

T10

**JS:** [00:00:00] ...[ ]... {JS sets up the equipment}. Grace, please may I take this opportunity to thank you for attending the interview today. We're really grateful that you've made the effort to travel all the way here. Thank you.

**Grace:** [00:00:20] You're welcome.

**JS:** [00:00:20] May I start with a question about your EPQ?

**Grace:** [00:00:20] Uh-hm.

**JS:** [00:00:26] What was your EPQ about?

**Grace:** [00:00:29] It was about the death penalty and whether it should be abolished worldwide, and part of the---Treaty and the Convention on Human Rights Law. About whether the article that allows it to still be used in certain countries, whether that should just make it really clear that it shouldn't be allowed across the world.

**JS:** [00:00:50] Why did you choose that topic?

**Grace:** [00:00:54] It was mainly because I wanted to do Law at university and it gave me the chance to look at like human rights law, and I've always thought that was more interesting. Because it's quite, you know, a modern day topic. A lot of people can benefit from human rights and looking into it, and I think it's quite interesting when we actually know what our human rights are, and what the laws say about it. And the death penalty was a really controversial topic, there's a lot of the stuff in America that was going on at the time. I think it's always just really stood out to me and I knew that I wanted to know more about it, so it gave me the chance to look into that a little deeper.

**JS:** [00:01:32] Is that why you chose to pursue an EPQ in the first place?

**Grace:** [00:01:38] Yeah. Well, mainly because EPQ is all about you having the independence to research. So, obviously when you do History coursework, or something like that, you have to research on your own, but you're still guided in a direction. And it's not like - yeah you enjoy doing History A level, but it's not something that you've chosen yourself to investigate. You're given a question and you're answering it. Whereas the EPQ was more to see how I would do when I was put in the scenario, where I had to find the research for myself, and kind of - I started off in a really broad topic of just the death penalty, and then I knew I wanted to do it from a legal perspective and I spoke to loads of people about how to narrow it down and what route. And I think

that was a really important part of being able to look at a topic as a whole and then finding your own way, and the path you wanted to take. So I thought that was quite interesting.

**JS:** [00:02:31] You spoke to loads of people?

**Grace:** [00:02:33] Well I spoke to - so I spoke to my---supervisor? - is that?~

**JS:** [00:02:39] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:02:40] Yeah, so I spoke to my supervisor, who was lovely and really really helpful and gave some ideas, and then I spoke to quite a few of the History department Because they obviously do a lot of the research and I was quite familiar with them, having to do an A level. And then it was one of the teacher's brothers had studied Law at Cambridge, so he gave me a lot of advice on how to look at it and things to pick up, and he suggested one route, which I didn't actually end up taking, because I thought it was too legal at that point and I wasn't really aware of like the in-depth view of that. And then I spoke to - just various other members of staff really, and being like 'How would you go about this?' and then it kind of - I had all these perspectives and I was able to look at them on like a surface level and then the ones that I found more interesting or stood out to me, I kind of looked at even more.

**JS:** [00:03:38] Members of staff outside of the History department as well?

**Grace:** [00:03:40] Yeah, members of staff outside the History department, students I spoke to, people in years above that had done Law, and I was like 'How did you - how have you found like law in general?' and then I was like 'Have you looked at any of this stuff, like do you know about the human rights?' and they were like 'Yeah, it's really interesting, like it's a really good topic to look at' so (\*\*).

**JS:** [00:04:03] When you say 'years above', do you mean when you were in Year 12 talking to 13s, or when you were in Year 13 talking to people at university?

**Grace:** [00:04:10] I did mine in Year 13 -

**JS:** [00:04:10] >13<.

**Grace:** [00:04:10] Yeah, so it was people in university that I was speaking to that I knew had either done the EPQ or had - or were doing Law.

**JS:** [00:04:19] How did you know who those people were? *{laughing}*

**Grace:** [00:04:22] Just from - just from school. *{laughing}*

**JS:** [00:04:25] Oh okay.

**Grace:** [00:04:25] Just from knowing them from school, and like knowing - like friends of friends and knowing what they were like, so yeah. *{both laughing}*

**JS:** [00:04:33] Would you say the project even - did it widen your social network, if that's possible? Or did you just utilise the social network?

**Grace:** [00:04:44] I'd say utilise, because I don't think I reached out to anyone that I didn't already know, but like, for example, %Jennifer%, I knew that she had done an amazing project and then I asked her about like how did she find it, how did she go about it like what was her kind of view on it, and she gave me some like 'I'd go about it this way', 'I looked at mine like this'. Obviously hers was a completely different topic, but like the idea of it and how she went about it.

**JS:** [00:05:09] You spoke to %Jennifer%?

**Grace:** [00:05:10] I spoke to %Jennifer%, I think I spoke to - %Millie Smith%, maybe at one point, I spoke to -

**JS:** [00:05:15] >%Millie Smith%?< *{laughing}*

[00:05:15] Yeah. That was because %Emma% suggested it I think. But, I spoke to like %Micaela%, who does Law at - one of the unis - so I spoke to a couple - a few people that could~

**JS:** [00:05:30] Did you know these people when you were in Year 12?

**Grace:** [00:05:35] Just - I think I just knew them *{both laughing}* from sixth form, just from sixth form, yeah.

**JS:** [00:05:41] Okay, so thank you for that. You said that your supervisor was lovely and helpful. Could you say a little bit more about how you worked with supervisor?

**Grace:** [00:05:51] So, with my supervisor I - had lessons with her, and then we would email quite frequently if I had any questions or - I think the first few weeks of EPQ is very - not overwhelming to say, but, you know, you're very confused, you're very much like - you've got so many ideas flowing about and you kind of just need someone to be like 'Okay, what do you want to look at?' and like just kind of set me on the right path. But she would never be like - 'I think you should do this', and kind of like force ideas, she'd be like 'Okay like, what do you think's interesting?' and

would kind of just prompt me along what I wanted to do. So, I didn't feel like there was any pressure for me to do an idea that would satisfy a teacher or satisfy someone else. And literally just e-mails whenever, would always answer any questions or queries and I'd see her quite regularly, like we'd organise like just meetings, even if it was just a quick five minutes like 'How are you doing? What have you been up to? How's it going?' and just always making sure I was - and I think it's really important to have someone there because, even though it is about your work and your effort, it is kind of nice to have someone just to make sure you're keeping up with it. And making sure you're like keeping up with your work, and doing the research and following up on things.

**JS:** [00:07:06] And when you say that, THE'RE not making sure of that, presumably, are they?

**Grace:** [00:07:10] No. So, you're the one that's doing all the work and stuff -

**JS:** [00:07:12] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:07:12] But, it's just to kind of - almost like a comfort just to know you're going along the right way and that you are doing the right things and you're following the right direction, and we always had - like I used to have my book of research that I'd like write stuff in, and then we'd go through, and if we had questions, like I'd write the little questions on the research and then that's what I would kind of have a look at next? So, say if, I don't know, I'd looked into Article 6. She'd be like 'Well what's the big difference between that article and this article? Like 'Why is there a difference?' or 'Why can that country do it and that one not?' and I'd be like 'Oh yeah. That's a good point then, actually'.

**JS:** [00:07:49] You kept a physical book of your research notes?

**Grace:** [00:07:53] Yeah. Yeah, because I found - I found when I wrote stuff out, the stuff that I found more interesting, I'd want to write more on, but then the stuff that was kind of a bit boring to me or like just didn't really add much to my project - and really you could see my thought process through the book. So, like I would maybe - I'd start off with the death penalty and I'd hear like a story or something that started it and then I'd be like 'Okay, I want to do that person', and then I would look at a bit more into that person, and then how the law that changed them - and you could kind of see through doing it in a physical process that I'd - that just worked for me, personally, writing it out. But, yeah. I found it more useful.

