

Writer's block? Here are possible topics for your GRFP Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement

- How did a “pivotal moment” in your life motivate you to pursue a graduate degree?
- How did a key college experience ignite your passion for research and discovery?
- What “life lesson” has readied you for success in graduate school?
- How has volunteering or service learning or study abroad impacted your career goals?
- If you have triumphed over an adversity in college, how this readied you for future success?
- If a role model inspired you to attend college, how can you become a role model for others?
- What have you learned from your faculty mentors that will help you mentor others?
- What knowledge, skills and abilities will your reference writers discuss in their letters about you?
- What career options have you explored (e.g., academic, government, industry, nonprofit)?
- How have you engaged people from diverse backgrounds in your research/ teaching/outreach?
- What efforts have you made to improve the public’s understanding of science?
- In what ways have you applied your previous research findings to benefit society?
- How have you demonstrated your commitment to responsible and ethical research practices?
- How might you extend your research skills through interdisciplinary or collaborative work?
- How do you analyze problems, frame relevant issues, devise solutions and marshal resources?
- What are your plans to develop scholarly writing (articles/grants) and project management skills?
- How will you stay abreast of technological advances that will impact the future of research?
- What experiences have shaped your cultural literacy and global awareness, and how does your insight prepare you to join the diverse/global workforce that the NSF envisions for the future?
- In the next 10 years, how do you intend to advance knowledge within and beyond your discipline?
- How does the NSF’s value of “societally relevant outcomes” resonate with your research topic?
- How will your future research activities align with the NSF’s priorities in the areas of national security; economic competitiveness; enhanced infrastructure for research and education; and academic-industry partnerships? Source: www.nsfgrfp.org