



OMS Reading List for Oxford Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics

Checklist of Actions for Oxbridge preparation

- Complete the course and college research booklet which covers entry requirements for your course (e.g. admissions tests during interviews). Use it to help you make informed choices.
- Respond and maintain email contact with your OMS Mentor and do not hesitate to ask questions which may help your Oxbridge preparation.
- Practise critical thinking by reading broadsheets i.e. The Daily Telegraph, The Independent or The Guardian preferably every day (or else 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 notes 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.
- You do not have to read suggested books from cover to cover; read chapters alongside reading a book cover to cover and try to put into practice the critical tools and theories you are discovering.
- Oxford does not require that students should read specific books before interview and isn't looking to test knowledge gained from particular texts. Reading is recommended to gain a sense of what topics are covered by the PPL course.
- The examples below are introductory and you shouldn't try to cover them all, but pick a subject or several subjects that interest you and use that list. Also, you could select a sample from the various areas of study that the course covers.

Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics at Oxford

Oxford PPL takes a scientific, rather than introspective approach, involving the rigorous formulation and testing of ideas based on experiments and systematic observations. The Oxford Department of Experimental Psychology is particularly strong in the fields of human cognitive processes, neuroscience, language development and social psychology.

Suggested Reading List

Read one or two books and articles carefully, and spend time thinking about their arguments, rather than reading more, but unreflectively.

Psychology

- Ramachandran, V.S. & Blakeslee S. (1999). *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the Mind*
- Sacks, O. (2011). *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*
- Bentall, R. & Beck. A.T. (2004). *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature*
- Dennett, D.C. (1993). *Consciousness Explained*
- Greenfield, S. (2002). *The Private Life of the Brain*
- Ridley, M. (2004). *Nature via Nurture: Genes, experience and what makes us human*
- Pinker, S. (1995). *The Language Instinct: The New Science of Language and Mind*
- Goldacre, B. (2009). *Bad Science*
- Introductory Psychology Textbooks:
 - Hewstone M., Fincham F. and Foster J. (2005). *Psychology*
 - Gross, R.D. (2005). *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*
 - Hayes, N. (2000). *Foundations of Psychology: An Introductory Text*

Philosophy

- Warburton, N. (2004). *Philosophy: The Basics*

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- Warburton, N. (2006). Philosophy: The Classics
- Hollis, M. (1997). Invitation to Philosophy
- Nagel, T. (2004). What does it all mean?
- O'Hear, A. (1995). What Philosophy is: An introduction to contemporary philosophy
- Blackburn, S. (1999). Think: A compelling introduction to philosophy
- Craig, E. (2002). Philosophy: A very short introduction
- Ayer, A.J. (1975). The Central questions of Philosophy
- Russell, B. (2008). The Problem of Philosophy
- Descartes, R. (Many translations) Discourse on the method Revised (June 2013)

Linguistics

- Parkvall, M. (2008). Limits of Language: Almost everything you didn't know about language and languages
- Aitchison, J. (2011). The Articulate Mammal: An introduction to Psycholinguistics
- Pinker, S. (1995) The Language Instinct: The New Science of Language and Mind
- The Language Log (<http://languageblog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll>) is a blog written by world renowned academic linguists but with a general readership in mind, and an emphasis on humour, debunking language myths and erroneous beliefs, topical issues relating to language, etc.
- An Introductory textbook at the level you would study in the first year Introduction to Linguistics course is Radford A., Atkinson M., Britain D., Clahsen, H. & Spencer, A. (2009). Linguistics: An Introduction.

(While earlier editions of many of these books may be cheaper, they may be somewhat out of date).

Statistics Background

A grasp of elementary algebra, particularly elementary probability theory (combinations and permutations), what is meant by logarithms, powers, and some knowledge of elementary coordinate geometry (particularly the equation of curves) and elementary statistics, is useful. If you have little or no statistical background, the following books are recommended:

- Huff, D. (1993). How to Lie with Statistics
- Graham, A. (2008). Teach yourself Statistics
- Rowntree, D. (2003). Statistics without tears: A primer for the non-mathematician
- Dancey, C.P. & Reidy J. (2004) Statistics Without Maths for Psychology
- Coolican, H. (2009). Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology

Other sources:

- The Psychologist (Journal of The British Psychological Society – free archive at <http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk>)
- Alssee - the BPS Research Digest (<http://bps-research-digest.blogspot.co.uk>)
- Useful Journals:
- NATURE, SCIENCE, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN and the NEW SCIENTIST

Insight into the PPL course (which you will have already read)

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/psychology-philosophy-and-linguistics>