Hayesfield GIRLS' SCHOOL | MIXED SIXTH

Making the most out of your UCAS Application - a brief guide

What information goes into the UCAS form?

- Personal details
- Education
- Work experience
- Choices
- Additional needs

Most sections are just about gathering information but it does need to be accurate and correct - e.g. title of qualifications from exam certificates.

Do research, lots and lots of research

- Research is key if you're wanting to stand out to university admissions departments.
- University courses vary widely with regards to content and modules. For example, English Literature at Bristol could offer a different experience and modules to the same course at St. Andrews
- As you'll be sending out the same university application, find out what the courses you have applied for have in common and then tailor your application accordingly.
- A good place to begin is by speaking to admissions departments themselves.

Choose your course and institution carefully

- In the choices section of Apply (the UCAS application website) all your university/college choices (a maximum of five) are to be listed, but remember that you should not mix your subjects.
- For example, in popular subject areas such as English or History it is safer to show total commitment by **applying for all courses in the same subject** and not to include second and/or third subject alternatives on the form.

Read books and research literature about your chosen subject

- It is important that students are engaged with their subject if they are to stand out from the crowd.
- Take a look at the reading lists of the courses you are interested in, pick a couple of books that you genuinely could see yourself enjoying, and knuckle down a couple of nights a week to challenge your current knowledge.
- Universities love students who love to learn, so don't be afraid to reference some books you've read and how they have bettered you as a Scientist/Writer/Designer (or whatever it is you specialise in).
- READING LIST ON WEBSITE & ATTACHED TO WEEKLY NOTES

Get course-related work experience

- Even just a short period undertaking work experience can be invaluable for students.
- Whilst academic studies provide a plethora of beneficial skills, the mind-set of the workplace is something that can only be acquired by spending time in such an environment and understanding the challenges that this presents.



Do something other than just focus on grades

- Gaining an award shows university admissions departments you have a certain level of expertise that you have worked hard for, and sets you apart from others. A great achievement you can aim for alongside your studies is the The Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- If, however, you've got an hour or two free in your week to hone a skill then why not pick up beginners French from where you left off?
- Of course, you won't have enough time to become fluent, but you can give it a good go. You can also express in your application that this is a goal you are working towards.

The Personal Statement

- The only section your daughter or son has control over.
- Their only chance to market themselves individually.
- One personal statement for **all** choices.

➔ Max. 4,000 characters, 47 lines
➔ Min. 1,000 characters
➔ No spelling/grammar check
➔ No formatting
➔ 3 prompt questions this year



PERSONAL STATEMENT CHEAT SHEET

Information taken from The Ultimate Personal Statement Guide

Minimum 4000 characters | Maximum 47 lines | Submitted by the deadline

What is a personal statement?

Your personal statement is your chance to show the universities you apply to who you really are. The rest of the application is faceless statistics – the personal statement gives the admissions tutor the opportunity to look beyond those statistics and focus on the real you, the person they may spend at least three years teaching their subject to.

Do I need to write one?

Every single UCAS applicant needs to write an Personal Statement to support their university application.

What is the deadline?

The final deadline is the 15th of January. For medicine, dentistry and Oxbridge, be aware there is an earlier deadline date of the 15th of October.

The Introduction - WHY DO YOU WANT TO STUDY THIS SUBJECT?

6 LINES

What subject are you applying for?	- Use a short, sharp, strong opening sentence.
What motivated you to apply for this subject?	- Avoid cliches like "from a young age, I've always been interested in X..." - Make it memorable, personal and most importantly, honest! - Avoid using overused words such as "passionate, devotion etc"

The Main Body - BROKEN INTO PARAGRAPHS

32-37 LINES

PARAGRAPH #1 - Why are you suited for the subject?	This should have a hard focus on the academic arguments to answer this question. Talk about future ambitions relevant to the degree, what makes the course right for you.
PARAGRAPH #2 - Still why are you suited for the subject?	This can be less academic - think: work experience, personal motivations, relevant awards and competitions.
PARAGRAPH #3 - What extra curricular activities do you have?	Show you're a well rounded person but also apply these activities to your chosen course. Don't get carried away here - this should be the shortest paragraph in the main body.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Long, complicated sentences
- Lack of reflection
- Listing things off
- Irrelevant/out of date examples - keep it recent
- Negative connotations - keep it positive
- Generic/stereotypical statements
- Gimmicks
- Controvery
- Repetition
- Dragging out one example for too long

The Conclusion - LEAVING A GOOD FINAL IMPRESSION

6 LINES

You should put into context what you have already written and leave a good final impression!

