



AUSTIN
COLLEGE

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT



Academic Skills Center
Scarborough Center for Writing
Pre-Health Advising

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

- ✘ Interview the person next to you
 - + Ask:
 - ✘ Which program are you applying for and why?
 - ✘ Why is this program a fit for you?
 - ✘ Why are you a fit for this program?
- ✘ Standing out

QUICK WRITE

- ✘ Write a paragraph

- ✘ Use an anecdote, description, or brief story to introduce yourself and your interest in the program

+ What makes you stand out?



Personal Statement Basics



Academic Style

-Thesis, body paragraphs with supporting arguments and conclusion connected to first paragraph



Narrative Style

-Best when telling story, using concrete details to illustrate it

KEEP IN MIND

DO

- × Be honest / accurate
- × Devote enough time
- × Keep audience in mind
- × Be objective
- × Answer questions completely
- × Be positive!

DON'T

- × Use clichés
- × Focus on the past
- × Make this a resume
- × Pepper in complicated words
- × Focus on controversial topics / sound too preachy



BEFORE YOU WRITE

- ✘ Research the school and program
- ✘ Know your audience
 - + Explain academic goals
 - + How you plan to develop
- ✘ Understand the Prompt
 - + Statement of Purpose vs Personal Essay
 - + Answer all questions
 - + Persuade
 - + Highlight relevant work

PLANNING YOUR DRAFT

Plan, set goals, generate ideas

✘ What are:

- + Achievements that distinguish you
- + Transferrable skills

✘ Use concrete details

- + Show vs. Tell

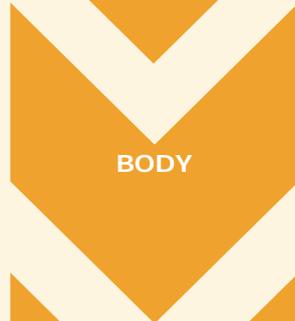


DRAFTING

Start telling your story, organize, gather more info, revisit



- Get their attention
- Well written



- Interesting opening sentences
- Good transitions



- No summary
- Significant statement about future
- End positively

REVISION

Revisit with fresh perspective – make discoveries, reorganize, add details

Gain insight - get professors/others to read

Questions answered? Active voice?
Clear/concise? Good transitions?

Copyedit – polished and professional

Move in and out of planning, drafting, and revising until you have a complete statement.



THE PROCESS OF REVISION

- ✘ What revision allows us to do
- ✘ What does an in-process draft look like?

- ✘ Example essay excerpt:
- ✘ Prompt: “Briefly discuss any unique circumstances or life experiences that are relevant to your application which have not previously been presented.” (2500 characters, including spaces)

THE PROCESS OF REVISION

By the start of my freshmen year of high school, I knew I wanted to enter a STEM field. At my high school, every freshmen had to take a science class called Science, Engineering and Technology class or Sci-Tech for short. My teacher, Ms. Earnhart, was a first year teacher with an infectious energy. She described herself as the lovechild of Ms. Frizzle and Buckaroo Banzai.

On the first day of Sci-Tech, Ms. Earnhart told us a story to explain centripetal force. She attended a lecture given by a respected professor early in her academic career. The professor mentioned centrifugal force, which doesn't actually exist. Ms. Earnhart spoke up during his talk and made the point that there is no such thing as centrifugal force and the professor corrected himself. I was impressed that she had the courage to speak up during the lecture. It made me realize that sharing of knowledge is critical to science. The correct terminology is important in science and she risked embarrassment for the sake of accuracy. From that first day, I looked up to her.

During my junior year, I took her astronomy class. In class, Ms. Earnhart made a point to include several famous female astronomers who are often overlooked. My senior year, she encouraged me to take over the role of president for the astronomy club and helped me to become a leader. Ms. Earnhart was more than my teacher, she was instrumental to building my confidence in high school.

THE PROCESS OF REVISION

I already knew I wanted to enter a STEM field in high school, but I was further inspired by my Science, Engineering and Technology teacher, Ms. Earnhart. She described herself as the lovechild of Ms. Frizzle and Buckaroo Banzai.

On the first day, she told us a story about attending a lecture given by a respected professor. The professor mentioned centrifugal force. Ms. Earnhart spoke up during his talk to make the point that centrifugal force is a misnomer for centripetal force. I was impressed that she had the courage to speak up during a lecture and risk embarrassment. It made me realize that sharing of knowledge and the correct terminology are essential to science. From that first day, I looked up to her.

One day in her class I struggled with calculations in an Excel spreadsheet. The numerical output didn't make any sense, and I asked for help. Ms. Earnhart reminded me we had talked about how to do this in class. She sent me back to figure it out myself. I struggled for an hour before I realized I hadn't included parentheses in the right place. I'd made a small clerical error but it was one I would never make again. Being forced to figure it out myself was much more rewarding than if I had just gotten the answer from her. I'm stubborn and I don't give up easily, and Ms. Earnhart nurtured and strengthened this part of my personality.

FINAL THOUGHTS – PLAN A TIMELINE

- ✘ Give yourself time to draft, get feedback, revise and copyedit
- ✘ Give readers time to offer feedback
- ✘ Plan backwards – account for coursework, studying for entrance exams, etc.
- ✘ Identify your resources: professors, advisors, ASC, Writing Center, Pre-Health Advisors



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