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# **Perfect your personal statement**

**Understanding University, the  
Ultimate Uni Podcast - Episode 14**

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**Katie**

Welcome to Understanding University, the Ultimate Uni Podcast.

My name is Katie and I work for the University of Essex Outreach Team helping to deliver activities and events to support students and guide them on their higher education journeys. The outreach team believe that all students, regardless of their background, education or where they come from, should have an equal opportunity to discover whether Higher Education could be part of their future. Our podcast is designed to give listeners an insight into university life, including the journey before, during and after, dispel some of the myths out there and also motivate and excite you to achieve your potential.

If you'd like to know more or have any questions please contact us by emailing [outreach@essex.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@essex.ac.uk)

**Katie**

When you apply for university, you are required to complete an online application via UCAS, which is a wonderful online platform with lots of helpful guidance and tools. It also plays a very important part in sending your applications to your chosen universities and notifying you with their responses. As part of the application process, you are required to write a personal statement. A bit like the one you may have had to write for applying to a college or sixth form. In today's episode, we'll be sharing with you some top tips on what to include, how to structure it, and highlighting how important this part of the application is. Our guests today will be providing you with some excellent guidance and tools that they currently provide for students and teachers on a regular basis. Welcome, Perry and Jake. Would you mind introducing yourself and telling us a bit about your position working with students in schools and colleges? Let's start with Perry.

**Perry**

Hello. My name is Perry. I work for the make happen team. So I work with students, particularly in the Colchester and Tendering areas, all about thinking about going to university or doing an apprenticeship in the future and getting them to start thinking about their applications and student finance and that kind of thing. And the thing with personal statements is that, you know, they're very applicable to a lot of different areas. So, yeah, really looking forward to speaking all about them today.

**Katie**

Amazing. Thanks, Perry. And Jake, hello.

**Jake**

Hi. So, yeah. I also work with Perry on the make happen team. I work with colleges mostly. So yeah, all the people that I work with are actually writing their personal statements as I'm working with them. And yeah, I've got quite a bit of experience helping them decide what to put in and what to leave out. And obviously, it's a very important thing. Doesn't even matter if you're going to university. You know, the skills that you get from writing that personal statement could be useful for job applications later or whatever you want to go into. It's gonna be useful.

**Katie**

Thank you. And I hear that you've brought your very own personal statement with you today as well.

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**Jake**

I have, I have.

**Katie**

I'm sure Perry is as well. We're looking forward to it.

**Jake**

There's a blast from the past that's about seven years old now.

**Katie**

Amazing. So, we're just gonna kick start off simply with defining what a personal statement is. Perry, would you mind explaining to our listeners what is a personal statement and why is it important?

**Perry**

So, a personal statement is a part of your university application which allows you to put your own kind of say imprint on the person on your application really to university. So, a lot of the other kind of bits of your application to you UCAS it's quite generic. You put down your contact details, your personal details, that kind of thing, whereas your personal statement is your real chance to kind of show that you got a passion for the subject you're applying for, that university is gonna be the right step for you. It's all about convincing that person that's gonna read that personal statement why you are the perfect person to go into that course. So, yeah, that's it in a nutshell.

**Katie**

Thank you, Perry. And is there anything that you wanted to add Jake?

**Jake**

Yeah. So, it's basically just trying to give a good sort of impression of yourself. It's kind of in a weird way it's a little bit like an advert. You're giving like the like the advert of yourself for the university. And yeah, it's probably the biggest part of your application. You've got to want to spend a decent amount of time on it so that you are really showcasing, you know, the best parts of yourself so that those admissions tutors will hopefully give you that dream university place.

**Katie**

And I know you touched on this just a moment ago, but even if I'm not applying for university, how might this still apply to me?