You shouldn't bring any new information into the conclusion - anything worth saying should be brought up much earlier!
You should avoid repeating what you've already said. You only have 47 lines so keep it short.
Draw on themes from the rest of the statement to close; the tutor is likely to remember your statement by the introduction and conclusion.

Write a personal statement that sells you

Writing a great personal statement is something that we will be cover in tutor time/PHSE over the next few months. Some quick tips:

- Structure is key
- Plan ahead
- Be original
- Explain why you’re right for the course
- Think about what you want to gain from your course
- Include a balance of academic, supercurricular and extracurricular content
- Be positive

The UCAS Personal Statement is different now…



Question 1

Show your spark for the subject, with specificity and genuine enthusiasm.



Question 2

Highlight how your studies extended and shaped your thinking, going beyond the core subject curriculum.



Question 3

Present experiences beyond school as further evidence of your curiosity and potential, always tying them back to why they matter for your chosen course.

What should the personal statement look like?

1. **Why do you want to study this course or subject?**
   Students should explain their passion for the subject, how their interest developed, and what they hope to achieve.
2. **How have your qualifications and studies helped you prepare for this course?**
   They should link their academic achievements to the skills needed for the course.
3. **What else have you done to prepare, and why are these experiences useful?**
   Students can discuss any activities outside school—such as work experience, volunteering, or personal projects—and how these experiences have prepared them for university.

What are super-curricular activities?

