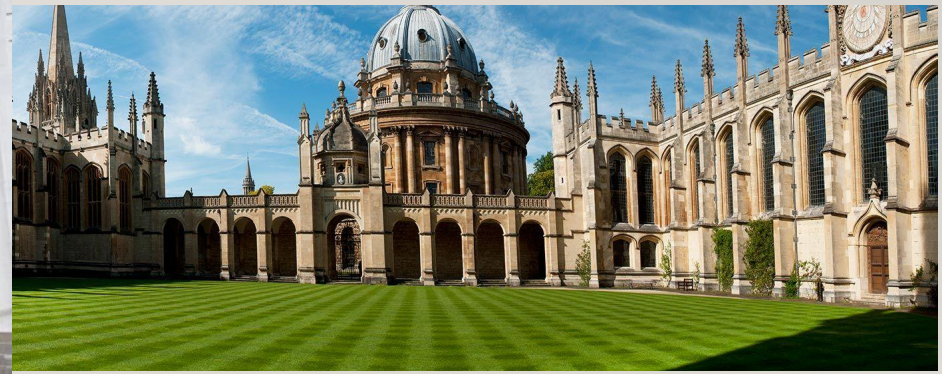


OXBRIDGE AND COMPETITIVE COURSES: WHAT'S IT REALLY LIKE TO APPLY?



SESSION PLAN

1. How are Oxbridge/Medical/Veterinary/Dentistry courses different from others?
2. The application process
3. The timeline
4. Common misconceptions
5. What makes an application competitive?
6. Support through Crypt
7. Support you can give
8. Any other questions

HOW IS OXBRIDGE DIFFERENT?

**Tutorial style
teaching**



**Explore your subject
with experts in the field**

**Access to high
quality facilities**



**Collegiate
universities**

HOW IS OXBRIDGE DIFFERENT? THE TEACHING

Tutorials/ Supervisions

- 1:1 or small group teaching as the main mode of study
- Students bring their work (essays / problem sheets) and discuss with expert tutors
- A chance to be challenged and develop your thinking

Lectures

- With the whole subject cohort
- Intended to provide a starting point for your own thoughts

Seminars

- Led by a tutor
- Students discuss and interrogate ideas in small classes

Labs

- Access to high-quality research laboratories

HOW IS OXBRIDGE DIFFERENT? THE COLLEGES



- A smaller community within the wider university
- A centre of academic, pastoral and social life
- All provide accommodation for the first and final years, some for the whole degree
- Students make an application to a college, but may be 'pooled' to another college during the selection process



CHOOSING A COLLEGE

- There's no one 'right' way to choose a college
- You can make an open application if you don't mind- this doesn't improve your chances though
- You might get an offer from a different college to the one you applied to
- Some criteria:
 - Location
 - Aesthetic/architecture
 - Price and type of accommodation
 - Statistics
 - Cambridge has two all-female colleges: Murray Edwards and Newnham

<https://www.whichcambridgecollege.com/>

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/colleges/>

STUDYING MEDICINE, VETERINARY OR DENTISTRY COURSES

- They will have different arrangements of academic work/clinical practice
- Varying admissions requirements
- Require strong academics and time management

MEDICINE:

- 5-6 years long
- 46 schools in the UK
 - Requires strong interpersonal skills
- Focus on broadening your understanding of different clinical settings

