Quick-write (one sentence warm-ups)

Why do you want to go ON to graduate school?

What two experiences, characteristics, abilities make you an ideal candidate for graduate school?

INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND SHARE YOUR ANSWERS WITH A NEIGHBOR.
Part A: Warm-ups

Turn to a neighbor and share your answers
My goal is to earn a Ph.D. in xxx with an emphasis in neuropsychology, and eventually obtain a faculty position at a major university conducting clinical research, teaching and providing clinical supervision. As a National Institute of Health funded scholar from the Minority Biomedical Research Support-Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (MBRS-IMSD) program, I have extensive research experience in neuropsychology, have presented at multiple research conferences and coauthored manuscripts. I am particularly interested in the neuropsychological changes associated with aging, memory and neurodegenerative disease and how these changes affect daily functioning.

Part B: What are the differences between a Personal Statement and a Statement of Purpose?

Sometimes there’s a difference—sometimes not. It depends upon the prompt.
In this workshop, we will combine the two genres because universities often do.
Complete Part C...10 minutes

Or, if you didn’t do your homework, complete Part D, “About you”.
Form groups of four…

Share your information from Part C or D with your group.
Group members ask questions. (10 minutes)
In groups of six (25 minutes)

- Divide responsibilities in pairs:
  - Part E (Actual model)
  - Part F (Examples 1-7)
  - Part G (Composite Personal Statement)

- Each pair lists at least five topics that are repeated or very similar in their “part” and therefore seem to be important. (10 minutes)

- Each pair shares with the rest of the group. As the pair shares, the group records those topics that appear in more than one of the parts. (10 minutes)

- The facilitator selects an individual from each group to share 2-3 shared items while a participant records these on the board. (5 minutes)
In your notes, reflect on what you discovered about the Personal Statements/Statements of Purpose questions and texts in the discussions of the "parts." Use these questions.

- What topics seem to be most important to almost all universities?
- What do I need to do to inform myself or write about some of these topics? That is, what are my goals for research into Personal Statement requirements?
Specifically, what do we know about the texts we are discussing? That

- Your SOPs or PSs are to be directed at specific audiences, e.g., faculty or graduate admissions officers at universities.

- These texts are less “personal,” in most cases, than academic and professional; although for some universities you are required to write two statements: one biographical and one academic.

- The texts require specific information, not generalities. Thus, you need to carefully study the program you are interested in, its faculty, and the types of research pursued.

- The texts must be written in an academic register as well as being coherent and well-edited.
What we cannot predict:

- Exactly what the prompt tells you to do. Why? Because each university wants you to write a different personal statement for them. No repeats!

- Exactly who will read the statement or how that person will react.

- Although you need to be careful, it might be good to contact the graduate advisor for the department or the faculty member you want to study with and talk with him/her as well.
Planning Time

- Select one of the questions in Part F.
- Use that question and the “moves” in Part G.
- Begin to draft what you might say in this part.
- And later: work with a faculty major or TA in your department to determine whether your tone, ideas, and argumentation are appropriate.
- When you’ve drafted a good copy, visit the Writing Center to talk to the tutor about the language and structure of your text.
Thanks and good luck!

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