Personal narrative- what, so what, now what

1. Part One: What

This is where you have the actual story, **specific** event, person, place, idea, issue, etc. Use a rich, thick description—avoid generalities like "She was always there for me." Narrate a little story or give specific evidence.

When I was younger,…
I'll never forget
I'll always cherish…
I've always been fascinated by…

2. Part Two: So What

How are you like the "What" in part 1? How does the "What" of part 1 relate to you? What have you learned because of the "What" in part 1?

That night changed me because…;
_____["What"]__ has made me _____ because…
It was then that I learned…

3. Part three: Now What

Conclusion statement—Connect your future plans to parts one and two-- how you look forward to working with this employer or studying at the school or whatever your topic calls for.

Use some variation of

Because of _["what"]_, I've learned __["so what"]_ and I look forward to being successful at _["now what"]__.

From a college application:

"Personal Essay: Please write an essay on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below. This personal essay helps us become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself."

Actual essay instructions: Your essay must be at least 250 -500 words, typed, and double spaced.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Address the following prompts in well-developed essays. Use your best writing—put your best foot forward, so to speak. Type, use proper grammar, and spell correctly.
2. Proofread your own work
3. Have another person, preferably someone who knows what they are doing, to proofread your essays.
4. Submit your work to turnitin.com by the due date.

PROMPT OPTIONS

From the Texas Common Application

1. Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there, and why is it meaningful to you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Other essay prompts

6. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
7. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
8. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.*
    a. *Variant*: Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
9. What is your intended major? Discuss how your interest in the subject developed and describe any experience you have had in the field — such as volunteer work, internships and employment, participation in student organizations and activities — and what you have gained from your involvement.
10. Tell us about a personal quality, talent, accomplishment, contribution or experience that is important to you. What about this quality or accomplishment makes you proud and how does it relate to the person you are?
11. Describe a significant setback, challenge or opportunity in your life and the impact that it has had on you.
12. Why should we hire/accept/ select you for this job/university/ opportunity?