

Applications for College - How to Write a Personal Statement

Your personal statement is a way of explaining your reasons for wanting to study at a particular college, why you are interested in a particular type of course and to 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, correct way of writing a personal statement. However, below are a few suggestions on what to include (you may want to use some or all the points below to help structure your personal statement). Remember its purpose is always based around selling yourself to the college admissions staff, summarising your skills & experiences and showing how they are relevant to what you are applying for.

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 you are and/or where you are currently studying.
- What qualification type (e.g. A levels, T-Levels & vocational qualifications) and subject/s you are 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 college (e.g. what makes that college stand out for you?).

You should demonstrate enthusiasm for your chosen subject/s, course type, college and show that you have a good understanding of both the subject area(s) 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, relating them to the subject(s) you are applying for. This will demonstrate that you can complete the course/s successfully.

Discuss any positions of responsibility you have undertaken

This might include being a student leader, prefect, peer mentor, reading ambassador, Duke of Edinburgh volunteer, work experience, part-time job etc.

Talk about work experience including non-GCSE activities in school

This could include what you did 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 are these experiences in relation to your future college studies? 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. Also include any charity/fundraising activities you have taken part in or organised outside of school.

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; explain 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 'your 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 schoolwork 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.	In addition....	Furthermore....

What is a skill?

A skill is something that can be developed or improved through training or practice. This could be in a workplace or education setting.

Skills you can include in your personal statement:

Team- work	Verbal / oral communication	Good listener
Organisation	Time management	ICT skills
Planning	Reading	Written communication
Analysing	Presenting	Researching
Problem solving	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 such as being caring, empathetic, energetic, creative, confident (more examples below).

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:

- <https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/post-16-options/how-write-personal-statement-further-education>
- <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/applying-for-college-or-university/>
- <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/a-level/sixth-form-college-application-personal-statements>

Example personal statements:

Over the next few pages, you will find some examples of personal statements. Use these examples to help you compose your own personal statement. Consider:

- Is the content clear and informative?
- Is the content free from spelling and/or grammatical errors?
- Do you know what the applicants want to study at college and why? (Reviewing example personal statements can help you to develop your own.)



Example 1

I am interested in joining Anytown Sixth Form College because I want to gain A-levels and maybe apply to university. I have looked at the sixth form prospectus, so I know it offers A levels in the subjects I would like to study. I have good attendance, punctuality, behaviour, homework and classwork. I am predicted to get good grades in all my GCSE subjects.

I have good communication skills which I developed during work experience. I have skills in teamworking and have strong self-confidence, which I also gained from work experience. During my work experience, I learned more about computers and how they work, and about architecture and using information technology to produce architectural drawings.

I have good business, computer and mathematics knowledge, which I hope to gain A-levels in. I am very pleased to be predicted high grades in both information technology and business studies as well as with the A grade in graphics, another subject I hope to study at A-level.

I have recently done my mock GCSEs, and I have learned that a lot of preparation must be done for success in these exams. Also, workload in school has been increasing in both classwork and coursework; I have learned that if we do not meet the deadlines then the workload increases even more!

In my spare time, I go out with my friends and play football and cricket. I used to play cricket for a club where I met new people and gained communication skills and increased my self-confidence. I am also a season ticket holder for Bolton Wanderers, and I have met new people at the ground and those that work in the ticket office. I like listening to music and playing a lot of sports.

At college I hope to gain A-levels in maths, graphics and business studies. From there I hope to go to university and do a course in architecture, interior design or designing cars. I hope to then work in architecture or for a car company.



Example 2

I am currently a pupil at Anytown School. I am a reliable student. My attendance record at school is good and I always try my best in lessons, even in maths which is a subject I do not enjoy and that I find difficult. I am expecting to get good grades in most of my GCSEs.

I have a strong interest in fashion and design. I keep a scrapbook of my favourite trends and enjoy sketching my own designs. I make some of my own clothes and use my design skills to make alterations to the clothes I buy in shops. I am keen to learn and develop new skills and I think the BTEC course your college offers will suit me as I will be assessed as I go through the course rather than having to sit big exams at the end.



Example 3

I attend Anytown School, and I am currently studying a range of GCSEs that include French, geography, IT, English literature and food technology. My favourite subject is English as I enjoy reading, writing, using a wide range of vocabulary and evaluating characters from novels. I have been a member of the school basketball team. I completed my work experience in a shoe shop where I gained various skills including how to deal with difficult customers which will help me in the future.

I want to apply to your college to study A levels in English language, economics, law and history. I would like to become a lawyer, and I know that I need A levels to do this and that I must get high grades. I know that there are different areas of law, and I am not yet sure what type of lawyer I want to become. I would like to legally represent people and help them with problems they have. My family and friends say I am a pleasant, kind, caring considerate and quiet person. I would describe myself as tolerant, hardworking, polite and friendly.

I want to apply to your college as I know it has a good reputation and that students get good grades in their A levels. I can get to the college quite easily by bus and I think I would also like to join the college basketball team.



Example 4

Sport is my biggest passion, and I really want to continue studying this after my GCSEs. I have developed many skills through playing sport and I think this will help me with my studies at college. I am good at all my subjects and if I work hard, I will get decent grades in my GCSEs, but I only really enjoy the active and practical subjects I study such as PE and photography. As a striker and a captain in my local football team I can work well within a team and perform under pressure. I enjoy helping others to get more skilled and more interested in sport and I do this by coaching younger pupils at my school in both football and swimming.

I want to study the BTEC qualification as this will be best for me and the way I prefer to learn – by doing and showing rather than writing lots of essays and assignments. Because I love sport so much, I think I will do really well and get good grades. I know that many universities will accept BTEC qualifications if I decide to apply. I am also keen to join some of the college sports teams so that I can challenge myself by having the chance to play against harder teams.



Example 5

I am studying at Anytown School for GCSEs. My favourite subject is resistant materials and I think I will pass all my GCSEs. Recently I won a school prize for showing good effort throughout the year. I like getting involved in after school activities such as swimming and golf and my favourite is swimming. I work hard and try anything that is challenging. I get extra help with my lessons, and I go to after school revision classes to help me. Outside of school I am very active, and I like to play lots of different sports with my brothers or friends. I am not sure exactly what subjects I want to study yet, but I came to a taster day at your college, and I really liked it. The teachers were very friendly, and I found out about the courses that you offer. I will have a better idea when I get my results.

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