

Oxbridge Interview Report

Please answer in as much detail as possible. Your responses will definitely help other Surbiton girls to win a place at Oxford or Cambridge.

Name: Gaby Mills

University: Cambridge

Subject: History

Written test sat when at Oxford or Cambridge: Of what did it comprise ?

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How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this written test ?

First Interview

College: Gonville & Caius

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Dr. Emma Hunter - College Lecturer, Director of Studies in History

Dr. Robert Priest - Research Fellow in History

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview ? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

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If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room ?

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To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

- How has our interpretation of the past changed?
- Why do you think our interpretation of the past has changed?
- Can you explain what you meant by "lasting influence on German consciousness" when you talk about "Der Vorleser"?

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

- What did you mean by "Americans value ~~more~~ liberty more than they value equality"?
- Why do you think Anti-Communism flourished in America?
- Was it ~~every~~ all of American society who opposed Communism, or just the government?
- Which influences the other more, the government or public opinion?

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

- I was shown an African scarf/skirt thing, and asked what kind of questions a historian would need to ask about it. Then they gave me a bit more information about it and asked me what I could deduce from it.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

- Do you think that empathy and sympathy should be included in the study of the past?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview?

7/10

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

I could have studied my essay on Vietnam in more depth.

Interview 2

College: Gonville & Caius Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Dr. Sujit Sivasundaram - University Lecturer, College Lecturer & Tutor

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

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If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

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To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

- Define slavery.
- Can you explain the differences in slavery in America and Ancient Rome?
- Do you think race is a European idea?

- Tell me about your volunteer work in Costa Rica.
- Do you know anything about the history of Costa Rica that may explain why you had the type of experience there that you did?

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

- Why do you think Communism took root in Vietnam?
- Do you think we should study Vietnam from the perspective of its people or from the perspective of other countries - like America - who saw it as a playground?

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

- He showed me a globe, and asked what historical processes may have made using a globe to study history more popular (e.g. Enlightenment, Industrialisation).
- Do you think Geography has an impact on history?
- Do you have any idea what you might want to specialise in as a dissertation topic?
- Why do you want to study History?

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

- Can you give an example of when the study of history has prevented us from making a mistake in the present?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview? 6/10

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

I think I should have had more practise analysing unseen objects, as I've had to do that in 2 interviews now!

Interview 3

College: Gonville & Caius

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Prof. Peter Mandler - Lecturer, Faculty Director of Research

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

... you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

(A lot of the questions he asked were motivated by the fact that he's American and I mentioned in my statement that my mum is too)

- Did your mum give you the book by Tuchman?

- Tell me a bit about your background - did your mum influence your desire to study History?

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

(He had intended to ask me about my essay on Vietnam, but when he found out that I had been asked about my Vietnam essay in my previous two interviews he decided not to)

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

- What do you read for fun, outside of your academic work?
- Why do people have such an interest in serial killers?
- Why did piracy decline?
- He showed me a painting by David and asked me to analyse what it said about the origins of the French Revolution (in particular the role of women).

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

- What's the earliest example of a serial killer?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview? 6/10

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

- MORE PRACTISE LOOKING AT UNSEEN OBJECTS/SOURCES!!

Oxbridge Interview Report

Please answer in as much detail as possible. Your responses will definitely help other Surbiton girls to win a place at Oxford or Cambridge.

Name: Nicola Denison

University: Cambridge

Subject: History

Written test sat when at Oxford or Cambridge: Of what did it comprise?

Broad question that you apply your historical knowledge to.
"Should we learn anything from the past?"

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this written test? 6

First Interview

College: Sidney Sussex

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

No

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

- Do people tend to forget / not focus on the information in between events?
- Not actually that related to my personal statement..

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

- Justify argument presented in my work
- Consider counter-points
- Nothing directly quoted - just general questions related to that period of history.
- Asked about Russian civil war which was after the time period that my essay covered.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

Broad open-ended questions

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview? 6

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

- Rewired written work - Russian topic more
- Comment exemplar of events.

Interview 2

College: Sidney Sussex

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Rosamond McKitterick - History fellow

Eugenio Sigani - History fellow

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

30 mins to prepare.

2 sources - one related to medieval history, other more current (issue of Irish Home rule). Related to the work the interviewers had done, i.e. their area of speciality.

1 was quite vague - had to decipher small details. Short text.
Other was longer - 2 pages. Much more detailed.

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

What did I find striking about the text?

Anything that seems vague / poses questions?

What SDA of text do you think it is?

If I told you (.....) how would that change your perspective of the text?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview? 5

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

Can't really prepare as they give you obscure texts that you would never have seen / know anything about.

Interview 3

College:

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer ?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview ?

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one ? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview ?

Oxbridge Interview Report

Please answer in as much detail as possible. Your responses will definitely help other Surbiton girls to win a place at Oxford or Cambridge.

Name: Susannah Bethnell (13th)

University: Oxford

Subject: History and Spanish

Written test sat when at Oxford or Cambridge: Of what did it comprise?

Spanish Grammar test. It comprised of translations from ~~French to~~ Spanish to English and English to Spanish as well as gap fill grammar exercises, such as, to give, pot, para, ser, estar and verb conjugations extra.
I also took the HAT test in November, over a month before the interview ~~interview~~

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this written test? 6

First Interview

College: Trinity

Subject, if applying for joint honours: Spanish

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Clive Griffin - Spanish Tutor. There was also a French tutor present, however he solely took notes throughout the interview and only asked me, before the interview, what I would consider ever taking a ~~note~~ ^{note} for Spanish or solely for History.

