

PERFECTING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

ICEBREAKER

Super Speed Dating!

Questions...

- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- Who would you most like to meet and why?
- What is your biggest ever achievement?

ABOUT YOU...

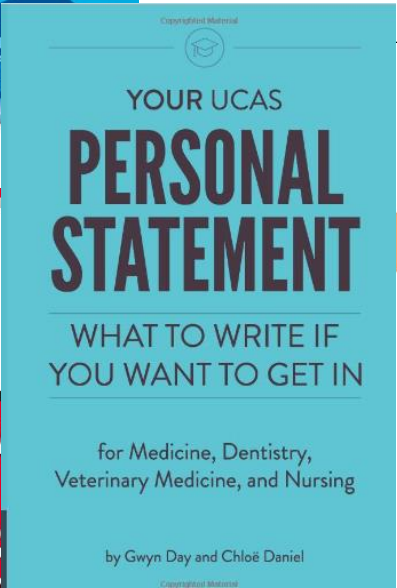
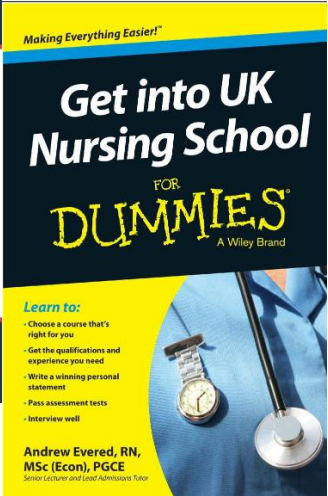
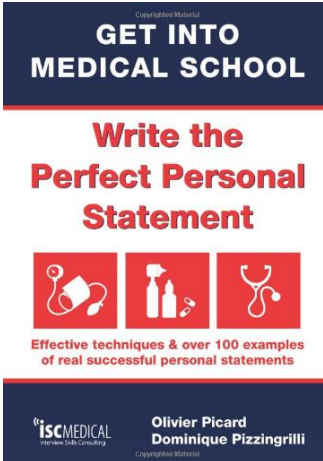
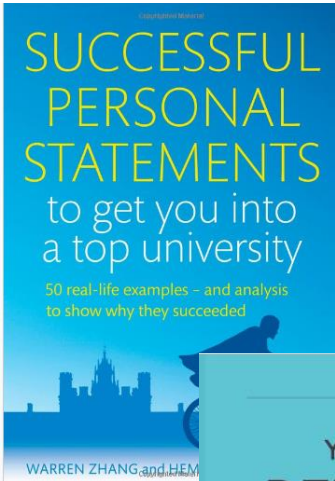
Questions...

- Your name?
- Which school/college are you from?
- What do you hope to study?
- Where do you hope to study?
- Which (if any) Open Days did you attend?
- How confident are you with your Personal Statement?
- Unusual/interesting fact about yourself.

Schedule

- Recap of the UCAS application process.
- Make sure we are familiar with key deadlines.
- Understand what a personal statement is.
- Workshop:
 - Structure
 - Introduction
 - Hook
 - Examples and experiences
- Questions throughout.

There are lots of books and other resources available but...



