



Hello (or *Bonjour, Hola, Привет etc*) Pembroke Linguists!

My name is Imogen, and I'm a second year MML student here at Pembroke. As your subject rep, my job is to give you a brief introduction to the MML course and to answer any of the questions which you may have. The MML tripos is one of the most diverse (and best) courses in Cambridge, so you are off to a good start!

First things first: **DON'T WORRY**. There are a lot of intimidating stories about studying at Cambridge, but I can guarantee you that 99.9% of these are just myths. It can be daunting arriving and wondering whether you are up to standard, but it is worth reminding yourself that you have earned your place here, and that everyone else will be in exactly the same position. Just relax and get to know the new system and people. There are always a host of friendly faces to go to if you have a problem of any sort, and you will get timetables telling you where to go and when. In your first week you will have meetings in which you will meet your Director of Studies (aka your 'DOS') and your tutor, so you will make some points of contact pretty quickly. Remember – they are there to help you: so don't hold back about anything which you think sounds pretty basic, there will be nothing that they won't have heard before. The important thing is not to let yourself get stressed out over anything - without a doubt there will be professors that will recommend working 12 hours a day, but this is NOT in the least bit necessary, or advisable. Success in an MML course relies on working steadily throughout the year, and not on trying to cram grammar or vocabulary. I would say from experience that having fun learning languages makes it stick far better (for those of you doing ab initio, watching foreign Disney cartoons on youtube comes to mind). You will definitely have time for a social life and whichever other extra-curricular activities you choose to pursue.

The first year as a linguist (Part 1A) has 4 components: oral, translation, 'use of' language work and your scheduled paper (usually a combination of literature and other cultural studies). The oral classes will involve 2 hour sessions once a week with a native speaker, either in the MML faculty (situated on the Sidgwick Site) or in Pembroke. The classes are usually quite informal, encouraging you to contribute as much as possible, and to feel more confident in building your language skills.

Language and translation classes take place in the faculty (the official name for the MML Faculty building is the 'Raised Faculty Building', or the RFB, so if you see this strange code on your timetable, this is what it means. On similar lines, the letters LB stand for the 'Lecture Block' – where most of your lectures will take place). These classes are usually organised into slightly larger groups of 10-15. This is where being a linguist has some of its best merits:

because everyone at Pembroke will be doing different languages, you may be the only Pembrokeian in your group, and so this is always a great opportunity to meet fellow linguists from other colleges. There is one language class a week, and one translation class every fortnight, and so it is important to keep up with the grammar and vocabulary taught, so that you can make the most out of these sessions.

The scheduled papers will vary depending on your language and level, but they all involve weekly or twice-weekly lectures by the faculty, and meetings with supervisors, who will set you essays and tasks to complete – you will probably get about one or two essays a week, but this will be on top of work set by other classes, so it is good to get into a habit of getting them done in good time. Supervisors will usually set you a list or recommended reading, and most of this will be easily found in the MML library, Pembroke library or the University Library (the 'UL'), so you don't need to worry about finding texts – there will be introductions to various libraries at the beginning of the year to explain more, so there is no need to worry about that now.

I would recommend starting your reading lists before arriving in Cambridge, but it is not essential to have read to whole list before you arrive. Selecting a few to read now will mean that you will have made a head-start, so that you can relax at the beginning of term, whilst you settle in. For your language classes there will probably be some kind of a grammar test online at the beginning of term, but this is hardly strenuous and nothing to get worked up about. This is just to see what level you are at and will probably never be mentioned again! For ab initio students, you will probably get some kind of preparatory work to do, and I would definitely recommend getting started on at least some of this, since the ab initio courses can be quite demanding, especially in the first couple of terms.

Most importantly – enjoy the rest of your summer! Well done for getting into Pembroke, and we hope you will enjoy life in Cambridge as much as we do. Your first term is always tiring, so make sure that you get plenty of rest... and if you have any questions, any at all, don't hesitate to contact me and I will be more than happy to answer any of your questions. You can e-mail me at je227@cam.ac.uk, or you can feel free to add me on Facebook. I study French and ad initio Russian, so any specific queries about these subjects, and any of the preparatory work, can be directed to me, and if you want to ask any questions about other languages then I will be happy to put you in touch with someone else who can help who will be better equipped to answer you in detail.

The MML group at Pembroke is always very small, with around 5 or 6 students admitted each year, so you will all get to know each other very quickly. We will help you on this fascinating and enjoyable, process by organising a subject lunch some time during Freshers' Week, so that you will have the chance to meet all of the Pembroke language students.

I look forward to meeting all you budding linguists in October, and until then have a wonderful summer! See you soon!!

Imogen Evans