

# Writing a Personal Statement

## What is a personal statement and why do I need one?

Most college application forms include a section called personal statement for you to fill in. This gives you the opportunity to tell the college what you are good at, what you have achieved and why you are applying for a place with them. You can also use this section to explain why you want to study a particular course and how it fits in with your future plans.

## What can I include?

There are no set rules about what you must or must not include – remember its personal to you. However, you could consider

- What you want to study and why
- Specific aspects of a course that interest you
- Things you have read that are related to the subject area
- Personal experiences that led to you choosing a specific course
- Where you hope a subject will lead in the future
- The reasons you want to attend a specific college
  
- Achievements and awards within school
- Extra-curricular activities you have taken part in
- Extra responsibilities you have taken on in school
- Subjects you are good at
- Subjects you have a strong interest in
  
- Part time job
- Community or charity work
- Work experience
  
- Hobbies and interests
- Sport activities
- Playing a musical instrument
- Languages you speak
- Awards or prizes you have won

## **Example paragraph plan**

Paragraph 1 – why are you applying?

- What you want to study and why
- Specific aspects of the course that interest you
- Anything you have done in school that relates to, or you feel would help you, with your chosen course
- How your subject choices relate to your career ideas

Paragraph 2 – school

- What are you good at? What do you enjoy?
- Achievements and awards (not everything, just highlight a few examples and explain what these awards say about you. For example, dedicated, hardworking, care for others)
- Extra responsibilities (helped with school events or shows, charity work)
- What do staff say about you in your reports and at parent's evenings?

Paragraph 3 – work experience

- Where did you do work experience and briefly what did you do?
- What skills and personal qualities did you develop?
- What did you enjoy? What did you do well?
- What feedback did you get from the employer?
- You can also write about part time jobs, volunteering, responsibilities you have at home

Paragraph 4 – Outside of school

- Hobbies, instruments, after school clubs
- Reading, gaming, art
- Sports, swimming, gym, dance

Paragraph 5 – What do you want the college to remember about you?

- What do you hope to gain from attending the college?
- What are you looking forward to about college?
- How can you contribute to the college?

## **An Example Personal Statement**

I am applying to the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College because I want to study A Levels and feel I am suited to the style of learning that A Levels require. I have chosen this college because it has an excellent reputation and I think staff here will support me to achieve the best I can. I recently attended an open event and was able to confirm my plans around the subjects I'd like to study. I was also very impressed with the extra-curricular activities offered at the college and I am looking forward to signing up for a first aid course and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

I have chosen A Levels in subjects I feel confident about and think I will enjoy. I would like to take a range of subjects so that I can keep my options as open as possible for the future. I am especially looking forward to continuing my study of Geography as this is a subject I am very interested in and have done well in at GCSE.

At school my teachers describe me as hardworking and focussed and I like to share my thoughts and opinions in lessons and debate topics with others. I have a good record of attendance and behaviour and attend after school revision sessions as I am determined to do well this year. During my time at Falinge I have been a Mental Health Ambassador, a responsibility teachers felt I could handle as I am mature and a good role model for others. Being an Ambassador is something that I feel is important and I wanted to be involved in helping other students and improving the different support available in school. I have also played for the school football team for 3 years and I've been able to develop my leadership skills by acting as Captain for the last year.

Outside of school I like to spend time with my friends and family. I also volunteer at a local scout group and I am responsible for helping to look after the younger children and supervise activities. Volunteering has pushed me to try new things and manage new challenges. I feel my confidence has grown and I know I can handle different situations and get on well with a variety of people.

I am looking forward to attending college, meeting new people and gaining higher qualifications. In the future I would like to go to university to continue my education and achieve my goal of a successful career.

### **Check list**

- Any information you include should be truthful and accurate. Be prepared for colleges to check information during your interview and with school.
- Is your information presented in a clear, logical way – does it make sense to the reader?
- Have you checked your spelling and grammar?
- If the college have asked for specific information have you included this?
- Have you read over your personal statement? Could you make any improvements?

**If you're not sure ask someone to check it!**