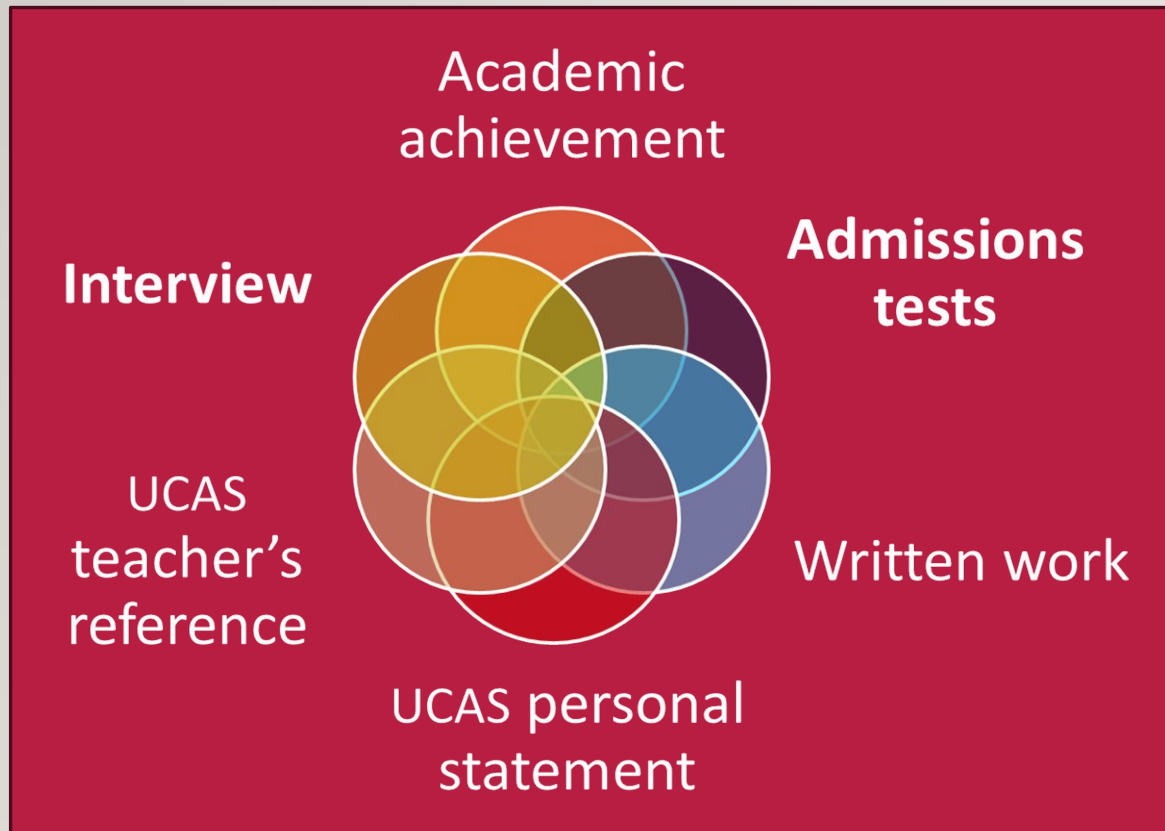
VETERINARY:

- 5-6 years long
- 12 schools in the UK
- Requires an aptitude for working with animals
- Focus on getting as much varied work experience as you can

DENTISTRY:

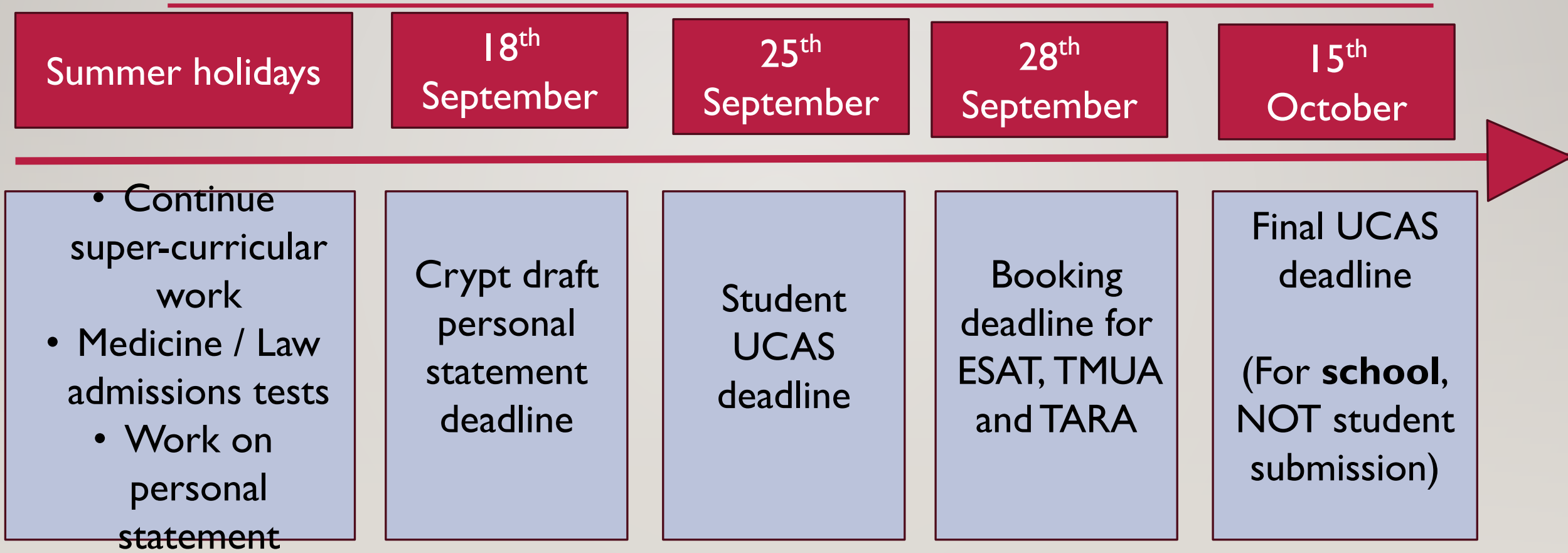
- 5 years long
- 16 schools in the UK
 - Requires strong interpersonal skills
- Focus on broadening your understanding of the role and current issues.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

