

# \* Personal Statements

Tutor notes - print slides A3 8-13 - one sheet per group

Or pick up from student services

## Personal Statement by Paragraph

Personal  
Statement Intro

**Personal  
Statement by  
Paragraph**

Personal  
Statements  
Transferable  
Skills



\* Personal  
Statements

Section by Section

- \* To look at a useful structure when writing a personal statement
- \* To look at strengths and weaknesses of comments
- \* To improve our explanations and create relevant detail

\* **Aims of the session**

\* UCAS Introduction to Personal Statements

\* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_8hFkMAjW-I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8hFkMAjW-I)

\* “I want to go to university because it has a good social life”

\* “I think a university education would broaden my social and intellectual horizons”

*Which one is better for a personal statement?*



\* **Appropriate Comments?**



\* “I play in a band which leaves little time to study”

\* “For relaxation, I play guitar to a good standard”



*Which one is better for a personal statement?*

\* **Appropriate Comments?**

- \* **Introduction** - General paragraph - why you want to study the course at Uni and why you are interested in the subject. You don't need to demonstrate skills or list experiences at this stage.
- \* **Section 1** - Discuss academic experiences. Relevant subjects, how these inspire you and what you find interesting. Give specific examples of things you enjoyed studying. You don't need to discuss every subject & don't need to list subjects you're studying - these are elsewhere in your application.
- \* **Section 2** - Academic - interest in subject outside the classroom, summer schools/open days, books read or relevant experience. Specific details of what you did and how this makes you a better/more motivated candidate are good. When discussing books avoid name dropping & discuss aspects of the book. What particular ideas raised in the book / lecture you found particularly interesting, and why.
- \* **Section 3** - Discuss work experiences, relevant or otherwise, with focus on how experiences have helped you develop relevant skills for the course. Opportunity to show appreciation of skills course requires.
- \* **Section 4** - Hobbies & extra-curricular activities - focus on skills. Sport, music and voluntary work show you are a diverse person outside the classroom. Avoid mundane hobbies like socialising with friends, playing computer games. This should be quite short section to make room for more academic sections.
- \* **Conclusion** - The conclusion should be brief (1-2 sentences) but should summarise and reiterate your interest in the subject and your aptitude and skill for it. This is also a good place to discuss any future career aspirations, but if you don't have any then you don't need to mention it.

## \* Section by section



## Before

I enjoy History lessons so I have decided to pursue the subject at degree level. At university I look forward to examining a range of historical sources. I am particularly interested in French history and trips to France have broadened my historical awareness.

## Evaluation

Strengths

Weaknesses

\* Introduction

Before

Aside from studying History at A level, I also take French and Politics. I have benefitted from studying politics alongside history, and feel it will benefit me throughout higher education. I am also undertaking an Extended Project which has focussed and improved my research skills.

Evaluation

Strengths

Weaknesses

**\*Section 1 - Academic Experiences**

## Before

Outside college, Art has always been a large part of my life. I recently visited an exhibition at the Photographer's Gallery on early colour photography in Russia. I also saw the Disobedient Objects exhibition at the V&A, demonstrating perfectly how art and design can instigate revolution. I also have a part-time job in a vintage clothing store which I enjoy.

## Evaluation

Strengths

Weaknesses

\* Section 2 - Academic - Outside Classroom

## Before

For my work experience, I worked in various museums and galleries in Brighton & Hove. This was very relevant to my historical studies as I was able to understand more about how people lived in the past and their surroundings.

I did relate to this in my Extended Project and history coursework.

## Evaluation

Strengths

Weaknesses

# \*Section 3 - Work Experiences

## Before

As a student union member, I hold many responsibilities: organising and attending college functions, delivering speeches to the college body, being an active member of the college student union, working effectively with other students. Having played in school concerts with the keyboard orchestra when I was in year nine, I have recently taken up piano lessons.

## Evaluation

Strengths

Weaknesses

**\*Section 4 - Extra/Super curriculum**

## Before

I'm passionate about History at higher level because it will broaden my horizons, help me secure my vocation to work in the museum sector, and stretch skills I am developing from my present studies. I plan to defer my place and take a gap year so I am refreshed and ready to begin my studies once it's over.

