**Graduate School Essay Get Started**

* First sentence should be compelling and attention-grabbing, but if you attempt to identify your opening line immediately you will probably induce writer’s block
* Make an outline or free write- tweak the introduction later

**Reasons for selecting your chosen career**

* Not autobiographical-Journey as an emerging scholar
* Provide evidence to demonstrate that you have actively confirmed your interests and that earning an advanced degree will help you achieve these goals
* Describe the courses, articles, professors, research, service projects, internships, shadowing or co-curricular activities that have shaped your aspirations
* Avoid references to high school accomplishments, gimmicks or clichés such as, “I have always wanted to be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* Cautiously address controversial topics.

**Be specific**

* Earn credibility by demonstrating this passion. Have you worked at a law firm or participated in student government, Model UN and/or mock trial?

**One size does not fit all**

* Describe your rationale for selecting the program (Unless it is a common application)
* What led you to select its particular program over others? Was it an emphasis in a particular area or the research interests of a professor? Was your interest heightened by a conversation with its alumni?
* **Be sincere, b**riefly mention any noteworthy and appealing features that attracted you to the program or institution, but do not go overboard.

**Describe your professional interests, particularly research**

* If you identified faculty members who share your interest in a topic, describe your desire to work with them. Be specific, but keep your options open, too.

**Demonstrate your motivation and capacity to succeed**

* Persuade them that you will contribute to their reputation as an institution throughout your academic studies and professional career
* Provide them with concrete examples including relevant publications, presentations, classroom assignments and employment experiences

**Blemishes in your application**

* No agreement on inclusions-If you do, be brief and positive-What did you learn-Keep it simple and do not be defensive
* If you do not-Consider asking one of your trusted references to include the topic from a positive standpoint in your letter of recommendations

**Be concise**

* Personal statements are generally no more than two pages
* If the sentence is not essential to your thesis, remove it
* Eliminate unnecessary words, such as “in order to,” “I believe” and “the fact is.”

**Carefully proofread and refine the essay**

* Any errors reflect your ability as a writer
* Confirm that you used transitions, diverse sentence structures
* Substitute weak words, such as “love,” with a more professional, powerful alternative
* Let it sit overnight. Then, read it aloud or backward.
* Make an appointment with Career Services to review your essay