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Chapter 4: Quality Personal Statements and Narratives

For the Project “*Preparing Students for Successful Transition in the New
Academic Structure: Effective Presentation and Planning Ahead*”

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Checklist on Writing Personal Statement/Self Account/Admission Essay by Student

After you complete the self-account or essay, use the following checklist to review your work. Though you can express your ideas with creative styles and means of expression, the general advice may help eliminating common problems or errors from your work.

A. About the Content

- ☐ Specific question from the institute (if any) answered
- ☐ The essay is personal – about YOU
- ☐ Examples and evidences given for each point
- ☐ Examples are personal and concrete
- ☐ The introduction is personal, with a clear image about you and what you do
- ☐ Demonstrate some research and understanding of the named tertiary institute, discipline, or programme

B. About the Structure

- ☐ Each paragraph, including the introduction (if any), have a clear idea
- ☐ Each point/idea is validly supported by at least a piece of evidence
- ☐ Each paragraph of the main body contains roughly the same length

C. About the Presentation

- ☐ No cutesiness (i.e. following some standard recipe of writing)
- ☐ Write in a positive, optimistic and energetic tone
- ☐ No excuses made on your failures and challenges
- ☐ Sentences used vary in length and structure
- ☐ Active voice used, and unnecessary passive voice deleted
- ☐ Use more verbs that illustrate your actions
- ☐ Do not overuse adjectives and adverbs (a list of adjectives like “communicative”, “honest”, “hardworking”, “enthusiastic”...without evidences from real-life experiences and actions)
- ☐ Use a variety of vocabularies but NOT sound like a thesaurus
- ☐ Names and abbreviations of activities, achievements or posts checked and correctly presented
- ☐ You also find the self-account or essay interesting
- ☐ The self-account ends with a last sentence that gives a sense of completeness
- ☐ Grammar and spelling checked:
 - ☐ Subject-verb agreement
 - ☐ Use of pronouns
 - ☐ Punctuations
 - ☐ Tense consistency
 - ☐ Appropriate transitions



D. About the Language

Types of Error	Example	Revised version	Checking Result
Parallel Construction	1. We seldom get much experience of practical work, field study and design experiments on our own. (E.g. 5)	1. We seldom get much experience of practical work, field study and designing experiments on our own. (E.g. 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject-verb Agreement	1. I love singing although practices is as time-consuming as any academic work. (E.g. 8) 2. I believe that not every question have a definite answer. (E.g. 2)	1. I love singing although practices are as time-consuming as any academic work. (E.g. 8) 2. I believe that not every question has a definite answer. (E.g. 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sentence Fragment	1. An idealist that success of a person is not a measurement of his wealth ... (E.g.1) 2. I have joined the School Ambassador for two years which is expected to tend the guests who visit my school. (E.g. 6)	1. An idealist that believes success of a person is not a measurement of his wealth ... (E.g. 1) 2. I have joined the School Ambassador Scheme for two years which helps guests visit my school. (E.g. 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pronouns	1. So the logical thinking of mine has been developed. (E.g. 9)	1. So my logical thinking has been developed. (E.g. 9)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tenses	1. Since then, I develop a curiosity in things and public issues happening around me. (Eg.2)	1. Since then, I have developed a curiosity in things and public issues happening around me. (Eg.2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word choice	1. I have joined many outer school competitions . (E.g. 9) 2. I know there have many volunteers do better then me. (E.g. 23)	1. I have joined many competitions outside . (E.g. 9) 2. I know there are many volunteers <i>who</i> do better than me. (E.g. 23)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preposition	1. It is my first time to approach science and discover my interest of science . (E.g. 6) 2. Effort paid in Mathematics would in return contribute every aspect of science. (E.g. 8)	1. It is my first time to approach science and discover my interest in science . (E.g. 6) 2. Effort paid in Mathematics would in return contribute to every aspect of science. (E.g. 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Word form	1. The new millennium would still be the century of science development . (E.g. 8) 2. We have limited chances to interact with our nature environment . (E.g. 5)	1. The new millennium would still be the century of scientific development . (E.g. 8) 2. We have limited chances to interact with our natural environment . (E.g. 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Article	1. I aspire to explore the world	1. I aspire to explore the world	<input type="checkbox"/>



Types of Error	Example	Revised version	Checking Result
	of knowledge in the university. (E.g. 5) 2. I realize the good attitude is always the main factor to reach the success . (E.g. 6)	of knowledge in the university. (E.g. 5) 2. I realize a good attitude is always the main factor to reach the success. (E.g. 6)	
Passive/Active structure	1. Enjoying each lesson of integrated science, I filled with confidence in performing well in my first science form test. (E.g. 6)	1. Enjoying each lesson of integrated science, I was filled with confidence in performing well in my first science form test. (E.g. 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>

E. An Reviewer Feedback Form

Name of Reviewer:	Date of Review:
1. Is the story unique to the writer? Which parts of the writing impress and interest you most?	
2. Which parts of the writing you find boring and amendments would be recommended to make it a better piece?	
3. Think of THREE adjectives to describe the writer.	
4. If there is a life theme connecting various experiences of the writer, what is it?	
5. Describe the key message from the writer in no more than two sentences.	
6. Major Strengths of the essay	
7. Areas of Improvement	



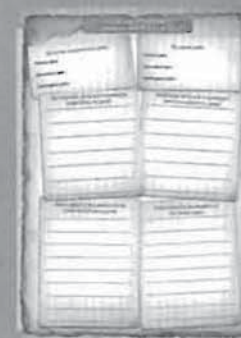
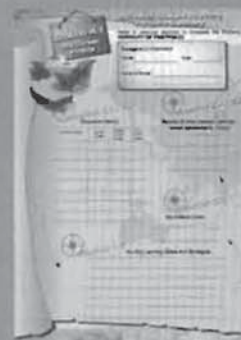
Preparing for the Student Learning Profile

(from *Career Mapping*, used with permission)

Career development is a life-long process and your plans will probably change as you gather more information. Exploring careers does not mean that decisions have to be made and set in stone, but they should be informed decisions/choices – i.e., decisions based on concrete and realistic information.

A career portfolio is a collection of your academic and career-related experiences (including career interest assessments, work-related experiences) and personal achievements in academic aspect and Other Learning Experiences (including voluntary services and various extra-curricular activities). These kinds of information are what you probably need in future.

The present section is excerpted from *Career Mapping*:





My Career Profile (Individual Student Planning Portfolio Summary)

Refer to Career Mapping to complete the following SUMMARY OF PORTFOLIO.

Background Information

Name:

Date:

Name of School:

Education History

HKDSE Subject	School Grade	Target HKDSE Grade	Final HKDSE Grade

My Key Learning Styles and Strategies

My Holland Code:

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Three most interested activities (academic or non-academic):

Results of other interest/aptitude/career assessments: (if any)

Three most interested further study/training programmes related to my Holland Code

Three most interested occupations related to my Holland Code:

My career values (e.g. meaningful, highly rewarding):

My goals on personal development:



KEY Other Learning Experiences that you may include in the Self Account/Personal Statement/Admission Essay

(Moral and Civic Education, Career-related Experiences, Physical Development, Aesthetic Development, Community Service)

- Order can be based on importance, time sequence, or category of learning (choose the one that suits you best)

Name of Activity or Programme or Award	Components of OLE	Role to play	What have you learnt? (or 'experience gained?')	Certificate/ Awards/ Achievement



Career Planner

My further study/training goals

Primary goal:

Secondary goal:

Contingency plan:

My career goals

Primary goal:

Secondary goal:

Contingency plan:

My interests, skills and knowledge supporting my goals:

Additional skills and knowledge I need to support my goals:

Action plans for actualization of my further study/training goals:

Action plans for actualization of my career goals:



Writing Personal Statements with Reflections on Lived Experiences

General Comments from university admission officers:

From Admission Officer 3:

- **Knowledge about Faculty/ School/ Programme:** Students have to show their sincerity by showcasing their knowledge about the Faculty/ School/ Programme that they are applying for. However, students should refrain from flattering the readers by exaggerating the accomplishments made by the Faculty/ School/ Programme.
- **Background which nurtures his/her interest in a specific programme/ area:** It is desirable for students to present a reasonable background which results in their interest in a specific programme/ area, e.g. I worked as an intern in a business company last year and since then I have discovered my interest in business.
- **Reasons for choosing a certain university (a specific programme) amongst other programmes:** By telling their stories, the applicants are also able to unroll their deeper knowledge about the programme. e.g. I want to study BBA program of a specific university because I am attracted by its focus on corporate social responsibility as well as the plentiful value-added opportunities. By joining BBA of that specific university, it is certain that I can develop myself as an ethical business leader.
- **Samples carefully and systematically written:** The attached samples are carefully and systematically written. In addition, a faculty member responded that students may consider writing the self-introduction in both English and Chinese to suit the expectations by various programmes.

From Admission Officer 4:

- In general, in a personal statement, we try to find out something about the applicant's personality, aspirations, and motivation/suitability for the program applied. A good essay should tell a story and have a clear focus, reveal passion and expose personality, show creativity and independent thinking so that after reading, a unique impression about the applicant is formed. We do also form an impression of an applicant by looking at whether there're careless errors and traits of sloppiness in the writing.



A Reflective Account about “WHO AM I?”

Example 1

I am...

A young adult with blossom of novel ideas about how a campaign or activity can be launched unlike what it was done before.

An activator among my peers so that we work as a team to accomplish goals in our study and voluntary works with a passion and thrust.

An athlete who endures the 1500-meter run every year in the school sports campaign, despite the fact that he had never been among the top 20 of the winner list.

A book lover who has wide reading interest, from Chinese novels to popular readers on economics.

An optimist who believes that failures he encounters occasionally in study, and most recently, in the inter-school finance competition, provide an opportunity to learn from mistakes and gain new strength in knowledge and generic skills.

A teacher who cares about the progress made by his student – his younger brother who needs coaching and a little push on his primary Mathematics.

A friend of the group of elderly who he delivers an one-and-a-half hour “Basic Computer Literacy” every week in joint school-NGO school for the elderly.

A choir member who enjoys every practice he has with the other 100 concerted voices.

A dreamer who envisions my learning in university business school will prepare me for the challenging career beyond Hong Kong.

A critic of unethical business practices that widen the gap between the rich and the poor in China and Hong Kong.

An idealist that success of a person is not a measurement of his wealth but how the professional capacity can promote the betterment of community and the needy through fair trade and involvement in community services.

I am...

Simon Wong who has experienced a rewarding secondary school life and is looking forward to new challenges in university.

Comment:

Admission officer 1: An interesting presentation can certainly impress the Admission Officers.

Admission Officer 2:

This is an interesting self account presented in 3rd person which presents the achievements and participation of the student in different roles. The account is creative and projects the



dynamic and self-reflective character of the student. The account is supported with relevant details, and hence quite convincing.

Admission Officer 4:

The Example is basically alright, but contents could be made more precise and concise.

Connecting Live Experiences to Education Goals

On Social Science

Example 2

I love raising questions. How do we live in our society? How do we behave under the current social system? Why traditional culture is important to our modern life? These are the questions I have always asked and I really enjoy finding out their answers. That's why I am interested in Social Science and Sociology as well as its rigorous and systemic way of studying the society.

I believe that not every question have a definite answer, especially those related to ethics, politics and human behaviour. I have experienced this through participating in debates. Being a member of the Chinese Debating Team, I have learnt how to collect useful information, how to analyze data, and in what way I should present my materials and how they can be made persuasively. More importantly, I have been trained to think systemically and respond logically. I am sure all these experience would be very helpful for being a Social Science student.

As a sociable and active student, I enjoy dealing with people. I really think there is somehow a specialty of knowledge about interactions with people. Perhaps communication is the key factor. Being elected by my schoolmates as a member of the Student Union, I got a lot of chances to get along with different people by taking up the role as External Vice Chairperson. According to my experience, arguments were from time to time unavoidable when we conducted planning of various activities, but a good communication skill had often helped us to come to a conclusion smoothly because it allowed sharing of ideas possible. I've also learnt how to cooperate with others. Human beings is a group of connected individuals, we can never live on our own.

Among various services in school, being the Chairperson of the Junior Police Call is a role I treasure most. Though I was only a junior form student then, I got a lot of exposure about the Police Force and the crime situation in Hong Kong. It was also the first time for me to realize my responsibility as a citizen. Since then, I develop a curiosity in things and public issues happening around me. The government, political groups, economy and the people's livelihood are all areas of interest. I observe people from different cultures, I try to understand why they do and the reason behind their actions and culture. These experiences attract me further towards the field of Social Science.

