

# MAKE A STATEMENT!

## TIPS ON WRITING A STAND-OUT PERSONAL STATEMENT

The purpose of a well-written personal statement is to help you stand out from all the other applicants. If you plan to attend dental school, you will most likely be required to submit an essay as part of your application. This is an opportunity to showcase your skills and personal qualities that are not reflected in test scores.

**Make your personal statement stand out by avoiding these common personal statement mistakes!**

## COMMON PERSONAL STATEMENT MISTAKES



### **NOT MAKING IT PERSONAL**

- The personal statement is your main opportunity to show dental schools what makes you unique and special. Your essay should paint a picture of your goals, desires, values, and outlook.



### **NOT CLEARLY EXPLAINING 'WHY DENTAL SCHOOL'**

- Dental schools want to admit students who truly want to become dentists. Your essay needs to clearly explain why you want to be a dentist. (Saying you want to help people is not a good reason- lots of other professions help people. Your essay must show what specifically about the role of a dentist appeals to you.)



### **FOCUSING ON NEGATIVES**

- Your personal statement is a time to show why you are a great candidate for admission to dental school. Pointing out your weaknesses is counterproductive. (If you have a serious "red flag" in your past, giving a brief explanation of what happened and how you grew from the experience may be justified; however, this is not the case for most applicants.)



### **GIVING EXCUSES**

- If you must mention a shortcoming or mistake in your past, don't make excuses. Discuss what you learned from the experience and how you will ensure that you won't make similar mistakes in the future.



### **LISTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITHOUT EXPLANATION**

- Your personal statement is not a glorified CV. While it is great to mention your accomplishments, you need to discuss what they mean to you and how those experiences helped to make you an ideal candidate for dental school.



### **UNNECESSARILY FLOWERY LANGUAGE**

- Your personal statement is not a creative writing assignment. Dental schools want clear, concise language. You don't get bonus points for using big, obscure words.



### **NOT PROVIDING EXAMPLES**

- You must provide evidence of your positive attributes and skills. For example, if you say that you have great leadership skills, describe an instance where you demonstrated leadership.



### **CRITICIZING DENTISTS/THE DENTAL PROFESSION**

- Although there are definitely some bad dentists and negative aspects of the dental profession, your personal statement is not the place to bring them up.



### **TALKING ABOUT "ANCIENT HISTORY"**

- Dental schools want to know about who you are *currently*. They really are not interested in what you did in high school. Keep the focus of your essay on recent events.



### **FOCUSING ON UNRELATED TOPICS**

- The purpose of your personal statement is to explain why you are an excellent candidate for dental school. Avoid discussing topics that can not be related to the central objective.



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