

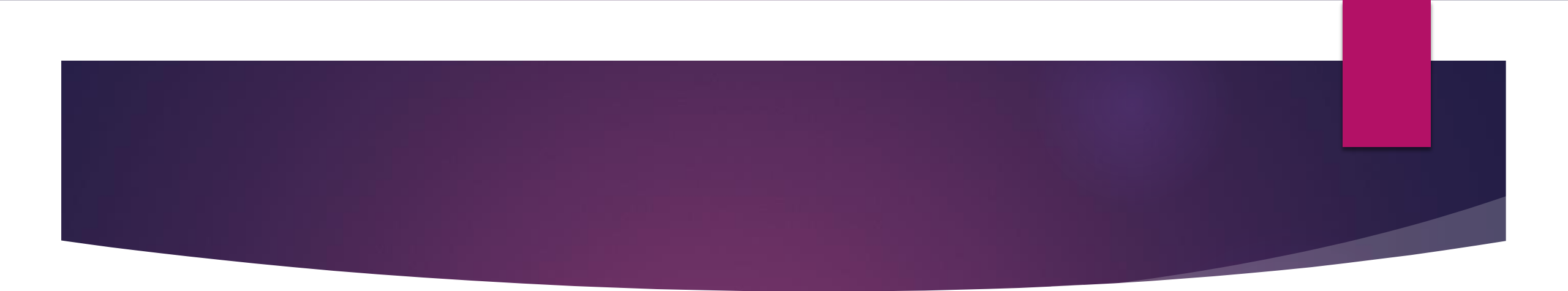


# UCAS Day 2

# Personal Statements

LORNA ELLIS

JULY 2016

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- ▶ 9.00-9.20 – fill in idea sheet
  - ▶ 9.20 – 10. – Mrs Ellis – thoughts and ideas.
  - ▶ 10.00-10.30 – Personal statement writing
  - ▶ 10.30-10.50- break
  - ▶ 10.50 – 11.30 – video
  - ▶ 11.30-12.30 – continued writing
  
  - ▶ 12.30 optional personal statement writing time

# So far.....

- ▶ Researched courses
- ▶ Visited open days
- ▶ PUSH talk
- ▶ Relevant experiences
- ▶ Extra reading
- ▶ Completed research sheet/personal statement planning sheet
- ▶ Started application – entered GCSEs and other personal data

# You should not have...

- ▶ Made a decision about your university
- ▶ Even narrowed it down to 5
- ▶ Done nothing and hoped it would sort itself out!

# Why are personal statements important?

- ▶ At CBSC really emphasize the 'personal' aspect – not robotic – get a sense of who you are
- ▶ To demonstrate interest and skills
- ▶ Because it may be the difference between getting a place and not getting a place (especially post results)
- ▶ It gives you a chance to reflect on why you have chosen this course
- ▶ Can lead to interview questions/discussion

# The facts

- ▶ Students usually write 6/7 drafts
- ▶ Many students struggle to get started
- ▶ The opening paragraph is often the hardest
- ▶ 4,000 characters – 47 lines ( just over a side)
- ▶ Only one statement for 5 applications (can be difficult if students applying for more than one course)
- ▶ Very important for top universities

# Getting started

- ▶ To get started you should make a list of things you want to include
- ▶ Why you want to do the subject for the next three years
- ▶ Skills you have developed in your subject areas
- ▶ Wider reading
- ▶ Relevant experience – coaching, theatre, lectures, taster days, summer schools
- ▶ Other experiences – leadership roles, volunteering

# Opening paragraph



The first paragraph needs to be a hook – something to capture the readers interest and encourage them to read more:

- 1 – an anecdote – a personal moment – a realisation – link to subject course
- 2- a quote – be careful!
- 3 – a philosophy – your thoughts on the chosen subject and its importance or place in the world.



# George Kelly

- ▶ 'Cars, planes and trains'; what typically comes to mind thinking of mechanical engineering. However, after reading 'The Existential Pleasures of engineering' I realised just how vast is the spectrum of applications for Mechanical engineering and how engineers' creations are not cold and passionless but the complete opposite. Each engineer leaves behind parts of themselves in each scientific marvel and breakthrough.

# Ben Browne

- ▶ Growing up in a lone parent family, I, like many children did not have a male role model. This absence in a child's life can have a major disruption to both academic and holistic development. For me, this absence was filled when I was taught by my Year 6 teacher. He inspired me to always believe in myself and taught us to celebrate differences instead of it acting as a negative anchor. In a world surrounded by a vast array of 'difference', the need for inspirational teachers whom have this positive impact on children is vital and with a growing rate of single parent families, the lack of men working in the education must be addressed. Therefore, I too, would like to bring this care and commitment to children, as my male role model did for me.

