

Revising

Review the Prompt

One strategy for revision that may help you is to highlight the different points of the prompt in different colors. Then use those same colors to highlight the sentences in your response that relate to those parts of the prompt. For example, a prompt may ask you to describe an award you received, what you did to earn it, and what resources you used to achieve success. You may mark any ideas in your writing that relate to the purpose of the award in yellow, the narrative/process sentences in green, and the resources in blue. This will help you recognize if there are any unmarked sentences that might not address the prompt. It can also help you to see if ideas are repeated or underdeveloped.

Example

Prompt: Our college aims to have small class sizes and to promote mentorships **between faculty and students** and **between peers**. Explain how you will **contribute from those mentorships**.

My Response:

Having tutored **fellow students** in writing, pronunciation, and presentation at **BYU-Hawaii's tutoring centers**, I feel comfortable mentoring and guiding students in areas such as language and presentation. ~~I was a teacher's assistant at~~ ~~BYU-Hawaii's distance learning program when tutoring for writing.~~ ~~I was a tutor at~~ ~~BYU-Hawaii's Language and Speech Lab when tutoring for pronunciation.~~ **Because of these tutoring experiences, I have developed the ability to** **notice the needs of specific students and to work with them as a guide to address** **those needs.**

In the example, the writer addressed the "between peers" and "how will you contribute" part of the prompt. However, the writer did not address the "between faculty and students" or the "how will you benefit from those mentorship" parts of the prompt. Now that the writer knows what is missing, they can add sentences or a paragraph to answer that part of the prompt. The writer also realized that the center sentences about being a teaching assistant were never highlighted because it didn't talk about the topics requested in the prompt. So, the writer decided to delete those sentences.

Word Choice

Because personal statements are often limited in terms of character or word count, you want to be sure that you get the most impact out of the words you choose to use. Choosing a word that is more precise in its meaning and connotation will help you to use the space wisely.

Exercises

Exercise 4.16: Develop a Paragraph

Read this example student paragraph from a personal statement. This is for a college application essay about what the writer found engaging. What general advice would you give the writer? What specific advice would you give about details and word choice?

I am interested in business. The lesson that I am learning from my successes and failures help me to understand that everything is possible If we work hard. When you have failures sometimes you decide to give up, but I believe that if you want to be successful you need to learn from your failures. It is very important to have a plan for your goals. Also, this topic captivates me because I am an entrepreneur.

Exercise 4.17: Revise Your Writing

Follow the steps below to revise your personal statement.

1. Open your essay and save a copy called "Revision."
2. Choose two or three colors to represent your main points. If you have more than that many points, you can choose more colors. However, it will be good to think about whether or not the additional points actually add strength to your essay or use space that could be better used for something else.
3. Change the text color for all sentences connected to each of those two or three points.
4. Look at any sentences that are still in black. Are they necessary? Should they be connected more clearly to your thesis and supporting details?
5. Select the highlighter in yellow.
6. Highlight any sections of your essay where words repeat too frequently or you use too many words to express an idea. Is there another way to say these points?
7. Make changes based off of this review of your draft.

Revise a Personal Statement



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