



EAP Application Writing Workshop 2024 -2025 Cycle

HPP Summer 2024

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Health Professions Program

Application
Writing
Components:

Work/Activities

Personal Statement

Other Essays

AMCAS (& EAP) Work/Activities asks:

- Category (Choose from drop down options on app)
- Experience Name
 - (use this space well to grab attention! For example, instead of just “Tutoring,” put down “Tutored General Chemistry; or instead of only “Patient Support Corps” write “Patient Support Corps: Shared Decision-Making Volunteer
- Dates: Estimated Start and end date
- Total Hours Organization Name
- Contact info
- Experience Description (700 Characters)
- Most Meaningful Experience? Yes/No (choose 3) If YES, more space will open up to allow up to +1325 more characters to expand on.

EAP (AMCAS) Work/Activities

DROP DOWN CATEGORIES

- Artistic Endeavors
- Community Service/Volunteer - Medical/Clinical
- Community Service/Volunteer - Not Medical/Clinical
- Conferences Attended
- Extracurricular Activities
- Hobbies
- Honors/Awards/Recognitions
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Leadership - Not Listed Elsewhere
- Social Justice/Advocacy
- Military Service
- Other
- Paid Employment - Medical/Clinical
- Paid Employment - Not Medical/Clinical
- Physician Shadowing/Clinical Observation
- Presentations/Posters
- Publications
- Research/Lab
- Teaching/Tutoring/Teaching Assistant

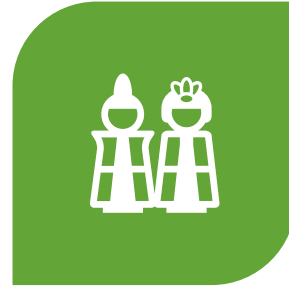
Writing Work + Activities (10 total for EAP)

You select 3 work/activity experiences and as “most meaningful.” For these three you will have 700 characters for your first paragraph, and then an additional 1325 characters to discuss more substantively, how/why it was more meaningful.

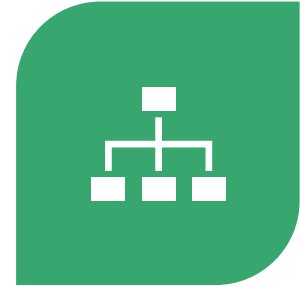
You have up to 7 more work/activity boxes. For each one you will have 700 characters.

To write a strong 700 character paragraph, you will most likely need to initially write more in order to uncover, choose what you most wish to talk about. THEN you can hone it down to the 700 characters. THEN you can take another round for crafting it.

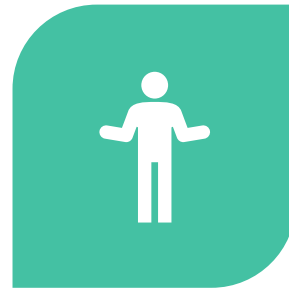
What HAVE
you been up
to?



WHAT EXPERIENCES
HAVE YOU HAD?



WHAT ROLES HAVE YOU
HAD?



WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES
DID YOU TAKE ON?



DID YOU GAIN SKILLS?
INSIGHTS? GROWTH?



AAMC Core Competencies

<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies>

How to Write Work/Activities Descriptions

AAMC: *When writing your response, you might want to consider the transformative nature of the experience, the impact you made while engaging in the activity, and the personal growth you experienced as a result of your participation.*

Detail in **concise** language what you did (including skills and abilities developed), observed, and learned from the experience.

What to include:

- **Brief** description if needed
- What were your **primary** responsibilities? Accomplishments?
- Did you make an impact during this experience?
- Do you have a meaningful example/story you can tell? A challenge you had to overcome?
- What qualities did you learn or demonstrate?
- What did you learn? How did you grow? What was the impact on you? On others? (Especially for the most meaningful)



Reflection is Key!

Do not just simply write “What you did”. In other words, show, don’t tell!

The most common mistake that applicants make is spending too much time describing the activity itself rather than focusing on what they learned and how they grew from the experience

Focus on your own growth, not theirs

Reflect on questions such as:

What lessons did you learn?

Did you face any difficulties/challenges?

