Useful Phrases for Writing a Statement of Purpose

**Self-Praise:**

In general try to avoid using praise words in the statement of purpose, do it in the recommendation letters. In the statement it is better to give facts and examples which will show you as an educated, determined and successful person.

If you feel that you want to use some self-praise please check out Describing Person's Qualifications in Collection of Useful Phrases for Recommendation Letters.

**Useful Expressions:**

To finish school, to graduate from university,

To attend lectures/seminars/laboratory practices (word "courses" is rarely used)

To attend advanced courses,

To gain thorough knowledge of mathematical modeling, learn to handle modern equipment such as..., to gain valuable experience,

Lectures in spring theory by prominent Russian scientist Prof. X,

**Words to Avoid:**

Thing  
  
qualifiers such as rather, quite, somewhat, probably, possibly, etc.

*You might improve your writing somewhat if you sometimes try to follow this suggestion.*  
The example contains nonsense. Deleting unnecessary qualifiers will strengthen your writing 1000%. Equivocating reveals a lack of confidence. If you do not believe what you write, why should the admissions officer?

interesting (you can use it but not too often, remember that it has good synonyms such as exciting, fascinating, thrilling, amazing, striking, etc.)  
  
nice (it is a very informal word)

**The following phrases might be useful throughout your statement:**

While preparing to these Olympiads I gained not only much new knowledge and experience but also confidence that devoting myself to physics was the right decision.

During last two years I have spent most of my time carrying out research and attending a number of extra-curricular lectures and seminars in optical physics. My favorite lectures were...

When I was taking special laboratory courses on advanced optics, I was struck by...

Of great interest to me was... /  2-photon spectroscopy is of great interest to me  
I found modeling of cellular development to be of the greatest interest to me.  
I especially enjoyed working on…

To my mind it is of key importance to have possibilities to obtain excellent education and to conduct certain research projects independently that is why I consider doctoral studies at ... University as the next professional stepping stone in my career.

Further, earning a Ph.D. in history would advance my other goals by adding to my creative and analytical skills in history as well as in working with language.

To help you understand my current goals better, I would like to explain my educational experience up to this point.

My extensive knowledge of physics and mathematical modeling proved to be very useful in understanding the principles that underlie biological phenomena in cells.

Besides studying general and theoretical physics at MIPT I started to attend advanced lectures in my major at the Institute of Solid State Physics(ISSP) in Chernogolovka.

My interest in optical phenomena deepened when in 1998 I joined the MIPT optical laboratory of Prof. X

I carried out my first research project in biophysics at ... Institute in the biokinetics research group under the guidance of Prof. X

I have assembled and mastered a Langmuir-Blodgett mini-trough and managed to obtain good quality films of fat acids and close materials.   
I have also got acquainted with ... technique/s of ... and have fabricated polymer films for the devices.

Apart from the technical problems it is interesting to me to be involved in experimental investigation of ...

These activities give me valuable experience as well as satisfaction of hard work.

Along with my studies and research work I also held a part-time position as a Physics teacher at Phystech College, which is an extracurricular high school. I enjoyed this job greatly and I believe that this experience will significantly help me both in my TA assignments and in my future academic career.

The ultimate goal of our research is/was to check...  
The laboratory I work in primarily deals with...

In this lab I have gained experience of working with the equipment for...  
From the beginning I was actively involved in the research in this laboratory.

Currently I am working on a second research project.../ on the part of this research project that deals with...  
Now my interests in science lie in the area of ...  
Our current work concerns creation and investigation of P-contact and its properties

This research is/was especially interesting because...

All these significantly improved my understanding of the subject and further enhanced my interest in it.

By the end of the year I successfully defended (plan to defend) a bachelor of science senior honors thesis on the topic

After graduation I plan to continue my scientific career in the field of...

**Examples of Good Endings:**

In conclusion I must say that I would regard my admission to the University of California at Berkeley not only as a great honor and success but also as an obligation for hard work.

I am sure that my curiosity and research skills will enable me to succeed in the greatly claiming program to become an experimentalist. Eventually, I deeply believe that the excellence of your program, along with my capabilities and motivation, will help me to attain my destination.

After graduation I plan to continue my scientific career in the field of cell physiology. Successful research requires modern equipment and facilities which in current financial situation Russian laboratories cannot afford. These has forced me to look for other opportunities to continue my education. Department of Biophysics at Harvard University has excellent facilities and leading laboratories in which I can fully realize my scientific interests. Study of molecular physiology of potassium channels in the laboratory of Prof. Gary Yellen and study of acetylcholine receptors in the laboratory of Prof. Jonathan Cohen are of particular interest to me. I would regard my admission to Harvard University not only as a great honor but also as a great responsibility and an obligation to work hard.

In the summary, my interest lies in the field of nonlinear dynamics and its applications, namely nonequilibrium physics, complex systems, self-organization, dynamics of neural networks. Research in this areas is very active at California Institute of Technology, namely at Physics, CNS, CDS and other departments. Therefore I want to continue my education at California Institute of Technology. I am sure that your PhD program will finally lead me to my dream – discovering of a secret of nature.

Your University has a strong theoretical condensed matter division. Therefore, I want to study physics at Your University in order to get a thorough education and a great research experience in the field of theoretical condensed matter physics. I believe this experience will allow me to increase human’s knowledge of Nature and, therefore, to be of benefit to mankind.

I am a hard-working and determined person, and I am ready for a new leap in my economics career. I will work hard in hope that the quantity of the effort I put in will result in high quality knowledge. The fact is that the best possible supervisors and a highly competitive atmosphere are necessary for this quality.  The only reasonable decision for me was to aim for such a place. All this gives me the motivation to apply to Princeton University.

Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I came to the conclusion, that the best opportunity to pursue my �chosen path� would be to continue my education as a graduate student at Princeton University. The facilities, scholarship, and traditions of your university, combined with the caliber of the student’s body, make me confident that I will be stimulated throughout the course of my studies. Upon graduating from your program, a variety of options are available for pursuing my objectives.

Summarizing all written above, I believe that my serious intention for study, my past lab work, strong academic background in various areas of physics and mathematics will be beneficial for my graduate studies and research. Attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology would give me an opportunity to receive high-level education under the guidance of prominent scientists and excellent teachers and with the help of first-class equipment. (or Massachusetts Institute of Technology is a place where I can receive high-level education under the guidance of prominent scientists and excellent teachers and with the help of first-class equipment.)