With all these activities I have participated, I am now becoming more independent and mature. I am able to make decisions in critical time and work effectively. Moreover, I have acquired a valuable leadership skills and it could surely help me in the future.

I believe that university education is not really about job training. It helps us develop intellectual ability and expand our knowledge base. I hope that I can be one of the candidates you find suitable for your university.

Example 3



我曾經參與青年協會舉辦的 U21 小主持訓練，於實習及訓練期間，我發現我比較喜歡與人接觸及溝通，所以，我希望入讀社會科學，將來成為社工，除了更多與人溝通的機會外，更能幫助社會上有需要的人。

在訓練的當中，我曾訪問一些社會上的弱勢社群，並發覺社會上依然有很多需要別人的輔導及幫助，我亦曾參與很多不同類型的義公服務，如賣旗，愛心義賣等，我希望藉著成為社工，讓我能履行我社會責任，為這個社會出少許力，幫助社會上需要幫助的人。

Example 4

我想選擇的是中大的心理學系。

我想入讀心理學系的原因在於自小便對心理學有著濃厚的興趣。家中有許多書籍是關於心理學的，對於人類各種不同的行為，表情所反映出的心理有一定的興趣，但是在小學與中學都沒有專修心理學的科目。自行修讀了一些有關於人類心理的書籍後，我對心理學這一科更為有興趣。

升上高中後，因為受到一位曾修讀心理學的老師教導，也從他身上學習到許多有關心理學的知識。我認為入讀心理學系能對我了解人類思維，行為有更大幫助，而且亦希望在以後能成為一位臨床心理學家。

我認為我有能力入讀心理學系因我對心理學充滿熱誠，而且對這一科亦有初步的了解。所以，我希望入讀心理學系學習更多關於心理學的知識。

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

Example 2 is very much better in comparison. Having said that, it can be shortened a bit and one suggestion – to bold the key position/responsibility the applicant has taken in his/her secondary school

In Example 3, the applicant shall elaborate a little bit more on his/her interest in Social Work. A generalized statement lacking breadth and depth.

In Example 4, the applicant can suggest one or two psychology books he/she has read before, giving evidence in support of his/her interest in psychology.

Admission Officer 2:

Example 2 is a well-structured self account which is illustrated with relevant and interesting examples. The specific details cited demonstrates that the writer has some understanding of the discipline he/ she has selected. The account also shows how participation in different activities has contributed to the growth and development of the student.

Example 3 and 4 have a similar structure as Example 2 but both lack relevant, specific details. It is difficult to see from the vague statements that the writers have made that they have carefully considered their programme choice.



On Science Programs

Example 5

Photo-taking is my favorite hobby. I could really feel the connection between the nature and me. My targets can be animals and plants I met in parks and countryside. I took photos of them and paid attention to the morphology of these wonderful creatures. Usually I cannot tell what species they are, but the mere interest of taking a snapshot of them gives me a sense of satisfaction. If necessary, I may check their names reference books.

When I studied Biology in senior secondary level, I was assigned to do a project on "biodiversity". I spent about four months in preparation and finally, my work was highly appreciated by the teacher. The preparatory work was by no means easy, I read a lot about the issue, I studied proposals and critiques as solutions of the threats, I organized all these facts and supplemented them with appealing graphics. The project was a software that allows students and teachers to study biotechnology from various aspects. In fact, a 1000-word written report was the basic requirement. I spent much more than required on this project because I found my work meaningful. The experience fuels my determination to study Biology-related disciplines in my tertiary education. Through researches and in-depth study, I hope that I can contribute to creation of a better environment for us, and also for other species.

I think the creation of the universe is fantastic; it cannot be described by any expressions. Unfortunately, in public examination we can only get in touch with textbooks, but have limited chances to interact with our nature environment. We seldom get much experiences of practical work, field study and design experiments on our own. I aspire to explore the world of knowledge in the university.

Example 6

If I have chance to enter the University, I want to Chemistry or Biology. The reasons can be explained from different angles.

I still remember having the integrated science lessons when I was a S.1 student. It is my first time to approach science and discover my interest of science. Enjoying each lesson of integrated science, I filled with confidence of performing well in my first science form test. Unfortunately, I failed my science test, that absolutely lower my self-esteem and makes me feel frustrated. After that, I am determined to reach the higher level of science in order not to fail again. By going over the experiments I have done and the theories such as particle theory and motion theory, the more I have observed and I started to believe that science is different from other subjects such as Chinese and English. It trains our logical and critical thinking and it give us some reasons behind all the phenomena of nature. Science is such a mysterious and challenging subject that I have ever learnt. As a student of Chemistry and Biology, I hope I can use the knowledge I have learnt on discovering more and more wonderful theories and rare species of animals or plants so as to help our society get more improvements and understandings about nature. My mission is to investigate useful materials from biology or chemistry in order to raise the society's living standard and there is another crucial mission for me to protect the natural environment so as to keep the ecosystem well and protect the wildlife.

In addition, I have joined the School Ambassador for two years which is expected to tend the guests who visit my school. This activity seems irrelevant to science but it definitely teaches me what attitude I should have towards science. As an ambassador of my burdened and therefore I will try to communicate with various guests without being shy, although we might have communication problem with overseas visitors.



The attitude I learnt from this duty teaches me to keep trying to find out the solution, when I encounter the difficulties of science.

I realize the good attitude is always the main factor to reach the success and my attitude towards science will be one of the driving forces for me to reach the higher level of science and make more welfares for the society and nature.

Example 7

從小的我於電視機上看到乒乓球員的英姿，所以我對乒乓球產生了濃厚的興趣，亦參加了學校的乒乓球校隊。可是，我卻沒想到這令我窺探到物理的偉大。

有一遍，我校邀請了別的學校作友誼賽。於第一場的比賽結果中，我們發現我校完全不敵對方。我們亦疑惑不敵的原因。休息時，我們的教練告訴我們落敗的原因。這都從物理方向解釋：乒乓球彈到最高點時，球的速度就是零。這樣的話，擊球時的方向、落點、速度都可以輕易掌握。而我們的擊球點太低了，力量掌握不到，球向下的速度太大，我們擊的球大部分都掉到網前了。

教練的解釋，使我恍然大悟，到最後雖然友誼賽也輸了，但我們的得分比之前的更多，不相伯仲。而且，在我的方面來看，我知道了原來物理可以洞悉日常生活的事。於物理課中，我知道了原來可以單憑剎車的痕跡，就可以判定那人是否有超速。物理能知道的東西，無物能及。

再次窺探物理之門是我的夢想。

Comparative Comments:



On Mathematics and Engineering

Example 8

I like Mathematics since I was young. I've been joining HK Mathematics Olympics to help me familiarize myself with it. Mathematics is the queen of science. Every science subject needs Mathematics to help in different analysis.

The new millennium would still be the century of science development. Efforts paid in Mathematics would in return contribute every aspect of science, space development, biotechnology, computer age – all these need help from Mathematics.

I like thinking. Thinking can help me to explore more things in festivals and drama workshops help me know how to stretch my mind. Thinking in different dimensions. Thinking in different aspects. One ability learnt from drama activity is imagination. In my HKDSE study, imagination helped me to acquire complex knowledge in science subjects. I believe imagination can also help my future study in science as well as researching in any science aspects. (too vague and hard to comprehend)

I like reading in my leisure time. Any type of book could be a good way of helping my understanding and creativity. Some books are about science; this gave me extra knowledge on science directly. Some are storybooks, which could stimulate both my imagination and creativity.

I am able to be very patient to things I like. I've been in school choirs for six years. It's is because I love singing, although practices is as time-consuming as any academic work. (Not really necessary to add this paragraph)

I am not strong in leadership. I've joined different courses to try to improve it. I finally found myself not a good leader. Rather, I found myself a good partner. (Not really necessary to say that. I would rephrase it by saying: I am a good team player,)I've learnt to be considerate and responsible. Therefore I tried to attend Chemistry Olympiad as a partnership team. I am well acquired with the sense of cooperation and being responsible. Project works were once my weakest field of work. In my junior form, I always get a low grade in projects. However, being a drama club committee member in S.4 enabled me to learn more skills in doing projects, as well as gaining confidence with my own work. And this would help me in any tertiary studies, which require projects rather than homework.

May student in Hong Kong think aspect of studying pure science may not be as good as other subjects. (Sorry, I can't quite catch the meaning of this sentence)But I think studying Mathematics contributes the career of global technology development and it is another reason why I want to choose Mathematics in tertiary education.

Example 9

I am interested in engineering. Maybe my result is not very good in public exam (Not relevant as the student has yet to take the HKDSE), but I have great interest in engineering and I know I will be an engineer in future.

I have studies Computer Studies, Physics and Pure Maths. So logical thinking mine has been developed during form 4 to form 7 (6?) period.



In my school, I have joined many outer school competitions such as Computer Program Design competition and Thinking and Art subject. And I worked as a committeeman of one of Houses in my school.

From all the above competitions, I have acquired the responsibility, leadership, solving the problems with a clear mind independently and how to operate with others well and sportsmanship also. These provide my confidence on studying engineering and getting a degree in it.

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

Example 8 can be a good statement if the applicant can further elaborate the linkage between Maths and every aspect of our daily lives. However, it contains a lot of vague sentences which give negative impression to the Admission Officers that the applicant doesn't have a logical and organized thinking. There is no need to put everything in the statement, be focused and concise.

Example 9 is too short, too brief and lack of focus.

Admission Officer 2:

In both Examples 8 and 9, the writers have made a series of statements which are not supported by details or examples. There is also a lack of organization or central theme or focus in these two self accounts. This gives the impression that the writers have not seriously considered their programme choices.

Admission Officer 4:

Example 8: basically alright, but the contents could be made more precise and concise.

Example 10 is OK but it's like putting a bit of everything together and there's a lack of clear focus/uniqueness that differentiates the applicant from others

On Business, Accounting and Financial Studies

Example 10

I am determined to apply for programs about Financial Studies in my tertiary education.

My friends always describe me as a self-motivated person. I always take the initiative in learning new things. I enjoy reading different sorts of books which helped broaden my horizons and enrich my mind. I enjoy reading fictions Tuesdays with Morrie which make me understand more about the meaning of life and the importance of treasuring every moment to do the right things. Recently, after reading the book The World is Flat, I have a better understanding about globalization and the rise of China and India. I also learnt various business strategies such as outsourcing. Apart from that, I like reading newspapers, especially the editorials. All these help enable me to understand deeply about social issues such as the financial tsunami and develop a critical mind and analytical skills.



I am also enthusiastic about helping people. I love doing voluntary work. I participated in flag-selling and rattle ticket selling for charities. As a committee member of the Academic Leaders, I was responsible to help some lower form students with academic difficulties. I met the students every week and provided academic advice. I also tried to improve their self-esteem and encourage them to study hard. Through the activities, I became more patient and responsible.

My life in secondary school is heavily involved in extra-curricular activities. Being in charge of the Current Affairs Club, I acquired important skills in organizing activities. I also gain much invaluable experience in dealing with adversities and making final decisions. Besides, as the Secretary of Odyssey of Mind Club, I learnt how to work as a team and communicate with others to solve problems.

To strike a balance between work and play, I have developed various interests. I love singing and I was a member of the School Choir in junior forms. Taking part in Hong Kong Schools Music Festival equipped me with more confidence. Besides, I like playing chess which help me develop a logical mind. Swimming and riding bicycles are also my hobbies. I will definitely seize the opportunities to take part in different extra-curricular activities so as to learn outside the classroom.

I have a strong passion for jobs related to finance. I wish to work in an investment bank or a commercial bank. My ultimate career goal is to join the HKMA or SFC as a regulator in order to help maintain the stability of the financial market in Hong Kong and prevent the next financial crisis. As a Hong Kong citizen, I think it is my responsibility to maintain Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, which in turn benefit the whole country through economic activities. I believe that your programme provides what I need to pursue my career and to contribute to society. I will cherish the opportunity of getting tertiary education and participate fully in university life.

