

Brainstorm, Reflection, and Why

Plan for a few hours to complete these worksheets. Multiple sittings can be beneficial. You may find it helpful to discuss these prompts with others.



A. Brainstorm



Strengths

Look within. Be creative. Also, ask your friends. Ask your parent/s.

Brainstorm an exhaustive list of your strengths. Include hard skills (like cracking books, managing time, or writing/laboratory skills/computer expertise) but also soft skills (like professionalism, making friends, and staying motivated). Put a star by any strength that less than 20% of applicants may claim.

Hard skills:

Soft skills:

What are your special attributes and perspectives?

Explain ways that your background has especially qualified you to excel in your chosen field.



Weaknesses

Be realistic—you may have weaknesses you don't understand. Ask your therapist.
Ask your enemies. **DON'T BE DISCOURAGED!**

Brainstorm an exhaustive list of your obstacles as a student. Include your weak attributes.

Include hard skills and soft skills.

Hard skills:

Soft skills:

What are personal or interpersonal areas that cause you confusion or discomfort? Most of a person's weaknesses don't present major problems—though being aware of them is part of maturity.

Put a **STAR** by any weakness that could pose significant problems for you in your desired program.



Accomplishments

What have you done that you're proud of? Why are you proud of these accomplishments?

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 1. What: | Why: |
| 2. What: | Why: |
| 3. What: | Why: |

From the accomplishments that you are proud of, how do they reflect your skills, work ethic, and character?

Accomplishments that reflect skills-
Explain.

Accomplishments that reflect work ethic-
Explain.

Accomplishments that reflect character-
Explain.



Motives

What motivates you to spend your time working towards your desired goal?
Explain how.

What events or individuals started you on this path?
Explain how.

How will this program help you do something you want to do each day for maybe the next 30-40 years?
Explain why.

**Specific**

-What will we accomplish?

**Measurable**

-How will we know when it's done?

**Assignable**

-Who is responsible for making it happen?

**Realistic**

-Can we do this?

**Timebound**

-When will this be accomplished?

Goals

Goals are what you look forward to in the future, personally and professionally. What does your dream future look like?

What sorts of tasks do you most enjoy?

Why?

Are you especially interested in special areas within your field (including academics or teaching)?

Why?



Influences

What people, experiences, relationships, or circumstances shaped who you are today?

People-How did they influence you?

Experiences-How did they influence you?

Relationships-How did they influence you?

Circumstances-How did they influence you?

Which influences above put you on the path to your programs?

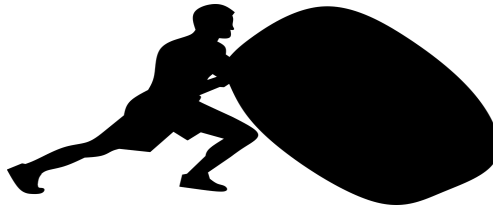
How?

Did a particular book, quote, or event especially shape your outlook?

How?

Do you have any defining moments in your life?

Explain why they are important to you.



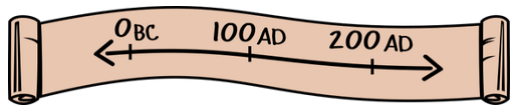
Challenges

What challenges, circumstances, or misfortunes have you had to overcome to get this far?

How did your influences and challenges change and mature you?

Do you have any special situations? (background check - academic or social, low grades) If yes, what is your special situation and how have you grown from it?

(If you have a conduct violation on your record, be prepared to write a response that takes responsibility for it and explains how you have grown from it.)



Chronology

Are there early events or experiences that have helped to shape you that are relevant to your chosen program?



B. Why do I want to be a _____?

Explain in detail your motivation for your *specific* profession-

Why are you applying? What inspires you to pursue this specific profession? What makes you passionate about this specific profession?

Explain in detail your fit for your *specific* profession-

What are your values? How do these values align with the values of your profession? What personal qualities do you have that will enable you to positively contribute to your profession?

Explain in detail your Capacity to be successful in your *specific* profession-

What are your most defining experiences? What competencies did you develop/demonstrate through your experiences? What errors or regrets have taught you something about yourself? How have you changed/grown from your experiences?

Explain in detail your personal Vision in your *specific* profession-

What do you want to do and be (professionally speaking)? What impact do you want to have?

Rubric: Reflection on your personal reflections-Self Assessment

The goal of this assignment is to have clear and detailed answers with an example/story to demonstrate your thoughts. Please describe your progress.

1 - uncertainty

2 - getting there, but need more thought and/or experiences

3 - clear and detailed explanation with example to demonstrate thoughts

Reflections	Progress
I can specifically describe my strengths and how they will relate to the profession.	
I can describe how my personal characteristics have led to the accomplishments that I am proud of.	
I can explain what motivates me to be in my profession.	
I can describe my goals and explain why these goals are important to me.	
I can explain why specific personal influences are meaningful and relate them to my profession.	
I can describe my challenges and how I have specifically worked to overcome them.	
I can specifically communicate my fit in my chosen profession.	
I can specifically communicate my capacity for success in my chosen profession.	

What insights did you gain from this task?

Have you noticed any trends?

What aspects of this task did you find most challenging?

What aspect of this task did you find most meaningful?

Start thinking about what you want your central message to be. Set aside time when you will not be rushed. Read the Personal Statement question/prompt. Using your notes from your reflection, start grouping like thoughts and look for an emerging theme. Remember, this is YOUR personal statement. Think about the aspect of yourself you want to convey to the admissions committee.