

Sample Personal Statements¹

Economics

Having been born in the UK, with parents from Delhi and Kenya, I feel my background has given me an internationally diverse outlook. In my travels, I have met with both the affluence of Europe and the poverty existing in India. Such contrasts have compelled me to seek an understanding of the forces that drive the world economy, and why after centuries of economic theory such inequalities continue to exist.

Comment [BH1]: Writer draws a relevant connection between personal background and positive/helpful trait for an Econ grad student.

Over the summer, I have been researching India's economic development, partly stimulated by the issues above. The Indian economy is a fascinating topic for me, not just due to my heritage, but because of the juxtaposition between rapid increases in wealth on the one hand and the Sub-Saharan African levels of poverty on the other. Another part of economics I find appealing is the use of theories. I have been introduced to the Tragedy of the Commons and the Coase Theorem's take on externalities. My interest in strategic decision-making has been boosted by Game Theory, which has developed an understanding of the situations faced by oligopolies and the implications of Nash equilibrium. Such theoretical models have led me to Experimental Economics and Charles Holt's 'Markets, Games and Strategic Behaviour', in an attempt to see if people actually behave in the way theory predicts.

Comment [BH2]: Theme of paragraph stays consistent; writer goes "deeper" into the point.

Comment [BH3]: Specific, relevant examples are better than many broad ones.

Being awarded the 2007 Kirk Cup for Mathematics at school, encouraged me to take A-level Further Maths. My problem solving skills and ability to manipulate algebraic variables have since been enhanced, which is beneficial considering the numerical analysis involved in economics. Given the problematic nature in conducting controlled experiments, I am eager to explore the range of statistical tools available to economists.

Presently, I offer tutoring for GCSE Maths students, and have taught an adult how to use various PC applications in the past. Such an experience has stressed the need for planning, patience and presenting work coherently for others to follow. I have also used graphical design software to produce adverts for my Mother's beauty business, and have assisted with book-keeping for annual tax returns. It has been noticeable how economic factors affect such a business; for example how demand for different treatments has changed with the credit crunch.

Comment [BH4]: Again, relevant life experience has been used to specifically bolster the type of student this writer would be.

Comment [BH5]: Writer demonstrates that s/he understands their field without "overdoing" it.

My internet browser's homepage is set to prompt me with the latest headlines from the BBC Business website, as it is a priority for me to keep up-to-date with the world around me. In addition, for different opinions, I also frequently read articles on economics in various newspapers. Reading books by economists, such as John Kay, has led me to appreciate better how concepts have developed over time. These include 'The Penguin History of Economics' by Backhouse and Levitt's 'Freakonomics', which I found entertaining, but thought lacked true economic substance. Besides reading, my other hobbies include remixing music on the computer and using Investopedia.com, on which I have a virtual portfolio of shares. As a representative of my college's debating team, my communication skills have greatly improved. At our next debate, I will be arguing for the wider use of congestion charges.

Comment [BH6]: This student does not have a large "extra-curricular" background, but has creatively the experience s/he does have to their advantage.

The recent economic turmoil has reinforced my belief in how economics is truly an integral part of our lives. University will provide the ideal environment in which to strengthen and test my understanding of such a discipline, whilst being a place where I can formulate and contribute my own theories to the subject. After receiving full marks in AS-level Economics, I have set myself a

¹ <http://www.studentia.com/personalstatements/pstop.asp>

high standard, and I wish to continue my ambitions in the finance industry. However, I recognise that my passion for economics will lead me to many more career horizons.

English

I have always been fascinated by the way writers can influence, and even manipulate readers emotions by their expression of thoughts, and by their ability to encourage the expansion of our imaginations and understanding. My favourite authors include Phillip Pullman, Caroline B. Cooney and also Ian McEwan, whose novels are inspiring because of their enviable lucidity and innovative character development. It is my love of literature that has stimulated me to write creatively for pleasure. I therefore want to study English further as a catalyst for my own writing and to extend my knowledge of a subject for which I have developed a passion.

Comment [BH7]: Strong intro paragraph, using specific writers to provide evidence that writer is truly interested in the field.

My love of drama inspired me from a young age to take part in school productions by competing with over a hundred girls in auditions and successfully securing parts. I performed in the production of Othello at the Greenwich theatre two years ago, which was not only a privilege but also an exhilarating experience in communicating my interpretation to a large audience.

I am enthusiastic about all my studies and have therefore decided to continue with four A Levels. My subjects have enabled me to enhance and develop many skills. English Literature has furthered my knowledge of the stylistic devices employed by a variety of writers. In addition I have developed the skill of arguing cogently and effectively through my own writing. Biology and Psychology have primarily helped me to acquire the skill of interpreting and learning complex factual information. Both subjects have developed my understanding of ethical and contemporary issues, and have thus complemented my study of English.

