



LAW PERSONAL STATEMENT

DUKES EDUCATION

Participating in a Citizenship Foundation Mock Trial Competition during Year 8 initiated my interest in the law. It gave me the opportunity to see how laws, whilst appearing fixed and universal, are open to interpretation, especially when attempts are made to apply them to specific cases. I also learnt how opposing arguments can be furnished using the same legal framework; a concept that holds a continual fascination for me. Following this, I have developed my interest both through practical experience and independent reading. A week's work experience in the legal department at my local council helped to expand my awareness of the law and allowed me to observe it within the political context of local government. Whilst at the council, I was especially enthused by observing a case at the local court and I have since found observing trials an engaging way to find out more about criminal law.

For the past year I have volunteered for the Citizens Advice Bureau and am now a qualified Gateway Assessor. This gives me regular experience of the law through interviewing new clients, identifying the advice they need and agreeing an appropriate course of action. Most cases involve an element of civil law and my work has left me with an appreciation of how the law can reach almost every area of our lives. Consequently I have become interested in the organisation's Social Policy Team and how client problems can lead to the questioning of laws and their modification to improve the welfare of society.

Regarding my independent reading, introductory law books such as Heneker's 'The Law in Brief' and Williams' 'Learning the Law' have given me an insight into some major legal areas and methods of study and have left me keen to learn more. An interest in politics has led to an interest in the nature of our constitution and I enjoyed reading Pannick's 'Judges', the role of the judiciary being an on-going debate. Also, Mill's classic essay 'On Liberty' provoked my thinking about not just what the role of law is but what perhaps it should be. Regular reading of 'The Times', including the law reports, has kept me abreast of some legal developments; the ever evolving nature of law is for me, part of its appeal.

Considering my academic life, I feel that studying my A-level subjects has equipped me with valuable analytical writing and thinking skills. I have always been eager to extend my knowledge beyond the syllabus and thus am working on an Extended Project, a piece of voluntary independent research culminating in a 5000 word essay. I chose to explore the extent to which our language impacts on our thought processes and perceptions of reality, evaluating the writings of thinkers such as Nietzsche, Wittgenstein and Foucault. As well as developing my research and extended writing techniques, I have enjoyed having the chance to work independently outside of the confines of the syllabus.

I have tried to play a full and active role in college life, to this end I have become

President of the Farnborough Union, a student-run parliamentary style debating society. Through this I had the opportunity to represent the college in the ESU Debating Championships and have become a confident public speaker. Outside of college, I play the trumpet in a wide variety of orchestras and ensembles. As well as being an enjoyable social activity, balancing these extra curricular commitments with my academic work has forced me to develop good time management. Meanwhile when the opportunity arose to go trekking in Borneo for a month of the summer, it seemed like too good an opportunity to miss. This World Challenge expedition, for which I raised the funds myself, certainly tested my confidence in a new and diverse range of situations.

To conclude, I believe that my combination of skills, abilities and above all my sheer enthusiasm and demonstrated dedication to the subject would make me a strong candidate for the successful study of law at university.

Commented [1]:

This is perhaps a little wordy, however when discussed in interview they liked the fact I'd explained what it was that I learnt about law through this experience that I specifically found interesting.

Commented [2]:

I think this sets up the structure well.

Commented [3]:

It is by no means necessary to have completed extensive work experience to get in for Law at Cambridge but it was another way of showing how I developed an interest. The interviewer asked me how I had got these opportunities, whether it was through connections (it wasn't). They liked the fact that I'd looked at law in a more everyday setting than if I'd had the chance to shadow a top barrister for example.

Commented [4]:

These books were both on the recommended pre-interview reading list. They were actually pretty dry and I'm not sure I'd have had anything interesting to say if I'd been asked about them so might have left this out if I'd had more confidence to not feel I had to show I'd done the suggested reading.

Commented [5]:

I wasn't asked about these 2 books either but would have had much more to say about them if I had been asked. I think the fact I'd read the Mill, not strictly a legal text, but worked out for myself how it was relevant shows more independent thought than the other examples which were all on the recommended list.

Commented [6]:

This sentence is I think a bit unnecessary as the point is fairly obvious.

Commented [7]:

We discussed my Extended Essay. I was worried as it wasn't at all legal in subject matter (as we could only do it on subjects we were studying) but that wasn't a problem, the law interviewer seemed genuinely curious to be told more about it.

Commented [8]:

I tried to minimise the extra-curricular section of my personal statement and I think the balance was pretty good in the end, giving just a few sentences demonstrating I have a life outside academic work and how this has taught me skills that will make me a better student.

Commented [9]:

At the time, I really didn't like what I came up with here- I thought it sounded arrogant. I now think there's no harm in a confident final statement at the end as long as you've backed up the claim.