



# Scholarship Workshop:

## *Rocking the **Personal Statement***

The Reading and Writing Center, Fall 2022

# *What Is a Personal Statement?*

A personal statement is an opportunity to add richness and depth to your application: *it's a chance to make yourself come alive for the scholarship committee.*

You're so much more than transcripts and financial records!

The personal statement is a place for you to share what makes you, you: it's where you can shine *by being your authentic self.*



# *The Good News . . .*



Image from [mindat](https://www.mindat.org/)

You already have what you need to write a brilliant personal statement!

Every single one of you has stories, dreams, and perspectives that make you a uniquely fascinating and spectacular person.

You might not think so right now, *but it's true.*



# ***More Good News . . .***

You already have the raw material to write a terrific essay.

A personal statement asks you to shape that material into a form that allows it to shine — *a 500-word essay all about you.*

This can be hard to do, but you don't have to go it alone!



Image from [Men's Jewelry](#)

# *The RWC Is Here to Help!*



Image from [Mindat](#)

The tutors at MPC's Reading and Writing Center are experts.

We know what persuasive personal statements look like, we're compassionate, and we love helping students craft impactful essays that represent their true selves.

And, when it's time to put on that final polish, we can give you a hand with the grammatical stuff as well.



***Where to  
Find the  
RWC***

- Head downstairs to the bottom level of the library (LTC)
  - Monday through Thursday:  
*8 a.m. – 7 p.m.*
  - Friday: *8 a.m. – 1 p.m.*
- Find us online through Lobo Apps — click on the **Accudemia** button



# *Five Steps to Rock the Personal Statement\**

1. Read the Prompts
2. Brainstorm
3. Outline
4. Draft
5. Revise

\* The Reading and Writing Center can help you with each of these steps!



# *Step 1: Read the Prompts*

Even the most beautifully written essay is no good if it doesn't answer the prompt.



So, print out the personal statement prompts and underline or highlight keywords.

This will help you understand exactly what the prompts are asking of you.



# *You Will Write Two Personal Statements*

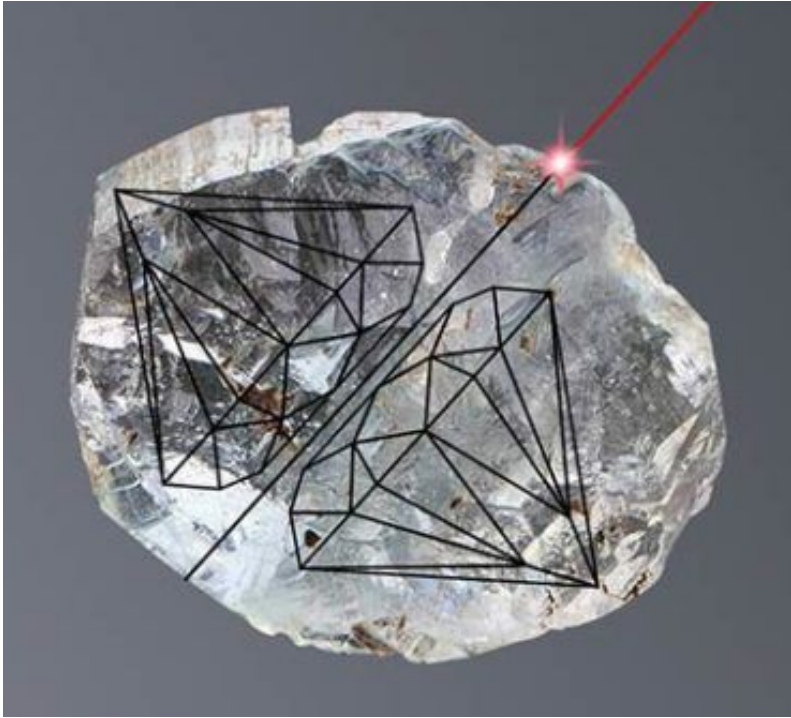


Image from [Goti Impex](#)

- For your first statement, you will be asked to respond to a specific, required prompt.
  - For your second statement, you will choose one of three prompts to respond to.
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- Some scholarships may require you to respond to one or more *additional* prompts, specific to those scholarships, *after* you submit the first two. (Worry about that later.)

# ***Your First Statement: The Prompt You Must Answer***

Please write a 500-word personal statement telling us about yourself and describing your **educational journey and career aspirations**.

