



Personal Statement Best Practices

- Open your piece with an engaging hook. Strive for a fresh, narrative quality that sounds like you.
- Devise a sensible structure (e.g., chronological, thematic).
- Engage with the specific guidelines and expectations, but don't do so formulaically. Your prose shouldn't read like a list.
- Avoid clichés.
- Show, don't tell. Use examples that highlight the characteristics you wish to highlight about yourself, rather than simply stating what characteristics you hold.
- Stay on-message. Omit non-relevant details.
- Get feedback on your drafts in progress from a variety of people, including mentors, professors, friends, and consultants at the Writing Center.
- Be patient with yourself. For high-stakes application essays, expect to work through 10 - 12 drafts before your statements are ready to submit.
- Engage a competent and trustworthy proofreader. After many drafts, it is nearly impossible to proofread your own work.

For a Fulbright application in particular:

- Draft your initial content for the two essays together; divide it up later. The essays should complement each other without repeating information.
- Convey genuine interest in your site, and illustrate the many reasons your work must take place in this country specifically. Show how your involvement will benefit the local community.

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