Personal Statement Examples

Philosophy

My desire to study philosophy is founded on my interest in thinking deeply about problems,
both abstract and practical, and using reason and logic to analyse them. I also enjoy
examining other people's responses and lines of reasoning in approaching philosophical
problems. I developed this interest through reading The Myth of Sisyphus by Albert Camus, a book that grapples with questions of life and death and demonstrates the importance of
philosophical thought on the human condition. By studying philosophy I will be able to explore even more texts and ideas in greater depth. I enjoy reading a variety of books by a number of philosophers including Soren Kierkegaard and Bertrand Russell. I am particularly drawn to the existentialists because of their focus on what it means to be human. I relish exploring philosophy in general, but also the history of the discipline as it provides a window onto both the development of human thought and how historical contexts can affect people's thinking. Studying Philosophy at University will permit me to continue to do this at a higher level.

I am keenly interested in aesthetics. I enjoy thinking about art and have participated in a
photography group where I achieved a Bronze Arts Award, through this some of my work was exhibited in the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. I have a keen appreciation of the arts and especially enjoy film and theatre, particularly the work of Wes Anderson and David Lynch. I am currently researching the screen writer Charlie Kaufmann as part of my studies. I enjoy Shakespeare and have seen A Midsummer Night's Dream in Stratford. I am also fascinated by the philosophical elements of Shakespeare and historical context and I have visited the Globe Theatre as well as Shakespeare in Ten Acts, an exhibition at the British Library. I believe that this will be useful preparation for the course, as it has allowed me to explore different facets of the arts and therefore the different sides of life and the philosophical issues they potentially represent.

I have always been an avid reader. In addition to philosophy, I appreciate a range of genres
including sci-fi, horror and classics such as Bulgakov's Master and Margarita and Austen's
Pride and Prejudice. My favourite authors are currently Haruki Murakami, Angela Carter and
David Foster Wallace. I believe the literature I have read gives me knowledge of a variety of
different human attitudes towards life, granting me knowledge of a diversity of opinions which could be applied to philosophy. I am currently working on my EPQ, which is based on
existentialist themes in horror literature including work by H.P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan
Poe, as well as critically acclaimed contemporary writers such as Thomas Ligotti. My
background reading for this topic has included both Sartre's plays and his philosophical works such as Being and Nothingness, as well as other existentialists' works such as Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling and The Concept of Dread. I am enjoying the research process and appreciate the EPQ as good preparation for the intellectual challenges of studying at University, which I will face with excitement and dedication.

I also have a passion for computers and was selected to take part in a Code Wars event
hosted by Hewlett Packard, where 75 students from 12 schools worked to solve a variety of
problems. My team won the competition, showing not just that I am capable of using the logic which is required both to be a proficient computer scientist and philosopher, but also that I am able to work in a team to achieve a goal.

I have done a range of volunteering during my time in Sixth Form and last summer I was able to apply my photography skills to running a stop motion workshop for children from a local primary school as part of a project in the Great North Museum. I am thoroughly enjoying my A-Level courses, particularly the opportunity to work independently and develop my own ideas and I believe this will enable me to meet the demands of University.

Physics (Oxbridge)

Watching Elon Musk's presentation 'Making Humans a Multiplanetary Species' online was
awe-inspiring. It strengthened my resolve to study physics in order to be at the forefront of
innovation. The method that SpaceX would use to fly to Mars made me excited about the work that I can do with a physics degree.

Throughout my time at secondary school, I have enjoyed developing my understanding and
applying my existing knowledge to unseen problems. In 2016 I achieved a gold award in the GCSE British Physics Olympiad. This improved my confidence a lot and drove me to do the AS equivalent in which I also achieved gold. My passion and work ethic for the subject was recognised by my school as I was named 'School's Physicist of the Year' by the Ogden Trust in Year 12. I used the problem-solving skills that I learned through these awards by taking part in a competitive scholarship scheme run by the Reece Foundation. In a small group, my colleagues and I designed an efficient way to maintain a solution stored in a tanker above two degrees Celsius with the ambient temperature being zero degrees. For this project, we researched Newton's Law of Cooling, created a model tanker and ran an experiment to approximate the rate of cooling. This project taught me to look at a problem from multiple angles, and made me understand that it is sometimes necessary to learn new concepts and to use them with known ones to find the best solution.

