

BWS Education Consulting International Colleges Sample Essays

University of British Columbia

Prompt: Explain how you responded to a significant challenge that you have encountered and what you learned in the process

Friendships are vital in every aspect of life. Friends teach you many lessons and are supposed to always be there to catch you when you fall. My friends definitely taught me a lesson last year – but instead of catching me when I fell, they launched all of the rage ensnaring their own lives on top of me as I descended. When I had first met this group, I thought they were some of the most intelligent, thoughtful, and creative people of my age. This façade was promptly stripped away once they had acquired my trust, compelling me to extricate myself from their grasp before they hurt me or my family anymore. They would use me, demean me by “hooking up” with the people I cared about most and even pushed one of my closest friends in the group to medication for her downward spiraling depression. Being passive to bullying is not my forte so I confronted them, knowing that great challenges would arise for me as a result. I walked away from them, alone, secure and committed to begin my life anew. In such a small community as Bainbridge Island, this is very difficult with rumors flying like wildfire but I did not regret my choice. My independence soared through this experience, allowing me to focus more intently upon my studies and attract others who shared similar values. I gained true friends through this exploit and learned a lot about myself. I am stronger and more confident in my integrity. Never again will I be used.

University of Edinburgh and the University of London

Prompt: Tell the universities and colleges why they should choose you. The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

Living in a young and architecturally modern city like Chicago, it’s difficult to perceive “history” in everyday life. However, since the age of eight, I have found my own ways to see history around me. My great-grandfather was the youngest Major in the American Expeditionary Force in World War I, I am distantly related to Grand Admiral Erich Raeder (head of the German Navy in WWII) and my grandfathers served in the American military during the 1940s and 50s. Such connections have led me to explore the stories surrounding World War I and II, and helped foster my enthusiasm for other complementary subjects such as international relations and technological advancements.

History creeps into every area of learning and is one of the only fields of education that connects to nearly every aspect of the past, present, and future of human existence. As George Santayana said in *Reason to Common Sense, The Life of Reason*: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Nowhere is this more evident than in Hitler’s failed Russian campaign during World War II, in which the Germans attempted to fight the Soviets during an infamous

Russian winter and were ill-equipped to handle the extreme weather and temperatures. The German collapse reminded many of the storied failure of Napoleon's Russian campaign, which was also derailed by harsh winters and lack of weather preparation. To me, these kinds of comparisons make history an interesting and exciting subject to study. The chances to use the lessons of the past to benefit the future are practically limitless, and the research and analytical skills I would gain studying history would be invaluable to my future career plans in law or the military.

I think the perfect complement to studying history is the location. Not only does the UK have a rich and immense history, but my family has many ties to it – from English and Scottish ancestors and British godparents to my parents marrying and living in England years ago. I have visited many times; most recently, I toured universities last Fall, and this summer, I attended the University of Cambridge's Cambridge College Programme (CCP) where I studied World War II; International Relations and Terrorism; and British Cultural History. CCP enhanced my interest in history and introduced me to international relations and to UK teaching styles. My World War II professor/University of Cambridge faculty member ended my Scholar Evaluation Form with: "He should consider studying History at university" which confirmed my decision to apply for all of my university years.

To prepare myself for the rigors of university, I have taken many challenging university-level (AP) and Honors-level courses resulting in four years of English, History, Spanish, Science and Math (where I am accelerated by two years). I also plan to undertake an Independent Study project in Spring 2012 so I can delve deeper into my fascination with military history.

And while most people wouldn't consider a month without toilets or showers, getting harassed by insects and enduring bad weather to be related to this UCAS application, a 300-mile canoe trip last summer in Northern Canada helped me "live" history a little, and actually develop skills I will need to thrive at university. Like the European explorers of the 17-19th centuries while exploring remote and unknown wilderness, I too learned the importance of planning ahead to prevent ending up on the wrong waterway; persevering even in the face of powerful winds and towering storms; and exercising control in the stern of the canoe and being strong in the bow. Surprisingly, all relevant skills for university.

I have an incredibly strong desire to attend university in the United Kingdom and would love to find myself back again in the Fall of 2012. For a history-buff like me, UK universities have a unique historical, educational and global appeal. That blend represents the perfect learning environment, and I believe I am ready to meet this challenge head-on.