

Personal statement

Lesson description

In this lesson you will plan to write a personal statement to apply for a course. You will read a model, find out what should be included and work on commonly used vocabulary in this area.

Aim

Writing a personal statement.

Language

- Phrases for describing interests and enthusiasm.

Task

The task for this lesson is for students to write a paragraph of a personal statement in pairs, and then draft a complete personal statement individually.

Materials

Handout.

Various course descriptions if you have no access to the internet in the classroom (see *Task 3*).

Suggested running order

Lead-in	Students discuss questions on university application processes.
Input	Students brainstorm what a personal statement should include, read a model and study it for content and organisation
Language focus	Students complete the gaps to form useful language chunks, choose the most natural collocations, and match sentence parts to refer to future aspirations.
Task	Students brainstorm the contents and write a paragraph on being an international student. Students choose a course and plan a personal statement. Consider tips for writing a personal statement then write a draft.

Lead-in

1 Ask students to discuss the questions. Use the following for information:

UK – UCAS is a central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education.

US – you have to apply to each university.

For more information on studying in the UK:

<https://wwwucas.com/>

<http://wwweducationuk.org/global/>

Input

- 1 Ask students to brainstorm what a personal statement should include.
- 2 Ask students to read the text quickly to check their ideas. Remind students that they should refer specifically to the course they are applying for.
- 3 Ask students to underline the parts in the text where she responds to the questions on the handout.
- 4 Ask students what else the personal statement refers to and if they think there is any information missing.

Answers

What else it includes:

hobbies and interests

work experience

being a mature student (though doesn't talk specifically about benefits this may bring, except professional experience)

future plans

- 5 Ask students to re-read the model and order the paragraph topics accordingly.

Answers

1 *Why she likes the subject*

2 *Where her interest in the subject comes from*

3 *Professional experience in the subject*

4 *Other relevant interests*

5 *Why she wants to do the course*

Language focus

- 1 Ask students to fill in the gaps from what they can remember and then check in the text.

Answers

1 *History of Art is the door to artistic, cultural, historical and personal enrichment.*

2 *... and as a result, (History of Art) can lead to a plethora of interesting career opportunities.*

3 *Art allows you to gain access to cultures throughout the world.*

4 *My interest in the subject started in my school years.*

5 *I developed a great enthusiasm for photography.*

6 *I was at once attracted to the mixture of art and information.*

- 2 Ask students to cross out the unnatural collocations and then check their answers in the text.

Answers

1 *During my professional experience I was ~~glad~~ / ~~lucky~~ / ~~happy~~ enough to be involved in an exhibition.*

2 *I ~~intensively~~ / ~~thoroughly~~ / ~~completely~~ enjoyed carrying out an in-depth study of the artist.*

3 *It will ~~greatly enlarge~~ / ~~expand~~ / ~~spread~~ my artistic horizons.*

4 *I ~~enjoy~~ / ~~fond-of~~ / ~~dig~~ music very much.*

5 *I have had the ~~excellent~~ / ~~good~~ / ~~agreeable~~ fortune to be involved in various radio and music magazine based projects.*

6 *I am also very much a ~~travel disciple~~ / ~~maniae~~ / ~~enthusiast~~.*

3 Ask students to match beginnings, middles and endings of the sentences.

Answers

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

Task

1 Ask students to brainstorm what information should be included regarding being an international student.

Possible answers

Tell universities:

- *why you want to study in an English-speaking country.*
- *why you think you can successfully complete a course that is taught in English.*
- *whether you have taken part in any activities where you have used English outside of your studies.*

2 Ask students to work in pairs to write the paragraph about being an international student.

3 Go to the website <http://www.educationuk.org/global/> and ask students to find a course that they might be interested in. Alternatively, show students some brief course descriptions. Ask students to choose a course and draft a personal statement. Ask them to make notes and then compare their notes with a partner. Remind students what they should include.

4 Ask students to write *do* or *don't* for the tips. If they write *don't*, encourage them to discuss why.

5 Refer students to the assessment criteria. Ask them to write up their complete personal statement including the paragraph on being an international student. Feedback on writing so far and review the learning objectives.