

Advice to the IB Class of 2004

From the Class of 2003

Last year, students in trig & analyt were asked to answer the following question as a part of their second semester exam:

Think back on your experiences in school this year. What advice would you give to a friend who is a year behind you and is about to take the same courses you have just completed? Your advice can address any aspect of life in IB, but must be basically serious and reasonable. If you choose, you may write your response in the form of a letter.

Below, you will find their answers. They have been edited only slightly, mainly to remove typos. The responses of the one freshman and three sophomores in the course last year are at the end, and their remarks apply more specifically to sophomores enrolled in the course now.

The junior year has been the most difficult year so far. It is the first year of the true IB experience; you must begin to take your school career seriously. The internal assessments are really unlike any other assignment. You have to do well on them because they help determine whether or not you get the diploma. In other words, do your best on them.

For many of you, some changes might be required in your habits. You would do well to be mindful of the future. You may not feel like finishing your work early, but you will wish you had when you have one night to study or complete a project. Also, do not focus merely on grades; they are not what it is all about. You will be expected to remember and understand much of what you have learned for IB and AP tests. Therefore, I suggest you take your education seriously.

For those overachievers among you, be forewarned: perfection is not always possible. If you should fail, do not give up. Redouble your efforts. School may have always been easy for you, but that does not mean it always will be. The same is true for life in general. Remember not to worry. It is a stumbling block and accomplishes nothing. I firmly believe it is possible to achieve nearly anything if you commit yourself to it.

Here is some information on junior classes:

Chemistry — this year, it is more difficult. Study seriously and make sure you understand each concept. You must be able to apply your knowledge rather than just memorize set methods.

U. S. History — You may find this class chaotic. Read your book and do not put off studying.

French IV — Mrs. Dietert takes French seriously. You cannot sleep through this class.

Psychology — This may be an easier class. Make sure to know everything well for the IB papers.

Trigonometry — Just do your work. It should help you learn.

English — Read the books and prepare for your formal oral commentary. Do your best on your informal oral presentation.

Good luck!
Jeremy Cummings

To those who follow in our footsteps (hopefully with less procrastination):

Remember what the poet Dante said of hell: “All hope abandon, ye who enter here.” This will be the most trying, intimidating, crazy time of your life. My list of needs for you is: Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook, a crapload of aspirin, a shoulder to cry on, and a good relationship with your teachers. Because Frisbie will edit this, I will only discuss three teachers — Frisbie, Goss, and Bond (Trig, History, and Chemistry).

I’ll start with Bond — do the labs as soon as you can. *Don’t* let them back up on you; that’s asking for trouble. Do the suggested 5 hours a week studying, and lab write-ups do count for that. When you do the lab, you get experience with the methods and concepts and do much better on tests. The only grades you get are labs and tests and they’re 100 points each.

Frisbie is a dynamic, animated teacher. [Editor’s note: coming soon to the Cartoon Network.] She makes things interesting — remember the four main themes in math. They are death, money, sex, and drugs. Just kidding. Do the homework and you’ll do better on tests, just like in chem. You’ll have a good time in here, but just do the work.

Goss, Gary. AKA Scary Gary or Hungary. Credit Richie Hill for the nicknames. He’s less of a challenge than he seems. Learn to write well, fast, or he’ll bust you big. Read all three books he gives you and do the research. When you get to the 1800’s, pay close attention. We didn’t and got more or less screwed on the AP US History exam. [Editor’s note: This was written long before scores on the AP exams came in.] One last thing — his momma is left-handed. You’ll find out later.

Try to do work when you get home. Frisbie will like my equation here:

$$\begin{aligned} (\text{magnitude of project}) \cdot (\text{how late you're doing it}) = \\ (\text{level of BS}); \\ \lambda \cdot T = (\text{BS}) \end{aligned}$$

You can’t afford to really BS any more because you’ll pay through the nose later. Some of this is humorous, but in a satirical way.

Chris Byrd

So now you're a junior. There's only two years left for you to suffer through, so I'll warn you ahead of time that this year is tough. So, because of that (and the fact that this is part of our final), I'll give you a little advice to get you through the year.

Due to the stresses of school, many friendships may be tested and even hurt. My advice to you is to find the one person to vent to when times get tough, one person who you can trust. You need to find somebody you can be open to without being judged. I know our class is probably the worst at getting along, and maybe that's why I had to use this strategy, but it's important to find somebody to talk to.

Now, about the classes you take. If you're in chemistry, I suggest buying a Barron's AP book, especially since all of Mrs. Bond's tests are old AP questions. In history, Mr. Goss is actually a nice person, and he's willing to listen to any problems you may have with life. For the class itself, be sure you read the chapters in Barron's and Pageant. Ms. Frisbie is a great teacher. I'd have to say that her class is the first time I've actually had fun in math class. Finally, for those of you in Psychology, it's really not as bad as you may have heard from the others. If you're in the small class, you've got it made.

My very final piece of advice is: hang in there! If I can deal with all the crap I went through my junior year, than so can you. I wish you the best of luck.

Tiffanie Gloyd

I see you made it to your junior year, congratulations!! Now for the serious stuff that will help you survive this year. First of all, make sure you have the e-mail addresses and phone numbers of at least one person in each of your classes because there will be times when you forget an assignment or directions for an assignment, or you might just need help on an assignment. Also, don't worry about being popular or having a lot of friends. All you really need is one great friend to help you get through.

Next is the dreadful word... homework!! I know you won't take to heart what I am about to tell you, but I promise you that it's true. DO NOT wait until you get to school to do the homework that's due that day. Doing homework that is due the next period (and doing this throughout the day) makes you feel very rushed and tires you out, and you don't have time for lunch — homework due on C days is the worst.

Let me give you a few pointers about the individual classes. If your science is going to be chemistry, it is easier to write the lab up as you do it and get it done in one week, because the points that are deducted for it being late add up quickly. For you Spanish students, watching the telenovelas (soap operas) offer an entertaining way to improve your listening comprehension. English class isn't hard at all, just complete your journal questions on all the books you read and you should be okay — and if you don't, relax, you won't fail (I know!!). I don't know what your T.O.K. experience will be like because you won't have the same teacher that I did. It shouldn't be too hard to make good

grades in American history as long as you read your book — this will also help with the workbook exercises. For trigonometry, there might be a bit of homework to complete, but she goes over questions before you turn it in, and it's pretty easy as long as you take notes (which will also be beneficial for the notebook tests every nine-weeks). Lastly, psychology is an enjoyable class as long as you read your textbook and do your homework. This is all the advice that came to mind as I thought back on my junior year. I hope I have been of some help to you!!

Good luck,

Brittany Miller

P. S.: A tip about writing: you will have to write lots of different papers for English, psychology, history, and T.O.K., and they cannot be written the same way.

Dearest upcoming trig student,

Brace yourself. This year could make you or break you. Here are some tidbits of advice from a THEN-struggling Trig veteran in hopes that you can pass the class and gain some respect from the smartest teacher at this school. I'll end with just some general tips on life in IB in case there are any freshmen reading this because it helps to have some surviving guidelines.

First... do your homework! Especially in trig, because even though she always goes over them the next day, it helps to have some idea of what Ms. Frisbie is talking about. You will get loads of homework, but it's good that you have two days to accomplish it. Take advantage of that, obviously, because even if you fail, you'll look responsible.

Next... do NOT be afraid to look stupid by asking questions. You may be the dumbest in your IB class of less than 100, but remember, you're still smarter than those other 1200 Bartow High kids. [Editor's note: This is not true, in my experience. But you're smarter than a lot of them.] And once again, your persistent inquiries will make you look responsible.

Lastly, don't give up your life. IB does call for late night procrastination and loads of back problems from all the books, but don't let that scare your friends away. Become close with those in your class (you're stuck with them for four years), but also make friends throughout the high school and in the community. If you parents are the type to frown on you actually doing anything else particularly enjoyable, play some sports and do community service so you can maintain an active lifestyle but act like you're only doing something constructive to please your parents.

Good luck and have fun no matter what. And if you're having problems still with the acquisition of a social life, look for me in the halls — I'm not hard to miss as the most popular person in IB! ☺

KIDDING!

Erica Ayala

It's the start of a new year, which means new challenges. The first is your teachers; it's not really a challenge, you just have to become acquainted with their teaching styles and policies quickly. Don't try to do things the old way, because it's a different year, time for different things. It's all part of growing up.

Make good use of your planner, not just for passes, but write down your assignments (always check the board in Ms. Frisbie's class). You have to stay caught up. The assignment passes are very helpful, but they are so tempting and by the time you realize it you might be four assignments behind. So keep track of the assignments and do them.

Portfolios. Portfolios. Portfolios. Do them before the period or day that they're due. It is so easy to put them off because they're given in advance. By doing them a little earlier, you can get help with the things you don't understand.

Andrea Henderson

I heard you got into IB this year. Congrats! I figured that since I am in IB, I would write you to tell you about the school and give you some advice. IB can be fun, but it's also hard work. I have three tips for you, which are to brush up on your time management skills, keep a sense of humor, and always be yourself. I think that if you keep those in mind, you'll be okay.

