Writing a personal statement

Wonderful things happen here.
The personal statement is arguably the most important part of the UCAS application. It is your opportunity to tell universities why you want to study a particular course and demonstrate your passion and enthusiasm for the subject.

Universities will use the personal statement to compare you to other candidates with similar grades. Not all universities will interview their applicants, so use this opportunity to showcase your skills and experience.

The personal statement can only be 4000 characters/47 lines of text long (including spaces and blank lines), so it needs to be clear and concise whilst showcasing your relevant achievements and talents. If you can demonstrate an enthusiastic, intellectual curiosity about your chosen subject (using your own words) then you will convey the best possible impression of yourself to the admissions tutor.

What can be included?
This isn’t an exhaustive list, but you may wish to consider the following questions before drafting your statement:

• Why do you want to study this particular subject/course?
• How have your current studies helped you prepare for this next step?
• How have you gone above and beyond the curriculum to demonstrate your interest in this subject? (e.g., books you’ve read, taster sessions you’ve attended if relevant)
• What skills and experience (including work experience if relevant) do you have that would help you succeed at this course and at university generally?
• What achievements have you felt particularly proud of?
• What are your interests/hobbies? What skills have you acquired?
• What do you hope to gain from University? What are your career aspirations?

Generally speaking, 75% of the statement should be academic (course-related) and 25% can focus on extra-curricular activities. Do try, where possible, to link your extra-curricular activities to skills that will help you succeed at university.

Some dos and don’ts from Admissions Tutors...

DO...
• Reference authors/artists when you’re writing about specific research or any additional reading you’ve completed
• Be reflective – explain why you made certain choices and what you’ve learnt from your experiences
• Be honest about your achievements – you may be asked about them at interview!
• Ensure you have clear structure and use paragraphs
• Be clear and concise about the points you are making
• Spell check, proof read and show it to teachers and parents to ensure there are no mistakes
• Be passionate about your chosen course

DON’T...
• Plagiarise – UCAS have advanced software to detect this and will know
• Mention a specific institution unless you are only applying to one
• Talk about your current syllabus in lots of detail
• Try and be funny or controversial