

Vocation Story Writing Guide

[Written Story](#) | [Video Story](#) | [Fill in the Blanks](#)

1 WRITTEN STORY OF PURPOSE/VOCATION

1.1 AUDIENCE

This is your opportunity to tell your story to the world, but remember that the intended audience is students, parents of students, and alumni. Tell a story that the 17-25 year olds might be able to relate to. The ideal length of written vocation stories is between 1,500 and 2,500 words.

1.2 DISTILL YOUR PURPOSE

Consider first what you see as your current purpose in life. You may have had hundreds of purposes throughout your life, for your vocation story, just focus on one. Example purposes you may feel:

- Raise a tiny human to be kind, loving, and generous
- Fan the flames of passion for the English language in today's youth
- Make our world function a little better by exercising patience in stressful situations
- Ensure my family feels love in their daily lives
- Create beautiful things to make people smile
- Provide a listening ear for people in crisis
- Make people's lives easier through improved technology

Think broadly about your purpose before distilling it down; consider the following questions:

- At the end of the day, what truly matters to me?
- Who or what do I aim to influence?
- How do I use my skills and talents to make a difference in someone else's life?
- If money were not an issue and I was not required to work for a living, what would I feel is a valuable use of my time and energy?

1.3 TELL YOUR STORY

Now that you have 1 of your many purposes distilled, considered what events big or small brought you to realize the importance of your purpose. Think of several moments, experiences, or relationships that developed your sense of purpose. Example events you may have experienced:

- A deep and meaningful conversation with a stranger
- Spending a summer on an internship you thought you'd love but actually hated
- Experiencing a heart-wrenching end to a relationship
- The elective class you took for fun that ended up changing your major
- Serving individuals in extreme poverty and realizing what you have to be grateful for
- Having your talents appreciated by someone you admire

- Working under negative conditions that made you desperate for change

Focus on several key moments or experiences that really get to the heart of your story; consider the following questions:

- How do I know what is important to me? How did I come to learn what is important?
- In retrospect, in what small moments was I experiencing a calling?
- Was there a single moment where I knew what I must do? Or were there several small moments that lead up to my understanding of purpose?
- Looking back, how can my past become a narrative that someone could learn from?

Outline your story. Figure out how it all fits together in a narrative that tells the story of your becoming or your vocation.

What is your take-away? What will others learn from reading your story? What piece of advice or wisdom do you want the reader to come away with? End on a positive note, giving the reader a feeling that they learned something about the world.

1.4 VISUAL DESIGN

Please include at least one large (at least 700px) image with your story. Example images:

- Your headshot
- Photographs from your undergraduate days
- Stock photographs that show the subject you are writing about
- Photographs from locations you discuss in your story (your college, a city, a place of gathering or worship)
- Graphics or illustrations related to your subjects
- Graphic typography of a quote related or in your story

If you submit your story without an image, one will be added for you. Your audience reacts best to a visual story, so please feel free to include more images as you see fit.

IMPORTANT: Make sure you have the right to post the image you choose (Creative Commons) and give the appropriate attribution to the author as requested.

2 VIDEO PURPOSE/VOCATION STORY

2.1 AUDIENCE

This is your opportunity to tell your story to the world, but remember that the intended audience is students, parents of students, and alumni. Tell a story that the 17-25 year olds might be able to relate to. The ideal length of video vocation stories is between 1 - 3 minutes (this is harder than it sounds).

2.2 MEDIUM

Choose a fitting medium to tell your story that works best for you. We are looking for your story, so tell it however you're comfortable. If all you have is your webcam or a camera phone, that's okay. If you're camera shy there are a lot of options to get creative and tell your video story. Consider drawing on a whiteboard to tell your story (in the style of [Draw My Life](#)) or using free software online that creates cartoons and other graphics for you ([Powtoon](#), [Animaker](#), and [Adobe Spark](#) are some examples).

2.3 DISTILL YOUR PURPOSE

Consider first what you see as your current purpose in life. You may have had hundreds of purposes throughout your life, for your vocation story, just focus on one. Example purposes you may feel:

- Raise a tiny human to be kind, loving, and generous
- Fan the flames of passion for the English language in today's youth
- Make our world function a little better by exercising patience in stressful situations
- Ensure my family feels love in their daily lives
- Create beautiful things to make people smile
- Provide a listening ear for people in crisis
- Make people's lives easier through improved technology

Think broadly about your purpose before distilling it down; consider the following questions:

- At the end of the day, what truly matters to me?
- Who or what do I aim to influence?
- How do I use my skills and talents to make a difference in someone else's life?
- If money were not an issue and I was not required to work for a living, what would I feel is a valuable use of my time and energy?

2.4 TELL YOUR STORY

Now that you have 1 of your many purposes distilled, considered what events big or small brought you to realize the importance of your purpose. Think of the single most important moment, experience, or relationship that influenced you and developed your sense of purpose. Example events you may have experienced:

- A deep and meaningful conversation with a stranger
- Spending a summer on an internship you thought you'd love but actually hated
- Experiencing a heart-wrenching end to a relationship
- The elective class you took for fun that ended up changing your major
- Serving individuals in extreme poverty and realizing what you have to be grateful for
- Having your talents appreciated by someone you admire
- Working under negative conditions that made you desperate for change

To find the moment that had the largest impact on your becoming; consider the following questions:

- How do I know what is important to me? How did I come to learn what is important?
- In retrospect, in what small moment was I experiencing a calling?

- Was there a single moment where I knew what I must do?
- Who or what shaped my understanding of my place in this world?

What is your take-away? What will others learn from hearing your story? What piece of advice or wisdom do you want the watcher to come away with? End on a positive note, giving your audience a feeling that they learned something about you and about the world.

3 FILL IN THE BLANKS VOCATION STORY

Use the following prompts to share about your experiences through your own vocational discernment. Feel free to include some or all of the prompts in your submission, please also feel free to add prompts that you feel better tell your story.

3.1 PROMPTS

My name is:

I currently earn a living by:

Outside of work my biggest priority is:

A defining value in my life is:

I believe my current purpose in life is:

The most important community I belong to is:

I always lose track of time when I:

As an undergraduate I was:

The most meaningful full class I remember taking was:

An important conversation that sticks out as being important to my formation was:

I believe the world needs:

I thought I would love but actually ended up not liking:

A defining time in my life was when:

One huge twist in my life plan was when:

One skill that I use without thinking is:

A mentor who had a profound impact on my life was:

If money were not an issue and I was not required to work for a living, a valuable use of my time, skills, and energy would be:

If I went back and took a different path than the one I am on, I would have:

Looking back, one important moment in understanding my purpose, vocation, or calling was:

3.2 VISUAL DESIGN

Please include at least one large (at least 700px) image with your story. Example images:

- Your headshot
- Photographs from your undergraduate days
- Stock photographs that show the subject you are writing about
- Photographs from locations you discuss in your story (your college, a city, a place of gathering or worship)
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