Ten Do's and Don'ts for Your Personal Statement

The Do's

- Unite your essay and give it direction with a theme or thesis. The thesis is the main point you want to communicate.
- Before you begin writing, choose what you want to discuss and the order in which you want to discuss it. Write an outline to stay on target.
- Use concrete examples from your life experience to support your thesis and distinguish yourself from other applicants.
- Write about what interests you – that what excites you. That's what the admissions staff wants to read.
- Start your essay with an attention-grabbing lead – an anecdote, quote, question, or engaging description of a scene.
- End your essay with a conclusion that refers back to the lead and restates your thesis.
- Revise your essay at least three times.
- In addition to your editing, ask someone else to critique your statement of purpose for you.
- Proofread your personal statement by reading it out loud or reading it into a tape recorder and playing back the tape.
- Write clearly, succinctly, and with purpose.

The Don'ts

- Don't include information that doesn't support your thesis.
- Don't start your essay with "I was born in...," or "My parents came from..."
- Don't write an autobiography, itinerary, or résumé in prose.
- Don't try to be a clown (but gentle humor is OK).
- Don't be afraid to start over if the essay just isn't working or doesn't answer the essay question.
- Don't try to impress your reader with your vocabulary.
- Don't rely exclusively on your computer to check your spelling and grammar.
- Don't provide a collection of generic statements and platitudes.
- Don't give mealy-mouthed, weak excuses for your GPA or test scores.
- Don't make things up.

Taken from www.accepted.com
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