



# How to write a personal statement for college/sixth form

## What is a personal statement?

A college/6<sup>th</sup> Form personal statement is written information about you! It puts across relevant skills, experience and attributes that

will make you appealing and illustrate your suitability for the course that you would like to apply for. It should be professional and in your own words.

A personal statement is important because you are introducing yourself to someone who may have nothing else to go on, maybe never having met you before. It is crucial then to include your own thoughts, feelings and opinions. Admissions staff are curious, they want to know more about **you** and why you are applying to them.

You must always link back to why you are a suitable candidate for the subjects they are offering. Why should they select you rather than someone else? Why are you suited to them and that course? What do you offer them in terms of your academic ability, confidence and interests?

For College courses or 6th Form courses; first explore the answers to these questions about your choices...it will help you write a statement with appropriate skills and qualities which match the requirements of your course. *(Sample answers in italics)*

## Which subject would you like to study?



*English Literature*

*Why? What specific aspects of the subject appeals to you?*

*I like the sound of the texts we will be studying on the course*

*I read a lot already and am good at the subject*

*I like writing and can already write well-structured essays*

*I want to study this subject later at university*

## What skills are required for you to be good at achieving the things you've written above?

*Enjoyment of reading.*

*Good time-management- being able to read long texts and write essays.*

*Public speaking- being able to debate and share interpretations, ability to work in a group*

*Concise note-taking and listening skills.*

*Personal organisation- a lot of work, essays, wider reading etc.*

*Responsible and hard-working- being able to complete the work at a high standard.*

## What does the course involve?

*Extensive reading, focusing on a Shakespeare play and poetry*

*Essay writing*

*Group presentations*



*A coursework / essay assignment of 4000 words*

*Lots of reading and writing for homework*

## How have you demonstrated these skills?

*Poetry/creative writing awards.*

*Evidence of consistently high marks in the subject & previous academic essays*

*Work experience at the library- talking with customers, recommending books, being able to prioritise and manage my time in the evenings.*

*Reading widely in my spare time.*



## What to include in your personal statement:

### About the college / 6<sup>th</sup> Form

- Why do you want to go there?

For example, someone who wanted to work with animals might write "I would like to study a BTEC in animal care as I am passionate about looking after animals. I already look after two dogs and it will help me in my future career plans".

- What about the college/courses on offer appeals to you?

You can write about anything you've read about the course(s) that you find interesting and would like to find out more about. For example, "I think it will be interesting to learn more about infection control in health and social care, as this is very important to keep patients healthy," or "I am very practical and I think I will enjoy learning practical plastering skills".

- What subjects do you want to study?
- Have you been to any open days or visits?

### What are your hobbies?

- What made (or encouraged) you take up this hobby?
- How often do you do it?
- What skills have you developed?
- Are these skills transferable? Will they be helpful for the subjects you hope to study? Or towards what you want to do in the future?

Write about anything you are proud of passing, for example, grade

2 in piano, or being selected for a sports team. Include any awards you have done, such as Duke of Edinburgh, or competitions and activities in school.

### What are your qualities?

- Are you friendly, hardworking, quiet, polite, reliable?
- Give some specific examples. (Ask a parent, sibling, friend, teacher if you need ideas.)

### What are your strengths/skills?

- Have you achieved any certificates or awards? What for? How did you gain them?

You can add any positions of responsibility you have held, for example, being on the Student Leadership Team or helping friends or family.

- What are some tasks or activities you enjoy doing? Why?
- What is your favourite subject at school?

You can let the provider know how much you enjoy a subject by writing about a course you have already studied that you found really interesting or you were good at. Remember, you don't have to have studied a course at GCSE to study it at college or sixth form though. You could write "I really enjoy GCSE geography, especially learning about climate change. I am looking forward to finding out more at A Level".



- Do you do any wider reading or work around the subject outside of school?
- How are your strengths relevant to the subjects you want to study?

### Share any employment experience

- Have you done any work experience, volunteering or part time jobs?

You can write about any experiences you have had that are related to the course(s), or any skills you've learnt that might help you. For example, if you have done any related volunteering or work experience, or if you have a part-time job such as babysitting, which shows more general strengths such as responsibility or commitment. For example, "I babysit regularly for a family friend. I always arrive on time and ensure that the 5-year-old I look after is put to bed on time after I have read her a story".

- What skills did you learn from these experiences?

Try to show how this experience gave you new skills or made you think about your future plans, for example, things you really enjoyed or were good at.

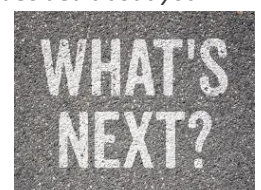
- How does your work experience and overall character show you are a valuable person to have at this college?

### The future

- What are your goals for the future?
- How do you hope your experiences at college will help you achieve them?

Explain how you would like to use the course you have applied for to help you reach your goal. In a college/6<sup>th</sup> form application it's fine to say you are undecided about your future but that you know that the subjects you have chosen to study will interest you.

You might say "I am planning a career in construction, as a quantity surveyor," or "I am undecided about my future career but am keen to explore my options and do work experience during sixth form".



## Example sentence starters

I have a great interest in...

Studying...has always appealed to me because...

In my free time I enjoy...

After school I dedicate a lot of time to...

It is important to me because...

In the future I hope to become a...

I understand that in order to achieve this goal I must...

I believe an important aspect of studying...is to learn...

Whilst working at...I learnt how to...

During my experience at...I was encouraged to...

In my free time I have focused on...which has enabled me to...

I have developed the ability to...because...

This demonstrates that I am...because...

Skills and attributes you might want to select from. Don't use them all, and don't pick things that you can't back up with an example as you might be asked about it at your interview! There are PLENTY more of them, but these are just to get you started if you need some ideas.

Respectful	Understanding	Logical	Enjoys a challenge	Problem solver	Resourceful	Curious	Practical
Determined	Good leader	Considerate	Team player	Good timekeeping	Positive attitude	Friendly	Creative
Good communication skills	Organised	Time management	Accurate	Adaptable	Helpful	Supportive	Enthusiastic
Motivated	Reliable	Calm	Confident	Diplomatic	Keen	Tenacious	Independent

## Dos and don'ts when writing a personal statement

- Do use your best English and check your spelling and grammar are correct.
- Do be enthusiastic – if you show your interest in the course, it will help your application.
- Do ask people that you trust, like your teacher/adviser or parent/carer to read through what you have written and give you feedback.
- Don't exaggerate – you might be asked about what you have written if you attend an interview with the course provider.
- Don't leave it until the last minute – it's a good idea to give yourself time to think about what you write to make sure you don't forget anything.
- Don't let worry about your personal statement stop you from applying. Most colleges and sixth forms don't turn applications down on the personal statement.

