



GUIDE TO SUBMITTING WRITTEN WORK



Certificate of Higher Education
(2026 entry)

Why we ask for written work

As part of your application for the Certificate of Higher Education, you'll need to submit a short piece of written work (around **1,000 words**, with 10% flexibility).

This isn't a test of what you already know — we don't expect you to be an expert. Instead, your written work:

1

gives you a taste of what studying on the programme will be like,

2

helps us understand your interests and how you express your ideas,

3

provides a starting point for conversation in your interview.

If you're unsure about anything, please get in touch via email: certhe@conted.ox.ac.uk

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ARCHAEOLOGY

1

Choose a book, article or television documentary about an archaeological subject that you have read or seen recently and write a review of it.

The item you choose may be intended for a general or more specialist audience, but the main points to cover are:

- whether you enjoyed it
- what you learned from it
- how the work contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the topic covered
- how the writer or maker of the programme went about the work.

Or

2

Choose an archaeological site that you have visited recently and explain why you think it is important and interesting.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

- 1** Choose a book, article or television documentary about an architectural site that you have read or seen recently and write a review of it.

The item you choose may be intended for a general or more specialist audience, but the main points to cover are:

- how it has increased your knowledge
- understanding of the building or site.

Or

- 2** Choose an historic building that you have visited recently and explain why you think it is significant as well as interesting.

CREATIVE WRITING

Write a creative piece of your preferred form, on a topic of your choosing.
This may be one of the following:

- 1 A single poem (of about 50 lines)
- 2 Two poems (of about 50 lines in total)
- 3 A complete work of micro fiction (of about 1,000 words)
- 4 The beginning of a short story or novel (of about 1,000 words)
- 5 The beginning of a play or film script.

HISTORY

1

Choose a history book, article, television documentary, museum or other exhibition that you have read or seen recently and write a review of it. The item you choose may be intended for a general or more specialist audience, but the main points to cover are:

- how it is relevant to the period of history that you are interested in
- what you learned from it
- how the writer or maker of the programme went about producing the item that you are reviewing.

Or

2

Choose an historical person, place or event that interests you and explain why you find them significant as well as interesting.

HISTORY OF ART

1

Choose a book, article or television documentary on an art history topic that you have read or seen recently and write a review of it. The item you choose may be intended for a general or more specialist audience, but the main points to cover are:

- whether you enjoyed it
- what you learned from it
- how the work contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the topic covered
- how the writer or maker of the programme went about the work.

Or

2

Choose a painting, sculpture, or other artefact that you have seen and explain why it is visually appealing and of artistic importance.

LITERATURE

1 Choose a book that you have read recently and write a commentary on it. The book that you choose may be intended for a general or more specialist audience, but the main points to cover are:

- whether you enjoyed it
- how the author went about the task of writing
- what features of the language, story line, or characterisation you found specially striking
- whether you would recommend it to another reader.

Or

2 Choose a literary character (that is, a character encountered in a poem, short story, novel or play) and explain why you think the character is interesting and important - and how the writer has achieved that effect.

PHILOSOPHY

1 Choose a book, article or a television documentary on a topic in Philosophy that you have read or seen recently and write a commentary on it. The piece that you choose may be intended for a general or more specialist audience, but the main points to cover are:

- whether you enjoyed it
- whether it contributed to your understanding
- whether it changed your own views on the subject.

Or

2 Think of a topic that has been in the media recently. What philosophical issues does it raise - for example:

- Does it pose ethical questions?
- What alternative points of view might there be?
- Why is it interesting from a philosophical point of view?

POLITICAL ECONOMY

1 Choose a book, article or a television documentary on a topic relating to Political Economy that you have read or seen recently, and which could have been written for either a general or more specialist audience. Write a commentary on it, and include the following:

- how it contributed to your understanding of the topic
- how the writer or maker of the documentary approached the topic
- whether or not you were persuaded by it.

Or

2 Think of a topic that has been in the media recently. Write a short summary of the main Political Economy issues raised by this topic and the different points of view that there might be. Why do you think people disagree about the issues involved?

DATA SCIENCE

- 1** Choose an article, episode, or book about data science, artificial intelligence, or the use of data to understand the world, and write a review of it.

The work you cover may be for a general or more specialist audience.
The main points to cover are:

- what you found compelling
- what you learned about data, methods, or the topic itself
- how you might expand on or challenge the interpretation, analysis or methods involved.

Or

- 2** Think about an example application of data to any topic. Summarise the interesting challenges, approaches and insights afforded by the data and its collection, analysis or interpretation.



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