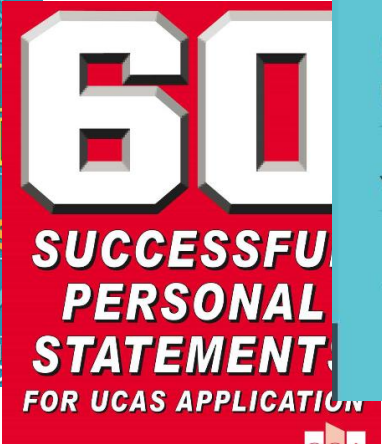
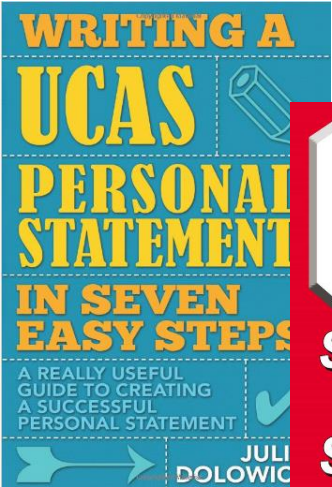
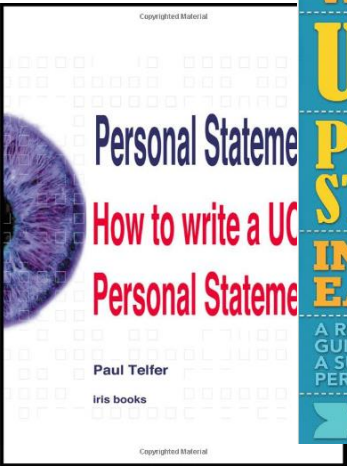
HOW TO WRITE YOUR UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENT AND GET INTO UNIVERSITY: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

With dedicated subject-specific chapters of advice for

Medicine	Economics
Dentistry	Engineering and
Law	all other popular
Psychology	subject field

PERSONAL STATEMENT CHECKER.COM

MOHAN-PAL SINGH CHANDAN



How to apply to university

- Once you have decided on the courses/universities you would like to apply to (5 max.*), it's time for UCAS!

UCAS = Universities and Colleges
Admissions Service

- You do not apply directly to a university. You submit your application to UCAS and they will pass it on to the respective universities.

*Oxford or Cambridge = one application

*Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science = four applications

Deadlines

Summer of Year 12 (FE1) + Autumn of Year 13 (FE2)

Research and Attend Open Days

Autumn of Year 13 (FE2)

Complete Application via UCAS

15th October

UCAS deadline for applications to Oxford and Cambridge, and for courses in
Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine/Science

15th January

UCAS deadline for all other applications

What is the point of your Personal Statement?

Your Personal Statement

- UCAS say:

“Course/Admission tutors read personal statements to compare different applicants – so this is where you should describe your ambitions, skills and experience that will make you suitable for the course.”

- In other words, your personal statement should cover two main points:
 1. Why you are applying to that course.
 2. What makes you a suitable candidate (academically).

How long can your Personal Statement be?

**4,000 characters or 47 lines
(whichever comes first)**

A quick note

- The significance of your personal statement might reduce (only slightly!) in certain situations:

Interview/audition – performing arts

Portfolio – visual arts

Admissions test – e.g. nursing

A quick note

- The significance of your personal statement might increase in certain situations:

When applying to more competitive universities:

Russell Group – 7 applications on average per place.

When applying to more competitive courses:

Medicine – 11

Dentistry – 10

Nursing and Veterinary Medicine – 9

Astronomy – 7

Teachers Training – 7

Law – 5

A quick note

- The significance of your personal statement might increase in certain situations:

When you have a more complicated background to explain (e.g. break in education).

Lower predicted grades than typical offers.

Taking a dramatic change in subject area.

Courses where writing skills are extremely important (e.g. English language/literature).

The structure

- Because you ‘only’ have 4,000 characters/47 lines, it’s critical that you have a structure for your personal statement.
- A simple structure can make the process seem less daunting.
- What we are going to talk about has been recommended by UCAS themselves.

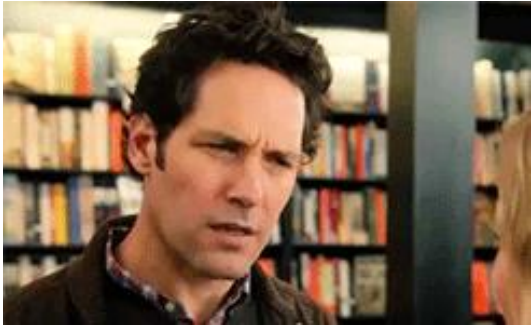
The structure

1. The introduction

- A snappy, powerful and **exciting introduction** grips the reader and encourages them to read more!
 - Start with something unique and original.
 - Find your hook.
 - Don't tell me things I already know!
 - An opportunity to set the scene.
 - Leave the reader wanting more.

