

Alumni Profile

Thomas Seal

Reporter, Bloomberg News



Thomas Seal graduated in 2013 and was active in student journalism. He returned home to the Isle of Wight and worked at his local newspaper, saving money for a master's degree.

After an MA in journalism he secured an internship at Bloomberg News, where he now works as a reporter.

Why did you choose to study English at Royal Holloway?

I liked the way the syllabus started with a traditional and wide-ranging first year, and gradually allowed you to hone in on your interests. And the campus is pretty.

What have you been doing since you graduated?

I did a couple of internships and a documentary project funded by Royal Holloway's Helen Shackleton fund, then worked at my local newspaper whilst saving up for a master's degree. It all helped me to land my current job.

How would you describe your job?

I try to break news about big businesses.

What attracted you to this industry or role?

I always wanted to get paid for writing things that people want to read.

What is the best thing about your job?

The ability to ask important people whatever I want (within reason).

What are the main qualities and/or skills that you need in your role?

A deep wellspring of natural curiosity, enough concentration to sift through often dull words and numbers to find the news, and being genuine and approachable enough for people to want to speak to you.

Did you/do you need any further qualifications to do your job?

I did a master's in newspaper journalism, though this is expensive and not essential.

Industry:

- Journalism

In a nutshell...

Degree:

English (Single Honours)

Year of graduation:

2013

Further study:

MA Newspaper Journalism (City University)

Core skills used from degree study:

- Writing
- Research
- Critical thinking

Mantra:

"Don't hesitate to talk to people"

Useful links

National Council for the Training of Journalists

www.nctj.com

Work and Internship opportunities

www.gorkanajobs.co.uk

Plus, see special interest groups on www.linkedin.com

"Be honest but confident in your achievements. Research what the employer is looking for and tailor your CV and pitch diligently. Bring examples of your best work."

Other routes include an NCTJ diploma or impressing an employer on work experience (so apply for a lot!)

Are there any drawbacks that you wish you'd known about?

Journalism is tough to get into and generally doesn't pay too well -- though I did know that going in...

Do you have any tips for the application and interview process?

Be honest but confident in your achievements. Research what the employer is looking for, tailor your CV and pitch diligently. Bring examples of your best work.

Of your time at Royal Holloway, what did you find most valuable?

The course itself. After that, the best thing was throwing myself into all sorts of societies and hobbies -- sports, acting, debating, and of course the student paper. It's harder to try your hand at such a variety of things outside of university.

How did studying English, specifically, strengthen your employability prospects?

It honed my ability to digest large amounts of information rapidly, then analyse and explain it precisely and concisely.

If you could have your time again, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?

I would have been bolder with the student paper, and applied for more work experience.

"Studying English honed my ability to digest large amounts of information rapidly, then analyse and explain it precisely and concisely."

Was there any one turning point or event for you that was significant?

Imagining myself in ten years' time and realising I would regret not trying a career in journalism if I did anything else.

What's the best career advice you have been given?

When you're chasing a story, put in one more phone call than your rivals.

Where do you want your career to be in five years' time?

To be a leading voice on my beat.

If you could travel back in time to give your younger self some great career advice, what would you say?

Don't hesitate to talk to people - the average person will try to answer your questions.

Do you have any final words of wisdom, for anyone thinking of following a similar career path to you?

Read and write as much as you can, as often as you can. Ask people on the 'rung' above you for advice -- they're often happy to give it.

[Spring 2018]

For more Department of English Alumni Profiles see:

royalholloway.ac.uk/english/alumniprofiles

Royal Holloway, University of London
Egham, Surrey, TW20 0EX
T: +44 (0)1784 434455
royalholloway.ac.uk