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Personal Statement Question Thread

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edited by: hogsmeades, 1 Hour Ago

[Oxford College Pros and Cons](#)

edited by: zuzia.kru, 1 Hour Ago

[Slade school of art applicants stalking page](#)

2015 entry

edited by: monika.m, 3 hours ago

[Speech and Language Therapy undergraduate courses 2015](#)

edited by: madagascar, 13 hours ago

[Queens campus stockton](#)

edited by: sydneybridge, 18 hours ago



oxymoronic Offline

2 Rep:

01-06-2010 12:22 #1

Question thread for 2013-14 [HERE](#)

The UCAS Personal Statement is an important part of a university application as it is the only opportunity that you have to write at length about why you want to study the course you are applying for and to set yourself apart from other applicants with the skills and experiences you have to offer. For many people this may be the first time they have had to write an important piece of prose about themselves. TSR has a number of good resources to help you with your statement:

Where should I post?**Drafts/content from your personal statement**

Any content from your statement, either single sentences or complete drafts should be posted in the private [Personal Statement Help](#) forum. Personal Statement Help is a private forum visible only to a selective group of PS Helpers who have all been to university and can review and offer advice on your Personal Statement. For more information on how the forum works please read the [Personal Statement Help FAQ](#).

DO NOT post your drafts or PS content anywhere else on TSR outside of PS Help as there is a risk it may be plagiarised.

If you see anyone posting a full PS or even part of it, please report the post using the ! mark button in the top right corner of the post so that the moderators can remove it.

General questions about personal statements

General questions about personal statements, what they should include, style and character/line limits should be posted in this thread. However this first post will attempt to answer many of them so read this before posting.

Subject specific questions

If your query is specific to a particular course or university you are applying to, for example how important books are to a Law Personal Statement, this should go in the appropriate [University and University Courses](#) sub-forum. Regulars in these forums are more likely to be able to answer your specific questions.

Before posting your query or draft have a read of the following:

How long can my personal statement be?

The UCAS form you fill in using [UCAS Apply](#) has both a character and a line limit for the Personal Statement section, and your statement must conform to both:

- Maximum of 4000 characters (including spaces). Generally you probably want to be aiming for 3000-3500 characters to allow room for line breaks and still be within the 47 line limit.
- Maximum of 47 lines, as measured on the UCAS Apply form. The only way to check this is to try inputting your statement into the form and it will tell you how many lines you are using. In MS Word Times New Roman at 12 point, with 3.17cm left and right margins gives a reasonably close approximation for the line count on the UCAS form.

Generally speaking, the 47 line limit is more important and relevant than the 4000 characters and so it is important to check when writing your draft how many lines you are using in addition to how many characters. You don't want to perfect your statement only to find it doesn't fit!

If you enter/submit a statement which is too long then the remaining lines or characters will simply be chopped off the bottom of your statement, even if that is mid sentence or mid word.

Formatting in the UCAS Apply form

The Personal Statement section of the UCAS Apply form will convert any text you enter to a standard format (font size and style). You cannot get around the line limit by writing in a smaller font. You cannot use bold, italic or underline text to emphasise as this will not be retained in the final form.

Useful resources

Help and advice:

Applying to uni? Get your perfect place: [sign up for email alerts](#)
[University Clearing 2014](#)

Articles:

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[prince_of_paupers](#) *Offline*

0 Rep:

22-06-2010 20:18 #2

Hi,

currently starting to draft my personal statement for UCAS and keep in line with the line and character limit etc. (at 4000 characters and 47 lines of 95 characters)...

However it has come to my attention that paragraphs aren't always distinct on the UCAS system. I have typed up my PS in word, pressing [enter] once to create a new paragraph. However this will look like just a line break on UCAS... Is it recommended that I press [enter] twice so as to have a line gap between my paragraphs, as to increase readability but lose out on potential lines?

what did most people do here?



[SK-mar](#) *Offline*

0 Rep:

22-06-2010 20:29 #3

(Original post by **prince_of_paupers**)

Hi,

currently starting to draft my personal statement for UCAS and keep in line with the line and character limit etc. (at 4000 characters and 47 lines of 95 characters)...

However it has come to my attention that paragraphs aren't always distinct on the UCAS system. I have typed up my PS in word, pressing [enter] once to create a new paragraph. However this will look like just a line break on UCAS... Is it recommended that I press [enter] twice so as to have a line gap between my paragraphs, as to increase readability but lose out on potential lines?

what did most people do here?

