Structuring a Typical Personal Statement

1. Paragraph 1: Introduction
- tell a story
- hook the reader
- limit your topic
- write in the first person
- introduce where the essay is going

2. Paragraphs 2 - 4: Body
- develop the focus you have introduced
- talk about what you did and why it's important
- use persuasive (but not arrogant) language
- use transitions
- watch grammar, spelling, verb tenses
- spice up the language - use the thesaurus for synonyms if you have redundancy in word choice (ex. “said” = affirmed, sanctioned, mentioned, voiced, objected, endorsed, etc.).

3. Paragraph 5: Conclusion
- tie everything into your desire to pursue_____school
- summarize your subject and its significance as it is related to_____
- close the essay by relating it back to your hook

(adapted from a handout given at a Princeton Review presentation held at Rutgers University for prospective law school students)

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