



PRESENTED BY GURUFI

Using storytelling to supercharge your admissions essay

*Presented by Brian T. Fobi, JD, PhD
CEO Gurufi / Fourthwrite*

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Welcome!

I hope that this workbook will be helpful to you in beginning to build out your admissions essays. I know that admissions essay writing can be intimidating. If you want to go through a more in-depth process with the support of professionals, Gurufi can help.

For the past 15 years, Gurufi has worked with 6,500 students to edit more than 10,000 essays. Our satisfaction rate is 99.4% and over 95% of our business comes by word of mouth. This fall, we are excited to be able to offer a more in depth offering for business school customers. We have designed Biz School Bootcamp so that you can hone your story, get professional support, and, most importantly, get your essays done!

In this two-day event, I will walk you through how to write a compelling essay. The Boot Camp includes:

- Two days of instruction, activities, and live workshopping of student essays.
- An hour-long individual essay consultation where you and one of Gurufi's essay experts will go through your essay (or outline). Collaboratively, we will work to tighten your theme, improve your structure, and otherwise prepare you for the writing process.
- A professional full revision of your admissions essay once you have a full draft
- A 20% discount on future admissions essay editing
- A \$1,000 credit toward Comprehensive Admissions Writing service

If you have any questions about the Boot Camp or any other of our services, please reach out to us at service@gurufi.com!

Best,

Brian Fobi, JD / PhD
CEO, Gurufi / FourthWrite



The answer to this question could very well determine whether you're admitted to the business school of your dreams.

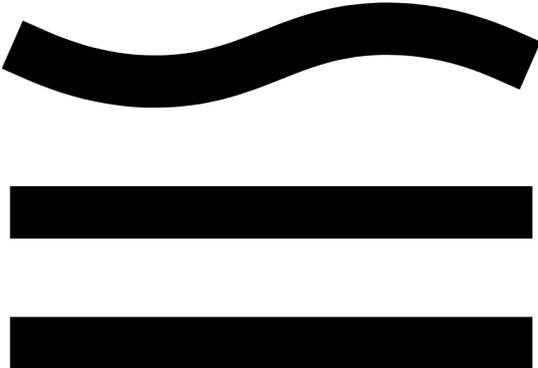
As noted in Gurufi's storytelling presentation, storytelling is a vital part of a compelling admissions essay. People have lots of ways of talking about storytelling.

What's your brand? Show, don't tell!

But in the end, the core idea is conveying a sense of how your journey to this point in your life and career demonstrates that you have it within you to excel in business school and achieve the dreams that you will lay out in your personal statement.

Writing compelling stories is a challenging task, and since most of you don't have the time to go back to college and major in Screenwriting or English Literature, this workbook is designed to give you three fast exercises and a sample outline that you can use to build out your story. **Obviously**, this is not the only way to do things, but it is one effective way. As such, I would encourage you to do the exercises on the following pages, and find ways to make the essay your own to the degree that you feel comfortable doing so.

Exercise One: Congruity



A compelling essay will (1) provide a clear vision of who you want to become, and (2) how what you've done has prepared you to achieve this goal. It is important that your past, present, and future all tell a clear and congruous story about who you are and what you can achieve. Importantly, you should

begin this process by looking to the future. It's this future self that the Admissions Committee is most interested in. This description of what you aspire to be is your core positioning. From there, the reader will want to know if your current role and past accomplishments and experiences make align with your goals. This exercise is designed to get you thinking about how past, present, and future connect to one another.

Exercise One: Congruity



Describe what you aspire to become	How is what you're doing now preparing you to achieve this goal?
Describe what you are doing now.	How has your past prepared you to excel in your current job / role?
Describe your most important accomplishment	How did that accomplishment prepare you to accomplish your long-term goals and / or define the person you are today?

Exercise Two: The Hero's Two Journeys (Defining Your Pivot)

For every obstacle, accomplishment, or story that you are thinking about including in your personal statement, complete the following four squares. Fill them in with as much detail as possible so that you can:

- (1) Figure out for yourself whether a story is compelling and shows you in a positive light
- (2) Begin to create the building blocks (in terms of detail, tension, challenges, accomplishments, and personal development) that you will use to build your stories once you write them.