**Jake**

Yeah. So know, even if you decide not to go to university, eventually you're gonna have to apply for a job or you can have to apply for an apprenticeship and you know, a lot of students, they really struggle to kind of sell themselves and write about, you know, what they do well, and yeah, linking their talents to what to what the job or universities are gonna want. So, yeah, a lot of the skills that you would learn from writing a personal statement are useful in other areas as well. They're what they call transferable skills. So even if you were listening to this now and thinking maybe I don't want to go to university I t's still gonna be really useful because eventually you are going to have to use some of those skills to really, you know, show that you can shine in whatever role you decide to do.

**Perry**

And it's a really specific skill to have to write about yourself, because I think, especially kind of like British people, we feel really awkward to kind of, you know, really talk about ourselves and to kind of really emphasise on our achievements and what we're good at and doing stuff like writing personal statements, writing cover letters or CVs. It's all about kind of really making you kind of shine and you know, what makes you unique. So, yeah, it's something to kind of get your head around and start to think about how can I do that in the best way possible?

**Katie**

Absolutely. So, on UCAS where is it that you will be putting your inputting in your statement? Where is it on the UCAS website?

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**Jake**

So, when you do your application, I think it's broken down into sections and the personal statements, usually the last section. So, you put in whatever information and do like, you know, the date of birth and all of that information and I'm pretty sure that the personal statement part is the last section that you fill out. And it's all done through the UCAS application process. And then once that application is sent off, you can obviously log into UCAS Track and see, you know, you might not know you get five choices when you apply to university. So, five universities and you can see which ones have responded and which ones haven't using that UCAS Track.

**Katie**

Nice. Thank you. And I think also on there it's in quite a different format to maybe things you applied for before but I would always advise that you write your personal statement in like a word document or something similar, because the way that they have it on UCAS is a bit clunky. It's not it's not great. So yeah. And then it means that you can edit it when and whenever you like and then once you've finished your personal statement, you can copy and paste it in there. And I think it also, it monitors for you your character and word limit count so you can keep track of that on word obviously. But when then you put it into UCAS, it will show you and it'll be a little bit clearer as to whether you have gone over that limit or not.

**Perry**

Yeah, it's really important to know that when you put your personal statement kind of onto the UCAS application form, it doesn't necessarily save it. So it's really, really kind of good to kind of draft first in word and kind of get it really up to scratch and then once it's ready, copy and paste it over and you know, it should be done.

**Katie**

Yeah. And I think one of the great things about doing in a word document as well was because you get your red wiggly lines telling you whether you've spelt incorrectly or grammar mistakes and things like that and it doesn't do that within UCAS. So, you can really, yeah, check out for your spelling and grammar errors before then.

**Perry**

And that is such a huge and important part of your personal statement to make sure that spelling or that grammar is absolutely tip top kind of correct. One of the worst things you can do is, you know, for this admissions tutor to kind of be reading from your personal statement and you've got all these kinds of errors everywhere. So, you know, make sure you review it, that you review it again. You know, you get your kind of friends to have a look at, your family, you know, always kind of get that feedback in. So, by the time that you're gonna be kind of submitting it, you know, it's kind of fool proof, you know, that it's kind of really safe and that you've not got any of those errors in there that might kind of give off the bad impression that you don't want to get.

**Jake**

Yeah, the worst thing you want to do is be like, oh, I have a very high attention to detail and then spell detail wrong or something like that so make sure all your spelling and punctuation is correct.

**Katie**

Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Always ask someone, someone you trust to have a look and it might be quite nice if you've got a friend that's also writing a personal statement, maybe swap them over and it's a good opportunity as well to to point out each other's skills to each other. Because as we were saying, it's not easy for some of us to talk about what we're good at but if your friend knows what you're good at, they can point out to you, look, you've you haven't mentioned that in your statement and you're really good at this. So, yeah. Always ask someone you trust whether that's a friend or a parent, carer, guardian or maybe even a tutor at your college or sixth form. They'd be more than happy to give you some pointers and maybe spot those spot spelling or grammar mistakes as well. So, we're gonna talk a bit more about the structure of personal statements now and simply how do we structure our statement.