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

I was given a short passage in Spanish called "La Muerte de Beatriz Viterbo". I was given 25 minutes to prepare for the passage in a quiet room. I was also given a dictionary to look up anything that I did not understand. The interviewers said that I could annotate ~~the text~~ and that they would discuss it without looking at my annotations. The language in the text was not too difficult and I would assume that it was derived from a book or ~~and~~ an article. There were not any tricky idiomatic expressions so it was not too difficult to understand. It was quite a nice text which allowed me to have a nice discussion with the interviewers - it was about one woman's opinion about the death of

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?
* There were a few questions to think about which they asked ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~before~~ ^{before} the interview - these were:

What is the passage about?

What is the ~~text~~ narrator's opinion of Beatrice?

What language is used to convey this opinion?

We then continued the discussion of the language in the text.

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

About 1/3 of the interview was based around the literature that I had mentioned in my personal statement. I was asked if any of that literature was part of my A-Level course, which it wasn't. I was asked if I had read anything else, luckily I had, and he asked which books I would like to talk about. We had a nice discussion about the literature and he picked up on how I had mentioned the idea of fate regarding "La familia de Pascual Duarte" by Camilo José Cela so the discussion turned a little more philosophical. He at first asked me who the narrator was, and then picked up on any points that I made, such as regarding whether we are free to formulate our own opinion of literature in this novel. ^{the conversation moved on to} ~~the~~ ^{discussed Franco's regime in Spain.} ~~we~~ ^{we} Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

I was asked in Spanish about going to Galicia and had \pm been anywhere else. Then we spoke in Spanish for a few ~~more~~ minutes. The interview felt like it went very quickly. In general I would say that 1/3 of the time was spent talking about the passage, 1/3 of the time (or perhaps a little larger) talking about literature and 1/3 of the time (or perhaps a little less) talking in Spanish.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

The questions regarding the given text, for example when I was asked what the juxtaposition between the Marriage of Beatriz and her divorce symbolised.

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview? 6

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

I do NOT think that there could have been any better preparation as it was more like a spontaneous discussion. Luckily I wasn't given any questions that could have thrown me. The interviewers were both very friendly and not at all intimidating.

Interview 2

College: Trinity

Subject, if applying for joint honours: History

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Professor McDougall

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

N/A - nothing given to look at and/or prepare.

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

N/A

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

I was asked about the historical content that I had written in my personal statement- e.g. Interest in the phylax Rouge. They also questioned me on the historiographical elements that I had mentioned in my personal statements, for example regarding whether or not the historian should have a detached opinion, and if they ever truly can have a detached opinion. Regarding the Chimer Rouge, I was asked on my extended project question what I concluded and what the main reasons were for the 'Chimer Rouge's' Reign of Terror.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.

I had sent in some work regarding Louis XVI's failings during the origins of the French Revolution. ~~I was asked~~ The interviewer asked me what my opinion was regarding the distinguishing of long term causes and short term/personal causes. In general, their questions allowed for a nice discussion and the interviewers were very friendly. They asked you "with hindsight, if you went back and you were Louis XVI, what would you have done differently in order to secure your power?"

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

In general, during this interview we solely elaborated on my interest of cartography and historiography, which ended up to have a good discussion. We then had a discussion about the ~~French~~ French Revolution. The questions were much more of a discussion style.

^{It would have to be} Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

With hindsight, if you were Louis XVI during the French Revolution, what would you have done to hold onto power "as it was. quite a hard question which did not really have a definite answer.

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview? 7

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

^{Between the two!!!}
I don't think I could have been, the actual interview was in a very similar style to the real interview and they were both like an open discussion which was really interesting. The interviewers were very calm and friendly, they were not intimidating at all. This really did put me at ease.

Please write in the space below as many other questions as you can remember not covered above.

Which question or kind of question did you find the most difficult to answer?

How, out of 10, would you rate your performance in this interview?

How well did your mock interview(s) prepare you for this one? (Please underline one of the following.) No use at all / A bit useful, but not much / Useful preparation / Extremely useful- it felt very similar indeed.

IF Lastly, how do you think that you could have been better prepared for this interview?

- ⇒ I feel that I was as best prepared as I could have possibly been for this interview.
- ⇒ All of the interviewers were very friendly and not intimidating in anyway.
- ⇒ My main tip would be to go in with the right frame of mind and confidence, sadly it is impossible to guess what will be asked but if you enter the room with an open mind and relax it will be easier to be calm and collected when you are faced with something more difficult than you had expected.
- ⇒ Make sure you have read everything that you have mentioned thoroughly and that you are able to back up and to support absolutely EVERYTHING that you have mentioned in your personal statement!

Interview 3

College:

Subject, if applying for joint honours:

Names of Interviewer(s) and / or position within College, if known (e.g., Admissions Tutor):

Were you given anything to look at before going into the interview? If so, please give as many details as possible (including how long you were given to prepare).

If you were given something to prepare, what did they ask you about it once in the interview room?

To what extent was the interview based around your personal statement- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your personal statement.

Were you required to send written work to the university before interview? Yes / No (underline one). If "Yes", to what extent was the interview based around it- none / a bit / quite a lot (underline one)? Please give some examples of questions asked about your written work.