



PERSONAL STATEMENT – COURSE IB #1

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Ralph Waldo Emerson said “Language is the archives of history”, an idea intrinsically linked to Classics. By examining language systematically to unravel its intricacies, by detailed literary analysis, and studying histories, I hope to understand the Greek and Roman mind.

Studying the classical languages has improved my grasp of modern ones. In ‘Empires of the Word’ I found Ostler’s discussion of the spread of the linguistic empires and their respective societies exciting. His ideas on why languages spread were fascinating, giving an insight into the decline of Greek and Latin. Deutscher’s ‘The Unfolding of Language’ was engaging as it described the natural development of language. The evolution of words and languages parallel to society intrigues me and the opportunities for philological and etymological exploration in studying Latin and Greek are amazing. Classics appeals to me as I can study linguistic structure and simultaneously understand the societies through their literature, history and philosophy.

Classical literature gives a peep-hole into the Greek and Roman mind as it creates a perfectly preserved microcosm, whilst dealing with timeless human dilemmas. Over the past few years, I have really enjoyed examining the heroic ideal, especially in the context of epic poetry. I found Griffin’s ‘Homer; on Life and Death’ enlightening, as it led me to examine many of the characters from a new perspective. Griffin presented Achilles in a favourable light, causing me to see past his arrogance and physicality to his principles and tragic fate with much more sympathy. The moral dilemmas presented by the Greek tragedians are thought-provoking. Euripides’ exploration of the themes of silence and oaths, and Phaedra’s plight in ‘Hippolytus’ moved me deeply. They also offer an insight to the issues Greece faced at the time and how its society worked.

Studying Chemistry and Mathematics honed my logic and ability to assimilate and apply new concepts to various situations. They also made me appreciate the work done by Archimedes, Pythagoras and other ancient scientific minds.



Over the LVI year, I started tutoring Classics and Maths. This is a symbiotic process. Teaching Latin and Greek helped me understand their structure better, and also taught me about the challenges of teaching. It is deeply rewarding.

I have a variety of non-academic interests. I love debating, and have improved over the past few years. It made me more analytical and increased my clarity of thought and expression. I am school Judo captain and a keen squash and tennis player. This combined with my role as school Librarian, chairman of the Classics society and Junior House prefect has improved my time management and efficiency. Being Junior House prefect has honed my communication and leadership skills. Such diverse responsibilities have given me confidence to push myself further in all that I do. I also represent my school quiz team. I participated in the Young Enterprise, developing my team-work skills considerably. I have done my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award, and am working towards Gold. I hope this show that my ability to juggle numerous commitments with dedication.

I am lucky to be brought up in two distinct cultures. This broadened my horizons and increased the opportunities I had. I am bilingual in Hindi and English, and am learning Sanskrit in the holidays. I love it, and find the similarities between Sanskrit and Latin and Greek fascinating.

I have been learning Mandarin for two years. It is very satisfying, yet challenging. It has given me a new perspective on language due to its idiosyncratic pictographic nature.

I agree with Tolkien's statement; "no language is justly studied merely as an aid to other purposes. It will in fact better serve other purposes, philological or historical, when it is studied for love, for itself". This is my motivation to study classics; that I may experience the beauty of the languages and also understand their speakers.

