PERSONAL STATEMENT EXAMPLES

Law School Personal Statement Example #1:

When I was a child, my neighbors, who had arrived in America from Nepal, often seemed stressed. They argued a lot, struggled for money, and seemed to work all hours of the day. One day, I woke early in the morning to a commotion outside my apartment. Police officers were accompanying my neighbors out of the building. They were being deported. In my teens, I was shocked to see that our kind, friendly neighbors had exhausted their last chance to stay in America as they lost a court appeal.

Since that time, I have worked closely with the many immigrant families in my neighborhood, and now university town. I began by volunteering at a local community center. Together with social workers, I served food and gave out clothes to new arrivals. My diligent work ethic led to more responsibility, and I received training in basic counseling techniques, first aid skills and community services. Soon, I was tasked with welcoming new community members and assessing their health and social needs. I heard the many difficult stories of those who had traveled thousands of miles, often through several countries, risking everything to reach a safe, welcoming country. I was proud to contribute in some small way to making America welcoming for these individuals.

The community center is where I had my first formal contact with legal aid lawyers, who were a constant source of knowledge and support for those who needed assistance. I was struck by the lawyers' ability to explain complex legal processes to nervous and exhausted incomers: law, I realized, was about more than procedure. I decided that I, too, would strive to balance a wealth of technical knowledge with my caring, compassionate personality.

As soon as I enrolled in university, I knew I had the chance to do so. In my very first week, I signed up to volunteer at the university's legal aid center, where I worked closely with law professors and students on a range of cases. Academically, I have focused on courses, such as a fourth-year Ethics seminar, that would help me develop rigorous critical reasoning skills. More importantly, I knew that, given my experience, I could be a leader on campus. I decided to found a refugee campaign group, Students4Refugees. Together with a group of volunteers, we campaigned to make our campus a refugee-friendly space. I organized a series of events: international student mixers, an art installation in our student commons, and concerts that raised over $5,000 for the charity Refugee Aid. I am proud to say that my contributions were recognized with a university medal for campus leadership.

I have seen time and again how immigrants to the United States struggle with bureaucracy, with complex legal procedures, and with the demands of living in a foreign and sometimes hostile climate. As I plan to enter law school, I look back to my neighbors' experiences: they needed someone who knew the law, who could negotiate with the authorities on their behalf, who could inform them of their rights—but they also needed someone who would provide a caring and compassionate outlet for their stresses. I know that Townsville University's combination of academic rigor, legal aid services, and history of graduates entering labor and non-profit sectors will allow me to develop these skills and continue making contributions to my community by advocating for those in need.

Law School Personal Statement Example #2:

I reach into the cab to grab my legal pad, and slam the car door shut. The warm Orlando sun immediately reminds me that I am no longer in Delaware. As my team and I walk towards the hotel ballroom, I see the hundreds of competitors sporting their university's colors funneling into the rows of seats. "Welcome to the American Mock Trial Association's National Championship Tournament," says the law school dean. It's time to introduce ourselves. The line to the stage is shorter and shorter, and I peer out into the crowd in search of a familiar face, and I see my teammates, smiling, mouthing my name, but I can't hear a thing. It's my turn. I step onto the stage, and the ballroom, just moments ago filled with inaudible voices, becomes silent. I lean into the microphone. "My name is John Doe, and I am the president of University of Delaware Mock Trial."

I wanted to be just like my dad. I looked up to him – the way he talked, the way he saw the world; he was my hero. We would talk for hours after dinner about his upcoming trial, about a suppression motion he had argued that day, or about a cop he had cross-examined earlier that week. I did not understand most of what he told me; after all, I was still in elementary school. And although I could barely see over the bar the first time my dad took me to see a real trial in a real courtroom, I knew I was where I wanted to be. I wanted to be a lawyer.

My mom's habit of scrolling through the morning announcements posted on my high school's website and reading them aloud was a nightly routine. "The mock trial club has a meeting this Tuesday," she shouted one night from her bedroom. Despite my desire to apply to law school, I ignored her; adjusting to a new school was challenging enough. But she was persistent. "One meeting. Give it a chance." I agreed.

I was given a binder filled with affidavits, legal documents, and exhibits. My team was to portray attorneys and witnesses, cross-examine opposing witnesses, make objections, and argue in front of scoring judges seated in the jury box. My team would compete in these mock trials against other schools. I was immediately fixated. Before I knew it, I was a sophomore, and named captain of the team. I recruited friends to join, we won tournaments, and by my senior year we were the Philadelphia city champions, finishing second in the state of Pennsylvania, the most successful team in school history.

