

Advice to the IB Class of 2007

From the Class of 2003

As part of their first semester calculus exam, last year's calculus students, who were mostly seniors, were asked to answer the following question:

Think back on your experience in the IB program. What advice would you give to someone just starting the program as a freshman? What possible pitfalls can you help this student avoid? What seems to have been most important and deserving of the most study? Your answer should mention mathematics, but your advice may address more than one subject area. If you like, you may write your response in the form of a letter.

Below you will find their answers. The first group of essays is from students in the IB program; the second section was written by students in AP Calculus who were enrolled in the traditional BHS curriculum.

They have been edited only slightly, largely to correct typographical errors, and they appear in no particular order. In the end, you will make your own mistakes as you progress through high school, but it is the hope of the students whose words you read here that you avoid their mistakes and make some original ones instead. They all took this assignment seriously, even those whose answers may not seem so serious. We hope that you find some wisdom in their words.

International Baccalaureate Students

Sleep as much as possible. It isn't bad the first two years, but it gets worse. I've personally never stayed up all night (because when it gets really late, I just don't care and go to sleep) but some people do stay up all night. Do your work!! I know I never listened to people when they told me to do it, but it really is true. It makes things so much easier when you discipline yourself enough to get your work done early/on time.

The major problem with our class was procrastination. We were notorious (still are). Ask any teacher that has had us. Even Dr. Vetter knows that. It's not a good thing to be known for. Especially when the class under you is a bunch of Einsteins. Either way, that's the major problem/pitfall of mine, and of my class. Don't get pulled in!! It's not worth it. I've only really, seriously broken down once, but that wasn't fun. Don't mess yourself up by putting everything off until you get overwhelmed.

As a general rule, I never got math. So, for me, math was what I needed to pay attention to. Inquiry skills really doesn't matter too much. Learn the basics of whatever language you take. If you don't know the basics, you can't do Spanish or French 5. It just doesn't work. And it's a lot harder trying to learn old stuff and new stuff rather than learning it the first time.

Get to know your teachers. There are some really awesome people that have a lot of experience in every different area. Just make use of your time, assets, and talents. Everything pays off in the end.

Amanda Coquyt

The most important thing I can impart upon the freshmen is due to my infinite knowledge of the suffering you are about to endure. There will be questioning of your abilities, an inordinate amount of work, and competition that you have never imagined. However, academics should not become the sole focus of your being. High school is that point in your life where you should become a social butterfly and experience those things that would be avoided if you were locked away studying in your room.

School is not meant to be a deluge of facts and information. And, no matter what your parents or teachers tell you, school shouldn't be totally focused on the academics. You have the whole rest of your life to work; this point in time is supposed to be where you foster relationships and learn how to live with people. Interaction is possibly the most important part of school. Your parents understand this fact; if they didn't, you would probably be homeschooled.

The ability to make friends and also deal with people you can't stand is an imperative aspect of life that has to be learned. Therefore, don't limit yourself to interaction with just other IB kids, but instead get to know some Bartow kids as well. The Bartow kids you befriend will be there to distract you from the uniformity of IB and allow you a chance to get new perspectives on things, which should always be welcomed.

Brendan Browne

Dear Freshpeople:

I don't know any of you. At all. But I like you. I would like to, therefore, give you a few pointers about being at BHS/IB. You will find that my advice is very helpful, should you choose to follow it. Even though some of it may seem laughable, take it seriously.

First of all, don't worry about straight A's. To achieve that, you'll probably have to give up any life outside of schoolwork, and that will hurt your college application worse than a couple of B's will. That said, you still must, especially your first three years, work to the best of your abilities. Your hard work will culminate into results in your senior year and you will be happy.

You will hear this a million times, but I know you will still do it. Do not procrastinate. There is too much work to be done for you sit around and play Nintendo. The most important things to work ahead on are reading all of your books, writing essays, ENGLISH JOURNALS. Most of all, finish most of your Extended Essay the summer before your senior year and you will be happy. If not, you will cry yourself to sleep every night and you won't turn it in on time and you'll forfeit your diploma. You'll be a failure, not only in school, but in life.

Make sure to study for history tests. Those are hard. Also, get on your teachers' good side. It won't even hurt your grade. Give them presents. They deserve it for putting up with you.

Throughout high school, try to mold yourself into somebody that you will be proud to be. You will be different by the time that you're a senior. Choose your friends wisely, but not too wisely, and make lots off them. Also, brush your teeth every morning before coming to school. Just because you can't smell your nasty breath doesn't mean your classmates can't. A little deodorant doesn't hurt, either. Guys, this is directed strictly at you, not the girls. All right, guys, you're probably a sad little creature right now and you have trouble with the ladies. Just admit it to yourself. Don't worry though, we have a tradition here that when you become an IB senior, the girls start noticing you. Trust me. It's weird. Until then, ignore girls. They like that. Seriously. No, not kidding. Also, get involved in activities where you'll meet people outside of IB, because you'll be around them for four years. Also, go to Blockbuster and rent "The Tao of Steve." That's all.

Best wishes,
Jaime Montoya

School wise, my biggest concern with giving advice about is homework and studying. We all know we shouldn't procrastinate or just not do something, but we still do that. DON'T! It does nothing good, not even short term. If you get behind in one thing, you'll get behind in the rest. And when it comes to classes like calculus, not doing something throws you off for weeks. It really sucks not knowing what is going on, too.

Missing days or skipping is just dumb, unless there is a valid excuse for being absent. There is no excuse for skipping except stupidity. If you don't want to go to class just because you didn't do something, do it and you won't have to worry. If you don't come to school just because you don't feel like it, grow up. We all have obligations and things we don't want to do, but we have to; hence the name obligation. Basically, don't miss days unless it is absolutely necessary.

Concerning teachers, my biggest problem is when people complain about them and their work. Well, they are here to help and to teach us. They are our resources. USE THEM! Surprisingly enough, they have lives outside of teaching and they might just know a little about life in general, so use them as resources for general life problems. It helps.

Finding a balance between school/work/other is a problem for most; just don't get overwhelmed. Distribute your time accordingly for each activity and always find time to have fun. Down time is so utterly important to balance out all of the stress.

Caitlin Seigal

Congratulations!! If you can make it through these next four years, then I think you will be well prepared for college. The most important thing for you to keep in check is your attitude. If you think you can't do it, then you won't. At times it's not that you have a lot of work to do, it's that it takes a lot of time to do the work — this is where self-discipline and time management come into play. As long as you have those two things and a productive attitude, I assure you that you will survive IB.

Your ninth and tenth grades aren't that difficult. Just read all of the books and complete your assignments and you should do just fine. Don't be afraid to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. If you manage your time well, you should have enough time to complete your work. Take advantage of the free time you get in class!! It might be tempting to just relax, but it pays off if you use your time wisely. If you're like me, a major procrastinator, it will be hard to concentrate when you get home. So try to complete as much as possible in school. I'm not going to lie to you and tell you that it's going to be super easy — some late nights will be required, but you'll make it through.

When you reach your senior year, you will be more than ready to graduate, but hang in there, it'll come soon enough. My last suggestions are for each individual class. Chemistry will be different because it is now organic and biochem, but pay attention to board problems because they will help you on the test. For calculus, do the review worksheets and turn in homework assignments on time, or else they will add up. In English, make sure to read all the books and write the papers. If you do all the essays in History of Latin America, you can pass with a C. Lastly, TOK and Spanish are pretty easy to survive. Enjoy!!

Good luck,
Brittany Miller

This is being written as an essay for Ms. Frisbie's midterm exam. In class, I'm writing, hoping to finish before the bell rings. This essay was assigned around a week ago. Yeah, so the point is: I procrastinate, and all of you will, too. It's unavoidable, and it's not always a bad thing. But you have to keep it under control. Figure out what obligations — gifts, favors, homework, and projects — you can afford to procrastinate on, and don't push that limit.

Other things: chances are you'll know the people in your class for the next four years. Some people are psychopathic liars with revenge complexes. Don't cross them your freshman year. Also — you'll never know who they are, so don't cross anyone. Being nice keeps you safe.

In general: college comes after high school, and if you want to go, keep a pretty GPA. If you miss the college of your dreams because you were a lazy freshman and sophomore, you'll be kicking yourself for a long time. Umm: take Miss Frisbie's class, any of them, and learn math. Get some AP credit, too.

Afra Ullah

If I had to give you any advice, I'd give you the stereotypical response: Don't procrastinate!

However, I would be very hypocritical in advising this, as I'm writing this in Chemistry, with only ten minutes until the bell. Basically, while the advice against procrastinating is good advice, it is almost impossible. So instead, I suggest that you choose your battles. Do the assignments that you can, do the assignments that are most important. Prioritize, but only if you can't do your assignments.

