

PLANNING YOUR FUTURE



**WADDESDON CE SCHOOL
SIXTH FORM 2018/19**

Aims for the Summer Term:

- 1) Research into, think carefully about and assess the various pathways that are open to you once you leave Waddesdon in order to make informed decisions about your future
- 2) Understand the various application processes and deadlines for Universities, Apprentices & Employment
- 3) Reflect on your personal achievements so far and complete a winning Personal Statement help you reach your career aspirations

Overview of Sessions/Events:

Date 2018	Session/Event
Monday 11 th June Extended Assembly	Welcome back & reminder of different pathways
Friday 15 th June	University of Reading Visit. Opportunity to attend talks on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UCAS process and Personal Statements• University Finance• Different degree courses• University life and accommodation
Thursday 21 st June assembly	Tips for researching all pathways and weighing up your options
Thursday 21 st June Period 3 or 4	Personal Research in IT rooms—explore UCAS & recommended websites for Apprenticeships, School Leavers Progs. & Gap Years
Thurs 28 th June 7pm	Life after Waddesdon Evening. Presentations from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University• Degree/higher apprenticeship provider• Gap Year organisation
Friday 29 th June Period 3	'My Brand' – writing your Personal Statement and super-curricular activities
Thursday 5 th July Period 3 or 4	Time to start drafting your Personal Statement
W/c Monday 9 th July	Conversation with tutor about plans and applications
Friday 13 th July Period 3	Choice of sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing for an interview• CV workshop
Thursday 19 th July Period 3	Presentation of Employability Awards
Monday 23 rd July	Hand-in first draft of Personal Statement to form tutor

Remember - Be proactive! Keep options open! Plan for success!

Support

- **The Sixth Form Team – Ms McIver, Ms Coulter, Miss Aldridge, Mrs Carr, your tutor and subject teachers.**
- **Mrs Bridges, our school Pathways' Coordinator. Make an appointment to meet with her in her office at the back of the library.**
- **Resources on the school website (www.waddesdonschool.com, 'Students', 'Sixth Form', 'Work', 'University', 'GAP years')**
- **Study Centre Library – books on Career Pathways, Universities, Apprenticeships, GAP Years, Interviews and Applications**
- **School booklets on 'Applying for University', 'Writing Personal Statements', 'Applying for an Apprenticeship', 'Student Finance', 'Finding a Direction'.**
- **University and College Prospectuses (Study Centre and School Library – you can also request your own copies from individual universities)**
- **Websites – particularly good are:**

www.ucas.com (as well as specific university websites)

www.notogingtouni.co.uk

www.getingofar.gov.uk (apprenticeships)

www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk

www.icould.com

Remember – you need to be proactive in seeking support!

Researching the University/College Route



- 1) Consider what sorts of courses you are interested in. What subjects are you fascinated by at A-Level? Are you passionate about the Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts etc? Have you got a career in mind?
- 2) Log on to www.ucas.com.
- 3) Watch the UCAS video 'How to choose your course' and complete a Course Search on UCAS to review the kinds of courses available as well as the grade entry requirements. Once you've narrowed it down to about 8 courses, look very carefully at the course content at each university on their websites as it can vary greatly. You can only apply to FIVE university courses through UCAS so think carefully.
- 4) Where do you want to study? A campus/non-campus/city/more rural university? What extracurricular activities do they offer? What financial support/accommodation might you get? How well is the university ranked for what you want to do? (Use <https://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>) What kinds of jobs do graduates from the course go into? Consider going on a University Open Day. Go to www.opendays.com for information and dates. Order some university prospectuses.
- 5) Be sure you understand the UCAS points tariff and how it links to AS and A2 grades.
- 6) Have you explored studying abroad? Go to www.dreamfoundation.eu as a starting point as well as '5 Myths about Studies Abroad' booklet in the Study Centre library. Lots of courses abroad are taught in English and in some countries there are no fees. Universities in the USA also have bursaries for foreign students – go to www.prospects.ac.uk/postgraduate-study/study-abroad/study-in-the-usa
- 7) Check if your course requires you to sit an admissions test at: www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests
- 8) If you are interested in applying for an Art Foundation Course, you need to apply to colleges directly (e.g. Banbury College). If you want to apply to a Music conservatoire, you should go to www.cukas.ac.uk.
- 9) If you are worried about university fees, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=55fKa-ErQ8E to hear from Martin from MoneySuperMarket.com – this busts all of the media myths about fees. Also look at: www.moneysavingexpert.com/students
- 10) Also, research the scholarships and bursaries that are available: <http://www.thescholarship.org.uk/>

We do not begin your actual UCAS application until September 2017, but it is important to have all of the thinking and research done by then. You will be given your predicted grades at the beginning of Year 13 which will also help to inform your choices. We will help you with the application process at the beginning of Year 13.

