



Being Super-Curricular

(and why it matters)

What are universities looking for?

EVIDENCE OF
HIGH
ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT
AND
POTENTIAL

e.g. GCSEs
Predicted grades

EVIDENCE OF
SKILLS
RELEVANT FOR
COURSE

e.g. Use of empirical
evidence to support
arguments
(Experimental Psych.)

EVIDENCE OF
SKILLS
RELEVANT FOR
UNIVERSITY

e.g. Critical thinking,
communication,
teamwork

EVIDENCE OF
SUBJECT
INTEREST

e.g Exploring
beyond
schoolwork

- 1. Being super-curricular**
2. Super-curricular reading
3. Planning your next steps

Extra- curricular

Activities outside of the core school curriculum
e.g. sports, student government, volunteering, playing an instrument.

Super- curricular

Activities that relate to the subjects you are learning in school, but go beyond what is taught in the curriculum and the classroom
e.g. more depth or breadth

Why are super-curriculars important?

- They give you an insight into potential degree courses (i.e. universities know you know what the course involves!)
- They help you develop key skills that the universities are looking for
- You can **reflect** on them in your personal statement to demonstrate the above interest and skills

Being Super-Curricular

How have you developed your knowledge outside the classroom?

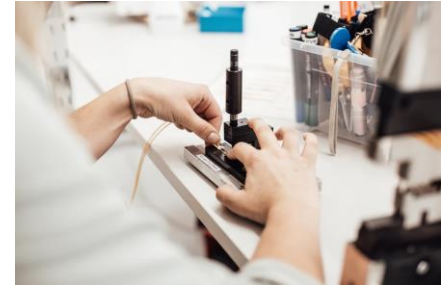
What have you done, read, visited, listened to that has inspired you?

If you haven't done anything, what do you plan to do?

- Programmes
- EPQ



- Practical experience
- Relevant work experience



- Reading



- Podcasts
- Lectures



How do you get the
most out of a
super-curricular?

Critical engagement

- What is the argument in this book/article/lecture?
- What is the supporting evidence?
- What is the problem that you are solving? Why is it important?
- What do I think about it ? How can I find out more?
- Talk to friends and family about what you have read/done

Keep a log of what you have done and more importantly, **what you learned** from the experience

THE UCAS 3 QUESTIONS

“
Why do you want to study this course or subject?
”

“
How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?
”

“
What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?
”

THE UCAS 3 QUESTIONS

“

Do you
like the
course?

”

“

Can you
do the
course?

”

“

Anything
else we
should
know?

”

The people who look at your university applications will often say they want people who are passionate about their subject.

How do you **show** academic passion?
without just saying,

“I’m passionate about...”

ENGLISH

PHYSICS

PPE

LAW

What have they done to show
super-curricular interest in their course?

What looks really impressive is if you can...

...take your super-curricular activity and
say what it made you think or link it to
things you have done or are learning about
(critical thinking)

Effective personal statement paragraphs
will use **super-curricular** activities to say...

WHAT?

What
you did

**SO
WHAT?**

What you
learnt

“**Before reading *Finding Moonshine*** by Marcus du Sautoy, I had only considered symmetries as a property of shapes which appear the same on both sides of a line, but **through reading this book I discovered that** symmetries are wider reaching than I had expected. These symmetries can even be used to prove things including the inexistence of a formula to solve quintic equations: despite their seeming irrelevance to algebra and polynomials. **Reading this book was conveniently timed with further research** on Group Theory; this allowed me to understand what du Sautoy described in the later parts of the book, especially the chapter which dramatized the race to find new sporadic groups in the 20th century.”
(*Maths*)

What looks really impressive is if you can...

...take your super-curricular activity and say what it made you think or link it to things you have done or are learning about
(critical thinking)

Or...say what it made you think, and use it as a link to other activities
a stepping stone

Effective personal statement paragraphs
will use **super-curricular** activities to say...

WHAT?

What
you did

**SO
WHAT?**

What you
learnt

**NOW
WHAT?**

What you
did next

“The study of female characters can provide an insight into the range of expectations placed on women. When reading **‘Beautiful Little Feminist: Daisy’s Perspective in The Great Gatsby’**, I was troubled by the argument that Daisy is portrayed as a villain in the novel because she is a feminist. I disagree as Daisy seems to ironize the stereotype of women as innocent to deflect any responsibility for her actions. Unlike Daisy, the women in Little Women prioritise female empowerment through sisterly bonds, illustrating the importance of women working together. **‘The Conflicted feminism of Little Women’** highlights that Jo’s submission to marriage is problematic when considering whether the novel is feminist. Still, Little Women demonstrates that women can choose their own path in life, an encouraging concept inspired my reading of **The Colour Purple**. Both texts offer inspiration to the oppressed, proving Literature can contribute to societal attitudes.”