Time management will keep you saner than the rest. Procrastination, although inevitable, is something you should steer away from. Plus, if you do things right, you shouldn't have a problem with not having time to do stuff out of school. Time management will help you be on top of things and you'll get a laugh once in a while when everyone is freaking out.

So like I mentioned before, a sense of humor wouldn't hurt. If you take every little thing too seriously, you'll go crazy. People will be harsh and super competitive, but just keep your boots on and laugh it off. Plus, the competitive nature of the school will sometimes make you do crazy things. Don't worry about what other people are doing; it will hurt you in the long run. Just be yourself and have a good time.

Don't worry, you'll be fine. I hope this has helped you prepare yourself. Remember all you have to do is be yourself, and stay on top of things. Expect the unexpected, and when it happens, make the best of it.

See ya later,
Melanie Leon

To all the IB students who've made it this far, congratulations. While IB Trigonometry can be pretty challenging at times, I have a few pieces of advice for you. First of all, don't let everything get to you at once. Take it one day at a time, one assignment at a time. Speaking of time, remember that you also don't have much of it, so while I recommend that you take IB one step at a time, do so in a timely fashion.

Another suggestion I have for you concerns trig homework specifically. While it may seem like a lot (as in, homework every night!) do not fall behind! And make sure that you do your portfolios. That's fifty points that always come in handy. I found from personal experience that when I got my homework out of the way, my grade was better. This is because if you're like me, you'll never get around to doing the makeup work.

Finally, I have to say that you most likely need to give yourself more credit. I found myself seemingly drowning in homework and low self-esteem. If at any point you feel you don't belong among these "smart people," do not give up. One thing that I have noticed is that IB makes you forget how smart you really are. You're surrounded by people who never put down their schoolbooks, and considering your "non-bookworm" lifestyle, you are doing pretty good.

Melissa Soforic

The year has finally come for you to shine. But I want to leave you with some encouragement, advice, and just some tidbits of information before I move on to yet another year of my life.

Mr. Goss is a great person! Don't let his constant homework assignments and "kids, you have to read your books" or "If you don't have a thesis, you have feces!" comments get in the way of seeing that. If you ever need anything, talk to him! Also, study groups are a plus! Several times throughout the year, several of us got together at each other's houses and various restaurants for "History" study sessions! They help... I promise!

Also, in the next year, you will be put to the test socially and academically. Juniors, this year will probably be your most difficult, but don't lose sight of the reward at the end. You will get through it alive! If you ever get frustrated, let your teachers know what you're going through — they'll help you, and they understand... (well, to a certain extent).

Don't forget who you are. There will be many times when you will be tempted to act differently, or believe something other than you actually do. TOK will challenge you, but this is the time you have to be who you are and stand up for what you believe!

Also, don't forget who your math teacher is! She DID graduate from Bartow, she knows about this school. Never come into her room out of dress code, and hopefully there won't be one person that comes in late every day!

Good luck,
Brooke Jones

To start with, advice for Trig: Make sure you do your homework and pay attention. Ms. Frisbie doesn't talk for no reason. She is helping you, and listening to her would be beneficial. Her sarcasm is a way to help you as well; don't think she's out to get you, it's all good. Doing your work helps immensely, and if you ever have questions, ASK THEM. It won't do you any good not to ask. She will answer all questions and help you out as much as she can.

For other classes, I'll start with English. If you don't do your journals, "sucks to be you" (to quote Ms. Frisbie). Journals are a pain, but they are a big part of your grade, they help you to understand, and they will help you your senior year. She also clarifies if you don't get something. Mr. Goss is a person that takes getting used to. On the day of orientation before school started, I remember wondering how and why they seniors were talking to Goss as if he were their age. He is fun like that. As long as you are learning and trying to do well, he's a nice guy. If you don't try, he gets frustrated because he wants you to do well. If you take biology, you are in for something. The class is fun as anything, Mrs. Kennon is awesome, and labs are great until you have to write them up. I strongly suggest getting Cliff's Notes to AP Bio. Most worksheets come from there, labs are explained well there, and it is easy to understand. **Do not put off labs!** It will catch up with you quickly. If you have psych, good stuff comes from there. The information is interesting, the class can be fun if you stay on her good side, and it all pays off. You might not feel any smarter at the end, but you'll be amazed at how much you do know when it comes to AP/IB tests.

For the classes I can't give advice on: Spanish I would just assume keep doing your work. TOK will be interesting enough with the concepts and all, but with a new teacher it will be much more exciting. Chemistry I have heard is a beast. It's hard and more power to you if you take it, Lord knows I couldn't. Physics seems easy enough if you take his notes, listen to him, ask questions, and get a good lab partner/group.

On a more personal note, *do not* ever let anything dumb ruin the friendships you have. You guys (class of 2004) have always been close and generally good friends; don't lose that. You need good friends to survive and, if you have them, don't lose them. I don't know what more I can say on that. If you ever need to talk to anyone, teacher wise, all of them will listen and try to help you. I have, however, talked to Mr. Goss about stuff and he helped a lot, and I have also talked to Mrs. Smith, who helped. These teachers want you to succeed and want you to do well; use that to your advantage.

Side note that I forgot, do not take orals lightly. They don't count for nothing. They are important and doing well is quite beneficial. Oh, and don't slack off on your extended essay or CAS, they both will get you eventually.

Caitlin Seigal

Your junior year has arrived and it's time for your hardest year of IB. You have moved quite easily through your freshman and sophomore years, but now it is time to see what it's all about. I hope you all have taken physics because if not, you're in for a long ride.

The year goes by quickly, but it's totally up to you to make the best of it. If you procrastinate like you've done in the past, it's going to hurt you tremendously. Do your work and do it on time, and please don't forget to come to class on time. Too many tardies lead to work details, as I have come to understand.

The best advice that I can give you, though, is to have some fun. Manage your time so you're not just doing homework; get out of the house and do something you enjoy. School is not all about the academics but rather the experiences you have and the relationships you have made. Those are the real aspects which leave a lasting impression on your life. So do your work and make them straight A's, but at the same time HAVE FUN! High school only comes around once (well... for most of us). [Editor's note: Yep, for some of us, it just keeps coming.]

Roshan Joseph

Here's some advice... You are now entering the true IB, and in my humble opinion, you should be afraid, very afraid. There is only so much that one can do to prepare, and even then, it won't be enough... Remember this. Freedom, sleep, work... that should get you through...

Freedom is what you will need most in this entangling year to come... freedom from the pressures that would seem to engulf you... I recommend going to Downtown Disney... As you would know, sleep is becoming something quite malleable, expanding and contracting according to the schedule... Sleep and sleep some more, never give up sleep for work, you will find ways to do the work... Time management, do one thing at a time... Work is important. I recommend you do it.

Junior year is one of the worst, first semester being hellish and chaotic, then the second being slow and almost seeming everlasting... Smile now, you're in hell with a glass of water...

Christian Soriano

To those who are just now starting their junior year: Welcome to IB. As much as you want to think you have been in IB up until now, you are incorrect. No need to worry, however, because you have been well prepared, as long as you realize that if you've learned anything at all, you've learned how to adapt to having very different teachers in the same year. You will write a lot of essays by the end of this year, and at the end of this year, so pay attention to how each teacher tells you to write, because each exam that you will take at the end of the year requires a different type of writing skill depending on the topic. As much as some of us hate to admit it, our teachers do know what they are talking about, they've been doing the IB thing a bit longer than we have (most of them).

Here is a hint for each of the classes that I took when I was a junior. English: Mrs. Smith is super nice, so be nice to her and she's tons of fun. She teaches the books really well, and if you don't get it, ask! Trig: Ms. Frisbie can be sarcastic, get used to it. Listen to her when she's teaching. She's funny, but there is an educational point to what she has to say, and you may find yourself learning more than just math stuff in her class. So pay attention! United States History: those of you who had Mr. Shuff for AP Euro, Goss is nothing like him. We don't take as many notes, but trust me, you still want to read the chapters. Listen to him, and he is also sarcastic. Again, get over it! He's usually joking if he's being mean, and if he's not, just tell him it's bothering you, he stops. Pst! By the way, try not to get off on "tangents" in his class; that bothers him. Spanish: I'd tell you guys all about how wonderful Sra. Laurent is, but you don't get to have her, so don't worry about it. I don't know what to tell you about ToK, because I don't even know what it's going to be like this year. Having Mr. Keers for physics is one thing, haven't had him for ToK yet. Which reminds me, in physics, there is really only one thing you need to remember, listen to what he says, it makes class so much easier. He'll tell you what you need to know, as long as you pay attention. Oh, and don't get too used to turning things in late, abuse the privilege and you end up WAY behind. Psych: this class is fun. Ms. Barrington is really nice to you as long as you are nice to her (Golden Rule), so be nice. Pay attention and don't think that you can just forget this stuff after each test, because at the end of the year, you have an AP exam and the IB exam in psychology. Once again: Welcome to IB.