How did this experience impact you or change the way you think about patient care?

Experience Example 1

Children's Science Museum Explainer

The museum contains interactive exhibits to introduce children to scientific concepts like magnetism and sound. As an Explainer, my role is to communicate challenging concepts to inspire children to interact with the exhibit and to develop a curious mindset more broadly. I've enjoyed teaching children to build anatomy models and to create visual illusions, instilling in their young minds that they can be scientists too. By building relationships with children, I help them connect with science, celebrate their curiosity and explore their newfound knowledge. I love breaking down science to make it understandable and hope I can do the same for future patients so they can feel more empowered in their care.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did the person do?
2. What did they learn? Why was it meaningful?
3. What did you like about this one? Why was this an effective experience description?

Experience Example 2 (with Most Meaningful)

Children's Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD) Volunteer

The Child Life Program helps children and families acclimate to the hospital environment. As part of the team, I create an environment where patients can feel comfortable and safe during their hospital stay. For each patient on my list, I choose developmentally appropriate activities to entertain or comfort them at bedside or in the playroom. During a shift I could hold a baby while their parents are away, play with a toddler in the playroom, or do arts and crafts with an adolescent. As part of my role, I also maintain the playroom and assist in projects that the team may have as well as help set up events for the patients who need to spend special occasions or holidays in the hospital.

MM: The first patient I met was a fourteen-year-old boy, a behavioral health patient who had already been in the hospital for a month. I sat with him on the floor where he was drawing anime, worried that he was not talking to me. To connect with him, I asked him if I could draw what he was drawing and he agreed, handing me a paper and pencil. Throughout that visit, he became comfortable talking to me about art and even jokingly teased my drawing. Now having interacted with over 90 CHaD patients, I have gained experience developing connections and trust with patients, knocking on patients' rooms to ask them what they most like doing for fun, or challenging them to play a game against me. Crucially, I learned the fundamental importance of establishing relationships with patients, which has allowed me to become a source of comfort and assistance to patients during their hospital stay. The experience of sitting with people at their bedside has allowed me to witness the team of individuals including physicians, nurses, and the Child Life team, that work to positively impact the health of their patients. Although I am not yet treating illness, I can bring happiness to individuals during difficult moments and help them feel safe in the hospital environment.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did the person do?
2. What did they learn? Why was it meaningful?
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THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

EAP PROMPT: Please provide an essay telling us how your background, experiences, and your interests motivate you to pursue medicine. You may choose to write about challenges or obstacles you have overcome, activities that have sparked your interest, or experiences that have led you to want to become a doctor.

5,300 characters

Here is where you communicate cohesively and specifically, about what has been meaningful to you in developing your decision to go into medicine. It conveys your motivation for medicine.

What is a personal statement?

An advertisement for yourself

A vehicle to explain what motivates you

An opportunity for you to reflect

Your chance to tell the admissions committee aspects about you that they will likely not find anywhere else on your application

Elements of a personal statement

Motivation: Why have you made the decisions you have made? Why do you want to go into your chosen field?

Distance Traveled/Challenges Overcome: Are there any particular challenges you have navigated in your life that contribute to your desire to pursue medicine? What has shaped who you are today?


Sincerity/Passion: What are things you are passionate about or interested in? What inspires you? What have you been most engaged in?

Aspiration: Where are you headed? What do you hope to accomplish?


Exploration/Preparation: What have you done to confirm/help your understanding of your motivation for medicine?

5-Point Essay Format:

1st paragraph: This paragraph should “catch the reader’s attention” and guide the reader to where you are going in the essay. May or may not end with a “thesis statement”.



3-4 body paragraphs: Use these to reveal your identity, tell your story, and present your main themes. What do you want admissions to know about you?



Concluding paragraph: The conclusion brings all of your major themes together in a new and unique way (not just simply re-stating them). It may also tie back to your introduction (does not always have to) and ends strong.

Tips for Personal Statement

- Essays must be GENUINE
- The content should demonstrate an applicant's motivation to become a doctor
- They want to see strong writing and communication skills
- Evidence of skills/experiences not found elsewhere in application can be showcased
- Don't write to the character count. IE: Write as much as you need to in order to get to what you really want to communicate, and what you want to pull from your life and experiences to illustrate your message.
- Once you've figure out what you want to convey—then tailor it to the character count.

