The best way to avoid conceit is to be specific to *your* situation and goals. It is impossible to not talk about yourself in the personal statement. If you find yourself avoiding the *I*, return to it, but don't simply list all the amazing things you've done. A list of your accomplishments will be both exhausting and boring for your reader, especially since they will already read that on your resume, CV, or on the experience section of your application. Instead, share a specific detail about an event. For example, if you worked at an orphanage in India, take a moment to reflect on your experience with one child; or if you won a prestigious science award, fill your reader in on your research and what you learned from the experience.

Also, consider the people and opportunities that helped you achieve all that you have. Know that you did not get where you are on your own. Think about where you want to go and know that you will also need to learn from people and experiences in order to get there. *Important Note: Each discipline emphasizes different elements in their application essay(s). To make sure that you are crafting an appropriate essay, meet with an advisor or professor in your discipline. Good luck!*

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