Comment [BH8]: Writer takes a potentially "negative" trait, such as courses outside his or her field that would be on their transcript, and spins it positively.

My study of History has allowed me to pursue my passion for investigating the past by retracing the steps that have led to our present circumstances. The subject offers me opportunities in abundance to formulate my own explanations, whilst emphasising the importance of open-mindedness in appraising the perspectives of other historians. I pursued my interest in history this summer by applying to the UCL/British Library summer school of Revolutions, and was selected, together with thirty-five other sixth formers across the UK. There I was given the inspiring opportunity to attend lectures given by recognised experts who were at the cutting edge of their field of study. Furthermore I was given the rare opportunity of handling primary material, which I found overwhelming given that many of the documents I studied were over four hundred years old.

I play an active part in my school and have consequently been involved in many extra-curricular activities. I was appointed a prefect, and discharged my responsibilities with sensitivity. I am currently on the schools sixth form committee. My role here is developing my confidence, leadership skills and capacity to work co-operatively as part of a team. By participating in a debate as part of the University Access Programme I have become more articulate in expressing my views. I have mentored a younger student, an experience that proved to be particularly rewarding when she acquired greater confidence in her reading. In addition I am a Millennium Volunteer and look forward to the prospect of teaching IT to a variety of people with physical or learning disabilities in my vacation period. I am a conscientious, sensitive and committed student and am confident that I have the qualities and skills to succeed at university. I look forward to the challenge of a demanding degree course, and to the opportunity to play a significant role in university life.

Criminology

The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it." (Oscar Wilde) The role temptation plays within the context of the criminal psyche, is a matter which compels my inquisitive and analytical mind to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding. Do we as a society and the criminal as an individual, require temptation in order to function adequately? Furthermore, is it the actual nature of temptation within both society and the mind, that cause criminal activity, and do both need the other in order for survival? The possible interpretations for criminal behaviour seem to be infinite, with criminals evolving as the world does. The vast array of complexities surrounding criminal behaviour enthrall me; and may be far beyond both logical reasoning and human imagination.

Comment [BH9]: A very different approach to an intro paragraph. However, the writer demonstrates an understanding of his/her field through this.

The passionate desire I possess for analysing and understanding people's behaviour and logic has been apparent since my early adolescence. What intrigues me most are those aspects of the criminal that trigger my sub-consciousness into desiring knowledge of how and why criminals function. The path upon which I have embarked since leaving secondary education has been an enlightening one. Overcoming my own personal traumas in the past decade has enabled me to evolve into a strong and empathetic individual. My years within Air Cadets and my personal experience with youth offending have led to profound moral reflection over all aspects of my life. I feel I am now so detached from what was once my life and the ordeals that came with it, that I can fully appreciate my strength of character. It is this journey through life that has enabled me to have an open-minded and analytical approach to all I aim to achieve within my life, on both a personal and academic level. I am confident in my ability to accomplish all my goals and aspirations which will continually change and develop throughout the process of life. I currently study, work part-time and am a highly self-evaluative mother to a dynamic 2 year old boy. Incorporating these vital aspects of my life, with the amount of self-directed learning required on my access to HE course, has enhanced my efficiency and increased the desire to challenge my personal capabilities. The substantial support network I have in place from family and friends has also improved my levels of confidence and self-belief. My employment within a small community pub has been an extremely insightful and motivating experience. Having experienced a vast array of people; with differing characteristics and perspectives, has given me the ability to look past initial misconceptions and stereotypes. I relish the challenge of analysing and exploring the different avenues of thinking within the diverse range of subjects embarked upon in my access to HE course. I am currently astounded at the relevance the role of the criminal plays within all aspects of the modern day world, and how this is encapsulated within several of the subjects I have undertaken. Specifically in regards to education and the Weberian theory, who argues that all members of society and class are of equal importance to each other. It also intrigues me to explore the different forms criminals take throughout the course of History. The opportunities within my access to HE course to delve into the criminal individual feed my constant hunger for gaining knowledge and understanding.

Comment [BH10]: Personal experience shows writer's commitment to this field.

Comment [BH11]: Even working at a pub (not to mention raising a child) can work in your favour!

As an individual I surround myself with long standing friendships that have quietly accompanied me throughout the past decade. I value my family immensely and am fully engaged into evolving into a positive role model for my young son. I believe that my past experiences have equipped me with the motivation and tenacity required to become a conscientious student. I eagerly anticipate walking through the doors that the world of education will open for me. As Max Erhmann said, "For all its sham and drudgery it is still a beautiful world."