UCAS Application Stages, Deadlines and Tariff Points

When?	What happens?
After Study Leave	Introduction to UCAS, advice and research; Open Day visits
Before the summer holidays 2018	First draft of Personal Statement handed in
August 2018	AS results 2018, registration for Admissions Tests if needed
September 2018	1 hour UCAS workshop to complete UCAS log on and personal details
September to end of November	One to one support at school for the re-drafting and refining of Personal Statements; Admissions Tests if needed
End of September 2018	Year 13 Parents' Evening to discuss AS results and predicted grades
15 th October 2018	UCAS deadline for Oxbridge, Vet, Medicine and Dentistry courses
Beginning of December 2018	Internal school deadline for sending off applications
15 th January 2019	Official UCAS deadline for most courses
February 2019	Applying for Student Finance presentation
From sending off of application to April 2019	Students receive offers and rejections through UCAS Track. Students may be invited to interview – school support is available
By the beginning of May 2019	Students needs to decide on their Firm and Insurance Offers and input their decision onto UCAS Track; Students may also start applying for accommodation
End of May 2019	Deadline for Student Finance if students want their fees/loans/grants for the start of their courses in the Autumn
August 2019	A level Results and offers of places through UCAS Track

Grade	A-level points	AS-level points	Extended Project Qualification points
A*	56	N/A	28
A	48	20	24
B	40	16	20
C	32	12	16
D	24	8	12
E	16	4	8

UCAS TARIFF POINTS

Some universities make offers using A level grades, but others use the points in this table to make offers.

e.g. University 1's offer = ABB vs. University 2's offer = 128 points (equivalent to ABB)

Use the UCAS Tariff Calculator to add in your BTEC grades too at:

www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator

Researching the Apprenticeship Route



- 1) Go to www.getingofar.gov.uk, type in your postcode, the radius you'd be prepared to travel and search for opportunities. Watch the level of apprenticeship – aim for higher or degree level.
- 2) Register if you want to explore the website more fully. Complete your name, address, DOB and e-mail. Then activate your account via your e-mail. This does not commit you to anything! If you decide to apply for apprenticeships you can set up your profile later.
- 3) Explore individual company websites e.g. BMW, National Grid, Siemens, Nielsen, Rutherford Appleton Labs or companies you are interested in.
- 4) Consider going to The Skills Show at the NEC in November.
- 5) Come to our school Careers' Fair in February 2019.
- 6) Look out for events during National Apprenticeships Week in March 2019.
- 7) You could also approach local employers/family connections to ask them if they would consider taking on an apprentice.
- 8) Explore the 'Apprenticeships Guide 2018/2019' in the library as well as other resources there.
- 9) Consider the entry level requirement for the apprenticeship – remember you are applying with A level qualifications so can apply for higher or degree apprenticeships. Although a lot of apprenticeships start you on minimum wage, you need to consider the longer term prospects, lack of debt and the fact that many will pay for your qualifications, in some cases, degrees.
- 10) You will also see apprenticeship opportunities advertised on www.notgoingtouni.co.uk.
- 11) Deadlines will vary depending on the apprenticeship and company. More become available after February/March every year.
- 12) See Mrs Bridges for opportunities and listen out in assembly for local apprenticeship opportunities.

