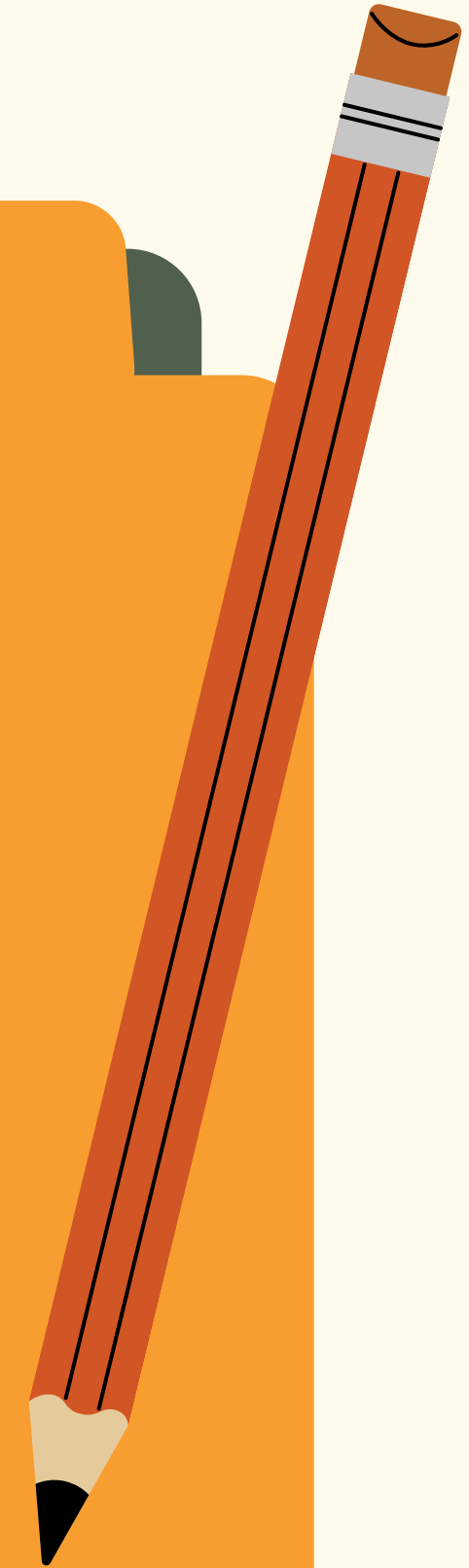


Prehealth Advising presents

WORKSHOP YOUR WHY MD

Medical School Personal Statement Workshop



Goals



1

Understand the purpose and importance of the personal statement

2

Develop 1 or more potential themes to highlight why you want to be a doctor

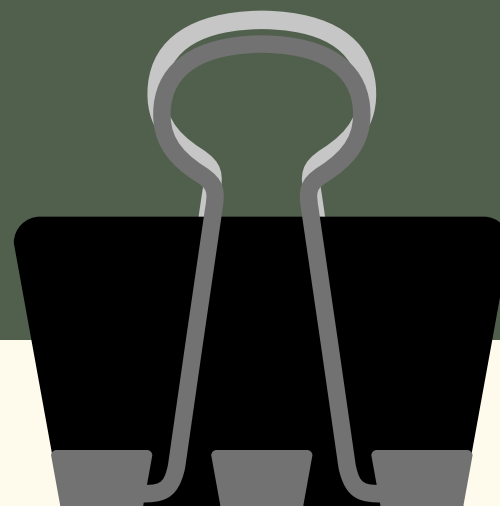
3

Identify experiences you've had that support your theme, compile them into a proposed outline

4

Understand the different categories of written materials for your medical school application

Important Info



AMCAS Personal Statement: Why MD?	5300 characters w/spaces	Answers the prompt: Why do you want to be a physician?
MD-PhD only: Why MD/PhD?	3000 characters w/spaces	Answers the prompt: Why do you want to be a physician scientist?
MD-PhD only: Significant Research Essay	10000 characters w/spaces	Answers the prompt: Tell us about your most significant research in technical detail.

