

## Tommy Walters, Journalist, PBS NewsHour



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| Course of study         | History with Spanish |
| Year of graduation      | 2018                 |
| City / Region / Country | London               |

**1. Tell us more about your job; an example of day-to-day work, average week, or a recent project (or how would you describe your job to a friend?).**

I work at PBS NewsHour, a nightly politics and current affairs show in the US, as a news assistant on the special projects unit. Currently, we're full-on with election coverage and the general drama of American politics. This involves producing breaking new videos and longer political documentaries, as well as organizing programming for the party conventions and presidential debates.

**2. What attributes make someone successful in this job (or what skills are involved in your current role)?**

Reporting, research, interviewing, fact-checking, editing, writing scripts, shooting, video production skills (especially Adobe Premiere Pro and Photoshop)

**3. What do you like most about your job?**

Every day is different. One day, I could be interviewing a member of congress to come on the show for a discussion segment. Another day, I could be in New York on a shoot for an arts & culture story.

**4. What are the most challenging aspects (role or sector)?**

If you like to "switch off," then journalism may not be for you. You're expected to closely follow and react to breaking news. A big story could break on a Friday night, which means you may need to rush home and help with the coverage.

**5. How did your degree prepare you for your current role (or are there any skills/knowledge you developed which you are using now)?**

I studied History with Spanish. By studying history, I learned to trawl through archives and write clearly and quickly. My historical knowledge, as well as my fluency in Spanish, also informs my day-to-day journalism.

**6. How did you get to where you are now in your career (or what experiences helped you)?**

I interned at an investigative documentary film company and worked as a news assistant at The Sunday Times in London. I also did a masters at Columbia Journalism School, where I specialized in video journalism.

**7. What advice would you give to current students about getting into / starting out in your sector? (e.g. relevant experiences, supportive people, necessary education)**

Firstly, find a community of journalists who are going in the same direction as you. This could be from a student publication, or from a masters in journalism. This will keep you motivated. Secondly, read and consume widely across the political spectrum – and especially things you disagree with. Make sure you follow Fox News & Breitbart as much as Channel 4 & the Guardian.

**8. What is on the horizon within your industry that our students should know about? (positives or negatives)**

The media ecosystem is shifting dramatically. The pandemic has cut revenue for newspapers, and people are now consuming news in different ways. A lot of established media organizations are cutting staff, but this shouldn't put you off – there are always exciting new start-ups and media organizations taking their place.

**9. If you could give a current student one piece of advice on something you wish you'd have known prior to starting your career what would it be?**

Reach out to anyone admire in the industry and ask for a chat – there's no harm in a cold email (or a double email.) Most journalists love to talk about themselves, so chances are, you'll get a positive response!