Researching the School Leavers Programme/Apprenticeship Route

- 1) These are very competitive as they are run by big International Companies who want to dispel the myth that you need to be a university graduate to work for them. They will train you on the job and pay for you to complete your professional qualifications e.g. in accountancy.
- 2) Read the following article at www.icould.com/article/the-rise-of-school-leaver-programmes/
- 3) Go to this website: <http://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk/>
- 4) Explore the following company's websites for details of their School Leaver Programmes:

KPMG: <https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/school-leavers>

Deloitte: <http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/careers/school-leavers.html>

Ernst and Young: <http://www.ey.com/uk/en/careers/students/schools-opportunities>

Royal Bank Scotland:
<http://www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk/employers/profile/rbs>

Price Waterhouse Coopers: www.pwc.co.uk/industries/government-public-sector/education/higher-apprenticeships.html

Nestle: www.nestlecareers.co.uk/academy/content/school-leavers

John Lewis: <http://www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk/work/training-and-development.html>

- 5) We will advertise these opportunities in assembly as they come up but you might want to contact the companies directly to get further information or go to visit them if they offer 'Insight Days'.

Researching a GAP Year

1) It is very important to plan your GAP year carefully and have some firm plans in place for when you return from it. Ideally your GAP year should help to prepare you for what you want to do after it.

2) Explore opportunities on the following websites:

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

www.icould.com

www.etrust.org.uk/year_in_industry.cfm (Year in Industry – great opportunity)

www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/alternatives-higher-education/gap-years-%E2%80%93-ideas-and-things-to-think-about (pros, cons and lots of good links)

www.gapyear.com

<http://www.volunteerics.org> (International Citizenship Service – very cost effective)

www.bunac.org (Camp America)

www.esu.org/programmes/scholarships/students/secondary-school-exchange
(American High School exchange)

www.gapyear.com/plan/snow (Ski Season)

www.vinspired.com or www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering (volunteering opportunities)

3) There are also lots of companies who offer opportunities abroad. Search for the companies through Google.

4) Most students work for part of their GAP year to earn money to travel and complete a project abroad. They usually organise some work experience as well. Some students complete a TEFL qualification so they can teach English abroad.

5) You can apply to UCAS this year and defer your place for a year meaning your university place is waiting for you when you return. You must check with individual universities if they are willing to let you do this, especially if you are considering studying Maths. Equally, you can during your GAP year, but do remember you may need to be in the country for interviews.

‘My Brand’ - Personal Statement

You will need to write a Personal Statement if you are applying to university, an apprenticeship, a school leaver programme or a job, although you may have to alter it slightly depending on the application requirements.

Your Personal Statement should contain answers to the following:

- Why are you passionate about the course, apprenticeship, programme or job you are applying for?
- What triggered your interest? What is the background to your interest?
- Have you completed any relevant work/voluntary experience in the area and what did you learn from it?
- What particular interests have you from your A-Level studies and how have these helped you to decide on your course?
- What evidence of wider reading or experience beyond on the syllabus can you produce?
- What super-curricular activities are you involved in?
- How else do you contribute to your school/local community?
- What other achievements/successes have you had?
- What skills have all of these helped you to develop? (e.g. leadership, team work, organisational, independent learning, interpersonal skills etc)

Top Tips

- **ENTHUSIASM!**
- **Don’t just tell – SHOW/DEMONSTRATE/GIVE EXAMPLES**
- **At least 70% of your Personal Statement must focus on demonstrating passion for your chosen option**
- **SELL YOURSELF**
- **Ensure you have enough evidence (wider reading, work experience etc)**
- **Keep to the word limit (4000 characters with spaces)**
- **Do not plagiarise**

For more detailed information see:

- **‘How to Write a Winning Personal Statement’ in the Study Centre**
- **‘Student Guide to Writing Personal Statements’ in the Study Centre**
- **Examples of Personal Statements at the back of this Booklet**

Personal Statement Outline Format

'Hook'/Trigger for your passion/Quotation (must be in context):

**Demonstration of your passion for your chosen option & your skills:
(work/voluntary experience, wider reading, trips/visits, super-curricular)**

70+%

How your current A-Level studies link to your chosen option:

Super-curricular interests/hobbies/achievements/pt job/responsibilities etc:

Concluding comment:

Personal Achievement Reflection

ACHIEVEMENTS	Skills/Personal qualities demonstrated
Academic Qualifications	
A level subjects and wider reading/participation	
Contributions to your school community / responsibilities	
Involvement in super/extra-curricular activities	
Voluntary work	

Work experience/placements	
Visits/trips/travel	
Workshops/Taster Days	
Part-time job	
Other	

ANY GAPS? WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT OVER THE SUMMER?