Example 11

我認為會計是一門專業的學科，而且會計可以幫助一所公司整理帳目。所以我希望將來可以收讀會計系。會計對我來說有一種魅力，我對數學很有興趣。從前聽別人說會計是一個很悶和辛苦工作，我也相信這會是事實，但這個職業和學科可以鍛煉我的邏輯思維和責任感，每件事都必須妥當地處，以完整地紀錄公司的帳目和避免令運作因為自己而減慢。

其實我想讀這一科也是因為我有時在學校中看到班會財政造的財政報告，他們的金錢使用和剩餘額亂七八糟，有些還放錯了地方，我看到後便認為一定要有一個有系統的紀錄法才可解決這個現象，而會計就可以有系統地把帳目紀錄，為了這個原因，我就想修讀會計，將帳目管理好，成為運作中不可或缺一顆螺絲，支撐着整個運作的過程。

Example 12

在云云眾多的學系當中，最讓我心儀的是環球經濟。

自小，父母為了讓我消磨時間，經常都會扭開電視，讓我樂在其中。我最喜歡的不是可愛的卡通，亦不是天真的音樂劇，竟是那遍佈着密密麻麻的數字的股票市場。一個一個符號的抖動、觀躍，都有着一種魔力，讓我這一個半點都不懂的人沉迷、沉迷。所謂的「經濟」，就成了我的一個目標，我亦在中四時特意選修經濟，以追求目標。



隨着成長，學習的更多，漸漸學會了什麼是金錢，什麼是股票，什麼是市場，亦發現在繼續升學中有着不同的分支。在經過多次的考慮，我決定報考環球經濟，學會世界經濟，為不同企業，甚至國家作貢獻，在理想的路上更進一步。

如今，希望我可以入讀大學中的環經濟學系，在這一目標、興趣上走得更遠。如果將來我可成功入讀，以後定會更用心的爭取進步，成為專業人士中的一員，貢獻更多。

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

Example 10 is a systematic writing, step-by-step and well organized, though some of the descriptions about his/her personal interest can be shortened.

Example 11 has confused the study of Accounting with Book-keeping. It shows that the applicant should do some research on his/her favourable subject discipline before writing the statement.

Example 12 is a concise statement. Similarly, the applicant shall do some research on the discipline of global economics which can help enrich the content of the statement.

Admission Officer 2:

In Example 10, the writer made an attempt to illustrate his/ her involvement in a range of activities. However, it is difficult to see how these are related to the chosen discipline or career plan. Also, it is difficult to see that he/ she has acquired a basic understanding of the discipline.

Similarly, Example 12 seems quite superficial and it is difficult to see from the vague statements that the writer has given serious thought to the chosen programme.

While Example 11 is quite short, the writer illustrates with an interesting example how he/ she comes to appreciate the importance of accounting. The self-account shows that the writer has some level of understanding the profession.

Admission Officer 4:

Example 11 & 12 tell just one single point about why he/she interested in ACCT/ECON, but we know nothing about the applicant after reading

On Legal Studies

Example 13

I believe I am possessed of the ability and interest of studying law.

Since S.4, a passion for law has grown in me and I started to visit the court. Nature of cases varies greatly, from winding up petitions to murder cases. Nonetheless, I enjoy listening to various court hearings and this confirmed my interest in law. One case which lasted for months impressed me the most. Ten barristers



participated in this case which was about illegal trafficking of tobacco. They presented the speech gracefully and answered the judge's questions without hesitations. I dreamed one day I can stand there and be a prosecutor to fight for justice.

I have got the ability to study law in my university life. Throughout my secondary school years, I have practiced public speaking and writing debate speech inside and outside classrooms. This year, I have joined the youth Internet governance forum at which I prepared a speech to express my views on Internet privacy in English. I presented my arguments in front of my peers and the guests from the USA. Now I am the NetMission Ambassador representing the Hong Kong youth to exchange views on internet issues at overseas forum. By this kind of training in these 6 years, I learned about the etiquette of speaking in debate and the skills of agreeing and disproving. I am also able to think from different perspectives and sort out the useful information in tons of documents. The above skills and experience definitely helps my future study in law.

If I have the honour to be admitted, I have great expectation to my life in studying here. Being a self-motivated and diligent student, I believe one day I can have the chance to represent the university to join various territory-wide and international mooted competitions to practice what I have learnt and to widen my horizon.

Comment:

On Art and Music

Example 14

我喜歡藝術，亦喜歡與人相處。在初中，我是一名銀樂步操隊之成員，喜歡透過社會服務接觸人群，也在樂團的練習及表演中發現了對待藝術的態度，在過程中，我學習很多解決問題的方法，也提升了我在待人接物方面的技巧。這些經驗豐富了我的學習，對我的研習奠定了深遠的影響。

在樂團的練習及表演活動過程中，我不斷學會新的技術，在團體練習中，我明白到每個聲部都要和諧地融合起來，並不能像獨奏般中一枝獨秀，也漸漸地對樂曲的技巧及背後的意義有更大的執著。在表演活動中，經常要面對不同階層的人士，亦要與不同的樂團切磋技巧。如中四參加的一次社區大型活動中 (Shall give the title of this event)，要面對不少政經界人士，難免有點緊張。幸好從前有參與多次演出的經驗，在該活動中亦表現自信。活動後更有機會與政經界人士閒聊數句，令自己面對世界不同人士亦不會感到靦腆。這也養成我比較外向，社交手腕強的個性。(Not relevant) 在中四期間，我首次參加了樂隊敲擊部的比賽，練習過程中，除了熟練自己的部分，亦有參與舞步及視覺



效果的設計。這給了我大量發揮創意的空間，同時讓我學會如何在表達自己個性和樂曲背後意義取得平衡。這些活動令我在藝術上的造詣有更大的提升。

在這個課外活動中，步操練習及行政處理也是我的責任之一。在步操訓練中，我們必須在比賽前不斷練習。這項練習講求隊員的合作性和一致性，所以在練習中，我們要遷就別人，同時也要守著步操應有的原則。在中五時，我有幸擔任隊長一職，負責隊中的後援工作。雖然這個職責的緊要性不比其他工作高，但也令我知道所有工作的準備功夫是非常重要，不能臨急抱佛腳。當隊長期間，也學會了如何領導下屬和讓他們有效率地工作。下屬是專才，而領導者則是一位通才，不能每樣事情都往身上扛，否則會失去領導威嚴。在團隊中，也必須學會與人磋商，滿足別人要求時亦不失自己的個性和原則，是我在這個課外活動中學到最大的一點。

參與樂團改變了我的性格。我比從前著重紀律及關愛別人；我對自己的強項和限制，及對個人的抱負都了解多了。不過，這一切的「好處」，都不及每一次與我的團隊合奏時那從「小我」與「大我」融合的滿足感；我希望別人聽到的，不是個別優越的演奏，而是整體的一把聲音。這是驅使我在過去幾年每個星期都花上多個小時努力練習的原動力。

我希望將來可投身音樂或藝術行業，發揮我的創意，並希望利用我的創意及對社區的瞭解，令社區的發展能夠與藝術，文化平衡。用以為人的原則，締造一個科技與內涵並重的城市。

Example 15

我自小就對音樂產生濃厚的興趣，小時候每當客廳裏播放着懷舊的經典金曲，即便是頭一次聽到的旋律，已經會不由自主哼了起來，令我對音樂有了初步的認識。

跟入小學階段，我開始發掘自己的音樂潛能，參加了合唱團，使我更發現音樂的奇妙，唱歌的技巧並不如我想像般簡單。直到小學五年級，我被老師推薦參加校外的合唱團。從那時開始，我從未離開樂團。不但在唱歌技巧方面，更是與人相處融洽的交流模式，我曾到國外參加國際合唱節，包括加拿大、韓國和台灣等，果然「一山還有一山高」，到了國外，才真正明白自己是如此微不足道，其他國家的隊伍超乎我們的想像，不禁拍手叫好，同時我們通過了聲音認識了其他國家的朋友，雖然我們不能以相同的語言溝通，但我們卻能以歌聲，歡欣快樂的氣氛表達出我們對他們的喜愛和感謝。我們相處得融洽全是因為這美妙的聲音，音樂是如此能表達出喜樂、歡欣。

另外，我在小二起便開始學習鋼琴，這令我對音樂有了另一種體會。鋼琴，雖然只是一種用手彈的樂器，卻能在我有壓力的時候把它們都釋放出來，心煩氣燥的時候能使我冷靜下來思考，心境平靜，才發覺音樂是一雙溫柔的手把我們的心靈都治療好。

即便以上大大小小的經歷對我對音樂產生了濃厚的興趣，但音樂的知識數之不盡，天涯之廣闊，令我想探索這個世界的所有音樂文化，故此，我很希望能在大學修讀音樂，繼續發掘我的潛能，探索我的興趣，感受神創造何等奇妙的音樂。



Comparative Comments :

Admission Officer 1:

I have asked a music colleague about his requirement. He told me that he would like to assess the admissibility of an applicant based on his/her personal interest, skills and aspiration in Music. The applicant is also advised to talk about his/her expectations on university education. Example 15 is better in comparison but it fails to talk about his/her expectations on university education and why he/she has decided to study Music in university.

Example 14 is giving too much attention on the marching band. Some are not relevant.

Admission Officer 2:

In both Examples 14 and 15, the writers clearly show how participation in different activities has helped them develop and deepen their appreciation of art and music. In Example 14, the writer organizes his/ her ideas logically and illustrates key points with relevant details while in Example 15, the writer seems to appeal more to personal feelings. Both are effective accounts for their chosen disciplines.

Example 16A Version 1

I like arts and design; working in a field that is related to them was my hope since I was young.

In the past three years of NSS study, I have been trained to have an analytical and logical mind through science subjects; as well as doing everything cautiously. On the other hand, I have studied History and Design, and I started to gain interest in arts stream also.

Among the subjects in arts stream, I like design most. To be a designer, I know I have to be creative. Besides reading some books related to design, I started to think creatively whenever I am going to solve any problems or to make a product. A designer has to take care of needs of the customers; I also serve as a big sister to teach the junior form students and serve in the voluntary group in order to train me to be patient.

Of course, this is not enough a student today in Hong Kong, a student nowadays needs to be all-rounded. I took part in different activities during my NSS, such as the vice-chairperson of one of the Houses and participation in various art competitions. They gain me some precious experiences, such as developing my responsibility, communication skills and creativity. From this late July to August, I participated in voluntary work for over 100 hours, spending time to lead the old people to play games. I understand that I must be patient, calm and careful so that I will not ruin my work. I stay the same when I do experiments and researches in the laboratory.

I played various kinds of sports too. As a school volleyball team member, I have been trained to have leadership, confidence and patient, because lacking either one of them you may lose the match. I bring these talents to my life and I believe that with them, I can learn more successfully.

I am sure that I am fitted in studying arts or design. I am sincerely looking forward to having an opportunity to receive education in university.



Example 16B Version 2

Every young person has his dreams but most of these dreams do not come true. In my secondary education, I have been striving persistently to explore my aspiration fields related to art and communication and to equip myself for the profession through academic and non-academic involvement.

I am thankful to have ample opportunities for developing various kinds of interests and hobbies when I was young. Though I was expected to excel in all of them, I was gradually aware of my earnest interest in Art and Design. Engaging in drawing or producing a piece of creative artwork always gives me a sense of flow. I enjoy the process of learning more than the outcomes. I became increasingly sensitive to art works including the paintings in school and museums, modern architectures, and even window display designs in shopping malls. My enthusiasm in Art and Design turned out to be my driving force to take an Applied Learning Course in Fashion Design organized by a tertiary institute. I need to attend a three-hour lesson every weekend. This two-year course gave me an authentic experience in design industry. I was able to equip myself with the knowledge, skills and develop positive attitude towards the industry. I could meet and learn from professionals. Most importantly, I was successfully selected to be one of the 20 candidates to show our individual designs in the fashion show. It was an unforgettable experience widened my horizon and allowed me to apply various skills I learnt.

I enjoy meeting different people. We have a Chinese saying, "it is an art for us to communicate with people". Being the Vice House Captain, I needed to coordinate and motivate more than 200 students in our house to take part in various inter-house activities. I also taught lower form students the skills in sports, and debating. At the same time, I concerned about their study and gave advice whenever possible.

I was one of the core members of the voluntary service group in school since I was in S.3. The first time I experienced the satisfaction of serving other people in need was to lead over 40 schoolmates to design a birthday party for an elderly group. I could still remember the laughter and joy on that day. Since then, I joined various community services for different people, from kids to elderly, from local people to non-Chinese speaking communities, and from people in Hong Kong to new immigrants from mainland China. Working closely with my volunteer group partners assures me that patience, trust and humbleness are qualities we should have when serving others.