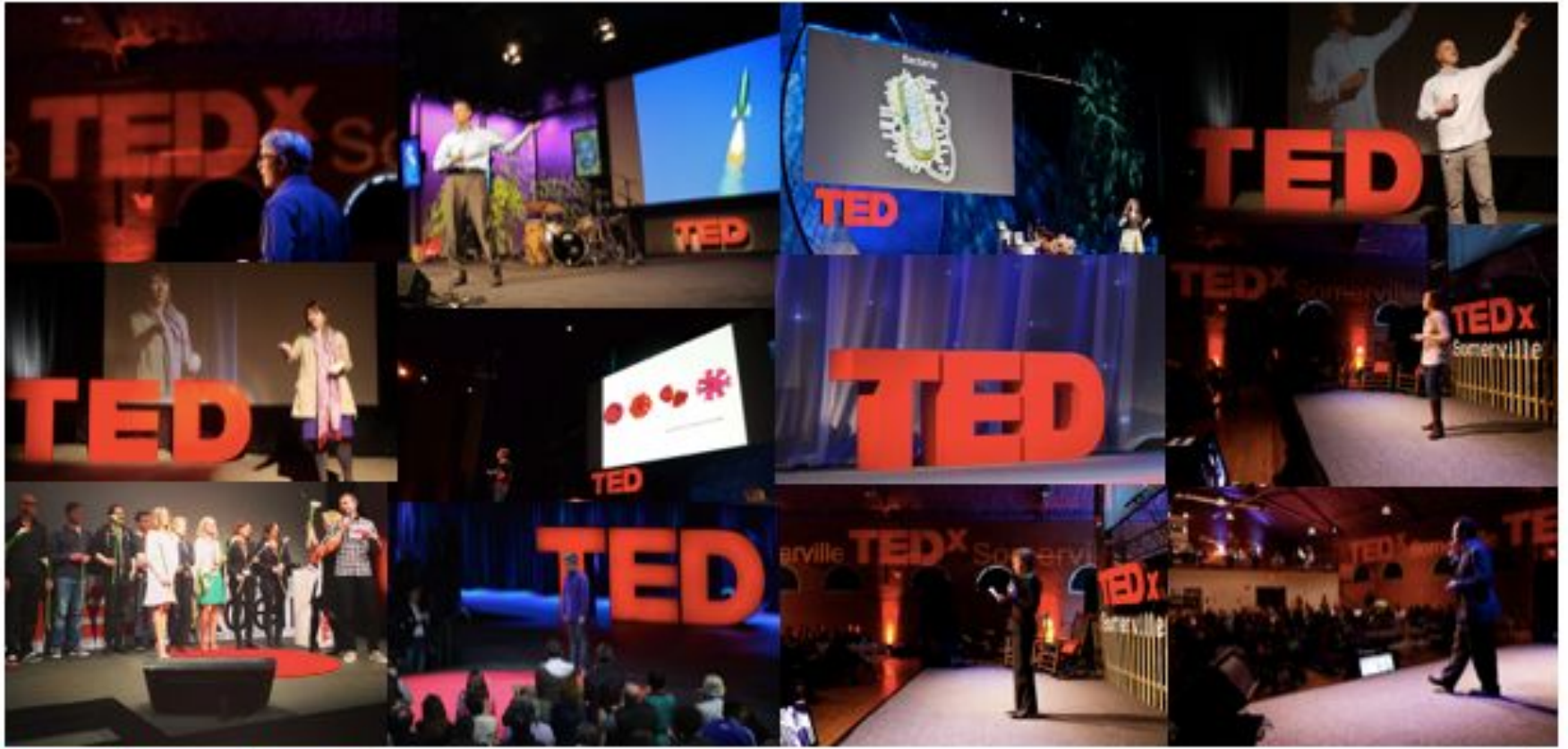


Super-curricular activities refers to activities which you undertake beyond the classroom to expand your knowledge and interest in a particular subject.

Extra-curricular activities are activities which you undertake outside of school which are not directly related to your academic work.


THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS
"No dead woman has done more for the living... A fascinating, harrowing, necessary book" HILARY MANTEL
She died in 1951. What happened next changed the world.
EDWARD O. WILSON
LETTERS TO A YOUNG SCIENTIST
PROFESSOR SARAH GILBERT
VAXXERS
DR CATHERINE GREEN
THE INSIDE STORY OF THE OXFORD ASTRAZENECA VACCINE AND THE RACE AGAINST THE VIRUS
THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS
THOMAS S. KUHN
JENNIFER DOUDNA & SAMUEL STERNBERG
A CRACK IN CREATION
THE NEW POWER TO CONTROL EVOLUTION
STEVEN JOHNSON
WHERE GOOD IDEAS COME FROM
THE NATURAL HISTORY OF INNOVATION
ESSAYS BY THE WORLD'S LEADING NEUROSCIENTISTS
THE FUTURE OF THE BRAIN
EDITED BY GARY MARCUS AND JEREMY FREEMAN
Brilliant Blunders
FROM DARWIN TO EINSTEIN
MARIO LIVIO
THE SECRET OF LIFE
Rosalind Franklin, James Watson, Francis Crick, and the Discovery of DNA's Double Helix
RICHARD DAWKINS
THE OXFORD BOOK OF MODERN SCIENCE WRITING


NOTES
HELLO
BLAH
BLAH
BLAH
PODCAST
ON AIR
ONLINE
REC



TED Ideas worth spreading*

Welcome to

Mooc.org

An affordable and flexible way to learn new skills, advance your career and deliver quality educational experiences at scale.




Future
Learn

UCAS

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT



Do ask for help

The Sixth Form team have been through this a lot of times and are here to support.

If we don't immediately know the answer, for example if your son/daughter is applying abroad then we will find it out and guide you on the exact process.



Don't focus only on overall university rankings

To get a better sense of the school (faculty/college) which you'll be enrolling into, take into consideration the subject ranking, teaching quality, and student satisfaction rate of the school.

Each university has their own strength and forte, so it's key that you focus on what is most relevant to you. Don't focus on applying to the "best" university, but applying for the best university *for you*.



Don’t wait until close to the deadline

- Do not wait until close to the deadline to begin your application.
- Keep tabs on deadlines and test registration dates (if applicable).
- Also, for documents like the personal statement, it is not uncommon to work on a few versions before you are happy with a final personal statement draft and portfolio for UCAS submission.
- The tutor, who will write you a reference , may also need time to prepare. So do allocate adequate time or you’ll risk missing the deadline.



3 weeks between pay and submit ⟶ the school sending it on to UCAS

Key takeaways

Be strategic - use the time you have now to do the extra reading and online courses

Do things in order - find the courses first before trying to write a personal statement

Make wise choices - Attend tutor time and get the support that is on offer to make the process as easy as possible

Collaborate - Reach out for support