You *may* also wish to describe **challenges** and **accomplishments** along the way, how your **past** has influenced you, *or* how receiving a **scholarship would help** you reach your goals.



# ***Your Second Statement: The Prompt You Pick***

Like the first statement, your second statement will require you to write up to 500 words (between one and two double-spaced pages).

This time, though, you have **three choices to pick from.**

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# ***Your Choices for Your Second Statement***

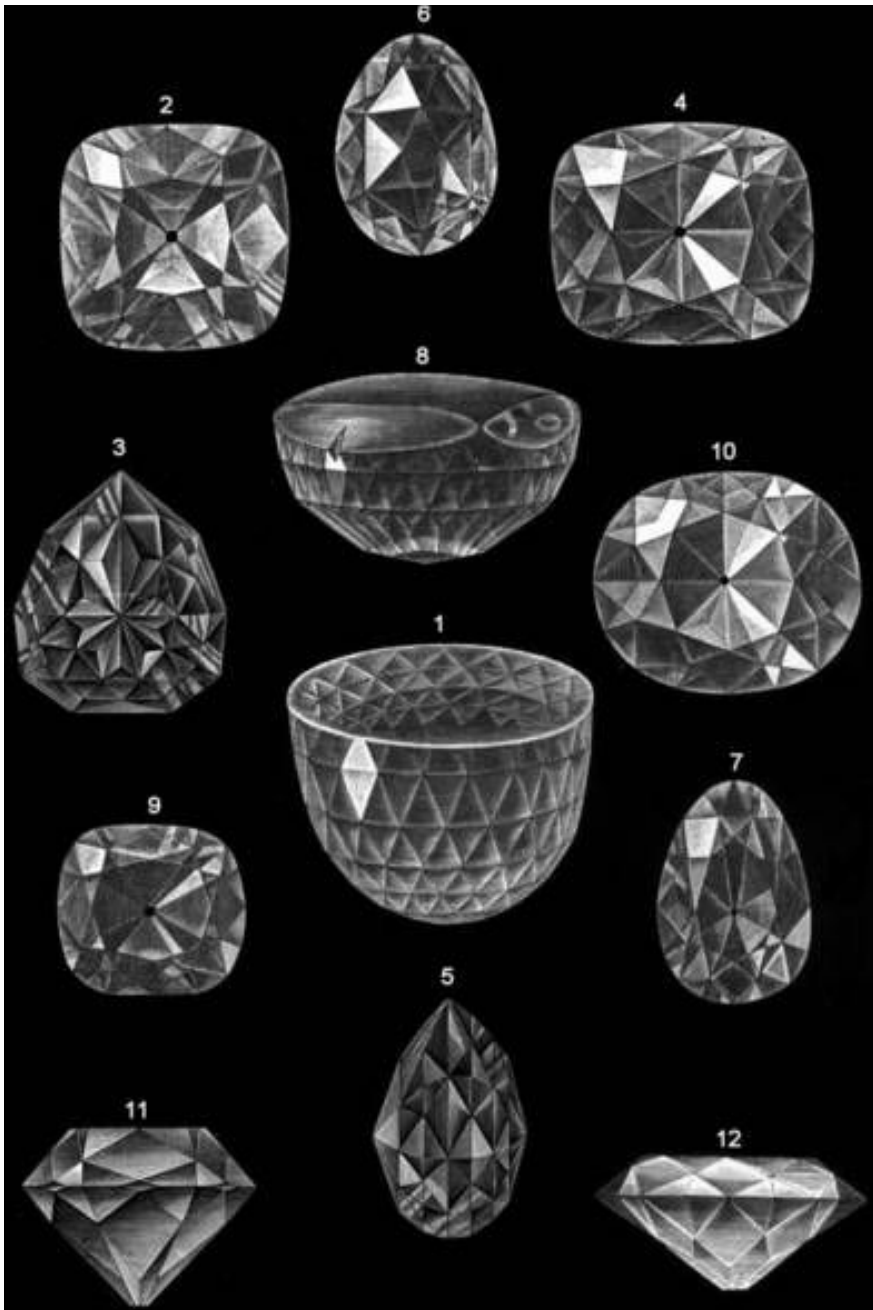
- The **lessons we take from the obstacles** we encounter can be fundamental to later **success**. Recount **a time** when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you **learn** from the experience?
- Reflect on **something that someone has done for you** that has made you happy or thankful in a **surprising** way. How has this **gratitude** affected or motivated you in a **positive manner**?
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find particularly **engaging or feel passionately** about. **Why** does it captivate or inspire you? **How** do you plan to incorporate this into your **future** learning, career path, **or** life in general?

