



*We envision a Jamaica where students are inspired and empowered to succeed and to positively impact their community.*

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

A personal statement is a form of introduction that is often used in applications. It is almost like a brief autobiography. You must use it as an opportunity to market yourself, but your personal statement should serve as a general description and answer to “Who are you?”

There are mainly two types of a personal statement, namely:

1. The general, comprehensive personal statement:

There is no prompt that directs your essay and you can have full creative freedom to tell persons about yourself. You may encounter this in school applications.

2. The response to very specific questions:

Some scholarship donors may ask specific questions that your statement should answer.

For the purpose of this portfolio, you will be asked to develop a general personal statement.

### Things to consider before you write your personal statement

- ✓ What is special, unique, distinctive, and/or impressive about you or your life story?
- ✓ What are your career goals?
- ✓ What details of your life (personal or family problems, history, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals) might help others better understand you or help makes you look different
- ✓ When did you become interested in your career and what have you learned about it (and about yourself) that has further stimulated your interest and reinforced your conviction that you are well suited to this field? What insights have you gained?
- ✓ How have you learned about your dream career? Was it through classes, readings, seminars, work or other experiences, or conversations with people already in the field?
- ✓ If you have held a position recently like club executive, student leader, etc., what have you learned (leadership or managerial skills, for example), and how has that work contributed to your growth?



*We envision a Jamaica where students are inspired and empowered to succeed and to positively impact their community.*

- ✓ Have you had to overcome any unusual obstacles or hardships (for example, economic, familial, or physical) in your life?
- ✓ What personal characteristics (for example, integrity, compassion, and/or persistence) do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in the field or profession? Is there a way to demonstrate or document that you have these characteristics?
- ✓ What skills (for example, leadership, communicative, analytical) do you possess? What have you achieved that is outside of the normal teenager your age?
- ✓ Why might you be a stronger candidate for an opportunity for or what will make you more successful and effective in the future?

These questions help to gear up your mind to think of possible responses for your personal statement. Every year, students complaining about not know what to write or wondering what goes where. These questions will be pushing you to think broadly about yourself. Spend at least 30 minutes reflecting on yourself and develop answers to these questions on a blank sheet.

---

## GENERAL ADVICE

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE ASKED

If you are given a prompt to guide your answers, ensure that your statement answers these.

*Example:* "Describe yourself with reference to your personal life, professional aspirations, and your extra-curricular activities"

Based on this question, you must answer towards your personal life, your career aspirations, and give examples of the clubs and other activities that you participate in outside of school. You can use paragraphs to answer each part.

### TELL A STORY

Be creative and draw readers into a story of your life. If your statement is fresh, lively, and different, you'll be putting yourself ahead of the pack. If you distinguish yourself through your story, you will make yourself memorable.



*We envision a Jamaica where students are inspired and empowered to succeed and to positively impact their community.*

Think of your favourite sport and draw your life in that line of thought. Show them the training you had to go through, the setbacks or the injury, your personal bests, your goals, and so forth. You get the picture. Be you but express in yourself in a dynamic way.

Find an angle to tell your story from and be consistent with it. There should be no whys after reading your story.

If you're like most people, a life story may lack drama like a novel, so figuring out a way to make it interesting becomes the big challenge. Finding an angle or a "hook" is vital.

### AVOID CLICHÉS

Ironically, avoid the clichés. Clichés wastes opportunities to be outstandingly creative and original. Be you, but avoid:

*I was born on..., On .....,2000, I was born*

They will check your records for that information, so please avoid the date of births and the derivatives.

*Think: From a small community in Likkle-Bit, came a young man despite being short was definitely, "Tallawah". I have always in all my fields managed to be "Tallawah".*

A better cliché and a great opening! We will know if you use this by the way for your portfolio

Here is another example

*I want to be a doctor because I am getting 'A's in science and want to help other people*

This will be said by everyone who is in medical school. Why not use an experience that confirmed that you wanted to medicine? This allows you to stand out from the crowd. Try your best to express original thoughts and stay away from often repeated or overused statements.

### BE SPECIFIC AND NOT VAGUE

Don't, for example, state that you would make an excellent [profession] unless you can back it up with specific reasons. Use specific experiences as much as you can to express your desire to become a [profession].



*We envision a Jamaica where students are inspired and empowered to succeed and to positively impact their community.*

## USE YOUR BEST ENGLISH

Be thorough. We will have volunteers to help you but type and proofread your essay very carefully. Ask your colleagues to read it for you and do peer reviews. The correct use of language is important to the personal statements. Express yourself in the context of the Jamaica Standard English in a clear and concise manner. Stick to the word limits when given

---

## ORGANIZATION

Here are some tips on how to organize your personal statement. These are not exhaustive methods so feel free to try new ones!

### START WITH A BANG! THE INTRODUCTION

The introduction is very important. It is here that you grab the reader's attention or lose it. This paragraph becomes the framework for the rest of the statement. You can start with a strong hook like:

- o Anecdote
- o Favourite Quote
- o Mantra
- o Rhetorical Question
- o Song Lyric

Just ensure that is something that flows and grabs the attention of who reads it.

### TELL WHAT YOU KNOW: THE BODY

The middle section of your essay or the body might detail your interest and experience in your field, as well as some of your knowledge of the field. This is where you speak about your life story

Organize your paragraphs and try to answer the earlier questions as much as you can.

You may use a paragraph to talk about your greatest setback and another talking about how you have moved on and lessons you have learnt. Use a sentence outline and map your responses paragraph by paragraph.



*We envision a Jamaica where students are inspired and empowered to succeed and to positively impact their community.*

## SUM IT UP AND WRAP IT UP: THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion must:

- Summarize the main ideas from each paragraph.
- Have concluding statements that close the personal statement
- End on a high note! – You can end with an affirmation or the quote you started with

### Instructions

Create a general and comprehensive personal statement using the advice from the overview above.

### Word Limits

Exploration: Minimum 250 words

Career Discovery: Minimum 350 words

There is no maximum limit for these cohorts above.

College Prep and Internship: 500 words maximum. (Most scholarships and colleges use this as the word limit. Try to be concise)