**Perry**

So, with the structure of the personal statement roughly kind of about three quarters of it should be about kind of the course that you're applying for. So why is it this course in particular that you kind of want to apply for? What kind of experiences have you had in the past that have kind of made you want to apply for that course? It's not kind of a must but if you got any career goals, maybe you might want to mention that

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and kind of say, well, this course will help me to kind of get to this in the future. And so, yeah, the vast majority of your personal statement are three quarters roughly should be about kind of the course and why you want to kind of go there. And then the other quarter of the kind of personal statement we normally say should be based around you as an individual and kind of putting your personal stamp on there. So, whether that's kind of talking a little bit about your hobbies, interests, what you do outside of school. Universities aren't looking for you to kind of be studying 24/7 hours a day so it's really important to kind of put that kind of personal bit in there as well, so to kind of make sure that you're a real kind of well-rounded individual.

**Katie**

Thank you for that, Perry. Was there anything else that you would want to add Jake?

**Jake**

You know, you completely said everything that I was going to say, to be honest, that three quarters of focusing on what, you know, the course, that is the most important part. That's what that admissions tutor is gonna be looking at mostly. But then like what Perry said, putting your own stamp on that, you know, everybody's gonna be talking about the course. What makes you stand out? What makes you stand out as an individual is also important. I'm just looking at my one now that I wrote seven years ago, I think it was, and mine is about is about I talk to quite a bit about. So, I applied to go to University of Biology at university so I talk quite a bit about news articles that I've read about like, you know, recent discoveries in Biology. And I also speak about books that I've read as well, you know, by Richard Dawkins and stuff like that. And what you're doing when you're doing that is you're showing that you actually have an invested interest in that subject. You know, that's what they are the admissions tutor is looking for. They're not expecting you to be a genius in Biology straight away. They or whatever is it you want to do that's what they want is to see that you've got that enthusiasm and that interest in that subject so that by the end of your course, then you could be the genius in that subject, you know?

**Perry**

Exactly. And it's like you say, it's not kind of being the know it all about everything and putting something that you think is clever on that personal statement. It's just kind of little things, really, that kind of demonstrate that you have that kind of genuine interest in that subject and then saying something about kind of how that's impacted your decision maybe to go to university or to study that course.

**Jake**

Yeah, great. Quite good example of that on mine is I talk a bit about like, this is me trying to link my interests to my subject as well. So, I say 'as a member of the scouts, I not only learn the importance of teamwork, but I was also lucky to spend a lot of my time appreciating the beauty of the natural world, which is what drives me to study the life sciences.' So, I'm even taking my interest from my extracurricular and trying to link them straight back to biology again, just to show that, you know, I'm a really keen bean when it comes to Biology.

**Katie**

No, that's really great and I think enthusiasm is such an important thing to think about when you're writing your statement, because if you don't come across as well as when you're talking, so when you're writing your statement, you've got to think, okay, does my personality come across? Because otherwise you could be anyone like you could come across as a bit of a robot. If not so. Yeah, having that enthusiasm and showing your sort of motivations and things is really important in this statement.

Definitely. Okay then so we just talked a bit about the structures of what needs to be included, but what happens if my application doesn't sort of apply to all of the places that I'm applying for? What should I do?

**Jake**

Great question. Yeah. So I get asked this quite a lot. Can I write multiple statements to different universities? Unfortunately, the answer is no. You have one personal statement which gets sent all five universities so if you were one of these people who maybe you're not quite sure what course it is you want to do yet and you're applying for different courses, you're going to have to make sure that the application applies to all of those courses. Now, hopefully those courses would be quite similar anyway. You know, hopefully you're not like doing one Biology, one Drama. Hopefully that's gonna be like Biology, Biological Sciences, Biomedical Sciences so you can kind of link in lots of different things. But yeah, it can't be a challenge to kind of overcome that and make sure that that application, you know, it goes to all of, you

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know, fits all of those universities. Well, what I would say is that the other universities don't know that. It's not like they all talk together and they know who you've applied for. So, yeah, just making sure that that application is relevant to all of those courses in some way. Yeah, could be difficult, but it's doable. Yeah, you want to make sure that you don't tailor it to like one specific course or kind of university because those other kind of four courses that you're applying for, probably four other universities are going to read exactly the same thing. So you've got to make it kind of open to all of your choices that you 're gonna kind of be applying for on that UCAS application.