Life has been so fruitful in the past few years. There have been learning opportunities and challenges in my study and other learning experiences. Nevertheless, I am sure that the attributes, including a sense of responsibility, willingness to collaborate with people, and perseverance I demonstrated and developed through them have laid the solid foundation for my pursuit in further study and career aspirations. I am looking forward to a new journey of navigation.

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

Obviously, Example 16B is better than 16A. 16B gives a more comprehensive picture with sufficient emphasis on the applicant's interest in VA.

Admission Officer 2:

Both of the writers for Example 16A and 16B seem to have focused on the quantitative aspects of their participation and experience, rather than on the quality of their learning from the activities. Instead of providing details on number of hours of participation, the number of participants in the activities and so on, it may be more effective for the writers to



discuss how the participation has helped them understand and appreciate their chosen discipline.

Admission Officer 3 commenting on Example 14-16: For the four self-accounts of students under "Connecting Life Experiences to Education Goals - on Art and Music", two are related to music and the other two are about design/fashion design. While 75% of secondary schools offer NSS Visual Arts as an elective, and only a few offer Music, the distribution of self-account subject is out of proportion. Better if a student self-account on visual arts can be included instead.

Out of the two Examples 16 A and 16B, 16B would certainly get the assessor's attention more than 16A. Nevertheless both examples appear fairly traditional and obviously follow a taught template: opening remark, personal development towards the subject, short elaboration on personal skills (in particular communication and some leadership), spare-time activities that underpin personal skills, closing remarks. Example 16B utilizes the template more skillfully, but especially in a comparative situation (as an admission situation would be) the identical setup becomes quite obvious, and then reflects back on the writers. Especially for studies in the Visual Arts, Fine Arts or Design, the assessor would appreciate a less assimilated, more creative, even potentially provocative even provocative approach. In both examples, an independent mind, certain edginess in attitude, even a convincing emotional urgency are missing.

On Architecture and Civil Engineering

Example 17

建築，很多人都認為是屬於男孩子的一個學系，也是屬於男孩子的職業，但是，建築就是我的從小以來的理想。因為受到爸爸的薰陶，我也很想和他一樣。我小時候，爸爸經常帶我到他的建築的各個村屋參觀，令我對建築有了初步的認識。中學的時候，偶然被朋友帶去參觀香港大學，到了那裏的建築學院，很多設計、模型和先進的設備都令我嘆為觀止，而且有很多我不認識和建築有關的事物，都令我對建築有更濃厚的興趣，並確立了我成為建築師的理想和有了更清晰的目標。所以，每逢假期的時候，我也會到書店閱讀有關建築設計的書籍，從而有更深入的認識。

因此，我將來想入讀的大學學系，便是建築系，為了實現我的理想—成為一名建築師。我會在英文、數學和物理上更努力學習和進步，並且訂立各個短期目標和時間表來推動自己在學習上更努力。

建築，是我已確立和穿不可破的目標和理想，為了實現它，我必定會更加努力去學習的。

Example 18

我希望能入讀土木工程系，在高中期間，我選修了Phy, Chem 和 Bio，亦修讀M2。我對理科極感興趣，數理成績亦尚算不俗，相信能應付土木工程系對數理的要求。

猶記得中二第一次接觸到力學時，我便對它著迷了。當時，老師出了幾個問題，問題看似簡單，我卻總是答錯，聽到答案才恍然大悟，對我而言這不但有挑戰性，答對後更帶給我更大的成功感。

然而，讓我下定決心以成為土木工程為目標的卻是一宗令人震驚的意外。土瓜灣馬頭圍道塌樓事件，一宗我所始終不及的意外，當電視影出一個個倒塌的家園，我明白到建築物穩固安全的重要性，了解到土木工程系的使命，認清了自己的目標。所以，我衷心希望成為土木工程系的一員。



Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

The two statements are not very attractive. The statement should mention some great architectural buildings in Hong Kong (e.g. HK Airport) or overseas that have impressed the applicant. Preferably, he/she can talk about his/her most admired architect, for example Sir Norman Foster, etc.

Mentioning of the tragedy at To Kwa Wan is a good example

Admission Officer 2:

In both Example 17 and 18, the writers have attempted to explain their interests in the chosen disciplines, and to show that they have the ability or skills in undertaking a course of study in the disciplines. The two short accounts are fine but would perhaps benefit from more details demonstrating a deeper understanding of the disciplines.

On Health and Medical Studies

Example 19

從小至大，我也十分喜愛照顧身邊的人。故此，我希望能進入大學中的護理系，幫助各個病人，貢獻社會。

小時，我因鼻膜太薄，所以經常容易流鼻血，並因此而經常進出醫院治療。記得年幼時一次，我因流鼻血不能止卻而被急送進醫院，在醫院中待留了幾天。就在這幾次，父母只能在探醫時間來照顧我，而其餘時間這責任則交給了護士，她們細心溫柔的對待，使我在冷凍的醫院中重獲溫暖，至此我便立志成為一個護士。

在我逐漸成長，我的理想仍在我心中燃燒着。有一次，在出外逛街中，突然看見面前有多人圍繞，像是發生了甚麼事，我立刻走前，原來發現有一位老人坐在樓梯上，頭破血流迷迷糊，我想是他不小心在樓梯上掉倒了。那時旁人總是在竊竊私語，甚或有些正在打電話報警，但卻無人主動上前問候老人的情況。我走前給他遞上一大堆紙巾，以便他能用紙巾抹乾頭上的血，而我也在旁等候着救護車來到，安全把他接載走，我才放心離開。微小的一個動作，人生中亮不要緊的一天，正為我未來的理想方向，奠定了基礎。

最後，雖然成為一位盡責的護士是十分辛勞，可能要執行一些較運用體力實行的任務，甚或工作時間很多，但總總事性的發生，也不磨滅我心中火。因此，我現在參加排球隊，希望能藉此鍛鍊體魄、健康身心、為日後吃力的工作及學習做好準備。

Comment:

Admission Officer 1:

Can write something about the personal touch with the patients. This kind of personal touch is very crucial throughout the process of recovery or for those terminally ill patients.

Example 20

我希望能入讀醫學系，自小的志願就是當一個法醫。部分是受電視的薰陶，看過法證先鋒後覺得法醫的工作十分有意義，使自己再到圖書館開始借閱有關法醫的書，開始明白死因是絕對有跡可尋，例如屍斑位置，身上的疤痕形狀等。



MICHAEL JACKSON 突然離世，令我對這個入醫科做法醫的立志。面對偶像原因不明的離世，不禁輕嘆當中的悲哀。法醫就能幫助死者找出死因，協助警方查案，亦可作法律上的呈堂證供，協助捉拿真正的罪犯，也是對死者的一種尊重。

作為一個理科生，本人在生物科及化學科的表現不俗，自中三的生物課程的解剖老鼠課程後，令我模擬了一次法醫的工作，有感能掌握好解剖的精髓及技巧。對人體的微妙構造及死後出現的提示有進一步的認識及學習，盼能有幸入讀貴校的醫學系，將來能盡一己之力，為死者抱打不平，貢獻社會。

Comment:

Admission Officer 1:

The role of a forensic medical expert is more than standing on the witness stand in a criminal trial. It has a bigger role to play. May give the Admission Officer an impression that the applicant has not done a good research on his/her choice of profession.

Example 21

小時候的我一向體弱多病，可說是個藥罐子，經常在父母陪同下出入住所樓下的中醫診所，接受中醫師的診治。每次當我受到疾病的煎熬之時，只須一口口地喝下中醫師所處方的中藥，配以適當的休息，往往便能「藥到病除」，加上看到中醫師只需透過「望、聞、問、切」四診之法便能準確地分析病情，並診斷出所患何症，從而對症下藥。因此，我從小便對中醫學存敬仰、欽佩之心，盼望長大後也能當中醫師，醫治病人。

當我踏入中三的階段，並須面對選科的壓力及發揮自己的興趣之時，我發現自己對生物科最感興趣。生物科探討人體各種系統、組織的功能及其互相協作的重要性，並從中解釋我們身軀上所出現的各種現象，故深深引起了我的興趣。及後，我又從一些前輩口中得知原來中醫學陰陽五行學說亦有異曲同工之妙。從大自然中五行屬性的特性形容各臟腑器官的功能。由此更加增添我對中醫學的興趣及好奇心。

有見及此，我深願能入讀大學醫學院的中醫全科學士課程，一方面能更深入認識人體運作，發展興趣。另一方面則盼望能當個好中醫師，盡一己之力，服務人羣，貢獻社會，一圓小時候的夢想。

Example 21 (a)

我最渴望的是醫科。這與我在小學五年級所發生的一件事有關。

還記得我在小學五年級的時候，有一次因為在咳嗽時發覺痰帶絲，後來被轉介至接受 X 光檢查，最後被證實我患上了肺炎，更需要即時留院。那時已經是晚上一時了，母親因要趕回家照顧弟妹而匆忙地走了。於是便剩下我一個人，在黑夜裡孤單地渡過了，我一邊哭，一邊想：為什麼我會患上這個病？連母親都走了，只剩下我獨自一人，那時的我感到十分寂寞和失落。

我帶著眼淚走出病房，當我在問路的時候，醫生和護士發覺我曾經哭過，於是便急著問我是否哪裡不舒服，那一位醫生更堅定地跟我說：放心吧！我一定會治好你的病！從這一句話，我感受無比的支持和安全感。醫生能夠給予病人鼓勵和安慰，令病人所治的不單只是身理的疾病，更能給病人心裡的支持和安慰。這就是我想當醫生的原因。我希望可以給予病人身理上，同時心理上的支持和鼓勵。



Example 21 (b)

成為一位物理治療師一直是我的理想。

我家境說不上富裕，也說不上小康，成為物理治療師無疑可改善我的生活環境，但更重要的是，我感受到物理治療是一種使病人身心得以完成痊癒的工作，更能造福大眾。

爸爸在十年前左右因工作過勞而患上腳部的骨患和使腰部常感痛楚至徹夜難眠，幸好得到醫院裡物理治療師的幫助，不但在醫院進行治療，還教授日常生活中的小練習，使爸爸的情況得以舒緩，睡得安枕。

媽媽在四五年前懷疑臉部有輕鬆中風，使嘴角歪了起來，嚇得全家人六神無主，幸得物理治療師的幫助，學會以冰敷面，才使媽媽的臉漸漸好起來，使家人得以安心。

病人最重要幫助的時候不但是在受傷時，而是受傷復原期間，而物理治療師是擔任這段期間的角色，其實這一段路更難走，心裡上的治療也很重要，就如我的父母，那段時期物理治療師的鼓勵真是一枝有力的強心針，希望我有幸能修讀物理治療系，成為其中一分子，盡力幫助有需要的人。

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

All these examples have one thing in common – driven by an inspiring person experience. In addition to this experience, the applicant should write a paragraph or two on his/her expectations on medical study, from various perspectives, social, moral, etc.

Don't know the reasons why these statements were all written in Chinese.

Admission Officer 2:

In all five examples, the writers have cited specific personal experiences which inspire an interest in specific medical disciplines. While some experiences are more dramatic than the others, they are quite convincing as the writers provide relevant, interesting details to illustrate how the experiences have shaped their thinking.



Impacts of Versatile Experiences

On Voluntary Services

Example 22

I have devoted myself to service the needy and the poor in my secondary school life. One of the most rewarding experiences is a trip to Guangxi impoverished villages. During the trip, I acquired many brand new experiences in my life such as planting on the field, teaching primary students and getting a taste of the Mainland high school student life. Also, I was much touched by their persistence in learning despite the poor living conditions. I have determined to help the underprivileged with my profession in the future. Other than this, I was appointed to organize two service trips in charities. Throughout the years of my social service for different groups of people, I become more sociable and acquired brilliant interpersonal skills and communication skills in 3 languages. Mastering the languages, I am made perfect for tertiary education school place over other candidates. Moreover, I have grown to be more mature in dealing with both individual and team work.

Last year, the Global Elites programme in July and August co-operated by the University of Hong Kong, Chinese University and U-Rounders opened my horizon to the world affairs. During the virtual G-20 Summit, our team representing the USA prepared a resolution on our views to various global issues ranging from medical insurance, financial tsunami to green policy. Through vigorous discussion, my critical thinking, leadership skill and communication skill were polished and fully utilized. A passion of knowing about and analyzing social issues has also grown in me when we listened to the lectures by prestigious speakers like Mr Joseph Wong Wing Ping and Ms Claudia Mo. This has proved that I am a self-motivated and inquisitive student.

