

Personal Statements, Part 3: Rough Drafts

SUBMITTED BY: Kathryn McGinn

SUBJECT(S): Career Development

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

This is the third lesson in a series about writing personal statements, during which students will think about their plans for the future and begin crafting personal statements that outline their goals and qualifications. In this lesson, students will finish outlining their personal statements and begin writing rough drafts.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Career Development, IV. Career Strategy

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“Would You Bypass College for Real-world Learning?”](#)
- [“Student Essay: The Power of Stories to Inspire Strong Leaders”](#)
- [“Providing Guidance to Others Could Boost Your Own Success”](#)
- [“One House, Three Seniors and Lots of College Essays”](#)
- [“How to Reflect on What Matters to You as You Begin the College Search”](#)
- [“Apple Peach Greenleaf Smoothies Can Help You Unlock Your True Potential”](#)

Common Core Standard(s):

- ELA CCR Writing 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- ELA CCR Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.
- ELA CCR Writing 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- ELA CCR Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ELA CCR Reading 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Objectives/Purposes:

- Students will read/discuss the article about two different career paths.
- Students will begin writing their personal statements.

Knowledge@Wharton Article:

- “From Soup to Negligée: Success According to Victoria’s Secret’s Lori Greeley and Campbell Soup’s Denise Morrison”

Other Resources/Materials:

- Reading Guide for “From Soup to Negligée” ([Handout A](#))
- Sample Personal Statement ([Handout B](#))

Activities:

1. Explain to students that there are many different ways to approach career planning. Two varying approaches are presented in the Knowledge@Wharton article. Have students read the article and complete the Venn diagram as they read ([Handout A](#)). What do Morrison and Greeley have in common? How do their approaches differ? After

students complete the Venn diagram, ask them to share their observations about which approach appeals to them. Be sure to discuss the key points noted below:

Morrison	Similarities	Greeley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Knew she wanted to be a CEO early on.- Wrote out a “critical pathway” to success: what she wanted to achieve and how.- Identified any gaps in her plan and proactively addressed them. – Work/life integration. – Values self-awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grew up in supportive, business oriented families who encouraged them to succeed.- Found strong mentors.- Learned to balance work and family. – Both earned degrees in psychology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Never imagined being a CEO.- Career path follows passion, rather than planning: do your best in the moment and it will lead to good things.- Work/life separation. – Values risk-taking and listening.

(10 mins)

2. While not everyone charts his/her exact career path before they achieve (or don’t achieve) it, making a plan can be helpful. Point out that: “Midway through her career, after working at Pepsi for two years and Nestle for more than a decade, Morrison committed her plan to paper, charting out what she termed a “critical pathway” to career success. Her recipe: Set the final destination, develop the career track, build the skills, secure the experience, set realistic timetables and ultimately reach the goal.” Ask students if they see any similarities between their own personal statements and what Morrison wrote. (5 mins)

3. Explain to students that today they will finish outlining their papers and begin writing rough drafts. Getting started on a rough draft can be difficult. As such, it will be useful to look at an example together. Share the Sample Personal Statement ([Handout B](#)) with students.

- Read the first paragraph aloud together. Remind students that the introduction to their essay should start with an anecdote, detail, or example that will get their readers’

attention. Does this first paragraph include an engaging story? What imagery/details does the author include?

- Read the second paragraph also aloud together. Remind students that in the first body paragraph the author should describe their educational/career goals and explain why these goals are important. How the author will accomplish this task is in the second paragraph. (10 mins)
4. Give students the remainder of the class time to finish their outlines and start drafting their essay. The next step will be peer editing, so students want to get as much done as possible. Go around while students are working to check in with them individually. (15 mins)

Tying It All Together:

Save time at the end of class to check in with students. How are they doing with their drafts? What (if anything) is giving them trouble? What questions do they have? (5 mins)

Practice Outside of the Classroom:

- Students may choose to take their outlines home with them and continue working on their drafts outside of class.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:

I was surprised that students seemed to enjoy the article and get a lot out of it. They did a great job completing the Venn diagram, and had an animated conversation about which work styles they embodied. Please note that both women in the article have since moved on from their positions at Victoria's Secret and Campbell's Soup; however, the theme is evergreen (and the brands well-known) and serve as an effective lead-in to the next phase in students' personal-statement writing.

Looking at a sample personal statement also proved helpful for the students. If I taught this unit several times, I would save the strong personal statements made by students and use them as samples in future lessons.

There is not enough time for students to complete their personal statements during class. They either need one-to-two days devoted solely to writing in class or they should work on it at home. Only then will each student have a completed draft to use for peer editing.

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