**Katie**

Mhm. My sort of top tip would be that if you are finding that you have got a real sort of last choice, of course, is perhaps go back and do your research again, because it might be that you're not really sure what it is that you want to do after university or at university. So just go back a few steps, do some more research. But then again, if you are still struggling, speak to the admissions tutors because there might be something they can do or perhaps talking to them will help you to realise what it is that you want to do and what you want to apply for.

**Jake**

Yeah, I agree. But it is worth noting at this stage as well that just when you first start that course, that doesn't necessarily mean that's going to be the course that you have to do for three years. Quite a lot of my friends, they started on the same course as me and moved to similar courses. So, for example, I did Biology quite a lot of my friends thought actually, I prefer Zoology and that, you know, that's a conversation can have that university and then switch across. So, it's not you're not necessarily going to be deciding your entire future right now. What is important is that you do know that you're keen that you do not want to sound like you don't know what you want to do in that personal statement. You don't want to be sort of flip flopping between different things because then that admissions tutor they're just gonna think, oh, this person doesn't know what they want to do. Why would I want them on my course? So, yeah, you got to be you've got to have this kind of confidence in that personal statement, yeah, I definitely want to do this. It's definitely one want to do.

**Katie**

Yeah. What do I do if I haven't been able to complete any work experience?

**Jake**

Great question. Me and Perry were talking about work experience just earlier today. Work experience is subversive. If you can get some work experience, I really would recommend it because it does make your personal statement a lot easier and you it gives you so much to talk about your personal statement. And yeah, it makes it so much easier. But this is literally what I was saying to Perry earlier. Even if you don't necessarily have work experience, there are lots of skills that you can link things that you've done in your extracurriculars. Just like I did with the scouts, for example, where you can actually take a lot of those skills and sort of use them to your advantage in that personal statement. I even said to Perry, it doesn't even really matter what work experience you actually do. What actually matters is how you use it to your advantage in that personal statement. And yeah, so it's taking those skills that you might have had from volunteering or even virtual work experience, which is, you know, an option that's increasing in popularity in the recent years. That's the sort of thing that you can be using in your personal statements to show that you have at least got some experience, you know, in working in that field.

**Perry**

Yeah. And I think kind of the use of the personal statement and your kind of work experience is to show that you do have that on a demonstrated interest in that subject and it's not just been kind of a spontaneous kind of decision to kind of, oh, I want to do this. It's there to show you that you've really spent time to have a think about that this is kind of the choice that you want to take. So, there are some really good kind of virtual opportunities out there that you can kind of take advantage of. But at the end of the day, kind of think about kind of how you can kind of use that work experience at the end of the day in your personal statement, because there's no point in just doing that kind of experience and then kind of not using it to its best ability on the personal statement. You got to think about kind of the skills that you kind of gained from it and how you can talk about it in this piece of writing.

**Jake**

Yeah, I think a lot of students are quite quick to kind of think of virtual work experience isn't the same as normal work experience. Why would I want to do that? Well, it is, you know, it is a good alternative and a

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great place to go and have a look at different virtual work experience opportunities there's a website called Springpod. They're constantly advertising different opportunities in different areas and it gives you a chance to ask questions to people who work in that field and, you know, not only is that going to give you things to write about in your personal statement but like we were talking about earlier, it does help you realise, oh, yeah, that is actually the thing that I want to do and that confidence will shine in that personal statement.

**Katie**

Hmm. Thank you, guys. Very, very good points there. Should I include any extenuating circumstances? So perhaps it's something to do with my exam results or anything like that. Does that need to be included in the statement?

