


Writing the Personal Statement



A Personal Statement is a common part of a scholarship application. The LLCC Foundation website explains: "The purpose of the personal statement is to give you an opportunity to tell us important things about yourself that are not addressed or apparent on the application." The personal statement allows a scholarship committee to learn more about you as an applicant. It allows you to "sell" your skills, abilities, and attributes. In order to "sell" yourself effectively, take time to draft a statement that expresses who you are and why you deserve to receive a scholarship.

Get Started

Do some pre-writing by jotting down answers to the following questions:

What are your long-term career goals and educational plans? What inspired you to choose this field of study or career? What do you hope to gain from LLCC and beyond?

Briefly describe yourself as a person and/or student. What personal characteristics do you possess that would enhance your prospects for success?

Are you involved in school or community organizations or teams? What honors or recognition have you received?

What accomplishments are you most proud of? What have you had to dig in and work hard to achieve?

What is your biggest disappointment or regret? What did you learn about yourself and life?

What sets you apart from other students? How are you uniquely you?

How would the scholarship monies benefit you? You may include how you are financing your college education or any personal or family circumstances affecting your need for financial assistance.



Organize and Draft

Once you have done some pre-writing, begin drafting. Your personal statement should be well structured and written to make you stand out from the rest of the applicants. The statement should present a picture of you as a person, a student and a potential scholarship recipient. It is an opportunity to share your story.

Here are suggestions for organizing your statement in 4 simple paragraphs:

1. INTRODUCTION (paragraph 1)

Grab the reader's attention in your opening sentence. Provide basic information about who you are, where you are from, and your family background. Include any special circumstances affecting your need for financial assistance.

2. BODY (paragraphs 2 & 3)

This is where you begin to make your case. What have you done so far? Why did you choose to attend LLCC? What is your major? How did you choose your major? What are positive qualities, accomplishments, work experience, internships, volunteer work, leadership experience, extracurricular activities, personal problems you have overcome. You don't have to address every question or point; the key is to focus on what makes you a good candidate for a scholarship.

Connect your goals with the opportunities receiving a scholarship will provide. What are your future plans? Try to be specific about plans for pursuing your goals. Do you plan to transfer? What is the highest degree you hope to achieve (i.e. Associate, Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D.)? What are your career goals? How do you plan to use your education to

3. CONCLUSION (paragraph 4)

This is your last chance to impress and persuade the reader. What impact would the scholarship have on your education and your future? Emphasize why you are a good candidate to receive a scholarship.

DOs

- Write in the first person.
- Find a focus. This isn't a list or a rambling journal entry. Focus on a specific experience or characteristic and explain its importance in your current life.
- Make your statement memorable. You want the committee to remember you.
- Be specific. Support the things you say about yourself and your experiences with specific examples. Show, don't tell.
- Proofread!! Ask someone to review for you: a family member, friend, the LLCC Writing Center.
- Be brief! Make sure you aren't repeating yourself.
- Start your essay early and take time to revise and write it well.

DONTs

- **Don't** use cliches. Example: "I just want to help people."
- **Don't** generalize; be specific when possible: "Education is essential to a strong future, and I'd like to teach high school in order to ensure that strong future for others."
- **Don't** mention political or religious affiliation unless necessary.
- **Don't** make lists of accomplishments. Instead, elaborate on them with examples and stories.
- **Don't** use big words just to use them.
- **Don't** make up stories, exaggerate, or lie!
- **Don't** copy someone else's words or ideas!