Exercise Two: The Hero's Two Journeys (Defining Your Pivot)



DESCRIBE AN IMPORTANT CHALLENGE THAT YOU'VE FACED

- What was the resolution to that challenge?
- How did you accomplish this?

WHO WERE YOU AT THE START OF THIS CHALLENGE?

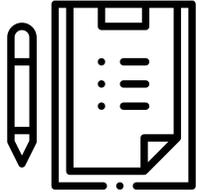
- What misapprehensions / misconceptions did you hold?
- In what ways were you unprepared for what was to come?

HOW DID YOU GROW, IMPROVE, OR MATURE BY THE END OF THIS PROCESS?

- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about the world?
- How were you better equipped going forward? Wiser? Stronger?



Exercise Three: A Rough & Ready Outline



Use the following sample outline / instructions to build an outline for your essay. As noted above, this is just one template. I have found it to be an effective way to build a story, but remember that your personal statement is just that: personal! Tweak, revise, and alter it to fit your vision of your candidacy. Once you create your outline, you are ready to write!

I. Introduction

- a. Begin with your **pivot point**: drop the reader into the **precise** pivotal moment of your most challenging accomplishment.
- b. Describe the challenge and **make it big!**
- c. What **did you DO** to accomplish your goal?

II. Back to the Beginning

A soft transition: use transitional text that identifies the core trait or talent you had that allowed you to succeed and talk about its origin. For example:

My ability to solve complex problems using A.I. proved critical to my career, but when I first began programming, I did it mostly for fun. During my freshman year, two friends and I started a video game design club... [from here, you tell your "origin story".]

III. Where you are now

- a. Now, you move the story forward chronologically.
- b. Focus on your current responsibilities, the things you have accomplished in this position, etc.
- c. Describe directly how it's laid the foundation for the accomplishments you seek to make in the future.
 - i. Be as concrete, clear, and specific as you can about what you hope to do and what you aspire to become.

Many people assume that your essay needs to be chronological. Let me be the first to tell you: it does not. You **can** write your essay chronologically, but the danger is that doing so can make it feel like a narrative version of your CV, which you don't want.

Dropping the reader immediately into the tension of the story allows you to establish all of the important traits that you're trying to convey.

IV. Where you're going



- a. You are now looking into the future. Be sure to use phrases that anchor your future plans to present roles and past accomplishments! *Example:*

"My experience running Bank of America's Artificial Intelligence Anti-Fraud Department has shown me that AI can provide financial institutions with a powerful set of tools to detect and deter cybercrimes. I seek to build upon this experience by founding an AI-powered cybercrimes consultancy that..."

- b. Be specific about your aspirations, why your experience has prepared you for this, and also what skills, abilities, information, and / or resources you need to turn this dream into a reality.
- i. These things that you need are the reason you now seek an MBA. Be clear about that.

V. Conclusion: How this school can get me there

Describe to the reader 1-2 of your top reasons that this school will allow you to accomplish your goals.

- i. Avoid generalizations true of all schools: strong alumni network, case method, etc.
- ii. Don't just list a bunch of clubs that you found on the website. Saying that you're going to join five clubs sounds less focused and refined than identifying **ONE** club and talking about it in detail and referencing how your past experiences and/or current role would position you well to contribute meaningfully to it. A list is boring and sounds like you're just copy-pasting the website.

Exercise Three: A Rough & Ready Outline



I. Introduction
a.
b.
c.
II. Back to the Beginning
III. Where you are now
a.
b.
c.
IV. Where you're going
a.
b.
V. Conclusion: How this school can get me there



Brian Fobi co-founded Gurufi in order to provide clients with admissions assistance that is ethical, true to clients' voices, and highly effective. Brian brings 11 years of experience working in the admissions industry. In this time, working both for a university and as an independent consultant, he has developed a nuanced understanding of the admissions process and, by extension, how applicants can best position themselves. He has helped more than 7,000 clients navigate the admissions process, and along the way has recorded a satisfaction rate of over 99%. The reason is simple: he strives to maintain clients' voices, remain true to their experiences, and reflect their life in the most positive manner possible. Brian has taught writing at Duke, Yale, and Harvard, and has extensive background working with clients of all skill levels, including non-native English speakers.

Education

- Yale University:
Ph.D.
- University of Michigan Law School:
Juris Doctorate

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