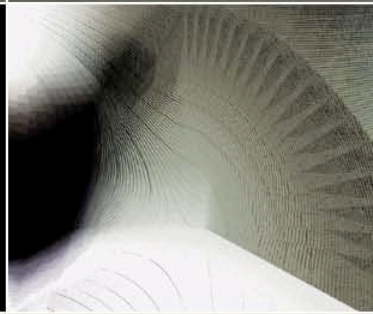


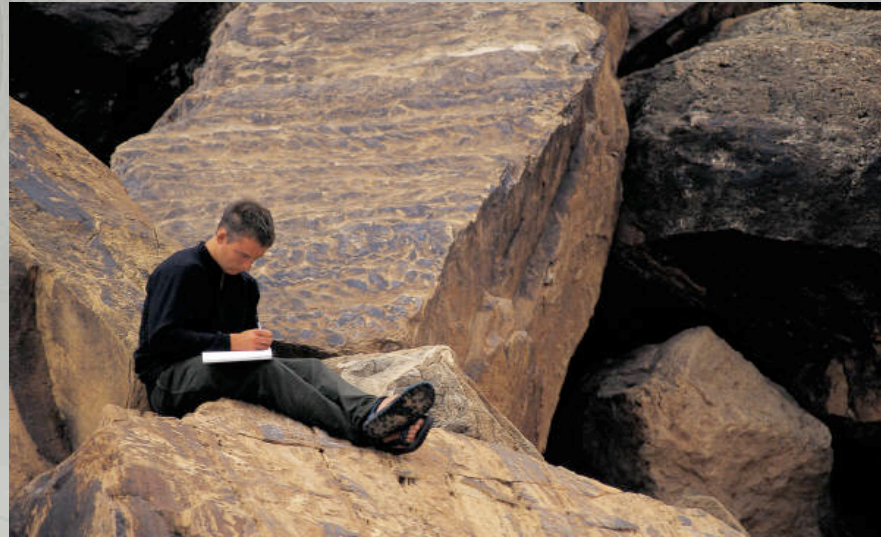
Writing A Personal Statement

Career Development Center
209 Wigley Administration Center
Minnesota State University, Mankato
507.389.6061 www.mnsu.edu/cdc



Definition of a personal statement

A unique and personal introduction of yourself to the selection committee



What is a personal statement?

- **It is a(n):**
- **Picture**
- **Invitation**
- **Indication of priorities and judgment**
- **Personal story**
- **Authentic piece**

