



# Wider and SuperCurricular Reading

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## Why read widely?

Successful students must be able to stand out from the crowd by going the extra mile to engage with their subject and expand their knowledge and abilities.

Although a large part of this is going to be reading recommended books, wider reading also covers articles, films, case studies, lectures and even just general news.

The key is to expand your understanding in a way that lets you explore further and improve depth or understanding and gives examples to back up points.

# How?



BOOKS, JOURNALS,  
VIDEOS



NATIONAL  
COMPETITIONS



RESEARCH  
PROJECTS



LECTURES



MOOCS

# Resources on offer in the Library

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- A level subject magazines
- Section of library called super curricular reading (next to the large table)



Resources on  
Unifrog – user  
name is school  
email. Go to  
subject Library  
or MOOC

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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.unifrog.org/student/subjects/keywords/mathematics>. The page title is "Mathematics". In the top right corner, there are buttons for "Share", a heart icon, and "Back". Below the title, there is a section for "Read Melih Mehmedov's story" with a link to "Connect" and a note that the video is sponsored by the University of Birmingham. A vertical list of subject categories is shown on the left, with "Prospects" highlighted in green. The categories are: "In a nutshell", "Getting in", "Prospects", "Decisions", "Statement", "Reference", "Geek out", "Recommendations: Read", and "Recommendations: Watch". On the right side, there is a section titled "Where next?" with a link to "Return to the Subjects library Start". The Windows taskbar is visible at the bottom of the screen.

# What?



It's the quality of the enrichment – and thus the **quality of the reflection** – that really matters here.

One high-quality book or article read will be as good a chance (if not better) than five separate activities without **reflecting on what each means.**



- Explore outside of the recommended lists, either individual books or different reading lists that feature less well-known texts.
- No rules on how to select as long as it's relevant to your subject.
- What matters is that you connect with what you are reading and you are able to reflect upon it.

# Organisation with Notes



- Be strict about note-taking and cataloguing for each text
  - To recall the key points
  - To formulate talking points
    - Title of Text
    - Date Read
    - Author's Main Argument & Key Ideas
    - Useful Facts & Actionable Points Learnt
    - Quick Analysis (Author's Intentions, Text Limitations, Questions)
- A neatly organised system allows you to more they easily remember exactly what you thought of the book after you had first finished it and compare it to how you feel about it now.

# Critical Engagement with reading

What is the argument in this book/article/talk?

