

Applications for College - How to Write a Personal Statement

Your personal statement is a way of conveying your reasons for wanting to study at a particular college, do a type of course, and to also demonstrate your ability to complete the course successfully. The application process for college can be very competitive and a strong personal statement is crucial to ensure your chances of success.

There is no single, right way of writing a personal statement. However below are a few suggestions on what to include (you may want to use some or all of the points below to help structure your personal statement).

Please note: Each college may provide its own guidelines on what to include in your personal statement (this might include a word or page limit, or specific content requirement), but please check with the college/s you are applying to.

- **Introduction**

Here you could outline:

- ✓ Who are you and/or where are you currently studying
- ✓ What are you applying for (e.g. English literature, bricklaying, childcare)
- ✓ Your reasons for wanting to study your chosen subjects
- ✓ Your reasons for wanting to study at that particular college (e.g. what makes that college stand out for you?)

You should demonstrate enthusiasm for your chosen subject/s, course type and college, and show that you have a good understanding of the subject area and college you are applying to. Failure to personalise your personal statement to a college and course could suggest you are not serious about your post 16 college choices.

- **Talk about your school subjects**

In this section you should discuss your strengths and key skills and relate them to what you are applying for. This will demonstrate that you are capable of accomplishing the course/s successfully.

- **Discuss any position of responsibility you may have had**

This might include being a Student Leader, Prefect, Peer Mentor etc.

- **Talk about work experience including non-GCSE activities in school**

This could include what you did do for your Year 10 work experience. Do you have a part-time job? Do you volunteer? What skills, knowledge, and experience have you developed from these experiences? How useful were these experiences? You could also include assisting at open evenings, taking part in drama productions, school fundraising events, projects, sports teams, meetings etc.

- **Talk about extra-curricular activities outside of school**

This could include any hobbies or interests (rock climbing, keeping fit, youth club etc.). You could also talk about any additional certificates/awards you have achieved such as Duke of Edinburgh, sports achievements, music awards (e.g. Grade 4 Piano) etc. It can also include any charity/fundraising activities you have taken part in or organised outside of school. Don't forget to mention if you are signed up to do the NCS (National Citizenship Service) at the end of Year 11.

- **Write about your plans for the future**

In this section you could write about what you would like to do in the future and why; explaining how your chosen subject/s can help you achieve this.

Useful sentence starters for writing a personal statement

I am a Year 11 student at School studying GCSEs in.....	My favourite subjects are....	I am currently.....
My strengths are.....	I am proud of.....	I enjoy.....
My greatest achievement(s) is/are....	I plan to.....	I hope to.....
I intend to.....	This year.....	While at school.....
Outside of school.....	Alongside my school work I.....	Last term I.....
Recently.....	During the summer.....	I work hard to.....
To develop my skills in.....	To achieve.....	To improve.....
I find / have foundchallenging/difficult	In addition.....	Furthermore.....

What is a Skill? A skill is something that can be developed or improved upon through training or practice. This could be in a work place or education setting.

Skills you can include in your personal statement

Team work organisation	Verbal / oral communication	Good listener
Planning	Time management	ICT skills
Analysing	Reading	Written communication
Problem solving	Presenting	Researching
	Leadership	Decision making

What is a Quality? A quality is part of your personality. It often describes the way you interact with others or behave.

Qualities you can include in your personal statement

Adaptability	Flexibility	Proactive approach
Reliability	Caring / friendly	Inquisitive
Patient	Polite	Punctual
Responsible	Dedicated	Confident
Positive	Ambitious	Conscientious
Honest	Hard working / diligent	Helpful
Thoughtful	Proactive	Adventurous

Useful websites

The following websites provide further information on how to write a personal statement; including top tips, Dos and Don'ts, and example personal statements:

- www.thestudentroom.co.uk/content.php?r=15927-sixth-form-college-entrance-personal-statements
- www.focuspoint.org.uk/s4-6/applying-to-college/your-college-personal-statement
- <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/tutorial-writing-personal-statement-ucas-or-college-application>