As part of my GCSE computer science controlled assessment, I created a memory game with a suitable User Interface in Python. I went above and beyond the task briefing and taught myself how to use the Tkinter library to create a fully functioning Graphical User Interface as part of my game. I particularly enjoyed learning about the library and applying my new understanding to maximise the program's efficiency. Outside the course, I took part in 'Code Wars', a competition run by Hewlett Packard Enterprise. I used my knowledge of coding to solve the increasingly complex problems. This was very rewarding and I learned that there is not one prescribed method of finding the answer to any question.

I have undertaken an EPQ to research the topic of space and time travel as I am a big science fiction fan. For this project I am researching Einstein's Theory of Relativity and I believe that this will give me a baseline understanding of the subject before I go to university. Furthermore, I am interested in how science fiction may become reality in the near or distant future, and I am also researching the feasibility of future spacecraft like the warp drive.

Outside of the curriculum, I enjoy furthering my wider knowledge of science by watching
educational videos online, and reading articles published in New Scientist, Physics Review and BBC Focus. I am also teaching myself the Mechanics 3 unit of the A-level Maths course not only to supplement what I learn at school, but because resolving real-life scenarios using logical thought-processes appeals to me.

Throughout Year 12 I took part in various volunteering activities. Beyond my AS studies, I
gained an AQA accreditation and a v50 certificate through my work with Success4All, tutoring children living in areas with low academic achievement. This was particularly fulfilling because seeing younger students eager to learn made me even more enthusiastic about science. Currently, I am completing my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award as I find satisfaction in challenging myself to do difficult things.

I will soon take part in a 5-day expedition, volunteering and using my skills in a non-academic situation which is very rewarding and I hope to continue this at university. For me, the most fascinating thing about physics is that it can explain even the most complex mechanisms. I hope to progress into working with companies like NASA or SpaceX, and I am really excited about studying at undergraduate-level and throwing myself into the challenges that lie ahead.

Architecture

Architecture is a way of connecting people through design and it is this human interaction

that fascinates me. I am passionate about creative spaces which as well as being aesthetically pleasing also compliment the environment whilst being useful to the community. The tension that exists between form and functionality will challenge me to address these potentially opposing areas. I have started to question how physical buildings interact with those who live there and the wider community.

My love of art, coupled with the broad range of courses I have opted for has led me to make

the decision to study architecture. I will be able to develop my skills of observation, creativity

and precision together with a problem solving ethic. These skills will give me the confidence

to be able to understand the complexity of designing and constructing buildings, and the

environment in which they are situated.

I am incredibly interested in how different architectural approaches will affect a community. Having lived in Newcastle upon Tyne all my life I have seen how structures such as Erskine's Byker Wall has in part (but not always successfully) built a community from slum Victorian terraces to a Grade II\* listed estate in the East End of my home city. The Byker Wall can be vividly seen from the River Tyne and makes me question if the design has improved the lives of those who live there.

My architectural reading has already shown me that there are a wide range of views and

opinions. For some, such as Hatherly, architectural decisions have already created ruins in

our northern cities. However, William Curtis equally shows that design can change a great deal in a short period of time. This constant change enthuses me in the way I would be able to approach the subject, being able to absorb the ideas of lecturers, practitioners and fellow students all around me. It amazes me how structures can be so different, such as work created by Herbst in New Zealand or Gilbartolome architects in Spain.