There was no greater feeling than standing in front of a panel of judges and delivering a closing argument, or sitting down at counsel table after an effective cross-examination. And now, instead of peering over the bar at my dad, it was my dad watching me. I would hear him whispering to my mom during trial, pleading with me to object to the other side's question or commenting approvingly to my mom after a strong performance. He was the first person I spoke to after trial. "Did you like my opening, dad? What did you think of that judge?" Now, our conversations about trial were just that, and they were serious, detailed and argumentative. They were perfect.

While my mom was interested in the size of the dorms and prices of meal plans during college visits, I only had one question for our tour guide. "Does your school have a mock trial team?" By the end of my freshman year at the University of Delaware, I was made captain. Made up of only seven students, the team was struggling. Despite this, I was not deterred. I continued poring over the case, offering new case theories, and working to help my team become competitive. By my sophomore year, things started to change. At the end of that season, I was elected president of the entire club, which has continued into my senior year. We had evolved into an organization of over thirty members that I had recruited, with a coaching staff that I had put together and more support from the university than ever before. During my junior year, I led my team to win all four trials at the Opening Round Championship Series in Philadelphia, earning an invitation to the National Championship Tournament for the first time in school history.

My time as a mock trial competitor is quickly coming to a close. When I reflect on the person that I was before high school, I realize the impact that mock trial has had on me. It has taught me to be a more effective speaker, an engaged listener, a more approachable teammate. It has taught me that hard work is the most important

predictor of success. From the time I first peeked into a courtroom as a child, to just earlier this year, energetically stepping out of that cab and into the federal courthouse in Orlando, I have watched myself evolve into the person I have always strived to emulate, my dad. And over the last eight years, the law, like him, has already left an indelible footprint on my life. I am ready now, ready to give back to the law what it has already given to me.

Medical School Personal Statement Example:

As I walked briskly down the hall to keep up during our daily rounds in the ICU, I heard the steady beeping of Michelle's cardiac monitor and saw a ruby ornament twinkling on the small Christmas tree beside her. She was always alone, but someone had decorated her room for the holidays.

It warmed my heart that I wasn't the only one who saw her as more than a patient in a coma. I continually felt guilty that I couldn't spend more time with her; her usual companions were ventilators, IV bags, and catheters, not to mention the golf ball-sized tumors along her spine. Every day, I thought about running to Michelle's bedside to do anything I could for her.

Thus, I was taken aback when my advisor, who was visiting me that day, asked me if I was okay. It never crossed my mind that at age 17, my peers might not be able to handle the tragedies that healthcare workers consistently face. These situations were difficult, but they invoked humanity and compassion from me. I knew I wanted to pursue medicine. And I knew I could do it.

From my senior year of high school to my senior year of college, I continued to explore my passion for patient interaction. At the Stepp Lab, I was charged with contacting potential study participants for a study focusing on speech symptoms in individuals with Parkinson's Disease. The study would help future patients, but I couldn't help but think: "What are we doing for these patients in return?" I worried that the heart and soul behind the research would get lost in the mix of acoustic data and participant ID numbers.

But my fears were put to rest by Richard, the self-proclaimed "Parkinson's Song & Dance Man," who recorded himself singing show tunes as part of his therapy. Knowing that he was legally blind and unable to read caller ID, I was always thrilled when he recognized my voice. The spirit in his voice indicated that my interest in him and his journey with Parkinson's was meaningful. Talking with him inspired me to dive deeper, which led to an appreciative understanding of his time as a sergeant in the U.S. military. It was an important reminder: my interest and care are just as important as an effective prescribed treatment plan.

Following graduation, I began my work as a medical assistant for a dermatologist. My experience with a patient, Joann, validated my ability to provide excellent hands-on patient care. Other physicians prescribed her painkillers to relieve the excruciating pain from the shingles rash, which presented as a fiery trail of blisters wrapped around her torso. But these painkillers offered no relief and made her so drowsy that she fell one night on the way to the bathroom.

Joann was tired, suffering, and beaten down. The lidocaine patches we initially prescribed would be a much safer option, but I refused for her to pay $250, as she was on the brink of losing her job. When she returned to the office a week later, she held my hand and cried tears of joy because I found her affordable patches, which helped her pain without the systemic effects. The joy that pierced through the weariness in her eyes immediately confirmed that direct patient care like this was what I was meant to do. As I passed her a tissue, I felt ecstatic that I could make such a difference, and I sought to do more.