[AMCAS Application Essays Instructions](#)

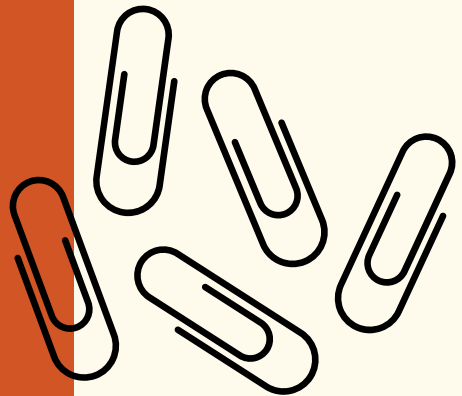
[AAMC Advisor Corner: Why Medicine?](#)



Writing Timeline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline your structure Write early draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask friends/family to critique early drafts Schedule an essay critique w/Prehealth Advising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize your essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit essay to AMCAS
Dec	Jan/Feb	Feb/Mar	Apr/May	Jun

AMCAS Application: Section 8



Personal Comments Essay

i Consider and write your Personal Comments carefully; many admissions committees place significant weight on this section. Make sure you proofread carefully because no changes may be made after you submit your application. What information should I consider including in my personal comments?

Use the space provided to explain why you want to go to medical school. *

5300 characters left of 5300



Content & Structure

Introduction

- grabs the reader's attention
- include thesis statement and/or introduces theme

Body Paragraphs (2-3)

- feature experiences you've had that confirm your interest
- provide evidence for your thesis statement/support your theme
- allow space for reflection about the experience

Conclusion

- reinforces theme & reflection through summary

Medical Colleges:

The Importance of the Personal Statement



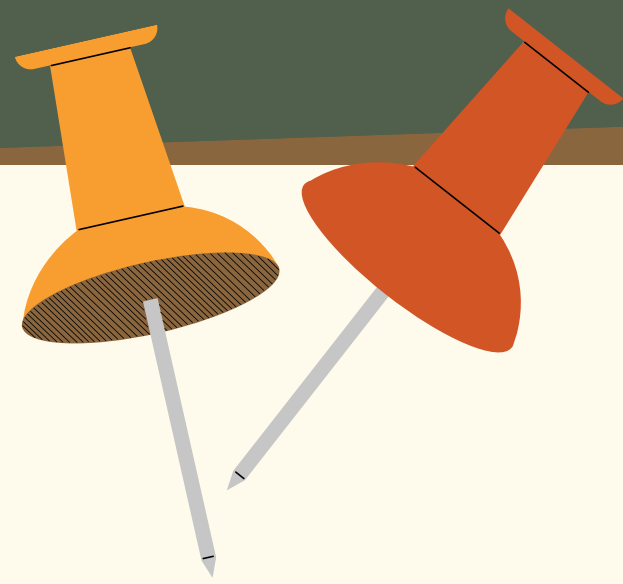
Figure 1. Importance of Application Data to Admission Officers at 113 Medical Schools in Their Decisions to Invite Interviewees and Offer Acceptances

Invite Interviewees

- GPA: Cumulative science and math (3.7)
- GPA: Cumulative (3.6)
- MCAT Total scores (3.5)
- Letters of recommendation (3.4)
- Community service: medical (3.3)
- Personal statements (3.2)
- Medical/clinical work experience (3.2)
- Community service: non-medical (3.1)
- Leadership experience (3.0)
- Completion of premedical requirements (3.0)
- Experience with underserved populations (2.7)

Offer Acceptances

- Interview recommendation (4.5)
- Letters of recommendation (3.8)
- GPA: Cumulative science and math (3.7)
- Community service: medical (3.6)
- GPA: Cumulative (3.6)
- MCAT Total scores (3.4)
- Personal statements (3.4)
- Medical/clinical work experience (3.4)
- Community service: non-medical (3.3)
- Leadership experience (3.2)
- Completion of premedical requirements (3.1)
- Experience with underserved populations (3.0)



**LET'S START
BRAINSTORMING!**

WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A DOCTOR?

Take 5
minutes to
brainstorm.

