What is a Personal Statement?
- It describes who you are personally, professionally and academically
- It gives the school an opportunity to examine how you think and express yourself.

Types of Personal Statements / Graduate Admission Essays
- General / Comprehensive: Allows you to write openly with few specific requirements for the subject matter
- Specific Essays: Given specific questions to answer. Goal: respond persuasively to hold reader’s interest.

Keys to Writing Your Essay
- Understand yourself
- Examine yourself and self-reflect on who you are
- What sets you apart from the other candidates?
- Tell a personal story
  - Stick to the facts
  - Make yourself memorable in a positive way
  - Be interesting, insightful and appropriately revealing
  - Describe your challenges and difficulties (without dwelling on the negative) and how you overcame them
  - Find a “hook” to your story that makes you unique
- Write a compelling opening paragraph
  - This is usually the most important component of your essay
  - Grab the reader’s attention!
  - Introduce the “hook” or other elements most relevant to your story
- Who are you?
  - Discuss your background and experiences
  - Explain how you are different from other applicants
  - Follow-up with interest and exposure to the field
  - Refer to classes, seminars, research, books and discussion with those in the field
• Complete a background check
  ◦ Review your experiences, events and achievements
• What not to include:
  ◦ Do not include high school information, unless you had extraordinary achievements and/or traumatic events which impacted your career plans
  ◦ Do not include controversial topics such as religion, politics, etc..
  ◦ Do not include ALL achievements, be selective and highlight those that are most relevant

Keep in mind...
• What you say and how you say it is most important!
• Be sure to answer any specific questions asked
• When appropriate, tell a story about yourself
• Include material that is “personal” in nature
• Adhere to word and page limits
• Avoid obvious clichés
• Do not write what you think the school wants to hear, be honest!
• Be sure you have proofread your essay for spelling and/or grammatical errors
• Know why you are applying to this particular school; research and be prepared to explain

Writing your personal statement for graduate and professional school, Career Development Center, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania. Retrieved from http://www.albright.edu/resources/careercenter/students-Grad-Prof.html

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