

Writing a personal statement can be one of the activities that stresses year 13 students out the most. We have compiled our experience in to one place to help make it a little easier!

# Personal Statement Starter Pack

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## What are Universities looking for when they read the Personal Statement?

They wish to find out more about why you are applying for the course you have chosen: this is particularly important when applying for a subject that you have not studied before, such as Medicine.

The personal statement should tell the tutor the reasons why that subject genuinely interests you and should **evidence** that you understand what is required to study the course. For example if applying for Computer Science; you should demonstrate that you know maths is integral to the subject.

Tutors are also looking to find out about your skills and experience, which may demonstrate the **potential to succeed** on the course. However, unless a course asks for it work experience is not a formal requirement for undergraduate courses and you can refer to skills or experience acquired **in any context** to illustrate compatibility with your chosen course. If you do discuss work experience it is important that you are able to **reflect** on your experience and what you have learned as a result-; what matters is that you have thought critically about it.

Further reading beyond the curriculum. Universities are not looking for a list of authors and texts; they want to know what you thought of what you have read.

**TIP:** Whether it is further reading, visits to exhibitions, performances, lectures, work experience, **try to engage critically with everything you include in the personal statement.**

## Personal Statement - Introduction

You will need to provide a brief but convincing explanation as to why you want to study your subject at university. The personal statement and UCAS application process is not like an X factor talent show where you have a few moments to make an impression and separate yourself from the crowd. Universities will consider each application on its individual merits, looking for evidence of your commitment and ability.

**TIP:** your personal statement should demonstrate your **academic abilities** and your **engagement** with and **motivation** for your subject or subjects.

Universities want to see that you are committed to the subject or subjects you want to study at university **but it's not enough just to say that you have a passion for something**; you need to **show** how you have engaged with your subject, above and beyond whatever you have studied at school or college. This can for example include any relevant extracurricular activities.

**TIP:** Do not JUST say you read around the subject, visit galleries, attend lectures, travel- **EVALUATE** these. Say how they have **affected you**, how **you have benefited**, and what **you'd like to learn next**.

Try to avoid writing your personal statement as though you are ticking things off a list. There is no checklist of required achievements, and Universities will not just scan what you have written to look for key words or phrases. Tutors will read your personal statement to try to understand what has **motivated you** to apply for their course. It's a good idea to **evaluate your experiences**, to show what you have learned from them and how they have helped develop your understanding of your subject

**Personal Trigger** - What was it that got you interested in the subject in the first place? It could be a book, trip, documentary, childhood experience, teacher, work experience etc. What motivates you to take this course at a university level? Mention how your interest developed, what you have done to pursue it or how you've drawn inspiration from your current studies. Alternatively, just demonstrate your enthusiasm for it.

**TIP:** 'Be specific from line one

**Wider** - Continue to develop why this subject is important and inspiring to you. **Evaluate your experiences**, to show **what you have learned from them and how they have helped develop your understanding** of your subject.

Talk about your achievements but show how they have affected you, how you have benefited and what you'd like to learn next. Perhaps say why this subject is significant in society. **TIP** do not just say "always wanted to study..".

Having given an account of why you love your subject, focus on specific areas of interest and how the degree course will develop your interest and passion further.

What was my personal trigger?

Wider: 1

Wider 2: Which aspect am I really looking forward to studying in more detail? Why?

## Extra-Curricular Activity Reflection

Use this next page to help focus on the types of activities you may have done and how it is **relevant to the course you have chosen**. This is not an exhaustive list and you are not expected to cover everything on the list. It is merely a way of getting you to think about all the activities you may do which will contribute to your personal statement by supporting your interest in your chosen course.

Activity	Tick	Description	Why has it made you more suitable?
Outside reading	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading the Economist regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding economic concepts</li> <li>Keeping up to date with current affairs</li> </ul>
Outside reading			
Theatre trips			
Exhibitions			
School Clubs			
Clubs outside of School			
Voluntary work			
Museum visits			
Historical sites			
Trips abroad			
Community activities			
Documentaries			

Articles			
Hobbies			
Work experience			
Competitions/prizes/awards			
Published work			
Workshops/programmes			
Summer School			
Career aspirations			
OTHER			

## Transferable Skills

Try to use this table to give **examples** of how you have demonstrated some key skills. Try to think about your **Hobbies, interests and social activities**. Then think about how they demonstrate your **personality, skills and abilities**. Try to link them to the skills and experience required for your course(s).

**Work experience** Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s). Try to link any experience to skills or qualities related to the course.

**TIP:** Do not simply list off the skills you think you have – think about which ones relate most readily to the course you're applying to, then demonstrate how **you've developed, used and improved** these. Admissions tutors want to hear about *specific* examples.

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Communication	
Commitment	
Time Management	
Teamwork	
Initiative	
Public Speaking	
Sense of responsibility	
Adaptability	
Organisation	
Leadership	
Research & Analysis	

### **How long should I spend talking about my academic interest?**

Universities typically suggest that you focus around 70-**80%** of your personal statement on your academic **interests, abilities and achievements**. This can include discussion of any relevant extracurricular activities. The remaining **20%**- 30% can then cover any unrelated extracurricular activities

### **How do I begin?**

What would you say to your friends/ family about what you want to study at university?

**TIP** Think about:

What have you read or watched or seen that has inspired you? (This might have been anyway not just as school- at home, on TV, in a book, on YouTube, a gallery, anywhere.)  
 Why was it interesting? What do you want to find out next? What did you do?

## Personal Statement Template

### **First draft – some pointers to get you started**

Introduction
Your interest in the subject (in School)
Your interest in the subject (out of School)
Personal
Summary