

PERSONAL STATEMENT A

I remember being given a tour around Greenwich University, where I undertook my work experience in their Chemistry labs, and having the opportunity to see their research department and discover all their current projects and developments at various stages from the initial discovery and theorising through to the final moments and conclusions of the clinical trials. It was at that point that I knew what I wanted to do; to be able to feel that same buzz of excitement each day as I learn about the key foundations of our world and being able to apply it in a realistic and impactful way in people's lives.

As a regular subscriber to both the New Scientist and Chemistry World magazines – the latter through my membership to the RSC – I am always being fascinated and amazed by new scientific discoveries and developments. It's exciting to realise that the articles I am reading are the most current and prominent scientific stories on research conducted by the scientists at the very forefront of modern day's science.

Recently, I represented my school at an event hosted by the Prince's Teaching Institute by speaking to a group of around 300 teachers from across the country about why I love studying science and what excites me about it. A major factor is that after studying a topic, it is never the end; it reappears in other areas, allowing you to formulate links between topics – a skill accentuated by the non-modular format of the IB – such as taking the more physical aspects of chemistry with, for example, the shapes of molecules, and combining that with the structures and mechanisms appearing in the organic topics, such as within chirality and the effect this has on different molecules. Moreover, the connections between chemistry and the other sciences such as the 'chemistry of life' topic in biology highlight the subject's positioning at the heart of science and a worthy area of study.

Throughout my school career, I have always been driven and determined to succeed and achieve highly across all areas, something highlighted by my acceptance into the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth in KS3, an achievement I am very proud of. I'm also dedicated to achieving outside of academics, such as attaining grade 5 piano, despite music not being a natural strength of mine. I also have a large focus on other people and the community; volunteering plays a key part in my life from helping in a local primary school by assisting the year six class to being part of a summer community action team for the past five or more years, which I have been approached about the possibility of leading in future years. These sorts of opportunities have also arisen through my role as a Science Prefect by allowing me the chance to work in local schools, performing experiments and supervising their own practicals.

Additionally, I have most enjoyed recently the challenge of learning BSL, as it allows me to improve my ability to communicate with a community I may previously have not had the full opportunity to interact with. This desire to help people and support them is greatly achievable through the study and applications of chemistry across all aspects: by developing new drugs and medical treatments; discovering new green technologies to create a cleaner world; or by unearthing new materials which improve construction and enhance the ease of everyday life.

The possibility of being able to discover more about how and what our world is made of and being part of a scientific community at the heart of new developments is an incredibly exciting prospect and something I cannot wait to be involved with.

Comments

PERSONAL STATEMENT B

Literature has an intensity which I would find hard to replicate elsewhere. It is at once intimately personal and also universally interpretable. It seems to have an inexhaustible capacity for originality both in its creation and also in its analysis. That quality of boundlessness attracts me to further study in English Literature and is also why I am excited at the prospect of a degree course that I can make individually rewarding.

I have a dilemma concerning my favourite book. My foremost interest is Gothic novels. I have always particularly enjoyed books with a sense of the macabre and supernatural but, it was only after studying *Wuthering Heights* that I realised they constitute a genre. I have had a great deal of fun since. Despite spanning such a period, all gothic novels seem to share an ability to tap into human psyche, and this has given me ideas on effective characterisation; as well as narrative structure and imagery. I have also met some of the pitfalls (*Northanger Abbey*) and have followed many of the common Gothic motifs back to their reputed origins in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. However, I cannot choose between *Dracula* and *The Turn of the Screw*. James' original take on the Gothic apparition should win me over – It so accurately depicts what I think the literary ghost should truly represent. But, I love Stoker's meticulous epistolary structure and his use of dialects is so clever that I cannot make a choice between the two. That is what I enjoy about literature – the different critical opinions and the debates that ensue. That also attracts me to English at university – rational debate and formulating theories with a group of like-minded people.

Recently, I have focussed on earlier texts. *Paradise Lost* was my first experience of the Epic Poem. I was challenged by the form at first but now consider it quite an effective narrative technique. History has always interested me, and has previously helped me form theories on characterisation, in *King Lear* for example, so I was glad to further my understanding of anti-Renaissance themes in their contemporary context with *Paradise Lost*; as well as experiencing some of the key biblical theology (though embellished) surrounding English literary history.

I think TS Eliot's work is brilliant. *The Four Quartets* were my first independent poetic experience; particularly *Little Gidding*. I was struck by Eliot's depiction of the tiny churchyard as an end of the world – it's so unlike the typical flame or flood scenario. However, the more I have read it, and particularly since taking in the prior three poems, I have come to appreciate just how effectively Eliot weaves religious themes into the poem – none more so than when the deaths of the cardinal elements are narrated. Partly because of this, and also to satisfy curiosity, I took a trip to *Little Gidding* to experience it for myself and to see how far I could agree with Eliot's portrayal. Having done so, I do.

Outside of school, I have taken a keen liking to politics. I am taking an A-level in the subject but I much prefer investigating the less clear-cut political world which exists outside the course. Like literature, politics seems to operate on multiple levels of meaning – this is probably why I like it. The opinions, debates and scrutiny of the media coverage appeal to my analytical side and I always enjoy the dichotomies and personalities brought out in political drama (*The House of Cards* being my favourite).

Although I have become accustomed, and am happy working independently: when I am at school I enjoy working with other students. I co-ordinated a group video project in Spanish and then took part in a filmed interview, to be shown to staff, discussing the merits of technology as a teaching tool.

I feel certain I should carry on with English Literature. I have no doubt the course will be an unprecedented challenge but, I will offer everything I can, with the dedication, enthusiasm and energy I have always held for the subject – I would not have it any other way.

Comments

