Writing a Personal Statement

What is a Personal Statement?
A personal statement is a short description of your character, interests, and goals. It should make the reader excited about your potential as a student and a future professional. It should also explain why you are a good fit for the college to which you are applying and why the reader should want you to attend this college.

You Should:

- Clearly answer the prompt or question(s)
  - Some colleges allow you to write whatever you want. However, if a college asks you to answer certain questions or address a certain prompt in your statement, make sure you do so.
- Narrow the focus of your statement
  - You cannot possibly tell the reader about ALL your interests, goals, and experiences. Instead, narrow the statement’s focus to a few important points, themes, or experiences.
- Make yourself and/or your story interesting to the reader
  - What is different, special, or unique about you or your experiences? Why does this make you a great fit for the college to which you are applying? Remember to be yourself!
- Be specific and detailed about your accomplishments
  - It is not convincing to say, “I am a great student.” You should provide specific, concrete details, such as “I took at least fifteen credits each semester and still maintained a strong GPA.”
- Do outside research
  - The reader will like it if you know something about the school and why you want to go there. For example, if you want to study Math, you should research the school’s Math department so that you can mention something about why you like it.
- Write Formally and Professionally
  - Your readers are professionals. To earn their respect, you should write as a professional.
  - Avoid making careless mistakes, such as typos, misspellings, and grammar errors.
- Avoid Clichés
  - Do not use overused statements like “I want to help people.” Instead, write specific, detailed statements that set you apart from other applicants, such as “I want to assist lower-income people with finding better job opportunities.”

You should NOT:

- Repeat information from other parts of the application
  - You have limited space in a personal statement. Use it wisely!
- Whine about negative experiences
  - Do you like whiners? Neither do other people.
- Preach to the reader
  - You should not lecture the reader. You should explain why you are a good applicant.
- Talk about politics, religion, or money
  - These topics are probably not relevant to your statement, and they might offend the reader.