

A Level Physics Trip to Geneva



Without a doubt, the A Level physics trip to CERN in Geneva was one of the major highlights of Year 12 for me; from the minute it had been revealed to us, a buzzing excitement had spread across all sixth form physicists, already making plans and choosing roommates. It gave us a welcome reprieve from the impending doom of revision for our mocks and later our guide at CERN would tell us that Geneva had experienced endless weeks of biting cold and grey sludge-turned snow, only to flip instantly to clear blue skies and dazzling sunshine, just in time for our arrival.



From the moment we landed, there was not a single person who wasn't stunned by the picturesque horizon; the overwhelming shadows of the mountains dusted with pure white snow across its peaks that seemed to glitter in the sunlight was a sight I don't think anybody got used to. At our hostel we settled in quickly, dumping our bags and getting ready to hit our first major stop: the United Nations.



As not only a politics student but a citizen of the world, the United Nations building was totally incredible; the moment of recognition struck when we approached the gates where the towering flagpoles stood, the iconic image of the countless colourful flags rippling in the breeze as they always do on the news. We received an excellent guided tour of the building, and walking into the cavernous conference rooms, now empty, only made us wonder what transformative decisions could've been reached in any one of them.

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In the evening, we explored around Lake Geneva, taking record numbers of selfies and group pictures, and deciding that karaoke of old pop hits was the best way to express our excitement, likely to the dismay of any passers-by and of course, our teachers. The next morning, we went on a walk again, this time appreciating the city in bright sunshine and admiring the mini rainbow that had formed across the Jet d'Eau.



We then trekked to CERN, where we watched the experiments that defined our school physics knowledge unfold in various exhibitions; Entering the Globe of Science and Innovation (a mysterious wooden entity) we were entranced by a show that depicted the Big Bang in astonishing colour and light. Being toured through ATLAS and the Data Centre really showed us how scientists began to put together the pieces, of not only the beginning of the entire universe but also about the existence of fundamental particles – we even had a talk in the conference room where the discovery of the Higgs boson was first announced.

Overall the experience was fantastic and left us all with a huge insight into the vital work physicists have done over decades, as well as the inspiration in our minds that such hard work does lead to amazing achievements.



Sadia, Year 12