News for the Week of November 17, 2014

Revising your Personal Statement

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Writing a personal statement is a little like writing an essay for your English class, or even a science research paper. The structure of an essay is generally the same, but with the personal statement, the topic is you! In this week’s newsletter, we’ll explore the general outline and structure of your essay, and get you a good start on a rough draft.

STEP 5. Creating an outline and filling it in as your rough draft

In last week’s newsletter, you decided on a topic and have a clear, honest list of why this topic is important to you and how it relates to your future academic career. Now you need to sketch an outline of what your essay will look like using those examples. Does this structure look familiar?

1. Introduction

This is the most important part of your essay! You should command attention from the beginning with a great opening sentence, but do not give away the whole story in this paragraph. Address the question in a way that will make the reader want to read the whole essay!

2. Body

The body of your essay will contain several paragraphs (2-4) each with an opening sentence followed by examples of support for your story. Jot down a sentence that will start off each paragraph, and then list an example that correlates with it. As you write your draft, expand upon the theme for that paragraph and incorporate your example.

3. Conclusion

Conclude by relating your story and examples to your reasons for pursuing a degree, summarizing your answer to the original question.

In next week’s newsletter, we’ll discuss writing styles, tone, and how to avoid clichés.