

Coding Scheme and Rubric—Personal Statements

Narrative Part	1 (worst)	2	3	4 (best)
Spark —Typically located in the opening paragraph, the writer discusses a story, experience, or realization that spurs their interest in medicine	The spark feels disconnected from being a doctor or is confusing or random			The spark is engaging and logically flows into the writer becoming a doctor.
Healthcare Experience —The writer describes watching a medical professional at work —The writer describes participating in a healthcare experience	The writer offers only a job description, passive observation, or a story that is uninteresting, irrelevant, problematic, simplistic, or unclear. The story has a negative tone or pessimistic outlook.	Story is bland/boring but not problematic.		The writer's account of the experience is vivid, active, thoughtful, relevant, and memorable. The overall tone of the story is positive and optimistic.
Showing Doctor Qualities —The writer describes stories or examples that portray their vision of what a doctor is/does —The writer identifies aspects or areas of medicine that are appealing	The writer sounds arrogant, immature, or overly confident. The writer displays an inaccurate or simplistic understanding of what a doctor does. The story has a negative tone or pessimistic outlook.	Story is bland/boring but not problematic.		The writer sounds realistic, self-aware, mature, and humble. The writer has a specific and clear understanding of what a doctor does. The overall tone of the story is positive and optimistic.

Spin —The writer explains why a specific experience qualifies them to be a doctor —The writer explains how the <i>sum</i> of their experiences leads them to be a doctor	The writer is brief, vague, or simplistic in connecting the experience to being a doctor, or their idea of being a doctor is generic or vague.			The writer makes a direct, logical, and specific argument to connect their experience to the profession of being a doctor.
Thread —The writer builds the statement around one aspect of their character that leads naturally to them becoming a doctor —The thread is woven through each part of the essay —Each experience in the personal statement is “infused” with the writer’s disposition or character	The thread is inauthentic, generic, or not present at all.	The thread applies to some parts of the personal statements but is a “stretch” for others.		The thread is honest and authentic to the writer and smoothly connected to a diversity of experiences.