

Cambridge Interview

1st Interview:

- Given half an hour to look at 2 extracts and annotate.
- 1st extract about half a side long. Written by Gregory of Tours, commenting on the lack of history written in his age, on the warring nature of neighbouring chieftains. Chronicle/ annalistic style, conversational tone.
- Second extract about 2 sides long. Written by a rebel commenting on the Fascist regime of Mussolini in Italy. Comments on contradictory nature of Marxist historians who stress the lack of intentionalism in deciding events, yet want to motivate social consciousness enough to inspire people to die in the rebel cause, (which requires a belief that individuals can cause change, not just in long-term socio-economic forces).
- Interviewers queried me on the specific dates that the extracts were written in, getting me to pick out clues within the text. Also asked about general themes, which I tried to supplement with my own background knowledge, and whether the language used could give any clues as to the protagonist: e.g. use of superlatives= emotionally involved with topic etc.
- 1st interviewer friendly- let you get into an explanatory flow. 2nd interviewer didn't let you get comfortable speaking: would cut me off and keep asking questions so had to move around the text fairly quickly.
- Asked me a little about my EPQ on the Vikings, in relation to the first extract in writing style, difficulties with sources, provenance of sources.

2nd Interview:

- Focused on my Viking EPQ and my Personal Statement.
- Picked out specific parts of my EPQ and asked me to elaborate or explain what I had said in more detail, talking about my work and asking me to give specific examples, or explain how one area of my EPQ could relate to another area: e.g. how economic change could lead to political/ social change. Asked me why I had chosen my specific essay structure.
- Posed abstract, hypothetical scenario's loosely based on my EPQ and asked me how I would respond to them as a historian. E.g. if I was tracing the movement and the scale of Viking trading globally how could I work out where the main trading centres were, the main types of goods traded and the origin of the goods.
- Picked up on the cross curriculum links I had made to my English Literature course. Asked me to explain how historical information can be inferred from Gothic literature and to what extent literature can be used as a reliable historical source.
- Then more abstract reasoning, such as asking the necessary prerequisites of a society that could produce Gothic literature similar to that of Britain.