



Daisy's Oxbridge Application



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Daisy's Oxbridge Application Experience:

Daisy, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Oxford

What did you do at GCSE:

English, Maths and Science
Art
Religious Studies
History
Classical Civilisations

What did you do at A-levels:

Classical Civilisations
Modern History
Film
Illustration

Were you State or Privately educated:

I have always attended Cornish state schools where ancient languages were not an option - we were the only state school in the south west to offer Classics in the first place so I consider myself lucky to have had such opportunities.

Why did you apply to the Oxford rather than Cambridge:

Simply put, it was the only one which offered my course! Oxford is the real hub of classical learning, and offers many courses and joint degrees with classics. I ended up choosing Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, with which you can also pick up or continue with an ancient language - I chose latin from scratch and I'm hoping to pick up Greek as an extra paper.

Why did you apply to the Oxbridge college that you did:

I had simple criteria to follow:

Had to be medium/small in size
Had to be old/atmospheric
Had to be central
Had to offer my course



Had to offer 3 years accommodation

I also wanted one which was 'less famous' because I wrongly believed it would give me a better chance of getting in

After this list narrowed it down to about ten colleges, I gave up and made my mum chose! She's always right, and Exeter is a friendly and beautiful college with a strong community and my tutor is wonderful. Floreat Exon!

What did the application process look like:

For me, it was about reading as many books as possible for my personal statement, and trying to find arguments and niches in academia I enjoyed.

I would try to supplement this with visits to museums or local sites, podcasts and documentaries. I was advised to stray away from the well trodden path of Mary Beard, or to at least use her as a springboard into topics from which I would try to find something a bit different and worth debating about if I were to get an interview offer!

I sat 3 interviews, which were archaeology and history based, but none for my language option as it is very much optional with CAAH. I also had to submit two forms of written work, of which I chose two particularly strong essays I had written in class with minor editing from my teacher.

What were the interviews like:

My interviews were on the whole actually quite enjoyable! They were fascinating, and you grow in confidence as they go on.

For one, I was asked to actually handle three fragments of authentic Athenian pottery and talk about the differences between the sets and to place them in chronological periods.

The interviewers are very kind, they often give prompts, and it feels like a conversation more than anything. For the others, I was given 30 minutes to read historical texts- primary and then secondary, and then we discussed them with various question prompts. We also discussed my personal statement, so make sure you know this inside out. Most importantly, it's ok to ask them to repeat the question, or to say you don't know.

How did you prepare for them:

You really can't to be honest! You don't know what they'll ask you, so I can only advise going over and over your personal statement ! Make sure you know what you've written and your arguments so they can't trip you up.



Maybe research outside the books as well- who was the author, what time period did they write in? What criticisms did they meet in their lifetime?



What was it like getting your results:

A lot of crying! The relief is insurmountable.

If you could only give 3 pieces of advice to your former self what would they be:

My three tips to Oxbridge candidates:

- 1.) Think outside the box when writing your statement, look beyond the main arguments, and be creative.
- 2.) However, don't make broad and bold statements for the sake of sounding smart with little evidence or reading to back it up- they will see through you.
- 3.) Do as much as possible to be involved with classics while you can - museums, summer schools, digs, essay competitions! Put yourself out there!





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