Should I be given the chance, I will certainly endeavour to prove my eligibility in tertiary education.

Example 23

In the several months of my volunteer services outside school, I know I have spent a lot of my free time but I think the time that I spent is really so worthwhile. In this period of time, I really learn much: I know that, share the happiness with others, is much happier than one happy! I know rather spend the time to serve the people in need than use the time to play the computer games! Being a volunteer is really worthwhile! In addition, in this all services, I found that I have improve lot include my attitude of people and things, I have learn to us another angle to think a thing. I'll continue my work as a voluntary even after I graduate from secondary school.

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

Example 22 is better with substantial evidence in support of his/her voluntary experience. The applicant has demonstrated his/her ability to learn from reflection, showing he/she is a learning student.

Example 23 is too general, not evidence-based and fails to show that the applicant has learnt anything from his/her past voluntary experience.

Admission Officer 2:

Although these two examples show that the students involved have participated in voluntary services, very little specific detail is provided on how the experiences have helped them in their personal growth. The statements made remain vague and general and therefore not very convincing.



Admission Officer 4:

Example 22: The details and individual examples are good.

Example 23:

- The Example is basically alright, but the contents could be made more precise and concise.
- Too general, English needs to be polished.

On Various Leadership Training and Experiential Learning

Example

I am writing to provide additional information with regard to the awards I have obtained and the duties I have performed in my secondary school years.

Being a Scout for more than seven years, I have always adopted the Scout Motto “Be Prepared” to be my guide. “Being prepared” does not only mean just being ready for emergencies but also ready in mind and body to meet any challenges. Through joining trainings such as expedition, camping and pioneering, in all of which I am required to exert myself to accomplish different tasks, I have acquired independence, communication and networking skills.

Besides, elected to be the Internal Vice-president of the Student Association, I needed to perform well under pressure both as a team player and a team leader and organize different sorts of student activities, which have undoubtedly enhanced my leadership, critical thinking and life-long learning skills.

I have also joined various exchange programmes and activities, both indoors and outdoors, to enrich myself. Concerning the indoor activities, I have been playing the piano and the violin for several years and I passed the examination of Grade 8 Piano as well as Grade 4 Violin of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. For the outdoor activities, I have been joining the Scout footdrill competition which requires cooperation and self-confidence since 2006 and I have represented my school football team to play a part for two years. I also took part in the 14th Nippon Jamboree and some exchange camping trips to Taiwan and Macau through which I have exposed myself to the foreign culture – an invaluable element which I had never encountered in Hong Kong before.

I enjoy exploring more advanced and professional knowledge in different areas. I strongly believe the above-mentioned experiences and characteristics can really benefit me. I hope all this evidence can really prove my capability and enthusiasm for my further studies in the tertiary education.

Example

As an S.6 student, all I wish is to get a seat in a university. Over the past few years, I have participated in a broad range of activities and taken an active role to complete every task.

Starting from S.3, I have joined the Hong Kong Award for Young People (the AYP). Beginning from the Bronze level, I have devoted a lot of effort to complete all the sections, including Service, Skills, Physical Recreation, Expedition and Residential Project, and gained the Gold Award in 2010. I have thoroughly developed myself through participating in this programme. Throughout the years, I served the needy, learned music skills,



acquired a fit body, overcame high peaks and worked with counterparts towards a shared goal. Among those sections, the Expedition, which requires participants to live in the countryside for a few days, is the most challenging. It is my toughness that has helped me to accomplish it even though I was injured, sick and frustrated during the journey. I am sure my perseverance will keep me not to give up easily in the university, where harsh life is everywhere. After joining the AYP, I have grown to become more mature in dealing both individual and team work.

During the summer vacation in 2010, I was chosen to be one of the delegates in the International Youth Exchange Programme to share ideas and experience with foreign teenagers. Before joining the programme, I have shown my good academic background and enthusiasm in voluntary service for being selected to the interview. My knowledge about Chinese culture and Hong Kong issues was also shown in the interview and enabled me to become the youth delegate of the year. The programme was packed with various interviews and excursions to museums, which has stepped up my international exposure and strengthened my leadership skills. I am sure that the experiences are precious for my university life and can help me be well-equipped for the course that I choose. Also, during the programme, I was immersed in the English world and had to talk to UK delegates all the time. This greatly improved my language skills, which are crucial in the university life. It is the programme that has helped me blossom.

I have also joined various kinds of activities, both indoors and outdoors, to enrich myself. For the outdoor activities, I am now a certificated canoeing player and have been in the athletics team joining inter-school competitions since I was in S 2. Concerning the indoor activities, I have been playing the guitar for several years and passed the examination of Grade 5 Guitar and Grade 5 Theory of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. I am sure I can adapt to the diverse learning environment in the university easily.

The tertiary education is my best choice to further improve myself and surely will further develop my interpersonal skills and encourage me to pursue my interests. I also believe that I have been well-prepared for the life ahead.

Example 26

轉眼間，高中生涯將要結束，回想起這幾年曾做過的事，發覺我正在一步一步地步向成長。

我們是新學制的第一屆畢業生。起初我感到十分害怕，怕活動不夠時數，怕因為進行太多的服務和活動，沒有時間去溫習。其實在這幾年裡面，我覺得自己比中三的時候進步得最多的是“時間管理”。“時間管理”不是只單單從書本可以學到的。這次，我能夠親身體會到原來安排好時間都是一件難事。盡量不被自己有一秒的浪費，這能夠可以把學習和活動一起做到最好。

我是學校乒乓球隊隊長，這個乒乓球體育運動，我參加了六年。中四那年，我能夠帶領隊伍取得學界的冠軍。其實這個冠軍一直是我的夢想，我要感謝隊員的努力和合作。因為學界乒乓球比賽是團體賽來的，合作是一樣很重要的東西。沒有合作，如何會居得成功呢？這也是到我親身感受到“團結就是能量”的一次寶貴的機會。還記得決賽的那一場，當時的賽果是 2:2，最後一場決勝負，我們整一隊都為該球員打氣，其實比賽氣氛是很重要，我們的掌聲給他動力。相反另一隊，他們的隊員只是各有各的東西做，沒有支持正在比賽的那個隊員，或許，這是他們輸了的原因。比賽過後，身為隊長的我，我也寫了一個報告，報告中大大讚賞隊員的合作力很大。希望下一代的隊員也能夠吸收這一點吧！



Comparative Comments:



On A Variety of OLEs

Example 27

'Try not to become a man of success but a man of value,' said by Albert Einstein, the well-known physicist and philosopher. We have to learn how to be a better person except for our basic knowledge on our academic subject. Being the cleverest person in the world is no better than being the valued person. My OLEs has influenced me in many ways which are conducive to my whole-person development. I have learnt to be a man of value.

In S.4, I had my first night in a tent was joining the whole-person develop camp organized by the SAHK. I would never forget this camping. Everyone in my form went to the campsite in Tai Po. We were divided in groups with mates from different classes. There were series of tasks we need to complete together in the first day. Honestly, we were not acquainted at all. We still needed to try to know each other. Every group needs a leader. The responsibility of the leader was to lead the group and distribute the work between members. Although there were some of the members were not motivated at first, eventually we corporate well together to complete the tasks. Everyone enjoyed the night. We were given raw ingredients and simple tools to cook for ourselves on that night. The worst dish was the egg in an orange but I loved it. I was ordered to be in charge of this dish. I was hopeless at first because I did not remember the cooking steps at all. Therefore, with help of my mate I dug out pulp first and use the oranges as the containers to cook the eggs. I was so excited to see the golden yellow eggs in the oranges were done. I would never forget the facial expression of my group leader when I let him to have the first try. I bet he almost vomited right away. For all that, we had an amazing night to cook together. Our group members had been responsible for their works. We had learnt to cherish food and the importance of teamwork. I had been a lot familiar with my group mates after that night.

Another interesting experience would be our school anniversary inter-form musical. I have always been interested in drama and theatre studies. Certainly, I signed up for it and for sake I passed the audition to be in it. I realized musical was a lot more complicated than what I knew before. It had combined singing, dancing and acting. There were around 40 of our schoolmates participated. I was frustrated and disappointed at first because everyone was not prepared at all and they did not treat musical seriously. Apart from it, I lost my confidence in the beginning of training. I sung as bad as a goose. I was almost shaking in front of my singing teacher. Another weakness would be dancing. I needed more time than the others to follow up. I wanted to dance with energy. Acting would be the least thing I was confident about. I took musical as a challenge.

Fortunately, things had gone better and smooth along with the rehearsals. The teachers were professional and enthusiastic. Dancing was the most difficult but everyone enjoyed this part the most. We had paid lot efforts in dancing. I had been obedient and followed the instructions strictly. Everyone was cheered and contented when we finished every lesson and knew that we had improved. We might not be the leading actor, but I understood that every part made a whole. Even in the society nowadays. It felt so great to produce a musical together with your mates.

Also, I had joined the community service and tried my best to help people in need. 'Good afternoon. This is Bunny Hear's Hotline...' This was how I began every time when I picked up the phone while volunteering in Harmony Home. I had joined the Bunny Hear's Hotline as the volunteer to talk with children. The aim of this hotline was to prevent family abuse cases and helped the children.

I was trained before officially on duty for answering the line. I was sluggish before. However when it was my turn to on duty, it was seriously not a piece of cake. I had to deal with children and solve their problems. Nevertheless, the part of my job that I enjoyed the most was when they shared their happiness with me. I



iked the innocence of children and how cute they could be. There were sometimes I might not know how to respond but the instructor was so kind to help us. Being a volunteer in Bunny Hear's Line was rewarding and meant a lot to me.

Yes. I want to be a man of value. Time flies and life is too short, I want my life to be meaningful and fruitful. I am anticipating in the near future how I can maintain my virtues and correct my mistakes. No doubt that I had learnt to be independent and responsible. Most importantly, I know who I am and I will be better.

Example 28

高中三年的生涯轉眼間已經完結了，接下來又要展開更具挑戰性的生活。因為學制的轉變，令本來埋在書堆中的日子，得變得充實有意義。課外活動排得密密麻麻，有藝術、運動及社會服務方面。學校為了讓我們能夠全方位發展，舉辦及提供了很多各式各樣的活動供我們選擇。

當中令我印象深刻的是學校安排的童軍導航計劃，這個活動是分組進行的，而分組方式更是隨機。在不相識的環境下，要學會發揮和找出自己的專長，以及要學懂與別人相處、分工的技巧，真的不是一件易事。每一至兩星期一次的訓練，有工作仿、遊戲、實踐等，透過每一次的活動，與同組朋友的友誼亦逐漸的建立起來。很高興，我的那組合作得很好，多次遊戲中都取得佳績，雖然沒獎品、沒計分，但我們依然享受過程。由原來互不相識，慢慢對彼更熟悉，這份的友誼真的很難得。

還記得，童軍有一節露營訓練，這可是我的第一次露營。我對露營的技巧一竅不通，而且愈幫愈忙，想起來真的很不好意思。站在一旁，看著朋友幫手紮營，又怕愈幫愈忙那時真的感受到原來在生活上，我還有很多不懂的地方，還需要我的努力去發掘出來。那次露營前，我是一個極為依賴家的小孩，離開家時總會覺得沒有安全感。露營的晚上更哭過不停，為同學們添了不少麻煩。但自從那一晚麻煩到別人後，我學會控制自己的情緒。更明白到，當人長大時，就應該隨著生活而作出改變，例如要在社會上學會獨立，不可事事靠別人的幫忙，很多事都要親力親為。

除了露營外，由國際十字路會主辦的地球村體驗，亦令我感觸良多。在冬天，天氣較為寒冷的那天，正是我們體驗之日。我們需要到草地上，分組組成各家庭，以摺紙袋為生，體驗貧民區的生活。體驗時，一旦生活出現困難，就是無奈地把身上值錢的用品、衣服、甚至家庭成員賣去。「幸福不是必然」這句話真的很正確，如果不懂珍惜，當你失去你的所愛時，就後悔莫及了。在香港這個物質豐富的社會，明白艱苦生活的人並不多。其實我們應該就我們所擁有的，去幫助有需要的人，所謂「施比受更有福」，能夠通過出一分力，既能幫助別人，又能令自己開心，真是一件賞心樂事。