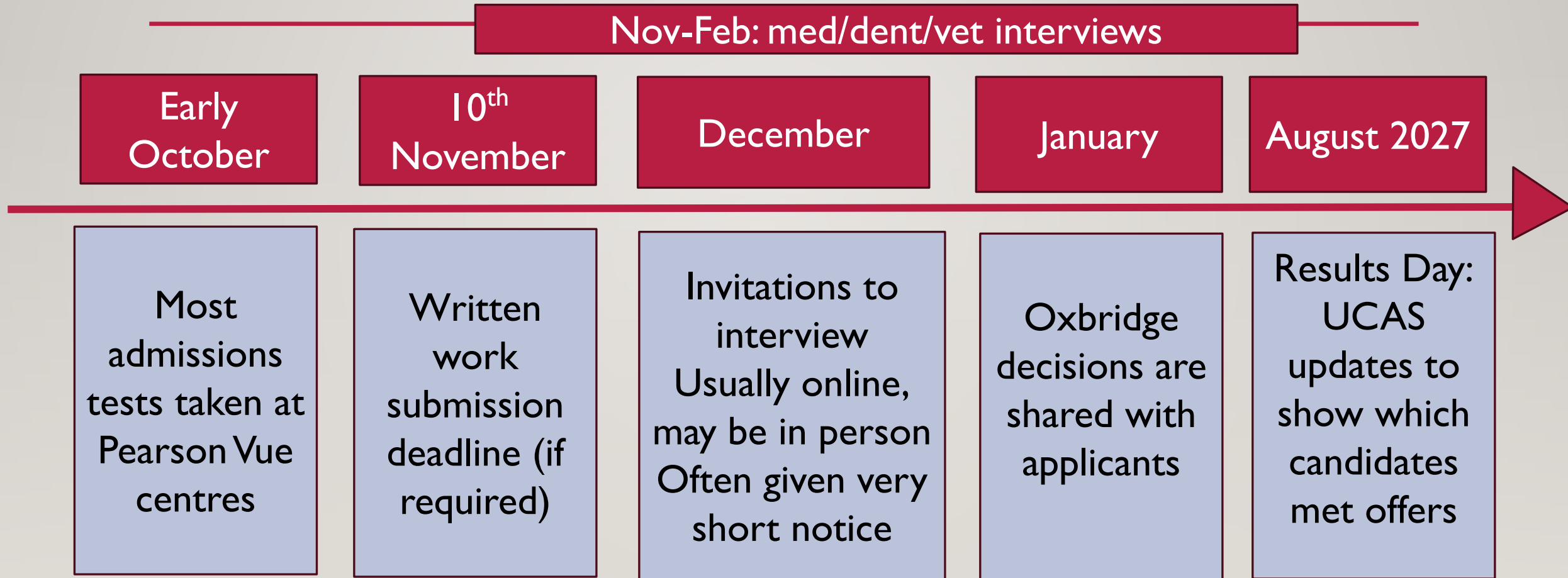


- Begins earlier to allow the university time to collect more data to select the best applicants
- The UCAS deadline is earlier (15th October)
- May involve written work, an admissions test, and an interview