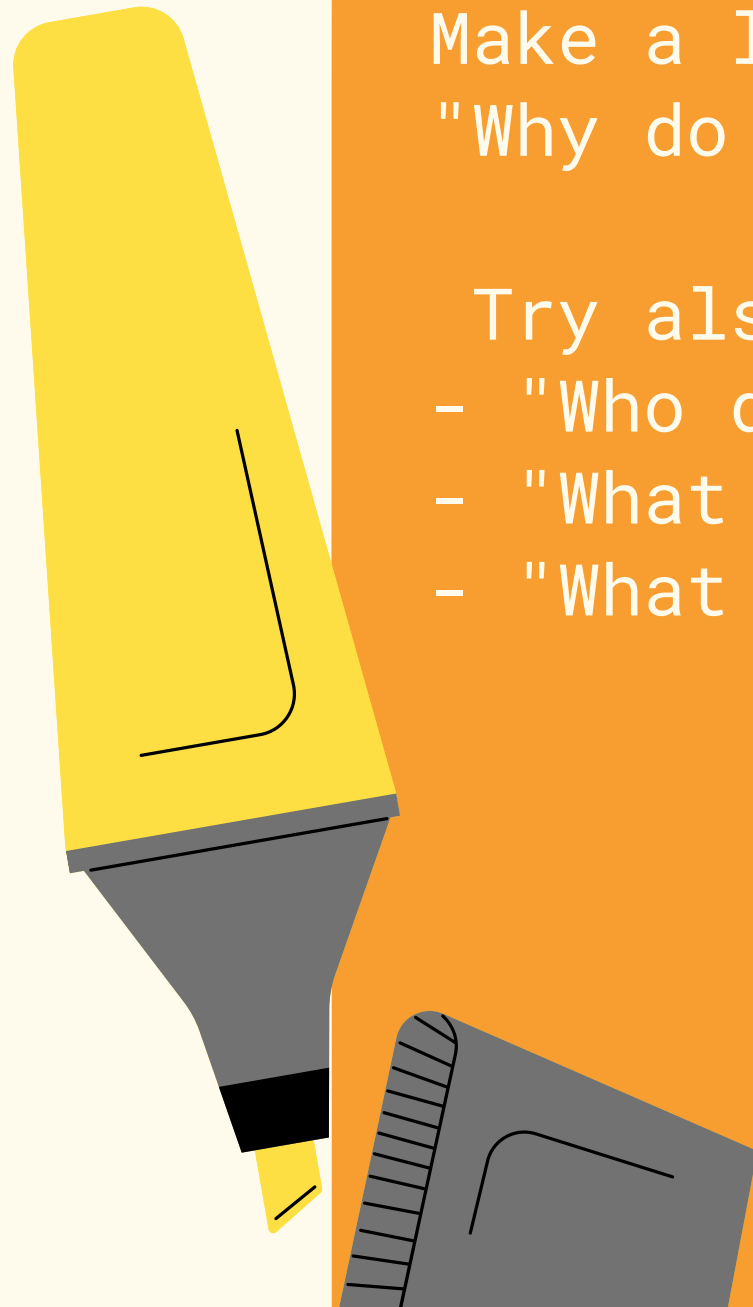
Make a list of 5-10 sentences that answer:
"Why do I want to be a doctor?"

Try also answering other questions for inspiration:

- "Who do you want to serve as a physician?"
 - "What do you hope to contribute to the field?"
 - "What qualities do you hope to embody as a doctor?"
-

Stumped? Check out this document for some inspiration:

["Why Helpers Help"](#) | [Why I Became a Doctor](#)



Examples

- 1) I want to serve my community, and there is a lack of healthcare providers who *represent my community members*.
- 2) I want to bring my *engineering* background to help patients by solving the physical challenges they experience.
- 3) I want to pair my skills in *research* with patient-input to develop effective and empowering medical devices.
- 4) I want to be there for my patients in their most *vulnerable* times and share my knowledge with them to ensure improved outcomes.

Each of these sentences has a theme hidden beneath the veil of 'wanting to help people.'

Don't forget to dig deeper - keep asking 'why?'

WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE A DOCTOR?

Take 5
minutes to
brainstorm.

