<u>Project Launch 'Personal Statement' Guide:</u> <u>Tips to Keep in Mind as You Write</u>

The Bridge:

The goal of your college essay is to make a case for who you are going to be in the future based on the things that you have already done and experienced. Your essay can build a bridge for the reader into your life. Your essay **builds a bridge** that **connects** the readers to insight on how you see **your future**, but also how your **background**, **experiences**, **and influences** have shaped you.

1.	Write down all the things you want to accomplish in college and beyond:
2.	Write down the things you have already done: defining background, experiences, and influences that have shaped you.

Experiences → **Moments** → **Defining Moment**

- Experience something that happens over an extended period of time.
 - If you write about an experience in your personal essay you run the risk of staying too general and not connecting with the reader.
- Moment a specific, contained instant in time.
 - Using moments allows readers to connect with your story, hear your authentic voice and understand your unique perspective.
- Defining Moment a moment when you risk something, learn something, change, or take action.
 - A Defining Moment is one where your character is revealed because you are tested and you take action.
- Ask yourself:
 - Who? Who are the other characters involved?
 - What is important to know about them?
 - Where? What is the setting? Why is it important?
 - When? How old were they? What time of day was it? What time of year?
 - Why? Why is this moment a Defining Moment? What does it show about you?

Magnet \rightarrow Pivot \rightarrow Glow

- Magnet: The first sentence draws the reader into the story and makes them want to keep reading.
 - **Puts the reader in the action**: Get right into the story and start with something that makes the reader pay attention.
 - Prompts the reader to ask what's next: Start with something simple, surprising, or intriguing
 and make the reader want to find out what's going on.
 - **Set the scene:** Paint a picture for the reader. Contextualize the moment so that the reader can experience it with you.
- Pivot: The point when you risk something, learn something, grow, change, or take action
 - Reveals the point at which you had to make a choice
 - Displays your character
 - Action-based that leads into your DEFINING MOMENT
- **Glow**: The last sentence of your story leaves something for the reader to remember and makes them want to know more about you.
 - Keep the reader in the action: Stay in the moment and stick to details, dialogue, and description.
 - Leave more to be asked: Don't state the lesson you learned or draw conclusions for the reader.
 Allowing the reader to experience the moment for themselves and connect with you from their own experience.
 - **Close the scene**: Leave something that is memorable for the senses.

Check Yourself → Before You Wreck Yourself

- You need to Check Yourself when you see the following trigger phrases in your writing
 - I thought
 - I felt
 - I realized
 - I knew
- When you hear these trigger phrases being used or notice scripts in your writing, stop and replace them with details, dialogue, and description. Show, don't tell!

Reasons to Believe

- The theme of your essay should be your **character**, and your **character** should give the reader of your essay's**Reasons to Believe** in you.
- The actions that you take in your story, the places where you do or say something, are going show Reasons to Believe in you.

ALWAYS REMEMBER the 3 D's: Details, Dialogue, Description