

# HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT

Create a pool of information to draw from for your first draft

Writing tips

▶ What makes you unique? What sets you apart from other applicants?

▶ Think about your ancestors, your geographic location, etc.

▶ Who are your intellectual influences?

▶ Are you familiar with any of the professors at the chosen university?

▶ How has your interest in this subject evolved? Any specific turning points?

▶ What is your career goal? What attracts you to this career?

▶ How have you prepared yourself for graduate school?

▶ Address the questions asked in the order that they are asked.

▶ I should not be the first word of your essay

▶ Make sure you have a strong opening paragraph  
↳ Eiphipany moments work well

▶ Say what you mean. Either describe the event or describe your feelings associated to the event

↳ Avoid using the words "beautiful," "meaningful," "rewarding," "challenging," and "invaluable." Also avoid the phrase, "I have always wanted to..."

▶ If you wish to discuss how your grades do not reflect your true potential, do so! But do not make long excuses.

▶ Before talking about a problem, make sure it meets the following criteria:

▶ It must be in the past

▶ It must be sympathetic

▶ It must be resolved

▶ It is unlike to recur in graduate school

▶ Use gender-neutral language and remove any sexist language

\*Information for this handout came from Asher, Donald. *Graduate Admissions Essays: Write Your Way into the Graduate School of Your Choice*. Ten Speed Press, 2012.