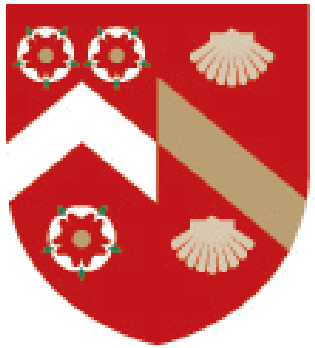


Access to Excellence

WADHAM COLLEGE

Back to Oxford: University Next Steps

Think back to your visit to Oxford:

- What do you remember?
- How would you evaluate the impact it has had on you?

Your next steps

Look at your pledges you made after the trip

- What actions are you taking to make sure you do them?

Pledge Example:

- I pledge to attend an Oxford University Open Day

Pledge Action:

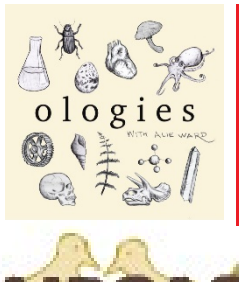
- Research dates for Oxford University Open Days
- See if school are organising a trip
- Can I arrange a trip myself (train, car etc.)?
- Prepare a list of things to visit (e.g. Colleges, Departments)

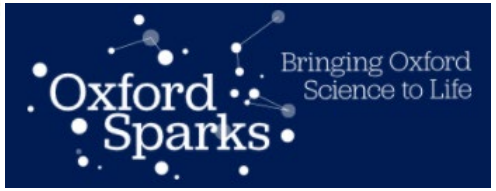
Developing your passions

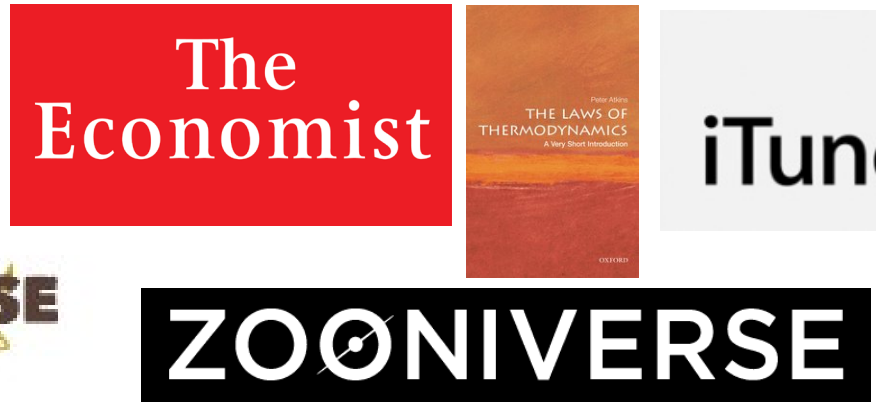
The people who look at your university applications will often say they want pupils who are passionate about the subject.

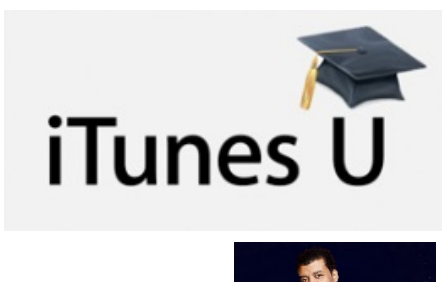
- How do you show academic passion? (without just saying, “I’m passionate about…”)