Now on to a more personal and social note. It's a really highly incredibly (am I making this apparent?) bad idea to let something stupid break up your friendships. This isn't like middle school where you know that next year you'll have class with a million different people who you didn't even know existed. These people have been with you for 2 years now, plus summer school at least once, and you have 2 years ahead of you. That's a long time to hold a grudge! Don't let the trivial things get to you, and if you haven't figured it out by now, you will soon learn who your real friends are and who they aren't. When you do find out, here's a small suggestion: don't make enemies of everyone and anyone who isn't your best friend. You need these

people and they need you. Learn to work together, and I don't mean on homework. There really is a limit to what counts as helping and what counts as cheating, and you know what it is. Don't cross that line, because if you do, you've wasted a lot of time and energy in a program that you won't be able to complete. I can tell you right now that knowing that I have only one year left, I would never EVER do anything that I think might compromise my chances at a diploma. Quite frankly, I've worked too hard to get here, and so have you, so don't blow it by being lazy.

By the way, if you thought I was going to rag on you about procrastinating, don't worry, I'm sure enough other people are that I don't have to worry about it. So work hard, play hard, and have fun! Best of luck to all of you!

Christine St. Germaine

As you already know, life in the IB program can be fun, challenging, and rewarding all at the same time. Because of this you must all be prepared for all that is to come. In light of our previous year, I am here to help you with preparations, and to give you advice. One of the most important things to remember is: NOT TO PROCRASTINATE. Another very important thing is to do all of your work. Also, you should not disobey the teachers, because they will get back at you.

Procrastination is something that the Class of 2003 does very well. Though, it is not always a quality to be proud of. You should never procrastinate on an important paper. Procrastinating on something like this leaves you with no time to prepare. Important essays and papers take time to write, and if done at the last minute, can seriously lower your grade. This is not always the case, but it does happen frequently. When you have an upcoming test, do not wait till the last minute to study. If you do, you will quickly find out that you should have studied earlier and longer. (I know many are saying, "Whatever, I don't have to study." That is what I thought too, but I was wrong.)

The junior year of IB is the most important year of your high school career. You have to do all of your work. It is very important that you do all of your work. Those who do not do their work suffer at the end. The ones who do their work get to laugh at the ones who didn't. If you do not do the work, your grades will be low. Making top grades on tests does not mean a thing if you do not do the work. I will stress that you do the work over and over again.

It is very important that you do not make the teachers mad. You should always, well, most of the time, obey the teachers. Teachers, whether you like it or not, have the power to give you work. In most cases if you make the teacher mad, they will give you more work, and you will be sorry. If a teacher tells you not to talk during a movie, listen to her. If you don't it is very likely that she will turn off the film, and give you written work. Being in IB, we need some free time, so don't blow it.

Have a good time in your junior year. If you follow my advice, you will do fine. For those that actually read this letter, THANKS. Once again, have a good time. BYE.

Your Upper Classman,
Jeremy Newby

My Experience In The World of IB
Welcome to the one of the most challenging years in your I.B. career. This is a most difficult time for a lot of you because this is your first year of true I.B. For the most part the challenge of your new year will come from the way you handle the work that is given to you. This means that, at least for my class, procrastination is completely the wrong way of approaching any assignment. Although, many of you would say that you can basically put something together the “night before,” experience would suggest that you do not take this route. The more that you rely on the process of procrastination, the worse your condition will become, especially when it comes time for you to complete the English Formal Oral Assessment and the Psychology Internal Assessment. When I relied on procrastination, I almost failed some of the major assignments that were due. I have to say, that the hardest and most overbearing class is Spanish IV because of the fact that I had to keep myself on a tight schedule of rigorous studying and learning because of the constant demands that Sra. Laurent puts upon students. In this class, I found out the hard way that procrastination would not hold up in her class. I have known and seen people breakdown at the last minute because they have forgotten an assignment or test that they were supposed to be studying for. Don’t let yourself be caught by the disease of procrastination. The easy, kiddy-stuff is over and it is time to harden up. The best way that I try to imagine school is that it is a training ground and battle-royal zone for military cadets preparing for war. Life is truly harsh outside of the protective walls and the I.B. program tries to teach you that by punishing those who use the futile and subjective art of procrastination to fool the professor into thinking that the procrastinated work is your best effort in that area of academics. Simply, procrastinate and you shall reap consequences that not even you could foresee.

Another aspect of the I.B. career that I have learned through my year-long experience is that the endeavors that you undertake in are for you. What I mean by this is that whatever effort you put in any subject, whether a science lab or an English project, do it for your future and not for any stupid awards. The entire system of rewards and punishment is used for those who need motivation. This type of motivation is no substitute for your own long-range goals. I found that when others rely on the stupidity of receiving praise for something that they were doing for their future, it degrades the entire task to a doggy trick. If you are pushing yourself through aggressive academic training and planning to receive praise and rewards, then it is completely futile because your future career is going to depend on how dedicated you are and how much you enjoy it. Self-fulfilling goals will help an individual grow stronger compared to the common and mundane and futile plaques that you might receive. Be your own judge on how well you do, in regards to the professor’s highly qualified advice and opinions rather than a rusting plaque. Be the person you are, reach for your own goals and be your own judge more than letting others judge you.

The last aspects that I find most important for you to know about as you enter the overwhelming doors of I.B., is that you should never be afraid to ask a question and learn from any experience that you come upon. I have been shunned frequently because I have a tendency to ask a lot of questions for my own curiosity and thirst for knowledge. **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION IF IT IS TRULY IMPORTANT TO YOU.** Now, I know that there are questions that are not pertinent to the matter at hand, say a question about history in a Trigonometry class, however, this does not make them stupid and so you should not consider it a stupid question but a question to be answered at a different time. I have been a firm believer in this, and through this and personal endurance, I have learned a lot and grown a lot. Thus, be true to your own sense of curiosity and sense of learning. Another lesson that I learned through my experience was that the assignments that are given to you should be done in a way in which they do not become obstacles in completing other assignments. What I mean by this is that you should tackle each assignment or set of assignments in a way that you finish what is needed to be completed first and then tackle later assignments. I have found that this helps me concentrate and make my I.B. career easier for me.

Thus, the advice above should be used when you feel that you have come to a complete dead end when you are doing something for school. If you find that different methods help you out, then by all means use them. I just feel that you should become aware of what the I.B. curriculum demands and how to work around it so that you can achieve more from your rigorous education. Welcome to the I.B. junior year and I hope you have a fulfilling time and try to enjoy it, if it is possible.

Sincerely,
Amit Patel

If I had a friend who was a year behind me in school and was in IB I would tell them to relax and just go with the flow. If they do their work and listen they should have no problems. I would tell them that they should always be in dress code for Mr. Goss and Mrs. Frisbie’s classes but the others don’t really care. I would also tell them that if they don’t study in Spanish then they wouldn’t do very well. I would tell them that if they got too worked up about all the stuff that is due then they would have a hard time dealing with it all, but if they do what is necessary and don’t worry about all the little things, the junior year is no harder than the others. I would also tell them that they need to get out some. They don’t need to only do school work, they need to go out and have some fun. But they shouldn’t put off all the work until the day before it is due because sometimes there is a lot of work due on the same day and it takes up a whole lot of time if they were to do it all at the same time.

Jason Buchanan

All right, I really don't know what to say to you or how to start this out. I think you have pretty much figured out what IB is like, even though you've only experienced Pre-IB. Either way, I would assume you've figured out that not all of the horror stories were true. Overall, IB isn't much different from Pre-IB, except this year the classes get harder and your grades drop. ☺

Personally, although I've been up late countless nights, I've never actually stayed up and pulled an all-nighter. I just figured that the grade wasn't that important. Don't do that. The grade really is that important, especially when it shows up on your report card that the reason your grade isn't an A is because of Comment 10 (Homework Incomplete). Even though the grade is important, try and get it done early enough so that you don't have to stay up all night. It just makes things so much easier and a lot less stressful.

English is nothing like Graffam's last year, and make sure you do the journals. Hope you did the summer assignment, otherwise you're pretty much screwed. Trig isn't so bad, and the late passes thing helps out a lot. DO PORTFOLIOS! Those end up being kinda important. History as told by Goss. He sticks to what he says, so listen and don't get an attitude. It makes the class go by much smoother. Even though you won't want to, reading the chapters makes the tests easier too. I took Physics, and I'm SO glad! Do the labs and turn them in that day. Do the homework. It seems like a lot, but they just help your grade, and if you miss one or two, it doesn't hurt you that bad. I can't tell you about ToK because I'm in the same boat you are since Keers is gonna take the class. Spanish is still Spanish, and you'll still have Mrs. Anderson, who I don't have. I ended up taking Psychology, but I wanted to. It can be a fun class, as long as you listen and be quiet when she tells you to. Oh yeah, learn the biological perspective and all that stuff the first time. It makes it easier when it comes time to take the A.P. Test.

