



60-second interview: Thomas Small

Tom is in his final year of secondary school and is studying biology, geography, psychology and critical thinking. He has recently applied to study anthropology at university. In his spare time he volunteers at a riding school, and enjoys going running, swimming and watching Formula One and Chelsea FC.

How did you first learn about anthropology?

Whilst looking at courses linked to my A-levels I remembered a conversation I had with my uncle, who works at a university. He said that to get the most out of university you should choose a subject that you are truly interested in. With this in mind I came across anthropology, which included elements of all of my A-level subjects and much more.

Do you take part in any extra curricular activities which link to your interest in anthropology?

For a number of years I have volunteered at a local riding school, this relates to my interest in animal behaviour and links to biological anthropology. I am also keenly interested in world and current affairs and world religions.

What makes you interested in studying the subject at university?

The fact that anthropology is multidisciplinary and embraces both science and humanities gave me the confidence that the subject would provide opportunities to work in many varied careers.

Do you know anyone who has studied the subject at undergraduate level?

No

What do your parents think about your decision?

At first my parents were apprehensive as they were not familiar with the subject. However after attending a university open day, they have been very supportive and happy about my decision.

Which university have you decided to apply to and why?

I was attracted to University of Kent because it was a campus style university. I was also very impressed with the enthusiasm of the staff and the fluidity of the course.

What do you think makes anthropology distinct from other social sciences such as history, sociology or geography?

Whereas other social science subjects study one particular area of society or the environment, anthropology sets itself apart by looking at all aspects of life.

Are you planning to take a gap year before going to university? Why/Why not?

I am not planning to take a gap year. This is partly because I want to capitalize on my enthusiasm for academic learning and also because I am considering taking a gap year after university.

Have you ever travelled abroad? (If yes, what was your experience like? did you go through any culture shock?)

My most thought provoking and enjoyable travel was to Egypt and Lebanon during a school trip. Whilst in Egypt our school party was accompanied by armed police, road blocks and an armed undercover officer who traveled with us on the coach. This exposure to danger was exhilarating and shocking at the same time.

In Lebanon the shock was the hospitality and friendliness of the local people, this was especially apparent when my friend was attempting to find a traditional outfit. He was very tall and all of the garments ended at his knees, although he looked totally out of place with his poorly fitting clothes the locals were far too kind to laugh at him.