

Personal Statements, Before and After

What follows are a few examples of personal statements as they were given to me. I am providing my modifications along with some of the reasons for the changes.

When I work with a client it is a “give and take” effort in the sense that you will give me your work, I’ll find some problems and fix them and ask you some questions and based on your answers I will continue to modify and improve the work.

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My initial observations to your first draft:

It is my impression that this text of about 580 words was first in Chinese, perhaps competent Chinese, and then run through some automatic translation software such as Google or Baidu. Then, still in this raw translation form, it was given to me. The author made no attempt to smooth out the raw translation into anything remotely resembling appropriate, grammatically-correct English.

Always perform and spelling and grammar check and look for ‘red underlines’ which indicate a possible error. Word: > Tools Menu>>Spelling Check

The errors that may be underlined include spelling and grammar errors and you should pay attention to any sentence that is underlined as a possible, indeed, likely error.

Studies have shown that some fonts are considered more ‘serious’ than others: Font selection: I suggest Algreya, Baskerville, Bookman Old Style, Century Schoolbook, Georgia, Gentium, Gentium Plus, Times New Roman.

Avoid ‘cute’ fonts like Comic sans MS. They are “unserious” fonts.

Look at how you are paragraphing. If some paragraphs ‘look’ too long or too big, they probably are.

Look for any ‘abbrs.’ and acronyms [these are short forms formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word, e.g., NUDT is “National University of Defense Technology).

Repeated mistakes of a simple error.

I suggest you access, copy and get familiar with the wiki:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punctuation_in_English and save it for future reference. You will avoid many basic, and distracting, errors.

I suggest you access and read the wiki:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punctuation>.

A common error that leads to many mistakes among native Chinese speakers is the order of adjectives.

I suggest you refer to:

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/adjectives/order-adjectives>

Some of the repeated, obvious, freshman mistakes include:

1. Missing capitalization such as 'i was' which should be "I was."
2. Numerous instances of "Chinese" grammar structures resulting in 'non-sentences'.

<i>0</i>	<i>1 Original Text</i>	<i>2 Comments and Modifications</i>
000	PERSONAL STATEMENT #1	
001	Listening to the flushing sound of toilet, i was relishing my lunch.	Omit this sentence entirely Mentioning eating while listening to a toilet flush is not appropriate for a 'personal statement'. It is a 'turn-off' to any reader.
002	I will never forget the flavor of my lunch, commingles with tears, tastes bitter but not sweet.	Inconsistent verb tenses. These should all be in the past tense hence: commingled tasted The point, or purpose, of this sentence is not obvious.
003	To children, lunch time is the happiest time in a day; to me, it's a stigmatic torture. "i'm too fat. They all hate me!" i thought to myself.	This may be an acceptable opening thought--if it introduces a theme that continues throughout the text. ===== For most school children, lunch is a happy time. For me it was endless torture. I sat at the table knowing that my classmates thought I was 'too fat' and that they hated me.
004	After that, day and day were recurrent of my acerbity.	"Chinese" grammar structures resulting in 'non-sentences'. ===== I cried almost every day.
005	I refused to go to school, and i gave up on my studies.	School was too unpleasant for me and I refused to go. I quit studying.

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006	All i do was strived to the end of school every moment, every day.	I was forced to attend school, but my only goal was to get through the day.
007	Lunch time was anguished to me during those days.	Lunchtime was the worst part of the day for me.
008	“i broke the wishes of my parents.	I knew I was disappointing my parents.
009	They sacrificed a ton in order to provide me with the best environment to study, but i”i, sat on toilet, tried extremely hard to ignore the revelries outside.	They had made many sacrifices for me to go to a good school and live in a nice home.
010	Tears dripped while i flashed back to my resplendent days before i came to Canada.	At school I would flee the lunchroom to hide, and cry, in the toilet.
011	I was the treasure of my family; i was instead of begrudging others, i blamed myself melancholy.	My family treasured me and I knew it. I also knew I was failing them every day and I blamed myself.
012	Days passed, i finished my elementary and crawled into Magee Secondary.	Grade school ended and middle school began. School life didn’t improve much.
013	My confidence was exhausted and i did n’t attain the mettle to communicate with others.	I had no self-confidence and couldn’t make friends. I didn’t have the courage to approach anyone and start a conversation.
014	Seeing classmates’ last bite of a pizza, an idea sparked, “Emmen, pizza house”.	One day I was watching a classmate eat the last slice of pizza and an idea came to me.
015	Gathered up all my little bit of confidence, i walked into the pizza house nearby my house, “may i in here, work? I asked timorously with my poor english.	I gathered up what confidence I had and went to a pizza shop near my home and asked for a job—not a paying job. I asked to volunteer.
016	I started to volunteer in Domino’s Pizza.	I “volunteered” at a Domino’s Pizza.
017	Telephone was ringing, a customer walked in, boxes of pizzas need to be served, i worked in turbulences at first.	It was a new experience for me. I was so busy! The phone would ring. Customers would come in and go out and each one needed to be served.
018	However, i got familiar with the tasks because of others’ ardent instructions.	I gradually learned how things worked.
019	Everyone in the pizza house trained	The other employees were very kind

