Introduce Yourself

Turn to a person next to you and introduce yourself!
What do you say to introduce yourself?

It depends on your audience and your purpose.
Colleges Want to Know You

- Focus on yourself and what you care about: your interests, experiences, goals
- They should be features that a stranger cannot discern from your transcript, résumé, or test scores
- Describe examples that illustrate your strengths and successes
Tell Them about You

- Your goal is to find a real story or two about you that illustrates your strengths.

- Good stories:
  - Are true
  - Are current
  - Speak your truth (avoid clichés)
  - Allow the reader to visualize
# Sample Traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Compassion and empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Genuineness and sincerity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of thought</td>
<td>Insightfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>Humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>A realistic perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivity</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Insight into your chosen profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctiveness</td>
<td>Industriousness and persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Ability to relate to diverse people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Strong written communication skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Personal?

- Choose topics you are comfortable sharing with strangers
- Give readers the best picture of you
- Small experiences or events can illustrate deep and complex personal traits
Personal Statements

- Typical Questions
- Form and Style
- Writing
- Writing Lab
Typical Questions

- What is your academic history?
- What are your intended major and career goals? How does this school relate?
- What significant challenge or positive experience has influenced your academic career?
- What cultural experiences have you had and what did you learn?
Academic History

- What have you studied and why?
- What are your accomplishments?
- What have you done in school (at BC and/or other colleges) that brings you to where you are now?
Academic History: Comparisons

Transcript telling: Chemistry 101 [Grade] A

Personal statement showing: Holding the warm Petri dish, it was clear which colony had been exposed to the antibiotic, and I knew laboratory research would . . .
Telling: I tried out a lot of different majors before I found one I liked.
Showing: . . . international studies appealed to my global interests, but it emphasized business and economics too much for me. The World Languages program interested me, but required a focus on just one language and culture.
Finally, through taking a career exploration class, I found linguistics has the mix of cross-cultural diversity, science, and humanities that engage my curiosity. After taking the introductory course, I learned that . . . and I’m eager to . . .
Worksheet Notes

Take just 2 minutes to write down some notes about what you have done the last couple of years in college.
What are your intended major and career goals?

- Why did you choose this major?
- What can this school do for you that perhaps another school cannot?
- What do you want to do after you graduate?
Major and Goals

Telling: Ever since I can remember, I’ve wanted to attend the University of Washington, study business, and get a job in international trade or marketing.
Major and Goals: Showing

Realistic knowledge not childhood wishes: I’ve grown up speaking three languages (English, French, and Arabic) and traveled for an internship. My intercultural experience and a degree in Business from the University of Washington’s Foster School
(along with its Certificate of International Studies) would allow me to help fill the world’s growing need for people with business and cross-cultural communication skills.
Why This School? Don’t Do This

- Do not remind the school of its ranking, reputation, or history with anything like this:
  
  The UW, founded in 1861, is a revered institution, ranked #6 in the nation in nursing. As such, I would be honored to be accepted . . .
Why This School? Do These:

- Instead, address the school’s unique features that interest you.
- Do your research, get to know your audience, and be specific!
Research Each School’s

- Mission Statement, Vision & Values
- Diversity Statement
- Undergraduate Research
- Study Abroad
- Other “Brags” (Fulbrights, Rhodes Scholars, etc.)
Why This School?

- Research the program, courses, faculty, and campus facilities you’re interested in.
Summarize your research

As someone who values . . . . In particular, I’m interested in . . . , . . . , . . . , . . . , all strengths of the [-----] program, which I’m pleased to learn is known for its . . . . Moreover, once I fulfill my remaining prerequisites, I would really look forward to taking . . . , as well as to work with expert teachers and mentors like . . . and . . . . Ultimately, . . .
Goals/Why This School?

Go ahead and jot down your ideas!

Consider…
(1) how you have prepared
(2) what you will contribute
(3) how their program will help you achieve your goals
(4) what campus facilities you seek
Cultural Experiences

According to the UW, “Culture may be defined broadly. Cultural understanding is often drawn from the ethnic background, customs, values, and ideas of a person’s immediate family, community, and/or social environment in which they live.”