## Evaluation

Strengths

Weaknesses

**\*Section 5 - Conclusion**



## Before

I enjoy History lessons so I have decided to pursue the subject at degree level. At university I look forward to examining a range of historical sources. I am particularly interested in French history and trips to France have broadened my historical awareness.

## Evaluation

### Strengths

- Does attempt to start with a reason about the choice of degree
- Each sentence tries to offer a different point

### Weaknesses

- A more insightful reason might be used to explain the choice of course
- Could state what the student wants out of the degree
- Could mention which areas of history are of interest
- Words such as history are used twice in one sentence

## Before

Aside from studying History at A level, I also take French and Politics. I have benefitted from studying politics alongside history, and feel it will benefit me throughout higher education. I am also undertaking an Extended Project which has focussed and improved my research skills.

## Evaluation

### Strengths

- It a good start to relate study from other subjects to the main subject
- Has begun to think about how A level study can benefit Higher Education study

### Weaknesses

- How does studying politics benefit history?
- Any benefits also of studying French?
- What is the area of Extended Project study? Relevant to the degree?
- How does it link to studying at a Higher Education level?

# \*Section 1 - Academic Experiences

## Before

Outside college, Art has always been a large part of my life. I recently visited an exhibition at the Photographer's Gallery on early colour photography in Russia.

I also saw the Disobedient Objects exhibition at the V&A, demonstrating perfectly how art and design can instigate revolution. I also have a part-time job in a vintage clothing store which I enjoy.

## Evaluation

### Strengths

- Student is presenting themselves as a well-rounded and diverse individual
- Passion for art and visiting an exhibition clearly showing real interest
- Mentions a specific exhibition

### Weaknesses

- So how did the student find the photography exhibition?
- Was the photography experience interesting / influential / inspiring?
- Relate more the part-time job to skills and interests?

\* Section 2 - Academic - Outside Classroom

## Before

For my work experience, I worked in various museums and galleries in Brighton & Hove. This was very relevant to my historical studies as I was able to understand more about how people lived in the past and their surroundings.

I did relate to this in my Extended Project and history coursework.

## Evaluation

### Strengths

- Begins to relate to how work experience has benefitted their studies.
- Does relate work experience to study which is helpful.

### Weaknesses

- It sounds like a varied and interesting work experience - perhaps an example of where - a museum or gallery would be helpful.
- How else relevant to studies?
- Specific examples of what was particularly interesting or relevant?

# \* Section 3 - Work Experiences

## Before

As a student union member, I hold many responsibilities: organising and attending college functions, delivering speeches to the college body, being an active member of the college student union, working effectively with other students. Having played in school concerts with the keyboard orchestra when I was in year nine, I have recently taken up piano lessons.

## Evaluation

### Strengths

- Being in a position of responsibility is useful to mention (i.e. School prefect)
- Examples are provided about the prefect duties
- Provides an image of a student with varied interests, e.g., music

### Weaknesses

- No mention of the skills gained from being a school prefect
- Omit the reference to year nine as it seems that the experience was too long ago to be relevant given the more recent responsibilities and experiences
- Has learning the piano really sold the student?

\* Section 4 - Extra/Super curriculum

## Before

I'm passionate about History at higher level because it will broaden my horizons, help me secure my vocation to work in the museum sector, and stretch skills I am developing from my present studies. I plan to defer my place and take a gap year so I am refreshed and ready to begin my studies once it's over.

## Evaluation

### Strengths

- Begins to say why they want to study the course at university
- Gives several clear examples for why they want to study the course
- Mentions clearing deferring and taking a gap year

### Weaknesses

- Doesn't explain what they are doing in their gap year?
- And why they are deferring and taking a gap year?
- No mention of what they will gain from the general University experience?

\* Section 5 - Conclusion



- \* It will help you to think of a clear structure
- \* Include everything you need to
- \* Keep it relevant and appropriate
- \* Remember that alongside job applications, this is one of the most important pieces of writing you will write in your life so take your time and check it carefully

\* **Conclusion**