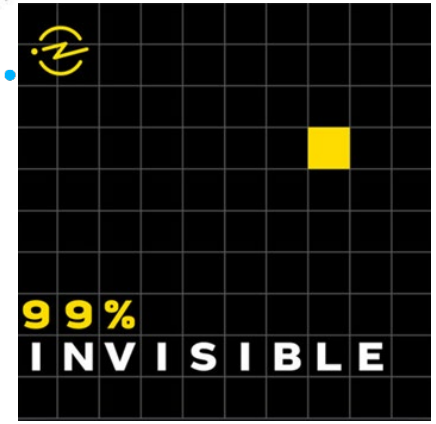
Super-curricular activities





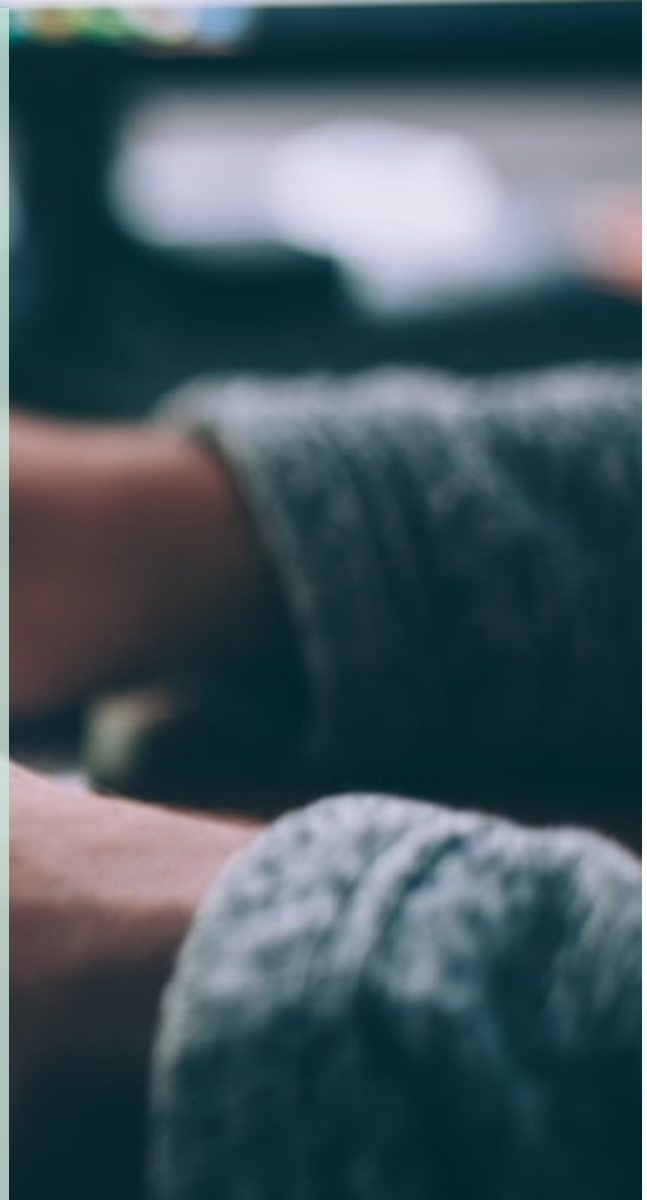






Your Next Steps: Super curricular Resources

- Pick one of the super-curricular resources from the previous image
- Research it
  - ✓ Focus on how and in what ways it can help you to extend your knowledge of the subject
- Prepare a 5 minute presentation for your classmates on the resource you found – summarising what it is and considering its impact



Super curricular Resources: Presentation

Your presentation should include:

- Brief overview of what the resource is
- Brief summary of the article/podcast/video you examined
- Outline what you personally learned, liked about it, or how it improved your understanding
- Quick evaluation of what impact it could have for your classmates
- What next steps are there?

From super-curricular

To Personal Statement

Super-curricular activities

Super curricular Resources: Presentation

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- Brief overview of what the resource is
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Super-curricular to Personal Statement

- Super-curricular resources are vital for a personal statement
- They help demonstrate a lot of university ready skills top institutions look for:
  - "*Enthusiasm for the subject*, *scientific curiosity*, and an ability to *think analytically*." Nick, Experimental Psychology
  - "*Curiosity*, wit, ambition candour, diversity and above all *work ethic*." Karolina, International Relations
  - "Some of the key ones (apart from the course paper track record and predicted grades in appropriate subjects) include *enthusiasm*, *motivation* and *inquisitiveness*…and the ability to make *connections between subjects*." Tamsin, Earth Sciences

Example: Reading

"I gained great insight into medicine from the *book* 'Being Mortal' by Atul Gawande. It addresses the modern day medical challenge: when it comes to the realities of ageing and death, the triumphs of cutting-edge medicine often conflict with the interests of the human spirit. It made me think about the fundamental questions of ethics and the point where autonomy diverges from beneficence. Is a sugar-loving diabetic a paradigm of freedom or suffering from neglect?"
Afrose, Medicine

What looks really impressive is...

…taking your super-curricular activity and saying what it made you think..

(Demonstrates critical thinking)

…or linking it to other things your have done or learned about.