Then there's the advice to have a social life. I have more of a social life now than I did all three years of high school combined. I doubt that it's a coincidence, but I also have higher grades this year. Basically, my theory is that if you have a social life, you're more likely to remember your homework; and if you remember your homework, you're likely to think about whether you should put it off or not. While you may, in the end, put the assignment off, at least you remember that it exists.

My last advice is to not let yourself get you down. I've been driving myself crazy the last couple of months and it's been nobody's fault but my own. It was a combination of my procrastination and my own social paranoia. I was alienating myself for my own reasons. Also, if you're absent for extended periods of time, be smart about it. If you have a choice, choose a week with little work, and if you have no choice, make up any work as soon as possible. But, I highly recommend that you miss NO school. (I know, it does sound scary.)

Melissa Soforic

As a freshman, do everything perfectly while you still can! Grades are really important and so is getting in the habit of doing homework. I never really got into the habit of doing this, and it has really hurt me. The best advice I can give someone just starting as a freshman is to not let yourself get behind on your work. Don't let things pile up until you have so much to do and not enough time to do it! Learning this lesson the hard way can be detrimental to your grades!

Another piece of advice I have is to get involved in everything! Student government and class office give you lots of experience with talking to adults and dealing with people. Also, do lots of volunteer work — getting involved in the community looks good on college applications and you can get all your CAS hours planned out. Having a plan for your CAS hours is really important — it will save you a lot of time.

Finally, get enough sleep, but not too much. Try to find a good balance and use your time wisely. If you are having trouble with things, GET HELP, don't be stubborn and wait until things get out of control. Have fun during high school — I won't say it will be the best time of your life because I hope that's not true, but it shouldn't be too bad!

Susan McComas

First things first, learn the campus. It is spread out, but that is why there's almost 10 minutes between classes. The second thing is to always do your work as soon as possible; it'll back up quickly in IB. To help with that, unless you're an overachiever, get an easy elective so you can have a period to do homework in.

Also, you've got to find something else to do besides schoolwork. Play a sport, join a club, do something that makes you be social, and do it quickly. Since Polk County is rather large, look forward to extremely long bus rides every day; make friends with those on your bus.

Finally, give your teachers some respect. They give us homework, but when we turn it in, they have fifty times as much. You'll find some teachers, usually IB, are more lenient than others. Do not take that for granted. They all have good senses of humor, so they're easy to get along with.

Right, and pick physics as your science, and trig/calc as your math.

Neil Floetke

At BHS/IB, you will be presented with many difficulties, even if you have experienced none so far. Therefore, I have included some advice and forewarnings, from which (it is my hope) you will benefit. First of all, make a conscious effort to learn the entire time you attend IB. All of the information that is presented to you (or almost all of it) will figure later in your high school career. Secondly, do all of your work in a timely manner. Neglecting homework can ruin your grade, so it is wisest not to do so. When you procrastinate, however, it will be very tempting to give up. So, do not procrastinate! Get everything done as soon as possible, and do not wait until the last minute to study. Specifically, be sure to complete your Extended Essay the summer before your senior year. You may think you can handle it, but you will most likely regret it if you procrastinate.

A few classes in particular may require more work to master. You should devote much of your energy to the subject area of English, because you will be writing many papers in the future. In addition, English is a higher level course, meaning that your writing skills will be expected to be quite advanced when you take the IB exam. If history is one of your hardest subject areas, study! Do not give up. History is also a higher level course, so you need to learn it well. Some people find Mr. Goss's and Mr. Shuff's classes difficult, so you might have to put more effort in. Lastly, chemistry is a difficult class (if you choose it for your IB science). Therefore, read the book, take good notes, and do a lot of practice problems to prepare yourself for the test. Make sure to understand the general concepts well, because you are tested in how well you can apply the material, not in how well you can memorize how to solve certain types of problems.

My final piece of advice is to enjoy yourself. These four years can be very trying, and you will need to recuperate from time to time. Focusing solely upon your work may help you succeed, but in the end you will be emotionally and mentally exhausted. Find something you like to do, tweak it so you can use it for CAS hours, and do it often. With luck, you can graduate and still maintain your sanity.

Best wishes,

Jeremy Cummings

Dearest Freshmen,
The next time you are around your IB classmates, if you aren't around them right now, take a good look at all of them. These people are going to be the people you will rely on over the next four years. They are going to help you maintain your sanity, challenge you intellectually, make you laugh, make you cry, and become the best friends you never had. While those ideas seem quite sappy and unlikely to happen (I would have NEVER thought those things possible when I was your age), they will. Between teachers, homework, essays, tests, and all of the high school drama you will experience over the next four years, you are going to need your classmates for everything. With this in mind, I suggest that you do your best to appreciate everyone around you, no matter how different, quiet, loud, obnoxious, shy, intelligent, shallow, insecure, or strange everyone may seem. You will thank yourself for taking advantage of the short time you have together — four years goes by much faster than you think.