A Personal Statement is a Narrative



Describe: create a dominant impression

Narrate: provide evidence to support your points

Consider significance: reflect on and interpret your experience

Writing is a process

Freewrite (anytime in process)

Gather/Reflect

Pre-write

Draft

Craft

Gather/Reflect

Self-assessment gives you understanding of your own personal growth, life experiences, accomplishments and skills

Recall events/things/people/courses/experiences that influenced you

Contemplate and clarify your motivations, choices and clearly identify your own goals

What has inspired you? Moved you? Shifted your perception? Challenged you?

What has your journey been-when have you grown-what aspects do you want to focus on?

It may help to start with an outline to help organize/gather your thoughts before attempting to start your essay



Some questions you can ask re: “Why Medicine” for YOU?

Have there been distinct experiences that sparked you thinking about medicine in the first place?

In what ways have you explored that interest? (in or out of the classroom?)

What shadowing experiences have been most meaningful to you, and why?

What volunteer/community service experiences have been most meaningful to you, and why?

If you have experience with patients, what has been most meaningful and why?

What academic or research experiences have been most meaningful to you, and why?

What service, leadership, or extracurricular activities most meaningful to you, and why?

*Don't need “lightening bolt” reason



Pre-Write

Brainstorm and journal

Flesh out some critical reflective pieces

Use some of the prompts in the packet

After free-writing, do some MINOR editing of these stories and pieces



“No one who bothers about originality will ever be original; whereas if you simply try to tell the truth (without caring how often it has been told before) you will, nine times out of ten, become original without ever having noticed it.”

-C.S. Lewis



Draft

Bring your ideas together

Is there a pattern?

What seem to be the most significant pieces?

Having trouble? Try a concept map

Don't be afraid to discard a piece of writing!
Even if you love the story, if it's not a major component of the "why" question, you might be able to use it down the road on secondaries.



Craft

You have a full draft. You've chosen what you want to say.

Now it's time to refine and craft the writing itself.

Keep In Mind:

- Develop your own voice in the essay
- Well placed anecdote

- Be specific; give examples
- Be honest and be genuine
- Themes? “Golden Threads?”
- Good transitions between paragraphs/
cohesion
- Speak from your heart
- Effective conclusion
- Active language
- Get feedback, have readers, check all
grammar and punctuation in final drafts

Avoid

- Gimmicks
- Generalities/vagueness
- Lists

- Passive structures
- Overusing words “big” words and
words such as: however, thus,
nevertheless
- Repeating what’s already in your
experiences
- Saying what you think they want to
hear
- Grammatical errors or typos
- Superficiality
- Exaggerate details
- Relying too heavily on childhood
experiences
- Lecturing the reader



GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME

1. Meet up with the blank page and don't wait until you get "the perfect, fully formed, idea."
2. Just get started, and you will find that your ideas will emerge and develop by having given yourself the time.
3. Don't write to the character limit. Find out what you want to say. Early drafts help you clarify what you want to say.
4. Early drafts can be "bad" but important for forming your ideas and moving you forward. So therefore, they are GOOD.
5. Notice what ideas/content generate a spark of emotion

The Joy of Editing!!



The “Cutting Process”