No the way UCAS does it is to automatically compress it so that you have as much space as possible and so that when they compare it against other personal statements it all looks the same.

Dont worry its perfectly normal, just keep doing what you are with the single line so that when you are writing it on word it makes sense to you and when you paste it into UCAS it will be compressed.

good luck 😊

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**TooSexyForMyStethoscope** Offline

0 Rep:

22-06-2010 20:36 #4

(Original post by **prince_of_paupers**)

Hi,

currently starting to draft my personal statement for UCAS and keep in line with the line and character limit etc. (at 4000 characters and 47 lines of 95 characters)...

However it has come to my attention that paragraphs aren't always distinct on the UCAS system. I have typed up my PS in word, pressing [enter] once to create a new paragraph. However this will look like just a line break on UCAS... Is it recommended that I press [enter] twice so as to have a line gap between my paragraphs, as to increase readability but lose out on potential lines?

what did most people do here?

I double entered it. i.e left a lines gap. It looks a lot nicer...and you shouldn't be that pushed for space 😊

**DarkWhite** Offline

2 Rep:

22-06-2010 20:39 #5

(Original post by **TooSexyForMyStethoscope**)

I double entered it. i.e left a lines gap. It looks a lot nicer...and you shouldn't be that pushed for space 😊

This. I think I was 3 lines over in the end, so I just merged 2 semi-related paragraphs together.

**AnonymousPenguin** Offline

0 Rep:

22-06-2010 20:43 #6

You can double-line break paragraphs and I would do that unless you really need the extra 2 lines. I needed all the lines so I just used single line-breaks and it was fine as well.

**acquiesce** Offline

0 Rep:

13-09-2010 02:12 #7

Is it a disastrous idea to mention topics you found interesting whilst reading a book ... which you haven't actually read?

(i won't have any interviews)

because obviously, the topics of a book can be known without reading the details of it, and you've got loads of reviews etc to find out what these topics are

Last edited by acquiesce; 01-02-2011 at 00:39.

**JIRAIYA-ERO-SENNIN** Offline

0 Rep:

13-09-2010 02:37 #8

dude im applying for oxford now to do history and politics and i have read about four books for the personal statement plus further reading to supplement my studies. this is the kind of **** you need to be doing, if you mention a book in your personal statement and you haven't read any of- you will get caught; they will ask follow-up questions and they will mention specific chapters in those books.

Post rating: 1

**theciz** Offline

0 Rep:

13-09-2010 02:53 #9

Ironically enough, everyone always says that you'll get caught if you haven't read any of the books you mention in your personal statement. For my Oxford interview, there were some I had and hadn't read. It wouldn't actually have mattered that much, because my memory is so terrible if they referenced specific chapters I might not have known what they were talking about, even if I had read the book. Anyway, it didn't matter because they didn't ask me about it. At all. Instead, we talked about *Wuthering Heights*, which I had read, but nothing specific, it wasn't an English Lit exam (which is as well, because I don't do English Lit). I got the impression they hadn't read my personal statement at all, which kinda amused me.

For the second personal statement I wrote, I didn't mention books at all, and arguably it was for a more academic subject. Still got an offer no bother.

In summary, it's not the be all and end all, and if you have no interviews, go for it. They'll never know lol.

**Craig_D** Offline

0 Rep:

13-09-2010 02:57 #10

Only expect mentioning a book to impress if *you* wrote it.

Post rating: 3

**LGF92** Offline

2 Rep:

13-09-2010 03:32 #11

In my Cambridge SAQ and my PS I mentioned *Crime and Punishment* despite only having read the first ten-fifteen chapters, which was brought up in both my interviews - my French one I managed to cope with it, but my Russian one he got really into it and that's what brought my 'score' down. So I'd advise that if you're gonna talk about a book, you should know it quite well.

**Krishna442** Offline

0 Rep:

13-09-2010 03:41 #12

(Original post by **acquiesce**)

Is it a disastrous idea to mention topics you found interesting whilst reading a book ... which you haven't actually read?

(**i won't have any interviews**)

because obviously, the topics of a book can be known without reading the details of it, and you've got loads of reviews etc to find out what these topics are

what do you think?

only bit thats relevant. do what you want.. it shouldn't matter. don't go overboard though..

