

# Personal Statement

## 2008, Natural Sciences, Trinity College

As the child of chemist parents, I grew up in a scientific atmosphere. I was quite mature for my age as a child: I learnt to read before the age of 4 and I started to write shortly afterwards, though in Hungary it is taught at the age of 6. I was extremely curious and my parents found pleasure in giving scientific explanation to my 'why?' questions, they showed me spectacular experiments like the flame test of alkali and alkaline earth metals or the thin-layer chromatography of the ink of my marker pens. That was the time when I became interested in science.

I was and still am open to anything that is interestingly introduced. The enthusiasm of my teachers gave me huge inspiration to learn during the 8 years I spent at ELTE Radnoti Miklos School, one of the best secondary schools in Hungary. We had to learn two languages: English was compulsory and I chose French as second foreign language. I passed a C1-level exam in English in 2005 which I am planning to resit this year, and I obtained a B2-level exam in French in 2008. In the last two years at school I specialised in Mathematics, Physics and Biology. As I always enjoyed language and liberal arts courses, I started Aesthetics and Latin language as well. Because of my timetable being already oversaturated with these courses, I studied chemistry on my own during these years, I only did laboratory work at school.

My greatest strength is definitely chemistry: since I started competing in this subject (in 2003), I have been in the top five every year. I am particularly proud of my two wins: I won the Irinyi Janos Chemistry Competition (for students aged 15-16 years) in 2005 and the Hungarian National Chemistry Competition in 2008. In 2007 and 2008 I was chosen as one of the 12 students from whom the Hungarian team for the Chemistry Olympiad is selected. I just narrowly missed getting into the team, I achieved 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> places only. During these two-week-long selection contests, I was studying advanced theoretical and practical chemistry I had never done before.

Last year with another student of my school, we started a preparation course for younger students wishing to compete in chemistry. We continued it this year, with a slightly increased audience and different focus. This year, instead of problem solving, we intend to talk about topics not, or only tangentially, mentioned at the Matura Examination, such as spectroscopical methods or reaction kinetics, and it also includes laboratory work, mainly qualitative inorganic analysis.

I was fascinated by physics because of the very special way of thinking it requires, though I did not prove to be as successful as in chemistry. My best result at the Mikola Sandor Physics Competition (for students aged 15-16) was 11<sup>th</sup> place, and at the National Physics Competition in 2008 I was awarded an honourable mention (23<sup>th</sup> place). I also participated in the annual mailing contest of the Mathematical and Physical Journal for Secondary Schools and achieved an honourable mention (14<sup>th</sup> place), and I visited lectures held for secondary school students on recent physics-related research at Eotvos Lorand University (ELTE), where I am currently studying physics as a first-year BSc student.

Despite all the effort I made to improve my problem-solving skills and to broaden my knowledge, I was never tired to do extra-curricular activities. I played the violin for 8 years and I am singing soprano in an amateur madrigal choir. I also did modern dance for 10 years and synchronised swim for 4 years. In the summer I usually go on a canoeing tour with my friends.

I believe that studying at a world-famous university in the UK could provide me more possibilities than I have now, that is why I decided to apply. I am determined to learn physical sciences as deeply as I am capable of because later I would like to work in the field of research.