Looking back on my last four years of high school, I think the biggest mistake I made (and continue to make) was horrible time management. I spent way too much time chatting online, talking on the phone, and keeping up with the latest Bartow gossip instead of doing my school work and studying a sufficient amount of time. Now, I am a firm believer in taking breaks from academics and having an extensive social life, but it's not worth letting social aspects of your life overpower your schoolwork. Furthermore, make sure you set realistic expectations for yourself. I know many of you have parents to keep happy, but please remember that you are no longer in middle school. The amount and difficulty of work you are going to have exceeds far above any previous standards, and it is more than okay not to make straight A's. I never once made straight A's in high school, but I do know that any grades I received as a result of doing the best I possibly could, whether they were A's or not, were just as rewarding as the grades I received in middle school without making any effort. I encourage all of you to shoot high, but don't ever get discouraged if your grades change as the year progresses.

I encourage you to get involved in as much as you can — it's a great way to get to know people around here, especially if you're not from Bartow. Develop good relationships with your teachers and your administrators. Dr. Vetter, while he spoke to you incessantly at the meetings, is a cool guy. He's always there to help you with any problems that may arise. The same goes for Dr. Katz. She has made my life much less complicated because of everything she does. She and Dr. Vetter are some of the best "perks" that come with being an IB student. Well, there's not much else to say. I wish you the best of luck, and

make the best of your time here! You only have one chance!

Sincerely,
Kate Wallace
c/o 2003
Go, Gators!

Within the realm which you tentatively plan to enter... I warn you... I warn you, with all my might, that it takes more than sheer power of brains, no my chitlins, my dumpling, mis cherries... Err... well... that's French from a Spanish student... Anyway, little freshmen... that there's lots to do, and little time to do it. Are you afraid? Well, I think you should be... Now laugh, laugh with me. Ha ha ha... Well, I bet you're still frightened. I am too, and I am a senior... Okay, maybe I'm not scared. But within that whole mess, there's a few real tidbits of information. Here, in IB, all the myths you hear, only a few are true. Guess which ones... IB is a desert, where oases are but mirages... First it is slow... A barrage of work... then it speeds up... Emotional disasters... then finally IB... As I've said, you're in hell, with a glass of water... I really can never explain what it is to be like at the end, but I advise you, stay in the program. There's something almost rewarding about hanging about 'til the end... I really don't want to spoil the surprise, so now I wish you good luck... and well... keep a bottle off water... it's hot in hell.

P. S.: When you read this, I've graduated.

Christian Soriano

Advice? To the freshmen? Sophomores? Juniors? The most important thing I can give to upcoming IB students in ALL grades is to turn in ALL work even if it's late. One of the areas I had the most trouble with this year was prioritizing. Between world lit papers, extended essay, TOK essay, and the 4-5 history essays every week, I felt overwhelmed and swamped. Don't let yourself get to that point. Come to school! Even if you're sick, just ask Dr. Katz to set you up a room in the office. She will — she's good. Once you get behind even with one assignment, it haunts you and so does all your other work. Another thing is, even if you do get behind, be open with the teachers, especially Mrs. Laurent and Ms. Frisbie. They'll help you and work with you. Turn in late stuff. I say this because it's better to show the teacher you can do it, even if you don't get credit for it. You're showing effort.

To the freshmen especially, interact with each other! Make friends. I know when Dr. Katz, teachers, and Dr. Vetter tell you these people are like family, it sounds really cheesy! But... they are. Whenever I need anything, I come to the people I have known for four years. They will be your steadfastness. Also, remember that this is only four years of your life, but you still have to enjoy it. Don't be a hermit! Enjoy it!

Brooke Jones

OK, you've started high school/Pre-IB. Step one, do your work. It may pile up, but focusing on the problem too much will not solve it. Don't think of the workload as crushing, because only you can make it worse than it is. I still sometimes have the problem of becoming frustrated by the amount of work alone, and when I do I get very little done.

"But how do I concentrate on work without seeing how much I have to do?" you ask. Well, that's step two. Keep your head up. Always be aware of both your time, and your morale. If you can figure out how to do work, little by little it will become more natural to allot your time well. Keep in good sports and you'll find that climbing the mountain of IB is easiest if you do what's immediately important first. Getting ahead is always good, but always get the immediate problems done first, because they're immediate.

