

Personal Statement Planner



What is a Personal Statement?

- It is a brief and focused essay about you.
- It allows the reader to know more about what interests you.
- It is a personal evaluation of your strengths.
- It is an account of your achievements and what you have learnt from your life experiences.
- A Personal Statement is required by universities but it can also help when applying for jobs, as it will give any future employer an idea of who you are.

Pages 2-7 show an example personal statement, which successfully gained an offer of a place at two different universities. It was also used to gain summer work experience that led to paid employment.

Now let's get started on your Personal Statement.

Paragraph 1: Why you have chosen your vocational area?

I have always been captivated by the construction and workings of different mechanical objects. My curiosity started at the age of three when I began accompanying my grandfather in his carpentry work and many projects. I gained a wealth of knowledge whilst in his company and learnt much about carpentry, construction and engineering, but more importantly how to adapt. On some jobs, unforeseen events would mean a change in plan and I learnt how to solve a problem by adjusting designs. I guess this could be viewed as my first experience of 'problem solving'. The enjoyment of finding solutions has propelled me on many an occasion to helping others find possible solutions to their problems.



Why did you choose your vocational area?



Take a moment to think about this.

This will be your opening paragraph. You need to grab the reader's attention straight away.

<p>List your ideas here:</p>	<p>What is it about this career path that interests you?</p> <p>Was there someone who inspired you?</p>
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Paragraph 2: Is there something that you feel proud of?

In year seven I received the Design & Technology cup for making a 3D puppet. I learnt that it was okay to discard prototypes and try out different materials in order to gain a good end design – even if it meant learning to use a sewing machine.

<p>List your ideas here:</p>	<p>Have you gained any recognition for doing something well?</p> <p>What did you learn from this experience?</p>
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Paragraphs 3 and 4: What can you do well? What are your personal strengths?

Further projects I have undertaken have included: taking apart my car and fixing it so that it passed its MOT on the first attempt. Work was needed on the engine, cooling system, brakes, and interior. I have also built a go-trike. This was built from scratch using an old scooter front, an old sit on lawnmower and a 125cc two-stroke Honda motorbike engine. On the motor, I had to rebuild this, with the carburettor and sourced many missing parts from the local motorbike breakers yard. Fabricating did involve welding the frame and engine mounting points.

The idea for this project was a joint effort between a friend and me. When faced with a hurdle, we sought the advice from a local builder and welder. This experience taught me the value of money, working to a budget and the ability to resource materials through recycling.

<p>List your ideas here:</p>	<p>Think about your strengths?</p> <p>List the things you are good at.</p> <p>What events or activities have you participated in?</p> <p>What have you learnt about yourself from taking part in these events or activities?</p>
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Paragraphs 5 and 6: What relevant experiences do you have for your chosen vocational area?

I have gained work experience with a national consulting engineering firm. Whilst with them I worked in the structures, environmental, geotechnical and civil departments. I was involved in site visits, drainage computer simulations and environmental statistical work. On the site visits I went to Earls Court with the exhibition structural engineer, and to a champagne bar development in the City of London where the firm was assessing the structural framework to cope with the staircase from basement to first floor. Whilst in the office I did computer simulation work on a drainage project that highlighted possible need for changes and then experimented to see what would be a possible solution.

Through this experience I gained an insight into the many disciplines of engineering and the confidence to contribute my ideas and opinions, which were welcomed and valued. It also confirmed to me that my future has definitely got to be in engineering as I found the whole experience inspirational.

<p>List your ideas here:</p>	<p>What relevant experiences do you have?</p> <p>What did you learn about yourself or your chosen vocational area?</p>
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Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9: What are your hobbies and interests?

Along with engineering I have a passion for music and have recently taken my grade 8 in drums. I was invited to join the school jazz band in year 8, which is usually only open to 6th formers and I have had the opportunity to tour with them in both Tuscany and Barcelona. I also play with the school big band and regularly play drum for worship in my local church, as well as operating the sound/mixing desk. This has given me great insight into working as a team and learning to listen to criticism and advice.

Each Friday I attend a Christian youth group and lead a small group of youngsters, where I empowered them to make positive choices about how they want to live. It has been rewarding to see individuals develop and overcome personal difficulties.

I enjoy cross-country mountain biking, mountain bike dirt jumping, power kiting and windsurfing, which has helped me to learn the value of maintaining equipment through regular care.

<p>List your ideas here:</p>	<p>What motivates you?</p> <p>What challenges have you faced or difficulties have you had to overcome?</p> <p>What did you learn from these challenges or difficulties?</p>
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Last paragraph: You need to reinforce to the reader why you have chosen your vocational path.

To become an engineering student would be the realisation of a long held dream. I believe I have the right mindset to tackle challenges; I am able to take the lead in decision-making as well as learn from those who have experience to share. I also feel I have the qualities and past experiences that would help contribute to a successful time at university.

<p>List your ideas here:</p>	<p>Remember: do not add any new information here.</p> <p>Keep it brief and to the point.</p>
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When you have completed this Personal Statement Planner, hand it to someone else to read. Explore together any other personal qualities you could include about yourself.

When you feel ready, log on to a computer and start to type up your Personal Statement.

Teaching Notes

Level 2 Adult literacy – writing

Wt/L2.1 Plan and draft writing

Wt/L2.2 Judge how much to write and the level of detail to include

Wt/L2.3 Present information and ideas in a logical or persuasive sequence, using paragraphs where appropriate

Wt/L2.4 Use format and structure to organise writing for different purposes.

Wt/L2.5 Use formal and informal language appropriate to purpose and audience

Wt/L2.6 Use different styles of writing for different purposes (e.g. persuasive techniques, supporting evidence, technical vocabulary)

L2.7 Proof-read and revise writing for accuracy and meaning

Level 2 Functional English – writing

Writing within Functional Skills qualifications is defined as the independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context. Ofqual (2009), pp3-5.

Level 2 Skill standard	Level 2 Coverage and range Ofqual (2009), pp12-13.
<p>Writing Write a range of texts, including extended written documents, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present information/ideas concisely, logically, and persuasively • Present information on complex subjects clearly and concisely • Use a range of writing styles for different purposes • Use a range of sentence structures, including complex sentences, and paragraphs to organise written communication effectively <i>(55-60% assessment weighting)</i> • Punctuate written text using commas, apostrophes and inverted commas accurately • Ensure written work is fit for purpose and audience, with accurate spelling and grammar that support clear meaning <i>(40-45% assessment weighting)</i> <p style="text-align: right;">In a range of text types.</p>

References

Ofqual (2009), Functional Skills criteria for English: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, level 1 and level 2.

<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2009-11-functional-skills-criteria-for-english.pdf>

Further functional skills documents available at <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/2578.aspx>