而在校內，我參了合唱團為我的課外活動。我從小到大都不喜歡唱歌，參加合唱團也是因為能夠跟我的好友一起。但原來，興趣真的能培養出來，受著朋友的感染，我對唱歌已經沒那麼抗拒。現在我已經是中四升中五的學生，難得學校在今年準備演出一齣歌舞劇，為了挑戰一下自己的膽量，就跟朋友一夥參與。經過多關面試，最後我竟能夠入圍。我發現了，原來自己的能力也不少，以往只是自己不願意作出嘗試。在一百多人中，只有不多於一半能入圍，這令我明白，其實很多事情都要靠自己爭取。作出了嘗試後，起碼不會後悔，甚至有可能在活動中找出自己的興趣。

在作出嘗試前，請不要為失敗而顧慮太多，在人生的路途上，失敗是才不免的，而經不起失敗的人，才是真正的失敗。在音樂劇訓練時，縱使我多努力，也總是比不上其他同學。我亦曾為止而沮喪，更為自己想很多藉口，想讓自己退出這個滿懷失敗感的音樂劇。可是，當我反復思考，想起我是由導師在眾人選出來的一員，就感到內疚。如果我因此退出，會否很對不起那些未能入選的同學？而且，每個人的專長也不同，也許我的專長並不在此。在這些需要在人面前表演自我的活動，我也是個初哥，我想我還是享受一下過程吧，不要太介懷自己的表現，皆因參與的過程是成長的一部份，應該盡情享受的。



每個人在學校都釋演不同的角色，而我是一位圖書館管理員副組長。作為一位副組長，經常被老師強調為責任重的一員，不但要好自己的本份，還是負責照顧新晉的管理員。剛上任時，難免會感受到一股無形的壓力，為免出錯，有時更給予自己很大的壓力。但原來，做事緊張，有時會出現反效果。有次跟老師傾訴時，老師說了一個句話「不出錯，很難會知道自己改善空間在哪，很難進步」，這句話令我有很多覺悟，有時做事只要以平常在，不要刻意的表演自己，反而效果更好。當了圖書館管理員已有四年了慢慢養成了對責任的一份執著，隨著角色的不同，本著的那份責任都要隨著作出調整。

高中所參與的活動多種多樣，但所經歷、所感受的，只是人生的一部份，還有大部份能著我去發掘。而我的進步空間亦很大，希望未來能夠有所進步，例如學會體諒和照顧別人，不要只要人照顧。同時，希望能夠打握升學機會，讓自己的潛能得到最好的發揮。

Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

The two statements contain a lot of details, especially 27. It looks like a composition essay but not a statement aiming to impress the Admission Officer. Too long and lacking focus. Remember that each Admission Officer may task with traversing as many as hundreds of statements and so, it is not recommended to write a long statement. Above all, the two statements are too lengthy and clumsy. Not impressive at all.

Admission Officer 2:

Examples 27 and 28 are fine as a record of the students' own learning and feelings. But if the two examples are also used as self accounts or personal statements to support application for further studies or for jobs then there are perhaps too many irrelevant details. Also, careful proof-reading is needed if the accounts are written to be read by someone else and not just as a personal record.

Admission Officer 4:

Example 27: By writing about the student's extracurricular activities and life experiences, the article gives us some good ideas on the personality and character of the student, as well as his/her writing skills, which facilitate the admission assessment.

Example 28: More concise personal statement is preferred, e.g. explaining why the applicants are interested in and applying for the program, indicating their strengths/experiences that are relevant to the application. It is better to focus on the particular excellence about him/herself, i.e. tell why he/she is better than other applicants (the special things about him/herself).



OLEs enlisted as Self-Account/Personal Statement

Example 29

個人性格/興趣

我個人較為好重，活潑，喜歡與人相處，溝通，透過不同的社交活動結交不同的朋友，另外，我喜歡參加不同種類的課外活動，促進多方面的經驗。這些活動都豐富了我的學習和經驗，促進個人所長。

活動/經歷

高中三年裡最令我印象深刻的經歷是年宵攤位。活動的目的是透過籌辦及營運攤位，實踐課本上的理論，如銷售技巧，人際關係技巧等。我期望不用虧蝕已經心滿意足，我跟組員們都很努力製作商品，絞盡腦汁詢問同學意見，希望把攤位搞得有聲有色，準備的十多星期時間，我們多次都為了製作商品而在學校逗留至深夜。直到年宵開始，各組各施奇招吸引顧客，當時每個組員也很賣力地推銷自己的產品，這次也是我第一次感受到工作競爭，成為了我的工作推動力，也令我感受到一種成功感，領悟到得著大於付出。

活動/經歷對成長的影響

從這次活動，我親身體驗到「一分耕耘，一分收穫」的意思，很多事紙上談兵是沒有用的，只有實踐行動才會知道計劃的成效，甚至領悟理論。而且我學會更細心，做事更謹慎，分析能力亦更全面，因此從此次活動，我經歷到每一個小的決策也有莫大的影響力，小則還可補救，動則影響全局。另外，我學懂了分工合作相討決策跟平常聊天是兩回事，只有提出主見才能作出一個好的定，而且要抱有一個認真的態度，不是鬧著玩，在適當時候做適當的事情。

活動/經歷對人生目標的影響

我希望在大專修讀有關管理和財務有關的課程，好好裝備自己，為將來投身商界作準備。我會學習多方面的技能，接觸不同方面的知識為自己升值，與時並進，求到一份富挑戰性又適合自己的工作，為社會大眾貢獻，謀福祉。

Example 30

(1) 陸運會：

反思：開始，我沒有參加陸運會，自知沒多少體育天份。

但是次水運會後，我希望下次能參加運動會。因為我非常欣賞參加比賽的同學，雖然實力相差較遠，但我欣賞參賽者的毅力，體育精神，令我深受感動。

(2) 學慶音樂會

反思：能讓我欣賞那麼精彩的音樂會，我十分高興。最難忘的是細聽了音樂表演部份的同學的悅耳動聽的歌曲和歌聲。因為我明白能夠合唱好一首歌，是困難的，非花很時間不可，非克服自己的害羞性格不可。因此，我知道無論做什麼事情，都要花時間，心力，才會得到理想成績。

(3) 中文閱讀：龍應台《大江大海一九四九》

反思：雖比較沉悶，但所表達內容正正是反映當時生活，人們沒有自由，生活得比較無奈，根本每天擔心自己被逮捕。而當時小孩的世界十分容易滿足，即管遇上不如意事，也顯得天真活潑，是非常明白事理。相比現今的小孩子，驕生慣養，處處生事，永不滿足。難道我們不能像當時的小孩子般堅強，懂事，更加要珍惜現在擁有的。



Comparative Comments:

Admission Officer 1:

Admission Officers may like this presentation mode – simple, direct and to-the-point. Able to reflect on each participated activity. I like this more than lengthy presentation.

Admission Officer 2:

In Example 29, the student focuses on a activity and reflects on the learning and insights gained from his/ her participation. He/ she shows quite clearly what he/she has learned from the activity and how it is related to his/ her future career/ academic plans.

In Example 30, the student has outlined participation in a wide range of activities, and has included self reflection on each activity. However, no attempt is made to provide an account of how these activities have helped the student in his/ her overall development.

Admission Officer 4:

Example 29:

The Example is basically alright, but the contents could be made more precise and concise.

Example 30: The writing is quite fluent, though there are some grammatical mistakes/wrong spellings in part (3). Self-reflections were demonstrated.



Authentic Examples from Case Studies in Chapter 4

Example from Case Study 1 (Harold's SLP Self-Account)

Learning in classroom is not the only way for learning; I believe learning through extra-curricular activities makes me learn much more.

I joined the school Robotics Team since I was Form 2. In Form 1, I was already fascinated by the robots built by higher form students. I studied the mechanisms in the robot when I had time. I also read different programming books in order to understand the programs written by higher form students. Therefore, when the team coach invited me to join the team when I was in form 2, I accept the invitation immediately.

People always think that the robotics team member only learn mechanical skills, and maybe some programming skills. That is far from truth. In the robotics team, I learnt a lot, mechanical skills and programming skills is just the tip of the iceberg comparing to what I learned.

Knowledge is one of the important gains I get. I participated in a lot of different competitions; some of the competitions require not only skills in robot construction, but also skills in research. During the years, I did research in Nano technologies, renewable energy sources, human control on climate, automatic guided vehicles... These researches require high level knowledge in Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Control Engineering, Geography and also other aspects. I needed to read thesis, books, reports, and also interviewing different professors and researchers in order to find the information needed.

Another important gain is having many friends. Inside the team, I learned what friendship really is. We laugh together, solve problems together and play together. We care for each other and support each other. One of my best memories in the team happened on my birthday. I am not a really socialistic person. Therefore in my point of view, birthday is not a really important date to me. I can live peacefully without any birthday celebrations. As I just don't care about my birthday, I had nobody celebrating for my birthday (except celebrations at home with my family) from form 1 to form 5. Even now I don't know how my teammates knew my birthday date. On the birthday during my form 6 school life, I was thinking that birthday was going to be just like the other birthdays I had. When I was doing my own business in the room, a teammate asked me to go down stairs to the playground. He said there were some problems about the robot which will be used in performance tomorrow. So I went down and what I saw amazed me and it etched in my memory. My teammates lit up seventeen candles on seventeen small cakes. When they sang the birthday song, I was really touched. "That is what friends are for," I thought in that moment.

Another thing I gained is experiences. My school's robotics team compete in a lot of different competitions, we also won a lot of these competitions and are often given the chance of representing Hong Kong to compete in international championships. I went to Atlanta, Shanghai and Tokyo to compete in competitions. These were precious experiences. These experiences are eye openers to me. It gives me better understanding to different parts in the world; it also let me know more about others cultures. For example, I know that Mocha and doughnut sold in Starbucks in Atlanta is the one of the most delicious items I had ever tastes; I know that people in mainland does not like to queue up; I know that most people in Japan does not know English, therefore next time when I visit Japan, I might learn a few Japanese beforehand. These experiences can only be gained by visiting places and trying to live like local people. It is precious and it helps me every day.



The next important gain is teamwork. “Robotics Team” ends with the word “Team”. We are a team and I am one of the teammates. To cooperate with other team members is a really difficult task, everyone has their own idea and we often cannot meet to an agreement easily. This requires understanding of each others, and communications. The best solution to a problem is often the combination of all ideas given by each of us. In the team, I experience the difficulties in working with others. There is often people who have a complete different approach in solving a problem, their solution may have its own weakness but also its own strengths. Being in the team taught me how to cooperate with different people and how to combine different ideas.

Being in the team makes me know more about myself. A team needs division of labor as everyone has their own skills, their own knowledge. By dividing the work, the team can work better and have more efficiency. For me, my main work is researching and programming. When I work with my teammates, I discovered my strengths. I have strong analytical power, good presentation skills and a lot of background knowledge in different area, these makes me a researcher in the team. I also have good programming skills, good logical thinking and critical, multi-angled thinking, these makes me an ideal programmer. During my work with teammates, I also discover my weaknesses. I am not very familiar with different parts; I also do not have a good “3D-sense”, which is very important to robot builders. Therefore I am not responsible in building the robot as others are better in this field.

Being in the team let me learn some important values. During competitions, I learn how to be honest, fair to everyone, also how to respect other teams. During preparations of different competitions, I learn how to discipline and how to concentrate on one thing but not being sidetracked. I also learn how to be optimistic and have fun during tense competitions while not loosing attention to other things.

Being in the team let me know how to share with others. Now I am in form 6 and I am going to leave the school soon. Other than being teammate, I am also a mentor of the team. New team members know nothing about robot. They do not know the traditions of the team, nor the flaws in the rules. They also do not have enough knowledge to complete the competition tasks. Therefore, being a senior member of the team, I teach these new members all I know, from scientific facts to skills to critical thinking. Being a teacher is not an easy task, these junior members is just like me when I was in form 2. By teaching all I knew to new members, the team can be as good as ever. Lastly, I would like to mention the greatest lost I had. Preparing for competitions is the most important task which the team does it every day. It is very time-consuming. After some calculations, I find that each year I spend at least a thousand hours to prepare for competitions. This consumes my time for studying, my time for doing revisions. Although it helps me to develop skills in planning, it still use up a lot of time. If I did not accept the invitation from the team coach when I was in form 2, I think that I would certainly have very good academic results. But in my point of view, although knowledge from books and teachers are important, they still cannot match with what I gained in the team during the years. If I reject the invitation, I think that I will be a “high in score but low in ability” student now. I would not regret joining the Robotics Team.

