Prep yourself for university!

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IT's that time of the year again, and all the Private Universities have lined up to disperse news about their admission dates for Spring 2007. In case you didn't know, in Private Universities, semesters are divided into three parts - Spring, Summer and Fall.

So, time to bid goodbye to that lazy lingering holiday and dive into preparing yourself for the next crucial stage of your life. There are many ways to go about it, but coming from the English department, I can only help you in that creative branch of Arts and such subjects.

It's quite simple actually, you just have to really know what you want to study and set yourself up for it. Now we can't leave the classic code of conduct that you must carry with you wherever you go in life, so hear it out one more time: Be confident, Be creative and Be yourself!

First of all, you need to know what this subject requires. Do some background research. 'Art' you say? Get to know the artists who have changed the world. History? Well, naturally you want to look a few steps back in the timeline. As for Literature, know that there are other great writers besides Shakespeare and PLEASE, don't go about saying that Shakespeare is your favorite author just to sound smart. He was NOT an author; he was a playwright! It seems that a lot of people misunderstand the concept of English Literature really.

Tahnim (not his real name) from a Private University declares that he imagined English in the University level to be exactly what it was in SSC and HSC except perhaps more advanced. He thought it was all about comprehension and composition. "We were taught Shakespeare in school as well, but we had the translated version and we never had to dig so deep until ten other meanings could pop out of just one line."

Therefore, talk to a few people who are already studying the subject. Read the works of different classical authors (Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, The Bronte sisters, Thomas Hardy, or poems by Shelly, Keats or Wordsworth just to name a few). If you plan to take Linguistics instead, then start jotting down essays and stories just to help you practice. If possible, get some write-ups published beforehand. That always looks good and motivates you to write more.

Another thing to keep in mind is that in the field of Arts, you WILL be made to think for yourself. Teachers want to know what you think and what you have understood from the materials provided to you. Let's consider an example shall we? Last semester, I took a course on Post-colonialism. We were required to venture into the works of writers that are considered Post-colonial, such as Nirad C Chaudhari, Chinua Achebe, Kamala Das and many others. Once the main concepts of post-colonialism were handed out, we were given the liberty to apply them in the poems and stories as we liked. This meant that there were no right or wrong answers. If someone thought that one of the authors isn't wholly post-colonial in his approach then they had the total freedom to say so as long as they had valid proof of it from the write-ups. That's the fun part about Literature; you get people to hear your voice, your perception and your unique evaluation on many things!

Now, if you really have made up your mind to study something like English Literature, then sound the part. Once you attend the viva, you may need to explain why you chose this subject. All you do is give a plain, simple, short yet convincing answer. They aren't asking you to re-define Oxford's meaning of Literature okay?

Next, make sure that you write down all the extra curricular activities you participated in at school.

1.Always try to participate in class.

2.Stay updated. Check the notice board, website and your email regularly.

3.Always manage all relevant course papers in separate folders. Also preserve cash receipts, registration forms and other official documents.

4.Consult teachers before you choose courses.

5.Consult your friends as soon as you miss a class. Find out what was covered and whether any work was assigned.

6.Get started with assignments, papers and projects well ahead of time.

7.Be sure to read the textbook in addition to the lecture sheets and slides provided in class.

8.Talk to the course teacher as soon as you face any confusion

9.Try to participate equally in group projects and assignments. Teachers wouldn't like to find out that you haven't done your fair share of the work.

10.Get involved in extra-curricular activities. It's a great way to develop your interpersonal and leadership skills.