

Personal Statement Format for College

Composing a student statement can be intimidating, so we encourage you to begin well before the deadline in order to take pressure off yourself and improve the quality of the final draft.

In your Student Statement-describe the following as it applies to you:

- Your educational & career goals
- Why have you chosen these goals
- Include any personal experiences that have impacted the pursuit of your education
- Special circumstances or unusual hardships that you have faced

Do:

- Write it yourself.
- Include brief descriptions of your specific achievements.
- Keep your statement focused.
- Make your statement easy for the reader to follow.
- Use spell check and proof read your statement for missing words, typos, and repeated words.
- Show the reader you have taken time writing this statement and that it was well thought out.

Don't:

- Spend too much of the statement describing other people and their lives. The statement should be about you.
- Spend the entire statement writing about the hardships or obstacles you have faced or overcome. Readers want to know where your life has been, but it is equally important to discuss your goals and what led you to them.
- Use odd or creative fonts on your application or personal statement. Make the documents easy to read and let the information speak for itself.
- Copy or plagiarize. Share thoughts or ideas with others, but do not use someone else's statement as your own.

There is no single student statement to follow. However, here are a few examples of what other students have written.

When reading these samples, bear in mind that your personal statement should reflect your *own* background, education and career goals and special circumstances. It is not necessary or desirable to duplicate the tone or style of any of the samples presented here.

Example #1

I am a Mexican American who was born and raised in Watsonville. This is my second year attending Cabrillo College. My long term educational goal is to obtain a Masters Degree in Biology. I plan on getting my Associates degree at Cabrillo College then transferring to UCSC for my undergraduate studies and perhaps my graduate studies. My life time goal is to improve myself and the standard of living for my child through higher education. My career goal is to teach biology at a community college level, and ultimately teach at a university. Three years ago, I could not even see myself pursuing any goals that I had set for myself. I got pregnant at eighteen, and decided to drop out of college so I could work full-time as a co-manager at a retail store. Needless to say, my parents were not happy. They had worked so hard to teach me important values.

My parents did not realize all the important values I had learned from them. Seeing my parents struggle to support me, my older sister, and younger brother has helped me to learn some valuable rules to live by. First, you must work hard to achieve your goals. Second, you must never ever give up working for your goals. Third, that anything is possible if you try hard enough. I apply those rules to my life even more so now that I am a single mother of one terrific boy. He is the very reason why I am so driven, and determined to make a better life for myself. His father is, unfortunately, uncooperative and does not support his son by any financial means.

Being a single mother is not easy. Sometimes I do not know how I will do it to raise a fine young man. I will do anything to ensure him a good and stable future. When he was six months old I realized the only way to ensure his future was through higher education for myself. Knowing that was the key factor to happiness I enrolled at Cabrillo College the summer of 2009.

Cabrillo College has helped me to realize even higher goals than I could ever have imagined for myself. I had always loved the sciences, but taking a biology class at Cabrillo emphasized that. This class showed me the fundamentals of Biology, and I enjoyed the class immensely. By the time high school came around I already knew that I wanted to take classes in Biology. After taking this class I decided that teaching Biology at a community college or university level would be the best job for me.

Through my love for science I know I can make a difference in the lives of my fellow Latinos. I want them to see science as a wonderful field of exploration. In America, Latinos are very under-represented in science. I want to change that, but I do realize that I must take it one step at a time. Currently, I am taking twelve units. I have completed thirty-four units with a cumulative GPA of 3.57. Also, I was just accepted as a member of the Alpha Gamma Sigma Honor Society.

Although my parents are helping me, my financial situation is not good. I do not receive any child support or welfare from the government. My parents are left with the bulk of expenses that my son incurs. I work as a temporary administrative assistant only when I can find a qualified, yet decently priced babysitter. Unfortunately, good childcare is expensive, and eight dollars an hour is not enough to pay for baby-sitting and living expenses. I have even had to stop working because of a lack of higher quality, affordable childcare. Luckily, my parents try and help my son the best they can.

I hope one day to pay help my community be recruiting other Latinos into college. I feel this is the only way we can truly advance ourselves and be heard. We must prove that we too are a strong, powerful, and intelligent people. I plan to help my fellow Hispanics by helping local organizations that deal with the prevention of drugs, alcohol, and gangs. I also hope to enroll at UCSC where I can be a part of their Latino Studies program, as well as the Latino organizations and clubs that support the advancement of all Hispanics. Most of all, as a single mother, I plan to succeed, advance, and survive with a good education.

Example #2

Early in my high school years I discovered a personal truth, that I have no limitations other than those I choose to impose upon myself. Everyone brings to the world unique talents, gifts, and abilities, and some of mine include my strong will and my determination to be able to give something back to the communities in which I was raised. My plans are to not only use education as a tool to prepare me for a vocation, but also to help me become a self-sufficient individual who is fully prepared for life.

No one is exempt from turmoil during their lives, and I can honestly say that I am thankful for the adversities and challenges which have crossed my path because they have strengthened my character and brought forth certain virtues I might otherwise never have known. There are various personal issues with which I have struggled and I have no doubt as to where their foundations lie. Because my parents divorced when I was two, I did not grow up with a secure sense of home. I was juggled around between different family members, each taking part in raising me with their own set of standards and values. I had different customs at each home and had to learn how to be "politically correct" according to who I was with. For example, with my father's family, I went to a Catholic church and studied the New Testament and, while with my mother's family, who is Jewish, I attended synagogue, studied the Torah and learned to pray in Hebrew.

One of the greatest challenges I have faced was growing up multi-ethnic in a bilingual and multi-cultural environment. Even though the society in which I live insists on categorizing me into one racial category, I consider myself to be multi-ethnic. My mother's ethnic make-up is French, Polish and Ukrainian and my father's is Brazilian, Native American, and African. Some of the conflicts that I dealt with while growing up concerned issues surrounding physical appearance, self-esteem, and questions such as "where do I fit in?" and "to whom do I belong?" Fortunately, I have since learned that being part of more than one ethnic group is an advantage, not a detriment, and I am proud to claim and take part in my diverse heritage. Everyone and everything in my past has been my teacher, and I feel that my history has inevitably led me to my major field of study, Ethnic Studies, about which I am immensely passionate. It has been a wonderful rite of passage for me to learn to accept all the parts of myself.

I am currently involved in various community activities and am particularly proud of my involvement with the Shanti Project, a San Francisco based organization dedicated to helping people who are HIV positive. I also devote a great deal of my time to music, a tremendously important part of my life. In addition to performing at local fund raisers, I spend time practicing and recording. I have on occasion found myself challenged to the maximum of my capabilities because of my high academic standards, my volunteer work, my music, and my part-time jobs. But my strong belief that I have no limitations and my will to succeed has kept me going.

My goals are to work with children, helping them to maintain their sense of self. I would like to do this through being a children's counselor or teacher. I would like the opportunity to be able to pass along the information I have learned, that no one person other than oneself can keep one from achieving one's goals and that everyone has the potential to share with the world their unique talents, gifts, and abilities. While one may find motivation in one's hopes for the future, one must not devalue the steps one takes to get there, because it is through one's past joys and hardships that one comes to be who one is in the future. As Ursula le Guin so aptly stated, "It is good to have an end to journey towards, but is the journey that matters in the end."