Example from Case Study 1 (Harold's Additional Information for JUPAS Application)

Since Form 2, I joined the robotics team of my school. After 5 years of being a team member, I had learnt a lot of things. The team built my personalities and let me understand myself.

Being a team member, I acquired a lot of different knowledge. Knowledge about robotics, such as robot modeling and programming, is one of the things that a learnt. During researches in preparing



for competitions, I also study topics such as Nano technology, renewable power sources in great depth. By reading books, searching on the internet, asking professors, I learn about these untaught topics. This actually let me to learn the skill of self-learning.

Being in the team also let me know more about myself. During working with teammates, I see what my strengths and my weaknesses are. For example, I am good at analyzing data, logical thinking, and understanding abstract concepts. These make me a good researcher and a good programmer. On the other side, I am not good at imagining virtue 3D structures, which make me not good at robot building. Being in the team let me had mental growth by letting me know more about myself. Lastly, I experience a lot in the team. I had represent Hong Kong to compete in global competitions for three times already. I went to Atlanta, Shanghai and Tokyo to participate the competitions. This gave me experience of travelling, also letting be to experience cultures in different places in the world. It also enhances my oral skills in Putonghua and English as I practice speaking these two languages a lot in the three places.

Joining the robotics team alters my life. It gave me confidence and it opens my eye. If I reject the invitation of joining the team when I was in form 2, my life and my personalities may be altered by a hundred and eighty degrees. I would never regret joining the Robotics Team.

Example from Case Study 2: Chan Siu Lai's Self-Account in SLP

我非常享受過去六年的中學生活。在這短短的時間裏，老師的感化，同學的影響，都使我改變了很多。下文我將首先整體描述我的變化，後會分享我一些特別的體驗。

從小性格文靜內向的我，在剛踏進中學校門時，心裡忐忑不安，害怕面對新環境、害怕認識新事物、害怕自己課業趕不上進度。幸好初中時，我遇到了和藹可親的老師和同學，他們從旁的協助及鼓勵使我積極了，又開始參與不同的課外活動，如：公益少年團、合唱團、手工藝學會等等。後來我也漸漸愛上了團體的生活，也在不同的活動中找到了自己的夢想。由於我參加了很多有關美術的活動，所以對這方面的認識慢慢加深了，亦發現了自己在設計方面特別有天份。在老師的鼓勵下，我便開始參加校內大大小小的比賽，使美術由最初單單是我減壓的方式，而變成了我最大的興趣，甚至是理想、夢想。

另外，在這些團體中，我變得更開朗。因為在不同的團體裡我能認識到有不同嗜好、不同年齡的同學，令我社交圈子擴闊了。比如說在合唱團裡我認識到很多師兄師姐，從與他們交談中，可以得到很多有關讀書的心得，有時更學到了待人處事的經驗；而且與其他同學相處時，我會發現大家有不同的喜好，有不同範疇的知識，而在交談間也擴闊了我的眼光。就是這樣，我漸漸知道更多不同事物，也漸漸學會怎樣與別人相處，而自己也變得更開放，更願意接受新事物，新挑戰；亦時常抱持敢於嘗試新事物的態度。

於是在高中時，由於多了「其他學習經歷」，令我有更多機會參與大型活動。如一次學校的舉辦的廣西山區兒童探望團令我有了第一次與國內同學學習的經驗，是次活動令我非常難忘。於活動中，我看見了小孩對知識的渴慕、追求和堅持；以及他們的知足常樂及珍惜生活的態度。對一個生活在香港小康之家的我，覺得一切事物是必然的，包括上學機會；但當我到了當地探訪後，我才明白我是幸運的一位，而我擁有的一切也不是必然的。記得山區一對姐弟，



他們每天要步行 3 小時上學，可是當我問他們會否因此感到辛苦，他們卻告訴我，覺得自己很幸運，因為不是每一個孩子也有上學的機會。他們這句話令我反省了我對生活的態度。

而在是次活動亦令我更明白雖然自己是幸運的一位，但社會上也有很多人需要別人幫助的人，所以回港後我便開始極積參與義工服務，參與了社會服務團，希望可以幫助到社會上有需要的人士，期望可以分享自己擁有的幸福。在服務團的日子裏，我多了很多幫助籌備活動的機會，雖然我不是擔當起團中領導的角色，可是我卻發現自己是個不錯的輔助者。因為我的點子多，當別人想到一個建議時，我往往能給予實踐的方向；而我「少說話多做事」我的性格卻能令我每一次也能專心一致的做好自己負責的工作。

在這多采多姿的中學生活中，我變得更勇敢面對和嘗試我未知的事物；亦讓我發掘到自己的優點及強項。

Example from Case Study 2: Chan Siu Lai's Additional Information for JUPAS application

Like many other students, all I wish to do is to get admitted by my most favourite university programme after my Secondary Six studies. In the last six years, I have strived for my best to have my dream come true and prepare myself to become a university student.

I am particularly keen on art, so I have joined many related activities in my secondary school life, ceramics, craftworks, sketching and painting, to name but a few. Also, I have acquired quite outstanding performances in this area. Not only did I once join the Handbook Cover-page Design Competition at school, but also I have participated in many other internal school competitions, such as the Inter-class Broad Design Competition, School Uniform Design competition as well as an external school competition, which is the Secondary School Sketching Competition 2010. These are invaluable experiences for me as they all have enhanced my personal growth and self-understanding. I have noted and confirmed in these competitions my advantage in art and design works. In the Handbook Cover-page Design Competition, I was awarded a merit. This is strong evidence that I can stand out from the others in this area.

Besides art and design, I am interested in participating in such other activities as the Social Service Group and the School Choir. In these groups, I usually took the role of being a loyal and reliable team member. For example, I have considerable experiences in helping committee members of the former group in planning activities. I was usually invited to give suggestions and asked to live up to the plan after the leaders had made decisions. I believe that my deployment in the various services and activities was due to my trustworthiness. Moreover, because I could act independently, I could concentrate on my tasks very well and finish my job efficiently.

I am highly aware of the condition of our society and I hope that one day, I can make use of my talents in art to improve our quality of life of the larger society. Last but not least, I believe the character traits I mentioned above can prove that I am a suitable candidate to be admitted to university and can have the ability to realize my dream.



Example from Case Study 3: Bobo's Self-Account in SLP

In my secondary school life, two important persons influence my thinking and planning of my career very much.

Mr Chun is one of my role models in life. He works in the Boys and Girls Clubs Association (BGCA). He is a social worker. I still remember his friendly face which made every one felt comfortable. Because of his encouragement and enthusiasm, I was convinced to take part in the activities there. Before I participated in the activities in BGCA in my estate, I was a timid and unconfident girl. I had no direction. I was poor and helped by social worker when I was small. I only understand that I was regarded inferior in society and of course, I did not think that I have any strength. It was Mr Chun who always encouraged me and inviting me to participate in the band of centre. After that, I was engaged to music. Participating in the band in BGCA is a turning point in my life. Not only did I have a chance to learn music, but I was also trained to be enduring and condident.

I learnt to practice playing the musical instrument and singing in the band. I like music very much. Music can help me relax and escape from the hectic and busy study life. Sometimes, I can feel that I can do something related to music in my career. Awards in competitions ensure me that I have the talent in music. Moreover, playing music in band earned me friendship and people skills. Whenever I have any problems, I make use of my time in playing music to release my pressure. I can also have a group of friends who share the same interest as me and whom I can talk my problems and seek advice from.

Most importantly, I learnt to be humble and hardworking in practicing playing the guitar because I know that being success should go through the process of tough training and practicing. In BGCA, our band was always given a lot of chances to join in music contests and performances for needy. To perform well, we spent a lot of time for preparation and rehearsals. The experiences made me understand that "practice makes perfect". My awards these few years in the singing contest in school confirm me that I should be serious in the thing I am doing just like my study. Playing the music is like studying. If I do not play effort and am careless, I cannot learn well. Therefore, I pay attention in the lesson and learn by heart. I am sure this attitude will make me learn well in school.

Moreover, playing good music in a band requires all members to work closely and harmonically. We have to understand each other well and work cooperatively. As we all understand that arguments are commonly found in team work. Whenever we have different opinions, we should be comprised, think positively, learn to be patient and accept differences, otherwise, we cannot work together and play good music to audience.

Another person I admire is my Mathematics teacher, Mr Ngan. He is also in charge of the guitar club in school. I am inspired and touched by his enthusiasm, good working attitude and care to students. He is a person with his own charm that influences students to learn and I hope that I can be like him as an influential person in future.

In junior forms, I found that Mathematics is a hard subject to study. I almost failed all mathematics examinations. I could not understand those difficult theories nor remember complicated formulas. I started being afraid of it. Lucky though, I can have Mr Ngan to be my math teachers in these two years. His teaching is fascinating. He always uses interesting life examples to explain difficult mathematics problems. This makes me and my classmates understand easily. His lessons are never



boring. Now, I like calculating and am always ready to take up challenges to do difficult mathematics problems. I improve in this subject a lot. I also learn to be willing to take risks to meet challenges.

I know Mr Ngan best only I joint in the guitar club. I discover that not only is Mr Ngan good at math, he is also a music talent. He plays the guitar well. In fact, Mr Ngan is a kind hearted teacher though he looks stern and cool. Most importantly, when he teaches us playing the guitar, he also shares with us the life experiences, such as choosing subjects and how he got into university. I learn a lot from him and feel that if a person has passion on doing a thing, he or she can work well.

Example from Case Study 3: Bobo's Additional Information for JUPAS application (around 300 words)

The grievances of citizens towards the recent government budget introduced by our Financial Secretary John Tsang Chun-wah has revealed a lot of social problems. I have mixed feelings as I was once in the underprivileged group in society and received assistance from social workers. Being inspired by two important persons in my secondary school life, I determine to study an area to prepare myself to work for and with people.

The first one is Mr Chun who works in Boys and Girls Clubs Association (BGCA). He invited me to participate in the voluntary work in his centre in my Form 3. At that time I was chosen to play a musical instrument in the band of the centre. Participating in the band enabled me to understand myself more and made me learn correct attitude towards playing music and study. The band in BGCA was given a lot of chances to participate in different competitions and performances for the needy. Performing experiences, like singing and playing the guitar to the sick children in hospital made me feel contented and great. I also deeply understand that "practice makes perfect" as our successful performance and success in competitions had to gone through a series of tough training, practising, rehearsals and also cooperation among team players. The experience makes me understand that I have to pay effort and be serious if I want to study well. Moreover, I learn to be cooperative, patient and accept differences. I am sure these are important qualities required to be a university student and a successful person in the working world.

Another important person who influences me is my Mathematics teacher who is also responsible for the school guitar club. His talent and enthusiasm in teaching, serious attitude towards work and sincere care to students make me understand that teaching is a career which is not only to teach students knowledge, but can also influence students thinking and even their entire life. I therefore determine to contribute myself to teaching or a career relating to helping people in future.



Example from Case Study 3: Teacher's Reference for Bobo's Application to Study Overseas

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to recommend Miss Bobo Lau for admission to your university for the following reasons.

During the past six years in our school, Miss Lau not only worked hard consistently but she has also made a great contribution to the general services and student life within the school. She is an outgoing and active girl. She actively joined many school activities, like, Guitar Club, inter-house singing contest, Taekwondo and inter-house drama competition. She always took important roles in school, such as being the chairlady of the Guitar Club, the committee member of the Photography Club, the English club, the Economics Club and the Red House in 2009-2010. She is an extremely gifted musician. Her guitar playing has given her many precious experiences. In 2009 and 2010, she won the school music contests for her guitar playing. She was also invited to play guitar for sick children in hospital as a voluntary worker by Boys & Girls Clubs Association in 2008 to 2010. Besides, Miss Lau passed the Grade 6 guitar in 2010 and grade 5 music theory in 2009 of the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music.

Bobo is a very trustworthy and mature person who receives high regards both from her teachers and fellow classmates. Her enthusiastic and initiative in arranging the Musical events in her voluntary work enriched her experience in organising ability and musical development. She is always very keen to improve in all areas.

I therefore believe that she will benefit a great deal from studying at university and will be able to make a positive contribution to both the university and to society in the future.