**JS:** [00:08:36] You took that book with you to your meetings

**Grace:** [00:08:39] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [00:08:39] with Miss as well?

**Grace:** [00:08:40] Yeah. So, I'd have my (\*) book, and it's mainly literally like I'd write out bits of websites, or write out chunks of information that I thought were like, you know, in note form of information, jot down where I'd got it from - like the website or the source or the newspaper article, whatever it was, or the journal article. And then would make good notes on it, and then I'd also put questions in. That I'd like want to - so from that research what I would ask myself to do, and be like 'Okay, look more into what it says here - or under this Act what does it say?', and then I'd show my supervisor and she'd be like 'Oh okay. Yeah that makes sense. Yeah. I agree with that question, do you think that you should go in that direction? Or'. And it was very much kind of - I think the supervisor was very useful keeping me on the like track to make sure that I wasn't going off on a tangent like every five seconds, because you can like once I think when you're quite young as well and you're immersed in so much knowledge - like you kind of do get a bit excited and you like want to know - look at everything, and you're like - if I could look at every journal article, if I could read a book on the death penalty or human rights or law, I would be here forever. So, it was like looking at journal articles and making sure I was making use of my time and not like drowning myself in information. {laughing} But, yeah.

**JS:** [00:10:01] Have you - did you use that writing technique in any of your A levels?

**Grace:** [00:10:08] What writing out notes?

**JS:** [00:10:10] Yes, in a book kind of form.

**Grace:** [00:10:10] Yeah. That's all - that's how I revised for my A levels. I'd write out like from textbooks, I wrote out notes. It's how I've done it at university as well. Just writing out notes and then looking through that and revising that, and then it's always - I think writing it for me has always massively helped because it makes me know - like it double checks in my brain what I actually know, and what I think I know. And then when I'm writing it I'm like 'Oh yeah, I remember that', or it will be like 'I don't remember ever doing that' and then it kind of refreshes it in my mind.

**JS:** [00:10:43] What do you do with the books after you've finished them?

**Grace:** [00:10:47] So - my History GCSE notes, I'm pretty sure I used to bring them in for - in Year 12 to like help the Year 11s.

I used that a lot and they would like look at them and be like 'Oh my gosh, you wrote so much'.

**JS:** [00:11:02] {JS laughing}.

**Grace:** [00:11:04] But, I used to bring those in. My A level ones - my Maths - Maths ones were slightly different, but I still wrote out like the formulas and examples and all of that, and I gave those to some of the year 12s that would've used them. But my History A level ones, I think I just threw them away the other day - I think {laughing}. Yeah, no I was - I'd kept them for a very long time and I was like there's no point me keeping them now, but yeah. I always - I'd always said to personally that would be the most useful way of revising and I found that out at university as well, like I can't revise in libraries, for example. I don't find it particularly useful sitting there - because I like to read them out loud afterwards, so I can't obviously talk out loud in a library {both laughing}. I don't - I don't think they'd like that very much.

**JS:** [00:11:54] No. {laughing}

**Grace:** [00:11:57] But I like would write my notes in the library, for example, and then I'd have to come home and like (\*\*). (\*say it all out?)

**JS:** [00:12:01] Do you think that might reduce your social network? {laughing}

**Grace:** [00:12:05] Yeah. I don't think they'd be too happy with it {laughing}.

**JS:** [00:12:07] What did you do with your EPQ notes - notebook - have they been thrown away as well?

**Grace:** [00:12:12] Well I think it was - with my - I think I gave it.

**JS:** [00:12:15] Oh you gave it in?

**Grace:** [00:12:16] I think I did.

**JS:** [00:12:17] Excellent.

**Grace:** [00:12:17] I think I did.

**JS:** [00:12:18] Yes.

**Grace:** [00:12:18] Well, I don't have it and I'm pretty sure it was part of like my -

**JS:** [00:12:22] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:12:22] Notes, so, yeah.

**JS:** [00:12:23] Do you worry about presentation?

**Grace:** [00:12:27] At the time - I think they are very neat, if I remember right, but that was only because it like - just like I'd write certain things in certain colours, like if there were questions I'd write them in like - a green so they - so I knew to do it, or if like I was correcting something. But I wouldn't - it's not - this year particularly, I think at university I don't - I haven't worried so much about presentation, because it's more about -

**JS:** [00:12:50] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:12:50] What you're - I think it's very - when you're younger, I think you worry more about the presentation and what they look like, because you'd be like 'Oh, look at my notes'. But now, when it's more for me and like looking at it, I don't think the presentation would have mattered massively. But, then again, I do think the different colours help remember things, so that's why I always use the different colours. But -

**JS:** [00:13:09] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:13:09] Apart from that - I wouldn't say it was very necessary if you were just jotting down notes and things and it's to yourself and it's to show your development, but I know I did make them look pretty. *{laughing}*

**JS:** [00:13:21] Yeah. Did you speak to many of your friends about your project as you were pursuing it?

**Grace:** [00:13:27] I think I spoke to people - along the way, just to be like 'What was - like what's your view?' because the death penalty I think is quite a controversial one. I mean - you do find people that will be completely for the death penalty, so that was quite interesting to talk to people that had that opinion. Because I was obviously arguing the complete opposite. So, it was interesting just to talk to people and see what they were thinking, and it's also been a massive conversation starter, even at like events and - especially at uni when they're - because a lot of people - various people did an EPQ, not a lot, but like there's a few people that did do the EPQ, and they'll like be 'Oh I did mine on this', and I'd be like 'Oh I did mine on this' and they're like 'Ooh, what did you argue? Like what was your point of view?', and then you explain it, and then it kind of starts the discussion of controversial topics. But, yeah no. I did - I definitely spoke to people at the time. And I think it's just part

of it, you just want to know other people's views are, and you're - you're curious aren't you? I mean you're already doing that much research. I spoke to my parents about it a lot, we used to have our dinner table debates over it *{JS laughing}* and all that, but yeah.

**JS:** [00:14:35] You had dinner table debates?

**Grace:** [00:14:38] Well yeah like, because you - you discuss it, don't you. So you like - so say I'd be like 'Well I don't think it's right', and then my mum - my mum would just do it just to like test me, and see how I would like react to it. Because - yeah, that's what my dad's always said, he's like 'If you're going to be a lawyer, you need to argue your point sophisticatedly', *{JS laughing}* and I'm like 'okay, I'll try'.

**JS:** [00:14:59] Were those discussions you, Mum, Dad: was brother there?

**Grace:** [00:15:03] He may have been at times, but -

**JS:** [00:15:07] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:15:07] Yeah.

**JS:** [00:15:10] Because he's - did he have any input?

**Grace:** [00:15:13] He's - yeah he - because obviously he does Journalism, so his input was very much like 'What would a newspaper like say about', like say if you have like got rid of the death penalty completely in America, what really would the media and all - so he - it's very interesting I think, when you speak to people depending on what their background is or what their kind of expertise are, you get very different points of view? And I think it's interesting to kind of rein in on those points and be like 'Oh, okay. I can understand where he's coming from', but, I think this *{laughing}* - they are.

**JS:** [00:15:51] What impact did all of those discussions have on your thinking?

**Grace:** [00:15:55] I think it just forces you to like - when you come in and you think of an idea, you're very passionate about it and that's your idea and that's kind of your, your blood, sweat and tears into a project. And I think when you talk to other people about it, it kind of forces you to think 'Oh I knew there were other perspectives, but there are really other perspectives that people are going to try and argue'. And I think you - it is okay to start off thinking one thing in your project, or have like one view, and then by the time you do all the research, you could kind of be thinking 'Right, well. Maybe what I originally thought



could be slightly different'. Because you have access to all these opinions, like not even just you know your social circle, like academic opinions and they can argue some points, and you might think 'Wow I never thought of that' or 'I've never thought about it from that point of view'. My opinion didn't change, I had like mine were just backed up by academics, but I did find people - particularly in places where it was still, you know, the death penalty is still allowed - academics there arguing their point, and you could you could kind of - you could see where they were coming from, or you could understand their views, and it does force you to, kind of, step back and think 'Okay, I need to look at it from a, kind of, distant point of view'. Because it's very easy to get yourself so immersed in it, and be like in your idea, that you have to consider other people's.

