Year 12 Choices: Getting ready to apply to university
A UCL Horizons advice sheet

During Year 12, you need to do the following:

1. Narrow down what subject areas you are interested in studying
2. Decide which universities and courses you want to apply to
3. Prepare to write your personal statement and application form

Choosing courses and universities

- Think hard about your interests – what lessons did you really enjoy at GCSE / A level? Did you read any books, articles or see any films or TV programmes that really interested you in a certain subject? Do you want to get into a particular career?
- Speak to as many people as possible – teachers, parents, family friends, older brothers / sisters, schoolmates, Connexions – to discuss your ideas and ask for their thoughts
- Start looking at university prospectuses – read online or order a hard copy. Pick out courses that interest you and read entries in detail. Can you meet the entry requirements (GCSEs, A and AS levels, anything else)? How is the course structured? What will you learn? What do their graduates go on to do?
- Go to open days – look up the dates now. You may need to book places in advance. UCL's Open Day usually runs in July and you have to book a place in advance (online in April / May).
  www.opendays.com lists most UK university open days.
- Look at newspaper university guides. These include rankings of universities and courses, by categories like student satisfaction, research, students' careers after graduating. There are lots of articles giving advice and opinions.
  www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide
  www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/gug/
  www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/

Things you can do during Year 12 to clarify your interests and gather material for personal statement

- Go to university master-classes. UCL offer a Year 12 programme every summer:
  www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/widening-participation/activities/masterclass
- Go to taster days at different universities, like University of London taster days:
  www.london.ac.uk/tasters
  Sign up in January – they go very quickly!
- Read articles connected to your favourite subjects in quality broadsheet newspapers and magazines – The Times, Independent, Guardian, Telegraph, Financial Times, Economist – and read extra books about your subject

- Apply for Year 12 Summer Schools at UCL or other universities:
  www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/widening-participation/activities/summer-schools
- Go to free public lectures to learn more about subjects that interest you – there are hundreds of free lectures across London
  http://lecturelist.org
  www.wellcomecollection.org
- Visit museums & places of interest like the Science Museum, Natural History Museum, Imperial War Museum, Hunterian Museum, British Library, Tate Gallery. View court cases in progress at the Old Bailey or see debates in progress at the Houses of Parliament. Many of these places are *__free__*, and they might have special activity programmes for young people.
  www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/oldbailey
  www.parliament.uk/visiting
  www.nhm.ac.uk
  www.iwm.org.uk
- Get some volunteering or paid work experience.
- Get involved in after school clubs like debating or school newspaper, mentoring younger students.
- Find workshops and short courses during the holidays:
  http://www.futureversity.org/

These are all experiences you can mention in personal statements or at interview to show that you are bright and interested in the world around you.
In summary, use your time in Year 12 to research and formulate your ideas and start putting together a plan. You may find that your ideas change and develop over the year!

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