

# The Statement of Purpose: A Few Suggestions

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# What is a statement of purpose?

- An essay included in a university application which...
  - Reveals your abilities as a writer
  - Shows your personality
  - Breathes life into a lifeless process
  - Tells the university what kind of person you are, not what kind of student you are
- Also called a “Personal Statement Essay” or a “College Application Essay”

# How important is it?

- What do you think? On a scale of one to ten, where is importance of the statement of purpose?
  - Don't tell me. Tell your neighbor.
- My answer:
  - Somewhere between zero and one (really!)

# However...

This does not mean that it is unimportant.

Think of it as a piece of the puzzle.

# What do colleges look for in one?

- If you were a reader, what would *you* look for?  
Don't tell me, tell your neighbor.
  - Honesty
  - Originality
  - Concise
  - Interesting
  - Revealing
  - NOT a list of academic achievements!

# Don't be afraid to...

- Reveal weaknesses
- Share learning experiences and mistakes
- Admit shortcomings

And...

- Show how you deal with them or have overcome them.

# How do I do it?

- My advice: ***Write a story about yourself***
  - A serious problem you faced at home or school
  - A time when you learned something about yourself
  - An embarrassing experience that made you a better person
  - A time you failed at something you worked very hard for

# Things to remember

- There is no pre-defined structure outside of the basic need for brevity, clarity and sincerity
- Put yourself in your reader's shoes
- How we handle failure is more revealing than how we handle success
- Use simple sentences and short words
- Short paragraphs are easier to read
- Do your own writing
- Ask a friend to read it and give you advice
- Revise, revise, revise
- Relax! You can only do your best, no more.

# What do you think?

- Tell your neighbor your thoughts about this approach. Answer these questions:
- Is this approach surprising? Why?
- What questions do you have?
- Does this make the process seem easier or harder. Why?

# COMMUNICATION



PRINTED FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT JUST IMAGINE "MY DINNER WITH ANDRÉ" WITHOUT IT AND YOU'LL SEE MY POINT.

MANY MODES OF COMMUNICATION EXIST THE ORAL DEVICE IS OFTEN USED. MUSIC, AS WELL AS BOOKS ARE OTHER EXAMPLES. LARGE, SLANTY OBJECTS ARE ALSO USED, OFTEN TO EXPRESS EMOTION.

CARTOONING IS SET AMONGST MODES, AND THE BEST OF THAT OR YOU DUBBY MY WORDS? WHO GETS MORE READERS, MALENAU OR GAMES? TRUDEAU? SEE ANY "KILLING FIELD CALENDARS NEXT TO THE "FOR GOD" ONES? NEED I CONTINUE?

CARTOONING ALLOWS ME TO COMMUNICATE WHAT HERE WORDS CANNOT.

FOR EXAMPLE -

THE WORLD IS SHAPED LIKE MY HEAD I PREFER IT

BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT I LOVE THE MOST ABOUT CARTOONS? I MEAN ASIDE FROM THE ESCAP- COMMUNICATION VALUE?

...THE THING I LOVE THE MOST IS --

## THE COMPANY!



# Let's practice!

- Very quickly, write a list of two or three of your worst failures at school.
- Make sure that each of them was a learning experience for you.
- What did you learn from them?
- How did they change you?
- Take five minutes to write them down.
- Share them with two neighbors.

# Thank You!

For more information:

100 Successful College Application Essays,  
edited by the staff of *The Harvard Independent*  
(2002)

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