

Crafting a One-Page Personal Statement—Outline Examples

Example Outline:

I. Opening

- a. Begin with a story about yourself which illustrates several facets of your personality
 - i. What type of person are you?
 - ii. How does your personality make you a good fit for this career path/graduate work?
 1. The line that answers this question should be the last line of your opening (which may be more than one paragraph, as shown below).
- b. EXAMPLE:¹

On a vacation to the Krak des Chevaliers and Palmyra in the Syrian Desert, I witnessed the rich culture of the Middle Eastern people. This region is generally perceived by western democracies as a constant source of political and social turmoil. This may be true for the most part; however, many areas in the region are as modern and peaceful as any western nation.

Further to being raised in a multi-cultural family with a Beirut-born father of Palestinian, Syrian and Armenian heritage and a Maltese mother, I have developed a strong interest in foreign cultures. Therefore, I believe that Political Science will be the most appropriate and applicable course to pursue given both my personal background and interests.

- i. Areas where this statement opening is strong:
 1. Telling a story
 2. Showing personal experience
 3. Reflecting on what they've learned
- ii. Areas where this opening is weaker:
 1. Sharing stereotypes is always risky
 2. Using "I believe" isn't as strong as "I know" or "I am confident that..."

II. 2-3 Body Paragraphs

- a. Use CAP: Make sure you have a paragraph which focuses on *career* goals, a paragraph which focuses on *academic* goals, and a paragraph which focuses on *personal* goals.
 - i. Note that you can also blend each into each paragraph but that it's important to give as balanced a perspective on each of these three facets as possible.

¹ All the examples are taken from a poli sci personal statement example available here:

<https://www.studential.com/personal-statement-examples/government-personal-statement>

b. EXAMPLE:

During an internship at the Magistrate's Court in the summer of 2008, I personally marshalled the Court Magistrate and took a particular interest in Immigration Law and the consequences of working in a country illegally. Further to working at the courts, I interned at a law firm, where I was given the opportunity to shadow lawyer at the Labour Tribunal and see, first-hand, the exploitation of workers, and their employers' disregard for labour laws.

After successfully completing my IGCSE's, I have enjoyed the challenge of Advanced level studies in geography, History, Business Studies and English Literature. As a young Geographer, I have attended local conferences, such as the symposium, "Fostering a Green Culture," with former US vice-president, Al Gore, as the main speaker on the contentious topic of climate change.

- i. Areas of strength:
 - 1. Showing their relevant experiences
 - 2. Addressing personal and academic knowledge
- ii. Areas of caution:
 - 1. Not much on the career interest here. You want to be relating back to that part as often as you can legitimately do so

III. Conclusion

- a. This part should remind readers why you really want this opportunity
 - i. Use this space to sum up who you are one more time, particularly in relation to this chance. In other words, reiterate the answer to the question "Why are you applying?"
- b. Example:

I hope this presents to you a well-rounded student, equipped with the skills necessary to succeed at university. I look forward to being introduced to new academic and social challenges as well as experiencing European culture.

- i. Areas of Strength:
 - 1. Summing up who they are
 - 2. Looking ahead to what they are excited for in regard to this opportunity
- ii. Areas that could be improved:
 - 1. You want to end on a strong, positive note. To do so, use confident terminology—I know, I am confident, I am ready, I look forward to this opportunity
 - 2. This closing is brief. Expand with specific details. Don't mention "skills necessary," for example, explain *what* they are.

Citation Information:

Prof. Scanlon compiled this document; she updated it September 2022 to be more accessible. If you notice an error, need it in a different format, or have further questions or concerns, please email her at scanlon1@kenyon.edu or stop by and visit one of our tutors in Chalmers library!