

# PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKBOOK

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# PERSONAL STATEMENTS

## AN INTRODUCTION

There is no set formula for writing the 'perfect' personal statement – part of what will make your statement successful is how you convey your personality, interests, academic motivations and potential.

### Key information

- 4000 characters/47 lines long
- Uploaded to the UCAS website as part of your application to UK universities
- All universities see the same personal statement
- A chance for you to sell yourself – for most universities this is your only chance
- Some universities will require additional information

Your personal statement is your chance to give the Admissions Tutors at the universities that you are applying to a chance to meet the real you – to demonstrate your interest in the course, show what you would bring to the faculty and the university, and to convince the Admissions Tutors to offer you a place. You have limited space to express yourself so every sentence in your personal statement will need to pull its weight. One thing is for certain, you won't come up with a polished personal statement overnight. It will take many drafts, a lot of editing and a few late-night flashes of inspiration – and it will all be worth it when those university offers start rolling in. To help you get started, we've got a few useful tips to point you in the right direction.

### Top tips

- **Research the course before hand** - You need to be expressing your interest in the subject you are applying for and your achievements in that specific area.
- **Illustrate intellectual curiosity** - Make sure that you are not just listing the things that you have done – try to show what your reading and how this has developed your interest and understanding of the subject.
- **Emphasise your academic motivation** - You should mention your extra-curricular achievements as well, but the amount of space that you dedicate to this section should depend on the university to which you are applying. If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge, you should keep your extra-curricular activities to a minimum as these universities are focussed primarily on your academic achievements.
- **Give specific examples of interests** - Your personal statement is a good place to write about any subject-related work experience you have done and any courses or lectures that you have attended which have advanced your knowledge and will demonstrate that your interest extends beyond the classroom and any books or articles that you have read.
- **Be engaging** - Your opening should set the tone for the rest of the personal statement – showing your enthusiasm and interest in your subject, and introducing the admissions tutor to your personality.
- **Be honest** - Don't ever feel like you need to pretend to be someone else in your personal statement – just make sure you are your academic self. Speak as you would to your headmaster or mistress – clearly, maturely, but retaining a sense of who you are.
- **Have the interview in mind** – Two thirds of applicants are asked about their personal statement in their Oxbridge interview so be prepared to talk about anything you write about.

# WHO AM I?

What are your three favourite activities outside of school?

Describe yourself in four adjectives

What are your three main reasons for going to university?

What two current topics really interest you?

What academic skills do you want to learn before university?

What would your friends say were your four best qualities?

What would your TedTalk topic be?

What's your favourite way of learning? (practical, visual...)  
e activities outside of school?

Independent reading and research (e.g. books, journals, podcasts)

Work experience relevant to your course

Competitions you have participated in

Projects, EPQs

**PERSONAL STATEMENT  
BRAINSTORM**

Special areas/topics of interest relevant to your course

Subject Taster Days and Masterclasses

Gap year plans

Lectures, courses, trips

Super-curricular activities

