

## Psychology and Philosophy

When the seven-year-old me walked in on my mother crying in despair, I didn't understand how unemployment took a toll on her mental health. When I had to sleep with the sound of bombs exploding in a city near my home, I tried to understand why my baby sister could sometimes still hear their noise even after the war was over. Throughout my childhood and my teenage years, I have seen the people close to me suffer from various psychological traumas and it has made me wonder how our external perceptions of our purpose and place in the world has shaped us into who we are. My personal and academic development was thus influenced by these experiences which sparked an interest in studying Psychology and Philosophy.

Studying Psychology at A-level pushed me to research into topics beyond the curriculum. I completed a science project on Theories of Emotions which examined how the understanding of the mind has changed over the centuries. I explored this remarkable journey from Hippocrates' ideas about humorism all the way to the Medical Model of mental illness. This historical timeline of research looked into the transition of philosophical approaches to psychology as a science and it gave me an insight into the kind of preparation I will need for my future university dissertation.

In the making of this project I came across Robert Kirk's 'Zombies' article in the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy and found the idea of a biologically identical human that lacks consciousness both difficult to conceive yet fascinating to consider. Although I have yet to decide whether I agree with the physicalists or the dualists, I am looking forward to being able to study such topics at a degree level.

Psychology is also relevant to the texts I'm studying in English Literature, such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Frankenstein*. A psychoanalytical perspective lets me consider arguments around the nature-nurture debate in my essays. I recently read 'Opening Skinner's Box' by Lauren Slater and thought that the author's semi-fictional style of writing positively contributes to the insightful recounting of the ten most influential psychological experiments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I have enjoyed applying the study of French language and culture to understanding human behaviour and thinking. Being exposed to French academically and during work experience in France enabled me to meet people of different backgrounds and to think about the issues around cultural relativism and ethnocentrism.

Outside school I have completed a DofE expedition and graduated from NCS. Both have given me the chance to advance my teamwork skills during hikes and to take on leadership responsibility during social action projects for the local community. My part-time job last year involved working with adult professionals. I had to conduct myself in a professional manner, always being punctual with correct attire and attitude.

I also performed as the lead in the musical 'Calamity Jane'. This taught me the importance of time management, balancing revision for my AS exams whilst attending rehearsals. Being the only sixth former performing in the play and the only underage employee at work also helped me understand modelled behaviour and imitation, as it highlighted the application of social learning theory in a real-life setting.

This half-term, I am taking an internship at the New Statesman to which I am really looking forward. I believe that work experience at a political magazine will enable me to start thinking about issues around the world and their possible solutions.

After university, I'm considering a potential career path in diplomacy. I believe that experts in human behaviour can successfully facilitate good relations with leaders of different countries. Having seen first-hand the amount of suffering war brings upon a nation, I'd like to spend my life working towards avoiding that whilst working under pressure and leading a team to meet deadlines successfully.

I also learnt how to utilise different skills in a group to produce the best outcome. This subsequently developed my team-working skills and made me a more effective communicator. I was also selected from the group to prepare a speech at the end of the placement in front of employees of EY, Link Laters, LinkedIn and the Big Lottery Fund, summarising my experience and journey on the programme.

To complete the sections of my Duke of Edinburgh silver award, I tutored GCSE maths students, all of them looking to achieve an A or A\* in their final examinations. I also learned how to read Arabic and can now read high levels of writing such as that demonstrated in the Qu'ran. In the practice expedition, I took on the role of team leader drawing on the leadership skills I had learned through my work experience placements.

I am excited to tackle all the hurdles I may encounter at university, to push my problem solving skills even further and increase my knowledge for a subject I cannot fault. I look forward to the independence in problem solving university will bring, the work I endeavour to complete and most importantly, falling deeper in love learning about a subject in which there is always something new to understand.