



TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE PERSONAL STATEMENT

A PRESENTATION GIVEN FOR RESEARCH EXPERIENCE FOR UNDERGRADS BY
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THINGS TO REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME

- What is technical writing
- What sets it apart from other varieties of writing
- What are some common everyday examples we could find of technical writing
- Does what we learned last time have any relevance for our conversation today

REMEMBER THAT PERSONAL STATEMENTS ARE PERSUASIVE

- The personal statement is about YOU, which means you'll need to comfortable writing about yourself.
- Don't think of it as bragging (but be mindful of tone)
- Write in your own voice
- Be strategic or “economical” with your word choice
- Don't be afraid to be passionate about the your research interests

CREATE A COHESIVE NARRATIVE WITH A CLEAR “THESIS”

- Example: Experiences such as this have helped me understand that historical lessons continue to have an impact on our culture, and have contributed to my goal of uncovering minority voices from the past. As a result, *I have focused my academic, professional, and extracurricular activities on my goal of pursuing a PhD in order to examine the daily lives of religious minorities during 18th century France and to use Marxist theory to understand the economic justifications used to stigmatize these groups.*

WRITE IN YOUR OWN VOICE

- Needs improvement: From all of these experiences, I came to a realization that being a dentist means being an imperative leader, an indispensable team player, and someone with refined dexterity skills.
- Better: Leading a dental practice requires coordination among many professionals, and my experience as president of UH Students for Change has demonstrated my success in working with a team of my peers.

BE SPECIFIC, BUT CONCISE

- Needs improvement: *My internship helped me understand the power of serving others.*
- Better: *Through working directly with wonderful researchers in the dynamic field of biotechnology, I see now that this field has the wonderful potential not only to be on the cutting edge of technological innovation, but also to aid many patients who previously would not have had access to such resources.*
- Best: *Through working directly with researchers in biotechnology, I now understand the field's potential not only to be on the cutting edge of technological innovation, but also to aid many patients in need.*

TALK ABOUT YOUR CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALIFICATIONS BY REFERENCING SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

- Needs improvement: To succeed academically you must work hard, and I am well-qualified based on my work ethic.
- Better: Working as a math tutor while simultaneously taking 18 hours and receiving a 3.5 GPA last semester was a challenge, but my planning and time management skills assured my success. In addition to using the work as a way to earn money, I could also brush up on my skills for my classes, and I knew that I would also have time to study when I wasn't working with students.

REMEMBER: You have to make the concrete connections for the reader. **NEVER** assume that they “know what you mean”

TAILOR YOUR ESSAY TO THE PROGRAMS TO WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING

- From the program website: “The University of Houston’s Center for Nuclear Receptors and Cell Signaling (CNRCS) [includes] current faculty members [who] are conducting a wide range of cutting-edge research, primarily focused on cancer-related investigations.”
- Example of tailoring an essay: My previous lab experience at MD Anderson has let me know the challenges that cancer-related investigations can pose, and I am particularly interested in the CNRCS’s Gustafsson Lab. The lab’s partnership with the Texas Medical Center provides opportunities for both academic investigation and industry applications of the continuing insights into estrogen receptor-alpha’s role in the division and proliferation of cancer cells.

HOW CAN THIS INFORMATION HELP ME IF I DON'T WANT TO GO TO GRAD SCHOOL

- Clear, persuasive writing is important for future writing projects
- Cover letters for a new job
- Grant writing

REVISE, REVISE, AND REVISE

- Start early!!
- Plan to work with several drafts, and don't be afraid to be messy
- Use multiple revision strategies to find out which one works best for you
 - Here's one: the magic cabinet
- Grab a friend to help you out with peer review
- Visit the Writing Center

SIGN UP WITH THE WRITING CENTER

To sign up for a UH Writing Center consultation visit our website at writingcenter.uh.edu and click “Schedule Appointments” to access our scheduling system

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
WRITING CENTER

**University of Houston
Writing Center**

First visit? [Click here to register.](#)
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Having trouble logging in?
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Using screen reader software?
[Click here for the text-only scheduler.](#)

For help with your WC Online account, call the Writing Center at 713-743-3018 or 713-743-3016.

We are located in the Classroom and Business Building, or CBB (Bldg. 499) on the second floor in Room 234.

[Click here to see a map of our location.](#)

Please note that the time stamp on some automated emails does not reflect UH's time zone. The WC Online server is hosted at a different location.

Under "CHOOSE A SCHEDULE" on the left, select the correct program name or course number that you need. If the program name or course number is not listed, verify your assignment instructions and required sign-up dates.

If an appointment is scheduled under an incorrect course number or program name, you may not receive credit for the consultation.

Please call us at 713-743-3016 with any questions about WC Online.

If you do not have an account with the UH Writing Center, select “Click here to register” and enter your information. Once you have an account, enter your email address and password, choose “Graduate Writing Consultations” from the drop-down menu and log in.

WHERE ARE WE?

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**
WRITING CENTER



- A** Classroom and Business Building
- B** M.D. Anderson Library
- C** Student Center North
- D** Student Center South
- E** LeRoy and Lucille Melcher Hall

writingcenter.uh.edu | 713-743-3016 | writingcenter@uh.edu

CBB 234

Monday-Thursday	9:00-7:00pm
Friday	9:00-5:00
Saturday	10:00-1:00