**English Literature Personal Statement dissected I**

With the following personal statement, I was able to receive four offers from Russell Group universities, including University of Bristol, University of Manchester, University of Nottingham and an unconditional from University of Birmingham.

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| Through literature, I can live a different life, gain a new perspective on the world and explore cultures and time periods that would usually be out of reach. Whether it's learning about the struggles of modern day teens through John Green’s novels or exploring the social landscape of Georgian England with iconic writers such as Jane Austen, English Literature compels the reader to question their beliefs and emotions. | Your introduction should be short and a means of highlighting your passion in the subject.  Avoid using phrases like “I love English” and “I have a passion for the subject” as they are essentially empty words - instead, do what you can to show that you feel that way. |
| Texts like The Great Gatsby have provided me with many moments of questioning, leaving me to decide whether I believe Gatsby's love for Daisy is true. Whilst one could argue convincingly for either side, I choose to believe that his image of her is too distorted for him to truly love her as she is. Destructive love such as this is interesting to read as it comes in such varying forms. In Wuthering Heights, it's Heathcliff's extreme love for Cathy that many people believe provides his character with redemption whilst in Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita, Humbert's love does the opposite– instead condemning him in the reader's eyes, and rightly so. | You should avoid trying to make your writing expression too stylised; when trying to fit the character limit, you will have to remove extra words and swap long words for much simpler ones.  In this paragraph, I show my wider reading by linking three very different books together with a common theme. If you find that you want to talk about a series of books from very different time periods and genres, then finding a common theme among them is a great way of connecting them and showing your reading range.  Don’t be afraid to put your own opinion in the statement - in fact, you should aim to provide something about how the text personally affected you as it shows that you were engaged by the work and not just mentioning it for the sake of having a text mentioned. |
| Looking into the lives of characters can be thought provoking, especially when considering the many ways those experiences relate to real life. From reading The Colour Purple, I realised that though society has moved forward regarding the treatment of black women, many problems faced by the characters then still remain now, such as the glorification of light complexions. Furthermore, the novel could be connected to feminism which is a topic that I enjoy to read around. By doing so, I discovered amazing novels such as The Handmaid’s Tale, a story that made me question what femininity is and the various ways it can be perverted. Those topics shaped my EPQ, leading me to adapt and translate Chaucer’s Wife of Bath character into a modern version, largely inspired by hip hop music and culture. This has developed my researching skills while also giving me the chance to explore my creativity. | English, as you will obviously know, is a highly text based subject - as a result, my Personal Statement is also highly text based. In this paragraph, I show further evidence of wider reading as well as linking that further reading into another aspect of my study.  Again, I use two very different novels, choosing to link them with a central theme that can be found in both texts. As well as this, by mentioning feminism, I show that I am aware of the critical aspects of English - though only briefly.  If possible, try to find ways of linking the texts you are discussing with other subjects and extracurriculars as that is one way of displaying your pervading interest in English. In this paragraph, I talk about my Extended Project Qualification and discuss how my wider reading inspired me.  If you are completing an EPQ, do what you can to integrate it into your personal statement as an EPQ provides you with many skills you’d need at university and if related to English, it shows further commitment to the subject. |
| Discovering the many intricacies of Shakespeare is challenging but also highly rewarding. After watching A Comedy of Errors when I was eight, I realised that Shakespeare can be enjoyed despite the difference in time periods due to his complex and engaging plots; something as small as the subtle change from blank verse to prose can reveal characters and their intentions. When reading Hamlet, I thought his madness was simply an act to deceive his uncle but upon watching the play, it was harder to make the distinction between what was real and what was an act. This taught me that watching the play could give a vastly different experience to reading it, something I kept in mind when watching King Lear and MacBeth. | In this paragraph, I explore another branch of English: plays, in this case, particularly Shakespeare. When studying your degree, you’ll be faced with a mixture of prose, poetry and plays so be sure to include at least two of those text types in your personal statement, if not all three.  As I mentioned before, try to relate every text you mention to something personal for you - whether that is something you learned from it or an opinion you formed whilst reading (or watching) it.  At the end of the paragraph, I name drop two plays without developing on them. Try to avoid doing this but keep in mind that with the limited character count, it’ll be impossible to discuss every text you mention in detail so make sure you pick the texts that you care about most to develop and that you don’t name drop too often. |
| My experiences at UNIQ summer school were amazing. I was able to study Shakespeare in new ways, exploring The Tempest from a postcolonial perspective with Prospero representing the coloniser and Caliban being the native. It was also possible to view the play as meta-theatre, depicting the creation and development of art. This connected well with Wordsworth’s The Prelude and James Joyce’s Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man as both those texts also had themes revolving around the artist and what inspires their work. I particularly enjoyed the way Wordsworth developed nature into a maternal figure for himself throughout the poem. My time spent at the summer school helped me to further develop my essay writing, as well as allowing me the opportunity to engage in valuable discussion and debates. | Your extracurriculars will not always be academic; that is not something to be worried about however, as long as you ensure that you properly relate it back to English. If they are not academic, try not to talk about them too much.  Fortunately, I was able to attend an extracurricular that was academic, allowing me to discuss it in my personal statement in detail. In the paragraph, I discuss what I learned from the summer school as well as the texts that I studied there.  Due to the character limit, I chose to discuss Wordsworth in detail rather than the James Joyce novel that I mention as I felt as though I had discussed plenty of prose and needed to discuss some poetry instead. When writing your personal statement, always be aware of what texts types you have and haven’t discussed so that when necessary, you can make the best decision of which text to discuss. |
| My school and community are important to me; I am a prefect and volunteer at my local primary school, helping students with their literacy and numeracy. This is rewarding and interesting as it allows me to see the building blocks that develop children’s reading and writing abilities. Furthermore, it makes me contemplate how much my own abilities have developed over the years and look forward to how they’ll grow during my time at university. | Don’t stress out too much about having an amazing conclusion as due to the character limit, the conclusion will often seem abrupt and sudden - this won’t damage your application at all as admissions tutors would rather you spend the characters on other content such as texts you’ve read and so on.  For my conclusion, I talked about my non-academic extracurriculars briefly, connecting them into my hopes and thoughts of the future. Talking about the future is always a good place to end your personal statement as it shows that you are ready and looking forward to university. |