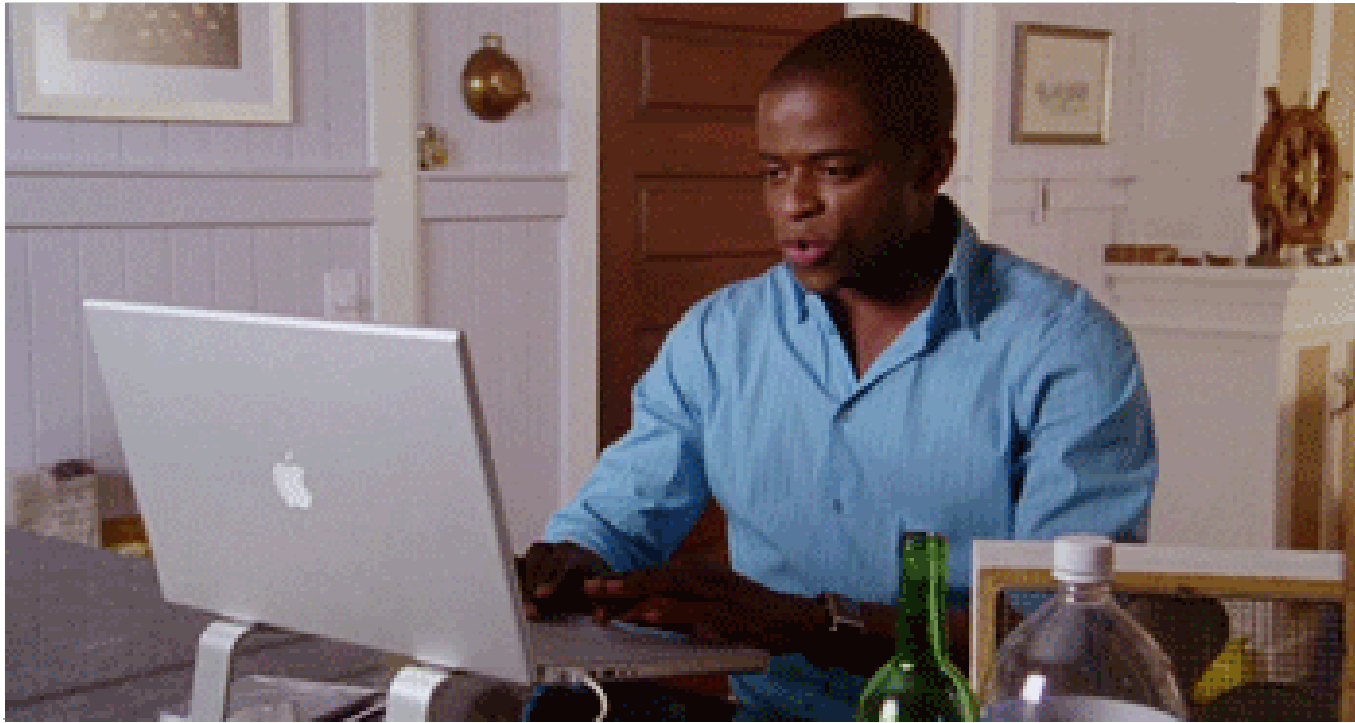
Once you feel comfortable that your writing states what you want it to say – now is the time to “cut” to fit the character count.

One tip of advice is to ensure every sentence has a purpose. If the sentence is unnecessary (“fluff or filler”) or does not add to the point you are trying to make, take it out.

Before you cut a sentence, ask yourself: If I take this out, will the reader still be able to follow the story?

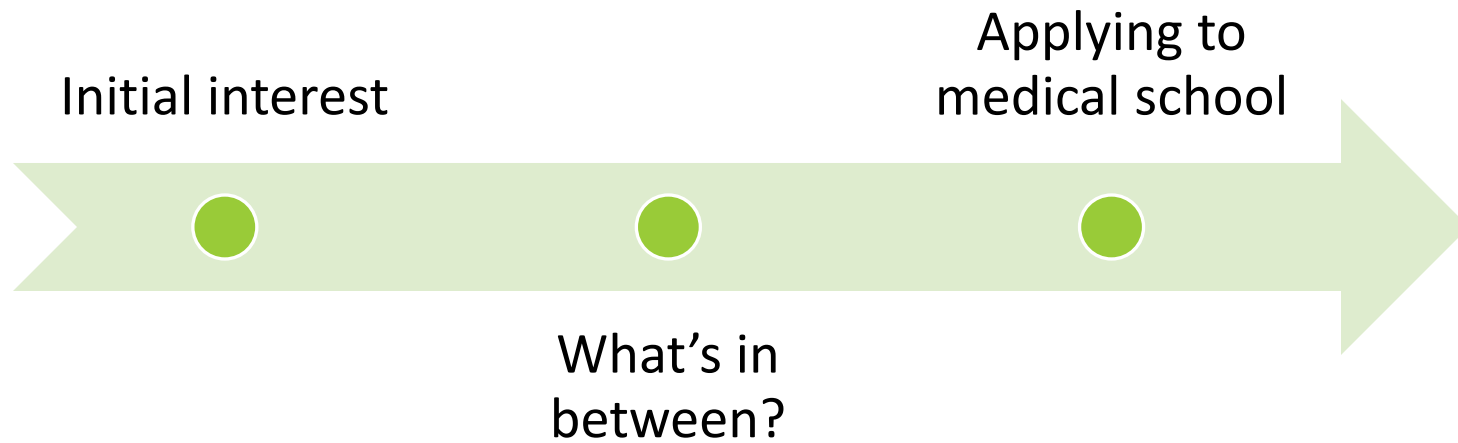
Go line by line and remove what does not need to be there.