SUPER CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES – What you can be doing to demonstrate ENTHUSIASM

<p>Complete a MOOC (Massive open online course) Go to: www.futurelearn.com and type your interest into 'search online courses'. They are free and run by lots of different universities.</p>	
<p>ACCOUNTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend accountancy insight days e.g. at Grant Thornton in MK. • Demonstrate mathematical ability. • Show awareness of why accounting is crucial to Business and Economics. • Work experience with an accountant. • www.accountancymagazine.com 	<p>ARCHITECTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit a range of interesting buildings and discuss why you find them interesting. • Demonstrate keen interest in new architectural methods/ building techniques. • <i>RIBA Journal</i> and <i>Architect's Journal</i> • Relevant work experience
<p>ART & DESIGN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit exhibitions showcasing a wide variety of artists/mediums • Start an Art Club at school. • Support in KS3 Art lessons. • www.creativereview.co.uk 	<p>BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT/ECONOMICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>The Economist</i> and the <i>Financial Times</i> regularly – follow certain stories. • Participate in Young Enterprise. • Work experience (paid or voluntary) in both big and small companies
<p>COMPUTER SCIENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create your own website/program. • Keep up to date with the latest developments in technology. • Take additional courses outside school. • www.t3.com 	<p>DENTISTRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 plus days Work Experience at a dental surgery. • Demonstrate manual dexterity. • Read <i>Dental Update</i> or <i>Dentistry Magazine</i>. • Join DCGS Medics Society.
<p>ENGINEERING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study some structures that you admire. • Demonstrate an understanding of Physics in relation to Engineering. • Read <i>Engineering Education</i>. • Relevant Work Experience. 	<p>ENGLISH LITERATURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do some creative writing • Read novels, poetry and plays of all eras/genres. • Start a book club. • www.literaryreview.co.uk • Enter an essay competition
<p>GEOGRAPHY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Trips and voluntary conservation work. • Research global issues. • Attend Royal Geographical Society Lectures • Read <i>National Geographic</i>. 	<p>HISTORY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit historical sites and museums. • Read books, watch documentaries and films beyond the syllabus. • Attend university history lectures. • Subscribe to History Today or access it online: www.historytoday.com

<p>LAW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Aylesbury Crown Court • Work Experience at a local solicitor's firm/shadow a barrister. • Follow cases in the news in a variety of areas (criminal, commercial etc.) • Read <i>The Lawyer</i>. • Follow The Times Law Report. 	<p>MATHEMATICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider reading on Maths theory and challenges. • Enter the UKMT Maths Challenge. • Discuss the application of Maths in Computing, Economics, Physics etc. • www.plus.maths.org.uk • Attend Royal Society Lectures.
<p>LANGUAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit/work in the country. • Read books and newspapers, watch films and listen to radio in your chosen language. • Start a lunchtime foreign film club. 	<p>MEDICINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Experience in a hospital, GP Surgery and Care Home. • Attend Medlink. • Join DCGS Medics Society. • Read <i>Student BMJ</i>.
<p>PHARMACY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Experience at GP Surgery. • Keep up-to-date on new drugs. • Demonstrate a keen interest in Chemistry. • Read <i>The Pharmaceutical Journal</i> 	<p>POLITICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit The House of Commons • Watch Question Time and Channel 4 News or Newsnight regularly. • Work Experience or volunteer in a local constituency office. • Join or start a debating society. • www.spectator.co.uk • Attend public lectures at the LSE.
<p>PSYCHOLOGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend lectures such as 'Psychology 4 Students'. • Join the British Psychology Society Student Group. • Read Freud, Jung, Pavlov, Piaget, etc. • www.bps.ork.uk 	<p>SCIENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Experience in labs/pharmacy (Chemistry), conservation work (for Biology), engineering/architect's firm (Physics). • Watch lectures on TED.com in your chosen field. • Attend university Science Days. • Read New Scientist. • Watch Royal Institution Lectures.
<p>SOCIOLOGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read about Marxism, functionalism and postmodernism. • Attend student lectures organised by the British Sociological Association. • Read the <i>British Journal of Sociology</i>. • www.britsoc.co.uk 	<p>TEACHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer as an LSA in your local Primary or Secondary School • Observe lessons • Co-teach part of a lesson • Read <i>The Journal of Teacher Education (JTE)</i> • www.community.tes.co.uk/

