Career & College Readiness Lesson Plans

Telling My Story

# Career Planning

## Grade Level 12

### Overview

Students will develop a personal statement that can be used in the college admissions process or for application to other programs.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

* Describe the key components of a successful personal statement
* Write a draft personal statement

### Language Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

* Verbally identify the different types of personal statements
* Verbally articulate the aspects of a successful and unsuccessful entrance essay based on close analysis of examples
* Tell their own story through written expression

### Standards Alignment

* California Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness   
  Anchor Standards:
  + W. 2, 3, 4, 5
* California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards:
  + 1, 2, 7, 11
* California Standards for Career Ready Practice:
  + 2
* National Career Development Guidelines:
  + ED 1, 2
* International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Students:
  + 3
* English Language Development Standards:
  + Part I: A 1, 2, 4; B 5, 6; C 9
  + Part II: B 3, 4, 5; C 6, 7
* American School Counselor Association Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:
  + BS-LS 2, 4; BS-SMS 3; BS-SS 1

### Materials

1. Instructor Resources
   * Computers with internet access for students
   * Projector and screen
   * Computer with internet access and projection capability for instructor

* + [California Career Resource Network Lesson Plans Handout E-copies](https://californiacareers.info/)

https://californiacareers.info/

1. Student Handouts

* Vocabulary (p. 6)
* University of California Personal Insight Questions (p. 7)
* Common Application Essay Prompts (p. 8)
* Personal Statement Open-ended Questions (p. 9)
* Lesson Resources (p. 10)

1. Online Resources

* [Telling My Story Start-Up Video](https://youtu.be/-ne6eyPQivA) [1:00]

https://youtu.be/-ne6eyPQivA

* [UC Personal Insight Questions](https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-freshman/personal-insight-questions.html), University of California https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-freshman/personal-insight-questions.html
* [Tips for Writing an Effective Application Essay](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/tips-for-writing-an-effective-application-essay-college-admissions), CollegeBoard Big Future

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/tips-for-writing-an-effective-application-essay-college-admissions

* [Common Application 2020–21 Essay Prompts](https://www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts)

https://www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts

*Optional*

[UC Personal Insight Questions Writing Tips Worksheet](https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/_assets/files/how-to-apply/uc-personal-questions-guide-freshman.pdf) [PDF] [Spanish](https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/_assets/files/how-to-apply/uc-personal-questions-guide-freshman-spanish.pdf) [PDF]

* + https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/\_assets/files/how-to-apply/uc-personal-questions-guide-freshman.pdf
  + https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/\_assets/files/how-to-apply/uc-personal-questions-guide-freshman-spanish.pdf

### Activity

Students will learn the key components of writing a compelling personal statement. They will analyze examples of college entrance essays and then write their own.

### Lesson Prep

Review the lesson plan procedures, handouts, online resources, and start-up video. This information will help prepare you to lead discussions on writing personal statements.

You may want to create a personal statement to use as an example.

Before class begins, have your projector and computer on and the start-up video, the UC Personal Insight Questions, and CollegeBoard’s “Tips for Writing an Effective Admissions Essay” webpages open in your web browser (links in the Materials section).

Copy student handouts or send your students e-copies. The handouts are posted separately with the lesson plan on the California Career Resource Network Lesson Plans (link in Materials section).

Determine if students will respond to the University of California questions or the Common Application questions or will choose from either option.

*About Hyperlinks*. All hyperlinks (URLs) used in this lesson are listed in the Lesson Resources student handout.

### Lesson Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson by describing the topic and activity. For a quick introduction, show the start-up video (link in Materials section). Confirm students understand what to expect.
2. Colleges and other programs generally require students to submit a personal statement, or admissions essay, as a part of their application packet. Although not always required, developing a statement can be a useful process for helping students focus on what is important to them. It’s also a resource for writing statements for other programs.

To guide students through the statement development process, they will work from three sets of prompts: 1) Open-ended question prompts, 2) the University of California Personal Insight prompts, 3) and the Common Application essay prompts.

1. Distribute and review the Vocabulary handout.
2. Distribute the Lesson Resources handout then instruct students to go to the UC Personal Insight Questions webpage. Have them read both the Questions & Guidance and Writing Tips sections. Ask students:
   * Were the “things to consider” in the guidance section helpful? Why or why not?
   * Is there any other guidance they’d like to receive on writing their personal statement? If so, what? Where can they find that guidance?
   * Was this what they thought a personal statement would be? Why or Why not?
   * Are some of the writing tips more useful than others? If so, which ones and why?
   * What tips they would add to the list?

*NOTE*: You can have students download and complete the UC Writing Tips Worksheet (link in Materials section). The worksheet can provide a good foundation for writing their personal statements.

