



Reading List and Activities for Economics

Checklist of Actions for Oxbridge preparation

- Read British broadsheets such as The Daily Telegraph, The Independent or The Guardian preferably every day (if not feasible, then at weekends). Think critically about what you have read; what issues are raised?; What assumptions are being made? What information is being relied on to draw which conclusions? How would you frame a counter-argument?
- Make note of subject-related terminology to look up definitions with the aim of working them into future academic discussions on your chosen Oxbridge course.
- Keep a "Learning Log". Note down (i) book titles/ articles (ii) author (iii) your thoughts, feelings and observations (iv) context and relevance of the book/article (v) whether you agree with what you have read.

Subject specific

- Mini project: Familiarise yourself with (make note of) the works and theories of the three big names in Economics. What impact have they had on the modern world? Be prepared to present notes on your research.
 - Adam Smith
 - Karl Marx
 - John Maynard Keynes
- First familiarise yourself with economic theory. Then introduce yourself to a couple of the individual thinkers below, who offer very different prescriptions for general prosperity.
- First familiarise yourself with economic theory. Then introduce yourself to **a couple** of the individual thinkers below, who offer very different prescriptions for general prosperity. The starred ones are things I would highly recommend. Absolutely do not try to read all the books on the list! It is just to give you some variety when you are choosing.
 - *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* by Joel Bakan
 - **Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman (Great for Behavioural Economics)
 - **The Bottom Billion* by Paul Collier (excellent on Economic Development)
 - *Poor story: an insider uncovers how globalisation and good intentions have failed the world's poor* by Giles Bolton
 - **The Undercover Economist* by Tim Harford
 - **The Logic of Life* by Tim Harford
 - *The Writing on the Wall* by Will Hutton
 - *China Shakes The World: The Rise of a Hungry Nation: The Rise of the Hungry Nation* by James Kyngge
 - **Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* by Steven Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner
 - **Lords of Finance* by Liaquat Ahamed (Great for Economic History)
 - *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins
 - *Capitalism as if the World Matters* by Jonathon Porritt
 - *How Rich Countries Got Rich and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor* by Erik S. Reinert
 - *The Dragon and the Elephant: China, India and the New World Order* by David Smith
 - *Globalization and Its Discontents* by Joseph Stiglitz

- *Making Globalization Work: The Next Steps to Global Justice* by Joseph Stiglitz
- *Fooled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in Life and in the Markets* by Nassim Nicholas Taleb
- *Economics (6th Edition)* by Begg, D.K.H., S. Fischer and R. Dornbusch (introductory text)
- **The communist manifesto* by Karl Marx
- *Free to Choose or (the more academic) Capitalism and Freedom* by Milton Friedman
- *The Great Unravelling or The Accidental Theorist* by Paul Krugman
- *The Truth About Markets* by John Kay

- As modern economists' thinking was shaped by the world depression of the 1920s, you might also like to read *Down and Out in Paris and London* by George Orwell and (for the US experience) *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. The Undercover Economist, (<http://timharford.com/books/undercovereconomist/>), is a blog that shows you how today's real economists think. <http://mainlymacro.blogspot.co.uk/> is also an interesting blog by the head of economics at Oxford, Simon Wren-Lewis. Try to stick with the more generalist stuff as it can get a little complex, but do persevere with difficult concepts and ideas. <http://gregmankiw.blogspot.co.uk/> is also an excellent blog.
- Write a summary of the key themes and arguments advanced in the above texts. If any particularly interest you, read further around the subject, browsing commentaries and articles (<http://scholar.google.co.uk> can be very useful for this.)
- Attend lectures at the LSE – these are on a range of subjects and usually include very notable speakers <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEPublicLecturesAndEvents/>
- Sound maths skills are expected for all the courses you are considering, as they involve statistics. You can hone these skills by solving interesting maths problems and get help on two Cambridge websites:
 - NRICH - <http://nrich.maths.org/public/index.php>
 - Plus magazine - <http://pass.maths.org.uk/>
- To hone your debating skills for your Oxbridge interview, watch “*Question Time*” on BBC2. Do also listen to BBC Radio4’s “*World at One*” or “*The PM Programme*”, which explain the background to the news. You can catch programmes you missed online on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/>.