

# Writing your Personal Statement

## Useful tips for writing your personal statement

- Be honest. For example, saying you have 100% attendance when you don't, is not honest. The places you are applying to will ask school for a reference which includes information about your attendance, punctuality, attitude to learning and behaviour, as well as your predicted exam grades.
- Another reason to be truthful and accurate, is that you may be asked to talk about what you have written at an interview. It will be difficult to continue the lie face-to-face!
- Be positive - tell them what you **can** do rather than what you can't. Use words or phrases such as 'willing to', 'tried', 'overcome', 'interested in', 'successfully' or 'keen to', rather than 'can't', 'don't', 'won't', 'haven't', or 'no good at'.
- Be enthusiastic. Make sure that your personal statement demonstrates why you are interested in applying for your chosen course or apprenticeship.
- Write your personal statement in your own style. Avoid copying someone else.
- Keep your writing focused and relevant to the course you are applying for.
- The personal statement has a limit of 4,000 characters, which is also known as a word count. This means that you will not be able to write more than around 500 words. It's a good idea to write your personal statement in Microsoft Word first, so you can keep an eye on the word count and do a spell check. Although the maximum word limit is around 500, a personal statement of 150-250 words is still acceptable.
- Save your personal statement as a separate document so you can use it again if you plan to apply for other courses, jobs or apprenticeships. It is a good idea to re-read your personal statement before your interview too, as a reminder of the key points you would like to get across to the interviewer.
- After you have finished writing, read it through lots of times to check for mistakes. You could also get someone else to check your personal statement. It's easy to make mistakes when you are typing.

## Information to include in your personal statement

You could start by writing a sentence or two that tells the school, college or training provider about yourself and your current situation.

The following phrases are examples of what you could write:

*'I am currently in Year 11 at ...'*

*'My favourite subjects are...'*

*'I like these subjects because...'*

*'I am honest, reliable and able to manage my time well in order to meet deadlines'*

*'I am a kind, helpful, well-mannered person'*

*'I am a practical, hardworking and responsible person who can work well in a group'*

*'At school I... (contribute in lessons/enjoy learning/play for the school football team)'*

Next you could write about your career aspirations, ambitions and why the course you have chosen fits with your plans for the future. Here are a couple of phrases you could start with:

*'I am applying for this course because...'*

*'I am hoping that completing this course will help me become a...'*

If you do not have any clear career ideas at this stage, just include your reasons for choosing the course. So, for example, you could say:

*'I am interested in science subjects, particularly biology and chemistry. I would like to use them in a future career.'*

## Achievements and skills

This is where you can include any achievements and positions of responsibility, such as being a form representative, looking after a younger sibling or caring for a pet. Have you helped at parents' evenings, completed your Duke of Edinburgh's Award, or mentored a younger student? You could write about awards given in assemblies or prizes for playing sport.

Include skills you have gained from any work experience, part-time jobs, or voluntary work. Most courses require skills in communication, teamwork and time management. Write about the positive qualities you have and give examples of how you have demonstrated your skills in action. An example of this could involve explaining how you led a small group of students on a class project or gave a presentation about your favourite topic. Further examples include:

*'I am a caring, compassionate person and a good listener, a skill I developed when doing voluntary work at a care home for the elderly'.*

*'My part-time job in a café has helped me to develop my communication skills with a wide range of different people'.*

## Hobbies and interests

You could write about activities you have participated in such as school plays, dog walking for neighbours, reading, going to dance classes, playing a musical instrument, going to the cinema, taking photographs or going to the gym.

## Some examples of skills for your personal statement

Problem solving	IT	Creativity
Communication	Negotiation	Decision making
Team work	Accuracy	Leadership
Organisation	Public speaking	Interpreting information
Working under pressure	Literacy	Planning
Numeracy	Time management	Drawing

## Some examples of qualities for your personal statement

Hardworking	Enthusiastic	Practical
Responsible	Honest	Motivated
Caring	Resilient	Dependable
Friendly	Flexible	Organised
Outgoing	Punctual	Reliable
Trustworthy	Tactful	Caring

## Some examples of personal statements

### Statement 1

I am currently in Year 11 at Hightown School. My timekeeping and attendance are good. I am meeting my targets for the GCSE subjects I am taking, which shows how hard I am working and that I want to do well.

I play rugby for the school and enjoy working as part of a team to win matches. I also enjoy practical activities, finding out how things work and making and mending things. I am a friendly, trustworthy and enthusiastic person who gets along with lots of people. I can be reliable, responsible and hardworking and during my work experience I showed that I can take instructions, be flexible, adaptable and deal with lots of different people under different circumstances.

My main interest is working with motor vehicles. I have had some experience of this on the course I attend at Kirklees College and when I help my uncle mend his car. I would very much like to continue to study towards becoming a mechanic and I am keen to gain further qualifications when I leave school. This will help me to achieve my ambition of becoming a mechanic in the future and eventually owning my own garage.

(198 words)

## **Statement 2**

I am hardworking, reliable and friendly. My attendance at school is very good and I am always on time for class. My favourite subject is history as I really enjoy reading about events that have happened in the past. In all my subjects, I work hard to meet deadlines and complete coursework to the best of my abilities. I work well independently and as part of a team. When I work in a group, I want to help others to achieve their potential.

At home, I help to care for my younger sister and I enjoy the responsibility this involves. My mum works night shifts quite often so I help prepare meals for my family after school. Helping my mum in this way has developed my skills in teamwork and time management. I have also gained confidence in my ability to care for others and take pride in the fact that I can set a good example to my family.

At this stage, I am considering different career ideas, so I have chosen to apply for a broad range of A levels that interest me, including health & social care, history and psychology. I am interested in training to be a nurse, but I am also thinking about working in academic research. I would like to keep my options open, so that I have a wide choice of university courses to consider in the future.

(253 words)

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**Good luck with writing your personal statement and making your application for your chosen course or apprenticeship.**

**Remember to let them know how good you are and demonstrate to them why they should offer you a place!**