

## **Aim Higher - Sian Roberts**

University of Birmingham  
BA English and American Literature

### **Background**

At school I suppose it could be fair to say that I was a tad talkative, easily distracted within lessons, basically not focusing on my studies as much as I should have been. Perhaps I was too interested in my social life than my work within school. What was important to me in school was my friends, what plans we had for the week-end etc. However, when my GCSEs approached I realised how important these exams would be in shaping my future. I began to work much harder in the lessons, concentrating a whole lot more and focusing on my revision when at home; although I don't feel I revised too much. When I began studying for my A-Levels, I took this work ethic with me to sixth form, I was not completely focused and constantly serious about my studies but I made sure I worked a lot harder and was always aware of where my A-Levels would take me in life.

Looking back on my exams within school when I began sitting them for my A-Levels, I suppose they were made a lot less daunting by the support I had around me i.e. my teachers who were consistently there to help me and offer me any guidance I needed. Of course I revised and put a lot of hard work into the exams myself but my teachers were there to offer me the materials I needed in order to achieve success. This is not like university at all, where you are completely independent and only have yourself to rely on. I'd like to say I was fairly confident of my results after sitting my A-Level exams but there is always that doubt in your mind and the thoughts that perhaps you missed something, maybe I could have done better in one exam.

I thought I was nervous collecting my GCSE results, but the morning of my A-Level results was a completely new feeling. I was aware that all I had planned to do with my life from this point was based on those results, failure, I suppose, was not an option. I wanted to go to university, doing anything else I felt would simply not suit me and I couldn't picture myself anywhere else but at university. That morning I did log onto the UCAS website before arriving at school to actually collect my results, there it said 'congratulations you have a place at your choice, The University of Birmingham', I couldn't believe it, I instantly rang my mom explaining that I must have done well to get into that university. That calmed my nerves slightly and when I did finally get my results, I was extremely happy to find I had done well, better than I expected.

### **Higher Education**

My results meant that I didn't have to go to The University of Birmingham, because I had done so well, I had several options available to me, several universities I could choose between, however I knew I wanted to attend The University of Birmingham, choosing to do an English and American Literature degree there as English had always been my passion throughout school and the brilliant teachers I had teaching it to me, meaning that I wanted to eventually become an English teacher myself, helping students through their exams as they had done with me.

If I'm honest, and although it does sound cliché, I wouldn't go back and change anything about my school life. I got the best out of school in all the years I was there, I made some amazing friends, enjoyed an active social life whilst knuckling down and working hard when it was most important in order to get the most out of my studies. School has enabled me to be where I am today, at one of the best universities, studying a subject I've been passionate about for as long as I can remember. There is always the thought that perhaps I could have worked harder to enable me to gain the very best grades possible at A-Level, but I always say I did my best and was eventually rewarded for working so hard over the two years of A-Level.

## **The Future**

Although I would love to teach, an English Literature degree doesn't mean I necessarily have to teach at the end of my three year course, there are a variety of options available to me once I complete my degree, although this will take a substantial amount of hard work to achieve my final degree mark.

At school, the perception of university is that it is more centred around the social side of things rather than the actual studying of your chosen course, and although you do make a vast amount of new friends with university organising nights out amongst other social events, there being hundreds of people on your course who share your passion for the subject, but I suppose the greatest thing about university is the opportunities that arise through it, such as travelling abroad to experience and learn more about your course but ultimately the opportunities in life in gives you.

You're that one step closer to clinching that dream job that comes with a successful wage in reward for all those years of study. University isn't the holiday it is perceived to be, exams are twice as daunting, the workload is in constant flow, doing an English degree I'm reading several novels a week as well as writing essays etc. but the way in which it enhances your life makes it all worthwhile. University is the first step in preparing you for the big wide world in which you will be completely independent, earning your own money, to pay your own allowances.