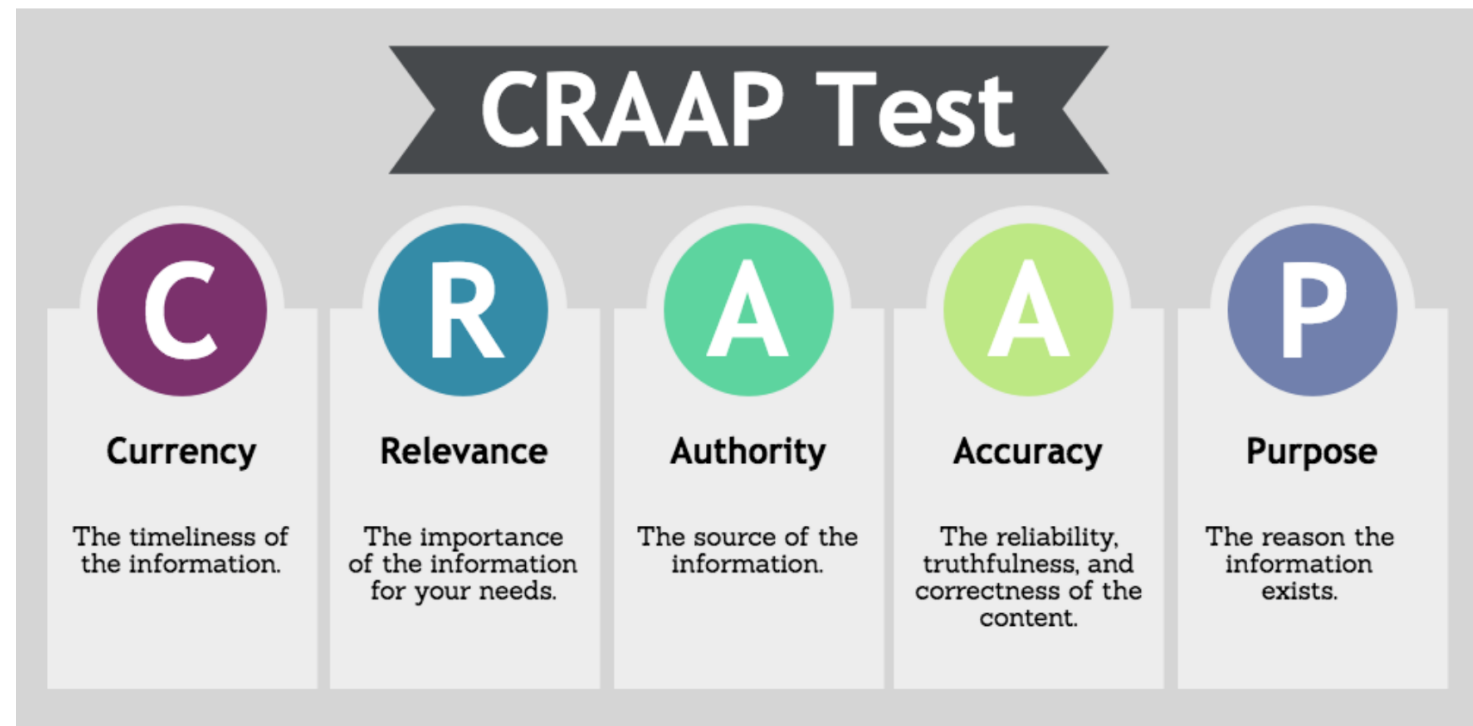
What is the supporting evidence?

What do I think?

How can I find out more?

# Source Credibility

- A lot of wider reading comes down to learning from **credible sources**
- Ensure you have a system for checking the reliability of sources



# Cambridge Super Curricular list

- <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/before/improve-application>



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**



Jstor.org

username: **Oxted**

password: **Research1929**



**JSTOR**



# Personal Statements



Take time to explain what a concept or idea might mean to you.



Why are you interested?



How does the idea link with others you have encountered?



Develop **YOUR** thinking about the topic.



Demonstrate how your brain works.

# Why does this work?

- It's personal and provides an opinion
- It includes super curricular work beyond what is learnt in class
- It includes critical thinking as opposed to fully agreeing with the writer
- It doesn't just say "I'm interested in", it provides proof i.e. reading
- There's self-motivated research, similar to what you would do at University
- It's authentic



# Example

Own Research and  
a genuine interest

Books and articles such as "Exorbitant Privilege"; "A new global exchange" and "What should replace Bretton Woods 2?" by Yang Yao have deeply augmented my understanding of global currency reserves and the dollar's role as a primary reserve currency.

Gives an opinion  
based on research

It is now clear to me that the US gains an unfair advantage from the seigniorage and the reduced interest payments on treasury bonds. These lead to it being able to achieve a higher return rate on its credit than it pays on its liabilities and subsequently run a current account deficit that would otherwise be unsustainable.

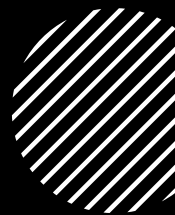
Discusses academic  
issues

The debate about whether it would be beneficial or even possible for a new reserve currency to usurp the dollar is one which I eagerly pursue, and it is through reading articles such as those mentioned that the difficulties faced by countries wanting to switch from the dollar have become clear.

Gives an opinion  
based on research



# Develop a plan



8 months

Find sources  
and courses

Develop your  
thinking

Set out your  
plan in an  
organised way

Enjoy the  
process

Quality over  
Quantity

Be Reflective

# Use your time now to

1

Explore Jstor &  
watch the  
advanced  
searching video

2

Find a MOOC

3

Discover  
National  
competitions in  
your subject area

4

Discuss &  
develop your  
8-month  
application plan