

PSYCHOLOGY



PERSONAL STATEMENTS

What would I do this summer to prepare for UCAS...

As a Year 12 thinking of applying for University in September, you might want to consider using this summer to gain valuable experience in your field of study.

It could be through local work experience, voluntary work, sport participation or additional study/ courses.

This experience helps build evidence for your personal statement and University application.



Some Psychology Advice

Research Psychology courses carefully.

Make a shortlist of Universities and compare: -

- Entry requirements (grade profiles)
- Whether the degree is accredited by the **British Psychological Society** (important if you may want to become a psychologist later)
- Whether the degree offers honours, i.e. BSc (HONS)
- Course structure (more Neuroscience, Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology, Research Methods, etc)
- Is there a placement or opportunities for a year abroad



Read beyond the A-level specification

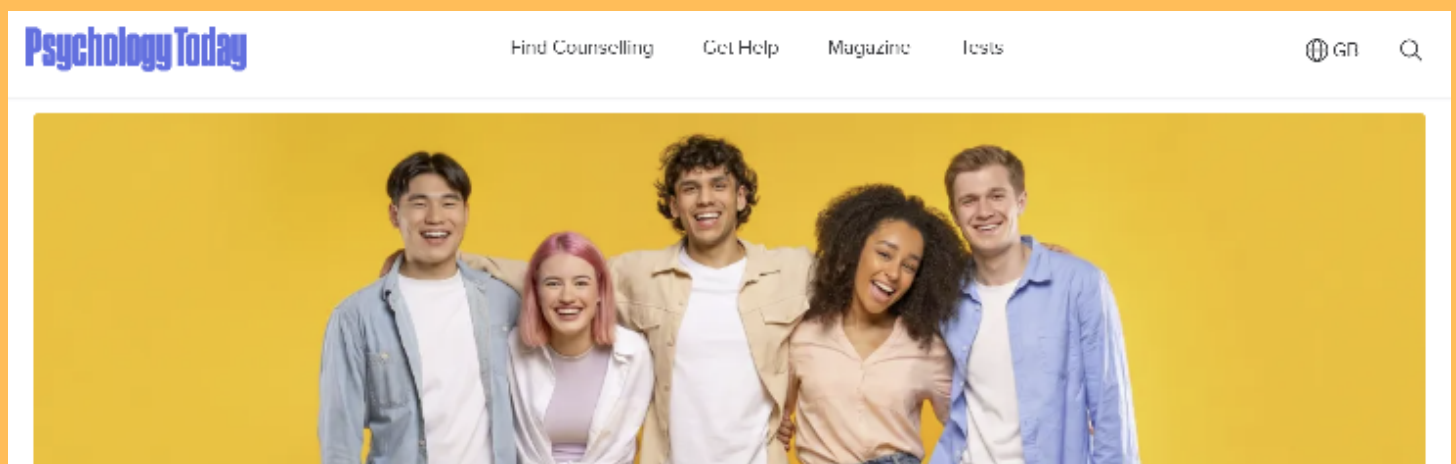
Universities want evidence that you are interested in Psychology outside school/ college.

Think about your course of choice or the specific subjects you are interested in, find sources that relate to these.

Consider, taking some notes and think how these books or articles relate to your studies at A-level.

‘Psychology Today’ is a good place to start

These reflections are often more valuable than the reading itself.



Complete a few Psychology-related online courses

Free options can strengthen your application:

- [FutureLearn](#)
- [Coursera](#)
- [OpenLearn](#)



The screenshot shows the FutureLearn website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Subjects', 'Courses', 'Degrees', and 'For Business'. Below this, the breadcrumb trail reads 'Online Courses / Psychology & Mental Health'. The course title is 'Forensic Psychology: Witness Investigation' by 'The Open University'. It has a rating of 4.8 stars based on 518 reviews. The description states: 'Discover how psychology can help obtain evidence from eyewitnesses in police investigations and prevent miscarriages of justice.' A 'Join now' button is visible at the bottom of the course card.



Many Universities also publish lectures online.

Gain relevant experience

Psychology applicants do not need clinical work experience, but experience with people is valuable.

