What do you particularly enjoy about studying History?

I enjoy History due to the relevancy of the course material. Not only do you develop an academic skill set that appeals to universities and future employers, but you are able to actively engage with history as it happens. For example, learning about the political, social and economic contexts that paved the way for the National Health Service is essential now more than ever before, while other units such as the civil rights movement provide the historical context for a battle still being fought today.

How much work is involved (hours in lessons/outside of lessons)?

Currently, four contact hours per week are timetabled, with two hours being spent on each unit per week. Homework and assignments take up some time outside of lessons, but you should realistically allocate a few hours per week to independent learning. For me, this involves reading some of the additional articles provided by the department, revising relevant content and applying it to key questions and spending some time consolidating learning from the weeks’ lessons.

If you studied the subject at GCSE how different is studying it at A Level/BTEC Level 3?

While I found history at GCSE enjoyable due to the periods of history we studied, the knowledge was relatively broad compared to A-Level. There are greater opportunities to study history in more detail, allowing you to form your own academic judgements and opinions rather than simply memorising facts for an exam. How you apply your knowledge is significantly more important than storytelling – it is a step up from GCSE to A-Level, but one that supports your academic development and encourages you to put your skills into practise.
How are you assessed and how regularly?

Assessment takes place in the form of knowledge checks within lessons, topic quizzes and practising and applying exam technique. This doesn’t mean you’ll be expected to answer essays every week on your own! You may get asked to practise drafting an introduction or a conclusion to an example question, or work on breaking down a historical extract as a class as part of a lesson. Points tests or assessments will typically take place when you finish studying a topic; I find this beneficial as it helps me to pinpoint areas I need to address when revising for college mock exams.

What support have you received and is support available if you don’t understand something?

If ever I don’t understand something I feel comfortable approaching any member of staff in the department for help. There are weekly drop-ins to support you whether it is a topic you are struggling with or you just have a quick question about the exam. They can also be used to talk with your tutor about goals you want to work towards, to receive help with organising your work and even UCAS advice later down the line. You can also contact staff via email or arrange a one-to-one for additional support.

Have you received careers support and what are your future plans?

I joined Carmel to gain skills that will be of use to me as a teacher in the future and the college has not fallen short of my expectations. I have received consistent careers support through discussions with my tutors about university and potential routes into teaching. There was also a talk for students who wished to learn more about Oxbridge and Russel Group universities, while history-specific UCAS and careers advice can be found on Connect. I also took advantage of the wonderful careers department and a teaching-oriented enrichment programme that allowed me to gain classroom experience in my 1st year! I plan to study English Language with a focus on linguistics to become an English teacher in the future.