**Perry**

So, it can be. But normally we'd say that within your references, that should kind of be mentioned. So, your kind of teacher or kind of a tutor or someone like that normally kind of does a reference alongside your personal statement that can give a bit of a background on the school that you've gone to and the kind of environment you kind of been learning in in the last few years and can give a bit of an insight into you as a learner and as part of that as well, they can really give an insight into kind of if you've had to overcome any barriers whilst you've been learning and kind of make any explanations as to kind of if your grades kind of weren't exactly what you were expecting and things like that.

**Katie**

Thanks, Perry. So, yeah, don't put that into your statement and leave that for your tutor or teacher to put that into reference and have a chat with them if that's something that you're worried about. And I think we mentioned earlier a bit about like the word limit and I've just double checked and the word limit for your personal statement is 47 lines. That's when a new sentence begins or for 4000 characters, which includes spaces and punctuation. So whichever one of those you meet first will be sort of the word limit for your statement.

**Perry**

If you print out, it's roughly about kind of a side of a four-page paper. So, it's really not that much space at all. So, you've really got to fit a lot of kind of information into that short space. You've got to be really smart with the words that you choose and the kind of main way that they kind of say about the restrictions of your personal statement is something called a character count. So, it's not even a word count of things like that. You've got to be really smart in the particular words that you use. But to start with, I wouldn't really focus about that word count, it's all about brainstorming and getting your ideas onto paper. And as you start refining that personal statement, you can really cut it down further.

**Katie**

Thanks for that, Perry. So, when is a good time to get started on the personal statement?

**Jake**

Right now, or as soon as possible. I think I think the earlier you start, the better, in my opinion. But obviously, you guys listening probably have stuff, on the exams and revision and stuff. So, I understand. Yeah, it could be tricky. You apply, the deadline to apply is in January to get your UCAS application off. But I would say that you want to be thinking about your personal statement long, long before that. So really, I think probably in the next couple of months you probably are going to want to be start thinking about it, start drafting it. I think the earlier the better, you can always, you know, get an early draft in and then, you know, come back to it later, you know, with a sort of fresh mind.

I think that's a really good way of doing it. But it's going to take you a good few hours to write, even though it's such a short document, because you are really, really thinking about those sentences, about how you know, what you want to include, what you don't want to include. And there's going to be a lot that you don't want to include as well, because like you said, it's so you really do not have that many characters to use. So, there's going to be kind of a lot of deleting and a lot of selects like having to certain things over other things. I think what you guys might be surprised is, a lot people, though, when they start this, they go, oh, how will I ever write that much about myself? And then they'll write that first draft and it's like twice as long as it needs to be. And they, then you have to delete stuff, which is harder than adding stuff. So, yeah, I would really give yourself quite a bit of time to do that.

**Perry**

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I think generally when you're thinking about kind of the student lifecycle in kind of a sixth form, for example, it's kind of towards the end of year 12. You start kind of thinking about kind of going to university and your kind of future pathways is starting to kind of come into view.

**Jake**

Yeah, go to some open days.

**Perry**

Definitely got to open days, if you can, are such an invaluable kind of opportunity for you to go out and see the universities and do your research properly. And the personal statement really comes after this research stage. So, once you've kind of read all the prospectuses, looked through all the Web sites, realised exactly which course you want to do, kind of maybe you have an idea of which universities you want to go to as well. Then that's when you start thinking about this personal statement and thinking about how can I do the best piece of writing to fit those courses I've researched I know that I want to do at those universities.

**Katie**

Yeah. Great. The summer holidays is always a perfect opportunity for students to start drafting or start brainstorming and things that they're going to pop into their statement.

**Jake**

And I think most sixth forms would like a first draft in by the end of the October half term, I think is usually when they want the first draft.

**Katie**

Yeah.

**Jake**

And then, yeah, and then your tutor will sort of work with you to sort of ironed out all the kinks in that personal statement and then obviously hopefully submitting by January.

