

Ideas for Wider Reading

'Super-curricular exploration' is the term we [Cambridge] use when talking about the wider reading and research that we hope to see in the applications we receive. The personal statement is an applicant's opportunity to show that they are genuinely interested in their subject and what they have done to pursue that interest in terms of wider reading. It can often be a challenge for students to know what they should be looking at and where to find more information. There is plenty of support available and listed below are some good starting points.

It is important that students read critically by thinking carefully about the arguments, assumptions and evidence being presented by the author. Reading quality news sources can be a useful way to begin to practise assessing arguments and weighing evidence. Oxbridge candidates will also be expected to have a current working knowledge of their subject in the news, so it is vital they stay abreast of current affairs.

Students should aim to read one broadsheet each weekend: *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent* or *The Daily Telegraph*. This can then be supplemented with the *Economist*, *Prospect Magazine*, or the *New Statesman*, all available in the 6th form library.

They should also endeavour to use the internet to develop their interest in a chosen area.

General On-line resources

www.bbc.co.uk

This should become your best friend. Listening to articulate, intelligent debate will help you to understand how to formulate your ideas, and how to discuss your subject at interview. You should be listening to the *Today* programme at least three times a week, as well as looking at programmes like *In Our Time*.

www.aljazeera.com

Examine the news from a different perspective.

<http://staircase12.univ.ox.ac.uk/>

University College Oxford's online hub of resources for students aiming high at school and thinking about applying to top universities. There are numerous resources to help students develop their interests, book reviews from current undergrads to help them 'read around' a chosen subject and also ideas for stretching students beyond the school syllabus (now an essential for entry to highly selective universities).

www.discoverdowning.com

Downing College, one of the Colleges of the University of Cambridge, has developed a website containing a wealth of information, including blogs on student life, podcasts and lectures.

www.myheplus.com/

Conversational in style, there are subject resources here to develop new interests and academic skills.

www.futurelearn.com

Enjoy free online courses from top universities and specialist organisations.

www.gresham.ac.uk

Gresham College has been providing free public lecture on a plethora of subjects for over 400 years. The website includes a guide to subjects and digital archive of past lectures, many of which are available as podcasts.

www.bbc.co.uk/iwonder

BBC iWonder provides thought-provoking answers to fascinating questions sparked by **BBC** programmes, the news, anniversaries and world events.

www.open.edu/itunes/

Part of Apple's iTunes store, **iTunes U** is a vast learning resource offering free educational content that users can download straight to their computer, iPad or iPod.

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/explore>

With a slightly different focus to the iTunes U version, there is a wealth of learning opportunities on this website.

<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/>

This free site features public lectures, teaching material, interviews with leading academics, information about applying to the University, and much more.

<https://www.ted.com/talks>

TED is a non-profit organisation devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. They upload extremely interesting lectures on a range of subjects.

Subject-specific resources

Your teachers will be delighted to share their passion and enthusiasm with you. Ask for advice.

Architecture:

<http://www.bdonline.co.uk/the-10-books-every-architecture-student-should-read/5060070.article>

The RIBA website <http://www.architecture.com/>

Economics:

Institute for Economic Affairs: www.iea.org.uk/

The Economist magazine: www.economist.com/

National Institute of Economic and Social Research: www.niesr.ac.uk/

International Monetary Fund: www.imf.org.external/

Age of Instability by David Smith

The Ascent of Money by Niall Ferguson
New Ideas from Dead Economists by Todd G. Buchholz
Why Globalization Works by Martin Wolf
The Economic Naturalist Robert H Frank

English

Booker Prize (<http://www.themanbookerprize.com/>)

Aim to read the winner, and at least two shortlisted authors, for the Booker Prize (current year and previous two). Compare to another literary prize.

Be familiar with one collection of poetry by the Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy. You could read a pre-twentieth century poet laureate for the purposes of comparison.

Read the review pages in the weekend papers, in order to acquire more terminology and see how the experts write about books.

Try to go to Cineworld Live as often as possible, and also try to visit the theatre at least once.

www.english.cam.ac.uk/cambridgeauthors

The website of the British Library <http://www.bl.uk>

The Times Literary Supplement <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/>

The Poetry Society poetrysociety.org.uk/

The National theatre www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/

Geography

National Geographic: www.nationalgeographic.com/

Geographical Association: <http://geography.org.uk/>

Royal Geographical Society: <http://rgs.org/>

Geological Society: www.geolsoc.org.uk/index.html

British Geological Survey: www.bgs.ac.uk

Imagined Communities by Benedict Anderson

Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping our Lives by Anthony Giddens

History

History Today: www.historytoday.com

A set of collections of public domain and copy-permitted original sources:

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/index.asp>

Historical Association: www.royalhistoricalsociety.org/

British Museum: www.britishmuseum.org/explore.aspx

In Our Time BBC Radio 4

Very Short Introductions, published by OUP. These short introduction series are written by experts and contain good analysis as well as an overview of the bigger picture. Utilise them to investigate the area you are interested in.

