

PERSONAL STATEMENT SAMPLE (English PhD)

My parents instilled a passion for reading in me even as a toddler; years later, an excellent, extremely motivational third grade teacher encouraged my writing in ways that all teachers should note. At the age of eight, I was a child who loved reading and writing, and at the age of eighteen, I was a first-year student at State College who decided to major in English. I am now a senior in college (thinking about that fact literally sends a strange mixture of frightened, yet excited shivers charging through my body) and a very different person than that nervous first-year student I used to be. The entire idea sounds almost trite-I've grown tremendously through my college days; however, as I have spent the last three months mulling over what to highlight in this reflective essay, I am being completely honest when I say I have matured into someone the Edna from three years ago might not even recognize. I would not say my greatest strength as an English major is my ability to compose an "A" paper or my confidence in reading an assigned work and discussing its characters and conflicts during class. What defines my greatest strength is indeed my ability to recognize that I-which encompasses both my mind and heart have grown, matured, and become more open-minded throughout my course of time with the English department.

As a first year student, I had no concept of what was meant by the word patriarchy. Feminism was some farfetched, radical notion that I felt had no impact on my life or me. Immediately, however, upon enrolling in English classes, a new world began to unfold before my eyes. I began to soak up the information that was presented, in addition to soaking up what I was reading and writing about in my many English courses. The most important element, of course, is that this process continues to this day. I constantly attempt to draw connections between English classes and courses in other content areas; moreover, I realize that I will not leave college as the perfect English scholar. Recognizing this fact the notion that I must continue to grow and evolve- is truly my key asset as an English major. Had I believed that I had grown into the ultimate English student, this portfolio would not have been possible. By adding to my poetry analysis, my first essay, as well as restructuring certain parts of it, I recognized that I have changed even from last spring. Approaching a paper I wrote as a first-year student (that I might mention had not been touched since that time) was an uplifting experience. My ability to strengthen my characters and recognize the need for a deeper conflict brought my growth process into light. I am even able to draw connections between these two works-one a critical essay and one a creative play.

I exalt in the fact that the feminism that once seemed so foreign to me now functions as the overriding theme of this portfolio. In my eyes, Katherine Philips and Lorraine Hansberry are two extremely strong women to be incorporated into this piece. Philips, as one of the few women writers of the seventeenth century, and Hansberry, as one of the first women and African-American

dramatists, are connected in that they both wrote against great opposition. Three years ago I do not believe I would have recognized such a connection; three years from now, I would hope to be able to draw even greater connections between these two women. I realize that I must utilize my recognition of growth and the ever-changing progress of our minds and knowledge to the best of my ability to assist me in not only my future pursuits in the area of English, but also in my life as well.

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Source: "Graduate School Admissions Essay – English Major." <<http://www.123HelpMe.com/view.asp?id=21019>>.