**Katie**

Yeah. So, some colleges and sixth forms, they will pop an internal deadline in there for to make sure that they can get their references to you and check to your statement in time before the actual application deadline, which is for most courses around January. But for courses in within medicine is usually October time. But do check when your application deadline is because it could be different for some quite unique courses as well. Thank you for that.

**Perry**

And just one other thing to add as well is that with the personal statement, it's not kind of an overnight process. It does take quite a few months to kind of really get this all together. So normally we'd probably say it's probably about that autumn term. So that first term that you start really in year 13 is when you start really kind of thinking about this personal statement and putting it all together and constructing it in its own way. So, it's going to take a bit of time. It's kind of have a think about kind of exactly how you want to put it together and how it's going to kind of best reflect you. So you kind of have that in mind that it's going to take a while to do, but it's all gonna be worth it in the end when those offers hopefully start coming through.

**Jake**

Yeah, it was quite funny. When I was looking for my old personal statement, I found it on my memory stick. It was safe. That's personal statement, final draft and then in brackets for real this time. So obviously had quite a few final drafts before that

**Katie**

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Keep on top of those draft's and make sure you were saving them either on a memory stick or on your device as well. Just make sure you've got several copies of that. If you were to lose one. Hopefully not. Then you have got a backup copy there as well. So, for our listeners who are now probably thinking, oh, I need to get started. What are your top tips then for getting started with this process?

**Jake**

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Great question. Yeah. So, getting started is probably the hardest part, I think as well, because it's like, well, what do I what? How do I even open? What's my starting line, you know? And so, I would say there's a lot of great guides that you can read. I think the University of Essex has even got one.

**Katie**

Yeah.

**Jake**

Yeah. And there's a lot of great guides that you can read that give you an idea of a structure. I also would start with maybe reading some like template ones or some example ones that you can find on the on. It could be tricky reading these because you obviously don't want to copy them and you certainly don't want to want to copy them. But having an idea of what a personal statement looks like and the things that they talk about, how they structure it might be a great place to start. And then I would say just get your computer out to start writing it like how you think it should sound because you can always go back and edit it. And you know that like what Perry said, that editing process is gonna be quite long. I think as soon as you start getting sort of pen to paper and you start getting into the flow of it, you'll be surprised at how much you can actually start writing down. And before you know it, you've already got the personal statement pretty much already there you just need to iron a few kinks out.

**Perry**

Yeah, it's quite a daunting process really to think about this kind of really formal document you're gonna be kinda submitting to universities. But I think to start with, you really gotta break it down and kind of think about it in basics. So, you know, just starting with a blank piece of paper and start brainstorming some ideas is a really good place to kind of start. So start thinking about kind of things like your course and what kind of is really inspiring you to study that course, what kind of experiences have led you to kind of come to that conclusion and start kind of getting a rough kind of structure in place to start with can be a kind of a really good place to start. And then from there you can really kind of look at kind of some example kind of structures and then you can kind of, you know, start kind of writing things out. And then hopefully by that point you'll have some really good support around you.

So you have kind of teachers who have seen loads of personal statements before and can point you in the right direction. But, you know, actually getting kind of the ideas off the page and getting things started is the hardest part.

**Jake**

Yeah, yeah, so really think about why you want to do that subject and like think about when did when was it you realised you wanted to do that subject as well what was it that made you kind of, oh, actually, that's something I really want to do. Like for me with Biology, I remember learning about DNA and just being like, oh my God, there's this like, you know, chemical inside me that decides everything about me, colour of my eyes, the colour of my hair, everything. And I was just like that completely blows my mind. I want to learn more about that. So, think about what that sort of light bulb moment was for your subject. Write that down. And that's a great place to start. I think, you know, that could even be the first, literally most personal statements start with I first realised I want to start this subject when blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And so really think about where your sort of love and passion for that subject started.