1. Go to the CollegeBoard’s Big Future webpage, “Tips for Writing an Effective Admissions Essay” (link in Materials section). Have students watch the video (Video; 0:43) and then read the seven tips.
2. Distribute the handouts, University of California Personal Insight Questions (p. 6), the Common Application Essay Prompts (p. 8), and the Personal Statement Open-ended Questions (p. 9). Review the prompts and instruct students to select one prompt from each handout.

Remind students that personal interest statements/essays can be used for applications to different programs, not just for college (e.g., the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, military, etc.)

1. Give students time to begin an outline and develop initial content for their three prompts. If students do not complete their drafts during class, assign it as homework.

Remind students that their personal statements are about them and their career goals. It gives them an opportunity to introduce themselves to the admissions and program staff.

Because application requirements change from year to year, students should always check to be sure the prompts they have are current.

1. Wrap Up. Review with students the knowledge they gained and employability skills they practiced in this lesson (employability skills are general skills necessary for success in the labor market).

* *Demonstrated responsibility, self-discipline, and social skills*: Actively participated in class, asked questions, volunteered answers, completed/submitted assignments, and worked well in groups.
* *Communication Skills, including reading and writing:* Developed by participating in class discussions, interpreting written instructions, and completing written assignments.
  + *Self-directional Skills*: Practiced by completing tasks independently.

### Estimated Time

One class session

### Learning Assessment

* Participation in class discussions.
* Writing drafts of personal statements/admission essays**.**
* *If assigned,* completing the UC Personal Insight Questions Writing Tips Worksheet(link in Materials section).

### Adaptations

1. Have students interview counselors about college admissions essays and/or ask for advice. Have students submit a report to you.
2. Have students partner with a classmate and peer review and edit their statements. Have them submit their statements for assessment.

Other materials and lessons are on the

[California Career Resource Network](https://californiacareers.info/).

https://californiacareers.info/

Vocabulary

**Academic Achievement**: cumulative GPA, completion of educational benchmarks such as secondary school and assessment results.

**Common Application (App)**: is an admissions application accepted by more than 900 schools. The app is designed to reduce barriers you may face when applying to multiple schools.

**Ethical Dilemma**: a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two courses of action, neither of which is completely acceptable.

**Extracurricular Achievement**: success in organized student activities outside of the regular school curriculum, connected with school but usually carrying no academic credit.

**Personal Achievement**: success in activities outside of the school setting.

**Personal Insight Questions:** questions designed to tell the reader about you, your hopes, dreams, aspirations, experiences, and/or challenges.

**Personal Statement**: Personal statement is also called a personal essay, reflective essay, admissions essay, application essay, and goals statement. Its purpose is to tell your readers about you; about your abilities to overcome obstacles, achieve goals, think critically and creatively, and write effectively. It’s the one thing evaluators can use to learn about who you are as an individual.

**Plagiarism**: taking someone else's words, work, or ideas and presenting them as your own.

**Quote**: words or phrases spoken or written by someone else.

University of California

Personal Insight Questions

### Choose one prompt to respond to:

These questions are the University of California’s Freshman questions. Questions may change from year to year so always be sure you are working with the most recent ones (check their website).

You have a maximum of 350 words.

* 1. Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.
  2. Every person has a creative side, and it can be expressed in many ways: problem solving, original and innovative thinking, and artistically, to name a few. Describe how you express your creative side.
  3. What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time?
  4. Describe how you have taken advantage of a significant educational opportunity or worked to overcome an educational barrier you have faced.
  5. Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to overcome this challenge. How has this challenge affected your academic achievement?
  6. Think about an academic subject that inspires you. Describe how you have furthered this interest inside and/or outside of the classroom.
  7. What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?
  8. Beyond what has already been shared in your application, what do you believe makes you stand out as a strong candidate for admissions to the University of California?

Source: University of California Freshman Personal Insight Questions

(link in Lesson Resources handout)

Common Application Essay Prompts

### Choose one prompt to respond to:

These questions are for the Common App 2021–22 personal statement. These questions may change from year to year so always be sure you are working with the most recent ones.

You have a maximum of 350 words.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from 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?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. 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?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Source: Common App (link in Lesson Resources)

Personal Statement Open-ended Questions

### Choose one prompt to respond to:

There are times you may not be given a specific topic to write about. Instead, you might be asked open-ended questions like the following.

You have a maximum of 350 words.

1. Tell us about you.
2. Talk about your hopes and dreams.
3. Talk about your life's purpose.
4. What makes you who you are?
5. What’s the best thing about you?
6. What makes a good life?
7. What's the biggest fear you have overcome?
8. What are you most proud of?

Lesson Resources

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[University of California 2020-21 Freshman Personal Insight Questions](https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-freshman/personal-insight-questions.html)

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