

**Two Tips for Fulbright Essay Writers**  
**April 8, 2009**

Tip # 1. Pay attention to the **TOPIC SENTENCE** – the first sentence in each paragraph.

**EXAMPLE**

The following topic sentences are drawn from Christina Guzik’s research proposal to study “The War on Terror and the Southern Cone” (2006). (They are edited slightly.)

**My project examines** the critical relationship between the U.S.-led War on Terror and regional security in South America’s Southern Cone. **I will use Argentina as a case study** to explore . . .

While **the bipolar security paradigm that characterized the Cold War** came to an end upon the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the security paradigm that has or might replace it remains unclear. . . .

**I will investigate and analyze** the ways in which the Argentine government has responded to the international pressures and demands that have originated from three specific sources—the United States, United Nations, and Organization of American States—in connection with the global War on Terror. . . .

**I will conduct my research project in collaboration with** Fundación Fundar: Justicia y Seguridad, as well as with the Instituto de Cooperación Internacional. . . .

**Motivation for my proposal is twofold.** First, . . . Second, . . .

**The majority of my data will be obtained** through extensive field interviewing, the subjects of which will include experts and colleagues of Professor Fontana . . .

There are **several courses offered within the Graduate School of International Relations** at the Universidad de Belgrano that complement my research project. . . .

**This grant will allow me to combine my two passions**—the study of International Relations and Latin American Studies—with my formal educational training and work experience in both areas . . .

**Two Tips for Fulbright Essay Writers (page 2)**  
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Tip # 2. Begin with or weave in an **ILLUSTRATIVE MOMENT** related to your academic experience, one that conveys a sense of you as a person. (Note, however, that if the prompt on a scholarship application asks for a very short essay, you should get right to the answer and avoid an opening anecdote.)

Opening paragraph from Nishita Trisal's **Statement of Grant Purpose** for an English Assistantship in Indonesia (2007):

When I immigrated to the United States from India in 1993 at the age of eight, I was proud that I could speak English. My mother, a teacher, had always stressed the importance of the language, and I was one of the only students at my school in India who spoke it fluently. My confidence quickly plummeted when I began school in America. My English sounded different—I had an accent. Convinced that my Indian accent was making me the object of classroom mockery, I became consumed with getting rid of it. I felt nothing but relief when over the course of a few months my accent became properly Americanized: I sounded just like my peers.

Opening paragraph from Christina Guzik's **Personal Statement**, accompanying her proposal to study "The War on Terror and the Southern Cone" (2006):

As I walked out of my apartment onto Avenida Santa Fé, the paralyzed traffic barely allowed me to cross the street. I was not alarmed, however, as it was common for protesters to obstruct rush hour traffic in downtown Buenos Aires. Amidst the chaos and confusion, I made my way into the closest internet café, only to discover an alarming email from my brother. "Are you OK?" read the subject line. In disbelief, I read his email outlining the bombings of three ATM's in Buenos Aires. While globalization was a familiar concept, I had suddenly acquired a deeper appreciation of the term, when my brother in Indiana *had informed me*, who lived fewer than two blocks away from one of the targets, of that morning's bombings. More importantly, that morning's events served as testimony that no country is immune to terrorism or threats to hemispheric security.

Opening paragraph from Todd Schmid's **Personal Statement**, accompanying his proposal to study "Sociolinguistic Politics and Bilingual Education in Contemporary Paraguay" (2009):

I spilled steaming *mate* on my lap as I jumped out of my chair on the terrace of my apartment overlooking the nostalgic streets of Buenos Aires. It was my semester abroad, and I had just read the opening verses of Hernández's epic saga, the *Martin Fierro*, for the first time. The muses were singing, my head was spinning. The constellations of the southern hemisphere battled with the city lights, the taxis roared along below into the night, and I was jumping up and down like a five year old over the first four lines of an old poem. This was my intellectual awakening, fully enveloped in the language I love.