

Tips for Writing a Statement of Purpose

A Statement of Purpose (SoP) is a narrative essay commonly requested in applications for graduate school, funding awards, and some academic positions. The aim of the SoP is to help the reader understand your experiences and motivations as they relate to the application context.

Q. What does the reader want to know?

A. How your academic or professional, related interests and experiences have prepared you for the project you are proposing, the position you are applying for, or the academic program you are hoping to enter.

Q. Is the SoP a description of my CV?

A. No. Statements like the SOP are your opportunity to explain the significance of the experiences you choose to highlight. What did you learn from a specific job? How does that experience fit your larger goals and interests?

Q. Is the SoP like an academic paper?

A. No, it is a narrative essay. You are writing about yourself to a reader who is interested in getting a sense of who you are, how you talk about yourself, and how you think about your short- and long-term goals. It is an “I” paper.