

10 Tips for Writing a Personal Statement for University Applications

The personal statement is a crucial part of university applications. It's your chance to show what makes you unique, besides your birth name. In just the number of characters you have to convince your chosen university that you are the best applicant, and that they should make you an offer immediately. These characters are your only chance, so your personal statement needs to be good. Really good. Here are some tips on how to write a truly *outstanding* statement.

1. Review ALL your personal statements and choose the BEST.

You have already started writing these last year!!!! Review those statements and select your BEST four. Start adding, deleting and revising!! Take the time now to really look over your personal statements.

2. Take your time.

Do not rush it. A superb personal statement will not be ready in a couple of hours. Or even a couple of days. It took me more than a month to complete the version I finally sent in. Sometimes it's worth taking a break for a few days, then coming back to it afresh.

3. Find the perfect words and expressions.

It sounds more professional and elegant if you use 'accomplish' rather than 'do', or 'presume' rather than 'think'. Using too many fancy words could make your statement sound overdone and difficult to read.

4. Concentrate on your strengths.

In these few characters you are trying to sell yourself to the university. A perfect product proposer is all about how great that thing is, and it's the same with your personal statement. You should write about your experiences, your knowledge and your future plans. You should NOT write, "I wanted to learn Spanish but I gave it up after a week" or "I am not very good at math, but I think this is understandable since I hate it so much."

5. Find the perfect opening sentence.

Starting with something funny, interesting, unusual or surprising will give a good first impression. But do not try to squeeze something funny out of your brain; that is useless. The perfect opening sentence will just hit you in a random moment, when you have already worked hours and hours on your personal statement. So, just wait and do not overthink it.

6. Make it your own work, voice and ideas.

I suggest that you should not read any other personal statements before writing the first few drafts of yours. It will simply give you a false idea. You are most definitely unique, and it is worthless to follow some set rules or patterns, or someone else's ideas. After all, this is about you, not somebody else.

7. Be honest.

Do not write that you are fluent in Spanish if you can only say "I love you" in Spanish. Do not write that you are good at problem-solving if your sole example is a trick of carrying five oranges in one hand. If you are good, you are good the way you are. There is no need to create a false image, and indeed the truth will always come out sooner or later.

8. Get someone to proofread your statement.

Your parents, your teachers, your friends, your enemies... The more people you show it to, the more feedback you will get, and the better the final version will be. Of course, some advice will be better and some less so, but it is easier to ask many people first, and differentiate later.

9. Read it out loud many times.

It helped me a lot when I read my personal statement out to my family and friends. When you are writing it sentence by sentence, you might not realize that there is no cohesion between your paragraphs. But when you read it out, all the vague parts will magically appear, so you can correct them.

10. Once you submit your university application, stop reading it!

I'd recommend not reading it for a few months once you've sent it in. You might feel it's not as good as you thought previously, but this is normal. Waiting to hear from universities is the worst part of the whole process (even worse than completing the application form...). After you get the offer you wanted, you will know that your application was just perfect the way you sent it.