

ENGLISH/HISTORY

I chose to study English and History at 'A' Level and want to continue to learn and develop my understanding of these subjects at degree level in university. I believe that my interest and enthusiasm for these subjects and strong work ethic will allow me to succeed at university. Since childhood I have enjoyed reading for pleasure and to further my knowledge and I have always had a keen interest in how past events shape the present, not only through how we learn from mistakes and experiences of the past, but also how history influences cultures and patterns of behaviour. This has led to the world we know today, with a vast array of cultural beliefs and principles that affect how different societies interact with each other. Societies are shaped by past events and create invisible parameters that govern their general behaviour and define their values and beliefs.

To date, the period I have most enjoyed learning about is the 1600's, in particular the reign of Charles I and the political turmoil within the three kingdoms. The English Civil War was a turning point in British history. What interested me most about this war is the way that the overturning of the absolute monarchy initiated the democratic parliament that has since evolved into Britain's present system of government, showing how previous events determine our future.

The relationship between powers of expression and argument are evident in both Historical and Literary texts and the ability to express yourself and evaluate the ideas and arguments of others is vital for success in both subjects. Whilst studying both topics at A level I have discovered how closely linked these two subjects are and how the skills I have acquired relate to both of them. Through studying history I have been encouraged to challenge and interpret the validity of historical sources, I have found this skill helpful in reaching balanced opinions and being able to create a fair and unbiased argument which has assisted me greatly in many of my English essays.

Another important use of the English language, I believe is allowing the reader to immerse themselves in a story or tale and for the reader to feel and experience emotions and thoughts that they may not in their day to day life. I have enjoyed many of the titles covered during my study of English literature, but my favourite has been *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This is because I find Fitzgerald's use of symbolism and manipulation of various characters in the novel, to represent the downfall of the 'American Dream' gives a fascinating insight into the reckless and frivolous lives of post-war Americans, fittingly described by Ernest Hemingway as 'The Lost Generation'. The literary techniques used by Fitzgerald within *The Great Gatsby* result in a novel of immense depth and complexity that has fuelled my interest in English literary heritage.

My commitment, drive and enthusiasm are not only directed towards A level study. Other achievements include reaching Grade 5 on the Flute, learning the piano, as well as gaining the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, which I would hope to continue with at University to achieve the Silver and Gold Award. In addition for the past four years I have been employed as a waitress in a busy restaurant. This has required me to be organized, punctual and to manage a number of more junior staff.

I was lucky enough to have recently secured a work experience placement at the British Olympic Association (BOA) in London. The legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games will become part of our history as the event will shape the future of London and the chance to be involved in the chief creation of the Games was a fantastic opportunity. I found this placement invaluable in preparing me for the world of employment. Although the responsibility of the placement was challenging