**Paul PTS** Offline

2 Rep:

13-09-2010 10:44 #13

(Original post by **LGF92**)

In my Cambridge SAQ and my PS I mentioned Crime and Punishment despite only having read the first ten-fifteen chapters, which was brought up in both my interviews - my French one I managed to cope with it, but my Russian one he got really into it and that's what brought my 'score' down. So I'd advise that if you're gonna talk about a book, you should know it quite well.

Dostoevshina. ☹️ If everything in human nature was like he wrote, there won't be millions of murdered during the Civil War. Dostoyevskiy isn't so popular at Russia, like he is popular abroad.

I see much more sense in "The science to win" by Alexander Vasiliavich Suvorov.

"Afraid of goddealplace (hospital) ! German drugs stink from far away, they all useless and even dangerous for health. Russians can't use to them, better ask your friends to get you some good medical grasses... The hunger is the best drug... At the goddealplace, for the first day you'll get soft bad, for the second - French soup, for the theird one, her (bed's) brother-coffin will come for you" .

That's exactly what I think about Dostoevskiy. 🙄

Suvorov also had such a phrase: "Avoid doctors all the time - in such a way you'll be health" . If you'll read too much Dostoevskiy you may become freak and will start to play in his famous game "the granny and the axe. " 🙄

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BC682qfVvB4>

**Outlines** Offline

0 Rep:

10-10-2010 16:56 #14

Okay I've got my personal statement in front of me, and on Microsoft Word, it says 3,986 characters and 46 lines. When I post it onto the section on UCAS for personal statement, I am 5 lines over the 47 limit!

Now I understand that obviously the length of lines on the website and on word is different, but how am I supposed to cut down 5 lines..? I was considering cutting out the lines which I left for a new paragraph but that just looks stupid.

What can I do?

**Potally_Tissed** Offline

3 Rep:

10-10-2010 17:01 #15

You could post it in the PS help section of the forum, saying specifically that you need help shortening it by five lines, and whoever reviews it will be able to suggest what you can cut down.

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/forumdisplay.php?f=134>

 **?!master?!mini?! Offline**
 0 Rep: 10-10-2010 17:03 #16

(Original post by **Outlines**)

Okay I've got my personal statement in front of me, and on Microsoft Word, it says 3,986 characters and 46 lines. When I post it onto the section on UCAS for personal statement, I am 5 lines over the 47 limit!

Now I understand that obviously the length of lines on the website and on word is different, but how am I supposed to cut down 5 lines..? I was considering cutting out the lines which I left for a new paragraph but that just looks stupid.

What can I do?

Not much really. Cut out words/sentences that are not needed, and simplify sentences into one sentence. Apart from this 🙄, unless you take out the lines which you left for new paragraphs?

 **lattywatty Offline**
 0 Rep: 10-10-2010 17:07 #17

I sent mine without any lines between paragraphs. They don't count for anything, I'd much rather have 5 more lines selling myself 😊

Post rating: 5

 **G550NDH Offline**
 0 Rep: 10-10-2010 17:10 #18

(Original post by **lattywatty**)

I sent mine without any lines between paragraphs. They don't count for anything, I'd much rather have 5 more lines selling myself 😊

I know an admission guy at a Leeds university for med who said that the having spaces made reading the PS much more easier since it would not put strain on his eyes. He also said he was naturally more positive about PS with spaces than ones which looked like one long bit of text

 **Outlines Offline**
 0 Rep: 10-10-2010 17:10 #19

(Original post by **lattywatty**)

I sent mine without any lines between paragraphs. They don't count for anything, I'd much rather have 5 more lines selling myself 😊

That is a good point, thanks! But doesn't it look slightly weird when there's no lines between paragraphs, surely they wouldn't be able to tell when paragraphs start and finish?

 **Potally_Tissed Offline**
 3 Rep: 10-10-2010 17:12 #20

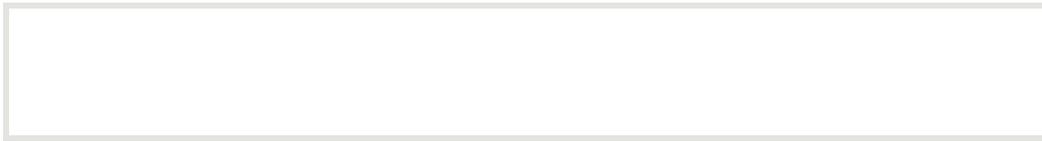
Spaces between paragraphs are important. Read Good Blokes profile to find out why. 😊

<http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/member.php?u=129948>

Updated: August 17, 2012

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