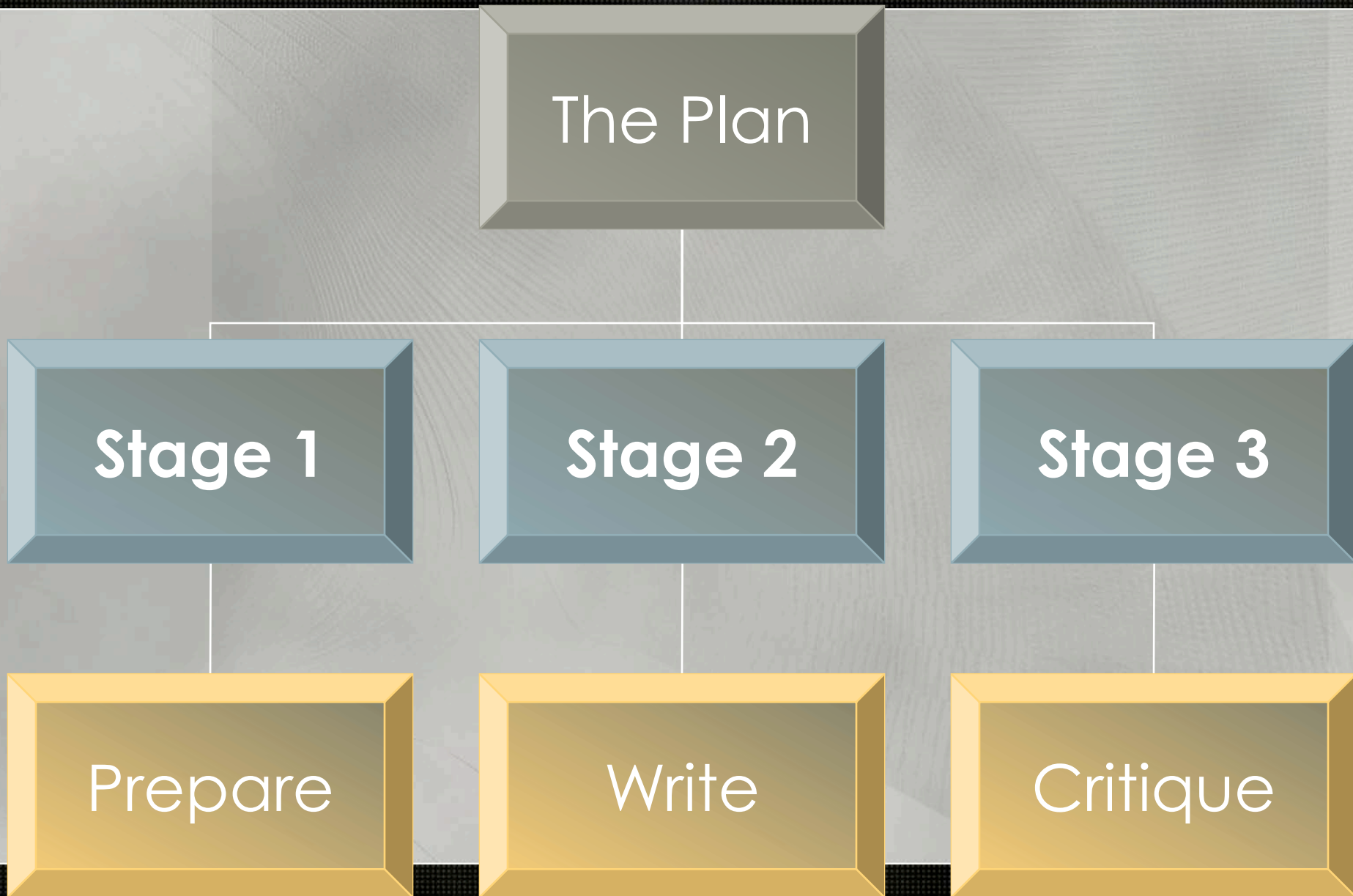
http://www.willamette.edu/dept/saga/national/personal_statements/definition.htm

What a personal statement is NOT

- **It is not a(n):**
- Academic paper with you as the subject
- Resume
- Journal entry
- Plea or justification for entry into grad school

http://www.willamette.edu/dept/saga/national/personal_statements/definition.htm

A glance at how to write a personal statement



Preparing for a Personal Statement

○ **Step 1: Polish up your writing skills**

- If you're having trouble, The Center for Academic Success can assist you

○ **Step 2: Research the Institution and the program**

- Does it fit you?
- Why did you choose the program?
- What stood out about the

Preparing for a Personal Statement

- **Step 3: Find out the requirements for your personal statement in the specific program you chose**

Examples of Requirements-

- Business
 - Education and Human Development
 - Engineering and Applied Science
-
- **Step 4: Self-Assessment-get a piece of paper out and jot down some...**
 - Past Successes
 - Core values
 - Contributions
 - Goals

Preparing for a Personal Statement

- **Step 5: What got you to this point in your life?**
 - Create a timeline of your life focusing in on key points that got you to where you are today
- **Step 6: BRAINSTORM-**
 - To get your creative mind going, write down the answers to the following questions...

Questions to ask yourself

- **What is distinctive about me?**
 - What sets me apart from my peers?
- **When did I first become interested in my field of study?**
 - What have I learned since then?
 - What motivates me in the field?
 - What have I learned about myself in the field?
- **What events, people or family history have shaped me?**
 - How did this contribute to my choice of program/school?

