Revising your Personal Statement

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By the time you have written, re-written, and written again the rough draft of your personal statement, you may need a break! Use the soon approaching winter break to return to your essay with refreshed eyes, and then ask friends, family, or anyone who you trust to read it and give you some constructive criticism.

STEP 6. Proof your own essay

In last week’s newsletter, we got you started on step 5, your rough draft. Did you make a lot of changes while you were writing? Did you have to write a few versions? Most likely, you did. Now re-read your final rough draft, while asking yourself the following questions:

- **Did you use your own vocabulary?**
  Application readers can tell if you inserted big words to impress them. Use words that you normally use in your writing and speaking.

- **Do you have good sentence variety?**
  Make sure your sentences don’t all start with “I”. It’s also good to have sentences of varying length—short to long—and in varying order too.

- **How does your essay flow?**
  Do your paragraphs flow nicely into each other? Are there places you could add/remove sentences to make it more readable?

- **Did you use any clichés?**
  There may be times when these phrases are actually applicable to you, but with so many students using them in their essay, the admissions committee might get bored. Try avoiding phrases like, “triumph over adversity” or “it opened my eyes to a whole new world”. (From Essay Edge—Top 10 Essay Clichés, www.essayedge.com)

STEP 7. Have someone else proof your essay

Have as many people as you can check your essay for spelling, grammar, and for points on the list above. You may end up reworking your essay based on the results. Every step gets you a little closer to that great essay!