EXCELLENT EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL STATEMENTS

JOURNALISM

'Journalism is the first draft of history' wrote Henry Grunwald. Journalism for me is writing history in the moment, expressing interpretations of current events which have the potential to shape history. In order to become a successful journalist, I understand the need for exceptional communication skills, confidence, writing ability and team work. I aspire to be part of an industry that is so vast and competitive, yet so influential and interesting. I dream of being successful, and as one of life's perfectionists, I work extremely hard on my studies. Despite the bad press regarding the phone hacking scandal and the myth that all journalists are corrupt, I refuse to let this deter me from my passion as a writer. As the media expands, journalism will only continue to evolve and I am determined to be a part of it.

My fascination with journalism and ambitious nature allowed me to secure a week long placement at IPC Media. Working with the editor of the online publication, I wrote thirteen articles that were published on www.whatsontv.co.uk. This gave me insight and experience into a real working media environment and the online skills needed to be successful in journalism in the 21st century. This also inspired me to write a weekly online blog expressing a student's viewpoint on current affairs, as I thrive on creative writing and am a keen believer that we must be aware of the world around us.

The strength of my communication skills is demonstrated through my experience in public speaking. I am an avid public speaker with an inquiring mind and have reached both district and regional finals as the main speaker of the school Rotary team, delivering speeches about 'drink driving' and 'health and safety gone mad.' Along with winning best overall team, I was awarded best youth speaker, along with the 'Senior Public Speaking Award' in 2009 and 2010 for my commitment to public speaking in school. This demonstrates my articulate nature and willingness to express an opinion.

My interpersonal skills are regularly tested as I am trained in Restorative Approaches Justice which requires me to take on the role of a 'mediator' between pupils in conflict in the lower years at school. Through links with my church, I have been involved with the Scripture Union Holiday Club for four years, giving under-privileged children a safe place where they can learn about God. In my role as team leader, I lead a group of children from difficult backgrounds, which although challenging at times, is extremely rewarding because I get the chance to interact with people from different social backgrounds as well as acting as a positive role model.

It is fundamental in journalism to possess the ability to work as an individual as well as a team member. My initiative, motivation and excellent time management skills led me to organise the school prom with a committee of helpers. This experience along with my role as one of six senior prefects within the Sixth Form highlights my leadership qualities. The role is one of great responsibility which includes leading a team of prefects and being a role model for younger students. I am currently employed as a part time sales assistant, as well as waitressing for an events company and being part of the promotional team at my local radio station, all requiring affability and excellent communication skills. I am a keen performer and have gained several grades in tap and modern dancing as well as being awarded half colours for my commitment to 'Performance' at school. I have performed in six professional pantomimes where commitment on the highest level was required with professional auditions, intense rehearsals and show schedules.

As 'journalism is the first draft of history,' it is a draft that is likely to be criticised, questioned and often discouraged. As an individual that flourishes under pressure I am ready for all the challenges it will present.

PHYSICS

On reading Richard Feynman's book on quantum electrodynamics, I felt inspired to pursue my interest in Physics. I find it fascinating that probabilities of a photon's direction of travel can be found by adding together arrows of length equal to the square root of the probability, turning to an imaginary stopwatch hand. This is what brings Physics to life for me; being presented with an idea that defies belief and seems absurd, but apparently works. This occurs on both impossibly small scales, like the counterintuitive quantum world, and astronomical scales, in which the same laws that govern our everyday lives give rise to alien environments in the farthest reaches of the universe. I particularly find it fascinating that so many situations can be simplified and modelled mathematically, and I enjoy the satisfaction of having worked through a mathematical problem to arrive at an answer. I want to study theoretical Physics as I believe it is at the forefront of our understanding, and it is useful in the real world, for example, new touch screen technology uses the phenomenon of quantum tunnelling, giving rise perhaps to force-sensitive touch screens.

Of the six Maths modules I took for AS level, FP1 was my favourite, as I was introduced to complex numbers, mathematical proof by induction, and matrices, which I found more challenging as they were new to me. I find enjoyment in carrying out a mathematical proof, showing something is true for any real number. I was impressed to find that some of these seemingly abstract mathematical concepts have applications in the real world. For example; matrix transformations are useful in generating computer graphics, and complex numbers can be used to describe electromagnetism more effectively than ordinary numbers, which I look forward to studying at degree level.

