

Personal Statement

Before you begin, take stock of the following:

- Your interests, values, and skills
- The reasons you chose this particular graduate school program
- Your long and short term career goals
- Your experience as it relates to the graduate program
- Your personal accomplishments, achievements, and attributes

Synthesize these items into the following 3 categories:

I. The ‘Where Have You Been?’ Paragraph

- a. Start your personal statement as you would beginning of a chronological story, drawing the reader in immediately.
- b. Recount a milestone or milestones from your past and how this affected your life and your decision now to attend Graduate School.
 - i. Example: “As a young inquisitive child of seven, the local library embraced me with its warm bookshelves and calm brick walls. Each Saturday, my imagination was ignited as my mother took me and my siblings to the Children’s Reading Hour. The magic and wonder that I experienced in that library as a child was a milestone in my life and would not be the last time a library would provide me a feeling of comfort, knowledge, purpose, and epiphany.”

2. The ‘Where Are You Now?’ Paragraph

- a. Continue your story by describing what you are currently doing to fulfill your career goals.
- b. Detail any relevant work/internship/volunteer experiences you have obtained or are obtaining currently.
- c. Describe the Bachelor’s Degree you are completing and specific courses you are taking or have taken that are specifically relevant along with Grade Point Average if above a 3.0.
- d. Provide details of any clubs/organizations that you belong to or have belonged to in the recent past and the leadership skills you gained.
 - i. Example: “I am currently a Humanities major and am enjoying the broad-based education it is providing me. While writing my Undergraduate Thesis Paper, I have made an effort to obtain computer skills such as the function of Windows, the Worldwide Web and Browser Systems, and creating directories to help myself become a more accomplished researcher for my future in Library Science. Currently, I am volunteering at the University Library and am active in ‘Reforma’. A professional association for Librarians.”

3. The 'Where Are You Going?' Paragraph

- a. Conclude your story and essay by explaining why you are applying to this specific Graduate School Program and College.
- b. Describe what you plan to accomplish after you obtain your Graduate Degree and how you will reflect back positively on the University where you earn your degree as a professional in the field.
 - i. Example: “ after an extended search of a Master’s degree in Library Science programs it is clear to me that your program best completes the picture I envision for myself and my future career goals. Your school’s mission of serving one’s community through teaching, research, service, and leadership completely encompasses my image of the kind of Librarian I want to become. After graduating from the University, I plan to develop programs that will include multicultural appreciation and diverse perspectives of the world. Mostly, I want to create the kind of wondrous learning environment that so warmly embraced me as a seven year old so many years ago; a special place where others can attain a feeling of empowerment and joy of learning.”

Be Sure To:

1. Observe basic composition structure and grammatical rules
2. Proofread! Remember, 'Spellcheck' does not catch everything.
3. Have a Career Counselor and/or Faculty Member read your essay and provide feedback.

Personal Statement Worksheet

The “Where Have You Been?” Paragraph

(Recount a milestone or milestones from your past and how this affected your life and your decision now to attend Graduate School)

The “Where Are You Now?” Paragraph

(Continue your story by describing what you are currently doing to fulfill your goals: education, internships, volunteer work, clubs/orgs, professional associations)

The “Where Are You Going?” Paragraph

(Conclude your story and essay by explaining why you are applying to this specific Graduate Program and College. Describe what you plan to accomplish after obtaining your Graduate Degree.)