It's not that bad. Do the work, listen to the teachers, and actually put forth some effort. Since my class is the "bad, procrastinating class," you guys shouldn't have too hard of a time trying to impress the teachers. Keep up with your reputation and everything should work out great for you guys! Don't get too caught up in the schoolwork to stop doing fundraisers for prom! ☺ School's important, but it's not so important that you compromise your time for everything else.

Amanda Coquyt

Okay, so now that you're juniors, that means that you've basically passed one of the biggest thresholds the IB has to offer. You've stepped over the line that divides Pre-IB from IB. Now, before you get too excited, I'm going to warn you, it is incredibly hard at times. Just about anybody can tell you that "as long as you apply yourself, you'll do fine," but I'm going to actually tell you the truth. There are going to be parts of this year that you will absolutely hate, but I will give you this one glimmer of hope: IT IS COMPLETELY WORTH IT. So what then is my advice for getting through this next year (and even the one to follow)? Well, here goes:

First of all, like I said, this year is going to be a tough one. Actually, it's probably going to be the hardest year out of the four you will spend here in IB, so my first piece of advice is to not let your work get the best of you. This has probably been one of my biggest problems. As a matter of fact, right now, as I'm writing you this letter, it is 12:10 AM on a Thursday night (Friday morning), and I still haven't done all of my English journals (you will learn to hate these), and what's worse, tomorrow is the beginning of finals (and needless to say, I have not prepared myself very well). So why should you listen to me, then? Don't make my mistakes. I'll be honest. Especially at the end of this year (the beginning wasn't so bad), I really let my work get the best of me, and I've definitely paid for it grade-wise.

What else can I offer you? If at all possible, don't get a job. My parents made it frightfully clear that if I wanted to even have a driver's license, I needed to have a job. Trust me, 50+ hours of school is a lot (not to mention time doing homework). Then when you add another 20+ hours at a job, this leaves incredibly little room for anything else. Time is probably the most important commodity that we as "IBers" could ever wish to have, so if at all possible, don't let an after school job monopolize all of this precious time.

Third, my advice is to know who your friends are and to spend as much time with them as possible. I know that I just got done telling you that time is too important to waste, but so is your life. Studying is important, but friends and family are even more so. Trust me when I tell you this: PEOPLE WHO SECLUDE THEMSELVES WILL NOT MAKE IT THROUGH IB. It just won't happen. Without plenty of social interaction, you'll crack. And trust me, that's not a good thing.

So are there any last minute tidbits of advice that I have? Of course: 1) Do as many of your CAS hours as soon as possible (as of the time that you are reading this, I most likely will still have zero hours... Vetter does not like this at all), 2) Don't get offended when Goss tells you that he'll burn your house down (hopefully he'll never make good on this threat), and 3) This may actually be the most important of all, remember how to laugh. Things are going to happen that just plain out suck this year, but a good sense of humor will definitely help you through just about all of it.

Sincerely,

Josh Boldman

Joshua 1:8-10

My advice to the juniors of next year would definitely be on the issue of getting your teachers to like you. This may seem like a trivial problem early in the year or even after all these years of school, but this is actually a vital thing to accomplish every year. Take my word for it, this is not one of those years that I accomplished this feat, and it caused many problems that could have been easily avoided. These problems may result in lots of begging and groveling towards the end of the year, especially in the way of grades, and can also result in a higher likelihood of being written up. I know that many of your classmates may think of this as sucking up and certain things like that, but it won't really matter when they get in trouble and you end up with a higher grade.

The very first day of school is the one where you make the impressions that will last until you are finished with this teacher, in a few cases now for the next two years. For example, the very first day of class Freshman year one of my teachers labeled me a slacker and that stuck with me in this class all year long. Because of the impression I made at the beginning of the year I almost didn't get an A in that class; that would have been a shame. Also this tag resulted in me getting written up for "disrespect" even though if anyone else had said it nothing would have happened. But that label stuck with me all year and if instead of doing whatever it was I did the first day, I had done something different, that class may have been that much easier.

This year you would think that I might not be quite as disruptive considering that it was not the first day in a totally different place as it had been freshman year. However, I still managed to irk some of my new teachers, which again resulted in bad reputations throughout the group of teachers (hey, at least I was well known, right?). One teacher's label for me stuck out to me the most since it was the most original one I had ever received. She told me at the beginning of the year that I reminded her of her son. Now most people would think that this is a good thing. However, later in the year I discovered that she had sent her son to military school for all the bad things that he had done (good reputation, eh?). The problem with this was that during the 4th quarter I had to once again get a very high grade in order to overcome a "not so great" grade that I had gotten during the 3rd marking period. This was made all that much more challenging by the fact that she had that little bit of a bias against me that could possibly make a difference in any subjective grade.

These are only a few examples of many (considering that I have managed to make a bad impression on at least one of my teachers every year that I have been in school), and they clearly demonstrate that making a good impression is imperative to having a fun and easy year in school. Therefore I strongly recommend sucking up as much as possible at the beginning of the year because then you can basically do whatever the heck you want and the teacher won't care after that (at least I think, I've never actually gotten to that point). But anyway good luck in IB and overall, have fun.

Brendan Browne

Congratulations on making it halfway through this four-year program and welcome to the real IB. If you thought that your first two years were easy, I'm happy for you, but this next year is going to be extremely difficult unless you learn to manage your time wisely and participate in constructive uses for your time. The amount of homework varies weekly (ex.: One week you might only have 2 hours a night while another week you might get 2 projects and 2 papers due). This year is really tough and it will separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak. This is not saying anything to those of you who will drop out this year, but everyone, and I mean everyone, in the class of 2003 has seriously considered dropping out at least once this year. It tends to happen when the going gets rough, but if you support each other then it should be okay in the end. One more little note on that, don't drop unless there is a REALLY good reason, you might regret it later.

Enjoy Ms. Frisbie. She makes math funny and you don't find many teachers who can do that, especially in IB. If you do poorly on a test, swallow your pride and retake it. You can't imagine how much better you learn it the second time around. Keep your homework passes too, they're extra credit at the end of the nine weeks and sometimes that can just make the difference between passing and failing or even a B and an A. Expect to be run over by your teachers at least once this year, they will find a way to tear a paper to shreds or just plain out fail you if you deserve it. The point is to go higher on the rebound and not just lie there and give up. Ms. Smith can be crazy, but sometimes it is a good thing. I HOPE you did your summer reading assignment, you'll be seeing that book again second semester. If you didn't do it, find the time before second semester, because that's when the going gets really tough. Goss is great. Some people don't like him but do what he says and listen in class and you'll be fine or he'll burn your house down. For those of you taking psychology, keep up with your journals. It is really hard to do all of them the night before they're do, and you don't even have all the prompts half of the time.

First semester, enjoy your elective. I can't tell you how hard it is not to have any electives second semester. Seven straight class of scholastic challenge can kill you. My advice is if you want to say alive, do something you love. If its art, get CAS hours, if it's a sport, get CAS hours, if it's helping the community, get CAS hours. Find something you love and get all the CAS hours in that area. Swimming is one of my passions and in one swim season, I got all my action hours. That's 50 hours I don't have to worry about. Don't procrastinate CAS. You will procrastinate at least once on something next year; you have to in order to stay alive. Not CAS. I think we should call them passion hours. All three areas are about either doing your passion or learning why someone else has that passion. Good luck on your first year in IB. Remember to buckle down when the going is tough and you'll be fine.

Anna Midence

You're starting your junior year, and, presumably, you're taking trig. Congratulations on the former. Taking trig was probably a good idea, too, if you care enough to work for it. Frisbie is actually one of the greatest teachers you will have in high school. Take advantage of that — don't be afraid to ask for help. Also — falling asleep and zoning out really do have adverse effects on your grade in this class — so don't do that. Another thing — the review sheets *are* the tests. Do those, or at least glance at the answers she has posted. You'll have an A in the class. [Editor's note: Not everyone is Afra.]

If you're taking biology and you plan to do well, also plan to learn the concepts and study. This isn't one of those classes that you can simply get by on with logic. Trust me on that one. If you've never studied for a class before, this may be the class you have to start with. Oh, and those labs. Those are fairly evil — full write-ups nearly all the time the first few months. Those go by much faster if you don't have to do them all in one night. Do parts of the lab over the week, so that by the end, you're not too tired to write a good conclusion.

For English class, the best advice I can give you is to actually listen to what the teacher is saying. She doesn't say much at all about the material, but use what she says. Her teaching style is very simple — you do practice AP tests every week, vocabulary sentences every week, read a few chapters and answer “journal questions” every week. It seems to be a really elementary level class. Rather, you are asked to do most of the learning on your own here. The vocabulary is for SAT/ACT purposes. Don't be tempted to cheat on the AP tests, or you will have to cram when the real test comes around. And journals — well, we all love journals. Just do them. And you *must* identify the teacher's interpretation, not your own. You get better grades that way.

American history isn't a really hard class if you listen to what Goss says and read the book (American Pageant, not the others). He tends to make odd associations — these are amusing enough to cause you to remember what he was talking about — so don't fall asleep.

