**Strategies & Structures for the Fulbright Statements**

*Make sure that you also review the “tips” for the personal statement on the Fulbright website. While I sketch out broader structure below, those tips fill in crucial details. You can find those tips on the US Student Fulbright website under “Applicants” 🡪 “Tips”*

**Personal Statement:** While there is no cookie-cutter template that will work for any given personal statement, there is a general pattern to how many of these essays unfold. Here is a rough sketch:

* **World, Me:** First, you want to zoom in and situate the reader in the midst of a dynamic thought or action that suggests some of the essay’s (and therefore some of your) grounding values. This is where your character comes to life. Although it is tempting to use childhood anecdotes, these are often the least successful unless done exceptionally well. Instead, introduce us to a more “mature” version of your character.
* **Frame it Out**: Next–and this might come at the end of the first paragraph or it might consume its own paragraph–you need to contextualize the opening move. The key is to answer this question: how does the opening anecdote fit into your story of growth and development? How did you arrive at that point? If it’s not already clear from the anecdote itself, what did you learn? This is a key move that essentially transitions from an opening set-piece to the rest of the essay. This is where you make a subtle case for how whatever it was that emerges through that opening serves as a sort of guide—thematic, values based—for the rest of your narrative.
* **Paragraphing Experiences:** the main body of the essay will most likely focus on a  set of experiences from your college career and give substance to, in some form, the value or values suggested in the opening paragraph. This is where the character you introduce in the opening becomes more complete and complex, more fully “you.” Think of each experience as a potential paragraph, and think of transitions between those paragraphs as bridges not simply between boxes of text, but between key aspects of your story. Transitions show how you get from the lab to campus, from campus to the broader Charleston community, and from Charleston to the wider world, from a rough patch to a recovery (don’t forget the power of tension). Transitions are the engine for the growth and development that drives your story.
* **Making your Exit:** Where have you been? And where are you going? In the conclusion, you will reflect briefly on the past, which you sketched above, and project into the future. You might return to the opening scene, or clarify the narrative of growth you’ve presented. Beyond that reflection, you will want to project the narrative’s grounding values meaningful towards specific future actions, plans, and goals. In the Personal Statement, these future goals relate to your Fulbright plans, as the Grant Statement will make the broader future gestures.

**Grant Statement for Research / Study grants (2-pages):** The grant statement is a well-established genre, and adapting the template below will ensure that your academic audience will be able to see your ideas clearly presented.

* **Set the Stage:** In the first paragraph, clearly state the problem or issue that compels your research or study plans. This help contextualize your project even as it gets the readers on board for what is to come. Statistics are often useful here as you articulate the “problem” or “issue” that you hope your future studies and career addresses. Conclude the first paragraph with a concise thesis statement that offers a condensed map and mirror for what follows. Here, preview your academic and professional self and identify the opportunity you are applying for (e.g. “As a double major in X and Y, with extensive experience related to A and B, pursuing Fulbright grant to research Z at LOCATION / SCHOOL will enable me to…). Your thesis might be 1-3 sentences.
* **Your Qualifications:** The second paragraph should address your skills and qualifications from a more academic perspective than you took in your personal statement, which is more about growth and development. Note your major, relevant research, international experience, and relevant campus, extracurricular, and professional engagements. The qualifications section might require 2 paragraph divided, for example, between academic and professional work. *This paragraph can also come later after a more in-depth exploration of the project*.
* **Your Project:** 
  + Independent Research: you should spend between half a page and a full page on your project description, noting in detail the work you will accomplish, when you will accomplish it (timeline), the methodologies you will employ, and relevant outcomes. You should also further underscore the importance and relevance of this project (echoing some moves in the first paragraph). Your affiliation will also be describing the project, albeit more briefly. This section should likely also include a brief literature review, contextualizing the project in light of related work. You are “joining a conversation” here.
  + Graduate Study: your “project” if you will enroll in a degree program is simply the program of study and any related thesis work. Really work to sell the program to your audience, justifying why it is a good fit for you and how you will work through the structure of the program (pursuing certain optional modules over others). You should also develop a brief paragraph about possible thesis work. This doesn’t have to be as intense as it will be fore independent research projects, but you should have some good ideas for research and your affiliation should ideally back those up in her or his letter.
* **Your Affiliation:** whether you are conducting research or are pursuing a degree, presenting your affiliation will help you answer the question: why X country? Why x school? Introduce your committee to the context here—not just the individual, but the school or organization, the regions, and the country (as relevant).
* **Host-Country Engagement:** Fulbright is an ambassadorial organization. They want you to make meaningful connections with the community beyond your role as a student or researcher. What ideas do you have for engaging the community? Sing in a choir? Join a student group? Volunteer for a non-profit nearby? Try to signal some familiarity with the school and city here.
* **Conclusion:**  As you work your way toward the conclusion, plan to make meaningful gestures toward future, post-Fulbright plans. All is hypothetical, of course, but the more specific you can be here, the better. The goal is to pitch Fulbright as this key experience connecting your past (sketched out in the Personal Statement) with your future. That trajectory absolutely needs to be there. You might offer a broader reflection on the importance of your project as well. But the future-gesture must be there.

**Grant Statement for ETA Grants (1-page)**

* **Opening Moves:** Begin with a concise, thesis-like statement that makes a clear case why the ETA experience in the country of choice is perfect for you. The first paragraph should be brief. You might begin with a focused reflection on why the work you propose to do as an ETA is particularly relevant for you in relation to the country of choice.
* **Your Experience and Your Plans:** The second and third paragraphs should present your experience in pedagogical contexts that have been important to you (as a student or teacher), and also present ideas for how you will engage students in the classroom. Be as specific as you can here. Make sure you convey why teaching is important to you and what makes you a great teacher (where “teaching” can mean things that happen outside of class as well). The goal here is to basically sketch out your own relevant experience while bringing yourself to life as an engaged teacher and mentor. Help the reader imagine you in the classroom full of young language learners.
* **Side Project:** In a separate paragraph, sketch out a meaningful “side project” through which you will engage the host community. This can relate to your own future goals, or serve as an extension of your pedagogical work into the broader community. Fulbright is an ambassadorial organization, so this part if very important. Pay attention to individual country descriptions for this section, as not all countries ask for the articulation of a clear side project (and some don’t allow for such projects).
* **Conclusion:** As you work your way toward the conclusion, plan to make meaningful and concrete gestures toward future, post-Fulbright plans. All is hypothetical, of course, but the more specific you can be here, the better. The goal is to pitch Fulbright as this key experience connecting your past (sketched out in the Personal Statement) with your future. That trajectory absolutely needs to be there.