**JS:** [00:17:18] That's fascinating. You read some academic articles, written by people who are pro death penalty -

**Grace:** [00:17:23] >Uh-hm<.

**JS:** [00:17:23] - effectively. You took a distance. How did you then respond to their point of view, when you'd understood it?

**Grace:** [00:17:32] It was more, kind of, me looking at the academics, that had said they were pro the death penalty, and then - what I think I did after that was understand where - try to understand what they were saying, and then I looked at cases? And like examples of people that had, you know, why they had been given the death penalty, what they had said and what the proof was, or why they'd been given that sentence. I looked at it, and then I would kind of - like look at the other side of it and find an academic article that would kind of shut down that point. Or would be like 'Okay, yeah. We understand to an extent, BUT - well you haven't considered this, this and this'. So, it was, kind of, like looking at academic's articles that gone kind of back and forth to each other, and a lot of the time - because the human rights act is - you know the world and - is looking at the world, there was a lot of different countries, so I didn't want to get too - you know - into different countries and be in different jurisdictions, and different legal systems. So, I kept to like the main ones that still hadn't had the death penalty. But you kind of just can pull them back and forth, and looked at who would say what, and, kind of, work out who had the stronger argument, and who fit my line of argument more? And kind of - but acknowledging that they had their view.

**JS:** [00:18:54] And you are - you positioned yourself in the debate to the end of your piece?~

**Grace:** [00:19:00] Yes. So, I kind of said my - I think the way I looked at my project was - I had my opinion and I said that -

should it be abolished? And that's how I phrased the question, and alongside like the whole legal terminology of it, and then said from the start, kind of, what my opinion was and looked at it, but I was very conscious that I wanted to include what the opposite arguments were. And what people might argue and what people might say, because - you know, you don't just want to have one piece of just your thought. But - yeah that's - yeah.

**JS:** [00:19:33] A few questions to follow on that. You were dealing with academic articles?

**Grace:** [00:19:38] >Uh-hm<.

**JS:** [00:19:38] How did you cope with them?

**Grace:** [00:19:41] So. I think at the start you - you read a lot, and it's kind of like you're trying to get as much information. But I'd really - I found academic journals and articles so much more useful than reading books, or just a blatant search on the internet because you come across information, and it's not, you know, it's not reliable, or it's from people that don't - like they might have an opinion, but they don't have the academic backing or the understanding of it. So, I thought journal articles were really really useful, they were probably one of my main sources of information, because they're a lot of the time - they're quite short, or they're part of bigger versions and you can find like the relevant chapters and things. And it just meant that you could look at loads of different views, but you weren't, kind of, reading hundreds and hundreds of pages, like some of them are - can be like 10, 15 pages long, or some are even shorter, or some are just like different chapters of books. But, I thought they were my most useful sources.

**JS:** [00:20:43] You were able to understand them?~

**Grace:** [00:20:47] Sometimes you'd get a bit bogged down in the legal jargon of it all, but I just thought that was kind of part of the process. I knew there was gonna be some stuff that would be a bit - you know, beyond me at the time. But, I kind of liked that I didn't know - like I kind of liked the idea that I had to look into some of the legal like - even, I remember, I was looking / going like down the jurisprudence route, and I was trying to work out like actually what it was and how it would work. And even though I decided not to go down it, I did have to like look into it a little bit, and like I have to do jurisprudence at university, so it's kind of like 'Oh I remember like looking at that a little bit', but that's that part of what I have to do. So. It all was useful in some form, but I think it's yeah I mean when you don't really understand it, you're forced to kind of take a closer reading at it, whereas, if it's very easy and simple, it's just kind of read and gone.

**JS:** [00:21:45] Yeah. You didn't have to look at jurisprudence for your EPQ, but you decided to because that would help~

**Grace:** [00:21:54] It was one route I was considering.

**JS:** [00:21:59] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:21:59] Because of the idea of like the morals, and the death penalty, and how it would all link and stuff. But I just thought it was a more like philosophical route, that I didn't want to go down or chose not to go down, but it was just part of like the building blocks of me finding the route I wanted to choose.

**JS:** [00:22:19] I'll come back to questions about how jurisprudence is dealt with at university, perhaps a little bit, a little bit later. So thank you for that. How did you find those journal articles?

**Grace:** [00:22:33] I think with anything, and especially when you haven't come across something like that before - because I don't think in my History coursework, you know, it was necessarily journal articles we were looking at. It was more like we had - you know, our two historians and we looked at them, and then we found information (\*\*). So, journal articles was something that I hadn't - you know, you'd heard of, but you hadn't really ventured into - and I think they just - it really opened up how useful they were, because they are one of the main things I use at university as well. The websites I used to find them, I still use at university - and yeah, I just think they were - they're like anything when you first read it, it's a bit overwhelming and you're bit like 'How am I going to understand all of this?', but the more you read, the more it kind of makes sense? And you kind of get used to they're all using the same words and they're - or if one of them used a word and I was a bit like 'Oh, I haven't heard of that', but then I read another one and they were using it, and another one was using it and I was like 'Oh, this is probably very important, like it will probably form a path'. So it opens your eyes a lot I think and it's just an easier way than getting bogged down in books and books and books, and because you can search for keywords, you can find them, and you can like look at what's more important. I think they were so useful, like if I could recommend - if someone came up to me was like 'What would you - how did you find your information?', I was like 'Use journal articles', obviously depending on what they were doing, but use journal articles.

**JS:** [00:23:58] You've fallen in love with journal articles?  
{laughs}

**Grace:** [00:24:01] I wouldn't say that, it's a love hate relationship I'd say, but~.

**JS:** [00:24:04] What's the hate part of it?

**Grace:** [00:24:06] I suppose in the same way that there is - there are a lot, there's hundreds -.

**JS:** [00:24:10] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:24:10] There's well, more than that, there's so many of them, and so you can be like 'I've got to read all of them' or - and you can't possibly, so you've got to know which ones to select and which ones to choose. And that's all part of finding out who wrote them, and where they came from, and what you think their views would be and all of that. So, in the same way as selecting any information, it is hard to select which journal articles, and even sometimes the Internet just you know - you can find part of an article, but you might not find another part of it or you can only read certain chunks of it or - yeah, but.

**JS:** [00:24:47] Did you have to select in the same way for your History coursework, Grace?

**Grace:** [00:24:51] It was, it was similar, but I wouldn't say it was like the same. I think it was a lot more of a higher level? Because History, you know, you've got - we had books and we had information, but that wasn't as in-depth as you having kind of an open door to all of them and you (\*\*) - and it was just part of finding the path. Like I could find loads of articles on the death penalty, but then could I find articles on the death penalty and Article 6 of the Human Rights thing? Or, could I find them like - could I find like pro death penalty journal articles that related to my specific point? So. It is a task, but it's like a selective information task that you really need, and that's why I found it more useful than, you know, kind of, just searching something on Google and the first website that came up.

**JS:** [00:25:45] Yes.

**Grace:** [00:25:46] Because they're more academic, much better. They're more structured as well and kind of you can I think by reading them you're like 'Okay, that's how an academic person would write their article', and that's what I get told at university when I write my Law essays, they say that - they say that our essay questions are meant to be like journal articles, and like the problems are meant to be like Supreme Court judgments. *{both laughing}* So I needed to - I really have to be familiar with like the voice of someone that would write journal articles, so it was quite good that I had exposure to them from early on.

**JS:** [00:26:24] Did your voice improve?

**Grace:** [00:26:27] I'd say my writing improved. I'd say, definitely it made - like even my writing - yeah, much better, because, it's like with anything, when you read more and your vocab grows and you you know gain access to new words and new things, you massively improve and I think you can - you can - I still stand by my point that the EPQ is one of the most useful things I did during my A levels, because even, even though it didn't help me personally, you know, get into university or get, you know, the lower offers *{laughing}* I wasn't lucky enough to get those. But - it was one of the most useful things, and I still think like - doing Law at university is incredibly difficult, but if I hadn't have done the EPQ, I think I would have found it a whole lot more difficult, because the research, the investigation, the writing, the you know source of information. I would have been so much more lost, and like I'm - I still say I'm so grateful for doing the EPQ, because it would have it would have left me in a very dangerous position if I hadn't have done it. But, yeah.