Architecture is more than a simple subject, it is a vocation, a profession and a way of looking at the world. Therefore as part of my decision making process I spent time at a large practice on the outskirts of Newcastle. At Faulkner & Brown, I learned how the practice is run. This highlighted that although designing buildings is very important, an architect's role has many more elements to it. Not only do you need to have an entrepreneurial spirit, communication skills with clients are also vital in order to meet the design brief. Furthermore, I was able to meet and speak to architects to discover what everyday life is like in the profession and saw the great opportunity to work in collaborative teams. My discussions with architects at other firms highlighted to me that my strong design ability on its own would not make me a successful architect.

My communication skills have been enhanced by working in my school's art department to help sell students work including my own to the public. This allowed me to express my interest and explain my work to others. Creativity proved particularly useful in my involvement with the National Citizenship Service as part of a project to create a website that helped newcomers to Newcastle. This time limited project taught me that planning and delivery are equally important. I have continued volunteering whilst undertaking my Gold Duke of Edinburgh award as a young leader at a local brownies group. This has given me the opportunity to work as a team with the other leaders to plan the programme. My leadership skills have developed whilst helping organise the young people, building my confidence to make sure that ideas are brought together as part of a common goal.

My passion for the subject is summed up by Renzo Piano who said "One of the great beauties of architecture is that each time it is like starting all over again." I can see that the

possibilities of architecture are endless and it is a subject that will excite and challenge me.

Primary Education

I believe that Primary school teaching is the most rewarding vocation there is. To be a great teacher, you must have a passion for education and the nurturing of children. A career in this worthwhile, but often challenging vocation would suit my personal attributes as I believe I have the enthusiasm and resilience to ensure that the children I teach would achieve their full potential in a supportive caring environment. I am a good listener and believe I have the patience and temperament to work with primary age children. I consider that a good primary education can influence a child in the choices they make for the rest of their lives; thus ensuring that they become responsible and successful adults. I am determined to become a great teacher and make a positive difference to the lives of young people. Through working with children in different situations and developing an understanding of what is required, I believe I am ready to turn my passion into reality.

I am applying for the Primary Education BA (Hons) course, as I know that this is an outstanding course and I consider that the more experience I can gain in different schools and age groups will help me to become the best teacher I can be. I also think that time in university developing theoretical knowledge combined with days on placement in school is the best way of gaining as much experience as possible before starting a teaching career. To be able to talk and learn from practitioners, experiencing the joys and challenges of working with primary age children will, I believe, give me a greater insight and better understanding of the skills I will need to become an outstanding primary school teacher.

Following success at GCSE, I continued my education at St Mary's Sixth Form studying Integrated Science, Business and Health and Social Care. Through my studies, I have gained skills in presenting to my peers after researching a topic and forming an opinion. As a result of this, I gained confidence in talking to a group as well as learning how to present information most effectively and interestingly. I believe my studies will contribute to my development as a primary school teacher. In order to become more aware of the classroom environment before commencing training as a teacher I have gained some school based experience at ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Primary School. During my time at the schools I have assisted with a variety of learning experiences including numeracy and literacy tasks. I have been able to observe a range of strategies being used in the classroom, in order to support the learning of children. This has helped me develop a greater understanding of how children learn and how teaching strategies need to be adapted in order to meet the learning styles of children. My school experience has also given me an insight into young children's thought processes and the different ways in which they learn and behave. Through observing outstanding teachers, I believe I have some understanding of what is required to succeed in this challenging profession.

In addition to my voluntary experiences within a primary school, I also have taken part in a number of other learning opportunities supporting the learning needs of others. These have included supporting Year 7 students in school to develop their reading skills and supporting Year 9 students with the Confirmation programme in my parish.

In my spare time, I enjoy reading, listening to music and walking and together with my family have been a National Trust member for many years. I hope I have demonstrated my desire and commitment to becoming the best teacher I can be. I am certain that my experiences and life lessons combined with excellent training will enable me to become an outstanding teacher.