

## How to Write a Personal Statement

Personal statements (also called "application essays", "statements of purpose", or "letters of intent") are essays written in response to a question or questions on an application. The personal statement is your opportunity to convey why you are a qualified candidate for the opportunities you are applying for and showcase your personal story. For the Norbertine Leadership and Service Awards (NLSA), please see the prompt for this year on the NLSA website or application.

In addition to responding to the question, here are some tips for completing your personal statement:

- No more than 2 pages
- Single or double spaced, size 12 font
- Use the same heading as your resume
- Grab the reader's attention in your opening paragraph
- Demonstrate your *specific* experience; expand upon your resume
- Tell a story, don't just list your accomplishments
- Focus on 1-2 key experiences; quality over quantity
- Do some research into the awards and what we are looking for in terms of criteria
- Be meticulous in writing your statement. Have other people read over it to ensure it is grammatically correct and the structure of the statement flows easily
- Avoid clichés. Focus on what makes you unique!
- Be authentic in your response and reflection

# Sample Personal Statement

## **Personal Statement: (Special Attribute or Accomplishment)**

I wake up to the sounds of chickadees singing outside my bedroom window and the delicious smell of breakfast cooking downstairs. A feeling of contentment washes over me as I slip out of bed and into my slippers. I saunter downstairs and sit at the kitchen bar as I rub the sleepy dirt from my eyes and wait to taste my mom's delicious cooking. I love my laid-back mornings. No alarms are jolting me out of a deep sleep followed by a mad rush to get ready and catch a bus like the other children in the neighborhood.

From the time I entered kindergarten until my eighth-grade year, I had the privilege of being homeschooled. It was during these formative years that I developed a love of reading and learning. My siblings and I used a literature-based curriculum which made history and other subjects come alive. My favorite part of the school day was our read-aloud books. My mom would sit on the couch, and the four of us would gather around her to see the pictures and hear the stories and then discuss the adventures we just went on. It was so enjoyable that it hardly seemed like school and we would beg for more. The schooled kids I would talk with were all jealous and wished they could be taught at home, too.

I was a late reader and had difficulties with spelling, but I didn't realize that as my mom let me progress at my own pace and never compared me to others. I had plenty of opportunities to be a child and learn through play during the early years and to explore and follow my interests, which often centered around horses and animals. The freedom to pursue my interests is how my passion for architectural design also began as I got a little older. In the early years, my mom would dictate for me and allow me to answer questions orally while my written expression and spelling developed. My mom was a firm believer in "better late than never," when it came to reading and learning. This method worked well for me. I learned much later that I had dyslexia, and I believe if I had started off in public school I would have been frustrated and realized I was struggling more than the other children. My love for learning very well may have been hampered.

The joy of reading and learning is just the tip of the iceberg of how I benefited from being taught at home. I got to grow up surrounded by my family, interacting with them, working as a team, and calling my siblings my best friends. I developed valuable life skills as a result of doing life together. I learned to cook, do laundry, watch younger siblings, plant a garden, clean, and I learned a lot about good health. I learned responsibility, time management, and how to work independently. I became self-motivated and took an interest in my learning.

Homeschooling laid a firm foundation; my values are firmly rooted. My work ethics are strong. I can stand on my own two feet and function independently. I have the skills to manage both my education and my personal life outside of my home. I have the skills necessary to be a successful college student and to pursue a higher level of learning. I give much of this credit to the experience I received as a homeschooled student early on in my formative years.