**JS:** [00:27:30] Dangerous? *{laughing}*.

**Grace:** [00:27:30] Yeah, (\*\*) I don't know how I would have got through university if - well the first year even. But, yeah. No it really really helped.

**JS:** [00:27:38] Especially useful in that first year?

**Grace:** [00:27:41] Yeah, {be}cause first year you're kind of finding your feet, and you're getting used to like university level work and I think, you know, some people that haven't done EPQ or haven't had the chance to do big essay based subjects or had to do the research, they would - they could come to university and be like - 'I have no idea'. I have a friend at university who hadn't done any like essay-based - she'd done like the Maths and the Physics and Science, but was doing Philosophy at university alongside Maths, and didn't understand, you know, like the referencing, or how to how to find stuff online, or like where to look, or what to do. So, I think if you didn't have that kind of step, it is kind of that like midway step between like your A levels and university, because you're not quite - you know, at your university academic level, but you're just that bit beyond A level. Yeah.

**JS:** [00:28:34] So it is - Would you use the word 'bridge'?

**Grace:** [00:28:37] >Yeah.< So it is definitely a bridge between - I mean - you know - what was the EPQ, five thousand?

**JS:** [00:28:43] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:28:43] Yeah, so I haven't had to even had to write a 5,000 word essay at university. I haven't - I have yet to *{laughing}* yet to be pushed to that level, but like it means that - that was like a really big test, and a really big push, and it just made it so much easier now to write like 2,000 word essays. I'll be like 'Oh okay. That's not that's not that much, you know, I've done a 5,000 word one before', but, definitely a bridge, definitely pushing you to start thinking as if you're at university, or start thinking like you want to - be more - just make your work in a more of an academic way. That's the way I'd really say it. Because it's so easy when you're in A levels, just to rely on the Internet and sources and all of that, and if you were to do that university - you wouldn't - and I know for a fact, one of my close friends had quite an awakening when she first went to university for like the whole plagiarism. I think she had quite a shock of an experience because she was like 'Well I've just done this for all my A levels, that's how I wrote my A level essays', and they were like 'You can't do that at university'. And I think for someone like her, if she'd had to do the EPQ, like referencing was really in-depth and you had to be really careful and like the source you were using be really clear, she would have really benefited from that, but she kind of had that rude awakening at university and was like 'Oh okay. Like - I really need to look at that then', and had to go on like courses to learn about referencing and like the sources you use and stuff, so yeah.

**JS:** [00:30:17] You've not done a 5,000 word essay yet -

**Grace:** [00:30:20] >No<.

**JS:** [00:30:20] at %Durham%?

**Grace:** [00:30:21] No.

**JS:** [00:30:23] Are any looming in the future?

**Grace:** [00:30:27] I'm pretty sure there are - I'm trying to think

**JS:** [00:30:30] Do you have to write a dissertation at the end?

**Grace:** [00:30:33] Yeah, so it's not called a dissertation for Law, I think it's like an investigation into something. I'm not quite sure, because obviously mine's four years because I've got my little year abroad, so they don't talk about it - in as much depth, but there is - there are I know there are some big - and like even our exams are like it's three hours but four essays, and you have to like plan and do all of that so - yeah we shall see.

**JS:** [00:30:58] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:30:59] I think they're coming in the future, but I don't know when.

**JS:** [00:31:02] Have you done anything as big as the EPQ at university? Maybe you haven't written an essay that's quite so long, but anything else?

**Grace:** [00:31:12] I wouldn't say like - I wouldn't say the essays there are quite as long, but I think the amount of research was probably more? Or~.

**JS:** [00:31:21] What, at university or for the EPQ?

**Grace:** [00:31:23] For - at university, I think the EPQ you know you can do - you can do the research, but I think it's like not as much, whereas, because you've got a shorter essay, it has to be -

**JS:** [00:31:32] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:31:32] very precise, very accurate information, and it's a learning experience. Like I still, you know, I've spoken to my tutors and they were like 'I didn't learn to write like Law essays until I reached THIS part of my - like university life', because there's very specific, or there's a very specific way of writing them. And they'll even say like 'research, the more you research, the more you get used to reading them, the more it becomes like second nature'. So, yeah.

**JS:** [00:32:00] You have tutors?

**Grace:** [00:32:01] Yeah. We have - so I have my personal tutor, lovely woman, wrote a book. She writes the book that we study for taught laws, so you can't get around not learning it {*JS laughing*}. But, we have those and we have meetings with them just to discuss your work and progress. Then I have my Spanish one and then you have like tutorials, which are like - six or seven people in a room and like you get set reading and work that you have to do and then we have seminar leaders for Spanish.

**JS:** [00:32:37] With your personal tutor, how similar are your meetings with her compared to ones that you had with your supervisor here?

**Grace:** [00:32:46] They're similar in the sense that there is someone there to guide you, but in - my supervisor for EPQ, they're more along, along the way. Whereas you can contact, you can definitely contact your personal tutor along the way if you want to or if you have any problems, but they're mainly there to be like - so once you get work back say, they'll be like 'Okay, what went wrong, what went right?', like 'where did you lose marks'? Like why - you know, they're kind of there just to be like

make sure you're still okay, and you're still ticking along, and you're still getting all your work done. They're the ones that will shout at you if you like missing too many things or you're not showing up, like they'll be the ones to be like 'Why are you missing it, like what's that?' so it is - I think it's just that reassurance, or that comfort in that you know someone - there is someone there you can go to, and there is someone there that you can - if you have questions or you need that little bit of guidance. But, I don't - they won't necessarily be like - if you would ask them like 'What should I write?' then they'd be like 'Well research it', which is I think very similar to your supervisor, like it's like that~.

**JS:** [00:33:51] Yeah. I don't understand what the key difference is~.

**Grace:** [00:33:52] It's like - I suppose my supervisor you're more - they're more there to prompt you along the way.

**JS:** [00:34:02] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:34:02] Whereas the - I suppose my tutor - I don't really see her that much, until like we have things like once a term, and near the end she might be like 'How was your - like how did your coursework go? How were your mock exams?' like 'What did you think?', and she'll kind of - ask me about that. So, it is similar in the sense you've got a guiding person, but I think the supervisor is a lot more along the way, if that makes sense? Like prodding you along the way, or like guiding you. Whereas that's more like an end result - 'How did it go?' reflection -

**JS:** [00:34:28] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:34:33] Kind of thing.

**JS:** [00:34:34] So it's more formal?~

**Grace:** [00:34:36] Yeah, it's a lot more - I mean they're still you know they're still humans that will talk to you and be nice, and they won't - like if you've done something wrong they're not going to be like 'Why did you do that?', they will be nice. But yeah, it's a lot more of like a more formal environment, because, you know, in a few years they might be the ones marking your dissertation or~

**JS:** [00:34:58] So you're always especially pleasant? *{laughing}*.

**Grace:** [00:35:00] I'm always nice *{both laughing}* I'm always nice with mine.

**JS:** [00:35:05] Aw.



**Grace:** [00:35:06] No, she's a lovely woman. I can't say anything about her really. She's really nice.

**JS:** [00:35:10] Does she mark some of your work at the moment?

**Grace:** [00:35:13] She marked - she marked something during the first term, which was like my very first 'Introduction to Law' module, when we all thought we would do really really well in Law. But she hasn't marked anything of mine since, I don't think. I can bring - I can bring her like my exam scripts, and she can be like 'Oh, like why did you decide to go down that route?', and I'd be like 'I got stressed in the exam and that's what I thought' and she'll kind of be like 'Okay, maybe next time like try and look at that' or something. But, it's very brief discussions, because they're also very very very busy people. But yeah, it just gives you a chance to kind of talk to someone about how it's all going, and if you need to relieve all the stress, or be like 'I'm really not coping', they'll be there or they'll like tell you where to go or who to talk to and stuff. Like mine was really good when I was really ill before my exams? And she was really really good at like - be like 'Talk to this person and get them to do this and fill out this', and yeah, she's really good.