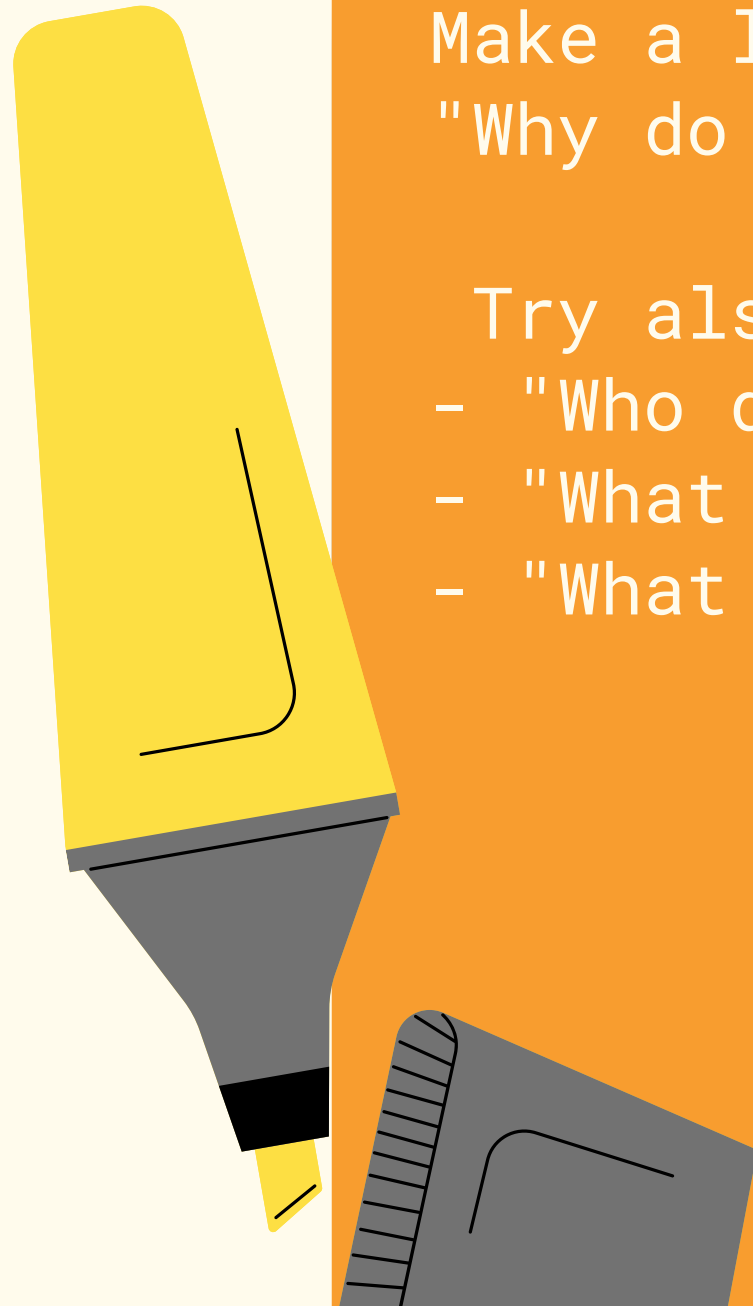
Make a list of 5-10 sentences that answer:
"Why do I want to be a doctor?"

Try also answering other questions for inspiration:

- "Who do you want to serve as a physician?"
 - "What medical problems do you want to solve?"
 - "What qualities do you hope to embody as a doctor?"
-

Stumped? Check out this document for some inspiration:

["Why Helpers Help"](#)
or ["Why I Became a Doctor"](#)



Identify Supporting Evidence

For each reason, identify 2-4 experiences that support the claim.



Ideas:

- life events & transitions
- health-related experience
- achievements
- your research
- service experiences
- obstacles you've overcome
- significant people in your life
- extracurriculars
- employment experiences
- shadowing experiences
- travel experiences

Example sentence: I want to become a gynecologist who empowers patients from diverse backgrounds to understand their bodies.

Example Experiences for Evidence:

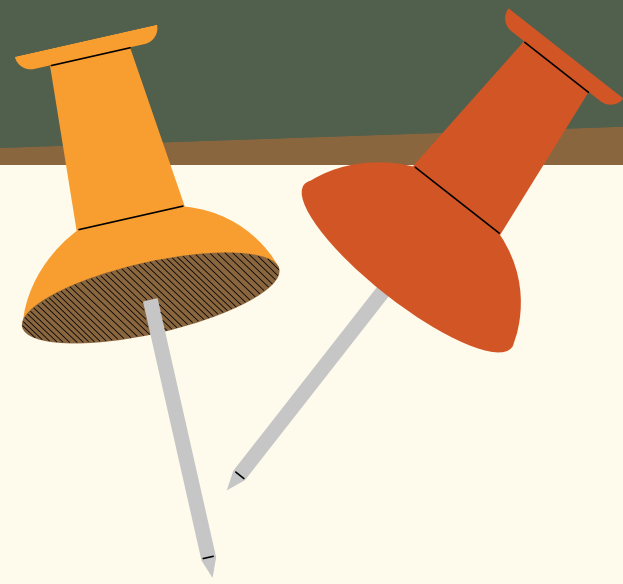
UROG studying cervical cancer

Shadowing at Cambridge Health Alliance

Serving as vice president of student club Mujeres Latinas

Volunteering as a medical interpreter

Take 5 minutes to brainstorm.