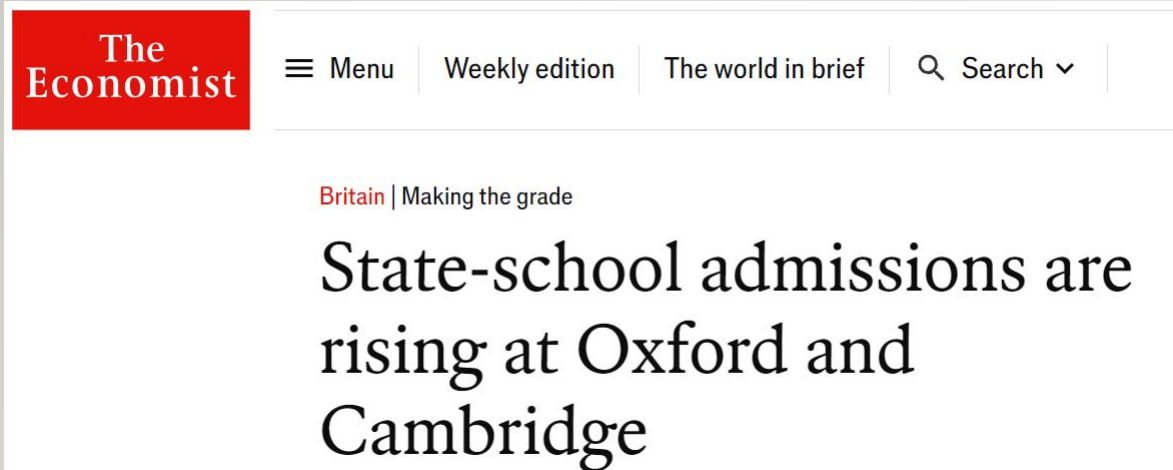
THE TIMELINE



THE TIMELINE



COMMON MYTHS: OXBRIDGE IS DOMINATED BY PRIVATE SCHOOLS



The Economist

Menu Weekly edition The world in brief Search

Britain | Making the grade

State-school admissions are rising at Oxford and Cambridge

- 68% state-educated students admitted to Oxford in 2022
- Varies by course and college: state students make up 76% of CompSci students and 94% of students at Mansfield (2022)

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics/undergraduate-students/current/school-type>

- 72.5% state-educated students in Cambridge 2022
- Up to 91% at Lucy Cavendish College (2023)

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2023/03/11/state-school-admissions-are-rising-at-oxford-and-cambridge>

22 February 2023

First College at Cambridge University to admit over 90% from state schools

COMMON MYTHS: THE INTERVIEWERS TRY TO 'CATCH YOU OUT'

Tell me about a banana...



- Interview questions are designed to test students' thinking skills and ability to apply their knowledge
- STEM subjects will often ask students to talk through their approach to solving a difficult question
- Humanities subjects will often invite students to talk about texts from their personal statement or written work
- Interviews are designed to see if students will thrive in tutorial style teaching

THE “NEW” PERSONAL STATEMENT

- 4000 characters overall
- Should evidence how a student is suited to their chosen course
- Split into 3 questions, minimum 350 characters each, beyond this, students choose how to split it
- At least 80% course-related material, 20% extra-curricular

Question 1: **Why** do you want to study this course or subject? **Motivation**

Question 2: **How** have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject? **Preparedness**

Question 3: **What else** have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful? **Extra-curricular**

WHAT MAKES A COMPETITIVE APPLICATION?

- **Demonstrated** interest in the subject, shown through specific examples of super-curricular work in the personal statement
- Ability to **link together and creatively apply** different areas of your knowledge
- **Teachability**: ability to listen to interviewer prompts and integrate them into your own thinking to solve a problem
- **Curious mindset** and ability to consider different views or look at a problem from different angles

SUPPORT THROUGH CRYPT

- Support sessions to work on each stage of the application with tailored guidance
- Google Classroom with resources for each stage of the process
- Application mentoring with Miss Parkin or Mr Dyer
- Interview practice and mock interviews
- Equipment loans for online interviews
- Support from subject teachers

SUPPORT YOU CAN GIVE

- Get them talking! Any practice articulating what they find interesting and why, with as much subject-specific vocab as possible, is good practice for interviews
- Help them explore options: for courses, colleges, etc.
- Ask about their progress: have they checked if their course requires an admissions test? Are they booked onto it?
- Encourage them to make notes. Comprehensive notes on super-curricular reading can be very helpful when writing a statement or preparing for an interview
- Point them towards resources: Competitive Courses Google Classroom, Crypt Super-Curricular Booklet

ANY QUESTIONS?