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	me with patience and taught me english in spare time. "do you like country music?" one of the cashier relaxed me by asking this question.	and patient with me. The helped me learn English during the slow times. For example, one cashier relaxed himself by quizzing me, in English about "country music?"
020 - 024	omitted	
025	Do you think this container is full now?' text omitted	I don't understand sentences 25-30 =====
032	Seeing is much more trenchant and effective than hearing and reading.	I think that seeing something more effectively teaches a point than hearing or reading and that philosophy is touchable or tangible and life can be comprehended better through using it.
033	When philosophy is tangible, one can comprehend it from tip to tail.	Okay.
034	Time rushes, five years vanished while I blink my eye.	My time at school sped up and five years later I was out.
035	Buildings, events and people around me altered, so did i.	I had altered my environment and my environment had altered me. I had gained confidence and joined society.
036	text omitted	
038	Every moment now is memorable to me. Life is not a straight acclivity or declivity; life is a wave that bounces from top to bottom.	Life doesn't move in a straight line but more like a wave. It doesn't bounce like a basketball but like a rugby ball. You can't predict where it will go because it is irregular and it moves too quickly for the eye to see.
039	Fortunately, I succeed in transferring the downfalls into my momentums.	I was fortunate in being able to use my pain to help me realize how much I need my family, school, and philosophy.
040	Being satisfied, I need is my family, my school, and philosophy.	Every day is a blessed day for me.
041	Every day is a blessing day!	
050	PERSONAL STATEMENT #2	

<i>0</i>	<i>1 Original Text</i>	<i>2 Comments and Modifications</i>
055	I am**** .	adding the Chinese characters personalizes the letter. ===== My name is **** [Insert hanwen character here].
056	I strongly wish to study in Social Psychology in graduate level and my long-term goal is to be enrolled in a US doctoral program and thereby get fully prepared to be a scholar.	More native English sounding. ===== My goal is to study Social Psychology at the graduate level in a US doctoral program in order to become a scholar in the field
057	The reason for which I make up my mind to apply for the master program of X university is to enrich my research experience and reinforce the academic foundation so that I can be not only more competitive but more focused on my research interest in the future.	More native English sounding. ===== I am applying to your school because I believe it meets my needs.
058	Psychology called out my name when I was a freshman in senior high.	I first became interested in psychology in high school.
059	I took psychology courses whereby I learn some classic psychology researches such as Ebbinghaus' curve, leading to the regulation of forgetting and Zimbard's Stanford Prison Experiment, revealing the innate potential to be both good and evil.	After reading about the Ebbinghaus curve and the Zimbard Stanford Prison Experiment, I became fascinated by memory, and the topic good and evil.
060	I quickly became fascinated by Psychology, a branch of science dedicated to explore the mental processes as well as behaviors.	Omit as redundant.
061	Thus, 3 years later, I chose to major in applied psychology at **** University, China. HUNNU has one of the top ten psychology departments in China and is one of the Chinese Project 211 universities.	I chose applied psychology at **** University. It has one of the top ten psychology departments in China and is a Project 211 university NOTE: The reader may not know what "211

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		Project' means. Include a sentence describing it.
062	Text Omitted	
081	After that, I played a major part in writing a paper concerning the core part of the findings and published it on the Journal of South China University as the corresponding author.	<p>suggestion: Was the paper in Chinese? If so, submit it along with an English version of the abstract, introduction and conclusion. =====</p> <p>The research resulted in an article published in the Journal of ***</p> <p>Provide full and complete and proper citation.</p>
082	text omitted	