# Ben Callistan

- ▶ Politics has been a passion for me since the 2010 general election, watching the leaders argue their contrasting ideas really grabbed my attention. I am curious about the ways in which countries interact with one another and the relationships that can, or cannot in some cases be formed. I have no doubt that my pursuit of politics and international relations will satisfy my desire to understand the world we live in and the ways in which peace can be formed out of hostile situations

Opening paragraph

- Demonstrates passion
- Anecdote or example of relevant experience
- Link to goals

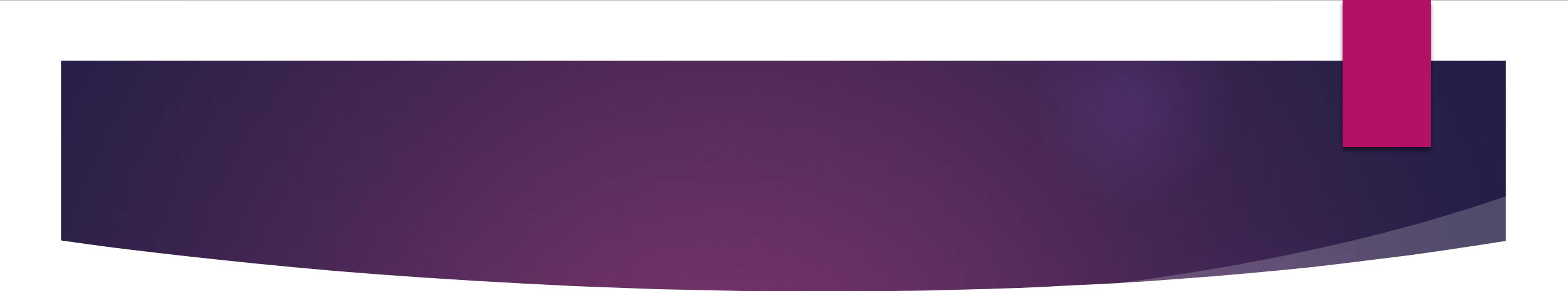
- Examples of relevance to course – how they demonstrate they are a strong candidate (academic)

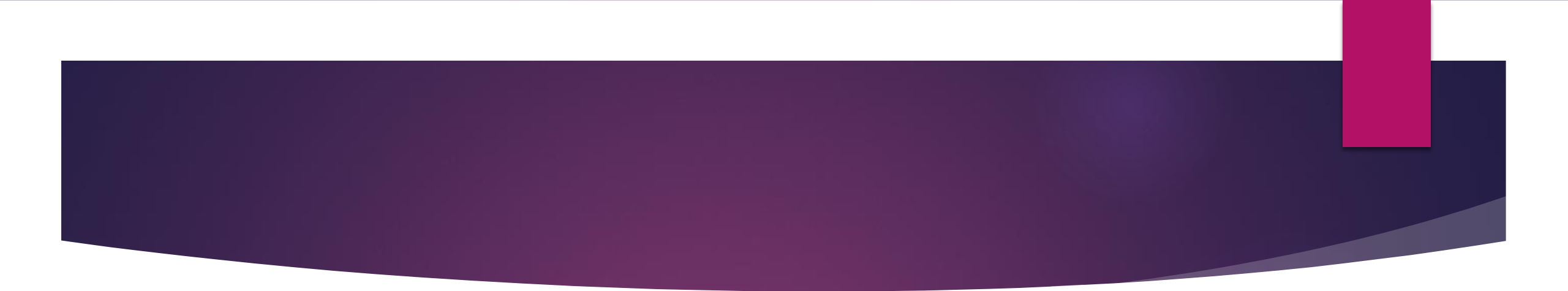
- Examples of relevance to course – how they demonstrate they are a strong candidate ( additional experiences/Skills)

