**Common Pitfalls to Writing a Personal Statement**

* **Repeating information**
  + In my junior year I was a cheerleader for my school. I worked really hard at it, and found it to be fun and challenging. I was also part of my school's Kids in the Kitchen program, which helped to make food available to poor people in my community. Cheerleading and volunteer work kept me very busy. I spent approximately twenty hours each week cheering and another five hours volunteering. I learned a lot from this experience and can manage my time effectively and maintain a positive attitude in the face of adversity.
* **Complaining instead of explaining**
  + Because my mother is a single parent, she has had to make a lot of sacrifices to keep me and my brother in a private school. It means that we have to go without a lot of things, which is sometimes embarrassing. But even though everyone in my school knows that we are poor, no one is willing to give me a break. This is especially true of my English teacher, Sister Magdalena. Because she didn't like me, and she is not comfortable with poor people, she gave me a C in English when I really should have gotten a B.
* **Voice: Clichés and Over-the-top Prose**
  + My father always told me that there is nothing to fear but fear itself. (A cliché)
  + A feeling of indescribable disbelief overcame me. (Wordy prose)
* **“Selflessness”: Focusing more on someone else’s experience**
  + My mother is a refugee from Vietnam. At the young age of 17, she had to leave her country, her friends, and the only life she knew to escape communist oppression. As a child, I remember her struggle to learn English: as a matter of fact, I remember that we learned to read together when I was in kindergarten. Eventually, she learned enough English and was able to take some classes at a community college near our home. She earned an AA in accounting. I admire her strength, determination and resilience and she is a constant reminder to me that anything is possible as long as you can dream and are willing to work hard.
* **Repeating information**

Definition:

Example:

* **Complaining instead of explaining**

Definition:

Example:

* **Voice: Clichés and Over-the-top Prose**

Definition:

Example:

* **“Selflessness”: Focusing more on someone else’s experience**

Definition:

Example: