

2. The application process

This second session is about how to prepare your application and is broken down into 2 main areas:

1. Universities > Personal Statements
2. Apprenticeships > Cover letters and CVs

Some key sites include:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>





Reminder!

- **Check out the slide with links – there should be something for everyone!**
- **Well done** to the vast majority of you completing work!
There are however a small number of you who need to put in effort in the coming days and weeks
- Contact your teachers with any issues you may be having regarding to work. Additionally email your tutor and myself if you need support.
- **Managing your mental health** should be part of your daily routine – see the next slide for ideas (updated weekly)

Mental health tips

It is so important to check in with yourself at this time. If you are feeling distressed, try ever so small ideas to focus yourself in the present. Many people are finding routines and daily lists useful.

A range of ideas on this link - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zfy3382>

Bit longer but similar ideas

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200429-the-new-normal-top-tips-for-good-mental-health>

Remember Kooth? They have people to open up to (sometimes talking to a stranger can be really helpful to offload) <https://www.kooth.com/>

Good link to understanding aspects of our mental health - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>



I massively favour these ideas – click the image to follow the link

University requirements



UCAS – This is what you apply through. NO NEED TO REGISTER ON HERE YET AS WE NEED TO SET EVERYTHING UP OUR END. Once you have chosen a course (if not see session 1), the main focus you should have is on **writing a personal statement**.

A personal statement is **4,000 characters or 47 lines** for you to say essentially write **WHY you want to study** on that course and **what skills and experience** you already have that **will make you a successful student**.

- Include **specific examples** of how you have explored your subject **beyond the A Level curriculum**
- Show how you have **critically engaged** with content – what you have learned from it, how you developed, whether or not you agreed
- Aim for approximately 80% to be academic in focus. The rest can be linked to extra curricular activities
- Be concise, make every sentence useful

There is no blueprint! When we return to 6th form you can ask your tutor, teacher (to the closest relevant subject), HoY and HoS for input.

Utilise the attached PDFs as a guide

- Personal statement worksheet
- Personal statement mind map

Building your personal statement

One key building block for you is **subject interest**.

Examples of research that connects to your course that is outside of your studies is vital. This can include books, podcasts and future learn courses

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>

University support from students and online content worth checking out:

<https://le.ac.uk/study/undergraduates/taster-days>

The more specific the example the better!



A very simple guide may look like

Personal statement

- 47 lines or 4,000 characters saying **WHY** you are interested in studying this course

About the degree and why
you have chosen it

- Interest
- Experiences
- Subjects

Use transferrable
skills to your course
eg. Independent
learning, patience,
resilience, analytical

Extra Curricular

For tips

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applyin-g-university/writing-personal-statement>

Key questions to consider

- What sparked your interest in the subject?
- How do you know it's what you want to study
- How have your current studies prepared you?
- Do you know what the course entails?
- How have you explored the subject independently and what did you learn from that?
- What relevant experiences have you had? (e.g. volunteering for Medicine)

An example from Cambridge Uni

Engagement with A Level Studies

Independent reading

In A Level English Literature, we read 'Brave New World' by Aldous Huxley. Fascinated by how an early twentieth-century writer created a science-fiction world inspired by an Early Modern text, I read Thomas More's 'Utopia', which in turn led me to Plato's 'Republic'. From these, I learned that texts do not exist in isolation, but in conversation with each other. My exploration demonstrated the importance of inter-disciplinary study: to understand literature, one must have a good grounding in history and philosophy, and I look forward to pursuing these topics in more depth at university.

What you have learned from super-curricular activity

Why you want to study this course

Examples

How to be specific?

Go directly to a university course page

Okay, so I want to study history but don't really want to write just about what I have studied at school. Looking at 2nd and 3rd year course options not only excites but gives me ideas. This is from Sheffield University.

[Stalinism and De-Stalinisation, 1929-1961](#)

[Fascism and Anti-Fascism in Britain, 1923-1945](#)

[Cannibals and Christians: Mexico and Spain, c.1491-1600](#)

[The Irish Revolution, 1912-1923](#)

[Merchants, Pirates and Planters: The English Overseas, 1570-1624](#)

[Mao and the Making of Twentieth-Century China](#)

[Solidarity, Sabotage, Students: Protest in Europe from 1968 to 1989](#)

[Emotions and identity in Twentieth-century Britain: from stiff upper lip to Facebook emotions](#)

[Humour and Laughter in Eighteenth-Century Britain](#)

This may prompt me to do some investigating, maybe to find a podcast or a documentary as a starting point

Example

Now I can research further into:

[Emotions and identity in Twentieth-century Britain: from stiff upper lip to Facebook emotions](#)

In any arts and humanities subject it is not enough just to write how I am fascinated by something, I have to say **WHY**. Even better if I can show some analysis, thinking of my own and linking back to my A Levels.

I am fascinated by cultural norms in British society and how similar collective behavior was between classes. The likes of Thompson have focused on social history of the working class and found an identity seemingly different from that of the stiff upper lip of the upper class. I am curious to learn more about the extent of these differences and whether or not moments such as the shared comradeship in the First and Second World and the subsequent national mourning transcend the experience of expressed emotion.

Cultural norms certainly are evident at times when studying the French Revolution...