And in general — do something you enjoy once every day. Don't go overboard, but don't strip yourself *completely* of the good life. Speaking of which — AIM is nifty for homework, yes, but it usually also adds about an hour more to every assignment you do. One of the greatest things you can do is sign off completely while you work. You finish faster and get more sleep. You also need 150 CAS hours to receive your IB diploma. 150 *documented* hours. Try not to get behind on this because you will never remember all that you have done at the end.

It's difficult, no question, but not impossible. Good luck.

Afra Ullah

Well, you've made it this far, you're finally IB students! I hope that each of you has enjoyed your journey so far and is prepared to move on. The road doesn't get any smoother up ahead, only longer and more rugged. Here's a little advice on how to survive and what you should expect this year...

For the most part I bet you've been reading essays (or letters) from other students, on what the classes were like our junior year. Well, I'm not going to tell you whether to like or hate a class, or even how hard it is. That's something that you as a student should do for yourself. One person may think that a class was super easy, where the next person down the line had troubles passing. Each person is different. You're going to have teachers that you can't stand, and teachers that you love and wish you had their class every day, but once again, everyone is different. What I will tell you is this as far as your classes are concerned: do the work. Don't think that you can get by without reading a book, or taking time to write an essay, because the truth is you won't. You may feel like you don't have a life, and that you're never going to get a chance to do anything, but it'll all pay off in the end. Whatever you do, don't procrastinate!

Don't miss school unless you really have to! I learned this first hand; the more you miss the further behind you become and the more stress you build up on yourself. It's better to go to school feeling horrible, than to stay home and miss bunches of work that you'll never be able to finish. And it's not just the work that you'll miss that's going to kill you, it's not being in class for the notes. I know missing classes like history and trig are a pain come test day. You aren't able to do what you did back in pre-IB days, with just copying someone's class notes and passing the test with flying colors. The tests are based on everything, from what is written on the board or overhead, to what the teacher says; it's all very important. The bottom line is, don't miss school!

Okay, enough about school work... nobody really wants to talk about that anyway. Your junior year is going to be very big change from what you did in the 9th and 10th grade. And that change means there's going to be lots and lots of stress, and the need to keep a safe level of sanity. The best way to work through everything is with your friends. Don't laugh the next time that Dr. Vetter says that IB is one “big happy family,” because it's true. As dysfunctional as this “family” maybe, they're all you really have left when stress comes knocking at your door. They know what you're going through because they're living the same nightmare. Talk to them, help them out, and they'll do the same for you. This doesn't mean to push your family away as a mode of support, but remember that your fellow classmates know what it's like, they may not. Find the people that you can relate to best, and then hang on to them.

Most of all, have fun. The year flies by, and before you know it it's all over. Don't forget to go out and be a teenager, don't just focus on schoolwork ALL THE TIME! I wish all of you the best of luck on whatever you may do in the future!

Monica Witherington

Welcome to IB. It takes very special people to stay in the Program for the long haul. By “special” I’m not trying to be facetious, it is really a great accomplishment to have come thus far, but you are only half way. The class of 2004 has stepped up to the task and has done a good job trying to raise the bar for the class of 2005. All I ever hear about is how much better the sophomore class is than the junior class. You must be pretty smart, or at least your teachers think so. This is enough; let’s get to the important stuff.

I’d like to start off by talking about the PSAT. It is definitely worth your time to sacrifice a little and prepare for the PSAT. A high score on this test will help you greatly. You will reap the benefits all the way to college. In math you will be well prepared because all of you are taking math at a high level already. Also, take the time to participate with the practice problems that Ms Frisbie will give you and make sure you know how to do them. Don’t be a slacker. Also, you HAVE to practice what Ms. Smith gives you. She will give you analogies and passages. The practice in English class will be miraculous for your verbal score. So, seize the opportunity.

The main thing to remember is that that the only way to succeed is through managing your time. You will not be able to accomplish anything if you procrastinate and let the work accumulate into Mount Everest, because it will, and you won’t be able to finish it. Just do your homework on time, no matter what class it is, and in classes such as trigonometry and physics, look over the worksheet before the test. The formula for succeeding in each class is simple, but you have to stick to it. Do not get behind because it becomes perpetual and you will never ever get caught up.

There is one class that I would like to address directly and that is American History. There IS a trick to this class. For those of you who are not history geniuses you will have a hard time. Fear not, my friends, for I have a solution. Many times I felt overwhelmed by Goss’s rants and notes. Most of the class will not make sense. If you do ANYTHING in history at all, do this: read the chapter. It is much more important to read the chapter than to take notes. Notes will... help you, supposedly. But, if you read the chapter, you will get an A on the test. If you take the notes but you do not read, Goss will flunk you, and you will develop hostile feelings towards Goss and you may attempt to burn his house down. This is bad. Just read the book. In fact, read every book. In English you will have to do an external assessment on books that you read the first semester, so you better know them, or else IB will flunk you.

Stay involved with activities that do not involve your seven classes. Do something, please. It does not matter what it is, but you need an extra activity just as much as you need to do your homework. If not then you will be really stressed out. You may not necessarily go insane, but at least if you are insane then you don’t worry about being insane.

Also I would like to warn you against some of the inherent evils of IB. Don’t cheat, it’s bad. You will get

kicked out of IB and then some Swedish guy you don’t even know will set your house aflame. Also, maintain a healthy level of vitamin C, because if you don’t then you will get scurvy. Scurvy is bad. It is bad because you lose your teeth. Also, you go insane. But worst of all, you go insane and you have no teeth. Also, brush your teeth every morning. I know that many of you are in a hurry to leave the house in the morning but as a courtesy to all of your peers who have noses, please brush.

Jaime Montoya

Dear newcomers to the wonderful world of trigonometry,

I have three classes to warn you about to get you on the way, if you’re a junior. Physics, turn everything in as early as possible, do not procrastinate on the work. Trig, only use the late homework passes if the assignment you’re turning in late is worth more than 10 points, and if it is, then turn it in for half credit. Theory of Knowledge, open your mind or you will get nothing out of the class.

In physics, Mr. Keers is very lenient on due dates, he gives you a week to turn assignments and labs in late. The most important thing is to not be a jerk about his free candy, only take one or two pieces. I know of some students that have been named “Big Fist” because they take a handful of candy at a time, and some students who don’t have physics stop by and take some candy, so be nice about it. Seriously study for the tests too, some of the questions are really out there; he samples from IB tests as well.

In trig, turn in the homework, and be prepared for the tests. Probability and the cosines, sines, tangents, and the like were the hardest tests, and I never retook the tests. If you do horribly on the test, take it again to get the average grade; that would be really smart. DO THE PORTFOLIOS WITH THE GREATEST OF DETAIL; just do them and you’ll see why I say that.

The whole purpose of ToK is to find alternate paths and to analyze those paths. If you don’t open your mind, you can’t see the other paths, and if you don’t see the other paths, you can’t analyze those paths, and if you don’t analyze the paths, good luck with the ToK paper. Don’t say what you think the teacher wants you to say, say what you feel, because anything else has no true value in that class.

I hope I’ve been some help.

Neil Floetke

As I sit down at my computer in the wee hours of the morning trying to come up with advice to share with all of you incoming IB students, a little part of me tells me to click file and close and shut down so that you all can go through the struggles that I had to go through, but... I am not that kind of person. As one of the students who have transcended the pre-IB program and completed the first year of the real IB program, I propose the following as items in your IB Survival Kit. Always carry them and your junior year will be one filled with fun and lots of learning, instead of stress and sleepless nights.

The major item that every survival kit should have is a planner. Believe it or not, that little orange organizer your teachers give you at the beginning of the year is your ticket to a fun-filled year. Though it weighs but a mere percentage of your total backload, it is filled with more important information than anything else in your backpack. The key thing to succeeding in IB is to stay organized and not to procrastinate. Write down every due date for projects and assignments in this tiny planner even if they are due months from now. Believe it or not, time flies quickly and your workload really piles up if you don't get a-moving now. Write down also every one of your classmates' e-mail addresses and screen names for you will never know when you'll need their help. Fortunately with today's technologies, you can talk to them in the middle of the night without having to wake up the rest of their families. In addition, write down your teachers' phone numbers for if for some odd reason, you're looking at your Buddy List and no one is on, you can still get help on all your homework, though call them at a more reasonable time than late night when they are busy replenishing their health to grade all that homework you're busy finishing at the time. In addition to allowing you to get out of and into class, and to the restroom (it really bites if you can't go when you have to go), your planner is an essential element in your survival kit. Therefore, ALWAYS HAVE IT WITH YOU!

Other items that you should always have in your kit are your homework and projects, and important papers. Always have your homework done AT HOME and not the class before (beware for your teachers will confiscate them if you get caught and all your efforts would have been in vain) and in your backpack. It won't do you any good if they're at home on your desk somewhere or in your car. Always have your projects completed before you turn them in the next day because printing them out in the studio or finishing them during lunch will not always work — the studio could be locked and most teachers do not allow you to use their computers. Besides, 50 minutes isn't really enough to write a really good ToK paper or DBQ, unless you've mastered the topics completely. (On a lighter note, you don't have to do as many projects this year, but your paperwork will certainly increase.) Always have important papers completed and turn in, particularly your CAS forms. It's better to have them filled out when you're doing them now instead of at the end of the year when they're due; this also lessens the workload for Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Delk, not to mention you having to worry about them and trying to remember what you did three or four months ago! I again emphasize in you having your homework

and papers in your survival kit. If you have none or fail to turn in enough of these, don't be surprised in your next interim or report card when you see incredibly low grades. You won't even get the IB diploma if you haven't got your CAS hours and papers done, so DO THEM!

Another important item in every survival kit is a car, unless you're one who likes to ride the slow yellow bus. Being able to drive at this time of high school really provides for opportunities of stress relief. If you're like me who takes a lot of time with tests, being able to not worry of having to catch the bus is a big help; then you could concentrate more on passing and finishing the tests (though don't take too long because one, that doesn't fare well for you if the teacher wants to go home, and two, you have other homework to finish, unless you finished them already). Having a car allows you some freedom; use it to have fun with friends, hang out with them, catch a movie or something. Do not adhere to the IB maxim of "All work, no play." High school years are supposed to be the best years of your life — enjoy them! Relax once in a while from all that work; IT REALLY HELPS! But don't relax so much that you end up procrastinating...

These items are just some the more important items that I have neglected to carry in my survival kit but wish I had in the beginning of the year. Believe me when I say this, your junior year will probably be the toughest year you have yet encountered, but if you don't have your act together, you will be in for a huge surprise.

Other future advice that I couldn't really put into words that would go with the whole theme of the paper:

- Take notes in all your classes, especially with "I'll burn your house down!" —Goss. (If you find the time, organize them later. This really helps in helping you keep up with the order the events happened. Organize all of them in neat notebooks — doing this really helps in Trig.

- Learn the material as you're taking notes! Early in the year you will be warned of future IB and AP tests — heed them! Learn them now as you go through them instead of cramming the day before the exams. These don't work and it could cost you your IB diploma and tons of money.

- Read the chapters, especially in Goss' US History. Don't think you could get by with just the notes because there are a lot of things your teachers don't cover that appear in these IB and AP tests. Also unless you're one of those who gets the material the first time (hats off to you!), reading the books actually helps... really... I'm not kidding... are you laughing at me...

- Always have a positive and friendly attitude, and never lose your drive. You got this far, might as well stick it out, right? Always be friendly to others for you never know when you'll need their help and there's no one else to turn to. Talk to your teachers. Go to them with your problems for that's why they're being paid, besides teaching you. Ask them if you have any questions and don't be afraid for asking too many, though keep in mind there are such things as stupid questions.

Jimmy Lapnawan, Jr.

"In Jimmy We Trust"

The first year of IB (no, you're not there yet) is the year you will need to come to terms with yourself in regards to your work ethic. It's perfectly all right if you slack or procrastinate or decide to turn in all of your missing Trig assignments during the last possible week for half credit. All of those things are quite all right, just so long as they're all right with you. Decide for yourself what direction you are going to go in. Don't be under the influence of parents/guardians, teachers/counselors, tutors/peers. It's all up to you.

Scoff at me if you will, but this is a first-time thing for me; I don't usually open up to people on a casual basis, let alone in a public statement. This is just what I've learned through what I've experienced and pieced together. For the span of 10th and 11th grade, I have found myself underachieving, performing way below what I know and have demonstrated I am capable of. B's and C's are not common attributes for Brendan Maloney, but I've discovered myself coasting on those grades for two years and counting. In 9th grade, I was ranked 7th in my pre-IB class with a 4.285 GPA and a single B in the class of Biology. My current cumulative GPA is 3.8, and this is with my 5.0 classes factored in. That sucks for me, and yet I find myself coping with it. Every time I witness the fruits of my labor, or lack thereof, I become omniscient of myself, and that is when the planning begins. "No more television. No more movies. No more music. No more distractions. I'm going to go straight home and do my homework and fix my grades," I think to myself in a disciplinarian tone. I've already made the same plans for this summer's English assignment regarding *Crime & Punishment*. And as much as I'd like to believe that I'll adhere to my plan, I know myself all too well to actually give it credibility. It's way too late now. I can give it another try Senior year, and I just might pull off a 4.0 cumulative by the time I graduate, but I won't be disappointed if I don't. I'm past regret and I'm still debating reform, but the thing that bothers me the most when I see my grades is the ignorance it instills in others. Bad grades prompt the most insidious, insulting, oblivious, and enraging comments from both peers and parents. I've run through the fantasy of yelling, "I'm smarter than you'll ever be, I'm just lazy!" followed by me punching said ignoramus repeatedly. Of course, that little dream is usually filled with much more vulgarity, but let's keep this clean for the sake of your impressionable, overachieving young minds.

I've applied most of my efforts for the past two years into learning about myself, and I've also exhibited a greater-than-usual pursuit of my music and movie studies; in these pursuits I've come to embrace my independent pursuit of learning, and I cannot keep a smile from creeping across my face when I speculate on how ideal the college setting of academics will be to my learning preferences. Each school year creeps by in August, when we're all saying, "Boo-hoo, school is so long," and speeds through May, when we're all saying, "Wow! That year went fast. Hooray Summer!" (the sad thing is, people really do say

these things every year); and each school year, I find myself unfulfilled. It's strange that I find myself not wanting to do homework (and ultimately not doing it), but I won't do anything else on account of the fact that I have homework. It's an inane cycle that has really slowed productivity down for 9 months out of every year since I was four. All I wish to say, in closing, is, "You need to grow up this year. Find out who you are, and deal with the consequences of that discovery, but whatever you do, don't be lazy. Make sure you don't close out a year of your life with only three months of satisfaction. Eliminate the lethargy, and you eliminate the stress. Eliminate the stress, and you eliminate everything that branches off of it. Do a little work, put yourself on Easy St., and go to college for free. Unless, of course, that's something you just can't come to terms with."

Brendan Maloney

To the lucky Juniors!
Wow, well I can't believe that I've made it this far, and all the things I have actually accomplished. I know you probably won't believe anything I say, just as I chose to not listen to the people before me, but DON'T PROCRASTINATE! It's really not a good thing to do; all it does is cause stress. Another word of wisdom... really try to complete all your assignments on time. It helps; it will allow your teacher to know you are trying, and when you have a question, they know you are trying to learn and that you really didn't understand.

Specific classes: if you're taking chemistry, good luck, and STUDY. In class time, the board problems help, but study time outside of class is still a must, and so are reading the chapters! History is great! You'll get to learn lots and lots about Mr. Goss in discussions. Reading the history book and putting post-it-notes in each chapter while reading is really helpful when you study for the AP exam. Psychology: Ms. Barrington prepares you for the IB exam well, AP, good luck! English: like any teacher, Mrs. Smith will respect you if you give her the respect she deserves. You won't have Graffam, but you had him for English, and in ToK, just think and spread your horizons. Change your paradigm! In Spanish, have fun!

Now for the best class of all... Trigonometry and Analytical Geometry! Well, basically, pay attention, take good notes, and ask questions if you don't understand. But don't try to ask questions just to answer them — it wastes class time. For the notebook test, having good notes is a necessity! The funny catch phrases used are really helpful, you'll learn all about it when you learn triangle trigonometry! Vectors really confuse me; if you don't understand, ask questions, because they come back and haunt you.

Good luck, try your best, this is the hardest year yet, and I think you guys can do it, if you try!

Katrina Simons

As someone who has done a great deal of regrettable things during her junior year, you might want to read this in order to avoid getting to the same point I have dug myself into. Now, as a class that has numerous students making well above average grades, I don't know if much of this will be hard for any of you guys to make part of your scholastic lifestyles. But, there's nothing wrong with preparing yourselves to the best of your ability.

The first piece of advice that I beg you to follow is to **take advantage of class time**. Okay... now, you're thinking *Kate, you could have at least told me something a little more original than that*. Stay tuned, folks, there's more to this than what meets the eye. Besides all of the work you receive to take care of on your own time, there are several assignments that you are given time to work on in class — specifically psych or English journals and math portfolios — that can be seriously detrimental to your grades if you don't take the initiative to work on them when you are supposed to. It's so easy to walk in to psychology and feel no inclination to do the journal question on the board; it's even easier to receive ten thousand journal questions from Mrs. Smith right after your class discussion and just decide to do them later. The worst part comes when the teachers say that they are collecting the journals, and that is the moment in time when you have to go back and do all of those questions that could have just as easily been done in class. Miss Frisbie is also ever so generous to give you class time to work on portfolios (you'll learn about what those are like soon). Most often, if you don't ask questions and get a good start on them you'll end up having to turn in a pretty crappy portfolio as a result of your failure to understand how to solve the problems or what not. So, what do all of these dreaded situations have in common? They could all be avoided simply by taking advantage of class time, and time is a valuable thing. End of story.

Second, to all of you who don't participate in much extracurricular activities, be advised that colleges aren't kidding when they say that straight A's don't mean anything if you aren't involved in activities. Believe me, it's truly remarkable to see so many of you do so well in the program, but if you're striving to get into somewhere a little more prestigious than a typical Florida state school, just having good grades or test scores won't cut it. If you feel like getting involved in anything would hurt your grades, you're not too far off by thinking that — just remember that there's more to life than making all A's. If you're active in school and still make straight A's, keep it up. Just don't be afraid to make a "B" or a "C" as a result of being involved in school. It's not as catastrophic as you think it would be. If you don't like what the high school has to offer, check out what the community has available. After all, you have 150 CAS hours to earn, too.

Third, read all assigned material that teachers give you. The teachers aren't going to cover everything that will be on tests, and it becomes your responsibility to learn everything they miss. Reading is time consuming, so plan

accordingly. Information in lectures will come together for you much better if you read the material that goes with it.

Finally, respect everyone in your class, regardless of whether you like them or not. Respect their opinions and beliefs, and never put others down. You are old enough now to know that disrespecting others is wrong and immature, but not everyone figures that out by their junior year in high school. Whether we like it or not, we all figuring out who we are in this world, what we believe in, and where we want to take our lives. Don't ever place yourself above someone else just because you think you are doing a little bit better of a job at doing so. You never know what people might be facing at home or what their pasts were like. You'll come to find that giving everyone else your utmost respect will earn you the same amount of respect from your classmates in return. Teachers will also notice that about your character, and that may be a good thing when you need them to give you the benefit of the doubt on a lost assignment, or any other query you might have. Other than that, good luck with everything, and I know you'll do great!!

Kate Wallace, Miss BHS

(one accomplishment I don't regret ☺)

Well, you've made it through half of your "adventure" in high school. I hope you've enjoyed yourselves, because the junior year is like nothing you have ever experienced before. I have many different things I could tell you, and considering I am getting a grade for it, I am going to say it all. So, if you want a heads up, read carefully...

This year is going to be a lot of work. Let me run you through the courses you will have to take. First off, seeing as how you are receiving this from your wonderful Trig teacher Ms. Frisbie, I'll talk about Trig. You may think Ms. Frisbie assigns too much work. Well, it helps. Trust me! There was a few times where I slipped up a little bit with the homework, and my test grades slipped a little too. Also, those review worksheets help. I found that I did my best when I actually took time to look over them the night before the test. Think about, what is a half an hour compared to a higher test grade. From math we head over to science. Since there are three sciences, and I have no idea what you happen to taking, I'll generalize. Do your work! Hopefully, you have good friends in your science because you'll need them. I happen to be in chemistry (I'll tutor anyone who needs it) and I have found that practice, practice, practice is what it takes. Also, the AP review book couldn't hurt.

Now let's move over to the language portion of our little chat. There's English and your foreign language. Unfortunately, my foreign language advice is directed to the minority. I am one the "elite" four, the four people in my grade who are in French. So, for all you French people, be prepared for a change. Mrs. Dietert is very different from what you have been used to with Mr. Lenker. Depending on whom you ask, either one could be better, so I won't deal with that. Mrs. Dietert brings French to you

(us) in a new way. It can be fun and interesting, and with everything else in junior year, it can be a lot of work. English... English... English. What can I say? I seriously recommend reading the books, and if you choose to ignore this warning as you might have all others, then I recommend at least paying attention to Ms. Smith. What she says does help you on the test, I promise. The journal questions may seem annoying, but they are feasible, IF you don't procrastinate. That is a big if (literally). I am going to include ToK in this section, because it just seems to fit. Unfortunately, all I can say about ToK is... your guess is as good as mine. Mr. Keers is taking over and I haven't had him as a ToK teacher yet. Ask me next year. Sorry.

And now for the miscellaneous two. I am talking about your IB elective and History. History with Mr. Goss is fun if you are one of two types of people. One: a strong conservative or two: a liberal who is not afraid to argue. Mr. Goss is very open about his beliefs, and this may work for you and it may not. One thing you must be though, not matter what type of person who are, is someone who can take a joke. Mr. Goss is likes to poke fun of people, although it is always all in good fun. Just be prepared to unlearn everything about how to please a history teacher, because Mr. Goss breaks all the conventionalities. As for the elective, I can only speak for Psychology. It's interesting if you like that kind of thing, might get a little tedious if you don't. Once again, I really recommend the AP review book.

And to wrap it up, I have my last bits of general advice. It is a lot of work, but you can do it. The extra review books do help. The teachers are great, especially if you can take a bit of sarcasm. Well, I think that I have said as much as I can. I hope you find this slightly informative, although even if you didn't I still get a grade so I won't say that it was a waste of my time. Good luck!

John Calabrese

As I sit typing a letter of advice to you I am thinking one thing: "Who am I to give advice to you?" It is 11:30 Thursday night and this essay is due sixth period tomorrow. That does not seem so terrifying, BUT WAIT! There is more. I still have an English journal to finish (on the whole poetry unit), a psychology journal (from the past three weeks) to finish, and an extended essay bibliography due (I think it was actually due sometime last week). I am not complaining... I have had worse nights; Nights that I have had so much to do it actually took from eleven o'clock until six o'clock the next morning to finish. I could say it is the teachers, but it is not. It is, however, me. I have waited until the last minute to do my work again for the hundredth time this year. Not something I would recommend you do next year because at this time of night beds are very appealing. They can easily talk a person out of doing homework (I know this from experience). They also have a way of impairing a person's ability to think logically!

Let's go back to the beginning of the year... which will be hard because it is a little foggy at this point in the year. I Advice to rising juniors from the class of 2003

had set out with the intention of doing all of my work without procrastinating until the last second before the assignment was due. Well, let's just say that my intentions were good, but they did not happen exactly as I had planned. I was always exhausted and disappointed because junior year was not the party I had imagined. The teachers began to pile work on us the first day of school (as you all know if you are reading this now!). They weren't lying when they said it was the hardest year yet! Eventually, after a few weeks, the feeling of being overwhelmed goes away because you can't stay in that state forever (Well, at least I hope you don't stay in that state forever!). So, we all moved on and realized we had to start doing some work (this wasn't exactly a new concept for us, but it was scary). Now, almost nine months have passed and I am exhausted and ecstatic at the same time because I only have three more days left!!! We made it through our junior year and we are all still in one piece.

I do have some words of wisdom I could pass on to you. Hopefully, it will make your junior year a breeze.

- Do not wait until the last minute to do your work (even if it means not going out a few weekends).
- Read everything! All the material is important and it will make life so much easier. Reading textbooks is definitely time-consuming, but it is worth every minute. Get involved with each other help each other! I know our class couldn't have managed without the support we received from our friendships with each other. I have come to love all of my classmates and respect them for their uniqueness. They are what make IB the wonderful program it is and you would be missing out if you do not get to know each other. BE NICE! This year is extremely frustrating and you feel as if people are constantly demanding things of you that you feel like you can't give them such as time, or in some cases (TOK), another intelligent, intellectual comment. Get lots of sleep even if it means not doing an assignment until lunch the day it is due (but you won't have to worry about this anyway, right?).

I hope I have covered everything, but I am sure there is much more advice to be given. Don't worry! By the time you read all of these essays I am sure you will have more advice than you know what to do with, but I will leave you with one final piece of advice. As I think about this year, I wish I could go back to the beginning and start all over again. There are a thousand things I would do differently. My final piece of advice to you is to MAKE THIS YEAR WONDERFUL! I hope my advice will help you so you will not regret all the things you didn't do and find yourself thinking back to the beginning of the year, as you write this essay, wishing you could go back and start over again. Good Luck.

Sincerely,
Susan McComas

Your junior year is your first year in IB. If you made it this far, congratulations, sorta. I don't know if it's good that you made it this far or not. This year is not an easy year. Well, it can be if you don't make the same mistakes I did. I did some of the stupidest things, that if I had not done them or done them in some cases, I would have had a lot better grades. I could have had better grades in Trig, history, English, chemistry, and psychology. Just listen, well read, the advice I give to you.

First thing first, a very good way to get a good grade in trig is to take notes and do the review sheets. I never take notes in math, and if I had I could've done a lot better on the notebook tests. Those can bring up your grade, or bring them down as they did mine. The review worksheets, those are very similar to the test. Only the problems are a little bit harder. If you can do that you can get an A on the test. **DO THE REVIEW WORKSHEETS!**

Even though history is really boring, or at least I think so, read the chapters. You should read at least half of the chapters. If you read the chapters, and take sticky notes while you read, you will do fine on the tests. The sticky notes are beneficial for a couple reasons. One is that it gives you two ways to learn things while reading. Reading the chapter and something more active, believe it or not, you remember a lot more this way. The second way is when you do the workbooks; it makes it easier to find answers. Don't worry, Goss will tell you about that in the first couple days of class. Also look at the learning objectives. Those tell you what you have to do, and they tell you what you have to know. Sometimes Goss forgets to tell you to do something, and the excuse is that it's on the learning objective. He runs the class more like a college class.

