Interview Day journal from a Godalming student applying for Linguistics at Cambridge. She had two interviews, one subject-specific and one more general. I have changed some of the names!

“ In the subject specific interview they asked me to compare German and English (I haven't studied German in 2 and a half years....I blanked and said I didn't know but they used different verb orders. Another girl got asked to compare Latin and Spanish when she'd never studied Latin before. They knew that but told her to do it anyway). They also asked what I was planning to do in my gap year and how I planned to continue my interest in linguistics while I wasn't studying. They moved on to using data/asking questions on it almost immediately after, they didn't spend very long asking me questions. I was shown a list of things that various children had said and asked me to explain what I thought the children were doing or trying to say. One of the interviewers disagreed with everything I said or asked me to explain more and was extremely doubtful but it seemed like the actual admissions tutor (Anna Macleish) didn't like that...it really seemed like they hated each other (bit awkward).

I was also given a list of verbs and told to spell them out in terms of vowels/consonants (in the way that we say them). Some of them they asked how it might be different in other dialects. I wasn't given a third task but everyone else was (Anna make a sarcastic comment at the other woman about not having time).”

“In the general interview she asked where I saw myself in 10 years if I studied at Cambridge and I said most likely teaching or speech therapy, or anything similar to that which involved working with young people, and she asked why I hadn't applied for education if that was the case. Everyone I spoke to who had that interviewer was asked why they hadn't applied for a different subject (including archaeology and MML). She asked a lot about my personal statement (they didn't use my personal statement at all in the other one), especially about my coursework. She then asked how I'd link my interest in teaching and culture (which I'd spoken about in regards to one of the books I've

read) to what I wrote about in my coursework about the language of politics. She asked other people who hadn't written about politics in their personal statements about the politicisation of language. She also asked about what I did outside of anything academic, and how I'd link that to language. She asked a few specific questions about the Shakespeare course I did too.”