1. Can you find examples of **critical thinking**?
(So what?)

2. Can you identify the '**so what**' of each
super-curricular activity?

3. Can you identify the '**now what**' of each
super-curricular activity? In other words, where
are the '**stepping stones**'?

1. Being super-curricular
- 2. Super-curricular reading**
3. Planning your next steps

What makes a good reader?

Palinscar and Brown observed that good readers constantly perform the following cognitive processes:

- **Summarising** the information so far in their working memory
- Asking themselves **questions** on what they do not understand
- **Clarifying** the answers to their questions and making sense of a text
- **Predicting** what will happen next (if in a story)

In 1997, educational researchers Keene and Zimmerman also showed that good readers make **connections** between information in a text and their prior knowledge.

Read the Economist article and then:

1. **Summarise** the main points with your partner
2. Did anything stand out?
3. Any **questions** about something you don't understand? **Clarify**
4. What subjects are represented in this article?

Oxbridge Interviews

We also test these skills at interview to see what you'd be like as a student here.

We will often give candidates unseen material:

- **Before** some interviews, you might be given a resource to look at
- **During** some interviews, you might be given a resource to look at

Medicine:

Put these countries in order by their
crude mortality
(deaths per thousands of the population):

Bangladesh

UK

Japan

South Africa

Types of Approach

Skills of a good reader:

- **Summarising** the information so far
- Asking **questions** on what you do not understand
- **Clarifying** the answers to their questions and making sense
- **Connections** with prior knowledge

1. **What risk factors reduce life expectancy?**
2. **What promotes a long life?**
3. **Is the terminology relevant? (e.g. crude mortality)**

Medicine:

Put these countries in order by their
crude mortality
(deaths per thousands of the population):

1. Japan (highest)
2. UK
3. South Africa
4. Bangladesh (lowest)



MRI

My Reflection Is...

Stuck for ideas?

Oxford Digital Resource Hub:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/increasing-access/ug-digital-resources/students-over-16>

University College Staircase 12:

<https://www.univ.ox.ac.uk/applying-to-univ/staircase12/>

Cambridge Super-Curricular Guide:

https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/sites/www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/super-curricular_suggestions.pdf

Some Maths & Computer Science Resources

- <https://www.ukmt.org.uk/challenges>
- <https://www.cipherchallenge.org/>
- <https://www.ukmt.org.uk/enrichment/mentoring-scheme>
- <https://bmos.ukmt.org.uk/home/bmo.shtml>
- <https://madasmaths.com/>
- <https://maths.org/step/welcome>
- <https://integralmaths.org/ritangle>
- <https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/admissions/python-challenges-page>
- <https://projecteuler.net>
- <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/outreach/oxford-mathematics-alphabet>
- <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/outreach/oxford-online-maths-club>
- <https://causeway.education/wider-reading/2020y/3m/18d/stem-science-technology-engineering-mathematics>
- http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/why_oxford/background_reading.html
- <https://nrich.maths.org/post-16>

Some Engineering Resources

- <https://www.bpho.org.uk/>
- <https://isaacphysics.org/>
- <https://causeway.education/wider-reading/2020y/3m/18d/stem-science-technology-engineering-mathematics>
- <https://i-want-to-study-engineering.org/>
- <https://brilliant.org/>
- <https://www.iop.org/explore-physics>
- <https://www.arborsci.com/pages/next-time-questions>

Super-Curricular Reflective Log



Super-curricular Reflective Log

Experiences you could reflect upon:

- Reading (book, article etc)
- Podcast / online lecture / TED talk
- Online course (e.g. MOOC from [Unifrog](#))
- EPQ
- Work experience / volunteering
- Summer School / Taster Day
- Attending a club / discussion
- Giving or seeing a presentation
- Writing an article / essay competition

This reflective log will be helpful when you start to write your personal statement. It is not enough to simply list the things you have done. What is important is that you reflect and communicate: what you learnt / found interesting and what it prompted you to do next (another super-curricular activity for example).

	WHAT? What you did	SO WHAT? What you learnt	NOW WHAT? What you did next	
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of what happened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you find most interesting and why? Give academic detail. • Has this experience changed your perspective or left you with further questions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you going to do next? • Are you going to sign up to an online course to explore this topic further? • Are you going to research the work of a particular academic? 	Links/Notes