

Personal statement

My flair for English and love for reading has long been apparent to me, whereas my enthusiasm for the German language is something I have only discovered in more recent years. My awareness of my talent for speaking and reading German has increased my appreciation for studying English, as I now have a rich interest in studying the literature of both countries.

My wider reading of German includes 'Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum' by Heinrich Böll. This novel appealed to me because it is centred around the 'Wiederaufbau' period in Germany, which, alongside the period of the Berlin Wall, interests me especially. I then watched the film adaptation of Böll's novel and found it just as interesting in showing the turbulent political times Germany has experienced and the workings of the German media. In addition, I have read various German short stories, such as Franz Kafka's 'Metamorphosis'. I plan to read more of his work, both in English and German because I find Kafka's prose style brilliant in either translation.

Making annual trips to Germany to visit step-family, native Germans, deepened my understanding of the culture and history of the country and my keenness to learn its language. My various trips to Germany and having conversations with step-family and regular contact with my German exchange partner have increased my confidence and accuracy in conversational German beyond that of my A level study.

I was a dedicated member of our school's 'Love Of Literature Society' from the age of 13. This was my first experience with discussing literature with other like-minded linguists, and the society enabled me to become more perceptive in the way I interpreted different forms of literature and expressing my arguments with fluency. The society was leading factor in my choosing to study English literature at A level, and in motivating me to found the Sixth Form Reading Club when I began year 12. The members meet in our own time to discuss classic literature that is not part of our A level curriculum. Beginning with Charlotte Brontë's 'Jane Eyre', I particularly enjoyed looking at the different critical responses to classic texts. For example, viewing 'Jane Eyre' through a feminist perspective led me to read Jean Rhys' 'Wide Sargasso Sea', which allowed me to reconsider the oppression of women in Brontë's original novel. I have an interest in feminist literature and studied sections of Gilbert and Gubar's book 'Madwoman in the Attic' to supplement my knowledge in this area.

Furthermore, I am interested in the works of George Orwell and upon reading 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' and 'Animal Farm' was keen to learn more about his motivations as an author and the symbolism in his works. Listening to BBC 'In Our Time' podcasts as well as choosing to base my A level history coursework on the Cold War period deepened my knowledge of the context Orwell was writing in, and I find him fascinating as an author whose works I still find relevant today.

For this reason, I chose to base my EPQ around the emergence of young adult fiction as a genre and its success in the past 20 years. Dystopian fiction constitutes a significant portion of this genre so I believe my research project will be fascinating in leading me to analyse

why young adult fiction has become so popular, which features are attributes to a successful young adult novel and why dystopian tales in particular are so commercially well-received.

Having always been an active member of the school community, I was elected by students and staff to be part of the head girl team beginning year 13. I take great pride in this role, as I care about improving the experience of all pupils, and enjoy speaking to parents and governors. My confidence in public speaking increased dramatically through my membership of the Sixth Form debate society. It is beneficial for both of the subjects I plan to study as it has developed my ability to construct a convincing argument as well as spontaneously respond to challenges.