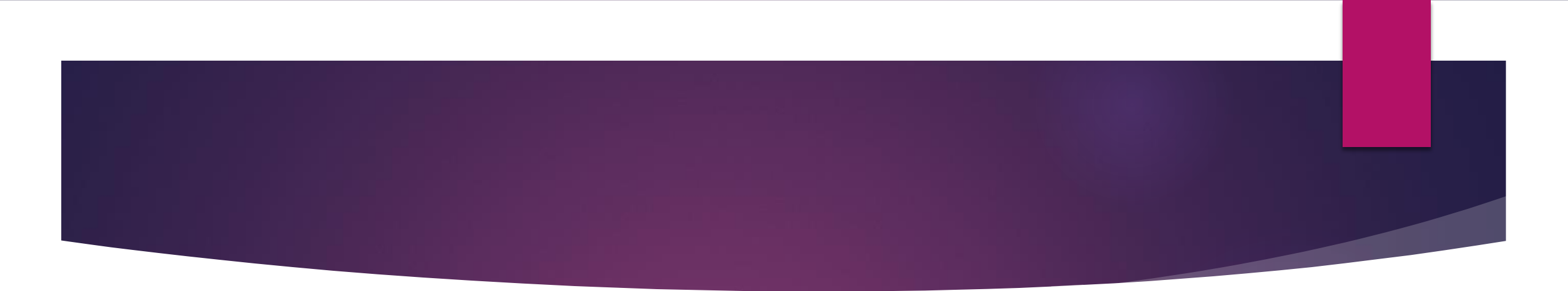
- Other relevant useful skills/experiences

Closing Paragraph

- Summary of personal strengths
- Return to goals
- Positive end!

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- ▶ I attended a taster course at Goldsmiths University, where there was a lecture on soldiers from Belfast who served in WW2. I wanted to find out more so I contacted the professor, Richard Grayson who advised me to buy his book 'Belfast Boys'. I have also read 'Sapper Martin', a secret diary from a soldier. From these I learnt how to read between the lines of sources, which is crucial in learning more from the information in front of you. A three day summer school at SOAS made me excited about the wide range of History to learn such as 'Golf in Japan' which I never thought would be so interesting. It also improved my confidence, as I was in a group presenting a History debate in front of other students. I further my study of History by applying to online courses on Future Learn, learning about how women have changed and the trauma of veteran soldiers, expanding my history interest alongside my online blog of the Middle Ages which has improved my individual research skills.

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- ▶ In June 2014 I attended the SOAS Globalisation summer school where through group activities and lectures I learned more about current affairs. What stood out for me in those three days was the lecture about the globalisation of Islam; including the on-going conflicts between the "western countries" and Islamic States. What interests me most in Geography is the fact that it is a current subject. Further lectures have broadened my interest in Geography such a lecture on global warming at UCL. Mike Hulme, a famous professor and publisher of Climate change and Culture, discussed the scale of global warming and our possible solutions. Various solutions looked into, including carbon pricing, thoroughly interested me which left me wanting to discover more.

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- ▶ Physical Education has been an ergogenic aid to my skills regarding to sport science with the development of my understanding of the core units. Having excelled in Anatomy and Physiology my interest in working within Physiology in elite sport has developed. The influence of the Cardiovascular system and the Muscular system, particularly strength, has on elite performance has intrigued me. Being able to scrutinize the impact of explosive strength in the success of a jump shot in Handball and the role of the Adenosine Triphosphate/Phosphocreatine system in the breakthrough of the opposition defensive line in rugby.

# Skills

This should be implicit where possible.

LEADERSHIP

TEAM WORK

INDEPENDENCE

RESILIENCE

DETERMINATION

RESEARCH

PRESENTATION

RESPONSIBILITY



# Top tips

- ▶ Mind map ideas first
- ▶ No jokes
- ▶ Don't start every sentence with I
- ▶ Don't list everything – pick best 3
- ▶ Don't mention universities being applied for
- ▶ Don't lie
- ▶ Write in word – not direct into UCAS
- ▶ No repetition from application

# Dos and Don'ts for students

## DO

- ▶ Plan the statement as you would an essay
- ▶ Clear and Concise - the more concentrated the points and facts, the more powerful
- ▶ Be honest- 'truth will out' - don't copy/buy! (SDS Software)
- ▶ Draft and redraft (X10 not unusual), and seek other opinions

## DON'T

- ▶ Waffle
- ▶ Try to include your life history
- ▶ Start with " I've always wanted to be a....."
- ▶ Use gimmicks, or quotations - unless they are very relevant and you deal with them in a way that shows your qualities

# What not to do:

- ▶ Repeat information from your application. They do **not** need to know your name or what you are studying – you have already told them
- ▶ Make lists of things you have done
- ▶ Make jokes
- ▶ Make spelling or grammar mistakes

# Video link

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jQ3MJgdkJY>

# What next?

- ▶ Students can write drafts over the holidays.
- ▶ First week back give allocated mentor.
- ▶ Different students – different schedules – flexible approach – constant encouraging
- ▶ Work together

**Questions?**

**Good luck**