

LESSON 26

Revising for Voice and Specificity

60 minutes

Strand 1.1: Understanding Myself

Applying

Feeds ALT 1

Outcome LCW.M1.S1.ALT1.1

Outcome LCW.M1.S1.SKL.5

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, revise your personal statement by converting vague claims into specific, evidenced statements. Annotate a sample draft for voice and specificity, then rewrite three sentences in your own draft to reflect your unique experiences.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M1.S1.ALT1.1	create and develop a personal statement.
LCW.M1.S1.SKL.5	identify transferable skills they demonstrate particular strengths in, and those that require further development, illustrating how these skills have developed.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Revise vague claims into specific evidenced statements
- Keep voice that sounds like one person, not every applicant
- Update the main draft after the voice and specificity pass

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
Voice	The sense that a real person wrote this piece: concrete details, honest wording, and a rhythm that sounds like you when read aloud.	A line naming a Bishopstown after-school club and a six-year-old learning to read, rather than 'I love working with children'
Specificity	Naming the place, the time, the action and the result so a stranger can picture what actually happened.	I held a 12-hour-a-week job at the café on Pearse Street through Junior Cert year
Evidence	A checkable fact or short story that proves a claim, instead of the claim standing alone.	I rang three suppliers when the fundraiser order fell through in October

BEFORE THE BELL

- Confirm students can open Strand 1.1 portfolio files on their devices.
- Prepare printed copies of Oisín's sample draft for any student without a device (same three margin tags: vague / specific / generic).
- Missing Draft 1 recovery: student opens Lesson 25 materials and writes a minimum three-sentence Draft 1 from Strong Skills Evidence, Achievements or What Others See before joining the rewrite.
- Have students open Personal Statement Draft 1 on their devices. The annotator is the skill warm-up; the portfolio artefact is the three revised sentences plus the two-line note.
- On screen this lesson: document annotator.

Revising for Voice and Specificity

HOW THE LESSON RUNS		
5 min	introduction	Getting Started
5 min	content	Key Terms
35 min	activity	Fix Three Vague Sentences
10 min	content	Think About It
5 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Confirm every student has **Personal Statement Draft 1** open in their Strand 1.1 portfolio folder before you start the main step. Anyone missing it: open Lesson 25 materials and produce a minimum three-sentence Draft 1 drawn from **Strong Skills Evidence, Achievements** or **What Others See**, save it as **Personal Statement Draft 1** in Strand 1.1, then join the rewrite. This is an ALT 1 checkpoint: voice and specificity pass.

5 min Key Terms

Spend under five minutes here. The test line to say aloud: *Could only you have written this sentence?* If the answer is no, it is not ready.

35 min Fix Three Vague Sentences On screen: document annotator

OFFLINE / NO-DEVICE PATH

If a student has no device for the annotator: issue a printed copy of Oisín's draft. They mark the same three tags (vague / specific / generic) in the margin, then compare against the IWB model reveal. Alternatively pair them with a device buddy for the challenge pass only. Everyone still produces the portfolio artefact: three before-and-after pairs and the two-line note in **Personal Statement Revision Voice**, plus an updated main draft.

SUGGESTED TIMING

- **12-15 mins:** document annotator in challenge mode on the IWB and devices (or paper tags in the margin). Reveal the model. Take one or two starred disagreements only.
- **20-23 mins:** independent revision of three sentences, two-line note, and draft update. Circulate for vague leftovers such as 'passionate', 'dedicated', 'team player', 'always give 100%'.

LOOK-FORS

- Each revised line names a place, time, action or result
- Before-and-after pairs and the two-line note are saved, not only the polished draft
- Voice still sounds like the student when read aloud

DIFFERENTIATION

Students stuck on evidence return to **Strong Skills Evidence, Achievements** or **What Others See** in Strand 1.1. Anyone finished early runs the same pass on a fourth sentence or the opening paragraph.

10 min Think About It

Keep this to a short pair-share. Listen for students defending a vague line because it 'sounds professional'. Push gently: *professional still has to be true and checkable*. Spot-check that the two-line note is already under the pairs in the portfolio file; if not, they add it now before the summary.

5 min What you covered

Spot-check that **Personal Statement Revision Voice** exists with before-and-after pairs and the two-line note, and that the main draft file has actually changed. Flag anyone who only listed intentions to revise. Optional stretch if time remains: run the same pass on the opening paragraph only.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- "hard-working and motivated student who always gives 100 percent" - Vague claim: no evidence - Three empty claims stacked together. No place, hours, task or result. Anyone could write this.
- "passionate about helping people and I work well as part of a team" - Generic voice: could be anyone - The default social-care sentence. It names a feeling and a slogan, not a moment only Oisín lived.
- "Communication is one of my strongest skills and I am a natural leader" - Vague claim: no evidence - Skills named without a situation. A reader cannot check either claim.
- "two-week placement at Oakwood Day Centre" - Specific and evidenced - Named place and length. This is the kind of anchor a whole paragraph can hang on. (Fictional sample placement.)
- "sat with him, followed the staff plan we had been shown, and stayed..." - Specific and evidenced - Action, procedure, and handover. This is evidence of care and judgement, not a claim about being caring.
- "play hurling for my club, which has taught me discipline and..." - Vague claim: no evidence - The club is real, but the lesson is a slogan. What match, role or week would prove the discipline?
- "help me achieve my goals and make a real difference" - Generic voice: could be anyone - Closing wallpaper. Swap for what he wants to learn on the PLC and why the day-centre placement pointed him there.
- "dedicated, reliable and always willing to learn" - Generic voice: could be anyone - Adjective pile at the end. Cut it or replace with one checkable habit from the placement.

TEACHING MOVES

- Model the annotation of the sample draft with the whole class first (IWB model reveal works for device and paper paths).
- Circulate during the rewrite activity to prompt for concrete details and evidence.
- Listen during pair shares for students defending vague lines and challenge gently.
- Confirm at the end that Personal Statement Revision Voice (pairs + two-line note) exists and the main draft file has been updated.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students keep generic phrases as they sound professional; remind them that such writing must still be true and checkable.
- Students cannot identify three vague sentences; guide them to claims without specific places, times or actions.
- Students only note plans to revise without making changes; require saving the updated draft and the revision file.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: Offer a few example vague phrases to help identify issues in their own work; point them back to Strong Skills Evidence, Achievements or What Others See.
- Support: Permit students to work in pairs for annotation and rewriting; offline students pair with a device buddy for the challenge pass only if needed.
- Extension: Ask students to revise more than three sentences if time allows.

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- Personal Statement Revision Voice: three revised sentences plus updated main draft