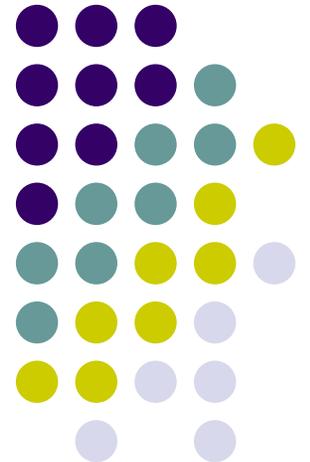


The Personal Statement

Do's and Don'ts





What is it?

- The personal statement is an essay about you to help admissions officers determine if you have the qualities that they are looking for in their applicants.
- Admissions Officers receive and read thousands of statements from well rounded students with high GPA's and numerous extra and co-curricular activities. Your job is to distinguish yourself from all of the other applicants.

How do I do that?



- Write a well crafted and error free essay
- Be sincere
- Follow the directions in the application
- Ask parents, friends, relatives, teachers etc. for suggestions
- Get started early

The UC Application



- There are generally two prompts for freshman applicants and they have changed little over the past ten years.
 - One asks you to reflect on personal circumstances or family experiences that have shaped or defined who you are.
 - The other asks you to choose one activity (two at most) that you engage in outside of class and explain what you have gained from that activity.



Family Experiences

- Tragedy
- Influential Person (family member)
- Finances
- Traditions
- Sense of Unity
- 1st in family to attend post secondary school
- Values

Personal Circumstances



- overcoming an obstacle
- finances
- physical handicap
- learning disability
- major accomplishment
- goals



Focus on an Activity

- sports
- church group
- volunteer
- classroom aide
- job
- club
- drama
- leadership
- baby-sitting
- entertaining
- speech
- competition
- community service
- leisure activity

Sample Personal Statement # 1



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[..\Personal Statement Sample #1.doc](#)

Review the Statement



- What can you infer about the author based on this essay?
 - keen sense of observation
 - open to diverse groups of people
 - able to see beyond the seeming boring façade of the town
 - knowledge of classical music and art
- What does his interest in chess tell you about him?
 - logical thinker
 - patient
 - likes strategy
- What do you notice about the craft of the writing?
 - sophisticated diction and syntax
 - well organized
 - excellent style and voice, engaging

Sample Personal Statement #2



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- [..\The Role of the Teacher-Personal Statement.doc](#)

Review



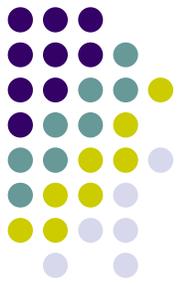
- What approach has this applicant used?
- How is the paper organized?
 - The paper begins with a scattered image approach—giving the reader a sense of the students in a classroom.
 - The author continues with other examples of activities “teaching” children
- What else do we know or can we infer about the author?
 - She is well rounded.
 - She has the ability to juggle many activities and maintain a high GPA which suggests a strong sense of balance and organization



Things to Remember

- Avoid clichés
- Show don't tell
- Avoid controversial subjects
- Don't repeat information from application
- Avoid overused expressions such as rewarding, invaluable, beautiful etc.
- Avoid the negative
- Avoid statements such as *I've always wanted to be a...*

Additional Resources



<http://admissions.berkeley.edu/pdf/PerState.pdf>

Packets with student samples and additional tips and suggestions are available from Mrs. Clark in Room C-103.