In Defence of History by Richard Evans

The Reprieve by Jean-Paul Sartre

Aim to read at least one biography in a figure you are interested in (Mr Devlin can assist you with this).

Law

Department of Justice: www.justice.gov.uk/

Judiciary of England and Wales: www.judiciary.gov.uk/

Legislation database: www.legislation.gov.uk/

Counsel Magazine: www.counselmagazine.co.uk

Guardian Law pages: www.guardian.co.uk/law

BBC Law in Action: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tgy1

Modern and Medieval Languages:

Read newspapers and magazines, watch TV and films and listen to the radio. Read literature in English translation, as well as trying some in the original language.

Newspapers:

Le Monde: www.lemonde.fr

Suddeutsche Zeitung: www.suddeutsche.de

El Pais: www.elpais.com

Corriere Della Sera: www.corriere.it

Diario de Noticias: www.dn.pt

www.multikultura.org.uk/ (German, Spanish and French exercises)

Philosophy

Philosophical Society: www.philosophicalsociety.com

The Moral Maze BBC Radio 4

Why I am not a Christian by Bertrand Russell

The Puzzle of Ethics by Peter Vardy

Politics:

Oxford Politics microsite: <http://politicsinspires.org/>

Political Studies Association: www.psa.ac.uk

UK parliament: www.parliament.uk/

United Nations: www.un.org/en/

Chatham House www.chathamhouse.org/

Amnesty: <http://amnesty.org/>

The Economist

Models of Democracy by David Held

On Liberty by J S Mill

Leviathan by Thomas Hobbes

The Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Sociology

British Sociological Association: www.britisoc.co.uk/

British Journal of Sociology: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/BJS/home.aspx>

Listen to the BBC Thinking Allowed: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes

The Communist Manifesto

The Female Eunuch by Germaine Greer

The Sciences

New Scientist: www.newscientist.com/

Scientific American: www.scientificamerican.com/

Cambridge Science Podcasts: www.thenaskedsScientists.com/HTML/podcasts

Oxford Science Podcasts: <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/units/mathematical-physical-life-sciences-division>

Oxford Science Blog: www.ox.ac.uk/media/science_blog/

Engineering

Online library and Engineering web forum: www.engineering.com/

Royal Academy of Engineering: www.raeng.org.uk/

Institution of Civil Engineering: www.ice.org.uk/

Mathematics

www.maths.ox.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduate/practice-problems

Millenium Mathematics Project: <http://mmp.maths.org/>

Institute of Mathematics: www.ima.org.uk

Plus Magazine: <http://plus.maths.org/content/>

Further Maths Support Network: www.fmnetwork.org.uk/#

<https://brilliant.org> An excellent website with hundreds of problems to help you build your problem solving skills.

STEP website: www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/step

National Cipher Challenge: www.cipher.maths.soton.ac.uk/

Alex through the Looking Glass: How Life reflects Numbers and Numbers reflect Life by Alex Bellos

17 Equations That Changed the World by Ian Stewart

The Great Mathematical Problems Ian Stewart

How Many Socks Make a Pair? Rob Eastaway

Medicine/Veterinary Medicine: (see also Natural Sciences)

British Medical Association: <http://bma.org.uk/>

Royal Society of Medicine mailing list: www.rsm.ac.uk/medicalcareers/index.php

Online introduction to anatomy:

http://camtools.cam.ac.uk/access/content/group/071fad89-2687-4b3f-0047-a99afea45e73/Basic%20Anatomy/fabinfo/basic_anatomy.htm

Wellcome Trust: www.wellcome.ac.uk

Human Genome Project: <http://genome.wellcome.ac.uk/>

Oxford Medical School Gazette: www.oms-gonline.com/

Institute of Biomedical Science: www.ibms.org/

Physiological Society: www.physoc.org/

British Veterinary Association: www.bva.co.uk

Biological, Biomedical and Life Sciences and Zoology: (see also Medicine/Vet Med)

Wellcome Trust: www.wellcome.ac.uk/

Human Genome Project: <http://genome.wellcome.ac.uk/>

Educational resources at the Natural History Museum:

www.nhm.ac.uk/education/index.html

Institute of Zoology: www.zsl.org/science

Botanical Sciences at Kew: www.key.org/

The Blind Watch Maker by Richard Dawkins

Selfish Gene by Richard Dawkins

Chemistry

Royal Society of Chemistry: www.rsc.org

Chemistry World Online: www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/

Biochemical Society: www.biochemistry.org/

Biochemistry for schools: www.biochem4schools.org/

Physics

Institute of Physics (including free membership for 16-19 year olds) www.physics.org/

British Physics Olympiad: www.physics.ox.ac.uk/olmpiad

Oxford Astronomy site: www.galaxyzoo.org/

A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking

A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson