
Personal Statement Writing

— Writing Center —

UndocuSpartan Student Resource Center

What should you include and do in your personal statements?

*Remember reviewers want to know why you are the best choice!

What you should include / do

- ★ Fully answer every part of the question being asked.
- ★ Use a strong personal voice, *use e.g, "I" and "my."*
- ★ Make sure you tell a positive, specific story about you as the "hero" who succeeds, grows, or learns from the past.
- ★ Demonstrate what makes you unique. Use your relevant traits, abilities, and experiences.

What you should **AVOID** doing:

- ❑ Making someone else the star of the story, and not presenting yourself as the focus.
- ❑ Lacking a single, clear focus for your story.
- ❑ Writing that sounds resume-like: Too formal and stiff.
- ❑ Not proofreading for typos and style.
- ❑ Bragging, complaining, or speaking negatively about others or yourself.

How should I approach writing personal statements?

- ★ Read examples of personal statements for inspiration.
- ★ Write multiple drafts.
 - Draft 1 = ideas.
 - Draft 2 = organization.
 - Draft 3 = grammar.

- ★ Get reader feedback:
 - Trade statements with classmates.
 - Make appointments with tutors, professors, and the Career Center.

Suggested Content Organization

1. Your Broad Personal Answer
2. The Importance to You and/or Your Community
3. A Specific, Personal, and Relevant Example
4. Your Future Looking Statement

Cultural Wealth Model

Definition of cultural wealth: common or shared experiences, strengths, and knowledge among marginalized communities, particularly communities of color; culture work coming together to create skills for culturally disadvantaged communities (Yosso).

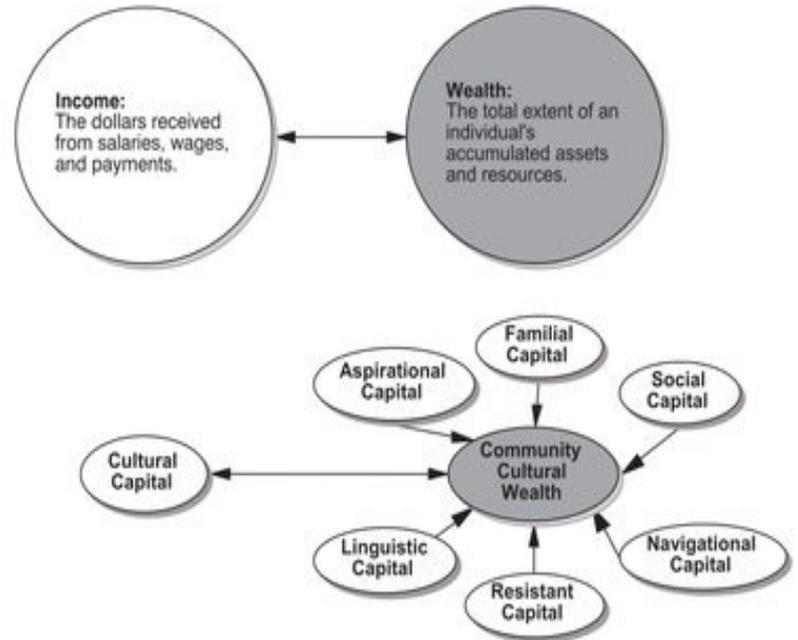


Figure 2. A model of community cultural wealth. Adapted from: Oliver & Shapiro, 1995

Six Capitals of Cultural Wealth

Linguistic - “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style”

Aspirational - “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers”

Familial - “those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition”

Social - “networks of people and community resources [...] can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions”

Navigational - “skills of maneuvering through social institutions [...] the ability to maneuver through institutions not created with Communities of Color in mind”

Resistant - “those knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality”

Personal Statement Activity

Personal Statement Examples

Discuss your career goals, what you hope to contribute to your desired profession, and how long you plan on working after finishing your degree. (Max 150 words.)

With my degree in Sociology, I plan to create a non-profit organization that supports young, single mothers to complete their education to get their high school diplomas or GEDs, and to continue on into higher education. I feel that through my personal experiences, I can contribute an in-depth knowledge of what these mothers need and create a program to support them. For example, I plan to provide financial support to the mothers as well as daycare service, so that they can focus their energy on their college classes. I plan to work as long as I am physically able to do so. My dream is that my non-profit organization will continue even after I am no longer at the helm.

My long-term goal is to get more students of color engaged in STEM. I believe that diversity within engineering is essential because of a greater diversity of opinions and experiences. [...] As the only undocumented student in the department, it is a significant struggle to find others with whom I can connect or understand my student experience and how it impacts me as an academic. However, I am motivated to challenge these systems as I recognize that my siblings and others who will follow after me will have a better experience. I wish to continue to inspire others to act and take action. I plan to make an impact through my future graduate research, showing that undocumented immigrants can pursue an advanced degree and inspiring others to pursue their dream regardless of legal status.

Personal Statement Prompt

1. Please explain why you are interested in joining the Elevate Tutoring Fellowship Program and how this program fits your educational and personal goals? (At least 250 words)

Scholarship Resources for Undocumented Scholars

