

Personal statement

Lead-in

Discuss these questions with your partner.

- 1 What do you know about applying to university in the UK and in the US?
- 2 Which process is most similar to the process in your country?
- 3 Have you ever considered applying to a university in an English-speaking country? Why? / Why not?
- 4 Do you think the application process is fair for international students?
- 5 Where can you find information about studying in the UK?

Input

- 1 As part of an application to a university you have to write a personal statement. What information do you think it should contain? Brainstorm with a partner.
- 2 Read this personal statement and check your ideas.

History of Art is the door to artistic, cultural, historical and personal enrichment. It is one of the most diverse subjects and as a result can lead to a plethora of interesting career opportunities. Art allows you to gain access to cultures throughout the world, through a still image, a sculpture or even a simple white canvas. Art is not only beautiful or impressive, it is a testimony of historical patrimony, and this is one of the main reasons I want to study History of Art.

My interest in the subject started in my school years during which I obtained outstanding marks in History, Art and Literature. For personal reasons I decided not to go to university after completing my A levels, but this did not affect my interest in Art. In my spare time I developed a great enthusiasm for photography. My grandfather taught me how to develop photos when I was 13 and I was at once attracted to the mixture of art and information as captured by the legendary Manuel Álvarez Bravo. After a hard day's work, photography was a welcome relief.

During my professional experience I was fortunate enough to be involved in the Sydney Sheldon Rock Against Racism exhibition, organised in London during the summer of 2013. I contributed to the research and drafting of the Press Book. This was

a challenging and demanding task, which involved compiling and summarising the content of the exhibition. I thoroughly enjoyed carrying out an in-depth study of the artist. Recently, I have been fortunate enough to work as assistant to Lee Jeong Woong two nights a week, which I believe, will greatly expand my artistic horizons.

Outside of Art, I enjoy music very much. I have had the good fortune to be involved in various radio and music magazine-based projects, culminating in an interview with Frank White. I try to attend concerts as often as possible as I enjoy being able to take part in music performances, whether it be by singing along, clapping or dancing. I am also very much a travel enthusiast and recently travelled around South America. On my travels I learnt Spanish, giving me a first-hand insight into the various foreign cultures.

I would like to make Art a greater part of my life and turn my passion for the subject into a career. As a mature student, I can benefit from the cultural knowledge I acquired through my personal and professional activities. I realise I still have so much to learn and discover and I believe that an undergraduate course in History of Art presents me with the perfect opportunity to achieve my goals.

- 3** To what extent does this applicant answer these questions? Underline her answers in the text.
- Why are you applying for your chosen course?
 - Why does this subject interest you?
 - Why do you think you're suitable for the course?
 - Do you have any particular skills and experience that will help you to succeed on the course?
 - Do your current or previous studies relate to the course that you have chosen? If so, how?
 - Have you taken part in any other activities that demonstrate your interest in the course?
- 4** Apart from the course, what else does this personal statement refer to? Is anything missing in your opinion? Discuss with a partner.
- 5** Using the model above, order these paragraph topics.
- Where her interest in the subject comes from
 - Why she wants to do the course
 - Why she likes the subject
 - Professional experience in the subject
 - Other relevant interests

Language focus

- 1** Can you remember what was in the gaps? Fill in the missing words then check against the text.
- History of Art is the to artistic, cultural, historical and personal
 - ... and as a result (History of Art) can to a plethora of interesting career
 - Art you to access to cultures throughout the world ...
 - My interest the subject started in my school
 - I developed a enthusiasm photography.
 - I was at attracted to the mixture of art and information.
- 2** Cross out the unnatural words from those in *italics* and then check your answers in the statement.
- During my professional experience I was *glad* / *lucky* / *happy* enough to be involved in an exhibition.
 - I *intensively* / *thoroughly* / *completely* enjoyed carrying out an in-depth study of the artist.
 - It will greatly *enlarge* / *expand* / *spread* my artistic horizons.
 - I *enjoy* / *fond of* / *dig* music very much.
 - I have had the *excellent* / *good* / *agreeable* fortune to be involved in various radio and music magazine-based projects.
 - I am also very much a travel *disciple* / *maniac* / *enthusiast*.

3 Match the beginning, middle and ending of these sentences to create phrases to talk about the future.

1 I would like	<i>turn my passion for</i>	<i>a greater part of my life.</i>
2 I would like to	<i>I still have so much</i>	<i>I acquired.</i>
3 I can truly benefit	<i>that an undergraduate course in History of Art presents me</i>	<i>the subject into a career.</i>
4 I realise	<i>to make Art</i>	<i>with the perfect opportunity to achieve my goals.</i>
5 I believe	<i>from the cultural background</i>	<i>to learn and discover.</i>

Task

- 1** With your group, brainstorm what you should include when you are referring to the fact that you're an international student.
- 2** With your partner, write a paragraph as part of your personal statement that refers to being an international student.
- 3** Go to <http://www.educationuk.org/global/>. Find a course that you are interested in and draft a personal statement. Make notes and compare these with your partner. Remember to include information on the following.
 - why you like the subject
 - where your interest in the subject comes from
 - professional experience in the subject
 - other relevant interests
 - why you want to do the course
- 4** Write *do* or *don't* for each of these tips. If you have written *don't*, discuss with your partner why.
 - 1 Use your best English and don't let spelling and grammatical mistakes tarnish your statement.
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 - 2 Rely on a spellchecker.
 - 3 Use words you know will be understood by the person reading your statement.
 - 4 Exaggerate.
 - 5 Expect to produce several drafts before being totally happy with it.
 - 6 Show that you know your strengths and can summarise your ideas and thoughts coherently.
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 - 7 Be enthusiastic.
 - 8 Write as many words as possible.

5 Write up your personal statement, including the paragraph on being an international student.

Assessment criteria

- The statement contains relevant and convincing information on why you should be considered for the course.
- The information is organised logically in paragraphs.
- The statement is written in an appropriate and consistently formal style.
- A wide range of vocabulary and structures is used to express enthusiasm and commitment.
- Grammatical and lexical choices are accurate.

Review
