**The Oxbridge Interview**

The Oxbridge interview has a reputation for filling students with dread. Why Do Oxford and Cambridge choose to interview candidates at all, you might ask, as the tutors already have access to information from UCAS. The answer lies in the tutorial system that makes Oxford and Cambridge so unusual in how the teach – the weekly one-to-one tutorials at Oxford, or supervisions at Cambridge.

**A key set of skills**

To do well at Oxford and Cambridge, you need to be able to perform well in these types of environments, which is why the universities interview – to test a set of key skills.

* The ability to communicate
* Take on new information quickly
* The confidence to engage with new topics

The interviewers are looking for **PhD levels of subject knowledge** from applicants.

For example : Applicants are asked a huge range of questions, such as “Why do many animals have stripes?” Applicants could think about categorising animals, predators or prey, younger or older. Compare specific examples, even the scale, size and colour of specific stripe patterns.

The tutors aren’t necessarily looking for the right answer, but instead **your approach to a seemingly impossible question**.

**Nerves are natural**

It’s normal to feel daunted by the Oxbridge interview process. Anyone who has been through it knows it is not easy – in fact the whole point is that it’s hard! Every applicant is naturally nervous in this type of setting and sometimes this can prevent them from showing their full potential. The best way to tackle this is **practice.** This doesn’t mean learning the whole course you’re applying for but practising the key skills that the tutors hope to see. With the right preparation and understanding of what they’re looking for, you’ll be able to give the best impression of your academic potential.