The part of the AS Physics course I enjoyed studying the most was particles and quantum phenomena, because the particles we learned about make up everything we observe. I was enthralled when learning about the quark composition of baryons and mesons, and interactions between electrons and photons, particularly that a current can be generated making use of the photoelectric effect. I am excited to study such marvels in more detail with a mathematical leaning in the future.

My interest in Physics and Maths extends outside of the classroom. I enjoy reading Physics related non-fiction books in my spare time. I particularly liked 'Time Travel in Einstein's Universe' by J. Richard Gott, as I find the prospects of time travel, although very speculative, exciting and paradoxical. I found his explanation of time dilation as a consequence of special relativity surprisingly simple to grasp, and the implications unbelievable. Another book I found inspiring was 'The Equation That Couldn't be Solved' in which the author, Mario Livio, recounts the lives of Abel and Galois, and explains the importance of symmetries and group theory. I also enjoy reading of new developments in physics, like the search for the Higgs boson, and I am a keen amateur astronomer. I take pleasure in gazing into the night sky through a small telescope, especially recently, when the supernova in the M101 galaxy was visible.

I have been playing drums from the age of 9, and I have played alone and as part of a band in a school assembly, and at a battle of the bands competition last year, which we won. Earlier this year, I contacted local primary schools to request permission to put up posters advertising drum lessons, and as a result, I am earning money from teaching students. At school, I was awarded half and full colours for my commitment to Music and Art.

I aim to pursue a career in theoretical physics, undertaking exciting research that tests the boundaries of our understanding of the world. I feel I am well suited to this as I am determined to achieve and I have a genuine passion for the subject.

ENGLISH

"Literature is a luxury; fiction is a necessity." I heard this quotation, attributed to GK Chesterton, at 16 whilst volunteering in Ghana. English, to me, is more than just a subject, it is a passion. I firmly believe it can make a difference to people; telling stories matters. It fascinates me to see the way narrative affects people and societies. Searching works of literature and attempting to understand what evoked the emotions behind the text, and seeing the links between these and the cultural and political undercurrents of the time, greatly appeals to my inquisitive nature.

I study English, Biology and French at A-level and each of these has widened my knowledge of literature, linguistics and the world in general. French has enabled me to discover some of the origins of English and also the different colloquialisms used. Biology has widened my knowledge of Latin, which I studied at GCSE, and has given me the scientific methodology to develop a logical approach to problem solving. However, my A-level studies of English Literature have been the most absorbing. My favourite part of the course has been Love Through the Ages, as I have been able to challenge myself to read around the texts. For example, it has allowed me to read "Wide Sargasso Sea", a novel I discovered after reading "Jane Eyre". I was intrigued to see how the character of Mr Rochester was subtly different in the two novels, possibly reflecting the time in which they were written. This is an aspect of literature I love, finding novels to enjoy which stem from others. At Degree Level, I am looking forward to being able to widen my knowledge of different types of literature. As an eclectic reader I enjoy the classics, my favourite being "The Great Gatsby", as well as more recent works; I am currently reading "A Spot of Bother" by Mark Haddon. I aim to read more novels from what is known by F Scott Fitzgerald as "The Jazz Age".

Volunteering is important to me, my dedication stemming from my time in Ghana. The children there were so unbelievably thankful to receive books that we in the UK take for granted. It made me realise just how important the written word is. I have volunteered for Christian Aid, Open Doors, campaigning, collecting money, and working as a barista. Through this work I have experienced new challenges and developed my organisational and time management skills. My favourite voluntary work has been with the Greenbelt Festival, working in the backstage area looking after artists like Billy Bragg and Beverley Knight. From this I have learnt professionalism and reliability, and been privileged to meet people who are passionate about their work. Like them, I would like to make a difference in the world through my work, and intend emulate this quality by working hard and having a mission in life. After reading for an English degree, I am considering studying Law or International Development in order to "be the change I want to see."