**Let's look at an
example essay!**

[Dropbox Link](#)

The Secret:



ONE BIG IDEA

Every piece of writing should communicate one big idea.
The rest of the document needs to support that idea.

Your one big idea is the theme of your essay.



Common Pitfalls

A strong personal statement balances storytelling with reflection, while also conveying your commitment to serve patients. Stories can serve as the evidence for the thoughts you lay out in your reflection.

Opening paragraph doesn't engage the reader

Not proofreading

Lack of transitions between paragraphs and ideas

Having too many people edit your essay

Telling your whole life's story

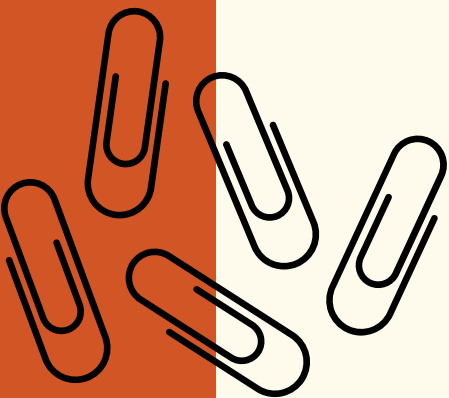
Claiming that you've wanted to be a healthcare professional since birth

Focusing more on someone else than on your own journey

Focusing too much on negative healthcare experiences

Not answering the question soon enough

"An average application essay summarizes accomplishments as a means to explaining motivation." ([Source](#))



Why MD-PhD

Why do you want to be a physician who primarily engages in research?

How will your research impact your patient care and how will your patient care impact your research?

Convince the reader that you cannot imagine a career where you could only do one.

[Link: Significant Research Essay Example](#)

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MD-PhD only: Significant Research Essay	10000 characters w/spaces	Answers the prompt: Tell us about your most significant research in technical detail.

[AMCAS Application Essays Instructions](#)

[AAMC Advisor Corner: Why Medicine?](#)



Other Application Documents

Consider what experiences would be relevant for these prompts.

Secondary Applications

How will you contribute to the diversity of the incoming class?

How have you overcome obstacles in your life?

How has COVID-19 affected you or your desire to go into medicine?

Activities Section

15 slots to write about different activities - 700 characters

3 of these become the 'most meaningful' activities - additional 1325 characters

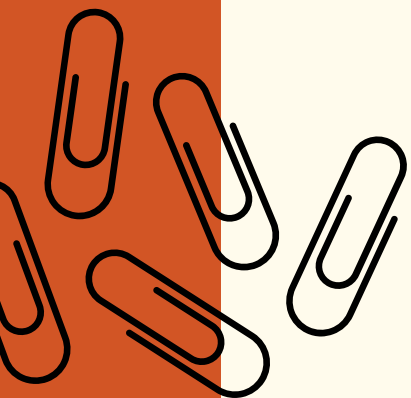
Med School Interviews

Tell me about a meaningful experience you had in a healthcare setting.

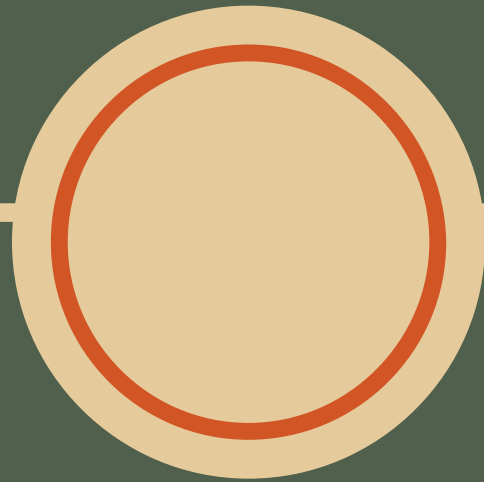
Tell me about how you've served as a leader for others.

Tell me about how you have communicated with people from diverse backgrounds.

You already answered several of these questions on your Prehealth Questionnaire!



Next Steps



- 1) Meet with Prehealth Advising for an Essay Critique Appointment
 - Book via Handshake -> <https://app.joinhandshake.com/>
- 2) Begin writing drafts & organizing your time
 - AMCAS opens May 4th
 - We recommend submitting by June 30th



Resources

*Additional Resources
are in the Handshake
Resource Library*

- Resource: Events that Activated Your Interest in Health
- Resource: Outlining Your Activities
- Resource: Identifying Your Themes
- Resource: Personal Statements Workshop Freewriting Activity
- Resource: Tough Love for Your Personal Statement: Advice from a Medical School Dean