Questions to ask yourself

- **What intellectual influences have shaped me?**
 - Discuss writers, books, professors
- **How can I help the committee understand me?**
 - What is most important for the committee to know about me?
- **What special qualifications or skills that I possess would make me more successful in graduate school?**

Questions to ask yourself

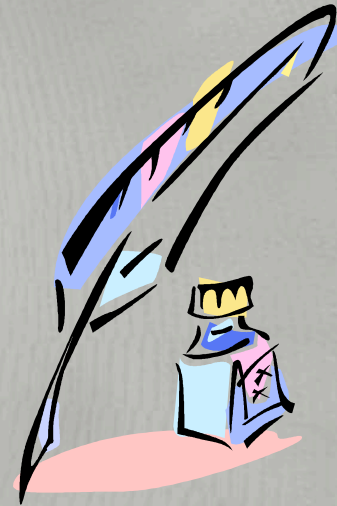
- **How has my undergraduate experience prepared me for graduate/professional school?**
 - What are some of my academic accomplishments?
- **What are my career goals?**
 - How will graduate/ professional school get me to my career goals?
- **What challenges have I faced and overcome recently?**
 - How does this make me a more viable candidate for graduate school?

Tips before you start writing

- **Plan to write the personal statement ahead of time**
 - Allow as much time possible for you to collect your thoughts and proofreading
- **Read some examples and get ideas**
 - Engineering example
 - Accepted. com examples
 - MA Program example
 - Law School example
- **Get to know what types of personal statements are acceptable in your field**
 - What do faculty expect/like to see?
 - Get a feel for your field—is it more artistic or professional?

Do's and Don'ts

- Things to keep in mind while writing your personal statement



Do's

- **Have a focus**
- **Brainstorm before writing**
- **Use examples to display skills**
- **Keep a professional theme, but be sure it reflects you**
- **Be unique**
- **Talk about the features of the school that drew you in**
- **Be yourself, not someone you think they want you to be**
- **Be positive**

Do's

- **Write about something that moves you**
- **Be creative, especially in the beginning—grab the reader's attention**
- **Proofread**
- **Have other people read it**
- **Get feedback from professionals in the field**
- **Take responsibility for GPA and test scores, identify why they may not be up to par**
- **Get to the point, be concise**

Don'ts

- **Don't rewrite your resume**
- **Don't use big words you wouldn't normally use**
- **Don't be negative**
- **Don't force your values on others**
- **Don't talk about money as motivation in the field**
- **Don't lie**
- **Don't use clichés**
- **Don't dig into sensitive topics**
- **Don't get overly personal and make the reader uncomfortable**
- **Don't go on and on and on**
- **Don't let careless errors leave you out of the selection process**

Writing the personal Statement

- **The best thing to do is start writing, even if you are unsure of what exactly to say**
 - Get your ideas out there
- **It may help to write ideas out with paper and pen before typing**
 - Typing seems formal and may be intimidating
- **Start over if you need to, it's okay**
- **Writer's block?**
 - Put it down and pick it up later, give your brain time to breath and think

Critiquing/Finalizing the Personal Statement

- **Double check that you have fulfilled all requirements of the program in which you are applying**
- **Type it with no mistakes**
- **Proofread it**
 - Spell-check
 - Peer review
 - Self-check
 - Remember, you can never have enough eyes see it!

Critiquing/Finalizing the Personal Statement

- **How do you feel about it overall?**
 - Is it too wordy?
 - Does it get your point across?
 - Does it portray you?
 - Are you proud of it?
 - **IF YOU DON'T STAND BEHIND IT, DON'T SEND IT!**
- **Print it on nice paper and be sure not to fold it in the mailing process**

Now That You're Finished

- **Pat yourself on the back for achieving a great accomplishment!**
- **Resources and References to Check out**
 - **Websites**
 - www.accepted.com
 - <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/workshop/tipsandtechniques.htm>
 - http://www.quintcareers.com/creating_personal_mission_statements.html
 - http://www.willamette.edu/dept/saga/national/personal_statements/
 - http://www.essayedge.com/graduate/essayadvice/course/lo_lookfor.shtml



Thank You

Thanks for your attention and good luck
with everything!!!

**THANK
YOU**

