CUHS PS Example
Psychological and Behavioural Sciences 2025

Personal Statement

From a young age, I have been captivated by the complexity of the human brain. Through observing my class, I have always enjoyed identifying patterns in my classmates' behaviours and thoughts, seeking to uncover the underlying logic. While it is often said that human behaviour is not always rational, I still believe that every emotion, thought, and action has a hidden explanation, a logical reason behind it.

My fascination with the mind began with an unexpected source: Melanie Mitchell's Artificial Intelligence. While it introduced me to the fundamental mechanisms behind various artificial minds, it also highlighted the complexity of human cognitive abilities-like describing a picture or recognizing a face-skills we often take for granted. This realization sparked my interest in cognitive science, leading me to explore the related chapter of James Kalat's Biological Psychology to gain a foundational understanding of the nervous system and related terminology. Simultaneously, I took data science and statistics courses at Milestone, an institution preparing high school students for studies abroad. I did all these extra-curriculars because my school curriculum did not yet cover these topics, but I knew they would be essential for my future in research.

To diversify my learning, I enrolled in a Cooperation and Morals course where I studied game theory- based altruism and moral philosophy, among other things. My favourite topic was the proof of common evolutionary psychological phenomena. I also studied linguistics and learnt two programming languages. Additionally, I completed Wesleyan University's Social Psychology course on Coursera, where I learned about well-known psychological experiments and concepts like the Stanford prison experiment and the Abilene paradox.

However, my academic experiences extend beyond theoretical learning. As the top student in my high school year group, I was invited to intern for a day at the Epilepsy lab of the Hungarian Research Network's Research Centre for Natural Sciences. Here, I learned fundamental neuroscientific lab procedures, such as preparing rat brain slices and using Nissl staining to visualize neuronal structures. This hands-on experience deepened my interest in neuroscience and affirmed my commitment to pursuing research. Later, I volunteered as a research assistant at CEU's Vision Lab, where I learned how to structure scientific experiments and gained experience working with human subjects. I also conducted an independent research project in cognitive psychology inspired by The Dress, a famous photograph that sparked global debate about its colours. Some viewers perceive it as blue and black, while others see it as white and gold. To explore this phenomenon, I collected hypotheses online and proposed some of my own about what could have caused the difference between different cognitions. For example, the difference could be caused by early or late waking up time. By analysing the answers I received via a form, I was able to support some of the hypotheses. I also got invited to present my findings to the whole school.

Outside of psychology, I have achieved success in other academic areas, such as placing second in a national grammar competition, winning regional math competitions, as well as a physics competition. I also played violin for 10 years and sang in a choir. In my free time, I love to read books about the human mind, e.g. Oliver Sacks' The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat. I also tutor 6 students at my school in various subjects. Currently, I study advanced Biology and Mathematics at one of Hungary's top high schools, preparing me for my future

studies.Overall, the positive feedback I have received over the last few years reinforces my dedication to continue researching the nature of the human mind. Knowing that I have been fortunate to have these opportunities, I feel inspired to give back as much to the world as I can, starting with this next phase of my education.

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I wholeheartedly agree with those who claim that schools are a mirror of society. Starting my social life in a foreign culture with a language barrier, my experience must have been eerily similar to those with Wernicke's aphasia (though, thankfully, mine was only temporary). Like them, the only things I could do was observe and adapt, pronounce but not understand. I needed to pick up any non-verbal cues available to me and then try to produce a proper response. As I eventually mastered the language, the habit of analysing people became ingrained in me, even if subconsciously.

While observing my classmates, I noticed fundamental differences in our beliefs, which I later attributed to cultural variation. This realisation sparked my interest in how the environment shapes our brains and influences our behaviour.

Though I love both maths and psychology, I realised my true passion lies in understanding the human mind. I want to both conduct lab research on the brain and work with people while trying to uncover patterns behind their actions. Cambridge’s PBS course, with its interdisciplinary focus on psychology, neuroscience, and behaviour, offers the perfect opportunity to explore this.