

Fashion and Textiles

My enthusiasm for Fashion and Textile design originated at a Southwark Summer School in 2002. This course gave me an insight into the design process, and showed me how mood boards and thumbnail sketches contribute to the development of a final design. [You haven't said how this will feed into your degree? This is a really good personal trigger but you need to explain exactly what impact this had on you and how it influenced your decision to study Fashion and Textiles at University.]

Through my A-Level studies and further projects outside school, I have come to see the importance of the Fashion and Textile industries in society. This is reinforced by the emergence of Textiles in the other courses I study. Whether it is costume in Theatre Studies, or how, in English, Chaucer uses clothing to describe his characters, or even in History, where you can see the social context in which fashion is created. [Well done! You have linked your other A-Levels to your passion for Fashion. Just make sure that each sentence reads well and makes sense.]

Clothing can say a lot about a person. Fashion can define who someone is and directly portray their identity and culture as well as being a clear reflection and highlighter of social changes. Technology is also fundamental; changes in manufacturing technique and the availability of new materials and fibres keep the industry in a constant state of progression.

Fashion, however, is not without controversy. The primitive and exploitative production methods in sweatshops and in the Third World attract disapproval [excellent use of current affairs to demonstrate that you read and take interest in your discipline outside of the classroom. You could have included a sentence about a particular case study on sweatshops to strengthen your point.]. Yet the industry is so vast and plays such a vital economic role, that it is impossible to envisage a society without it. My concern about the 'throw-away' society and its impact on the environment led me to set up and host a fashion show, promoting second hand and recycled clothing. I wanted to show the benefits of recycling, and to encourage a more responsible attitude towards fashion. The overall experience was extremely valuable as it enhanced my leadership skills and developed my organisational abilities. [Excellent!]

I subsequently visited many other fashion shows, particularly by 'Fashion Awareness Direct'. I was so impressed by their ethos that I arranged a Work Placement with them. This focused on workshops for year 10 students, encouraging them to develop their own skills in designing and making. I was then asked to return to help run more fashion shows and other events. Working with FAD reinforced not only my interest in the industry as a whole but my passion for the technical aspects of designing. [Maybe you could have linked this to what you are looking forward to in your course. Are there any modules that you can relate this to?]

The role of technology was emphasised for me when my Textiles teacher selected me to join her on a professional training course for teachers about a new CAD programme: 'Speedstep'. This gave me insight into the technical advancements of design, as well as harnessing my ICT abilities.

I explored the function of Fashion and Textiles in other fields when I arranged to visit Sands Film Studios. I went to look at their collection of costumes as inspiration for my coursework - a dress for Darcey Bussell. This coursework revealed the reasons for my love of textiles: the combination of the creative and the practical. [This is a really fantastic extra-curricular activity. Try to avoid breaking up your paragraphs like this. Remember that there should be a very clear structure to your personal statement and using small paragraphs like this, does not show the admissions tutor that you have used a clear, defined structure.]

My inspiration for the dress came largely from attending weekly dance classes for 5 years, during which I was involved in 3 major public performances. I also took part in many drama courses, including the Young Vic, the Globe, Central and RADA, as well as playing leading roles in two school productions. This, as well as my participation in a public speaking course, has helped me gain confidence and work successfully as part of a team. I found that these transferable skills also came in useful when I took the role of a mentor to a year 9 student, and during my weekly volunteering at an after school club for young children.

I hope to continue to volunteer with children in Kenya during my Gap year, as well as travel to Vietnam, India and South America. I anticipate this Gap year will allow me not only to develop as a person, but also intellectually through seeing different cultures and traditions. [Great stuff! It's always important to state what you intend to do on your gap year and volunteering work / course-related job work are two great ways to convey your passion and interest in the subject] While I am away I will be collecting materials, fabrics and inspiration to expand my passion further. This, with the opportunities available at university, will extend my interest and knowledge in the subject but hopefully also further my career prospects.