**JS:** [00:36:16] Your discussions with %Ms Magpie% were therefore longer?~

**Grace:** [00:36:19] Yeah, I think they were much more - longer and more frequent.

**JS:** [00:36:22] Longer and more frequent?

**Grace:** [00:36:23] Yeah more - a lot more frequent, like I'd see - I'd have meetings with %Ms Magpie% quite often.

**JS:** [00:36:28] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:36:28] And I think, you know, you have more of a - I don't like - more of a casual relationship, where you can send like emails being like - 'What do you think this means?' or something. Whereas, if I was to email my tutor I'd be like 'Hello, how are you? I just wanted to inquire into...' {JS laughing}, but they are - you know, they're just the professors at the end of the day, like they would probably reply less formally than a year 7 here half the time, because they're in such a rush, they're just like 'Yeah. That sounds good', and then that's it. But, yeah definitely had more - I had more meetings with %Ms Magpie%. Yeah. Probably did last longer, yeah.

**JS:** [00:37:10] Did you get feedback from her?

**Grace:** [00:37:12] From %Ms Magpie%?

**JS:** [00:37:12] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:37:14] I think she kind of - she'd kind of be like along the way like 'Oh yeah, that sounds good' like 'You're going in the right direction', like 'Keep going', and then obviously after the first draft we kind of spoke about it, and she'd be like 'Do this, this and this'. Though it wasn't like massively like 'change this' or 'do this', she kind of let me go along and would like hint and, kind of, suggest ways to improve it and stuff like that, but it was never - I didn't ever felt like there was a pressure or a - that I had to conform to a certain way, or do something a specific way. But, maybe that was me personally, because she knew that I would get on and do it anyway and I would like would push myself to make it better. But, yeah no. I couldn't - I mean I wouldn't have changed %Ms Magpie% as my - my supervisor.

**JS:** [00:38:00] Yeah, she's amazing.

**Grace:** [00:38:01] Yeah she is.

**JS:** [00:38:01] She didn't provide you, presumably with any written feedback though -

**Grace:** [00:38:05] >No<.

**JS:** [00:38:06] - because that's not quite allowed. How did that feel, not being given written feedback?

**Grace:** [00:38:12] Well it's very very different, because it's kind of not what you're used to. Like you're used to getting like - you had in your homework, you get your book back, you get your mark so and it's kind of - sometimes it is frustrating because you're like 'Just - tell me like whereabouts am I?', but it's kind of just like - you know, they just prompt - I think it's useful to be prompted along and to be told like 'You might get this'. Like - just to go in the direction that you're meant to go in, rather than be handed back like work all the time, I think it just makes you more independent and more self-critical of your own work? I know that you do - you know, you do your marking at home and you'd mark your own work sometimes, but it's very easy, like usually it's just like tick or cross when you've got your homework. But this was like you had to read your work and be like 'Okay. Having all the feedback that I've got, kind of, said to me or like, you know, think about this or think about that, is that the right direction? Is that relevant?', and then having to look at your own work and be like 'Okay, I've got to do this for myself now', like I've put my like teachery head on and be like 'What am I going to do? How's this going to work?'. So I think it is useful, because

when I hand in a piece of - I don't get first drafts at university, I don't have - I don't get, you know, hand in my work and ask the teacher, or ask my tutor 'How did I do?'. Like it's - you hand it in and - that's it, gone. Like, you know, that's your mark then. So, it is something you have to do, and you do have to gain that skill, so, even though it is frustrating at the time, and you do feel a bit like 'I need some help, like help me, like what do I do?', it's kind of cruel to be kind. You have to go through it to use it in the future really.

**JS:** [00:39:54] You said you put your teacher's head on - why did you - would you say a little bit more about that?

**Grace:** [00:40:00] So you have to kind of, you know - like I said before, you're writing something and you get immersed into it, and you're so wrapped up and like it's your little baby, it's your project like you know you've spent hours and hours on it, and you kind of have to step aside and think 'Okay, if I was reading this, as someone else, what would I think? What what would I think your viewpoint is? Does it sound like you know you're talking about, or is it just you, you know, going on and on and on about a point, or do you need to improve on...?'. And it's kind of just looking at it and thinking 'Right. If I'm going to be critical about this, what would I say?', because, you know, you get your friends to read things and you can be like 'Oh, you know' like I've done it many times, I remember you know reading some of my best friend's personal statements, and being like 'Right, let's change this' or 'Let's put this in', and so you think 'Well if I can do that someone else's, I can do it to mine as well'. So it's just kind of - you know - cutting yourself away from your project for a second and being like 'Right, I'm going to sort out'.

**JS:** [00:41:04] Did you put your teacher's head on for other work that you'd done at A level or GCSE?

**Grace:** [00:41:11] Oh yeah, no. Like for coursework, especially for my History coursework, or even for like Spanish, when I would write something I'd - when you'd write any essay really, I always think, and I've spoken to other people at university just to make sure it wasn't just me going crazy that does this, *{JS laughing}* but like when you read through your essays, I always read in a particular voice, in my head. Like I have a particular like - so if I'm like when - so I said before we have our problem questions, that we get given, so it's like a scenario and you have to (\*) the Law about it. But they say it's meant to be like a Supreme Court judgment, so in my head when I'm reading it, I'm like 'Right. Let's try and imagine a judge saying this', and what, you know, they would kind of sound like, or whether it sounds and I just think - and other people do it. So I mean it's not just me going crazy, but just the kind of re-read it in a - from a third point

of view perspective? And think about how someone else looking at your work would interpret it.

**JS:** [00:42:08] Yeah. So by voice, you don't mean {a} kind of accented voice?

**Grace:** [00:42:13] >Oh no<.

**JS:** [00:42:15] But voice as in authorial voice?

**Grace:** [00:42:15] Yeah like just - I think it's just useful to read it in my head, but it wouldn't be my typical voice. I mean you could put on a different accent {*JS laughs*} if you wanted, but just kind of looking at it and thinking - because, you know, like that's why they always say re-read your work, but, you know, you can reread it and think 'Yeah I've written that. It sounds good to me'. But, re-reading it in a way that's like 'Okay, separate from myself, I'm sitting down now', or just imagining it's like a someone else's work and I'm having to like - look at the positives and negatives of it. I've always found it helps.

**JS:** [00:42:48] Practically, how did you enact that kind of self-criticism? You've written a draft

**Grace:** [00:42:55] Uh-hmm, for the EPQ?

**JS:** [00:42:56] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:42:58] So what I did, is I'd print it off - print of my draft, and would read it out loud and then I'd kind of write myself like little questions over it or - highlight bits that I'd be like 'Does that actually help my point? Or is that just, you know, silly background information?'. And it's always like - I always used to have to say to myself like be critical. Like you don't want to just tell the story, like you want to have - you know if I'm looking at academics' views like why am I including it? Like what's the point? If - like if I'm just going to be like 'he said this', well that's lovely that he said that, but like why - why have I included that? So for me it was very much being like why - why have you said this? Like - because at the time, you kind of I think in your head you're like 'Yeah. They'll know what I mean, they'll know why I've included it', but then you kind of look at it and you're like 'Oh' like - 'Why did - why did I include that?'. So I found it useful to have like a printed version and write myself questions and notes and cross out bits, or be like stars or like. - Or even just checking like referencing as well. Like when you read it for a second time, you can be like 'Well where on earth did I get that from? Like I've got to have read that somewhere'. So yeah, I always found that more useful.