## ***Step 2: Brainstorm***

Jot down ideas related to all four prompts, using a separate page for each one.

**Don't limit or censor yourself** at this stage, and don't rush yourself either: give your mind permission to play and explore all kinds of thoughts, memories, challenges, and dreams.

Think beyond your first idea: you may surprise yourself with what you discover!

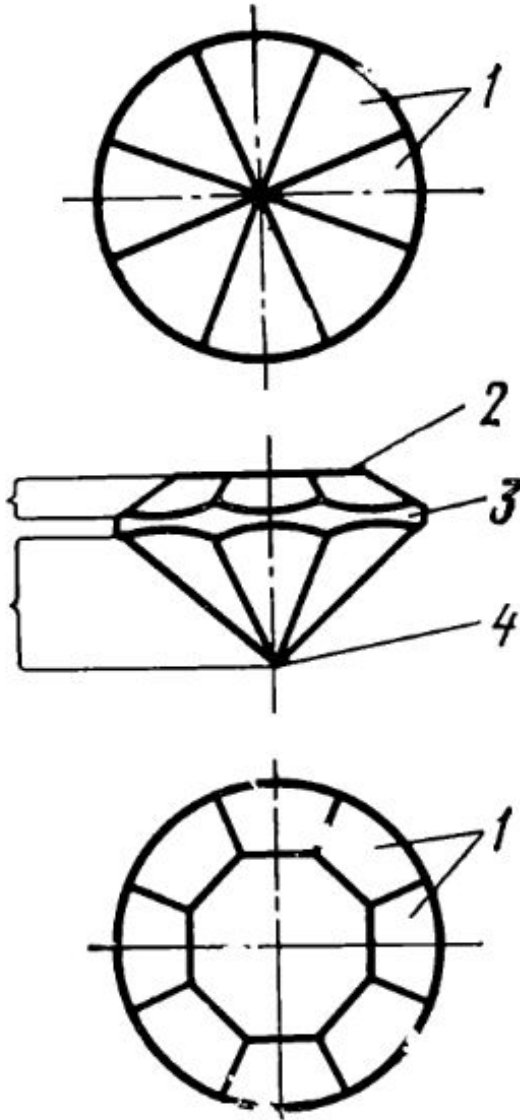


## *Step 3: Outline*

Once you've gathered your ideas, it's time to start planning how you will shape them into essays.

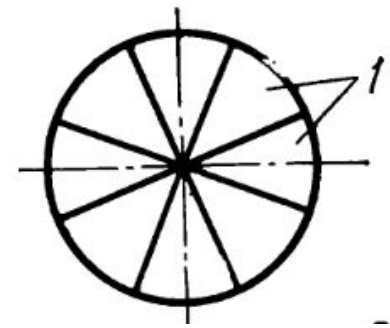
Remember that you're writing personal statements, not research papers, so you'll want to follow more of a narrative, **story-telling logic**.

Sketch outlines that will allow you to share meaningful information about yourself in a way that sticks to the point, flows naturally, and avoids repeating anything.





# *Example Outline*



1. I hope to do X in my career.
2. Experience A was my first introduction to X.
  - **Tip:** Start thinking about **vivid, sensory, descriptive details** you can include to create a clear picture in your reader's mind. This will make you and your essays memorable.
3. Experience B got me really curious about X.
4. Experience C was my first big step toward a career in X.
  - **Tip:** It's not enough to state the experiences you've had; you'll also want to **reflect on their meaning**, and show how you've grown from them. This will show your character.
5. This scholarship will allow me to pursue experience D, the next step on my path to a career in X.

# *Choose Your Optional Prompt*

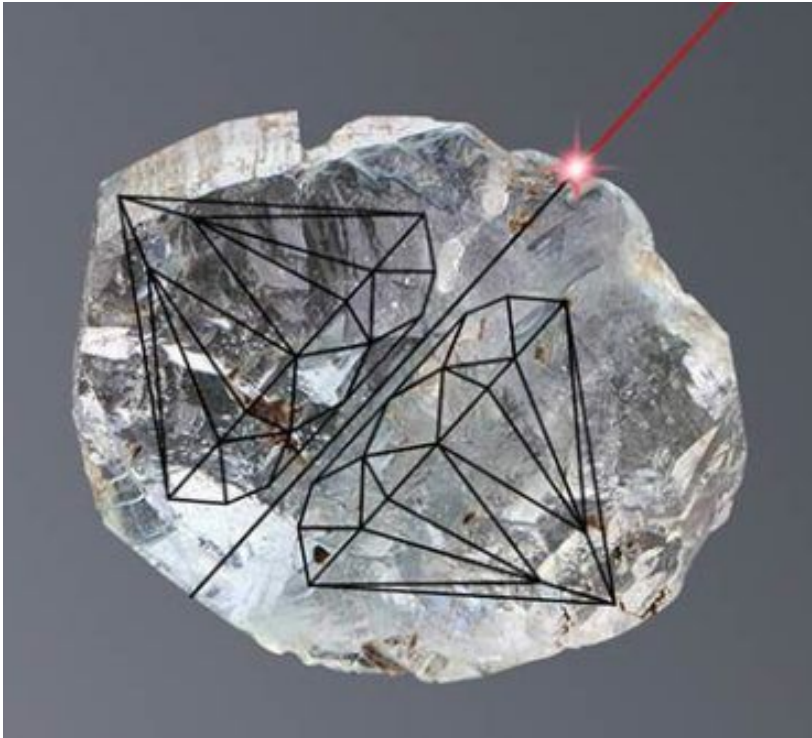


Image from [Goti Impex](#)

Once you've outlined all four personal statements, choose which of the three prompts you like best for your second essay.

Which one of the three do you feel most strongly about?

# Step 4: Draft

From your outlines, start writing your essays.

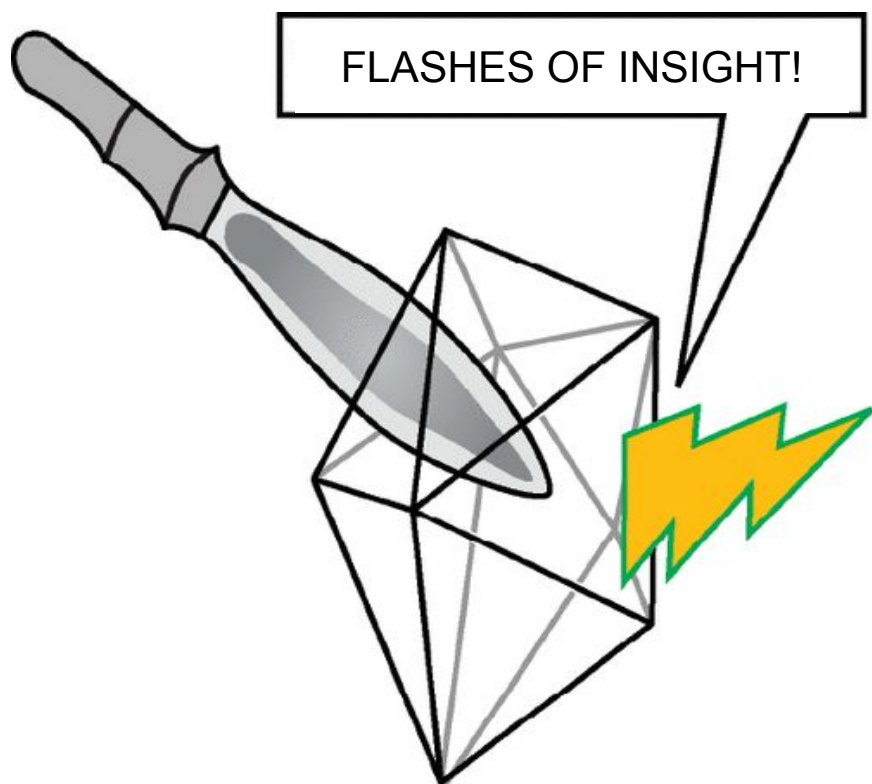


Image from [Journal of Chemical Education](#)

- Remember, there is a 500-word limit for each statement.
- Compose in Word or Google Docs so that you can use editing tools. Then copy and paste your essays into the scholarship application.
- Don't be too critical of yourself in this phase. Let your thoughts flow and save the editing for later.





Image from [NOVA](#), example from [KState](#)

# ***Make a Scene***

For example . . .

<b>Good Start</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Vivid!</b>
I changed my mind about being PreVet.	I did not like working at the animal clinic and dropped PreVet.	After having to euthanize a healthy beagle, simply because the owner did not want it, I decided I could never run a veterinary clinic.

# *Step 5: Revise*



- Give yourself plenty of time to revise your personal statements — days or even weeks.
- Carve away at your essays until you're confident that what remains is clear, specific, sharply detailed, and reflective — don't repeat yourself; instead, make every word count.
- Ask someone who knows you well to see if you've left out anything important.
- Then, ask someone who doesn't know you well the same thing.

# *Finally . . .*

**Proofread.** Then proofread again. Then ask a family member to read through your statements. Then share them with folks at the RWC. Then proofread them again. Don't let grammar or spelling mistakes distract the scholarship committees from how great you are.



Image from [With Clarity](#)



# *Tips for Standing Out*

1. **Be specific** — offer details that let the reader step into your shoes and see the world through your eyes.
2. **Be authentic** — dig deep and share what truly matters to you.
3. **Be positive** — show that you are resilient, motivated, and wiser as a result of the challenges you've faced.
4. **Be proud** — know that your experiences are valuable, your dreams matter, and you are worthy of support.



Image from [Lesley Ann Jewels](#)

# *The RWC Is Here to Help!*

We offer:

- In-person appointments
- Zoom appointments
- An essay drop-off service

Come see us in the Library, or check us out through your Lobo Apps:

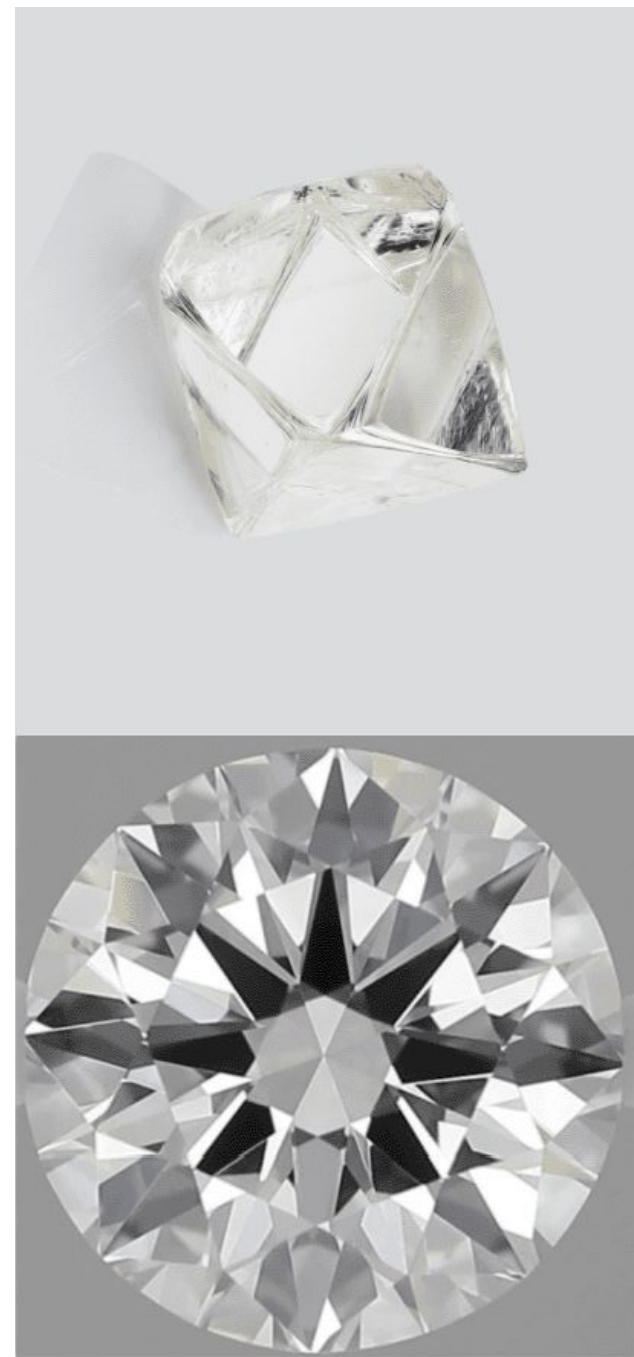


Image from [rarecarat.com](https://www.rarecarat.com)