Next, see if you can shorten your writing or combine sentences to say a word or two.



You just have to start somewhere

Don't Panic: You already have ideas



The Other Questions:

No character
limit

Why Geisel?

The Geisel School of Medicine values social justice and diversity in all its forms. Reflect on a situation where you were the "other."

Please reflect on your application and share something not addressed elsewhere that would be helpful to the Admissions Committee as we review your file.

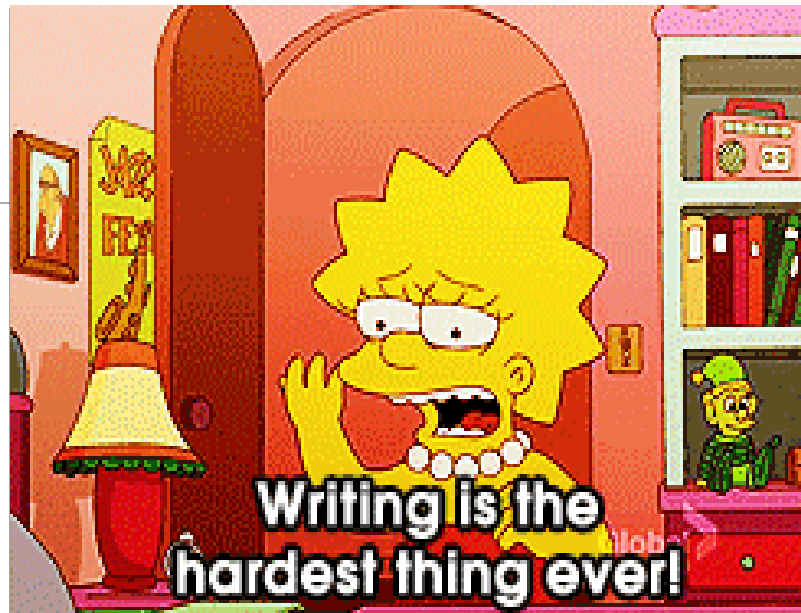
More brainstorming questions

- Try using chronology for discovery (though not necessarily how you structure your essay).
- Describe some of your personal characteristics/qualities, consider how some of them are also skills. How might be part of what would make you a successful doctor.
- Has anything every “changed your mind” or perspective about something (in a class, the news, discussion w friends, an experience out in the world?)
- When have you felt like “other”
- How will you contribute to the diversity of your cohort?
- Describe a time when you failed at something, and how did you go through that experience.
- When have you experienced adversity and how did you go through it?

More brainstorming questions

- When have you been resilient?
- What touches you, moves you, makes you laugh?
- When have you been affected by others you have encountered; when has your humanity been touched, evolved.
- **Remember--what's been pivotal to YOU might have been apparently small moments, but for some reason were meaningful to YOU. That is what is important. Big or small, what is True for you?
- Any important moments in life that had nothing to do with medicine at all but just were meaningful to what matters to you?
- What do you love to do/enjoy/ learn outside of the “pre med space” that is just part of what makes you you?

You'll have
moments like this



And, You'll have moments like this



Writing Packets

Writing Exercise

Reflection questions

Sample Writing



Let's end with a Free Writing Exercise

- Set a timer: low stakes
- Keep your hand moving
- Don't cross out or erase
- Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar
- Lose control-no judging
- Lean into things with "life force."

And... Deep Breath