The structure

This might be a little how you feel right now!



**Time to read each
others' introductions...**

The structure

10. Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. (148)
 - UCAS's top 10 most frequently used personal statement opening lines:
9. I have always been passionate about... (160)
9. I have always wanted to pursue a career in... (160)
8. Academically, I have always been... (168)
7. Nursing is a very challenging and demanding career/profession/course... (211)
6. Reflecting on my educational experience... (257)
5. Throughout my life I have always enjoyed... (310)
4. I have always been interested in... (927)
3. I am applying for this course because... (1,370)
2. For as long as I can remember I have... (1,451)
1. From a young age I have (always) been interested in/fascinated by... (1,779)

What did you think of your partner's introduction?

The structure

A

'I want to study for a degree in Psychology; it is a subject which I find both intriguing and challenging. Eventually I wish to have a career that is related to Psychology...'

B

Since each person is unique, from DNA to fingerprints, it's reasonable to believe that each of us also has a purpose, a reason for being, that is uniquely personal.

C

I am applying for English Literature first and foremost because I very much enjoy reading and I look forward to extending my knowledge and my understanding of a wide range of texts. What attracts me to the subject...

The structure

1. The introduction

- Finding your unique hook
 - Why do you want to study that particular subject?
 - You can talk about something of particular interest to you within that subject field. Or maybe a specific experience that stands out amongst the rest.
 - You were not born wanting to do that (massive cliché)!
 - Throughout, you should keep asking yourself “why?”.

The structure

1. The introduction

My hook...

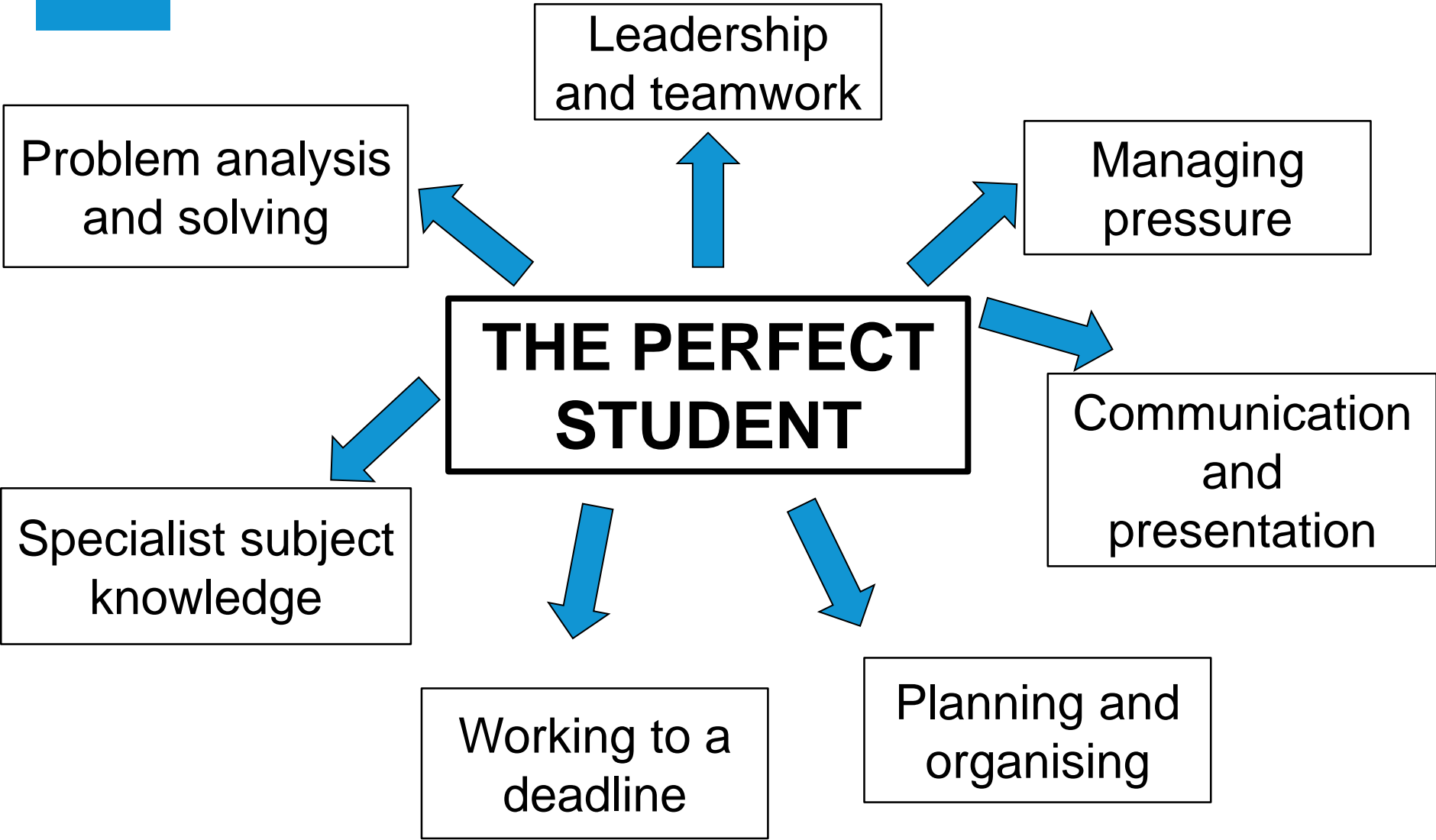
Many suggest a proper criminal justice system (CJS) is fundamental to any civilised society as it lays the foundations upon which a modern democracy is based.

