**The Everlasting Competition between Oxford and Cambridge**



Cambridge and Oxford are two of the oldest universities in England. Both were created more than eight hundred years ago. Ever since the day the two schools were created, they've been locked in a **rivalry**that shows no signs of stopping.

**The University of Cambridge**

In terms of academics Cambridge is one of the best. The university is said to have the fifth best academic program in the world. The school seems to take particular **pride** in its mathematics and science programs. In addition to having an impressive academic program, the school is also credited with providing the world with some very impressive scientific discoveries via some of its brightest graduates the list of whom includes Sir Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, Alan Turing, Charles Darwin and Paul Dirac.

**University of Oxford**

The University of Oxford is the third oldest university in the world, and England's oldest. Historians believe the university was first created early in the 11th century. During 1167 Henry II **forbade** any English speaking students from attending the University of Paris, **triggering** an explosion in Oxford's attendance.

Today the school has one of the best academic programs in the world. Internationally the school is best known for its Rhodes **scholarship** program, a program that some of the best and brightest minds in the world have been a part of.

The list of Oxford graduates is quite impressive. No less than 26 of Britain's Prime Ministers, including Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher, attended Oxford. In addition to the Prime Ministers, Oxford has been the **alma mater** of twelve saints and fifty Olympic medalists. Oxford has also educated many influential authors including Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Oscar Wilde, and Lewis Carroll.

**Long Memories**

One of the reasons these schools are so fiercely competitive is their age. Old schools have time to build and cultivate rivalries. The older the schools, the more **infamous** the rivalry becomes. Not only do the schools have long histories, they also have long memories. No slight, real or perceived, has ever been forgotten, or even forgiven.

In the case of Oxford and Cambridge, an actual date the competition started was in 1209. This was the year that that several of Oxford's scholars **fled** the university. They promptly created Cambridge. Shortly after Cambridge was established, the two schools started competing together in a variety of **varsity** events, the most famous being the two day long cricket match that was held in 1827. Since then the schools have been constantly trying to prove that their athletes are superior.

**The Student Body**

One of the biggest reasons the two universities will always be in a state of constant competition with each other is because of the students that they accept. Both schools pride themselves on accepting only the best and brightest students. This means that the entire student body at both Cambridge and Oxford is made out of **overachievers**. Overachievers are competitive by nature. They expect to win, at everything, it doesn't matter if they are competing in a spelling **bee** or a **rowing** competition, they want to win.

Competition between the two schools actually starts during the application process. When they are ready to apply to university, students must choose one school or the other. They are not allowed to apply to both schools during the same year.

**The Nature of Competitiveness**

Another reason that the two schools are so competitive is because a competitive nature is **addictive**. As soon as the battle **gauntlet** is tossed, the other people will join in the competition. Pretty soon every person is competing, not just against the opposing side, but also against each other. Each person wants to have the most cutting comment, the loudest yell, and the most **boisterous** **cheer**.

It might be hard to believe, but the very land both universities are built on contributes to the competitive spirit between the two schools. Both schools are built on property that would be ideal for sporting events or farming. The land surrounding both universities is flat, and the rivers that cut through the campus have slow, **steady** currents, perfect for rowing competitions.

**The Boat Race**

Although the schools are competitive about a variety of sports including rugby, **tiddlywinks**, and cricket, the sport they are most passionate about is rowing. The most famous rowing match is simply called The Boat Race and it is an annual event. The race takes place on the **Thames**. Teams of eight rowers compete to see who can navigate the stretch of river between the two schools **boathouses** the fastest. The winner of the race gets the glory. Each year the race draws approximately a quarter of a million fans, many of them **alumni** of the two prestigious schools. It is estimated that 20 million fans tune into the race each year.

**It's a Good Thing**

People who aren't a part of Cambridge/Oxford's competitive environment might roll eyes and shake heads at the **ridiculousness** of the competitive **antics**. It turns out that the spirit of competition the two universities have cultivated is actually a good thing. A little competitive pride is something that should be cultivated. When people are caught up in the spirit of competition, they have something that distracts them from their problems; they experience a rush of **endorphins** that provides a natural high. Sometimes this little boost is all it takes to make the day a little more tolerable. In addition to being a mood **booster**, healthy competition, like that between two schools, can also create a bond making people feel more connected to the people around them.

Słowniczek

Tiddlywinks-gra w pchełki

Thames-geogr. Tamiza

boathouse-hangar dla łodzi

alumnus-absolwent studiów wyższych z tytułem

ridiculousness-śmieszność, absurd (np. sytuacji)

antic-sztuczka, trik, figiel

endorphins-endorfiny

booster-osoba dodająca siły, efektywności

scholarship-stypendium

pride-duma, godność osobista

alma mater-szkoła, kolegium lub uniwersytet, który się ukończyło

infamous-niesławny, cieszący się bardzo złą sławą, mający złą reputację

flee-uciekać

rivalry-rywalizacja, współzawodnictwo, rywalizowanie, współzawodniczenie, konkurowanie

varsity-pot. uniwersytet, zwykle odnosząc się do uniwersytetów Oxford lub Cambridge

overachiever-osoba wyróżniająca się na tle grupy lub osiągająca o wiele lepsze rezultaty, niż reszta grupy

bee-konkurs

rowing-sport. wioślarstwo

addictive-uzależniający

trigger-wywoływać, powodować, zapoczątkować

gauntlet-hist. mil. średniowieczna rękawica skórzana (stanowiąca część zbroi)

boisterous-żywiołowy

forbid-zakazywać, zabraniać komuś robienia czegoś, nie pozwalać komuś na coś

cheer-wiwat, owacja

steady-miarowy, stały (np. rytm)

1. It is much older than the other famous English university.

1. Oxford University
2. Cambridge University
3. Both

2. It has one of the best academic programs and scholars in the world.

1. Oxford University
2. Cambridge University
3. Both

3. Its students are very competitive and don't forget any affronts.

1. Oxford University
2. Cambridge University
3. Both

4. It was founded by students who left the other famous English university.

1. Oxford University
2. Cambridge University
3. Both

5. For its students, winning is the most important thing.

1. Oxford University
2. Cambridge University
3. Both

6. Every year it takes part in a rowing competition called “The Boat Race”.

1. Oxford University
2. Cambridge University
3. Both