PERSONAL STATEMENTS
WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

• Key section of your UCAS application
• Many candidates apply for the same course with the same grades as you
• Your chance to stand out and demonstrate why you want to study your chosen subject
ADMISSIONS TUTORS LOOK AT

- Academic results
- Certain subjects (if required)
- Work experience (if required)
- Written work
- Pre-admissions tests
- Personal statements
- Teacher’s reference
ADMISSIONS TUTORS LOOK FOR

**Enthusiasm**
An inquiring mind
Burning desire to study the subject

**Ambition – ‘Spark’**

**Interest in the field**
Research & knowledge
Independent learning

**Application of skills learnt**
Awareness of real world issues in their chosen area
THINGS NOT TO DO IN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Quotations
- Clichés
- Sweeping statements or big claims
- Avoid “Passion”
- Humour – be careful
- Negative comments
- Irrelevant facts
- PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism: the act of presenting another’s work or ideas as your own.
TOP 10 MOST OVERUSED PERSONAL STATEMENT OPENINGS

- Of over 700,000 candidates who applied to university last year, 1,779 began their personal statement: "From a young age I have (always) been..." and most of these continued "interested in" or "fascinated by".
- "For as long as I can remember I have..." was used by 1,451 applicants
- "I am applying for this course because..." by 1,370 applicants
- "I have always been interested in..." (927)
- "Throughout my life I have always enjoyed..." (310)
- "Reflecting on my educational experiences..." (257)
- "Nursing is a very challenging and demanding (career/ profession/ course)..." (211)
- "Academically, I have always been..." (168)
- "I have always wanted to pursue a career in..." (160)
- "I have always been passionate about..." (160).

Source: BBC Online 21st April 2016 published by UCAS
WHAT COULD YOU INCLUDE?

- Interest in the subject
- Key skills and qualities
- Work experience
- Taster/master classes
- Personal achievements
- Gap year plans
- Something about you!
- Your future plans
THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

• Paragraphs
• Balance between academic and extra-curricular content
• What you want from the course
• Engagement and understanding
• Honesty
• Enthusiasm
• Saying How...?
• Positivity
WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

• Keep it relevant

• No one has their dream job/work experience during 6th form

• How can your experiences relate to your course?

• Part-time jobs and extra-curricular activities will have helped you gain a whole host of transferable skills
VOLUNTARY WORK

• Initiative
• Leadership
• Commitment
WORK EXPERIENCE

• Teamwork
• Communication skills
• Interpersonal skills
WHAT DO I DO IF I’M APPLYING FOR MORE THAN ONE COURSE?

• Joint Honours
  • Complimentary
  • Blend the similar topics
  • Aim to address each subject within the statement

• Not Joint Honours
  • Focus on your skills and how they will help you advance on the course
  • Ask the universities directly
  • Research how competitive places are and balance your content based on your results
NOT THINKING ABOUT UNIVERSITY?

• Applications for jobs, apprenticeships or internships have a very similar process to UCAS
• It is a skill to write positively about yourself and your achievements
• May require you to do it in more words or less
• At some point in your life, you will write something that resembles a personal statement
LET’S REVIEW... GOOD OR BAD?

‘To be or not to be, that is the question.’ Ever since I was old enough to pick up a book, I have been enthralled by the English language. From Roald Dahl to Shakesspeare, I have always had an unquenchable thirst for literature, reading and knowledge. In particular, my love of English has stemmed also from my love of performance and script. My favourite quote is the one above from Macbeth. I have been the president of my schools drama club for 2 years now and played the leading role in many of our plays. I particularly want to study at The University of Reading because I have heard they have a really good drama society that do good socials and have a nice department. I have a passion for both reading and the spoken word which is why I want to combine my too loves and to study English and Drama.
LET’S REVIEW... GOOD OR BAD?

I also know that others think Biology is important. As the famous Scientist Freedman dyson said about Biology ‘Biology is now bigger than physics, as measured by the size of budgets, by the size if the workforce, or by the output of major discoveries; and biology is likely to remain the biggest part of science through the twenty-first century’

I do lots of things outside of my lessons. I do horse riding and have been doing since I was really small. I have a horse called Tinker and I have had her since I was 13. I keep her at a local stables and I go and see her and ride her almost every day, unless I am very busy with school work. We have been in lots of competitions together. In the 1st one, we come fifth overall and in the second one we came 6th. But really since then we have always been in the top three, usually 2nd but sometimes first as well.
Let's review... Good or bad?

From a very young age, I have been interested in the way businesses are run: how shops are laid out, how they sell themselves to the customer, asking myself why are video games so differently priced? My enthusiasm for Business Studies and Management grew from a visit in my youth to my father's newspaper office at Canary Wharf. I was intrigued by the amount of work and effort that was put into running a daily newspaper, wondering how it was possible to manage so many people and run a business that involved such careful delegation and use of time. Studying Business Studies at A level strengthened these early interests. I am particularly interested in the human behaviour side of business, and have been keen to explore motivation. What makes people tick? What drives them forward? The world in which we live is increasingly dominated by businesses, so what could be more captivating than studying the most powerful collections of people on the planet? These dynamic organisations not only reflect but create the values of contemporary societies, shaping our beliefs and lifestyle choices. Psychology at A level has taught me all about human interaction and how our minds work.
OVER TO YOU...
HARDEST THING TO DO IS START IT

3 minutes to write

• Your strengths
• Why do you enjoy most about X subject?
  • Any particular interests
  • Be specific about passions
• What are your best skills?
• Keep it all positive
PERSONAL STATEMENT CHECKLIST

✓ Starts with an opening sentence that encourages the reader to read on
✓ Structured to reflect the skills and qualities the universities value most
✓ Enthusiastic, concise and natural style – nothing too complex
✓ Conclusion – reinforce your commitment, enthusiasm and skills suited to university/college life
✓ Proofread aloud and check with friends/family
✓ Check your grammar, spelling and punctuation
✓ Leave time to get feedback and redraft
WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Make a list of interests, experiences, skills and qualities
- Be selective
- Organise your thoughts
- Tone, language, clarity
- Show it to others
- Re-draft and submit
HOW TO STAND OUT (IN THE RIGHT WAY!)*

• Write a strong opening sentence - why have you applied to study this particular course?
• Demonstrate a real, genuine interest in subject – e.g. outside reading, talking to someone in profession, gaining relevant work experience
• Answer why you should have a place on the course
• Remember the ABC rule – explain the Action, the Benefit, and relevance to the Course

*According to admissions tutors (Which? University, 2015)
KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER

• Admissions tutors want to see a person not just an application
• You need to show yourself as a highly motivated student who is an independent learner with an inquiring mind
• Consider how you write the personal statement, as well as what you write about
• Above all be truthful, be specific and be interesting
GET STARTED: GET ORGANISED
WEBSITES

www.reading.ac.uk
www.ucas.com
www.unistats.direct.gov.uk
www.push.co.uk
www.thestudentroom.co.uk
www.gov.uk/student-finance
www.opendays.com
www.ukcoursefinder.com
www.prospects.ac.uk
www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus
www.futurelearn.com/courses