Writing an Effective Personal Statement

LET'S GET STARTED!

Stop! Before you start typing…

- **Make a List:** Using the "20 Steps to a Personal Statement" as a guide, describe all of the items that you would ideally like to mention in your personal statement. Do not omit anything. You will organize and cut content later.

- **Start Cutting:** Refer to your list and prioritize important items. If an item does not effectively fit into the statement or is not deemed important, it is time to cut that item.

- **Create an Outline:** Once you narrow your points, you will want to create your outline using the format listed below.

LET'S GET ORGANIZED!

Now, it's time to make that outline…

Part I: Introduction

The Hook: This could be a story, quote, surprising statement, etc. that sets the stage for the rest of your statement. The purpose of the hook is to spark the reader's interest. If the reader isn't intrigued from the beginning, he or she probably won't continue reading.

Thesis Statement: The hook should transition into a thesis statement, which describes the overall theme of the personal statement. It is important to stick to one theme.

Part II: Body
This is the bulk of your statement. It should address the thesis statement and answer the question posed on the application. Using your theme, you should address why you would be a good candidate for medical school and how you know that you will succeed. Address your strengths, experiences and accomplishments. It is important to be specific by using examples from your experiences to support your statements. Do not make assumptions, use clichés or state the obvious.

Part III: Conclusion
Conclude the statement by summarizing everything that was previously addressed. The last sentence or two should relate to the hook. The reader should not be left hanging.

NOW…STARTING TYPING!

Using the outline as your guide, type your personal statement. Do not worry about editing at this point. This will be done in the next step.

EDIT, EDIT, EDIT…AND EDIT SOME MORE!

The first thing you should do is click on the spell check button. Once that is complete, read your statement aloud. This ensures that your paper makes sense and flows correctly. Next, take the time to review your writing with a fine tooth comb and correct any spelling/grammatical errors. Finally, circulate your statement amongst several people. Others will surely catch things that you missed.

PERSONAL STATEMENT WRITING TIPS

- **Utilize multiple eyes and multiple opinions:** It is important that you ask multiple people to read your personal statement. Someone may catch a grammatical or spelling error. Another person may let you know that one of your points is unclear. Please keep an open mind, as doing this ensures that the statement is legible and interesting when it arrives at the medical school.

- **Be specific:** Admissions Representatives have seen it all. There is no new concept to them. However, you can still make your statement stand-out by illustrating your assertions with examples. It is important to avoid generalized statements, such as "I would be a great doctor because I have an excellent work ethic." Admissions Representatives have seen this stated a million times in a million different ways. Instead, write out a story about yourself that illustrates this point. For example, you may want to explain how you worked your way through high school to save up enough money to go to college.

- **Go beyond the application:** Most of your academic and professional history will be noted on your application. The purpose of the personal statement is the give the Admissions Committee a glimpse into your motivation and ability to become a doctor. Therefore, it is extremely important that you incorporate personal stories and examples as mentioned above.

- **Avoid clichés:** Medical schools do not want to hear that you want to "help people." This statement is overused and not a strong enough reason to admit you into the school. Remember, the personal statement's purpose is to set you apart from other candidates.