I believe I am a well-rounded individual and work part time at Boots the Chemists, as well as taking singing lessons from an inspirational teacher. When I sing I find relaxation despite the technicalities of the songs; I am currently studying for my Grade 7 exam. I take part in a number of theatre groups and have played lead roles in both school and amateur dramatics productions. I have learnt that beauty and art in music, like literature, can make a difference in the world. I have travelled independently and enjoy the challenge of this as well as holidays with my family.

I am very much looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that studying at university will give me; it is, for me, a time to indulge my love for English and give myself time to develop and grow in a subject I am passionate about.

MEDICINE

Imagine having a conversation with someone whilst they operate on your brain. This is what I watched, transfixed, on a documentary when I was eleven years old. Throughout the procedure, the patient was asked questions to ensure his communication was not damaged, giving the surgeon the boldness to proceed without removing vital components of the brain. With a passion for science, medicine was always a natural choice for me, but it was this experience which confirmed in me an ambition to also become a neurosurgeon. Last year my closest friend developed idiopathic epilepsy. Frightened and concerned I sought to understand how this could suddenly happen. Whilst on a work experience, I visited the Clinical Neurophysiology department at the John Radcliffe Hospital and observed several EEGs. I was amazed by how each patient was so entirely different, a puzzle to be solved using extensive knowledge gained from a lifetime of learning. I know I can be the one responsible for making these life-saving decisions.

Spending time in a GP's surgery gave me the opportunity to ask questions of the doctors and to witness the routine of the more familiar face of our health care system. I was intrigued by the different way in which each doctor communicated with their patients. Those with a good sense of humour, used appropriately, seem to connect and empathise well. Being involved with an ambulance service for several days also gave me an insight into the need for urgency and quick decision-making. A week on a geriatrics ward in local hospital taught me some unglamorous realities of healthcare. Whilst aiding nurses in giving bed baths and helping patients to use the toilet, I was struck by the vulnerability of the very elderly and how it is our duty to protect their dignity as they become more dependent on others. This is increasingly important as the ageing population grows.

Since starting Sixth Form, I have volunteered at my local community hospital, once a week. After a tiring day at school, I am sometimes reluctant to go, but without exception I always leave with a sense of achievement, and it continues to be as fulfilling as the first day. Unable to do much more than make cups of tea, it is still uplifting to simply provide company to an elderly patient who may be feeling lonely or depressed. It is difficult to know how much help I am, but I have learnt the importance of commitment and the significance of dedicating my time to each patient separately, seeing each person as an individual, not just a hospital bed.

I play the oboe and the piano and have taken part in various orchestras including the County Youth Orchestra. Both instruments require a high level of manual dexterity. Tours across Europe have heightened my attraction towards travelling and experiencing different cultures. As well as enjoying music the experiences have improved my ability to work in a team both as a leader, for example taking the role of section principal, and follower. I also teach piano to young children which is rewarding yet has taught me the importance of patience and communication. At school I have participated in dramatic productions, student council and am a prefect at Sixth Form. My study of art enables me to express my creativity and has developed my research skills. I particularly enjoy photography, and find printing my photos in the darkroom helps me unwind from my busy life, as does using a treadmill.

The neurosurgeon who first inspired me so much was Henry Marsh. Though one of the most highly commended surgeons in the country, he spends his time attempting to improve the medical system in Ukraine. Henry does not charge patients for consultations; he goes out of his way to help people in need. As a Christian and with my determination, stamina and ability to take on what seems an impossible challenge, I hope to become an altruistic doctor like him, as in his words: "What are we if we don't try to help others? We are nothing - nothing at all."

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Photography helps people to see." (Berenice Abbott)

Throughout the world today it is hard to escape the photographic image, from pictures captured on a mobile phone to billboard advertising. My curiosity and interest in art, particularly photography, began from an early age. It was during my childhood I started developing an awareness of beauty, fashion and imagery. I established my art skills by drawing portraits of my mother; colour crayons and pencils of all different varieties fascinated me. I then became more captivated by the impact of images, advertisements seen on the way to school became my focus and my photography skills were built from taking practice shoots in order to improve and learn more.

In my mind, photography combined with fashion, are two of the most persuasive and at times challenging forms of art and culture. I believe fashion is not just what we wear; it has changed the way we look at key aspects in life, changing gender issues, sexuality, ethnicity and the way the body is portrayed. I explored this when I was selected, to complete alongside my GCSE's an extended project where I created my own fashion and events magazine. My ambition and determination meant I succeeded and was awarded a Creative and Media Diploma, fuelling my desire to become more involved in art and visual communications.