**Perry**

And it doesn't even have to be some like really deep epiphany or light bulb moment that made you kind of standstill in time all of a sudden and kind of made you realise that this is your kind of life's purpose. It could be something as simply as kind of watching a really good documentary or studying a really good topic of that subject that's kind of made you kind of realise, actually, I could really imagine myself doing that.

**Katie**

Yeah. Oh, guys, that's really lovely. I just wanted to quickly touch upon something you mentioned earlier about looking at examples online and things like that because they are really great. But you can also look at sort of the typical opener's which you obviously want to avoid because they've been used over and over again. But UCAS also has this thing with copying and plagiarism. Would you mind just sort of highlighting that?

**Jake**

Yeah. Yeah. So, every personal statement that is submitted will be run through like a piece of software that will tell you whether it's plagiarised or not, because, you know, it has to be your it's a personal statement,

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has to be personal to you and if you've, you know, paid somebody else to do it or got it off the internet, then it's not personal anymore, it's somebody else's personal statement. So, they will run it through software that kind of detects plagiarism. You know, the text, it basically just reads through the person's statement and see if anything that you've said has been taken off Wikipedia or taken off of the other Web site, for example.

**Perry**

Yeah, it comes out with like a similarity score. And so, it kind of tells you kind of how much of your personal statement is similar to other peoples. Yeah, so of course, like your personal statement is gonna be at least kind of a few percent similar because it's a very specific piece of writing. But if it kind of comes out that it's like 98 percent similar to another personal statement, it's probably because, you know, you've taken your older brother's personal statement or an older friends and kind of repurposed a few words. Definitely do not want to do that because there could be some quite serious consequences with that.

**Jake**

Yeah, definitely. And this is why I was a little bit hesitant to say looking at them online, because I'm sure nobody listening to this would ever try and steal someone else's personal statement on purpose. But sometimes when you read a really good one online, you can, you know, subconsciously you can start including parts of that into your own. So just really making sure that, you know, you're not doing that. You are right. Like I said, a personal statement that's personal to you. And yeah, that that's the whole point of the document is to showcase you as a person and I think we're gonna talk about Do's and Dont's in a bit. But this is one of the things I think for mine was a little bit of a don't actually is I feel like when I started my personal statement, I had an idea of what a university student is like, probably the complete wrong idea, but this is what I thought they were like. And so can it kind of comes across in my writing. It's very like I'll just read my opening line, for example, is 'the elaborate world of the Life Sciences has enthralled me from an early age' like that's how I imagined like students spoke and they don't speak like that at all they speak like normal people. So, yeah, I think maybe still making sure that that document is still personal to you and you're not like trying to emulate anything, but still the best version of yourself. You know, you don't want to be too honest, but yeah, you want to be showcasing the best, you know, all the best parts about you, about why you would be an asset to that course.

**Perry**

It's about finding the right middle ground, isn't it? It's not kind of being trying to be too clever or use like loads of big and fancy words that would never say in real life and at the same time you don't want to be too casual either. So, you know, gotta remain professional.

**Jake**

There were a couple of times where I think I got the thesaurus out and I was looking at words I never heard before.

**Katie**

No yeah, it's good to be yourself definitely. Huge thank you to our guest speakers in today's episode, Jake and Perry for their info about personal statements. Hopefully you've come away from this episode with the confidence to write your own. I'm just going to finish with some final top tips which are to: be yourself, be genuine, check your spelling and grammar and get a trusted friend, or adult to proof read it for you. Your school or college will also be able to provide you with lots of support so check in with your teachers, tutors and the careers department when you're making an application. We have a personal statement writing guide on our schools and colleges webpages if you go to [Essex.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges](http://Essex.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges) and there are lots of other guides on [ucas.com](http://ucas.com) as well. Good luck with your personal statement writing!

Thank you for listening to today's episode. If you want to listen to more, our previous episodes are available on the playlist and you can keep an eye out for new releases by making sure you're a registered listener. Please email us on [outreach@essex.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@essex.ac.uk) to find out more.

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Thanks again and don't forget to share the episode with your family, friends and colleagues.