

NORTHERN FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP **THE PERSONAL STATEMENT**

STAGE ONE: UNDERSTAND AND PLAN THE PROCESS

TIMELINE

- Make note of the application deadline, but you should...
- Commit to an earlier deadline (1 to 2 days in advance)
- Consider your class, work, homework, family obligations
- Consider starting early and knowing the Writing Center hours

UNDERSTAND THE ASSIGNMENT

- Underline the requirements on length, format
- Circle the words that provide ideas for content
- Consider the audience: Who are they? What are they looking for?

STAGE TWO: WRITE THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

BRAINSTORM

- Be open to all ideas
- Don't worry about correctness
- Push yourself

OUTLINE

- Review the ideas – select the essential topics that tell YOUR story!
- Outline your essay – opening, body paragraphs, closing

DRAFT

- Follow your outline and get it written!
- Be specific, elaborate, explain, show
- Be creative, tell YOUR story, be authentic

STAGE THREE: POLISH YOUR WORK

EDIT

- Long paragraphs/short paragraphs
- Word choice – exact, vivid, specific, formal
- Clarity – revise wordy or awkward sentences

PROOFREAD

- Major Errors – fragments, run ons, pronouns, verbs
- Careless Errors – spelling, left out words
- Read sentence by sentence backwards
- HAVe soemone else read your text

TUTORING SESSION – SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT IN THE WRITING CENTER

Visit the Writing Center at any stage when you need help! AD I29 / 505.747.2294

The Personal Statement / WORKSHEET I

STAGE ONE: UNDERSTAND AND PLAN THE PROCESS

SAMPLE TIMELINE:

- Complete Stage 1 by Thursday, March 29
- Complete Stage 2 by Sunday, April 1
- Complete your part of Stage 3 by Monday, April 2
- Visit the Writing Center by end of day Tuesday, April 3
- Wednesday, April 4 submit application Packet**

YOUR TIMELINE:

- Complete Stage 1 by _____
- Complete Stage 2 by _____
- Complete your part of Stage 3 _____
- Visit the Writing Center _____
- Submit application Packet** _____

MARK THE PERSONAL STATEMENT ASSIGNMENT:

(underline requirements/circle ideas for content – see sample marks!)

PERSONAL STATEMENT

In an essay (500 words for Northern Scholarship), tell us your story and why you need a scholarship. Your personal statement is an opportunity to share who you are beyond test scores and grades.

The following questions can be used for general guidance in preparing the essay, but your individual creativity is encouraged. Essay must be typed and double spaced.

1. Provide some information about your decision to attend college.
2. What are your educational and career goals?
3. Discuss the progress you've made toward your educational goals.
4. How do you intend to use your education in service to your community?
5. Include any information about volunteer or community service, employment, talents or special skills, and participation in athletics.
6. Are there recent changes in your situation that affect your financial need?
7. If you have received a Northern Foundation scholarship in the past, discuss how the scholarship affected your academic performance in college.

The Personal Statement / WORKSHEET 2

STAGE TWO: WRITE THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

BRAINSTORM:

Write any idea that comes to mind when you consider the suggested topics (words circled on the application).

Sample (just a start – you will need more!): want to be teacher, I had a special English teacher in HS who gave me confidence that I can write and introduced me to Maya Angelou, my favorite author, volunteering in my daughter's second grade class showed me that I love the classroom and the opportunity to create projects and get students interested in reading, originally I thought I would go into business but I am not sure why I picked that

REVIEW THE IDEAS YOU GENERATED:

Cross out the less essential ones and mark the ideas you want to elaborate to tell YOUR story.

Sample (just a start!): want to be teacher, I had a special English teacher in HS who gave me confidence that I can write and introduced me to Maya Angelou, my favorite author, volunteering in my daughter's second grade class showed me that I love the classroom and want to teach! originally I thought I would go into business but I am not sure why I picked that

CREATE AN OUTLINE THAT ORGANIZES YOUR IDEAS:

Sample Outline (not a complete outline – make sure your outline fits YOUR story!)

INTRODUCTION: Name, where I am from, my family, and my major

PARAGRAPH ONE: How I got interested in teaching

- English Teacher in HS
- Volunteering in my daughter's 2nd grade class

WRITE THE DRAFT FOLLOWING YOUR OUTLINE, elaborating, explaining, showing YOUR story!

Sample Passage (too general – see highlighted): I really enjoyed volunteering in my daughter's second grade class. It was so rewarding to work with the students.

Revision (with development!): When I volunteered in my daughter's second grade class, I helped the students with a reading project. It was so rewarding when the students became excited about the book they were presenting to the class. They created dioramas of their favorite scenes and even dressed up like their favorite characters. I know how important reading skills are to a child's education and I loved seeing them engage with the stories.

The Personal Statement / WORKSHEET 3

STAGE THREE: POLISH YOUR WORK

EDIT PARAGRAPHS: Review your draft asking the following questions

1. IS ONE PARAGRAPH MUCH LONGER THAN THE OTHERS?

Should it be broken into two paragraphs? Are there unnecessary details or repetition of ideas? Can my wording be more succinct?

2. IS ONE PARAGRAPH MUCH SHORTER THAN THE OTHERS?

Can I add examples, specific details, and explanations to develop the paragraph? Should I delete the paragraph? Can it be combined with another paragraph?

EDIT FOR WORD CHOICE: Notice how the following word choice edits improve the writing. Look for similar opportunities to improve your personal statement.

1. BE SPECIFIC: I am pursuing a degree in education ~~an Associate of Arts degree in~~ Elementary Education.

2. BE VIVID: I was fortunate to have a great ~~challenging but encouraging~~ English teacher in high school.

3. BE FORMAL: Making the Dean's list was a ~~big deal~~ a significant accomplishment for me.

EDIT FOR CLARITY: Notice how the following edits improve the writing. Look for similar opportunities to improve your personal statement.

1. BE DIRECT: One aspect of the college experience that I have found to be very difficult is affording all the expenses. ~~I have found it difficult to afford all the college expenses.~~

2. REWORD FOR CLARITY: To make the Dean's List, an accomplishment that came from a lot of hard work was something that was like that for me. ~~I studied very hard to make the Dean's list,~~ and this was a significant accomplishment for me.

PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD!

- Don't proofread right after you finish writing. Wait a few hours or a day.
- Look for major errors and the errors you tend to make.
- Proofread it sentence by sentence backwards so you don't become distracted by the flow and forget to look for errors!
- **Call the Writing Center (747-2294) or drop by (AD 129) to schedule an appointment. Writing Center hours are as follows: Mondays 10-4, Tuesdays 10-7:30, Wednesdays 10-5, Thursdays 10-4, and Fridays 12-2.**