

The 5-Step Personal Essay Writing Guide: "Future Career"

Writing about your future career is an excellent way to show colleges and scholarship organizations how you will use your education. College is not your final destination, but a springboard that will help you reach larger goals in life. Colleges and scholarship organizations do not expect you to be 100% certain about your future job. Don't be afraid to aim high and write about your dream job.

STEP 1: Brainstorm Your Future Career

You don't need to be absolutely certain about your career choice. You're going to write about your dream job and there's no limit to what this could be. Answer these questions to help you decide what to put in your essay:

1. What is your dream job? _____

2. What attracts you to this job? _____

3. How did you first get interested in this type of work? Did someone in this career inspire you? How? _____

4. What do you hope to accomplish in this career? _____

5. Have you prepared yourself for this career in any way? (e.g., talked to someone in the field, read a book about what it's like to have such a career, or tried out a workshop or class?) _____

6. What will you do in college to help prepare you for this career? (You might list a major, classes or activities you'll pursue.) _____

7. Have you had any experiences that have helped you learn about this career? (e.g., summer job, internship, job shadowing, etc.) _____

Which of the above questions was the easiest to answer?

Which question gets you started on the best stories you can tell?

Choose one to two main points to use in STEP 2 of this worksheet. Also, weave in some of your other great answers and stories into your essay in STEP 3.

STEP 2: Uncover Your Main Point

Your essay needs to have a strong main point. You need to tell your reader, “THIS is what I’m going to tell you about.” Here are four examples of how to start your essay with a strong main point:

My dream is to become a civil engineer. Ever since I was a child with a Lego set, I have enjoyed building things. Engineering would let me express my love for creating things, and allow me to apply my science and math skills.

In the future, I would like to become a teacher. Teaching seems like the perfect match for me because I enjoy working with children and teaching them new skills. Also, my own teachers have played an important role in my life and I hope to do the same for other students in the future.

I want to become a chef just like Sam Choy. To me, cooking is very creative and although it can look easy from the outside, it is often very difficult to do well. Plus, I love to eat!

Although I’m not sure what job I will have, I do know that it will be in the field of medicine. I have learned a lot about nursing from my aunt, who has inspired me to consider a career in medicine.

What will be one or two main points of YOUR essay?

STEP 3: Construct Your Story

The heart of your essay will be the stories and details you use to support your main point. Good examples also bring your main point to life and make your essay memorable. Notice how the essay is built up, in the example:

Focus of essay:

My dream job is to be a crime scene investigator. This job would combine my love of science with the challenge of solving a real life mystery.

Details:

I have always enjoyed science. This year I am taking Chemistry and have learned how various chemicals react and how you can test for the presence of different chemicals.

Reading detective novels is a favorite pastime. It’s a challenge to figure out “who did it.” Real life detective work would be much more exciting. I watch CSI every week. It’s amazing how the simplest clue can lead to the arrest of a criminal. Just one tiny fiber from the assailant’s jacket can lead to his capture.

Law enforcement helps to keep the community safe. CSI detectives make sure that criminals do not get away with their crimes.

STEP 4: End Strong

End your essay by shining a new light on the main point you started with, or leave the reader with something interesting to think about. Here are three examples:

Medicine is a very honorable profession, since it seeks to help those who need it the most. I am looking forward to becoming a pre-med major in college and taking the first step toward becoming a doctor.

Seeing people enjoy my cooking is one of the best feelings in the world. Becoming a chef is one way I can spread this joy to many more. Hopefully someday I will even have my own restaurant named after me!

Being a police officer, like my father, has always seemed like a dream. Going to college will not only make this dream possible, but it will also help me to reach my lifelong goal.

STEP 5: Hear it Out

Try to put down your draft for a day so you can look at it with a fresh eye. Read your essay out loud and ask yourself and helpers (teachers, friends, relatives, essay coaches) the following questions:

- Does it start with a bang? Does the first sentence make you want to read more? Do you know from the beginning what the essay is going to be about?
- Were you able to follow the story? Did you get lost anywhere along the way? Did it follow a logical order, or skip back and forth in a confusing way?
- Were there questions that came up that didn't get answered?
- Were there any words that you heard too many times? (Try to avoid using the same word twice in the same sentence.)
- Was it interesting? Were there parts that could be livened up?
- Was it too long? Which parts should you cut out?
- Is it too short? What parts should have more information?
- Does it end on a high note?

Go back and try to rewrite some parts to make your essay better. If you get stuck, go back to STEP 1 on this worksheet and re-do some parts. Good luck!

Personal Statement

Opening Paragraph:

Remember to include your main point from STEP 2.

Main Body:

Here is where you get to add details to support and illustrate your main point. Remember to go back to STEP 1 and STEP 3 to find good stories and details to include in your essay.

Conclusion:

End strong by adding something for the reader to think about. See STEP 4 for ideas.
