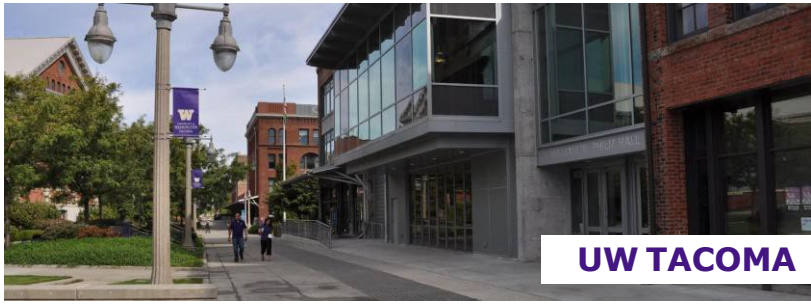
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
BOTHELL

PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHOP

PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Typically, between 550-650 words
- Opportunity to describe oneself as a person, not just as a student – share something unique that is reflected in other parts of application
- Breathes life into your application – not just numbers and bullet points anymore



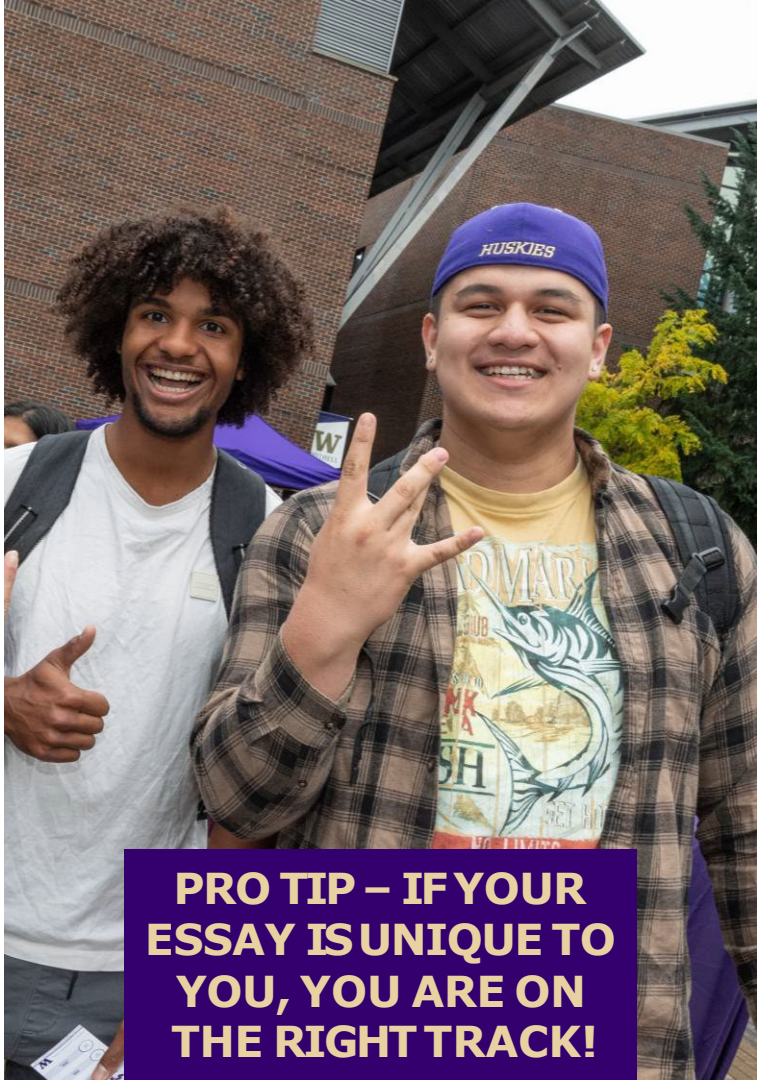
PICKING THE RIGHT TOPIC

MYTH: Your essay must be about something extraordinary

REALITY: The best essays are authentic and personal – write about what matters to YOU

AVOID THESE COMMON PITFALLS:

- Don't just re-list accomplishments or summarize your resume.
- Avoid topics that might be controversial or offensive
- Focus on YOUR story – not someone else's
- Don't try to cover everything you have ever done in one essay – you have limited space



PRO TIP – IF YOUR ESSAY IS UNIQUE TO YOU, YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK!

THE ACTIVITY LOG

- List up to 10 relevant and important activities
- Does not have to be school based – hobbies, family support, jobs, religious, community service, etc.
- Think about leadership, consistency, passion, relevance
- 150-character limit on each activity

HOW DOES ADMISSIONS EVALUATE THE PERSONAL STATEMENT?

- **Personal Qualities and Values:** Show your character traits like resilience, empathy, and integrity through your experiences
- **Your Unique Voice:** Let your personality shine through your writing, be genuine and authentic
- **Passions and Interests:** Highlight what you are passionate about and reflect on how these things have shaped who you are
- **Quality of Writing:** Ensure your essay is well-written, clear and engaging and demonstrates collegiate level skills

SAMPLE ESSAY STRUCTURE

OPENING

- Write your hook/grab the reader's attention
- Introduce your topic

NARRATIVE

- Story and details
- Move your narrative forward

CONCLUSION

- Summarize and reflect
- Personal truth revealed

3 MINUTE WRITING EXERCISE

30 Seconds:

Think of an object of significant meaning to you

Write it down:

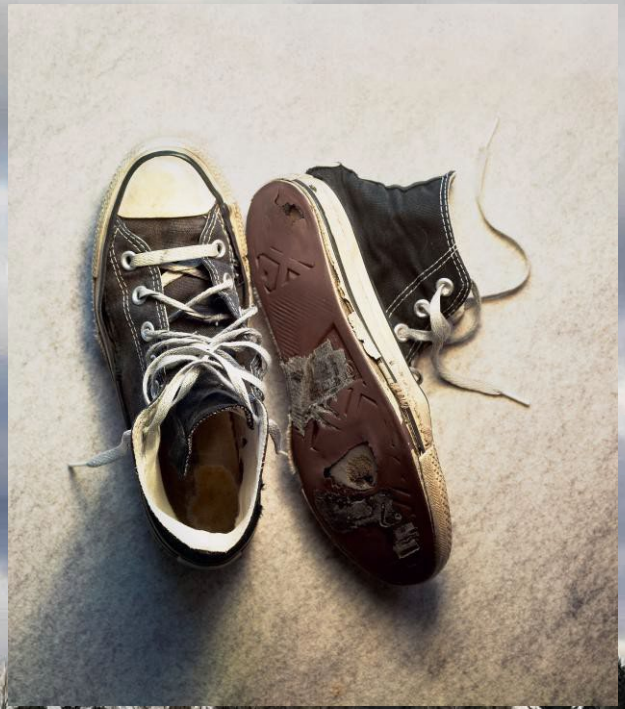
-Tell a story about the object

-Why is it meaningful to you?

-Where did you get it?

-What does the object say about you?

-Describe it using your 5 senses



LET'S PRACTICE

FINAL PRO TIPS

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Your essay should be a reflection of you. The more unique to you, the better.

USE VIVID LANGUAGE

Paint a picture with your words to engage the reader and make the story come alive.

PROOFREAD

Spelling and grammar mistakes can distract from your message. Take the time to review and revise. Read aloud, have others read your writing, and don't be afraid to ask for help!

BE HONEST

Authenticity resonates more than trying to impress. Share your true self and real experiences.

QUESTIONS?

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