

If you're curious about subjects there are lots of ways you can explore. 'Supercurricular' activities are things you do to explore subjects beyond your school studies and develop your skills. This sheet will give you a few ideas of where to look if you need some inspiration!

Why do supercurricular activities?

The best reason to do them is because you want to, e.g. it's interesting and you enjoy a challenge. They'll also help you explore what you would like to study, and they'll help bridge the gap between school and university level studying. You shouldn't do them just so you can write about them in your UCAS personal statement, but they will come in handy when you're writing it, as they're things that help demonstrate that you've explored your subject and you are developing the skills and qualities universities are looking for.

What sort of things can I do?

Most things will happen naturally if you're interested anyway, but if you need some inspiration, here are a few ideas:

Reading

Just read **books** that interest you. If you're not sure what to read you can find ideas at www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/suggested-reading-and-resources and staircase12.univ.ox.ac.uk As well as books, you could read **magazines**: e.g. BBC History and New Scientist, and read **news articles**: e.g. BBC news and broadsheet newspapers, particularly if your subject has lots of relevance to current affairs. You could also watch **podcasts and videos**: e.g. www.ox.ac.uk/itunes-u and www.ted.com and **TV** documentaries and news programmes. Once you've read something or maybe studied something at school, you might want to find out more – consider reading another book about the same thing/by the same author, or something by a different author who maybe has a different approach or disagrees. You could also look at any related material – maybe reviews or interviews about the book.

Experiences

Depending on what's relevant to your subject, this could be job shadowing, volunteering, visiting museums, finding out about your local area, taking part in a competition or project, joining a debating society, helping at science club, etc. You can also take part in university taster days and summer schools for free, e.g. www.uniq.ox.ac.uk and www.pathways.ox.ac.uk which will give you a chance to try out university study for real.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)

These are free university-level courses available online. The largest are www.futurelearn.com and www.coursera.org both of which offer courses in a huge range of topics, which you can sign up to and follow through several weeks. You'll usually have video-talks, some reading to do, and discussions and assignments. You can do as much or as little as you like – it's free, and there's no test unless you want one!

Thinking and talking

To make the most of these things, it's good to develop your own opinions and to have someone to talk to about what you've learnt and what you think. This could be a member of your family, a friend, a teacher, a club (e.g. science club or a debating society). Your teachers will also be able to help you if you want to find out more about their subject, and may suggest some things to read and do.

Supercurricular Activities

Use the table to jot down a few ideas for some supercurricular activities – things you're interested in, how you could explore them, and who you can talk to about it or find out more from.

I'm interested in:	I could explore this by:	I could talk to/ask:
<i>e.g. History</i>	<i>e.g. reading BBC History magazine</i>	<i>e.g. my teacher/friends</i>

It's a good idea to keep some notes on what you read and do, so that you can look back at them when you're applying to university. You'll probably need a lot more space than this but you can write down the key things in the boxes below.

Things I've learnt from exploring subjects

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My thoughts and reflections

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