

My English teachers at secondary school fostered my love for the written word, inspiring me to study English literature at A level, and subsequently degree level. Extracurricular experiences during my time at university then led me to consider my own potential to become a teacher and share my passion for literature with others.

Address what inspired you to choose teaching as a career. Give specific reasons to justify your motivations, drawing upon your own insights and experiences.

My first insight into the challenges and rewards of working with children and young people came while volunteering to support a local community centre's summer school programme. In this voluntary role, I assisted a team of staff and other volunteers to deliver a variety of activities such as drama games and cooking classes as part of the two-week programme.

Include any experience of working with children or young people and what you learnt from this. You can also talk about any voluntary experience you have undertaken, reflecting on how the skills you've gained will make you an effective teacher.

Applying strong observational skills and effectively communicating with colleagues was important for ensuring the activities ran smoothly. I led a street dance activity, which taught me how to show patience and enthusiasm to engage a young audience while teaching a specialist subject. An example of this was breaking down dance moves into small parts to make it easier for the children to follow.

Talk about any special skills that could be useful for the range of extracurricular activities that schools provide.

I learned how to build rapport with all the children, who ranged widely in age, from three to fourteen years, although I felt that I connected particularly well with the older children. This experience crystalised my interest in teaching the secondary school age range and indicated my suitability for it.

Explain your interest in the subject and/or age range you wish to teach.

Throughout my time at university, I have been a member of a street dance troupe, performing at events and competitions around the UK. Performing can be nerve-racking and stressful, yet fellow troupe members have frequently remarked on my ability to keep a cool head during performances, whatever the circumstances – being heckled at, audience members joining us onstage unexpectedly, and the music cutting out partway through the routine to name a few! My resilience and adaptability in the face of unpredictable situations would transfer well to teaching in a secondary school, where unforeseen or stressful situations may crop up daily. Discovering that I thrive under pressure helped me decide upon teaching as a strong career option.

Discuss how your experiences (including from your degree, work experience or extracurricular activities) have enabled you to develop the transferable skills and personal qualities needed to become an effective teacher, such as communication skills, teamwork, leadership, resilience and adaptability.

I participated in an Insight into Teaching scheme during my final year of studies, which for two weeks placed me in a local state secondary school partnered with my university. Here I developed an understanding of the national curriculum for English by shadowing an English teacher during year 8 classes.

If you have gained any teaching experience in a classroom, make sure to mention it in your statement. Describe areas of the national curriculum you observed, age groups you worked with, subjects you covered, and the types of schools you visited and for how long.

Some groups were rowdier than others, and I observed how the teacher managed the more disruptive students while keeping the rest of the class engaged. Some children found the lesson activities more challenging, so I spoke to these children to determine if any adjustments could be made to help them. One pupil was struggling to hear the teacher from the back of the room and so, after class, I made the teacher aware of this issue and suggested a seating plan change for the whole class (discretely placing the student in question near the front of the class where they could hear better, without drawing the rest of the class's attention to this). The teacher adopted my suggestion and commented that I was very good at listening to and empathising with students. This experience highlighted the importance of proactively making adjustments for students with additional needs.

Include an appraisal of the demands and rewards of teaching, showing a realistic understanding of teacher training and the role of a teacher.

You may wish to include your thoughts on welfare and education based on your knowledge and experience.

Following my placement, I undertook online courses in disability awareness and in equality, diversity and inclusion to develop more knowledge in this area in preparation for teacher training. I am now ready to advance onto a PGCE Secondary Education course, through which I am excited to develop innovative, inclusive teaching approaches that incorporate individual and additional needs and promote equal opportunities.

Through my English literature degree, I have read a wide range of literature: from classical, canonical works to niche, experimental forms, such as hypertext fiction. From Old English epic poems such as Beowulf to 21st century visual poems and song lyrics; and from novels, short stories, drama, and poetry to literary non-fiction including essays and criticism. Familiarity with such a breadth of literature will, in turn, enable me to teach pupils how to read and appreciate the wide variety of writing they will encounter through the national curriculum.

In addition, my A level in English Language has grounded my understanding of technical grammatical terminology, making me confident in using and teaching English grammar and vocabulary at key Stage 3 and above.

My degree taught me how to read texts within specific contexts and frameworks. For example, a module on 'Shakespeare and Gender' involved studying several of Shakespeare's plays alongside feminist criticism on Shakespeare's writing and other Early Modern literature. Reading Shakespeare through a feminist lens broadened my perspective on literary representations of "madwomen", such as Ophelia in Hamlet and Lady Macbeth: complicated, ambivalent figures whose madness is seemingly triggered by – or erupts in defiance of – the patriarchal order.

Part of the pleasure in reading Shakespeare's plays is discovering the myriad ways they can be interpreted by engaging with literary criticism, enriched further still by considering how the plays have been performed and adapted for the stage and screen (all-female casts performing Hamlet, for example, complicating and engaging with the play's feminist potential). I am keen to share this pleasure with secondary school students, keen to inspire them to enjoy the challenge of reading Shakespeare and, in the process, help them to learn about a broad range of perspectives and develop critical thinking skills.

In addition to acquiring advanced subject knowledge, I also developed a number of transferable skills through my degree that make me well suited to teaching English. Every week of my course involved extensive readings and participation in lectures and seminars alongside my extracurricular commitments. During several modules, I supported, and on occasion led, group presentations on a particular topic. As a result, I am a confident oral communicator and strong team player with excellent organisation skills. This will enable me to handle a busy teacher's schedule of delivering and planning lessons, supporting extracurricular activities within the school, and working closely with a team of teaching and professional services staff.

Explain how your undergraduate degree and A-Levels (plus your postgraduate degree if you have one) prepares you to teach your chosen subject at secondary level. It may be useful to show the relevance of your subject for teaching specific areas of the national curriculum for this subject.

Give examples of modules you studied as part of your degree to demonstrate your subject knowledge. Explain how your subject knowledge would make you an effective secondary school teacher.

Discuss the relevant transferable skills you have gained through your studies or other experiences to show your suitability for teaching.