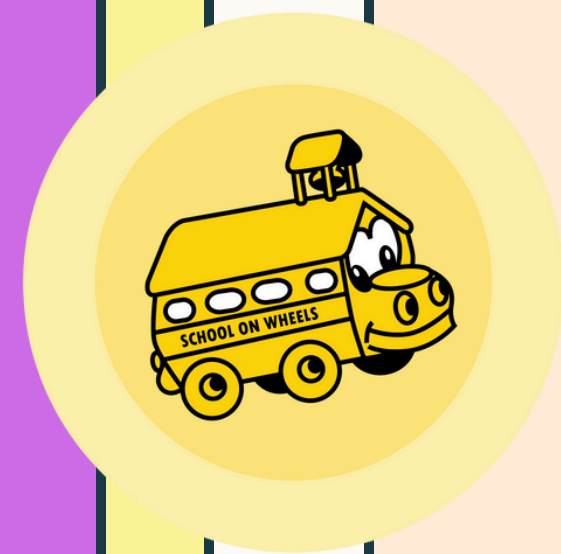


# Personal Statement Tips for College Applications

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## BRAINSTORMING

Begin by reading the prompt. Write down any ideas that come to mind. They could be personal struggles, notable experiences, or even random, unrelated thoughts.



## FINDING CONNECTIONS

Circle the ideas that you like. Did one event influence another? (For example: studying for a science project sparked your interest in astrophysics.) Reorganize the ideas chronologically and draw arrows between related events.



## EXPANDING THE NARRATIVE

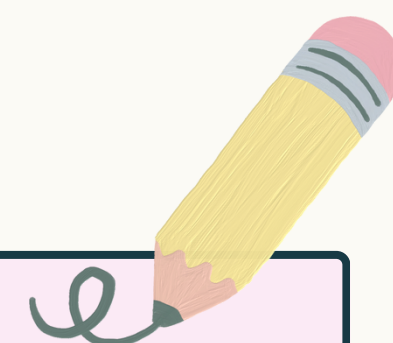
Readers are trying to understand **who you are** as a person and your amazing **potential** for the future—they'll need plenty of context to do so! Add a few bullet points to each circle that you could later elaborate on:

- **Background information needed to understand the event**
  - Time/Location
  - People involved
  - What happened + why
- **Why does this matter?**
  - Does it highlight...
    - Achievements/passions
    - Values/character
    - Current endeavors
  - **How did you grow from the experience?**
    - Did you learn something?
    - Did it change/strengthen viewpoints?
- **Impact on your community and those around you**
  - What is your vision/goal?
    - How will you achieve this?
- **How does your upbringing affect you and who you will become in the future?**
  - Experiences or values from your background
  - How they shape your goals, mindset, or approach to challenges





## WRITING

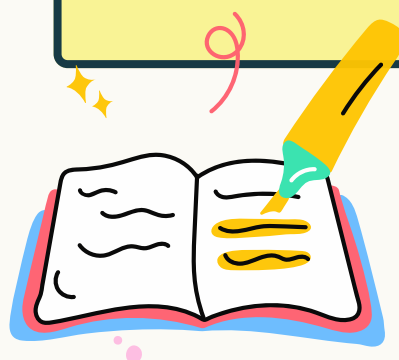


- Begin with a short hook that introduces the main story. This could be a simple description of you doing something. (For example: I leaned down to tie my shoes before the race).
- Use related events to show how your (passion/character/perspective/etc.) developed over time and how these experiences will help you achieve your future goals.
- **Focus more on your feelings, reflections, and reasoning rather than giving an exact retelling of what happened.** Try not to include too many events in the same essay, which can make it read like a list. Also, don't hesitate to be genuine and to write in the first person!



## EDIT, EDIT, EDIT!

- Have friends, family, and mentors in your life (like your tutor or a Volunteer Mentor) read your essay. They can often help to spot inconsistencies, gaps in reasoning, or other issues that you might overlook as the writer.
- Try reading your essay out loud: Hearing your words can help you catch awkward phrasing, repeated ideas, or sentences that don't flow smoothly.
- Take a break before revising: Step away from your essay for a few hours or a day, if you have the time. Returning with fresh eyes makes it easier to notice areas that need improvement.



For questions and further support with personal statements, essay editing, scholarship applications, and resume building, please feel free to contact Justin Bui via email at [justinbui3212@ucla.edu](mailto:justinbui3212@ucla.edu), or visit the School on Wheels Mentor Directory [here](#).