Seven Paragraph Essay Format for Writing a Personal Statement
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P1 - Opening
You want to come to program
You think you are a good fit
How the program will serve BOTH short term AND long term goals
[saying you will offer evidence for this]

P2 – Interests and Career goals/Life experience [brief]
Interests in the field [thoughtful, avoid clichés]
   Why are you interested?
Long term goals are _________
   Why these?
   How will this degree facilitate these goals?
Life experience [not required]
   What brought you here?
   Later entry into academics/Changing career paths
   Skills you learned from other experience

P3 – Experience: Research or applied experience
What you worked on or did
   For how long
   With whom you worked
Detail what you learned
   Critical analysis (thoughtful, avoid negativity)
Skills you developed
   RESEARCH: literature searching, run a lab, preparing an experiment, writing reviews, poster submission preparation, professional presentation, grant writing/submission, publication writing
   APPLIED: populations worked with, what skills learned, challenges overcome, how used supervision

P4 – Again with experience
What you worked on or did
   For how long
   With whom you worked
Detail what you learned
   Critical analysis (thoughtful, but avoid negativity)
Skills you developed from your experience
   See above for ideas

P5 – Summarizing value of experience [shorter]
How experience helps prepare you for your immediate goals
State how experience informs your decision to pursue career (long term) goals
State how this experience ties into your immediate goals for program you are applying to

P6 – Why this program
I am applying to ____ because it will [allow me to do this goal]
Program is a fit because
   use what you learned from program materials
   again how it facilitates your long term goals
Specifics
   Who are interested in working with and why (for research programs)
   Who else are you interested in working with and why (for research programs)
What do you want to accomplish
   RESEARCH: what you are interested in investigating [keep consistent with research at this program]
   APPLIED: what skills for practice you want to develop [keep consistent with training at this program]
P7 – Summing it all up
You want come to program
You think you are a good fit
How the program will serve BOTH short term AND long term goals
[offer evidence for this]
Tips and suggestions

want to do
present yourself professionally
make your argument succinctly
write clearly
show sophistication
convey your fit
convey your passion/dedication
let your personality come through [carefully]
vary sentence structure [not all sentences start with “I did…”]

avoid
clichéd writing
vague goals or experiences
just talking grades
negativistic or hostile tone
arrogant tone
over self-disclosure/leading with own suffering