When you stare at a world map, you see all the continents with their colors and contours, rivers and seas; Cities named in tiny black writing dotted everywhere across the land. However, what you also see is that it's surrounded by just a vast expanse of blue; our oceans. If you're lucky, they'll have some different color variations to show its depth, but overall, you don't get much else. What intrigues me is that big blue area; What our oceans consist of, ocean stratification, mixing, nutrient cycling, currents and oscillations, the polar regions and the future of our sea ice.

I currently study Geography and Environmental studies at high school because they both contain elements of Environmental Physics and Oceanography. During my first year of Environmental Studies, there was a module that I loved about ocean circulation; It emphasized to me how dynamic our ocean system really is, and it interlinked well with the Weather and Climate topic during Geography, which then showed me how ocean circulation influences our climate. Something I love about these two subjects is how synoptic they are. Not only does it make things easier to understand, it also often gives you two different viewpoints; A hard, scientific perspective from Environmental Studies, and an anthropogenic view from Geography of our impacts and what we can do to reduce them. Both subjects have helped me to gain a more globalized view of our planet, which I think is so important when studying the ocean, because you begin to realize everything is in some way interconnected.

A newfound hobby of mine is to go to talks and seminars about topics that pique my curiosity. I find that talks are very engaging and are great ways to network with other people interested in the subject. Dr. Eric van Sebille ran a seminar that I really enjoyed at Imperial College London called "Rubber Duckies at the End of the Ocean", which used the story of the rubber ducks that were lost in the ocean to explain currents and eddies, and in more depth, how they cause ocean plastic to accumulate. One talk that had the most impact on me was at the University College London, chaired by Dr. Helen Czerski, all about 'Understanding the September 2016 Arctic Ice-minimum'; where the arctic ice melts to its lowest extent/volume. I got to delve deeper into the topic of polar ice, it's cycles of melting and freezing, and how that is changing over time. It really motivated me to learn more about our poles, particularly the Arctic, before they undergo drastic changes that may be irreversible in my lifetime.

Attending a Head start course during the summer with Southampton University at the nearby National Oceanography Centre absolutely solidified my choice of study. I had applied to do a Geology and Geophysics course, but while we were there, we were often twinned with an Oceanography and Marine Biology group and had lots of lectures together. One mini lecture that was most memorable was by Dr. Simon Boxall about oil spills in the ocean. I had previously thought that oil spills would last for decades; little did I know that with bioremediation they can sometimes be cleared within a few months. It gave me that wonderful feeling when your mind gets blown and you learn something completely new. On one of their research vessels, we used a CDT and a side-scanner to collect data from the water which gave me experience of practical work in ocean science, and I got to see how data comes from the ocean and onto a graph. I had an amazing time on this course and feel that it gave me a great introduction to Oceanography. University feels like the perfect place for me, as I'm forever curious and have a passion for learning. I am very excited to finally have an opportunity to learn so much more about the things I love. In future, I hope to pursue a career within the scientific community, perhaps within research or education.