Since graduation, I have been volunteering at Open Door, a small pantry that serves a primarily Hispanic community of lower socioeconomic families. It is gut-wrenching to explain that we cannot give them certain items when our stock is low. After all, the fresh fruits and vegetables I serve are fundamental to their culturally-inspired

meals. For the first time, I found myself serving anguish rather than a helping hand. Usually, uplifting moments strengthen one's desire to become a physician, but in this case, it was my ability to handle the low points that reignited my passion for aiding others.

After running out of produce one day, I was confused as to why a woman thanked me. Through translation by a fellow volunteer, I learned it was because of my positivity. She taught me that the way I approach unfavorable situations affects another's perception and that my spirited attitude breaks through language barriers.

This volunteer work served as a wake-up call to the unacceptable fact that U.S. citizens' health suffers due to lack of access to healthy foods. If someone cannot afford healthy foods, they may not have access to healthcare. In the future, I want to partner with other food banks to offer free services like blood pressure readings. I have always wanted to help people, but I now have a particular interest in bringing help to people who cannot afford it.

While the foundation of medicine is scientific knowledge, the foundation of healthcare is the word "care" itself. I never found out what happened to Michelle and her Christmas tree, but I still wonder about her to this day, and she has strengthened my passion to serve others. A sense of excitement and comfort stems from knowing that I will be there for people on their worst days, since I have already seen the impact my support has had. In my mind, becoming a physician is not a choice but a natural next step to continue bringing humanity and compassion to those around me.

Graduate School Personal Statement Example #1:

One of the things I remember most about my father is his bookcase. My father never finished grade school, and he had worked most of his life. He had as many jobs as anyone I ever knew, and he took pride in listing off the jobs he had held in his time, ranging from janitor, factory worker, and line supervisor to line cook, hospital attendant, and general contractor.

Wearing as many hats as he did, he knew a lot about different subjects. He knew how to take apart a carburetor and cook a French omelet. He knew the best wood to build a house (spruce or Douglas fir) and the best way to get out chocolate stains. But he was always insecure about not having a formal education.

He made up for it by learning as much practical knowledge as he could from the jobs that he had, but inside I think it wasn't enough. He could never fill that void that wanted to be filled with a college- or university-level education. I would tell him that he could take a night course or something else that interested him, but he always said "no" and made up some excuse.

He had his own plan. He built a ramshackle bookcase out of old, repurposed wood and stuck it in the basement. He slowly filled the shelves with whatever he could find – books he bought at garage sales, books the library gave away, books our neighbors gave him – but mainly a lot of repair and how-to books and manuals. After a year, the bookcase was almost full.

His other plan involved me. If he couldn't go to university, then I would be the one to go. He made clear to me at a young age that I was headed to university and that education was one of the most important things in life. It was one of the few things that we agreed on: education. We didn't have much else in common other than an appreciation for learning.

As his book collection grew, so did I. Since my dad was so hands-on, one day, when I was in high school, I was surprised to find a book on the bookcase that actually interested me: a copy of Ovid's Metamorphoses. I didn't know where he got the book or who gave it to him – it was such a rare thing to see on my father's bookcase – but finding that book would shape the rest of my life and bring me here to apply to the PhD in Ancient History program at Harvard.

I have an innate love for stories, but Ovid's poetry was such a departure from the storytelling structure I had grown up with. An epic poem was a genre I never knew existed, let alone one that was thousands of years old. While I was reading the second book, I was drawn in by the story of Phaeton, the demi-god who believes Helios is his true father and is desperate to prove it.

The lines Helios speaks to Phaeton to dissuade him from riding the sun chariot, "Your lot is mortal, it is not mortal what you ask," made me think of my father, wanting to know more than what life had taught him. Helios spoke those words to Phaeton to keep him from danger, but my father told me the opposite. My father taught me that knowledge was a way to achieve greatness. He did not want me to be content with what I had or who I was. He wanted me to strive to be more than he could ever be.

Reading those lines from Ovid put everything into perspective and made me realize my future would be among the Classics. I wanted to reach back to the beginning of recorded knowledge, where the first poets, philosophers, historians, mathematicians, and engineers tried to interpret the living world in a way that had never been done before. I started taking Latin classes with my local priest who had learned the language while studying at the Vatican.

When I graduated from high school, I decided on Northwestern because its Classics program is one of the best in the country and because it was not far from home. I wanted my father to visit me on campus to give him a taste of the college life.

