



THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

What is the Personal Statement?

The Personal Statement consists of the essay(s) that one must write in order to get into the institution of higher education of their choice.

- For the University of California, there are two prompts that Freshmen and Transfer Applicants must answer.
- For the Cal State University system, there is no Personal Statement prompt to be completed.
- Private Universities vary and have their own individual admissions processes. Do research on the ones you are interested in and look up their specific admissions guidelines and prompts.

Why is it important?

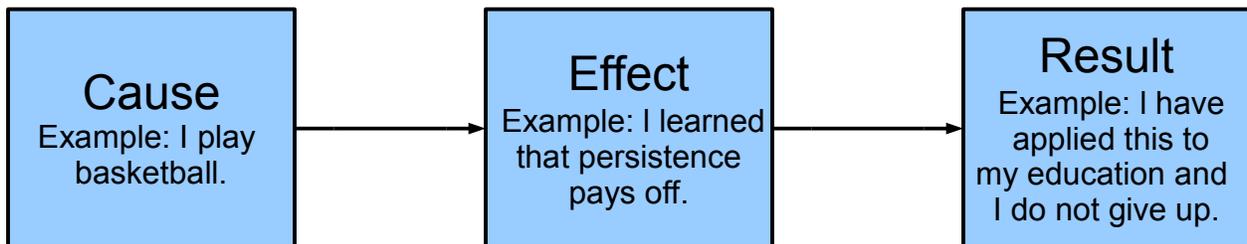
The Personal Statement is your opportunity to tell the university about yourself -- your hopes, ambitions, life experiences, inspirations. This is an opportunity for you to explain circumstances within your life that have affected you, your education, and your future.

The University of California system reviews your application under **Comprehensive Review**. Under this policy, applicants are looked at holistically, accounting for factors such as life circumstances, life experiences, educational performance in relation to opportunities available, and leadership experiences (example: Student Government, Captain of Team, taking care of siblings after school, work, etc).

For the full policy and variations among campuses, please visit:
<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/counselors/freshman/comprehensive-review/index.html>

Structure

Use this simple structure to follow to fully get your message across to the readers.



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Prompts

PROMPT #1 (For Freshmyn Applicants)

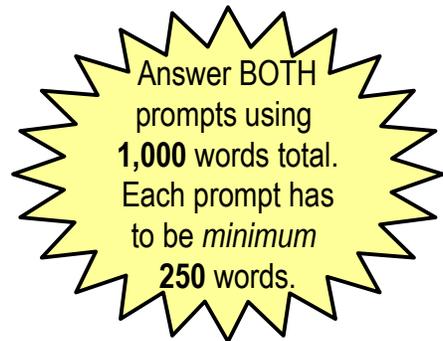
Describe the world you come from—for example, your family, community, or school—and tell us how your world has shaped your dreams and aspirations.

PROMPT #1 (For Transfer Applicants)

What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field — such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.

PROMPT #2 (For ALL Applicants)

Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?



TIPS!

- Don't use cliches! A reader does not want to hear that you were a seed that sprouted into beautiful flower. Chances are they've read the exact same thing a million times.
- Be real. Write about something you're really passionate about. The readers can tell if you really cared about what you wrote.
- Writing about someone who inspired you is great! BUT, remember that this is about you. Always tie it back to you. You want the University to accept you, not your grandmother.
- Be clear and concise with what you write about. A thousand words seems like a lot but it's actually not that much. You want the reader to pick up your point and understand it without having to linger on it. Be blunt.
- Spend more time on what you learned and got out of a situation than the description of it.
- Write in your own voice but a grammatically correct you.
- Readers don't want to read sob stories. They want to hear how you overcame those obstacles.
- Universities want to see leaders who can impact change. Don't just identify a problem. Explain how you will use your college degree to fix it.
- Choose one thing and expand on it. Your application is for listing all of your accomplishments. This is your opportunity to explain something you cannot say in the application.
- Use the Additional Comments section to expand on important details such as Visa issues, additional names, additional tests, or anything else you did not have an opportunity to include elsewhere.
- Have your friends, family, and teachers read your personal statements because they know you best and know if it sounds like you! Have someone you may not know as well read and see if they can tell who you are!

You can always have us read them by emailing us at

UCBERKELEYPASS@lists.berkeley.edu

We're trained by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and we'll assign someone to work with you!

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