

The Autobiographical Sketch

Provides your writers with important context. It helps them to put your application goal into a more holistic understanding. You share, in prose, information that offers more meaning than a list of items on a resume could possibly provide, including something about your motivation for this journey. While it does not need to be as refined as your final personal statement essay for the application, it should be well-written with a narrative that goes beyond listing. Also, the purpose of this sketch IS to be autobiographical, so writers have a more general context of your journey and aspiration.

The autobiographical sketch also:

- Provides you with a catalyst for diving into the process of reflection and drafting that is required to write your primary and secondary applications.
- Is considerate, and always provides writers with context **any time** they write for you.

You can share the narrative in the form of:

- A Letter
- An essay
- A set of organized paragraphs with topic headings (ie: Childhood, Before College; Academics/Intellectual journey; What I Did outside the Classroom/experiential learning, etc; Important Inspirations; Family influences--or “titles” that are most relevant to you.).
 - Definitely also write about your motivation for medicine.

There’s no minimum or maximum length, but we recommend keeping it to two pages or less. Many of you may be wondering what to focus on when writing your autobiographical sketch. While you will send your autobiographical sketch to all your support writers, it is mostly for your composite writer. The composite writer is responsible for synthesizing their experiences with you, along with the information shared by you and your support writers. Overall, the composite writer provides context to your abilities, experiences, and who you are as a person. As such, your autobiographical sketch is an important resource for achieving this goal.

The self-reflection involved in this project is a great way to begin the reflection that is essential for the application itself. The format is flexible. Write your sketch as an essay or in sections. You can choose/create your own relevant sections (ex. Family influences; growing up; before college; academics; highlight experiences that were especially meaningful/relevant to goal; highlight other experiences meaningful to you personally; why medicine?).

The autobiographical sketch is also a place to share any unique challenges you may have experienced. If you don’t wish to share that with all your writers, add it for your composite writer, or have a thoughtful discussion with them. The context provided by the composite writer can be very beneficial in some circumstances. Feel free to discuss this with an advisor. Questions to consider for your autobiographical sketch (and ultimately for your application), are below.

Self-Reflection and Questions to Consider:

Self-reflection is vital for the autobiographical sketch and for an excellent application. Consider the following questions:

- What were your formative experiences with your family, education, or community before college?
- What experiences have you had over the years that have been meaningful to you?
- How have you grown academically and personally? Do you have any academic challenges to discuss?
- What classes have meant the most to you?
- Have you conducted research? How has it been meaningful to you?
- What extracurriculars or passions (music, athletics, etc.) are you involved in? How have they inspired or surprised you? What do you find meaningful about them?
- Have you engaged in certain themes in your studies or experiences (ex. working with children, elderly, disadvantaged communities, etc.; research into autism, dementia, oncology, etc.)?
- Why do you want to study medicine/dentistry? What has influenced and affirmed this choice? Who has influenced or inspired you?