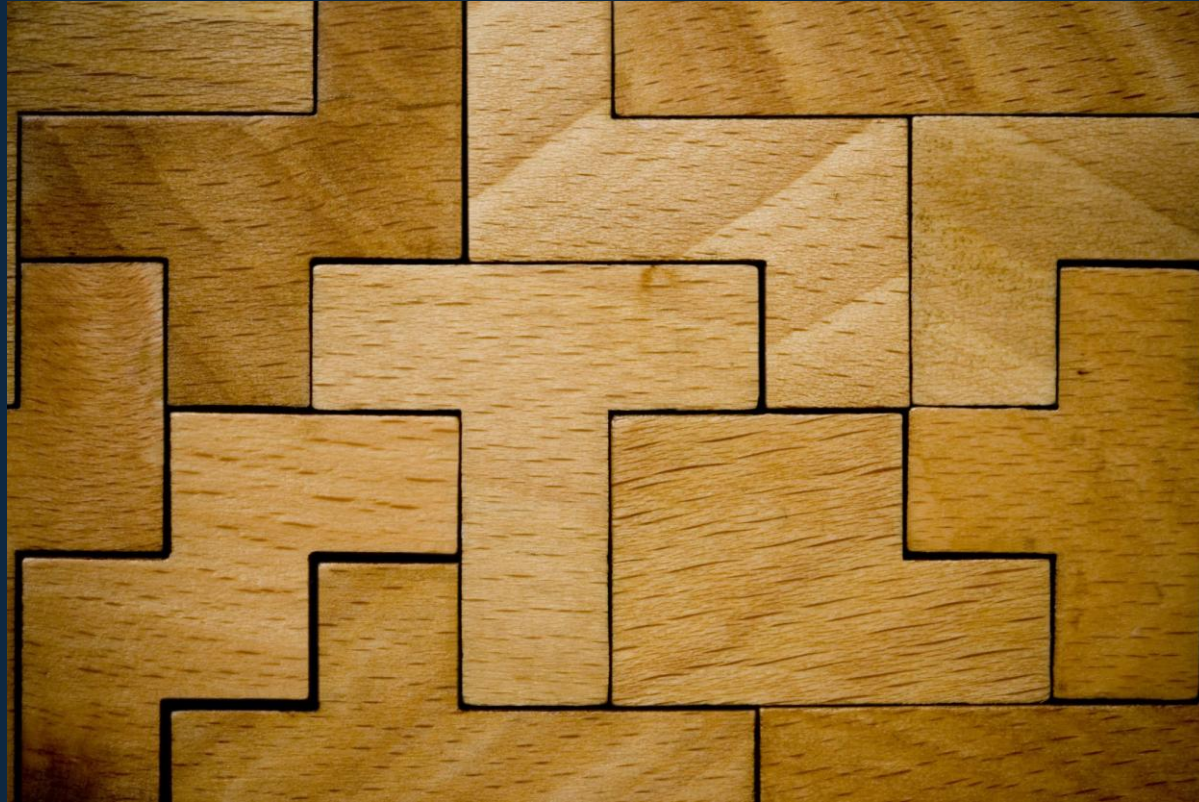


Personal Statement Do's and Don'ts

**For Physician Assistant School
Applications**

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Answer the Question!

A close-up photograph of a bird's wing, showing the intricate patterns and textures of the feathers. The feathers are primarily grey and white, with some reddish-brown spots. The background is dark and blurred. Overlaid on the image is the text "Who you are and what you're about" in a white, sans-serif font.

Who you are and what you're about



Know your audience

Quality Over Quantity



Sounds easy... but how do I do it?

- **Be specific**
- Tell a story
- Focus on what you've learned
- Focus on your values and times they have been reinforced or challenged
- Tie it back to the practice of medicine
- Address any academic issues or GPA trends

Values exercise

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| • Achievement | Curiosity | Reputation |
| • Adventure | Fairness | Respect |
| • Authority | Growth | Responsibility |
| • Autonomy | Honesty | Security |
| • Balance | Justice | Service |
| • Compassion | Leadership | Success |
| • Challenge | Learning | Vulnerability |
| • Community | Loyalty | Wealth |
| • Creativity | Recognition | Wisdom |

- Can you think of a story when these values were upheld or challenged?
- How do your values mesh with your intended career?
- How do your values clash?

What to Include

What information should I consider including in my personal statement? Some questions you may want to consider while drafting this essay are:

- Why have you selected this field?
- What motivates you to learn more about health care?
- What do you want PA schools to know about you that hasn't been disclosed in another section of the application?

In addition, you may wish to include information such as:

- Special hardships, challenges or obstacles that may have influenced your educational pursuits
- Commentary on significant fluctuations in your academic record which are not explained elsewhere in your application

Things to avoid

- **Critical of PAs**
 - Okay to question the system, don't bash the people reading your essay!
- **Praise other people**
 - Committee wants to know about YOU, not your grandfather
- **Using AI**
 - Please.... People can tell... Just don't!
- **Overly optimistic**
 - It's okay to acknowledge the challenges

What do you know about this person?

Being engaged in several extracurricular activities has always provided me with much gratification. Having started in grade school continuing through college, I find myself partaking in as many organizations as feasibly possible. As a freshman at the University of Iowa, I was eager to participate in sorority recruitment, sign up for a Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow membership, find a part-time job, and explore volunteer options. I found myself, two weeks later, to have become a member of my sorority, a weekly volunteer in the Mother/ Baby Unit at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics and have a part-time job as a student clerk at the university hospital in the Surgery- Trauma/Burn division. These activities led to my development as a scholar, leader, and philanthropist as well as, solidify my decision to become a physician assistant.

Impressions?

I laid out my stack of papers - a pile for psychiatry, primary care, physical therapy until my table was full. The doors opened, and one by one, people waiting for their turn at the food pantry came up. The first patient is always Ernesto; he was diagnosed with hypertension in Mexico and has not been treated since he moved. After using my Spanish to point him toward an eager medical student waiting to take his blood pressure, I speak to the next patient.

The importance of preventative healthcare hung over each interaction. Yet some patients did not have a car and used unreliable public transportation; some relocated due to housing insecurity and were unfamiliar with the resources in their new area; some needed to eat healthier, which is hard while living in a food desert. Each experience solidified my goal of working with marginalized populations. I learned how important it is that patients feel understood. As they told their stories I realized how little information is provided to minority communities about their health. My experience at the clinic affirmed my aspirations to become a physician assistant who listens and prioritizes healthcare disparities and is mindful of a system that discourages this.