Describe an experience and display your self-awareness. Show how you are mindful about yourself and your place in the world, and blend such a reflection into any part of or throughout your essay.
Culture Example: Telling

I once volunteered at a homeless shelter and thought the people there would be really different from me.
I once volunteered at a homeless shelter as part of my school’s community outreach project. I was a bit judgmental at first—I thought people became homeless because they didn’t want to work or were addicted to drugs or alcohol.
However, after I continued working there, I got to know a woman who had worked in Chicago as a teacher's assistant until her mother became ill. She had to sell most of her belongings to move back to Seattle. After paying off her mother’s debts and funeral, she ended up living in her car, which has made it hard to find a new job.
This experience helped me see that even if we appear different from others at first, we can end up in the same place, caring about the same things. We've both taken care of our parents as they aged, and I've realized that the health and housing industries need to be changed to keep people from becoming homeless. By majoring in . . . , I could . . .
Note Your Cultural Experiences

Have ideas about this topic? Write ’em down!

How has your ethnic background, gender identity, customs, values, and ideas of family, community, and/or social environment

- affected you?
- challenged you?
- enriched you?
- taught you about yourself?
- taught you about society?
Challenge or Positive Experience

- What happened?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- How will you deal with this situation if it should happen again?

Focus on showing how your experience empowers you and prepares you for university challenges.
Challenging Experience

Telling: I got very sick, and as a result . . .

Showing: I tried to lie still, but shivers racked my body. At 3 a.m., I had to change all my clothes and the sheets because my sweat had soaked through everything. Because of the sudden illness, I had to miss my mid-term exam and . . .
Positive Experience

**Telling:** I heard a great speaker give a talk that made me support the value and use of Native American languages.
Showing: When Vi Hilbert, who had more strength than people a quarter her age, spoke for an hour without notes to the students in the theater, and then told a story in Lushootseed with consonants and tones.
I doubt anyone else in the room could repeat, I knew a very special kind of knowledge would be lost with her passing, unless we, the next generation, took up the language with drive and determination.

That is why . . .
Challenging/Positive Experience

If you have some ideas of what you might want to discuss, please note them on your worksheet.
Form and Style

- Start with an appeal to emotions to hook and keep readers hooked
- Avoid a cliché and/or boring introduction
Avoid starting with anything like these:

“Allow me to introduce myself. My name is...”

“To whom it may concern…”

“In response to question #1…”

“I would like to thank the admissions committee for considering my application.”

“There are three reasons why you should admit me . . .”

Or ending with something like this:

“It is my sincere hope that you will grant me the opportunity to attend your fine school.”
"As I look back, my lack of action seems disgraceful, but at the time, I was simply trying to survive."

"Amid an alien expanse of green, the air dry from a season without rain, I labored."

http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns/june09/hub_lines.html
Essay Form and Style: Stories

- Tell a story: **narrative** or **montage**
- The style or tone do not need to reflect or be related to your intended major
- Content matters most!
Writing

- Use your notes today for the basis of a draft
- Or, brainstorm with someone
- Start with key ideas and build on them
- Keep your prompt in front of you
Writing and Writing Again

- Plan time to write many drafts:
  - Different schools
  - Different purposes
- Write several before showing one to someone else—satisfy yourself first, then be open to feedback.
Once you have a draft, and you’re ready to show it to someone, you can drop by the Writing Lab for a one-to-one talk about it!
What to Bring to the Writing Lab

- Your draft—printed and double-spaced
- Application essay prompt
- Something to write with
- Your questions and concerns
Liz Mendez, UW Admissions, advises:

- Be clear
- Be descriptive
- Be genuine
- Write at a college level
- Stay within the word limit
Personal Statement Recap

- Vivid personal story
- Let whoever reads your essay see you as a unique individual
- Show how your struggles and triumphs have taught you how to be successful
Web Resources

The University of Washington Admissions: 
http://admit.washington.edu/
Recommended: the Find Quick Answers link under “Quick Links”

For international students: 
https://www.applyweb.com/apply/uwi/

For all other transfer students: 
https://www.applyweb.com/apply/uwt/
More Web Resources

Interview with Philip Ballinger, Director UW Admissions:
http://collegeadmissionbook.com/blog/philip-ballinger-university-washington-answers-six-questions

Advice from UCLA Admissions Officers:
http://www.admissions.ucla.edu/prospect/perstmt.htm

Personal Statement Workshop Video (Univ. of CA):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zo6NI4wHf4

The YUNiversity’s “What You Need to Know About College Application Essays”:
https://medium.com/i-love-charts/how-to-get-started-on-writing-your-college-application-essay-72c80c5ca139