**JS:** [00:44:12] The time frame. So you'd printed it off~.

**Grace:** [00:44:15] I left it for like - so I did my draft, and then I kind of left it, and I was like 'I'm not - I'm going to have a bit of a time away'.

**JS:** [00:44:26] >Yeah<.

[00:44:26] From it, and then I came back to it, because I think you kind of need the break {laughs}. The break from all the information, or even looking at it, thinking about it, just have a couple of - even if it's like a couple of days, or you know - just not even thinking about it. Then I came back to it and you can see the mistakes, or you can see the errors or - where you've gone slightly wrong, which is why, you know, as much as I do try at university, to get the essays done - you know - a couple of days {both laughing} I do try - a couple of days earlier and then - and then you've got that time to kind of read through it and be like 'Oh okay right I can make that better', because it's really - and I think that's why you know you've got - you have the opportunity of the draft. And I think to make - one, I think it's really useful just to make sure you got it down and all your ideas and kind of - because you can research, you can research, you know what you want to do, but then there's a very big difference between actually getting it down on paper within like all the words. But yeah, having a few days from it and then going back over it, seeing kind of what I would change, having had that separation time. Yeah. That's what I~

**JS:** [00:45:33] Did it make you feel quite low, the fact that you were criticising your own work?

**Grace:** [00:45:38] No.

**JS:** [00:45:39] No.

**Grace:** [00:45:39] No I wouldn't say that at all. I'd say - I think - well I mean I'm quite a critical person, of not of myself anyway, but I've always like looked at my work and been like 'Okay, I can do better' or 'I can make that better'. So for me it wasn't a low point at all, it was more like - I mean the only time I'd say it's particularly low is when you've done so much work and you're like 'I'm going to have to keep changing it, I'm going to have to keep changing it', and at some point you just have to say like 'It's good enough' like 'It will be good enough now' like. Because you could change a piece of work forever really. Like you can - you could go on and on, and I remember personal statements, you know - seventh, eighth, ninth draft, and by one point I was just like 'Oh, you know. We just have to leave it at that now'. But I think it's kind of - you need to have that self criticism of your work sometimes, because if you went around being like 'This

is the best thing ever', you know - you'd never really improve on anything, so I didn't think it was a~

**JS:** [00:46:36] So rather than being a low point, it was quite a high point insofar as you knew that you were constantly improving?~

**Grace:** [00:46:43] Yeah, exactly. Like you know that you're constantly making it better, and like yeah it's draining reading the same piece of work or going over the same things, but you're working towards an end goal, to make it as good as you can possibly make it. So, why would you not - you know, help yourself as much as you can?

**JS:** [00:47:01] Yes. And I think that a bit earlier you described the EPQ as your little baby?

**Grace:** [00:47:06] Yeah.

**JS:** [00:47:08] Why might you feel it's like your baby? *{laughing}*

**Grace:** [00:47:12] I suppose at the time, it's one of the biggest things you've ever - you've ever had to do. It's the most research anyone's probably ever asked you to go into, and also I think it's the freedom. You've - in any other A level subject, like even in Spanish that I did - I obviously kept a lot of mine quite legally based, but I did it on - abortion? But even then, I had to keep it very - abortion laws in Spain. And like whereas the EPQ had so much freedom to, kind of, look into what you want, and investigate what you actually find interesting, that you get attached to it and it's like you get so - like you're so immersed in this world of information, that you're growing and growing alongside it. And I think it's like - as your project gets better, you improve yourself as a person. Like I learnt to research, I learnt to be critical, I learnt to reference, I think - referencing was a massive one. And it's like you know you put all that effort, all that time, all that energy into something, and it does become like your little baby that's growing, and it's getting bigger, and it's getting better, and like it's getting, you know, your amount of work that you've got is getting larger. And it's just, yeah.

**JS:** [00:48:23] Do you feel that way? You invested a lot of effort into your History, and into your Spanish, and what was the other A level?

**Grace:** [00:48:31] Maths.

**JS:** [00:48:31] Maths. Do you feel the same way about those subjects, that they're cute little babies?

**Grace:** [00:48:35] Not in the same sense. I think it's because you work towards this final project, and you have that final goal, and you can see the goal. Whereas, like Maths A level like you're doing papers, you're doing questions, and then you get your result, and like that's your result, but that was your Maths A level. Whereas, your EPQ is like - you've got this goal to make this project, and you've got all this information, all this research, and it's not just like following a textbook, or following a curriculum, or following what someone's told you to do. I think it's because it's such an independent thing that you see it in a different light? Like I wouldn't - I always forget that it was almost like part of my A levels, it was almost like I had my A levels -

**JS:** [00:49:15] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:49:15] And then my EPQ.

**JS:** [00:49:15] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:49:15] And that's very much how I always see it. It's not like - it wasn't like any of - I mean it took aspects from my A levels, but it wasn't - it was never like any of the other A levels, so~.

**JS:** [00:49:30] When you say it took aspects~.

**Grace:** [00:49:32] So like obviously from History I have to research. It took a bit of the research, or maths, I have to understand concepts that I don't necessarily know, or Spanish you know, you're discovering new things constantly. So, it took like little bits, but it kind of put them all together, and that was part, you know - I chose to do it on something that would do that. You could have done something completely different, but mine kind of incorporated all the different aspects of my subjects quite nicely.

**JS:** [00:49:57] Incorporated aspects of your different subjects?

**Grace:** [00:50:02] Mm, but then, I suppose like, your A levels - all A levels are going to force you to understand things and stuff. But, for me, it was just like I took very contradicting A levels {laughs} that wouldn't you know wouldn't - the average person I don't think would necessarily put those ones together. So for me it was very much like understanding like - it definitely - it massively took bits from History, and took bits from doing my coursework, but at the same time you know - Spanish. I was constantly having to look at things that I didn't know or didn't understand. That's why I think words I don't understand don't throw me as much - as like they would because I'm constantly - like another language, you know, there's always going to be words

I don't understand. And then with maths, there's always going to be a problem I can't do, or a problem I can't solve, or like can't solve at the start, but will eventually get over that, and that's what the EPQ was. Like, at one point, I was, you know, tearing my hair out over what my actual question was going to be and like refining the words, and you think at the start like 'Oh your question, you know. That's a broad topic. We'll be fine', but at the end of the day like it's getting that question that really suits your project. And I remember being like 'What am I going to do it on?' and then sitting down and being like 'Okay', I must have written out about like 10 titles and it was just kind of which one suited me the most. Then I changed my title about - multiple times *{both laugh}* until I reached like one that I was like 'Okay, that's the one'.

**JS:** [00:51:31] At what stage in the process did you finalise your question? Was it absolutely~

**Grace:** [00:51:38] It must of - it was - I think it was at a point where I had done all my base research, so I'd had like a few weeks or months - I don't, you know, they all go into one - but a few weeks or months having researched it and it was at the point when I had all my base knowledge, and I was kind of knew the path by I then - I mean even then I think I you know changed a few words, or swapped it round a bit, but the general idea of my question was once I'd looked at everything. So, I'd say - I'd definitely say if someone was looking into it 'Go in with, you know' - even if you were going to do a sciencey-based one and say you wanted to look at plants, 'Have a look at like plants in general, and then maybe you want to look at leaves', and then like, you know. Once you kind of know what you really want to focus on, that's when you can start thinking of questions. Because your question is what guides your work. Like if you're going to write a 5,000 essay, you're going to want to answer the question you are putting forward. And I was really keen to get the legal point in my questions? That's why I had like the actual - and then looking at death penalty from a legal perspective, well that's still massive. So then that's why I decided 'okay'. I wanted to discuss this particular thing that spoke about it, because it was wide enough for me to, kind of, choose what I wanted, but you know narrow enough to - pick up on specific bits.

**JS:** [00:52:57] Would you use the word pre-researching to -.

**Grace:** [00:53:00] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [00:53:00] - talk about that process?

**Grace:** [00:53:02] Yeah, definitely. Like have a little - like just having a look in on like - even like dipping your toe in that area of water. Just to have a look at what you wanted to go, because



you might think - I'm trying to think of the people that completely changed it - but you might think, you know, the history of Henry VIII is really interesting because you did it, you know, once in primary school and you thought 'Oh that's really interesting', and you might look into and think 'Well that's a lot more in depth than I ever really wanted to do'. So, it's like, you have to give yourself that time to investigate what you're looking at, to decide if you actually really want to go - because I mean that's like I said, I started off with the jurisprudence and I was like 'Yeah, that's great. I'm going to do that', and then I got into it and I was like 'No' I was like 'I can't, that's not the route for me'. So, then you find another way. So, yeah, my question - I mean the idea was always the same, but it just - what - it got more like refined -

**JS:** [00:53:55] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:53:55] Each time.

**JS:** [00:53:57] So, would you say that you discovered more about your own interest?

**Grace:** [00:54:00] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [00:54:00] You're own REAL interest?

**Grace:** [00:54:02] Yeah 100 percent. Like it's what - when you've got all that information, you're obviously going to be drawn to certain things. It's like even, you know, doing Law, there's certain aspects of it that I really love, and there's certain aspects that I just don't like that much. And it's always going to be the case, and the stuff it's - it's like they say when you're revising like you always start with the stuff you like, because, you know, you think 'Okay, I'm going to revise' {says excitedly}, and then you put off the stuff you don't like. So, it's kind of, you find out that certain areas are really interesting to you, and certain areas aren't, and it's that - it's for you to discover really, and you to find out.

**JS:** [00:54:38] Did you learn anything else about yourself from doing the project?

**Grace:** [00:54:45] Probably my time management wasn't the best {laughing}. But, mainly because I tended to, you know, do a lot all at once and then would kind of have a break, and then do a lot all at once, so I would get - I suppose if I would do it again, I'd kind of do more over a longer period of time, if that makes sense? A little - less on like one day, but over a longer period, rather than do more in a shorter period.

**JS:** [00:55:13] Would you really? Or are you just saying that because it sounds as if it~

**Grace:** [00:55:17] No. I think I would because I think some - sometimes I'd get a bit like - I'd almost do too much and get too like distracted by everything, and I think I would have. Yeah. I mean I've always done - I've always worked better under pressure, personally.

**JS:** [00:55:32] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [00:55:33] For like, when I know I've got deadlines to meet, I think it's much better for me because I know I have to get it done by then. But, sometimes, you know, I find myself doing a lot of work and then days where I wasn't doing anything, where I could have probably, you know, have balanced it out if I'd planned it much better. But I did - I know I did plan it - but if you know, you can always look back and say 'I wish I'd done that a little bit differently' but - I'm trying to think what else~

**JS:** [00:56:01] Did you set yourself deadlines?

**Grace:** [00:56:03] Yeah. Because I had the calendar thing. I kept like days like kind of kept a note of what I'd done each day. But, mainly just, you know - you have other A levels as well, so it's very easy to kind of neglect something and pick up the things that I had other A levels going on or like at times I'd have other deadlines for other subjects. So you'd feel a bit like 'I've got so much going on'. So, just kind of if I had set myself like - or stuck to my own personal deadlines, it would have caused me less stress, but overall.

**JS:** [00:56:40] You were ...[X]... as well?~.

**Grace:** [00:56:42] Yeah, exactly. So I had a lot - a lot of things to do, but - and that the time management was like you're always going to have other things going on in life, you're always going to have to juggle things.

**JS:** [00:56:55] Yeah.

**Grace:** [00:56:55] So it's kind of just part of that, but, yeah.

**JS:** [00:56:59] The fact that you managed to juggle all of those things, you still feel that your time management - wasn't quite~

**Grace:** [00:57:09] I mean - I mean I did it, I managed. *{laughing}* I did fine. But - I don't know, I just think, at the time, I remember - I do, you know, there are stressful days. There always will be with A levels. And I had, you know, I had like my Further Maths one in Year 12, but I didn't do the the EPQ until Year 13,

but, it was, you know, you have a lot going on, but I just I know that like certain things I could have done you know - a bit earlier on, and not have been rushing before deadlines, or not have been like trying to cram stuff in, or read various different things in one night - like I could have done that. I think the summer, I did a lot - I'd looked at some stuff over the summer I think, because the idea was introduced in Year 12, so over the Year 13 summer, I kind of took that as like my pre-researchy stage? Because then you've got all the time you want really to spend on it, so I used - I definitely did, I remember doing it over summer and using that to kind of have a little research. Because I mean over summer, you've - I mean personally being back a couple of weeks, and I feel like my brain was just going to mush, and it's like I need to do something. So, I think it's quite useful to have like - a little something, like there's no pressure over someone to do a lot of work, you know, you just get the things done, but I think that was a really useful time to look at stuff especially and get that broader reading done, because you don't have the stress of your other - well I mean - you do coming - going into Year 13, but, you know, you don't have the immediate stress of it coming.

**JS:** [00:58:36] Was the EPQ a source of stress?

**Grace:** [00:58:41] Yeah, but I think that's just like any other A level is a source of stress, or any other big project is going to be a source of stress, but it was more of an enjoyable stress, if that's possible? Because, you know, like I said, you're - you've chosen to do it, you kind of want to do it and it is something that's interesting to you. So like I never - I'd never be like - well you would - you'd be like 'Oh, I've got to read something', or 'I've got to write' you know 'this much by this day' but - it was more of, you know, I've tried to do this and I quite liked doing it. Rather than, say, if I had to research about - I don't know, they made me - at university, they make me do a topic on the making of the Hispanic world, and it's just not - it doesn't really particularly interest me, so that's more of a chore. Whereas if they were like 'Write an essay on this case where this person had this happen', and you're like 'Oh, that's really interesting, so I'll do that' - you're quite - you're more happy to do it. If that makes sense?

**JS:** [00:59:37] Yes. What was the lowest point on your EPQ journey?

**Grace:** [00:59:46] Umm.

**Grace:** [00:59:47] I don't think there is a - like a low point that necessarily stands out as - that was the worst moment. I just think, you know, it's I think that probably the scariest point I'd say is the start, because you've just got so much, and it is a bit like 'Oh my God, I'm so young and there's so much to do, and I

don't - and there's all these old people saying all these views, and I've got to read them and understand them', and it's just like 'Ah!'. And then I think once - once you've kind of overcome that hurdle of this isn't that scary, and you - it's kind of then like a just a plane sailing route. I mean it's - it's hard to write, you know, it's hard to get the 5,000 words and you - and I think my probably lowest point is referencing, but that was only because I didn't - I hadn't really done that. I'd done it for History, but not to - that was only like 2,000 words, and 5,000 was a lot more, a lot more to reference. But, I wouldn't really say there was like a low point at all.

**JS:** [01:00:40] Yeah. The History coursework was 2,000 words?

**Grace:** [01:00:47] Yeah.

**JS:** [01:00:48] Did you do coursework for Spanish?

**Grace:** [01:00:52] No. You just had to do speakings, but that was like - that was - that wasn't like, you know, writing an essay or anything. So, no. I didn't have coursework, it was just for History.

**JS:** [01:01:04] What did you make of presentation evening? You attended presentation evening~

**Grace:** [01:01:05] Yeah, of the EPQ?

**JS:** [01:01:09] Yeah.

**Grace:** [01:01:14] Yeah. When I had to do - present it?

**JS:** [01:01:14] Yes.

**Grace:** [01:01:15] I actually thought that was really really useful and I really enjoyed doing that, because I think like I said it's your baby, and some people won't read your 5,000 words, because, you know - they just won't read it all. And when you have a presentation, it's a time when, you know, you've got everyone there that you - obviously supported you through a lot of it, and it's your time to just be like look, 'I found this out, I did this', and I love presentations anyway *{laughing}*. You know me, I'd love to do a presentation. So I thought they were really really useful and really good, and also seeing some of my friends, like I'd known that like %Chris%, I knew that he was doing an EPQ, and I knew it was on - well at the time I knew what it was on - but I didn't know much about it at all. And so it's quite nice to go see like his presentation, and like listen to him talk about his and what he'd learnt, and kind of how we'd had similar journeys but different at the same time? So I really liked presentation evening, and I think it's just you know showing -

it's like the point where you've done all this work, you're so proud of it, and you can just be like 'Here's what I did'. But, yeah. I thought it was really good.

