Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is your first personal contact with the Admissions committee. Use it to distinguish yourself. The SOP should speak about you, your aspirations and professional goals and relate these to the graduate program that you intend to pursue.It should basically answer the question..."Why should the graduate school admit you... what makes you special?

Remember, the SOP is the tool that faculty use to gauge if you have what it takes to succeed in grad school and later in the academic discipline as a professional.

What they are looking for, is an undying commitment to pursuing the desired field, backed with adequate preparation from your side, towards the same. It would help to keep these points in mind while writing your SOP.
Begin with an eye-catching first paragraph.
Remember, the Admissions committee goes through atleast 40-50 SOPs at a time. You've gotta catch their attention in the very first few lines. SOP should be to the point. Why do you want to continue studying? How is graduate studies going to affect your career?What have you done in the past? What do you expect? What are you looking for concerning an international experience?Why have you chosen this particular University?After MS, what and why Be objective, yet self-revelatory In a very straight-forward manner, speak about your experiences and academic bac-ground and how these have influenced your decision to pursue graduate studies.

SOP must demonstrate your knowledge of the field, but shouldn't lecture or bore the highly trained professionals who will read it.They already know what skills are important to the field. They want to know your purpose in graduate study and specific academic interests. You must know the field well enough to state a preference, without being simplistic or pedantic. High-light your achievements...this is no place for humility. List any special preparation or achievements that you have that may make you "more qualified" than others.

Remember the whole purpose is to convince or persuade the admissions committee and to make your application stand out from the crowd. Use it as a tool to explain any specific problems. SOP should honestly address any problems or special conditions e.g. grades on one semester may have been poor, b'coz the applicant had to work on a part-time job or was affected by a family emergency. Negatives should be balanced by positives e.g. "even though I had to take up a part-time job to support myself, I developed important time management skills that enabled me to not only raise my grades the following semester but to pursue my research interests".

Don't restate information already provided in the application. Don't limit the SOP to a recitation of achievements...its not a C.V. Don't quote from Univ catalogs. SOP should be limited in length, no more than two pages(or depends on Univ's instructions). If the Univ asks for a response to specific questions, answer accordingly. Never generalise. Don't use terms like 'invaluable', 'significant', 'challenging' etc without further explanation drawn from personal experience. Also avoid over-used phrases such as "I can contribute", "meant a lot to me" or "is appealing to me". Be direct. Be honest or atleast sound honest. Try and strike a personal chord.

Remember, the Admissions committee is interested in knowing more about the person, that is **YOU.** They are tired of reading numbers and techno -gabble. Try and reveal bits (the better bits) of your personality through the SOP. They like to know that they are making decisions that influence the lives of people. Be University specific.

Don't make one common SOP and send copies of it to different Univs.

Ask yourself

1. Why are you interested in your chosen field of study? How and when did you begin to get interested?
2. Why do you want a graduate degree?
3. Why do you want to study abroad?
4. What was the most rewarding class you took in college and why? What was the most rewarding assignment you did and why?
5. In addition to classes, how else did you learn about your field of interest (e.g. books, seminars, lectures, conversations)?
6. Do you feel your grades (university and graduate school if applicable) and test scores (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, TOEFL, etc.) accurately reflect your academic ability and potential? Why or why not?
7. What kinds of academic skills (research, lab, etc.) did you learn in college?
8. Were you involved in any especially memorable academic accomplishments in college? Describe them.
9. Who or what has been the biggest influence on your academic development and why?

Career Plans:

1. What are your short and long-term career plans? How certain are you of them?
2. How will pursuing a graduate degree help you reach your career your goals?
3. What current and past work experiences have you had? What were the most important things that you learned from them?

Extracurricular activities:

1. What hobbies do you do in your free time?
2. What clubs or other extracurricular activities did you participate in during college? Did you hold any leadership positions?
3. Have you won any awards for your extracurricular achievements?
4. Have you done any volunteer work?

1. Is there anything impressive about your background (e.g. experiences, accomplishments, family history, cultural background)?
2. Did you have to overcome any unique obstacles growing up?

Personality Questions:

1. Are you responsible? If yes, describe how.
2. Are you creative? If yes, describe how.
3. Are you honest? If yes, describe how.
4. Are you independent? If yes, describe how.
5. Are you mature? If yes, describe how.

6. Are you hard-working? If yes, describe how.
7. Are you confident? If yes, describe how.