

English and French

Languages are my passion, the main source of challenge and enjoyment I have found throughout my studies. The prevalence of the English language across almost every level of international interaction is well established. Thus, some native English speakers see learning a new language as trivial. However, I believe languages are paramount to understanding human nature as they are the foundation upon which communication is built and offer a sense of pride in one's heritage. Hence, I have decided to read English and French as in my opinion, both offer an equally captivating language, literature and culture to explore.

Studying English Literature and French at A level gives me a critical appreciation of linguistic frameworks that I incorporate into my wider reading. Enthused by the prospect of analysing 'L'Étranger' by Albert Camus, I read his essay 'L'Homme révolté' to gain a greater understanding of the writer's philosophical beliefs. His social commentary provokes deep thought into human nature and state-sponsored enslavement, a sentiment echoed in George Orwell's 'Down and Out in Paris and London'. In the memoir, the speaker's dependent register alludes to the writer's antipathy for totalitarianism as the narrator's dialogue constantly changes to befit his predicament. These intercultural similarities immerse me in the context behind compelling literature and I aspire to develop these opinions through further analysis at degree level.

Completing two work placements in France affirmed my ambition to study French alongside English at university. Throughout, I lived alone with a monolingual French family, a rewarding experience that reinforced my love for the language and family life. The latter provided the groundwork for my research into 'the French family' for the AS oral exam and my EPQ on family law. Working in a retail office, I was trusted to handle finances and stock, showing maturity and adaptability by meeting deadlines under pressure. Communicating in a French corporate environment ameliorated my linguistics skills, allowing me to utilise the language to a greater degree.

To enhance my knowledge of both English and French, I attended a summer school at UCL (SELCS). A lecture from Dr Katherine Ibbett gave me a valuable insight into the ways in which language can be manipulated amongst social classes. For example, in the 18th century, aristocrats created phrasebooks to dictate how they were to be addressed by servants. As a team, we tasked ourselves with summarising languages and culture in one word. This culminated in a group presentation in which we examined the subject then offered our answer: people. I viewed this as an opportunity to develop interpersonal skills by working in an unfamiliar group to collectively produce a time-critical presentation. The experience bolstered my confidence and gave me the conviction to respond to impromptu questioning from a diverse audience of students and lecturers.

Outside of academic life, I play for Fulham Rugby Sevens Club, where we won a regional championship. As part of the team, I have used connections to help attain local sponsorships to aid running costs. I also led my school team to the Debate Mate Cup finals held at LSE, allowing me to exhibit leadership skills by allocating roles and managing time constraints. My interest in Shakespeare sparked an interest in acting as I participated in the Shakespeare Schools Festival for two successive years. Performing 'Othello' and 'The Winter's Tale' at the Shaw Theatre allowed me to translate my contemporary interpretation onto the roles. These opportunities deepened my understanding of Shakespeare's literary aims and intended audience, adding depth to my critical analysis.

These differing interpretations of language are utterly engrossing; in short, they capture my imagination and this is why I have decided to commit my future to their study.