Involving research and showing that you have begun to develop your critical thinking skills is really important

- Interest
- Experiences
- Subjects

Example

- Having had the opportunity to have experience with architects at Atkins Global I was able to use my **design and computing skills to** complete a series of tasks. I also gathered a variety of other useful attributes while working there such as **developing my knowledge of Revit**. Throughout the experience I created a project on the possible improvements that could be made to a house that would practically and visually benefit the owner. The experience gave me an insight into a variety of projects that are worked on such as educational buildings, and the detail that went into creating

Whilst you have necessarily had recent work experience, something relevant may be a future opportunity and you can write a little on what you hope to gain.

Extra Curricular

Examples

- As part of the National Talent Development Programme for Archery GB, I am learning to **coach and share my knowledge** of archery; so I currently volunteer for events such as the Archery GB National Series to coach the general public who are interested in archery, which has helped **me develop my communication skills by explaining the basics of archery** mechanics and techniques. Being interested in the mechanics side of physics, I have read articles on the **physics of archery** as well as parts of the PhD thesis by B.W. Kooi, 'On the Mechanics of the Bow and Arrow', to try to develop my understanding.
- As a player in my County basketball team as well as a local club, which involves training and playing up to 5 times a week, I have learnt **vital skills such as time management, dedication, discipline and working as part of a team**. I now appreciate the importance of using individual skills to carry out different roles for team success. Playing basketball has always complemented my academic studies by **relieving stress** so that I can work harder off the court. I have consolidated and passed on these skills by **coaching younger** players in my local club.

If your extra curricular links to your course then clearly include much more. Sports for example would have really good opportunities here.

Your personal statement ought to link to at least 4 skills.

You don't always have to write that "I also am..." but you may demonstrate your communication and analytical skills



Tips from Cambridge University

- ✓ A personal statement should be just that, personal to the applicant – so make it about YOU and YOUR academic interests and skills!
- ✓ Think carefully when using quotes and anecdotes
- ✓ Try to avoid overuse of 'I'
- ✓ Avoid unnatural use of 'fancy' language or humour
- ✓ Read your statement to someone else out loud and ask others to proofread
- ✓ Don't just list things out – discuss them, be critical and analytical and make sure you can backup what you say!

See the Dos and Don't attachment

Try to be original

Most commonly used opening lines	
From a young age I have (always) been [interested in/fascinated by]	1779
For as long as I can remember I have...	1451
I am applying for this course because...	1370
I have always been interested in...	927
Throughout my life I have always enjoyed...	310
Reflecting on my educational experiences...	257
Nursing is a very challenging and demanding [career/profession/course]...	211
Academically, I have always been...	168
I have always wanted to pursue a career in...	16
I have always been passionate about...	160
Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world...	148

More links to support your decision making process:

- https://successatschool.org/advisedetails/1221/coronavirus-gatsby-subject-guides-free-to-access-from-home?utm_source=Success+at+School+-+Newsletter+Signups&utm_campaign=0b62a88136-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_02_02_10&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_65c6d67e71-0b62a88136-212019081&goal=0_65c6d67e71-0b62a88136-212019081&mc_cid=0b62a88136&mc_eid=9ad9723dcf
- <https://mailchi.mp/successatschool/careers-resources-from-pwc-skills-for-care-other-top-orgs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1WZ7du0BzQ&list=PLkBZZhQeuA80RRX0f914N2lHuZkUqs85n&index=6&t=0s>
- ONLINE SUMMER INTERNSHIPS FOR THIS SUMMER - https://investin.org/collections/all/15-18-years?sort_by=best-selling
- <https://www.netsixthform.co.uk/resources>
- For BMAT testing
<http://schools.tecl.co.uk/educationcompany4lz/lz.aspx?p1=MAaDUxNTI3OTQ0UzY5ODpCNUJCMUEzNjNFQ0UwMEExRDdBQTRBM0FGQTEzRkU1Qg%3d%3d-&CC=&p=0>

Have a go!

- It usually takes a number of drafts but starting the process early gives you a massive advantage not only in applying earlier on but also to be able to focus on your studies and not this during year 13



Apprenticeships – This pathway combines practical training in a job with study. There are different levels, after 6th form you should be entering a HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP. There are now degree apprenticeships in nursing, law and policing.

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	GCSE
Advanced	3	A level
Higher	4,5,6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

You will need:

1. A CV.
2. Covering letter –

The whole focus here is being able to 'sell yourself.' Every cover should be slightly adapted to each company you're applying for. Make sure that you have visited their website and understood the nature of their company.

CV. – See the attached PDF

- Use the examples given to update your own CV.
- Be confident about your abilities but don't lie.
- Spellcheck your CV for basic mistakes. This is your 1st impression so it is important that you give a good account of yourself.

Also make use of

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/get-a-job/cv-sections>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/get-a-job/covering-letter>

Cover letter - See the PDF attached with this email.

- This should include key skills and experiences. It should be relevant to the industry you are applying for. **For example if you are applying to an engineering apprenticeship** you will need skills such as **problem solving and teamwork**.
- Cover letters are usually between 1-2 pages. Your potential employer will be examining your communication skills so **make sure it has been checked by someone else**. You can ask for support from teachers, tutors, HoY and HoS.
- Writing generic sentences about how you enjoy a subject does not show how you will fit with your potential employer. If you explain **how** and **why** this had increased your skillset then it is relevant.

APPLICATIONS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS WILL INCREASE IN MARCH 2021 BUT THERE IS NO HARM IN PREPARING YOUR SKILLS & CAREER DIRECTION