Examples:

- Volunteering with children
- Care homes
- Youth groups
- Tutoring
- Mentoring younger students
- Charity work
- Mental health awareness projects



Develop research-methods knowledge

Research methods are a large part of Psychology and future Psychology degree courses.

Over the summer:

- Review experiments, correlations and observations
- Practise interpreting data
- Learn basic statistical concepts
- Read Psychology journal summaries

You may have conducted practical work at school/ college - check that you understand the methodology and maths behind it.



Attend University open days

If possible, visit Universities you want to consider as options in September.

Pay attention to:

- Teaching styles
- Facilities
- Accommodation
- Placement opportunities
- Student support

Make notes immediately afterwards because Universities quickly blur into one!



Start drafting your UCAS statement/ application content

By late August, try to have:

- Why Psychology interests YOU specifically
- Academic reading you have done
- Relevant work/ voluntary experiences
- Skills you have developed
- Future goals

A strong Psychology applicant by September should be able to talk confidently about:

1. What aspects of Psychology interest them
2. Offer a few psychological studies or ideas that fascinate them
3. Describe what they have learned from experiences with people
4. Explain how those experiences confirmed their desire to study Psychology at University



Know the UCAS changes

Applications changed for students from 2026 onwards.

What is the new application process?

With the new process, you will answer three questions. These will be:

- **Why do you want to study this course or subject?** This is where you can show your passion for the subject as well as your existing knowledge. It will show universities you understand the course and you're enthusiastic to push your understanding!
- **How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course?** Here you can show more of your academic skills such as essay writing, as well as transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, and organisation.
- **What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences helpful?** This is a chance to talk about extracurricular activities. Whether this be your hobbies, sports clubs, or further reading. It will, again show your passion for learning and some of the great qualities you have.

These questions will allow you to present yourself in a way that has more structure than the previous version. While the original question list included longer questions on preparedness for study and preferred learning styles, these questions caused confusion due to different teaching and assessment styles. Because of this, they've been removed from the potential questions.

Along with this change, teachers' references will also change to allow for more objective comments.



Personal Statement Hints

There's no right or wrong answer

There's no 'wrong' place to include information in your answers, so just make sure your evidence is included where you feel it is relevant...and don't panic about whether it should be in your answer for question 2 or 3!

Your answers will be reviewed as one

Admissions staff will still review your personal statement as a whole, so remember not to repeat information - focus on making your evidence relevant and specific to the subject you're applying to.

Maximising the character count limit

You can use the 4,000 character count limit across all answers in any way you choose, and the amount you write for each question can vary depending on your chosen course or experience.

The new personal statement questions

Question 1: Why do you want to study this course or subject?

Question 2: How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?

Question 3: What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?

Getting started: Things to think about

Here are a few questions you can answer to help you get started:

- 1 Why have you chosen this course?
- 2 What excites you about the subject?
- 3 Is my previous or current study relevant to the course?
- 4 Have you got any work experience that might help you?
- 5 What life experiences have you had that you could talk about?
- 6 What achievements are you proud of?
- 7 What skills do you have that make you perfect for the course?
- 8 What plans and ambitions do you have for your future career?

Dos

- ✓ Do relate any examples back to the subject you're applying to – make it relevant
- ✓ Do make it personal – admissions staff want to get to know who you are
- ✓ Do use a spell-checker and grammar-checker to ensure there are no errors
- ✓ Do ask people for feedback, whether that's family members or teachers
- ✓ Do your research to find out what universities are looking for, and make sure you include evidence to show how you are suitable for the course

Don'ts

- × Don't just list out examples, subjects you study, or experiences you've had without any evidence
- × Don't copy something you've seen online or use AI to write something for you
- × Don't make things up just because you think they'll make you look good on paper
- × Don't leave it until the last minute – you need time for several drafts
- × Don't worry about making each section the same length; as long as you hit the minimum character count, you can use the 4,000 characters across each answer in the way that suits you best

For more specific information on applying for a PSYCHOLOGY degree, head over to the UCAS website.

www.ucas.com/explore/subjects/psychology

Most Universities require at least one (often two) science or mathematics subjects, such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or Maths. A minimum of ABB is standard for top courses.