**JS:** [01:02:16] How did you handle the questions?

**Grace:** [01:02:22] I think the questions were just, kind of - you know so much about your topic, you can kind of expect the questions that are going to come your way anyway. Like you can kind of imagine the questions that people would have, especially with the death penalty, you're always going to get certain things that are going to come up, or people are going to be like 'Well why did he get the death penalty?' like if there was no proof, and you kind of have to go into it. I - the fellow Head Boy, gave me quite a hard question, I remember~

**JS:** [01:02:51] %Simon?%.

**Grace:** [01:02:53] Yeah, %Simon% gave me quite a hard question, and I think you just have to kind of take it as is, and give as much as you can. And then, if they ask you again, you know you can't know everything, there is a certain point, and I was like 'Well I know that this has happened, this has happened, but I'm sure if we really searched into that area, we could definitely find out more'. So, you can, you know - there might be some questions that you just can't answer. But, I think how you handle them is a massive part, because you can't just be like - 'I dunno'. *{both laughing}* So, you answer it with your best of knowledge. I'd always be like 'Oh so - well from what I've researched, it said this and this, but you know, taking that point I mean you could look into it a little bit more and they might say something different'. So, but I thought, you know, the questions - you have so much knowledge on the topic - more than you could know - I mean it's like part, almost of like your subconscious - knows that you've got information in there, that you don't even know you knew, or that you've remembered that you didn't even know you remembered. So, it's a good point to get that all out.

**JS:** [01:03:50] Do you feel that way about A levels? Would it kind of embedded subconscious knowledge?~

**Grace:** [01:03:55] Oh yeah, 100 percent. Even I'd - in History A level particularly, and I've always found this in a lot of my subjects when I've done exams like, you know more than you think you know. I mean university wasn't quite like that *{laughing}*, but especially with like A levels and stuff, where you've got all the time to look at it, and you've done it throughout the year so much, you'll find yourself writing something, and you'll be like 'How do I remember that? I mean. That was such a long time ago' - but like you kind of find it a lot more - or even with maths, like I find myself doing little bits of maths, where you know the

typical questions like 'Miss, when am I ever going to use that?', like you do find yourself doing it, but you just don't actually think it's maths. But now I've learnt it as maths, I'm like 'Oh, I did that in my A level'. So, yeah. It is subconsciously in there somewhere.

**JS:** [01:04:46] That's not playing itself out at university yet?

**Grace:** [01:04:49] I wouldn't say as much, but then also I think you know - at History A level, you have kind of two years of doing it, whereas, this has been a year.

**JS:** [01:04:56] >Yeah<.

**Grace:** [01:04:56] And I had never done Law before. I hadn't done a topic like that before. There are some things which I'll come out with, which will surprise myself. Other things, I can't be like 'Oh I knew that, but I didn't know it', but I think it's - that's just the like learning experience, like learning to do those essays, and learning to improve, and, you know, get better will - will come with time?

**JS:** [01:05:19] Did you - do you remember that logbook?

**Grace:** [01:05:23] Uh-hm.

**JS:** [01:05:23] What did you think of it?

**Grace:** [01:05:26] I mean at times, you know, you - once you've written your project, I think the log book is one of the last things you would have wanted to look at, but you did it - you had to fill it in at certain points, didn't you? You did like - yeah. Which I think was - I actually think it was quite useful, because it's one of those self-critical things, where you had to be really honest with how you had been doing and how you'd kept up with it. Well to an extent~

**JS:** [01:05:45] Were you really honest?

**Grace:** [01:05:47] I think I was quite honest with it.

**JS:** [01:05:48] > Yeah, yeah.<.

**Grace:** [01:05:49] I think I was quite like - if I had to improve or something, or I needed to look back at something, or what you had to do - I think yeah, I think you have to - well I took it as a point to be like 'Okay, I've done this, this is what I've got to do, this is what I've discussed with my supervisor, this is what we're going to work on' and all of that, and I think - even at the time, it's one of those things at the time you're like 'Why am I writing this?'. But on reflection it is - I think it is so much

more useful to reflect on your work, and what you've done, and what you've achieved, and what you need to do, because I - I love doing like my little to do lists, and ticking it off and I think like with the logbook, it kind of gives you the - do this, do this, do this.

**JS:** [01:06:30] >The structure to do it<.

**Grace:** [01:06:30] Yeah. Yeah. And then I think - I also think it's nice now - well not at that time necessarily, but to look at, once you've done your project as a whole, like actually look back and reflect on what you've done, and kind of have that time to be like - 'Okay, I did this, this and this'. At the time, obviously, you've written your 5,000 word essay and you're like 'Ugh, more to write'. *{JS laughing}* But - it's more useful than like you think. That's like with anything really. At the time - I mean we said that with DofE, at the time it wasn't very funny, but looking back it was quite a funny experience. *{laughing}* But, yeah no. That's what I think. The logbook was useful at times.

**JS:** [01:07:07] So. The last two or three questions now. If you had to pick one thing - what would you say was the best thing about doing your project?

**Grace:** [01:07:16] The skills that it gave me and equipped me for university one hundred like - a thousand percent, I couldn't stress that more to anyone. It REALLY did give me that - even if it was just the foundation, even if people didn't do as much research or didn't - they still had to do some, and I think everyone can say that they'd gain the skills that they needed to use for university, because without it I'd honestly be lost. And I think it really did give me that like insight into what university would be like? Or what would be expected of me at university, so that was definitely what I think was the best bit I think.

**JS:** [01:07:51] And the worst bit?~

**Grace:** [01:07:53] The worst bit I think is just - having to manage it alongside everything else, and having that 5,000 word project kind of looming over you, and it's all like the research - yeah, it's good, it's good, it's good, but at the back of your mind you've got '5,000 words I've got to write'. So that was probably just the worst bit, of having the stress - like, you know, the added stress, like you've given yourself this extra stress, so, kind of, keeping up with that stress that you've given yourself really, so that was, I suppose, the worst bit of it.

**JS:** [01:08:21] Thank you. And do you have any questions for me, Grace?

**Grace:** [01:08:26] How do you find reading all the EPQs over the year?

**JS:** [01:08:31] Tiring *{laughing}*.

**Grace:** [01:08:31] Do you find them interesting?

**JS:** [01:08:35] Um.

**Grace:** [01:08:35] some of them?

**JS:** [01:08:36] I find them all interesting, in some way -

**Grace:** [01:08:39] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [01:08:39] - or another. It does take a long time to read a project -

**Grace:** [01:08:43] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [01:08:43] - from cover to cover and to properly understand the depth of the processes. I'm only really interested in the projects of pupils that I've supervised myself, because I understand their journey from start to finish.

**Grace:** [01:08:59] And do you see the growth? Do you think you can see it?

**JS:** [01:09:02] To quote you, '1,000 percent!' *{both laughing}* 1,000 percent. Even more so actually, when pupils are moving from one project qualification to another, which you haven't had a chance to experience.

**Grace:** [01:09:13] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [01:09:13] But, you're kind of experiencing now

**Grace:** [01:09:15] >Yeah<.

**JS:** [01:09:15] from what I can gather, moving from EPQ to your next bigger kind of project at the university.

**Grace:** [01:09:22] Yeah.

**JS:** [01:09:22] I'm going to stop recording now, because I don't want to transcribe my voice too much! I just want to say - just thank you for coming in again for me - that does bring the interview to a close. I appreciate your honesty, and you sharing your insights and your thoughts, and I'm really grateful that you've made me effort to be with us.



**Grace:** [01:09:44] Always.