

7. Tell me about a news article you have read recently that you found interesting.

Why has the interviewer asked this question?

The interviewer is looking for a candidate to demonstrate their interest in the wider world. This is a nice broad question, which answered well would allow the student to take control and direct the later course of the interview.

You could choose to discuss an article relating to your subject, for example an Economics applicant might want to talk about the recent downturn in Chinese GDP growth rate. This would allow you to demonstrate your enthusiasm and independent interest in your subject outside of school. A Sciences applicant might want to talk about a discovery or recent experiment, for example advances in genetic technology.

Alternatively, you could choose an article of a topical news story. A current example might be the change in leadership of the Labour Party or the refugee crisis in Europe – on which this example will focus.

Example answer

“I read an article last weekend in The Times about the European response to the ongoing refugee crisis.

It focussed on a number of personal stories of the journeys people have made from Syria and Afghanistan – over thousands of miles, and for many the first time they have left their home country.

It made me think of a number of different things. One is the immense power of the media to influence public opinion and government policy. The picture of a lifeless three year old on a beach in Turkey highlighted the personal and tragic nature of the crisis. However, if this picture had not been published, the response might potentially have been different – affecting thousands of lives.

There are also questions arising from the increasing rise of right-wing sentiment and anti-immigrant feeling across Europe – highlighted in the comments of the Hungarian Prime Minister. In recent elections we have seen populist parties entering government across the continent – which seem to focus on exploiting people’s fears. It is slightly terrifying – and I think there are many different causes. The article discussed the effect of the terminology we use – are they refugees, economic migrants or asylum seekers? Should this make any difference?

I thought about is the obligation we have as an individual and as a society. My personal opinion is that we have a moral duty to assist those in need and less fortunate than ourselves – one of the reasons that I find it important to volunteer. After all, the refugees are experiencing horrific and terrifying violence at home and if I were in their situation, I would be doing exactly the same.”

Why this is a good answer

The student has given a clear and structured answer, demonstrating their ability to summarise and form an opinion of an extended news article.

The student has also demonstrated questions that they have formed in their mind having read the article – showing that the article has caused them to reflect and consider their own position.

This answer has also allowed the student to show their general knowledge of the causes and effects of the ongoing crisis in a broader context – going beyond what was in the article, and providing material for the interviewer to engage with further questions.

Potential follow up questions

General

- *What was it about this article that you found particularly interesting?*
- *How have recent developments in technology changed how we receive news? Do you think that this been generally positive or negative?*
- *How do you receive your news?*
- *Is an independent media important for society – why or why not?*
- *Do you think it is important for everybody in society to read the news – why or why not?*
- *Do you think that media outlets can go too far in invading the privacy of individuals or is this necessary to keep us safe and informed?*
- *Which areas do you feel are underreported in the news – why?*
- *If you were a journalist, what would you like to write about?*
- *If ignorance is bliss, why do we need news? Would this be better for society?*
- *Do you think that the newspaper is dead?*
- *How have 24 hour news channels changed the reporting of news? Do you feel that this is advantageous?*

Relating to the above example

- *There is obviously no easy answer to this crisis – however what kind of approach would you like the government to take?*
- *Do think that the government should be doing more?*
- *What do you think has caused this particular increase in movement at this time rather than earlier?*
- *What social tensions might arise if the UK accepted 50,000 refugees currently in Europe, and how might these be best addressed?*
- *If you were Prime Minister, what would you do and why?*
- *Do you think all EU members have an obligation to accept refugees?*
- *Do you think we should remove national borders?*
- *Is Angela Merkel a good leader? What about David Cameron?*