I believe the United Kingdom has one of the most professional and accountable CJSs in the world and accordingly, we expect the courts to achieve the correct results. But this is not always the case! (61 words/357 characters)

The structure

1. The introduction (What should feature next?)
2. Educational experience/evidence (What percentage?)

- Linking the experience and knowledge you have gained through your current studies to the skills you will need to succeed at university, and on your particular chosen course.
- Identify what your university is looking for and then work backwards.
- This enables you to link specific skills developed in different subjects to your chosen university course (e.g. how can I link geography to criminology?).



A

Action

B

Benefit

C

Course

How does geography link to studying criminology?



Geography



Analytical Skills



Social Research

The structure

1. The introduction

2. Educational experience/evidence

3. Extracurricular activities (the personal touch)

Anything you have done that is relevant to the course you are applying to. Again, talk about developed skills and how this will help you at university.

4. Hobbies and interests

4. Anything that can demonstrate that you are a well rounded individual (but keep it brief).

5. Conclusion

A concise conclusion draws together your skills and experiences and shows why you would be an ideal candidate for the course.

QUESTIONS?

Mark's top 10 tips!

1. Be unique
2. Be specific and relevant (rather than listing)
3. Gain relevant (work) experience
4. Nail your introduction
5. Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar
6. Your personal statement is an academic piece of work
7. Don't waffle/avoid particularly flowery or poetic language
8. Don't quote or provide clichés
9. Don't name universities or colleges
10. Get excited!



What has been seen



Cannot be unseen

Don't copy!

- UCAS Similarity Detection Service (CopyCatch Software)
- Every personal statement is checked against:
 - All previously submitted personal statements.
 - All personal statements submitted during that cycle.
 - Sample statements from a variety of websites.
 - “Other sources”
- Common words (and, the, with) and common phrases (Duke of Edinburgh, A-Level, football) are ignored.
- Similarity level of 10% or more.

More information

- The Student Room:
<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/content.php?r=15883-writing-your-personal-statement>
- UCAS
<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>
- Which? University
<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements>