



# Summer Application Bootcamp – Interview Preparation Workshop (Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences)

## Interview Question Pack

In this pack, you will find questions for Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences subjects for you to practice your critical thinking, oracy, and problem-solving skills. These questions have been compiled to give you an insight into the types of questions that are asked at Oxbridge interviews and to allow you to practice the key skills that interviewers are looking for in interview responses.

Please note that these questions are NOT intended for you to prepare specific answers ahead of your interview. Interview questions change each year and interviewers are not looking for pre-prepared answers.

### In your breakout rooms:

1. Introduce yourselves – name, where you're from, what A-Levels (or equivalent) you're taking, what subject(s)/universities you want to apply to
2. Discuss the question prompts together. There is no need to answer all the questions – feel free to focus on whichever questions you find most interesting. Please try and make sure that all students have a chance to share their ideas. If you run out of questions, you can either move onto questions from a related subject, or work through [Explore](#) questions together.
3. We will return to the main room at 12:30, and you'll have the chance to share some of the things that you've been talking about in your breakout rooms.

Hayley will be in the main room and circulating through the breakout rooms, so if you have any questions or concerns, please just let her know.



### Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

- "Do you think Chairman Mao would be proud of the China of today?"
- "Why does the word 'God' and 'I' have a capital letter?"
- "Give me a brief case study of an area of Middle Eastern politics that has interested you?"
- "How many cultures are grouped together under the label "China?""
- "What is your favourite dictionary?"
- "What can we learn from Pompeian excavations as to the quality of their life, especially their dietary habits?"

### Classics

- "How civilised was the Roman world?"
- "Why would a book of today be called a classic?"
- "What do you think the differences are between modern and ancient democracy and why?"
- "Relate Classics to a modern piece of Literature."
- "Tell me about chronology in the Odyssey."
- "Was Ovid trying to moralise or entertain?"
- "Is the Aeneid just political propaganda supporting Augustus?"
- "How many Latin cases are there excluding the vocative? How many do you think might have been in Proto Indo-European?"
- "Give a few meanings of the word 'Quibus'. What peculiarity does this word have in relation to a certain preposition? Which personal pronouns share this property? On the subject of personal pronouns, can you name two intensifying enclitics affixed to it? Why shouldn't we stack enclitics?"
- "'Latin is far from the pristine, perfect, sanctified tongue it is portrayed to be' – what do you think of this statement? (You might want to think about defective verbs, obsolete particles and the lack of the perfect active participle)."
- "What is the difference in Herodotus' and Tacitus' histories? Which one do we find closest to what a History means today? What else can we conclude from reading an ancient historian's work, apart from the facts?"

### Economics

- "Why are rich countries rich and poor countries poor?"
- "What would you say if Theresa May were to take a report which shows that people who go to university earn more than those who do not, and then proclaim that going to university causes you to earn more?"
- "What is the difference between buying and selling of slaves and the buying and selling of football players?"



- "Differentiate  $x^2/z^2+h^2$ "
- "Would it be feasible to have an economy entirely based on the service sector?"
- "Should governments subsidise agriculture?"
- "Sketch the graph of  $\sin^2 x + 2 = y$ "
- "What role should the state play in the economy?"
- "What is the point of privatisation?"
- "What are the arguments for and against the Minimum wage?"

## English

- "Why do you think an English student might be interested in the fact that Coronation Street has been running for 50 years?"
- "Why might it be useful for an English student to read the Twilight series?"
- "What is the purpose of comedy?"
- "What is the effect of a story within a story?"
- "Was Romeo impulsive?"
- "Tell me about your favourite poem."
- "JK Rowling has just published a book for adults after the hugely successful Harry Potter series. In what ways do you think that writing for children is different to writing for adults?"
- "Is there a difference between innocence and naivety?"
- "Is the stage a platform for opinions or just entertainment?"
- "Tell me about the last book you read."
- "What are the advantages and disadvantages of ignoring context when dealing with works of literature?"
- "What are the positives and negatives of adapting books to films? Is it a positive thing to bring literature to a wider audience?"
- "Can books be bad for you?"
- "What makes a short story different from a novel?"
- "Should poetry be difficult to understand?"

## Geography

- "If I visited your local area, what would I be interested in?"
- "Suggest a list of conditions necessary to sustain life on Earth."
- "Is globalisation a good thing?"
- "What do you think would be the major differences on Earth if, (a) no atmosphere had ever formed? (b) there was no water? (c) plate tectonics did not exist?"
- "What is the relevance of physical geography to human geography?"
- "Can you tell me about a recent news story related to Geography, which you found interesting?"
- "Are fair-trade bananas really fair?"



- "How do mountains originate? How can computers help geographers find out more about this question?"

### **History/Archaeology/History & Politics**

- "Imagine we had no records about the past at all, except everything to do with sport – how much of the past could we find out about?"
- "What can historians not find out about the past?"
- "Which person (or sort of person) in the past would you most like to interview, and why?"
- "Is violence always political? Does 'political' mean something different in different contexts?"
- "What makes civil wars so different from other wars?"
- "What are the links between History and Archaeology?"
- "What are the origins of your first name? What is the significance of given names? How about place names?"
- "Tell me about your favourite museum. What's the role of a museum?"
- "Do you think modern history is more relevant than ancient and medieval history?"
- "Are modern historians more nihilistic about religion?"
- "Does History repeat itself? Would it be worth studying if it didn't?"
- "What place that you have been to recently interested you the most historically?"
- "What can we conclude from reading an ancient or medieval historian's work, apart from the facts?"

### **History of Art**

- "Discuss restoration and conservation. Are they good or bad?"
- "What is your opinion on the Turner Prize and Brit Art?"
- "How does art reflect its society?"
- "What work of art would you most like to own?"
- "How can art be musical?"

### **Human, Social, and Political Sciences**

- "Is American politics democratic?"
- "Should women have their own representatives?"
- "Are there conditions under which the outcomes of democratic elections should be ignored?"
- "If you could interview a relative who had lived through World War II, what would you expect to learn about the main ways society has changed since the war, and what might make their perspective distinctive?"
- "Does the recent migration crisis in Europe challenge or reinforce racism?"



- "Must all revolutions necessarily fail?"
- "What are the major causes and consequences of global inequality?"

### **Land Economy**

- "What do you think about those who regard global warming as nonsense?"
- "Why is traffic so bad in cities and what would you do about it?"
- "Is it more important to focus on poverty at home or abroad?"
- "How can urban planners increase happiness in local communities without increasing spending?"
- "You've just been appointed Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. What is your first Act in office?"

### **Law**

- "Should it be illegal to run a red light in the middle of the night on an empty road?"
- "What does it mean for someone to 'take' another's car?"
- "If the punishment for parking on double yellow lines were death, and therefore nobody did it, would that be a just and effective law?"
- "Should it be illegal to run a red light in the middle of the night on an empty road?"
- "Should the use of mobile phones be banned on public transport?"
- "Can you imagine a world without laws?"
- "Does a girl scout have a political agenda?"
- "Tell me about a case that you find particularly interesting."
- "What is best: a written or non-written constitution?"
- "Why should justice not be retributive?"
- "Do you enter a contract when you get on a bus?"
- "A man stabbed another man in his sleep, not realising that his victim had already died in his sleep from a heart attack. Should the stabber be convicted of murder?"
- "What is 'necessity'? Are there any times when a defence of necessity would not be appropriate?"

### **Modern and Medieval Languages/Linguistics**

- "What is language?"
- "What are the differences between Spain and Latin America?"
- "How does Le Monde differ from English broadsheets?"
- "Should poetry be difficult to understand?"
- "What makes a short story different from a novel?"
- "In a world where English is a global language, why learn French?"
- "What makes something poetic?"



- "Why haven't there been many French operas?"
- "What makes a novel or play political?"

## Philosophy

- "What exactly do you think is involved in blaming someone?"
- "Is someone who risks their own life (and those of others) in extreme sports or endurance activities a hero or a fool?"
- "If I deconstruct someone, record their structure, and send that information elsewhere to reconstruct them, is it the same person?"
- "I agree that air transport contributes to harmful climate change. But whether or not I make a given plane journey, the plane will fly anyway. So there is no moral reason for me not to travel by plane.' Is this a convincing argument?"
- "Suppose that you could plug yourself into a machine for the rest of your life, which would give you all the experiences you find enjoyable and valuable. Once in the machine, you would not know that you are plugged in, and that these experiences are not real. Would you go into the machine? If so, why? If not, why not?"
- "Is it a matter of fact or knowledge that time travels in only one direction?"
- "What's the importance of literacy in the development of religions? Can you give some examples?"
- "Differentiate between power and authority."
- "Is emotion an important part of religion?"
- "If you wanted to form a government of Philosophers, what selection criteria would you use?"