

History Personal Statement

I have always read widely and, due to my English Exhibition at Woodbridge School and my enjoyment of writing, at one point I had hoped to read English at university. However, whilst studying World War One poetry for my English Literature GCSE, I found that I was most interested in the times and conditions in which the author was writing.

The study of history evokes great curiosity in me; during my study of 19th Century Germany last year I found the debate concerning Bismarck's role in German unification fascinating. A.J.P. Taylor's examination of Bismarck's character in "The Man and the Statesman" was particularly illuminating because its challenge to the previously accepted 'great man' theory shows the impact an individual can have upon a situation.

In my view, past and present are inseparable, in that what we are today has been formed by past events and, therefore, the study of the past illuminates the present. For example, my independent coursework study of the decline of the Liberal Party has demonstrated to me the effects of war on all aspects of society and the need for political parties to adapt to the current electorate – subjects still very relevant today.

As Arthur Marwick writes, "because everything has a history, history as a body of knowledge and as a discipline covers everything," and history is indeed the most inclusive of all intellectual pursuits – its wide range of subject matter is a definite factor in its favour. History also can be a challenging and totally absorbing intellectual exercise, which develops valuable skills in synthesising and presenting information.

Although at this early stage, I feel unable to predict a career path, I could envisage becoming a journalist. This stems from a work experience placement shadowing the journalist Dominic Kennedy, the crime writer for The Times, last year. This experience encouraged me to write five articles for the school's award-winning Times Educational Supplement "newspaper day competition" submission in my role as Home Affairs Correspondent. History, like journalism, involves selecting relevant facts to create either narrative or a persuasive argument, and consequently it is both useful and informative.

Moving to a boarding school for my Sixth Form Studies has afforded me increased opportunities to contribute to the school community. I am a member of House Council - a committee which liaises with the Head of House on academic and boarding-related issues – and participated in a paired reading scheme last year. I played Benjamin in the school's production of "Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat" last year, despite breaking my ankle playing for the school football team the week before. I attempted the complex dance routines on crutches notwithstanding!

I enjoy most team sports, and have played for school cricket and rugby teams throughout my school career; however, I find myself most suited to football and hockey. I received junior full colours for Woodbridge School hockey team, and play for the Wymondham College Second Eleven football team. I play the tuba to Grade 6 standard, and have recently toured Italy and Austria whilst representing the county as a member of the Suffolk Youth Wind Band. Outside school, my home close to the sea provides an ideal location for my hobbies of surfing and sailing. I have a part-time job at Lowestoft Public Library, which improves my communication skills and self-confidence.

I am taking a gap year in order to broaden my horizons, and to this end I have made plans to teach English in a Tibetan community in India in conjunction with GAP Activity Projects.

I look forward to extending my knowledge of the many aspects of history available for study, and believe that university will enhance these opportunities.