

AMCAS-ALIGNED WRITING GUIDE



The Medical School Personal Statement Playbook

A scene-to-thesis system for turning your experiences
into a clear, credible answer to “Why medicine?”

By Earth Hasassri, MD

Strategy, worksheets, revision tools, and a seven-day
drafting plan for U.S. medical school applicants.

**2027 APPLICATION CYCLE
FIRST EDITION**

Build the argument before you polish the sentences

This is not a fill-in-the-blank essay formula. It is a decision system: identify what changed you, choose evidence, make meaning, and compress only after the story works.

The promise

By the end, you will have a thesis, a scene map, a complete draft, a revision rubric, and a submission checklist.

The boundary

No guide can guarantee admission. Your job is to submit an honest account of your own experiences in your own voice.

Use the sequence

1 Inventory	2 Choose	3 Draft	4 Revise	5 Submit
-----------------------	--------------------	-------------------	--------------------	--------------------

1. **Write in the workbook spaces.** Do not merely read. Useful material appears when you force yourself to name actions, tensions, and consequences.
2. **Keep a separate plain-text draft.** The AMCAS application sends essay text to schools as plain text, so visual formatting cannot carry your meaning.
3. **Invite feedback late.** First make the core decisions yourself. Then ask readers targeted questions instead of “What do you think?”
4. **Verify the current rules.** This edition is aligned to the 2027 AMCAS Applicant Guide; application instructions can change.

Your essay is not your entire candidacy. Its job is narrower: give the reader a memorable, evidence-based understanding of why medicine makes sense for you.

The essay must answer one question under hard constraints

For AMCAS, every applicant submits a Personal Comments Essay. The 2027 guide allows 5,300 characters including spaces, sends the essay to every designated school, and permits no changes after submission.

The reader needs to understand

- Why you selected medicine.
- What motivates you to learn more.
- What this path asks of you.
- What the rest of the application does not already make obvious.

The essay does not need to do

- Retell every activity.
- Prove you have never doubted yourself.
- Name every competency.
- Predict a specialty.
- Sound like a physician already.

The useful test

After reading only this essay, could a thoughtful stranger explain *why medicine*, name the experiences that shaped that answer, and describe how your thinking changed?

Set your drafting target

Draft long, but not shapeless. Aim for roughly 5,700-6,100 characters in the first complete version, then cut with purpose. Count characters in plain text before submission.

My one-sentence assignment:

Official constraints and prompts: 2027 AMCAS Applicant Guide, pp. 58-59. See Sources.

A one-sentence thesis prevents a resume recap

Your thesis is not a slogan. It is the working logic that decides what stays, what goes, and what every paragraph must prove.

The three-part thesis engine

I am drawn to medicine because [physician-specific work or responsibility] **allows me to** [serve, solve, connect, or learn in a way grounded in your values], **as I learned through** [two or three linked experiences].

Weak thesis

"I want to become a doctor because I love science and helping people." It may be sincere, but it does not distinguish medicine from research, nursing, public health, teaching, or many other paths.

Stronger working thesis

"I am drawn to the physician's responsibility to translate uncertainty into a plan patients can act on, a role I first observed in a free clinic and later practiced in a limited way while coordinating follow-up for a community screening program."

This example is fictional. Use its specificity, not its content.

Draft three versions.

Circle the version that creates the clearest selection rule. If an anecdote does not support that thesis, it belongs elsewhere in the application.

Mine moments before choosing a theme

Do not begin by asking, “What sounds impressive?” Begin with moments that changed what you noticed, believed, or did.

Clinical exposure

A moment when care was more complicated than the textbook.

Service

A moment when someone’s stated need differed from your assumption.

Research

A moment when an answer created a better question.

Work or family

A moment when responsibility changed how you showed up.

Teamwork

A moment when you changed roles, listened, or repaired a mistake.

Setback

A moment when your first approach failed and you adapted.

The ten-minute memory dump

Set a timer. List at least ten moments in fragments. Include what you saw, what you did, and what bothered or surprised you. Do not interpret yet.

Moment	My action	What shifted

Ordinary can be excellent. A brief interaction may carry more insight than a dramatic event if you can explain what it taught you and how it changed your behavior.

FREE PREVIEW · WHAT'S INSIDE THE FULL GUIDE

The Personal Statement Guide

You've read the opening pages. Here is everything else the guide covers:

- The actual assignment: what the AMCAS essay must do
- The three-part thesis engine
- Story inventory: mining moments that changed you
- Evidence selection: anecdotes for change, not drama
- Coherence: one narrative spine across experiences
- Architecture: the five-move map for 5,300 characters
- Openings, scene craft, and reflection that earns its place
- Answering "why medicine" without cliches
- Competencies, vulnerability, and authenticity
- Drafting, revision rubric, and sentence surgery
- An annotated worked example
- Feedback: who to ask, and what to ask them
- The seven-day sprint and final technical pass

Get the full guide — \$39

Or get all five guides — \$149 (save \$46)