

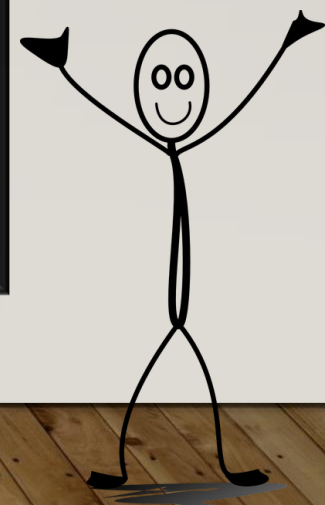
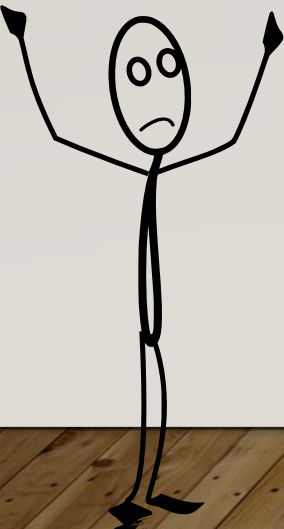
# WRITING AN OXBRIDGE PERSONAL STATEMENT

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WHAT TO DO IN A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

HOW DOES AN OXBRIDGE PERSONAL STATEMENT DIFFER FROM OTHER PERSONAL STATEMENTS?

DO'S AND DO NOT'S





# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

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‘When reading your personal statement, admissions tutors are looking for evidence that you’re **passionate and knowledgeable** about the subject area you’re looking to study further and have the **relevant skills, experiences and potential** to be a great student’

UCAS

# WHAT TO DO IN A PERSONAL STATEMENT?

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- 4,000 characters to 'show off'
- 2026 Changes
  - Why do you want to study this course or subject?
  - How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
  - What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

# WHY DO YOU WANT TO STUDY THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

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- ‘This is your opportunity to showcase **your passion and knowledge** of your chosen subject area and to demonstrate to universities and colleges **why it’s a good fit for you and your future ambitions**’
- You may want to discuss
  - Your motivations for studying this course
  - Your knowledge of this subject area and interests
  - Your future plans and why this is a good fit for you



# HOW HAVE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AND STUDIES HELPED YOU TO PREPARE FOR THIS COURSE OR SUBJECT?

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- ‘This is your chance to shout about the **relevant or transferable skills** you’ve gained **from your formal education** and highlight your understanding of how they will help you succeed in this subject area’
- You may want to discuss:
  - How your studies or training relate to your chosen course or subject area?
  - What relevant or transferable skills you have that make you a great candidate?
  - Any relevant educational achievements



# WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU DONE TO PREPARE OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION, AND WHY ARE THESE EXPERIENCES USEFUL?

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- ‘This is your chance to talk about any other activities you have undertaken **outside of your formal education** or personal experiences which further demonstrate your suitability for the course. This section is likely to be highly personal to you and **anything you do include should reflect on why you’re including it**’
- You may want to discuss:
  - Work experience, employment, or volunteering
  - Personal life experiences or responsibilities
  - Hobbies and any extracurricular or outreach activities
  - Achievements outside of school or college

# HOW DOES AN OXBRIDGE PERSONAL STATEMENT DIFFER FROM OTHER PERSONAL STATEMENTS?

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- Earlier completion date – October 15<sup>th</sup>
- The quality of writing expected is higher
- Academic focus
- Independence in studies and research
- Expectations of further reading, research or experience – combination of breadth and depth
- Logical links and ‘story’ to further academic pursuits
- Ability to show critical and independent thought
- How can you add value to the university?





# TOP TIPS – DO'S

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- What will make YOU stand out?
- Ensure that your personal statement is grammatically pristine
- Everything should be linked to your course of choice
- Don't just say what you have read – reflect on what you learned, what it made you want to learn, and if you agreed with the argument/research of the author
- It's not *just* all about the reading – bring in lectures, podcasts, work experience etc.
- Record everything that you have read/are reading/will read
- Remember that you are applying for other universities
  - My Cambridge statement

# TOP TIPS – DO NOT'S

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- Avoid cliches – the admissions tutors will read loads of these!
- Pander to tutors – they will know more than you!
- Lie or exaggerate – remember, you will have interviews!
- Hand in an unrefined personal statement – remember that you can seek feedback!
- Overload with independent work – reflective writing will serve you better, and be mindful of the interview!
- Overload with co-curriculars – how will this make you a good student for your course?
- Remain focused on the guidance questions,

# USEFUL SUPPORT AND LINKS

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- Your tutor
- Your Oxbridge tutor (to be released in coming week)
- The Academic and Super-Curricular team
- [The new personal statement for 2026 entry | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)
- [2026 personal statement guides | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)
- [Oxbridge Personal Statements: A Complete Teacher's Guide](#)
- [Personal Statement - Oxbridge Mind](#)
- [2026 entry admissions timeline | University of Oxford](#)
- [Application dates and deadlines for Cambridge | Undergraduate Study](#)