

# Speech-Language Pathology Personal Statements

Personal statements for Speech Language Pathology (SLP) can be a little different from the typical personal statement. Here you can address some unique concerns for SLP personal statements as well as learn some general tips.

**Q: I want to make my personal statement unique. Is it ok if I do not mention an experience with someone who has communication disorder?**

A: Yes. It will show that you have the ability to link things together that might seem unrelated at first, and synthesize information really well together. It might show the professors that you can apply information from classes in grad school to other experiences such as internships. Showing that you are passionate about something and relating it back to communication sciences and disorders is a good strategy- almost any experience involves some sort of communication, just make sure you relate it back to your academic goals!

**Q: I know my GPA/GRE is lower than the average (3.0 or lower, but be sure to check the school's average GPA) that is usually accepted by a certain school. Should I address this in my personal statement?**

A: Yes, you need to address any GPA 3.0 or lower in your personal statement, or the admissions committee may have some questions about your application. When addressing this issue, think about why your grades or GRE score was lower than usual. Did your GPA suffer during your freshman year because you were going through a period of adjustment and transitioning from high school to college? Was there a personal incident, such as a family death? Addressing the specific strategies you've used to improve is a good idea. Are you utilizing a calendar now, and have better time management strategies? Did you meet with professors during office hours to clarify material that you were unsure about from class? *Above all, make sure not to blame an instructor--this will not reflect back on you well.*

**Q: Some prompts ask about a disagreement I've had with someone and how I handled it. What should I make sure to highlight when answering this question?**

A: Make sure to explain what you gained from this experience, and how it made you grow as a person. Discuss a time where you maintain emotional control and self-regulation. Here are some questions to get you started: Did you learn how to compromise? What strategies did you use to prevent the conflict from escalating? Have you learned how to respond professionally despite disagreeing with someone?

**Q: Some of the schools I'm applying to ask for a personal statement as well as an academic statement. Can I assume that they're looking for more information about me in the personal statement?**

A: Yes. It might be a good idea to write about experiences with individuals with communication disorders in your academic statement, and focus on what you're passionate about in your personal statement. Keep in mind, they are probably asking for a personal statement to get to know you.

**Q: I know that I don't want to participate in research in graduate school. Is there a different way that I can frame this in my personal statement that won't detract from my application?**

A: Here are some some ways strategies to frame that information: Convey that you want to apply evidence and research to future work in SLP. Discuss interpreting research, or any experience you have with interpreting research and applying it to a new situation. Show that you strive to use an evidence-based approach as a SLP.

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After addressing the higher order concerns, here are some other questions you may have when writing your SLP personal statement.

**Q: I want to discuss a specific story in my personal statement, but I don't want to violate HIPAA. How can I tell the story while ensuring that I'm not violating HIPAA?**

A: It's safest to provide an alternate first name for the story and add (pseudonym) next to it. For instance, you could also say something like: I worked with a four-year old who I called "Sam" (pseudonym). Make sure not to specify the location (city or name) of the experience. Is it appropriate to say that you shadowed an SLP at a local school, but providing a name along with describing a patient's case would not be prudent.

**Q: I'm not sure if I'm choosing the right words for my personal statement. How do I know if I'm being overly-technical or if I'm not using "big" enough words?**

A: Choosing words precisely is always a good idea. Here are some general tips on using the correct diction: Use the word that fits the message the best. If you aren't sure if a word is fitting or you don't know what it means, it might be to your advantage not to include that word. Vary word choice throughout the paper Don't go too over the top--for example, If you had to look up most of the words you used in a thesaurus, then there's a chance that the personal statement might come off as disingenuous, or that your voice as a writer may have been lost in the process.

**Q: I know that I eventually want to pursue a PhD. Is it appropriate to mention this in my personal statement?**

A: Yes! Research-intensive universities will like to see this, because there are a shortage of SLPs who have a PhD in our field--remember writing about this is not set in stone, and you can always change your mind later. Of course, do not say that you would like to pursue a PhD if you know that you don't want to. Make sure to discuss why you are interested. It also might be a good idea to look into the faculty members at each university and what their research focus is. Disclosing which research labs you would like to work in could be a good addition to your personal statement.

**Q: I want to discuss my experiences with interacting with people who have communication disorders...the only problem is, I have too much I want to talk about! How do I decide what to include?**

A: It might be a good strategy to focus on one, maybe two experiences that really influenced you. You can mention that you've had multiple experiences (for ex: I've enjoyed my time working with people who have communication disorders through my job at the nursing home and through my volunteer position at a local school. However, my experience with working at a local hospital particularly influenced my decision to become a speech-language pathologist). Make sure to discuss why this has influenced you.