While at Northwestern, I participated in an exchange program during my third year and took two semesters in Hellenic Studies at the University of Athens. I started learning Greek in my first year, and by the time I arrived in Athens, I was semi-fluent. Unfortunately, my academic dreams came close to crashing in my last years, as that was when my father passed away from prostate cancer. His loss is something I still struggle with, but his love for learning and knowledge is something that has stayed with me and continues to motivate me. His plan for retirement was to read a book a day from his bookcase, but he never got there. I dedicated my personal statement for my master's degree in Anthropology to my father.

During that degree, I participated in a field expedition to the hills of Thessaloniki to explore a cache of pottery and other artifacts uncovered by recent construction. It was during this time when I also co-published my first academic paper, "The Enchantment of Ovid: Love, Desire and Consent in Mythological Context," with Dimitrios Alexopoulos, now co-chair of the Hellenic Studies program at Dartmouth.

My plans for the rest of my career include opening new methods of analysis in understanding classical literature. I have a strong interest in dissecting the ways that classical arts continue to influence modern artists and thinking, especially as seen through a gendered and racialized prism.

I would also like to follow in my father's example and pass on his love of learning to a new generation of students. I want my students to be imbued with the desire to learn as much as Phaeton desired to ride the sun chariot, which to my father, would not have been as exciting as getting an education.

Graduate School Personal Statement Example #2:

A tense silence hung heavy in the air, broken only by the rhythmic tick of the grandfather clock. My finger hovered over the worn plastic grid, the coordinates carefully plotted in my mind. "B5," I declared, voice taut with anticipation. My grandfather, a mischievous glint in his eye, mirrored my pose, his own plastic battleship fleet poised for a counterattack.

Weekends were a ritual in our household. Afternoons melted into evenings, punctuated by the satisfying clicks of

plastic pegs hitting their targets and the groans of mock defeat. Battleship, with its gridded sea and numbered coordinates, became our shared battleground, a world of strategic salvos and calculated risks.

As months slipped by, our Battleship battles evolved. My initial focus on sinking the enemy fleet morphed into a fascination with the game's mechanics. I pestered my grandfather about the strategies he employed, the logic behind his ship placements, and the thrill of a well-timed lucky shot. He, patient and ever-encouraging, explained the importance of reading the opponent's moves, the value of calculated risks, and the occasional necessity of adapting plans in the face of the unexpected.

One rainy afternoon, as the familiar hum of the Battleship game filled the room, my grandfather's gaze drifted towards the television. A documentary about World War II flickered on the screen, a black and white panorama of warships churning through choppy waters. A hush fell over us, the playful tension replaced by a more contemplative silence.

The plastic battleships on the table transformed. No longer just toy soldiers, they became a tangible link to a bygone era. The game, once a lighthearted competition, blossomed into a springboard for historical exploration. The thrill of sinking a plastic battleship paled in comparison to the stories of real-life sailors, their courage and sacrifice echoing across the decades. The seeds of my historical fascination, planted in the fertile ground of strategy and playful competition, were beginning to sprout.

These weekend battles weren't just about winning; they were a gateway to a deeper understanding of the past. My hunger for knowledge grew, leading me to devour books on naval history, the strategies of war, and the human cost of conflict. History classes ceased to be rote memorization; they became journeys of discovery, each era a puzzle waiting to be pieced together. The complexity of human motivations, the ripple effects of decisions both grand and small, captivated me.

My undergraduate studies in history further fueled this passion. Analyzing primary sources – diaries, letters, and government documents – offered a window into the minds of those who shaped history. These firsthand accounts, often messy and contradictory, challenged sanitized narratives and exposed the complexities of human decision-making. My senior thesis, exploring the logistical challenges faced by the Allied forces during the D-Day invasion, allowed me to hone my research skills and delve into the often-overlooked aspects of historical events.

However, academia alone cannot satiate my hunger for the past. Volunteering at local historical societies allowed me to bridge the gap between research and public engagement. Translating historical findings into engaging exhibits and educational programs fostered my passion for making history accessible and relevant to contemporary issues.

Your esteemed graduate program, with its emphasis on [mention specific program strengths related to your interests], aligns perfectly with my academic aspirations. The opportunity to work with renowned faculty in [mention specific areas of faculty expertise], conduct original research in [mention your area of interest], and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the past is a tremendous motivator.

From the strategic salvos in Battleship to the captivating narratives of World War II, my passion for history was ignited in the most unexpected of places. I am confident that your program will provide the rigorous academic foundation and resources necessary to refine my research skills, deepen my historical knowledge, and prepare me for a career dedicated to understanding, analyzing, and sharing the stories of the past.