A good way to get a good grade in English, it's a very simple way, is to read the books. It's something that I didn't do much of. I read completely two books, and don't follow that example. I got lucky and got a formal oral on the only book I read completely. If you read the books, and do the summer assignment, you should do fine in that class.

Psychology isn't that easy. The AP test is sorta easy. The multiple-choice part was easy. We were prepared for that just fine. When we got to the essay part, we realized that we were screwed. Many of us complained about the essay in the place that we were suppose to write them. Some drew pictures, and others just completely BSeD the paper. So have fun with that. [Editor's note: BS is more likely to get you some points on an exam than drawing pictures is.] Although, the IB exams are a lot easier than the AP exams, or at least they seem to be. All I can tell you for this class is to pay attention in class.

Well, that's all the advice that I can think of right now. I think if you follow all that, you will do fine in IB. It takes a lot of effort, time, and devotion. It is something that is very doable. And for some final bits of advice: for chemistry, **RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN**, or do all the labs and get them in on time. I will leave you with this last bit of advice: **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE**, it's a killer this year if you do.

Shaun Gonzalez

To any freshman who just happens to be in my current situation,

You are about to begin your journey through the IB program, freshman. Fortunately for you, freshman year is terribly easy. Many of your classes require little effort. However, some do. Read on for advice on how to pass all of your classes.

Firstly, you will have to take government and economics with Mrs. Patton. Mrs. Patton is one of the nicest teachers you will have freshman year, so be thankful. Do the work, read the chapter, and stay awake and you'll do fine. By the way, don't be discouraged if you don't do as well as you hoped on the government final. It's **HARD**.

Secondly, there's Spanish, if that's the language you opted to take. This will be one of the two classes that you will be required to put forth effort in. Pay attention in class and **STUDY!** Do not complain if you have to watch a Spanish soap opera for the entire first quarter. We did. By the time orals roll around, I hope that you either have a very good grade or you can speak Spanish really well. If not, I pray for you. If you don't want my prayers, good luck. If you don't want that, you're conceited.

Then there's English. If you were fortunate enough to have good English teachers in middle school, you can basically sleep through this class. If not, it won't be much more difficult. The only thing to remember is **DON'T PROCRASTINATE**. You do not want to be up until 4 in the morning finishing your essays. Just make it seem as if you know what you're talking about and you'll do fine.

One of my favorite classes in freshman year was biology with Mrs. Longworth. There will be times when you'll sit around and do absolutely nothing for the entire period or watch a movie. Just remember that when Mrs. Longworth decides to give you notes, take them. They will be what the quizzes (tests) are based on. In addition, do your work, read the chapter, and buy your own biology book for further reference.

On to Inquiry Skills. Mr. Sparks (a.k.a. Pombird) is a **HUGE OSU fan**. During college football season, don't rub it in too much when OSU loses a football game. If they lose to Michigan, **DO NOT** wear a Michigan t-shirt to school the next day you have class. He'll loathe you for the rest of the year. Anyway, most of the work you will do in his class is easy. Make sure you actually read *Fahrenheit 451* or you'll fail all of the quizzes on the book. Even if you do read it, you'll probably still fail, so don't worry. Don't procrastinate on the Mini-Extended essay or you'll find yourself in a horrible predicament the night before it's due.

Finally, there's trig, the most humorous and enjoyable class you'll have (I'm not saying this to get extra credit because I don't need any). It is not a good idea to act extremely stupid or annoy her. This will elicit a piece of chalk being thrown at you. Just pay attention in class, take notes (for the notebook tests), do your homework, don't procrastinate on your portfolios and you'll be just fine.

Well, that's about it. Enjoy freshman year while it lasts. It only gets worse from there.

Neal Bhutiani

Dear Joe Wannabe,

I am pleased that you have decided to read this information regarding what your life will be like now that you have decided to be just like me. As I am currently the expert in this subject, I have several pieces of advice to give you. First of all, even though Little Neal gets one point higher than you on every Trig test, you can always blame it on his TI-89 and kill him in chess in order to restore your ego. The moral: Buy a TI-89... or buy a tazer to use on any freshman in Trig class (die, overachievers, die). As for Trig itself, don't take notes. If you merely write down things that seem like they would be good notebook questions, you'll do fine, or at least I did. Or you could be like little Neal and write down every single word the teacher says, in which case you'll get a perfect on the first two tests, miss a few points on the 3rd one, and suffer the humiliation of Joe laughing at you for getting the same grade despite not taking notes.

Now moving on to general advice outside of Trig class. Since you won't have Graffam, and Sra. Anderson, you're missing out, but at least you get Mrs. Bond. Chemistry is pretty fun, keep a good notebook if you need the extra credit, or you could just study. Make sure you pick a good lab group, one in which you'll have fun and still finish the lab. If you're in AP European History, I am about to reveal to you the MOST important part of this essay. Shuff was born in Indiana and went to John Adams High School. He taught in Mexico for a while, where he first created the idea of the pointless extra credit question. He moved to Lakeland in 1978 and his phone, number is 666-8404 (useful for calling him when he's home sick). If you want 1,000,000 points I suggest sneaking up to his house on test days to look at the odometer readings on his and his wife's cars (he covers his up by the time he gets to school if it's a question for that day). If you know you'll never get one of those questions right, study the pictures, they're usually worth a good 5-10, but occasionally a 25 gets thrown in there too. Don't ever tell him what you expect the extra credit questions will be, however, because he writes them while you're taking the test and has the bad habit of not asking things you tell him to. All in all, take the notes and study them hard-core, If no one else is taking notes, expect a bunch of extra credit questions only from the notes. But enough about Shuff; most of you will probably just have Rhoden. In which case, study the proper nouns. Rhoden's quizzes are mostly just making sure you know the people, places, etc., in the section

As for just general advice, I suggest you get lots of sleep. You have very little to do this year so you might as well enjoy your free time. Pick certain classes to mess around in (*cough*Trig*cough*), it relieves stress. Of course, once your grade drops below an A you have to stop, but Frisbie makes most Trig seep into your brain whether you're paying attention or calling Karl gay, so you should do fine. Just have fun and this year will be great. [Editor's note: I *hate* it when Joe calls Karl names.]

Sincerely,
Joseph "Joe" Dick

Imagine that by now you have already read through paragraph upon paragraph of advice, probably ranging from the individual skills required of your future academic agenda to retrospective looks at yourself, your faith, determination, and friendships. And I'm sure that like myself when I first browsed the counsel given to me, you're probably beginning to get sick of the former, and unfortunately at the same time I cannot pretend to have sufficient experience to allow you the latter. I can only tell you what I know from what I have experienced, and to be honest that is not nearly as much as some of my peers.

Don't get me wrong. I am by no means saying that there is nothing that you can assimilate from the words before you. In fact, and I'm sure Miss Frisbie will tell you this, by the time you yourselves are writing your own advice to a younger upcoming class you will realize that the words before are some of the truest you will undoubtedly ever find concerning your life within the IB program. But do remember that what you are doing now is building a foundation for the person who you will be. Are that person and the person you wish to become the same?

Take advantage of your time here. The old adage that education stops not in the classroom is as true here as it will ever be. Make learning your own. If film interests you, bring it into the classroom as you embellish it outside. If dance is your forte, make your own search for truth your repertoire. Vivify the endless drone of cause and effect with the colors of past and present, memory and experience; find ways to entwine the threads of life and learning until not even you can distinguish them from one another. Create. Explore. Question. Reevaluate. Harness.

Appreciate. You recall that seemingly repetitive discourse from your peers about the trials and tribulations, the blood and toil, the strains and anxiety that you are about to undergo? Read them again. Because they come from a menagerie of different viewpoints, different backgrounds, different worlds of emphasis and meaning that have come together to create this forum of minds that is the International Baccalaureate School. Allow me to repeat that. You are at, or rather a part of, a forum of minds and beliefs and outlooks that are so rich in interest and pure ability that you would be hard-pressed to find this level of opportunity anywhere else. Embrace it. Cherish it. For, as cliché as it sounds, it will remain with you until the end of your days.

Karl Kong

To all the underclassmen who are preparing to follow in my footsteps:

First of all, I'm sorry.

Secondly, some advice to get you through next year.

Don't make enemies; make friends, and really good ones. Throughout IB you will depend on them. I have discovered this year that your classmates are essential to your sanity throughout IB. Keep in mind, the only people who know exactly what you are going through are your fellow classmates.

Next, don't procrastinate. I know, I know, all you need is one more person telling you to not procrastinate. Really though, keep yourself on top of things, or you will get bogged down. Learn the polyatomic ions and Spanish vocabulary the first time around. Everything is cumulative; if you miss one chapter, you'll be "sucking canal water" for a long time. Keep up in trig, too; portfolios are a pain to do the night before (trust me, I know).

Good luck on your next year in IB. Don't argue with Mr. Rhoden; you'll lose every time (at least in his mind). Stay up to date with your labs in Chemistry and Mrs. Bond won't hate you. Try to take halfway decent notes in Trig; who know, they might actually help you at some time or another. Stay sane and you'll survive.

Kara Lowe