

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR MY
UCAS APPLICATION?

START NOW

REMEMBER

Good grades are important but are not a guarantee that you will get an offer from the university

You have to convince the admission tutors that you have a real interest and passion for the subject


You have to show it in your personal statement



HOW?

60 – 80% OF YOUR STATEMENT SHOULD BE ABOUT THE SUBJECT YOU WANT TO STUDY.

You have to demonstrate that you have :

- Read extensively about it – books, articles, periodic publications,
 - Followed the latest research and developments related to the subject,
 - Attended lectures, seminars or taster days,
 - Met and talked to people connected with your subject (speakers coming to visit our school for Enrichment sessions - that counts too!)
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VOCATIONAL DEGREES

TEACHING, MEDICINE & HEALTH CARE, LAW,
ARCHITECTURE, SOCIAL WORK, ENGINEERING,
ACCOUNTANCY, DENTISTRY, ETC

You have to spend time inside the place of work either shadowing, observing, volunteering or working to prove that you understand what the job is about.



VERY IMPORTANT!

**JUST MENTIONING THAT YOU HAVE READ A
BOOK, LISTENED TO A LECTURE OR
TALKED TO A PROFESSIONAL IS NOT
ENOUGH!**

YOU MUST BE ABLE TO ELABORATE



READING

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO MENTION THE TITLE AND AUTHOR, YOU MUST ALSO WRITE:


- Short description of the contents
- What did it teach you?
- Did you agree with it?
- Did it inspire you to follow it up with more reading?

SO....keep notes of everything you read now, you will not remember it in October



EXTRACTS FROM PERSONAL STATEMENTS:

I have read, '23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism' by Ha-Joon Chang which showed me that there is no such thing as a 'free market' due to the legal restrictions on trade, political interference and licensing laws. Therefore price is never really determined just by simple supply and demand but it is influenced by political objectives. The book also questions the benefits of globalisation and asserts that deprived countries are more entrepreneurial than affluent countries.



I have read 'Poor Economics' by Banerjee and Duflo, which posits a different view of the real causes of poverty. The authors argue that it is the misunderstanding of poverty that has led to the failure of anti-poverty strategies. They suggest that attempts to eradicate this problem are often misguided, and write that the poorest need programmes such as micro-saving that empower them with a real, fighting chance. It is this powerful relationship between Economics and its tangible effect on lives that attracts me so strongly to the subject.



My growing interest in different cultures which was ignited by reading the novel 'Not Without My Daughter' by Betty Mahmoody, a true story which focuses largely on the culture of the Islamic Middle East. The novel persuaded me to ask questions such as 'Is it in man or his culture that morality lies?' Similar questions were debated after reading the biography of Dennis Nilsen 'Killing for Company', which analyses the man's motivation for committing mass murder. The influence of his race, ancestry, upbringing, occupation and political stance were considered, amongst other factors.

I enjoyed reading "Freakonomics" by Steven D. Levitt, particularly his unique analysis of information asymmetry which highlights the abuse of power that may occur by individuals possessing non-public information. I feel that this book provides an intuitive and light-hearted application of Economics to everyday life and in the words of Levitt "represents how it (the world) actually does work". I also liked Robert H. Frank's "The Economic Naturalist" but found it dull in comparison - it does not provoke a similar level of debate or further reasoning.



VISITS

IF YOU ATTEND ANY LECTURES OR TASTER DAYS MAKE A NOTE OF:

- Date & place,
- Names of the speakers/important people you have met
- Subject of discussion
- Important highlights
- What did you learn or gain from it?
- How did it inspire you to decide to study this subject?

WHEN YOU COME BACK FILL IN A FORM KEPT AT SCHOOL WITH ALL THE DETAILS.

IT WILL HELP YOU TO WRITE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE IN FEW MONTHS TIME



AN EXAMPLE OF A FORM COMPLETED AFTER A VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

Date of the activity:	13 th December 2013
Type of the activity:	Taster Day
Place:	University of West London, Ealing Campus, St Mary's Road
Department:	Photography
Important people I have met:	Matthew Lea Senior Lecturer and Course Leader (BA Photography)
Important highlights of the activity	Talk from Mr Lea on preparing perfect portfolio, Being shown different types of portfolio, investing in good quality is important, PM Gallery tour (Alice Exhibition) in the Pitzhanger Manor House Talk from an Artist – background to the photographers & their work on display
What I have learned/ gained from the activity	deeper understanding of how to organise and present my portfolio, to look for common theme, tone, warmth of colour, groups of 3 photos work best, how the way you present it, says a lot about you as a person. It made me more aware of what admissions tutors are looking for when assessing portfolios. Better understanding of how to critique photographic work

AN EXAMPLE OF A FORM COMPLETED AFTER A VISIT TO CERN IN GENEVA

Date of the activity:	19 th December 2013
Type of the activity:	School trip (residential)
Place:	CERN and the Large Hedron Collider (LHC), near Geneva, Switzerland
Department:	Physics
Important people I have met:	Dr Lyn Evans, project manager of the LHC Prof Dewi Lewis who gave talk at Wiseman School prior to the trip
Important highlights of the activity	Lecture by Professor of Theoretical Physics. Tour of the Compact Muon Solenoid and The Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer Examples of particle detectors of the LHC Hands-on interactive exhibitions e.g. the Globe
What I have learnt/gained from the activity	Appreciated the vast scale and complexity of large scientific and engineering projects; Realised that we only understand a small proportion of the Universe; Introduction to particle physics by world-class experts.

MORE EXTRACTS FROM PERSONAL STATEMENTS:

I have attended different lectures such as one at Brunel University on number systems which discussed the possible link between prime numbers. This inspired me to read "An Adventure Guide On Number Theory" by Richard Friedberg to help further my understanding of the topic. I attended a Mathematics lecture series in Russell Square one of the subjects was Game Theory. I then decided to do further research on Game Theory and read two books on the subject "Game Theory" written by Morton D. Davis and "Game Theory A Very Short Introduction" written by Ken Binmore. I was intrigued about how Game Theory could be used as a model in economic situations and found it interesting that the simple 'tit for tat' strategy was the most effective and won both competitions held by Robert Axelrod held in the 1980's. I have also started to read other books on Mathematics in order to broaden my knowledge such as "Maths a very short introduction" by Timothy Gowers and enjoyed the nice proof to show that square root of 2 is an irrational number and found the idea of multi-dimensional geometry most interesting. I attended another maths lecture series and I found Steve Mould's 'Weird and Wonderful Maths' fascinating.

I attended the Sports Careers Fair at Brunel University and participated in a workshop led by the Physiology Manager in the Centre for Sports Medicine and Human Performance, Christopher Stock. Throughout the course of this workshop, I learnt how the basic principles of Biomechanics are employed to improve movement performance in athletes and clinically in patients such as children or the elderly. This is where my initial interest in the subject was strengthened as I found the various avenues that can be taken through the profession extremely attractive. This was furthered in my second workshop, headed by Paul Hobrough, Owner and Managing Director of Physio & Therapy UK where Mr Hobrough was able to highlight the importance of communication in the profession. His words, "Confidence is 80% of this job, once qualifications are in place" resonates within me as I see myself as a confident, well-spoken individual; qualities that I believe are vital for this occupation.



FINALLY - REMEMBER!

You only have 8 – 9 months to prepare yourself for the task of writing the Personal Statement.

Start booking your visits/lectures (check UCAS Blog and UCAS Resources)

Start organising work experience or shadowing for your half-terms or summer break

After the visits write down all the important information and add to your file at school, it will all be there for you next September

Keep on reading – write notes of what you have read and add them to the file as well.