Thank you so much for your consideration.



Writing Recommendations for Students

RECOMMENDATION LETTER STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS:

1. Choose your teacher wisely
 - Admissions officers want letters from important subjects such as math, science, and English, NOT physical education, art, or drama. Choose a teacher who has taught you during the year the application is made.
2. Ask your teacher if the letter will be positive
 - Make sure you know that the letter will be a positive one by asking directly. If you feel the teacher is hesitant in any way, then back out of the request. The worst thing you can do is insist that the teacher write you a letter, only to end up with a lukewarm or negative letter. A lukewarm letter may not damage your application, but a negative letter will.
3. Give plenty of time
 - Give your teacher/counselor at least one month to write your letter. You know how many students they have, so be considerate and give them plenty of time. To give your letter writer enough time, it means that you need to start preparing your application well in advance. If you are very well prepared, you can ask for a letter before summer vacation begins. That way, your teacher/counselor has the summer to write your letter.
4. Get someone who knows you personally
 - Ask a teacher who has taught you recently. This teacher should know you well as a person, not just your performance in class. You should not ask a teacher who has given you an A but does not know you well. Remember that the “A” is already reflected on your transcript. You are looking for a teacher who can help make you an individual rather than pieces of information on paper.
5. Get someone who will write specifically about you
 - Provide a background summary sheet for easy reference. Personalize the sheet to include experiences you had in class (discussions, activities, projects, etc.). Include what you learned in the class. The sheet should include your college plans, extracurricular activities, GPA, test scores, intellectual interests, hobbies, and other information that makes you different from others.



RECOMMENDATION LETTER STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS: UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCE: RECOMMENDATION LETTERS AND THEIR STRUCTURE

Audience:

1. Who reads these recommendation letters?
2. How important are recommendation letters in a student's application?
3. What do readers look for in recommendation letters?

Recommendation Letter Structure:

Date

Salutation

Introduction:

Name of student you are recommending
How you know the student
Why you think the student is worthy of admission

Body:

Specific qualities and characteristics of student
Include anecdotes and details
Relate these qualities and characteristics to what
the university may be looking for

Conclusion:

Restate strengths
Include contact information and title
Sign the letter

Content:

1. Introduce the school, especially about the academic performance in general, so as to allow the audience to understand the relative standard of graduates and the student recommended.
2. Introduce how the referee get know to the student and elaborate performance of the student in the subject which is relevant to his/her potential field of study. Your content reveals whether you really know the student well and support his/her application.
3. Support "big words" with evidences or recall specific instances that reveal the uniqueness of the student.
4. Focus more on the student's intellectual capacity and strengths instead of describing how "nice" the student is.



Excerpt

___:

I am writing to recommend ___ for a vacancy in Y. ___ is currently my student in Liberal Studies with an Individual Enquiry Study working on the “Youth Culture on Facebook”. I have worked with her and find her responsible and highly capable. She is an energetic, enthusiastic, and creative scholar, and I know that she can instill enthusiasm in the students she works with.

___’s enthusiasm for learning is impressive and in some cases extracurricular: she is self-taught in A, B, and C. An important fact is that she was admitted to the DDD Youth Leadership program in social public policy after achieving competitive scores on the school internal exams.

I highly recommend her. If you would like to discuss this recommendation further, please let me know.

Comments:

Recommendation Letter Excerpt B:

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to support Ms. ___, who has just finished the first year of coursework in ABC, to apply for the XYZ. Currently she is preparing her research proposal. As I know she was majored in German and English in her undergraduate studies. She is a responsible and I believe she is competent in the mentioned position at XYZ.

Comments:



Recommendation Letter Excerpt C:

Dear XXX:

I am pleased to write this recommendation letter in support of Ms. ____, an extraordinary students in my class and an exceptional candidate among your prospective pool of candidates.

I am an English teacher at AAA and teach BBB. Ms. ____ is one of the students in my class, and I would like to say she is one of the best students I have ever met in AAA.

Ms. ____ has greatly impressed me with her intellect and diligence. Her self-introduction on the first day of class was interesting and attractive. In comparison with her classmates, she clearly exhibits much more advanced English skills in writing, pronunciation and fluency in speaking. Besides, she also shows valuable qualities of clear thinking, enthusiasm, and self-confidence.

During the classes of this semester, Ms. ____ has distinguished herself as an outstanding student in English. In class, she is always active, expressing ideas and sharing opinions with others. Moreover, when encountering problems and uncertainties concerning the English usage, unlike most other students, she will bring up the questions and try to share and discuss in class.

Additionally, Ms. ____ is warm-hearted and helpful person who is eager to help and contribute. She has been an excellent assistant in my class who has been helping me to distribute class materials and deliver class messages.

Comments:

Recommendation Letter Excerpt D:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Ms. ____ who has applied for XXX. Ms. ____ was a student in three courses I taught. So I had a chance to observe her academic performance over one and half years.

Ms. ____ was one of the top two or three students in my classes, probably the best. She commands the English and Chinese languages exceptionally well. Her work often strikes my colleagues and myself by exquisite quality and fine style. She writes essays clearly and thoughtfully. Not only is she highly able to conduct studies meticulously on her own, but constantly she plays a constructive and cooperative role when doing teamwork. Her class presentations are always well prepared and convincingly delivered. She reads widely, and is broadly interested.

In addition, Ms. ____ has been actively engaged in extra-curricular activities. She won, of a good number of achievements, the first prize in the W contest when she was a sophomore. Her long



stories are published in the first and second issues of T magazine. She also plays viola in the orchestra.

Ms. ____ has a passion for letters. I strongly believe that Ms. ____, if she is given the chance, will be strong

Comments:

Recommendation Letter Excerpt E:

Dear Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Ms. ____ for this prestigious scholarship. I have known Ms. ____ since AAA when she performed with distinction in my Use of English classes at X. Her academic record is exceptional and her work ethic unquestionable. Ms. ____ is a uniquely talented individual and a caring human being and well deserves this Y scholarship.

Ms. ____ is currently a student at Q. She is well suited for this degree as she has consistently demonstrated her dedication to honing her craft of teaching. She also has the right kind of personality to become an effective English language instructor in a voluntary service group for the elderly and ethnic groups in our community. Thoughtful, patient, and diligent, I recommended that B recruit her to serve as a coordinator of the English Ambassador Program which initiates whole-school English language promotion events and cultural exchange programs with international studies from Z university. Surpassing even the highest of expectations, Ms. ____ has helped to foster the language exchange opportunities between X and Z.

Such are the experiences that will assist Ms. ____ in her pursuit of her degree in E. Specifically, her combined academic and extra-curricular experiences will allow her to design and develop teaching and learning materials appropriate for diversified groups in school and local community. This focus is precisely why Ms. ____ should be awarded a scholarship. I have no doubt that she will make significant contributions to improving English education upon her graduation. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at...

Comments:



Recommendation Letter Excerpt F: Susan who excelled irrespective of adversities

I am writing in support of Susan who has applied for the Quantitative Finance Program in your prestigious university. Our school, with majority of students having high calibre, uses to have around 85% of graduates successfully admitted by university degree programs. A general description of our school's public examination results can be found at ZZZ.

Susan has caught our attention since she was admitted as our Form 1 student. Her academic potential is most remarkable though she was a Band-two student according to the admission record. She excels in all subjects. What's most impressive to us is her keenness and enthusiasm in pursuing knowledge, especially on science and mathematics. She enjoys the challenges from difficult problem-solving tasks, as what her Math teacher commented. She is eager to ask teachers sensible questions and work independently on extra workload, such as the determination to take an extra subject (Economics) in the HKCEE without formal coaching from school teacher. Susan's result in HKCEE is the strongest proof of her effort and intellectual capacity. However, all these achievements made become much more precious when we consider her background.

Susan was an immigrant from the Mainland and was admitted as a P.3 student in an age of 12. She started learning ABC in P.3, and with a consistent effort to attend tutorial classes for over a year and to complete additional drilling exercises, she managed to be ranked the top 50% in her school. She overcame the challenge of learning English language and integrating into the local culture, as well as the threatening financial situation of her family, despite the fact that humiliation from people around was not rare incidences. Yet people's harshness was transformed into the driving force for her determination to strive for excellence in later years.

What Susan has demonstrated is an exceptional quality we envision in young people – boldness to face adversities with a high EQ. ...

Comments:



Recommendation Letter Excerpt G: The versatile Sunny

Sunny is a talented musician. He won prizes in Vocal Solo of the Annual School Music and Speech Festival in three consecutive years. At school, he was a committed Chair part-leader, leading 100 members, and a Brass Band member. Throughout these years, he took up the training role. His commitment and enthusiasm had helped develop skills of the members and team spirit in our school choir.

Sunny is a talented sportsman. He was the Best Sportsman in our School Sports Days. Besides, he is now a team member of the "Union Team" of China Hong Kong Volleyball Association. These achievements are results of tough training, strong sense of determination and endurance.

Sunny is a talented leader. He was a responsible office bearer of the Student Union when he was in S.4. He managed to coordinate inter-house and inter-school competitions and organized activities for over 1000 students in the school. His performance was outstanding. This experience forms a strong basis for his role as a House Captain in S.6. He is a person-centred leader. Not only did he try to train lower form students with skills in sports and play, he also showed genuine care and gave advice when they had personal problems. Most of the house members became so supportive and cooperative that they finally won the first runner up in the keen year-round inter-house challenge.

Sunny, with such a profound record in extra-curricular activities and admirable personality, will be an excellent candidate for your school.

Comments:

Recommendation Letter Excerpt H: May – good enough but not standing out

I am writing to facilitate your understanding towards my student, Miss May Lee, who I appreciate very much. I taught May Biology and had been her Class Teacher for two years. I have been impressed by her cheerful and outgoing personality. She was an active member of the Class Association who always demonstrated an eagerness to build up class spirit by coordinating various class activities. She was a Vice Captain of the badminton team during 2006-2007 and a Vice Captain of Virtue House during 2007-2007. Not only she demonstrated a spirit of sportsmanship in the former activity, her leadership had also been proven. Organizing and motivating over 250 students in the school to take part in the inter-house competitions were never an easy task. However, the outstanding performance of her house is a solid proof of her capability. She has also taken part in doing voluntary work in community centers. She is the kind of people who is always ready to give a helping hand to people in need.



Considering her academic performance, she was an active learner. She did not excel in every subject she took, but she was keen to seek improvement with her determination and actions. She is clever, and at the same time she sets clear goals for herself. Understanding the importance of having a satisfactory English proficiency, she has tried to improve her English standard through various means. In the school year 2001-2002, she was offered “The Best Reader” in class in the English Reading Scheme due to her brilliant record in extensive reading.

A student who understands her own strengths, weaknesses, and is willing to pay effort to strive for improvement, is the self-initiated learner who would succeed in her further study and even her career in the long run. Without hesitation, I highly recommend May for your institution.

Comments:



References

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- O'Leary, J. Kennedy, P., & Horseman, N. (2010). The Times Good University Guide 2010. London: The Times Newspaper Limited.

On-line Resources:

From www.about.com:

Good Letters of Recommendation:

<http://businessmajors.about.com/od/recommendationletter1/a/GoodRecLetters.htm>

Recommendation Letters - Sample Recommendation Letter - Undergrad Student:

<http://businessmajors.about.com/od/samplererecommendations/a/RecSample9.htm>

From www.education.com:

College Admissions:

<http://www.education.com/topic/college-admissions/>

College Essay Examples:

<http://www.education.com/topic/college-essay-examples/#page1/>

General Outline of the Recommendation Letter:

http://www.education.com/Graduate/General_Outline_of_the_Recommendation_Letter.html

From **Purdue University**:

Writing the Personal Statement:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/>

From **UC Berkeley**:

Characteristics of a Good Personal Essay:

<http://students.berkeley.edu/apa/personalstatement/gettingstarted.html>

From www.education.com:

Free Sample Personal Essays:

<http://www.education.com/personalstatement/sample.htm>

Sample Letter of Recommendation:

<http://www.education.com/reference/teacher.htm>

From www.ucas.ac.uk :

Useful Tips on writing personal statements:

<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/applying/howtoapply/personalstatement/>

For referees on writing references:

<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/advisers/online/references>

From [http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Category:Personal Statements by Subject](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Category:Personal_Statements_by_Subject): a website on personal statements with loads of examples particular to different disciplines