

# Nine Tips for Personal Statements Essays for Scholarship Applications

1. Before beginning the essay, think of your life in a global way. What have been the accomplishments, crises, obstacles related to education? Take some notes and don't worry about the organization of these random thoughts. **Make sure you begin this process early** enough to gather useful information. Talk to your family and friends about how they view you because they may see your achievements more clearly than you do.
2. It is appropriate to talk about personal crises, but your essay should tie these in to **how** you overcame them and **what** this has to do with education. For example, you may cite an accident that left you disabled. You may want to elaborate on the recovery process and how it contributed to who you are now and why education has become important to you because of this traumatic experience. The reader should get a sense of your stamina, resilience, creativity, and other personal resources that would lead him/her to believe you could draw on these reserves to be successful in achieving your goals.
3. Your essay should have an **introduction, middle, and conclusion**. Begin by introducing yourself and what you intend to say; the middle should, in a more comprehensive form, reflect what your introduction said you would discuss; and the conclusion should sum up all the information in a logical progression. You could decide to write your introduction last so that it can be truly specific in its purpose.
4. It is not necessary to use sesquipedalian (foot-long) words. If you do, make sure you are using them appropriately and with the correct spelling. **It is more effective to use ordinary words in clear statements.**
5. When you **begin** writing your essay, do not worry about using all the correct words and phrases because this may block you. Take a deep breath and let your self feel the freedom of your own ability to express yourself. Keep writing without stopping for "just the right word", and skip over anything that doesn't come to you readily. Don't worry about spelling, content, or correct English usage, as it will keep you from saying some important things about yourself.
6. After you have written a first draft, go back over it to be sure that you have included specific experiences that are relevant to your college goals. Make a good case for why you are **unique** and how your experiences will help you with your college education. Four-year schools expect you to be mature enough to extrapolate lessons from experiences. What unique contribution will you make as a student and as an alumni they can be proud of? It would be a good idea to answer this question in all of your personal statements regardless of where you apply because it indicates vision and self-esteem.
7. When you are ready to write your final draft, **go back** to number 2 through 7. Check for spelling, grammar, and logical, linear thought progression. Does everything relate to your educational goals in the conclusion?
8. Again, do this exercise **early enough** to that you will have time to write the essay as well as time for other people to **proof** it and offer you some **feedback**.
9. If this feels overwhelming, go back to number 5 and take a deep breath. Remember, the subject matter is **you**, and you are the greatest authority on this topic. Write from your heart, and worry about all the intellectual concerns when you are working on the finished product.

**You can do it!**