



# Pick Me

LEVERAGING SKILL AND DEFICITS IN APPLICATION ESSAYS

# The Rhetorical Situation: Audience-Purpose-

- ▶ **Audience:** Who is reading your statement of purpose or personal statement?
- ▶ **Purpose:** What are they trying to assess? Why?
- ▶ **Language Choices:**
  - ▶ What do language choices say about your attitude?
  - ▶ Background?
  - ▶ Learning style?
  - ▶ Potential for learning? Teamwork?
- ▶ **Constraints:** What are the limitations in your experiences or the limitations to talking about those experiences?

# Personal Statement and Statement of Purpose

## Statement of Purpose

- ▶ “a concise, well-written essay about your career goals and how the graduate program will help you meet your career and education objectives. Please indicate the area(s) of research and departmental faculty that are of interest to you.” (PhD)

## Personal Statement

- ▶ “A brief description about your background (500 word limit).” (PhD)  
<https://sph.umich.edu/epid/programs/phd.html>

### **MPH:**

<https://sph.umich.edu/admissions/programs-degrees/masters/how-to-apply.html#mph>

# The Two Statements

## Statement of Purpose

- ▶ Audience
- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Language choices
- ▶ Constraints

## Personal Statement

- ▶ Audience
- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Language choices
- ▶ Constraints

# Analysis

- ▶ Working in groups, analyze Statement of Purpose A, and identify 5 genre moves the author uses to make their argument.
- ▶ Write a list of the strategies you identify
- ▶ Identify the strategies that “work”
- ▶ What seems less effective?



# Statement of Purpose v. Personal Statement

## Professional Statement

- ▶ Argument
- ▶ Intellectual plan
- ▶ Skills and goals
- ▶ How I will achieve it
- ▶ Who I will work with
- ▶ What knowledge /skills I will bring
- ▶ How you will transfer skills/experiences

## Personal Statement

- ▶ Narrative moments
- ▶ Character and motivation
- ▶ Experiences
- ▶ Goals
- ▶ How your non-academic experience inform your academic / professional identity and vice versa

# Statement of Purpose Strategies

SOP is an ARGUMENT, not a narrative.

Audience should SEE YOU performing  
in the department/field



- ▶ The strategy: use specific ACTIONS from your past to make arguments about your future
- ▶ Identify HOW past ACTIONS created present skills and potentials
- ▶ Reflect on interactions in experiences/learning
- ▶ Identify learning you intend to do and why it makes sense to do it at X institution

# Personal Statement Strategies

- ▶ Character and Motivation
- ▶ PS can address weaknesses in profile
- ▶ The strategy: describe one specific experience that captures your character
- ▶ HOW experience contributed to your core values
- ▶ Interactions b/t values and your professional or academic identity





# Activity

- ▶ On a new sheet of paper, make a list of activities you have engaged in the past 6 years.
- ▶ Include all academic and professional experiences
- ▶ Include experiences that developed character
- ▶ Include experiences of failure/difficulty



## Working with Partners

Select 3-4 experiences from your list and explain how they have prepared you to pursue your goals




6:00

# Don't forget FIT

- ▶ Why are you the right fit for this program?
- ▶ Why is the program the right fit for you?
- ▶ Identify specific research projects you want to be a part of AND how you can contribute
- ▶ Identify abilities you have to contribute to team-building/collaborations



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lumaxart/2137737248>



# Drafting: continue to work on developing a rough draft for a Statement of Purpose

Send any drafts to Brett Griffiths ([bgriffit@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:bgriffit@schoolcraft.edu) or [brettmegan@gmail.com](mailto:brettmegan@gmail.com) with the subject "BDSI Statement for Feedback," and sign up for a time to connect to discuss feedback.



[bgriff@umich.edu](mailto:bgriff@umich.edu)

[griffithsb09@Macomb.edu](mailto:griffithsb09@Macomb.edu)

## For Personalized Feedback (now & when you apply):

- Subject: Last name-BDSI-Statement of purpose (or personal statement, etc.)
- Please give me two weeks to respond
- Allow yourself an additional 2-3 weeks to revise