

Recommendation letter

To whom it may concern,

I have had the pleasure to tutor Paul over the past three weeks, to provide a strong grammatical basis with which he can tackle writing and reading in the French language. He really is quite an astonishing young person, and at only fourteen years old, showed incredible enthusiasm for a topic which would, to many, appear mundane. Every conversation with him, whether in the classroom or otherwise, becomes a lively discussion about literature, or philosophy – you really can tell that he approaches life with a rare intelligence and hunger to learn.

We covered four general topics throughout the course of tutoring: French grammar, linguistics, translation from French to English, and French and Italian literature. Paul has shown massive improvement in French grammatical application, of which I can only credit his dedication and hard work. Being a native speaker, he was not previously taught technical grammatical language, but he now uses each term with confidence and ease, in order to better grasp grammatical structures, and be able to apply them to new situations. This was proven to be the case when we tackled the Oxford LAT [Language Admissions Test] – a problem solving task which involves translating a made-up language using logic. As a result of his grammar sessions, he was able to pick apart an unfamiliar language and draw out grammatical structures using accurate terminology with great success.

In terms of literature, too, Paul was able to engage in complex discussion surrounding both modern and renaissance texts in French and Italian. We covered a wide range of literature: in French, we studied Beckett, Rabelais, Montaigne, Diderot, Léry, Thevet, Cartier and Proust; and in Italian, Eco, D'Annunzio and Pirandello. Each was accompanied by a tutorial-style discussion of an example essay. These sessions were where Paul's natural thirst for knowledge was most apparent – and he grasped numerous intricate ideas easily, bringing up past topics in casual conversation, and furthering discussion outside of teaching time. He is a curious soul, and it is clear that he would thrive in an Oxbridge atmosphere – approaching every conversation, whether 'academic' or otherwise, with sensitivity, intellect and experimental thought.

His personality in general is one of a kind. For his age he is astonishingly attuned to current world matters, and historic events both well-known *and* niche. He has countless special interests, with new ones coming to the surface in almost every conversation - each one more obscure. My personal favourite has to be his obsession with Mazarin Academie Française socks. In our discussions about Oxford life, he took pleasure in learning about the culture, and was a great active listener - and both of us took great interest in comparing our academic experiences in well-known institutions. I, too, am leaving with a great deal more knowledge than when I arrived.

His academic work however was not the only thing of note. He continues to impress me with the wide range of sports in which he participates every day, during his holidays: beginning each morning with an ice bath and a workout, he still would always come to my lessons full of energy and focus. Of course, throughout tutoring we would take regular breaks to play ping-pong to ensure his eyes did not get too tired - and he helped me to massively improve in the sport, which I had no real experience of before-hand. After tutoring he would run ten kilometres to the swimming pool, five there-and-back, and swim for an hour in between. His sportsmanship is truly striking, and it is clear that he takes great pride in nourishing his body as well as his mind.

Paul was a delight to teach, and brought to the lessons a lively dynamic with which he was eager to learn. He showed great interest in everything brought to the table, and we had many stimulating conversations throughout my stay. I wish him all the best in the future, and am sure that he will continue to achieve great things with such a positive, and engaging attitude.



Kind regards,
Charlotte Mitchell, BA in French and Italian
University of Oxford