I completed work experience within the graphics department at a specialist-training provider, as I was keen to find out more about the magazine industry. During my time there I was able to contribute to brochure artwork and was given the task to improve the design of the website. I gained a valuable insight into the accuracy and dedication involved in creating and running a successful company.

My desire for fashion and visual communication is reflected in my part time job choice, as a sales assistant on the high street, which keeps me up to date with current styles and fashion. Alongside this I am now a qualified level 2 swimming instructor at a local sports centre, I volunteered prior to this as an assistant swimming instructor for 3 years. This has all helped me learn the value of practice and preparation as a key element to help setting goals. I have flair and vision, a thirst for more knowledge and I would love to progress with my practical skills. Alongside learning theory and historical context, I know that having the opportunity to participate in placements would immerse me fully in the industry and enabling me to work on live projects. I have a competitive nature and am constantly challenging myself setting goals and working hard to achieve them.

I am passionate about continuing my studies with photography to communicate and convey something more than just a standard image. I feel that I have the right temperament, discipline and dedication that are required to become a successful graduate in the world of fashion.

GEOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY

"The world is the geologist's great puzzle-box" wrote Louis Agassiz in 1866. From exploring the Ddu Cleddau estuary in Pembrokeshire for a river project in primary school, to conquering the mountain tops of the Lake District with my family, the evolving landscape has continued to excite and intrigue me. GCSE and A-level geography has further developed this passion, and led me to challenge my own understanding of the landscape and how we interact with, and affect it. From childhood, I have been on holiday every year to Pembrokeshire, in Wales with my family. I have always been fascinated with the amazing diversity of rock formations on this coastline; the stark contrast between the late Silurian old red sandstone rock, and the Tertiary, limestone cliffs of Stack rocks, in the south of the county, which were formed about 400 million years apart. I can't wait to develop my understanding of physical geography and geology at University.

Alongside geography at A-level, I am studying engineering and business studies. Within engineering, the topics of tensile testing of metals, equilibrium forces and statics, have given me an academic appreciation of graphs, collection of data, and analysing and interpreting results. I was able to put this into practice when, on my geography skills field trip to Devon, I also learnt an array of data sampling techniques, and their advantages and disadvantages. Business studies requires me to be analytical, and to evaluate and link the information I have recorded. Both these complement the skills I use in geography, and will enable me to progress to degree level. Topics such as rivers, glaciers, plate tectonics, and the coastal environment are the ones I enjoy most in geography. These inspire me, and have wetted my appetite to explore geology.

My time at school has helped me to hone the skills I need to succeed at university. I am proud to be a valued member of the School Council, subject ambassador for engineering, and form representative. I enjoyed the challenge of giving a speech to prospective new parents at a school open evening. I have also run a school lunch time dodgeball club for juniors for over a year. These roles require me to demonstrate good organisational, communicative, and leadership skills. My ability to work independently and meet deadlines resulted in my being awarded the trophy for the student making most progress of the year. Team work is important to me; I have been a member of both school rugby and football teams throughout my school life, and having completed my currently working towards my silver. Planning expeditions with team members, and training for school fixtures has given me problem solving, leadership, and team working skills, which I look forward to taking forward to university life.

Leadership and team work skills have also allowed me to succeed in my out of school interests. I have been a member of running, cycling, and swimming clubs, which have led to my success in triathlon, a sport that requires dedication, self-discipline, and commitment to an independent training regime. This commitment has led to the success of previously coming 3rd in the South-East region for my age group. I have always enjoyed being outside, and this has given me an appreciation of the natural world. I have enjoyed volunteering locally to clear ancient common land, to prevent reforestation of this rare area. Studying rivers and coastal landforms has helped me to understand the environments which I am passionate about. Coaststeering in Pembrokeshire, hiking and open water swimming in Cumbria, have all contributed to fueling my hunger for learning more about these environments.

My time at University will give me the opportunities I need to expand, and deepen my knowledge of geology, a subject I love. Like the three disciplines of triathlon, my three years studying will require me to push myself to my limits, explore unknown concepts, and revel in the rewards this brings.

