Penn State Essay

PENN STATE *1 NOV 2022*

**Personal Statement (Optional)**

*Please tell us something about yourself, your experiences, or activities that you believe would reflect positively on your ability to succeed at Penn State. This is your opportunity to tell us something about yourself that is not already reflected in your application or academic records. We suggest a limit of 500 words or fewer.*

My mother looked at me, a look of disbelief on her face, another day of losing another book. One day it was socks; the other day it was a pencil case, homework paper, shirts, and bags. There was almost nothing that I did not lose already. When I was in primary school, this habit was tolerated. I was reprimanded, but my mother and teachers thought it was normal for a little boy to be disorganized, forgetful, and messy. Then my first year in secondary school, this habit became worse. At least the consequences that I had to bear were substantial. Not only was this disorganization starting to reflect on my grades, but my teacher also suspected that I was suffering from ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). She suggested that my mother should take me to a [psychiatrist](https://www.google.com/search?pws=0&gl=us&sxsrf=ALiCzsZOkBfbwG-qqZGyRUCDf3QGTSgiWw:1666256534854&q=psychiatrist&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjU_PSmue76AhW0yXMBHcjwDkkQkeECKAB6BAgHEAE) and have a complete analysis of my behavior.

We did not go to the psychiatrist, although my mother was ready to book the appointment to take me to a child psychiatrist. My family was sure I did not have enough symptoms to have ADHD. My mother helped me with checklists, notes, and reminders to help me become more organized. It helped a little, but that was not what helped me to overcome my bad habit.

Then Covid-19 happened; I was in the second semester of grade 9. My friend asked me to join community service at my school, where we taught students from local primary schools English. We created lesson plans and sourced learning material to conduct online classes for the students during the pandemic. I was assigned a big responsibility where a group of students relied on me for the entire one-and-a-half hour. I put in my best effort and dedicated my time carefully to make sure the online lesson would be successful, and it was. The students were eager to learn and showed significant improvement in their English skills.

We had several more classes for three months, and it taught me to make plans, create to-do lists, limit my distraction, and focus my attention as I was talking in front of the students. I did not believe in myself that I was able to be entrusted with important tasks. But this experience has proved me wrong; it boosted my confidence that I could do what I thought was impossible before.

I started to accept more responsibility by dedicating my weekly time to tutoring the 7th and 8th-grade students struggling with English and Math. I was supposed to be the teacher, but I find myself learning more and more every day. I studied the subjects of both English and Math deeper. It made me question more, research more and listen more.

At Penn State, I will have a chance to challenge myself even more. Studying in a foreign country with great diversity, I will face many hurdles and challenges. But I came well prepared. Challenges are what made me grow to be a better version of myself.

Hi William,

I think it was a great turnaround story that you shared in this essay!

However, I think the prompt would require you to be more direct and explicit in sharing experiences and activities—not just one—that would help you succeed at Penn State.

You could give several other stories or activities that display your skills and how they would directly help you at Penn State. It will also be of help if you know what kind of skills or activities you will be required to show and perform during your time there. Then, you could directly link those requirements to the skills that you possess or have gained in the past.

Best wishes,

Johana