



A "Skeleton" for Your Statement of Purpose Essay

Is this you? <RX¶YH UHGD WKH HVVD\ SURPSW FDUHIXOO\ DQG \RX include in your essay. But \RX¶UH QRW VXUH K-RX ¶MRH VDWXLEQDWR DUBVWVVOILUVV ³ZKHUH GR , PHQWLRQ P\ ILKORZZIRDQ\ H[SUDJLHDSFKU VROR E GRLX¶ just completely overwhelmed with the very idea of writing a statement. You have no idea where to begin.

Don't worry: This handout can help. 7KHU¶V only one correct way to write a statement. And many programs have specific instructions for their essays (if so, follow those instructions exactly). But all writing is a matter of making choices, and each choice has pros and cons. For example, if you write a page and D KDOI WDONLQJ DERXW \RXU UHVHDFK H[SHULHQFHV \RX¶OO SURJUDP \RX¶UH DSSO\LQJ WR

from advisors, other students, the internet, and the program itself ² about what the program is looking for.

Always remember: :KHQHYHU \RX ZULWH DQ\WKLQJ \RX VROR O G DVN Why will they read it? How can I give my readers the information that they want/need?¹ For grad school admissions, your readers are the admissions committee ² tenured faculty i Q WKH GHSDUWPHQW \RX 7KH\ ZDQW WR NQRZ² for the program. Your job is to show them that you are.

Below is a paragraph-by- SDUDJUDSK ³VNHOHWRQ´ RU VFDIROG IRU FRQV

1. The Introduction Paragraph

There are two basic options for writing this paragraph: (1) direct and (2) anecdote (see examples below). Your readers are busy. They have to read dozens of these essays, and you GRQ¶W ZDQW WR ER misdirect them. Instead, keep things short, simple, and to-the-point. So, I almost always recommend option 1. This option always works because \RX¶OO DGG GHWDLOV LQ RWKHU SD

+RZHYHU IRFHQSWHRSIOG´ SURIHVVduation, social work, counseling, you might want to include a human element, such as a demonstration of your bedside manner or your skills working with students/clients. If so, option 2 might be a good choice (but remember, you can insert the human elem

came in with a leg that had been badly injured in a car accident. Her prognosis looked grim: I
GRXEWHG LI VKH†G HYHU ZUDONDDJLQZLWK RZWD D F D Q H
therapist direct Maria through various exercises, and as time went on, she made rapid
improvement... When I finally saw her walk up the stairs unassisted, I felt so inspired by the role
that I had played in her recovery. Realizing how much good I can do for people through PT
makes me certain that PT i V WKH ULJKW FDUHHU IRU PH ´

2. The Education Paragraph

Describe your educational experiences and how they prepared you to succeed in grad school. This paragraph

3. The Experiences Paragraph(s)

Describe key professional experiences, research, clinical experiences, shadowing, publication, teaching, TA-ing, leadership, conference presentations, or volunteering relevant to your field of study/graduate program. Talk about the experiences in more detail than your résumé allows