(Using it as a stepping stone)

Linking Knowledge

“After realising how much Archaeology and History can combine to allow you to understand the ancient world I read 'Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction'. As a *new subject* to me the methods and theories behind archaeology were less apparent. I was struck most by the idea of scientific and social theories affecting archaeologists' work. *Theories I studied in A-level* Sociology, such as Engels and Marx's idea of 'primitive communism' had such a profound effect on the discipline that Marxist Archaeology was founded. This showed me how connected 'social sciences' can be in determining how we think about the world and the past.”
Classical Archaeology & Ancient History

Stepping Stones

“Reading the book prompted me to listen to a *Radio 4 series*, Darwin: In Our Time, about how Darwin reached his theory of evolution and how this was received by 19th century society. As well as reading seminal texts on Biology, I have taken the opportunity to attend *lectures*, at the Imperial College Festival and at a *residential course* at Trinity College Cambridge, amongst other events. I particularly enjoyed a lecture by science author Kat Arney on genetics. It highlighted how much we don't understand about the function of much of our DNA, and expanded on what I had previously read in 'The Animal Kingdom: A Very Short Introduction', by Peter Holland, about embryological development and how DNA can code for the construction of a complex body plan.”
Biology

Example: Stepping Stone Scaffold

1. Select something that you have done.
2. What were you struck by? What questions did it raise?
3. What did you do to find our more find out more?
4. What struck you about this?

I attended a taster lecture at Oxford University on the use of lasers in cell biology (1,2). I was intrigued to see how particular technology allows us to uncover complexity not normally visible to the naked eye, and in particular the role of fluorescence molecules (3). The ability to use adaptations from other organisms (e.g. the GFP gene from Jellyfish) to see the inner workings of the cell made me realise how the way we design experiments shape our knowledge (3). Subsequently, I accessed the Cell Library Online to explore other ways in which researchers have solved the problems of labeling cell components, e.g. LipidTOX to visualise lipid droplets without killing the cell (3,4).

Example: Stepping Stone Scaffold

1. Select something that you have done.
2. What were you struck by? What questions did it raise?
3. What did you do to find our more find out more?
4. What grabbed your attention and why?

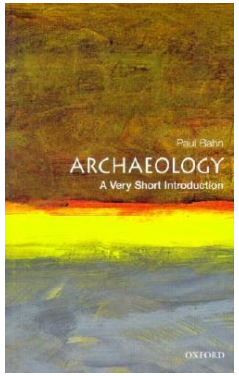
"Reading A Very Short Introduction to Molecular Biology (1), I was struck by a segment on regulatory RNA molecules. I was particularly fascinated by the concept of RNA used in the regulation of gene expression (2). This led me to a Nature article about Riboswitches: RNA molecules that can bind to a ligand and change their physical conformation (3). This happens in the expression region of the riboswitch, and determines whether the RNA is transcribed or not... Taking biochemistry at degree level would allow me to learn more about cell function and control... (4)"
Biochemistry

Step 3: Ways to develop your passions

Museums

Programming Courses

Podcasts



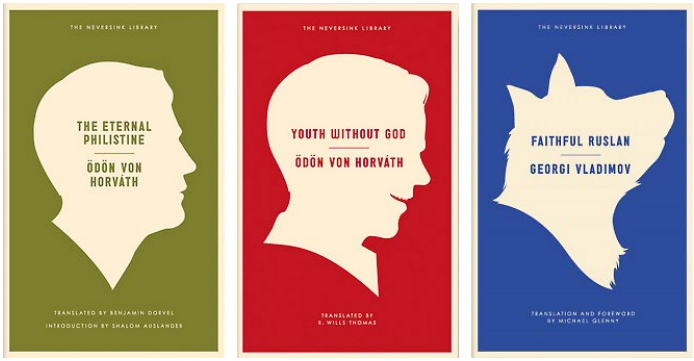
Other book examples

Summer Schools

University lectures

EPQ

Relevant Work Experience



Other Books by author

SUMMING UP

- What are your stepping stones going to be?
- Set yourself 3 targets for super-curricular activities, and assign yourself a time frame
- What other steps are you going to take to help get yourself ready for university?

Get in touch

Email

access@wadham.ox.ac.uk

Twitter

@WadhamAccess

Website

wadham.ox.ac.uk