



**Capture  
Greatness!**  
*Scholarship & College Coaching*

*The*

**PERSONAL  
STATEMENT**

*Workbook*



## **The Personal Statement Workbook**

This workbook was created to help you understand the essential components of the college admission essay. Personal Statements are wonderful opportunities to tell a college admission panel about your goals and desires for your life and community. A strong essay will tell your story, while positioning you as an asset to any college. Complete the exercises in this workbook and you will have lots of powerful and compelling content for your college admission essays.

### **In each section of this workbook you will find:**

- Helpful tips for each topic area
- Strong and weak examples to guide your work
- Space for you to compose your own statements

The Capture Greatness approach to college essays is like a good 3-course meal; there is an appetizer, entrée, and dessert. Each course is equally important to a reader's feasting experience. The appetizer sets the stage for the scrumptious entrée, to come. By the time the main course is in front of them, they are already convinced that the meal will be delicious. That's when they are ready for the protein, vegetables, and carbohydrates (more on these in a bit). Finally, dessert comes and sends their reading taste buds to heaven. Check out the menu I provided below, to get a better understanding of how we will lay out your essay.

### **Easy Essay Menu:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <i>Appetizer</i> | Your Introduction  |
| <i>Entrée</i>    | The Body of Your Essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Goal Statement - Protein</li><li>Value Statement - Veggies</li><li>Motivation Statement - Carbs</li></ul> |
| <i>Dessert</i>   | Your Conclusion  |

**Are you ready to get to the good stuff? Let's stick our forks in!**

### **Introduction Paragraph – Whet the Appetite!**

We all know that first impressions are lasting impressions. This applies to college and scholarship essays as well. That’s why it’s important to make your introduction yummy enough that your reader is willing to get to the body of your essay.

The start of your essay determines how much enthusiasm people will have about reading it. Your goal for your introductory paragraph is to “edutain.” A good intro will educate your reader about who you are and be compelling enough to keep them engaged in the story you will share throughout the essay. The first paragraph **MUST** include something that will make the panel remember you, even if they forget your name.

**Example of a *weak* intro statement:**

My name is Melissa and I always wanted to be a doctor because I like to make people feel better . . . I am applying for your biology program to help me become a doctor, so that I can heal the world.

**Examples of *strong* intro statements:**

If there is one event, in my life, that I could erase it would be the day I was arrested for theft . . . I’m applying for this scholarship to help me toward my goal of becoming a youth counselor. My purpose is to help teens eliminate negative influences and achieve success in life.

I failed science my freshman year of high school and was deeply embarrassed. That was my wakeup call . . . Today, I am applying to State University with a commitment to myself to set higher standards and overcome all obstacles.

Think of some things in your life that make you unique. What experiences have you had that a lot of people would be shocked to find out about?

**Compose three (3) different “edutaining,” attention grabbers below.**

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Body of Your Essay – Dig In!

Like a great meal, the main course provides most of the substance. A good balance of proteins, vegetables, and carbohydrates are needed for proper nutrients. Your readers will need the same nourishment when your essay is in front of them. Don't let them down with an awesome appetizer, but a weak entrée. Check out how I break down what's needed in the body of your college or scholarship essay.

### *The Goal Statement*

Great goals, like proteins in a meal, make your essay strong and solid. Powerful goal statements will tempt your readers to buy into your vision of success. There are plenty of young people who write essays that are very vague when describing their goals. It's your job to paint a vision of your future that gets the panel excited when they consider helping you achieve your goals. You should include clear and concise statements that show you've given much consideration to your goals and have set the bar high for yourself.

#### **Example of a *weak* goal statement:**

I want to come to your university so that I can get a degree in education and become a teacher. I think teaching is an important job in society. I also like to work with young people.

#### **Example of a *strong* goal statement:**

Do you have direct access to the U.S. Secretary of Education? I will, one day, because that person will be me. I am seeking a spot in your College of Education as my first step toward my mission of tackling our national drop-out crisis.

You have to use your imagination and aim high when thinking of where you see yourself in 5 – 10 years. Once you are excited about what you visualize start to write the image out. Then write strong statements conveying your vision to others.

**Compose three (3) different concrete goal statements below.**

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***The Value Statement***

Understanding how you add value is as essential as vegetables are to a meal. The value we add or contributions we make, helps to nourish and maintain healthy attitudes, relationships and communities. Your reader needs to know how you plan to make a positive impact on others if they help you achieve your goals.

Would you spend your time and energy helping a millionaire become more rich, if they weren't willing to help you or other people? Would you give that person \$10 of your hard earned money just to make their pockets fatter? That's how college and scholarship committees feel about you. If they choose you to get a scholarship or admission into their school, they want to know what you will do that benefits them and your community.

Some ways you can add great value to a school or organization is by doing cool and unique work in your field of study, your community, or the world. You could also serve as a role model for other students by being a great example of perseverance and success, becoming a mentor, taking on leadership roles etc.

**Example of a *weak* value statement:**

I should be admitted into your University because I am a good student and I have a 3.5 grade point average. My presence will add more intelligence to your campus.

**Example of a *strong* value statement:**

At the age of 18, I have overcome numerous obstacles in my life. With my passion and drive to achieve my goals, I will bring an open mind and compassion to my college classes. I have been able to excel because of the help of mentors. As a college student, I will serve as a peer mentor when others are discouraged.

Think about all of the ways you are unique and add value in school, to your family, or in your community. Do you inspire people to do well? Are you more hands-on and help people get things done? Is there an organization you can start or participate in, that will assist others in achieving their goals?

**Compose three (3) different value statements below.**

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***The Motivation Statement***

Motivation, like carbohydrates, gives us the energy to keep moving toward our goals. Even if you have strong goal and value statements, a college or scholarship panel wants to know that you are committed to your success. They won't want to waste their time on students who are clueless about their driving force.

Everyone has something that propels them forward in a positive direction. Some people are moved to excel because they know there are people who wish they would fail (HATERS). Some find motivation in having people depend on them, like children or younger siblings. Still, others are pushed toward their goals because they have people they don't want to let down, like their parents or themselves. Take this time to identify three (3) sources of motivation.

**Examples of *weak* sources of motivation:**

- 1) My mother keeps nagging me about college.
- 2) I can't get a job without a degree.

**Examples of *strong* sources of motivation:**

- 1) I want to make my older brother proud because he has saved money to help with my education.
- 2) I need to earn enough money to buy my mother a house of her own .
- 3) To prove to myself that no challenge is too difficult when it comes to my dreams.

**Write three (3) reasons you are motivated to achieve your goals.**

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

### The Conclusion – Make it Sweet!

Your conclusion is the finishing touch – dessert after dinner. Your readers should already be full from the information and excitement they got from reading, thus far. The summary should be a sweet reminder of the most important things you have laid out in the essay, but it should be strong enough to seal the deal.

A good conclusion will give a recap of: 1) Your goals; 2) Your motivation; & 3) The value you add.

**Example of a *weak* concluding statement:**

In conclusion . . . I want to come to your school so that I can get a degree in psychology, have famous clients, and live in a big mansion in New Jersey.

**Example of a *strong* concluding statement:**

It is with much humility and respect that I seek admission into City University’s College of Arts. My goal is to transform the mindset of the children in my community by providing art lessons and local exhibits, so that they can see that beauty exists everywhere. My love for learning and desire to create welcoming spaces shows in my attitude and overflows into the classroom. I know that I am an ideal candidate. If I am admitted I will bring beauty and passion to campus everyday.

**Compose two (2) different *sweet & savory* conclusion statements below.**

1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_