

# Your Personal Statement: Worksheet & Template

**Step 1:** Brainstorm your essay focus & story

**Which subject are you hoping to study at university? Which specific degree courses are you applying for?**

**Make a list of reasons why you want to study this subject and what influenced your thinking.**

**Make a list of why you've chosen to apply for these specific degree courses. Why are these courses/universities more interesting to you than other ones in the same subject?**

## Step 2: Listing your academic achievements

List some examples of when you have demonstrated the core skills, aptitude and critical thinking necessary for your chosen subject.

Can you list occasions when you have demonstrated hard work and diligence in your chosen subject area? Was there a time, in class or in a project, where you had to overcome a particular challenge?

When did you first become interested in this subject? How has this interest changed and developed since you first discovered it? How do you see it changing at university?

List examples of when you have demonstrated an interest in your subject outside the classroom.

Write about your extra-curricular activities and interests outside the classroom. Think about how these activities might be relevant to your application.

List any other relevant qualifications and awards which may support your application.

### Step 3: Read example Personal Statements

#### Example Personal Statement

When I was thirteen I wanted to be a rock star. I wanted to meet people, to unleash my imagination, and to find a way to help and inspire people creatively. I wanted to do something I loved, something I could see myself pursuing for the rest of my life, something filled with exploration and adventure. It was when I was thirteen that I began writing, and writing soon became everything to me that I had first imagined finding in music.

My love of literature began in early childhood, when my life would change every few years as I moved to different cities and countries: stories became the friends I would never move away from, Avi and Kenneth Grahame my closest confidants. I began writing journals, packed with so many imaginary details until they became stories in their own right. But it was when I was thirteen that I came across Fitzgerald's quote saying that writers are 'a whole lot of people trying so hard to be one person'. This quote struck me, not only as something I could truly identify with, but also as the confirmation that my love for other people's writing could translate into my enthusiasm for writing itself. Within a few months, I began writing on the internet and interacting with other young authors: the thrill of uploading stories, of receiving valuable feedback and encouraging comments, and of integrating with a community of other people who shared my passion and gave me the confidence to begin developing my own style and write outside of my comfort zone.

Studying different genres of English Literature has encouraged me to explore other aspects of Creative Writing, especially poetry, as well as develop a wide interest in adult literature. I discovered that I prefer reading and writing stories which focus more on character development, like Joyce's *Dubliners*. Studying him led me to discover the works of Wilde and Donna Tartt, who both combine their complex character development with plots that lead the reader to question the values and morals of society.

In my own writing, I enjoy experimenting with combining aspects of both adult and children's literature into the same story, especially telling darker tales using child or childlike voices. Because of this, children and young adult literature remains a powerful inspiration to me. I find that books often geared towards children and teenagers can convey their message in such a pure and honest way, quite like Joyce's writing, because of character development and naïve perspectives. This contrast, which I first came across in classic characters like Scout from *To Kill a Mockingbird* and then in modern protagonists like Charlie from Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, is what, I believe, weaves the stories into such powerful tales.

Being a Head of Press this year for our school's international MUN conference, I have been learning to shoulder more responsibility and work collaboratively with people ranging from local French bureaucrats to fellow international students. This is a skill I have also been developing while tutoring and volunteering in a grade 5 class. Working with children is perhaps one of my greatest sources of inspiration as I feel that, by observing the way in which they perceive the world, I learn as much from them as they do from me.

Music has remained an important part of my life, and has merged together with my passion for writing both when writing lyrics, but also poetry and prose, especially in English because of its natural iambic rhythm. I have also studied literature in French and Spanish, which has broadened my horizons and introduced me to a variety of literary movements, but perhaps the most important lessons I learned is that English, and most importantly English Literature, is my true rock n roll.

### Step 4: Writing a compelling essay

List five examples of storytelling technique from example personal statements that the writer uses to tell a compelling story, particularly at the beginning & end of the essay.

List five examples from example personal statements where the writer explains what they're currently studying and why that makes them a good academic fit for their course.

List five examples from example personal statements where students list relevant extracurricular activities or clubs which are relevant to their application.

## Step 5: Writing your own Personal Statement

**In 4000 characters, write a draft of your own Personal Statement. Make sure you tell a personal, compelling story and make use of detailed, relevant examples.**