Step three is a very important standard to live by. Do not think you're better than anyone else. Making friends is a necessity in IB, unless you feel like doing everything without any help. You'll change through the years in high school, so be open-minded about people and their personalities.

Lastly, make sure that you actually know what you're learning. You don't have to get all A's to be intelligent. In fact, I'd say if you do get all A's in IB, you're probably too concerned with your grades. They are letters on paper. They reflect performance, but no one has the right to judge you as inferior for

getting a C. After all, in ten years, you won't care that much.

Ian Trulson

Do not quit. Oh, lord, do not even think about contemplating the consideration of quitting to be a possibility. This is military training for your mind. If you keep it in your head that when it gets too hard you can opt out, it will make you weak, which in turn will make you seem stupid. And do you know what happens to stupid people in IB? They get teased and beat up. Well, maybe not teased.

Yeah, so do not quit... yeah, because in some way or another, you've made a commitment (either for yourselves or for your parents) and that commitment will be advantageous to you. You won't fear college (getting in or the academics), and you will worry less... but not until after you complete IB, of course. I would love to tell you which teachers are likeable and which are hate-able, but most of the teachers we've had over the years have left.

There were three teachers that I liked in particular over all the rest, but one left, so now all you guys have is Ms. Frisbie and Pie, the teachers of various maths and arts, respectively. Ms. Frisbie is insanely knowledgeable in areas of, well, everything, but seems (at least to me) to have a particular passion for music. Pie is full of great idiosyncrasies, which are made cooler by the fact that he's a teacher. Both are incredibly in touch with the students, both will give you extra help (if you are not too embarrassed to ask), and both can take a joke and give a joke.

To get through IB, pace yourself. If you hit the ground running, you'll run out of gas. Start slow and you won't catch up. Granted, it's not a race, but you try to make a better metaphor for school.

Don't get overwhelmed.

Brendan Maloney

I know the first year of high school may seem a bit overwhelming at the start, but you'll make it through. The best advice I can give you is to not forget that you are in high school; you are supposed to be living the best four years of your life. That doesn't mean go out and party every night, it just means don't get so wrapped up in school that you forget to have some fun along the way.

Learn to manage your time wisely. I'm not going to tell you not to procrastinate, because most people do anyway, regardless of what others tell them. However, learn to budget your time between school, sports, friends, etc., and stick with a plan. Leave some time for yourself, or else you'll experience a serious burnout in a year or two. Don't slack off on work, though; it's what teaches you how to manage your time in the real world, when you actually have to get a job and pay bills.

Also, get involved. High school isn't high school unless you are involved in some kind of activity. Whether it be soccer, drama, or marching band, extracurricular activities help to relieve stress and you meet some really cool people while you are doing them. Colleges also love kids who are active and are about more than academics. Don't wait until your senior year to get involved, either; it's a lot more fun to do something for all four years, and you have a better chance at leadership opportunities (which colleges also love).

One more thing: always keep on decent terms with your teachers. No matter what they say, some part (even if it's just a sliver) of their grading is subjective. Also, you want to be able to ask them questions and get help from them when you don't understand, because they are the ones writing/giving your final exam.

Good luck in the next four years of your life. Enjoy them; they will go by much too quickly.

Kara Lowe

Fitting in seems to be the most important part of high school, but it is not. You might want to act like someone you're not, but eventually you are going to let your true self shine through and then you will not fit in. Be true to yourself from the beginning and you will have true and lasting friendships. Try to pay more attention to your studies because it is much easier to keep a high grade than to try and bring up a bad grade later on.

Participate in extracurricular activities that interest you and remember that it is better to participate fully in a few extracurricular activities than to give very little effort in many of them. Enjoy high school, but when it gets tough, just buckle down and ride it out. Do community service as early as you can and try to stick to one organization because it looks better on a college resume. Enjoy your community service and try to relate it to a future job interest because it is a good way to make sure that's what you want to do with the rest of your life, and it does look great for college and on scholarship applications. It also helps you realize how lucky you actually are.

Have fun and your high school career will fly by, even when it seems like it keeps dragging on and on. Even though you may disagree with the adults around you, especially your parents, respect them anyway because it is easier to get what you want if you maintain a respectful tone. Take lots of hard classes in high school to get college credit while it is free, so you don't have to pay for them later in college. A final thought — find an adult mentor, other than your parents, to be able to go to when it seems like everyone is against you. They may be able to help figure things out in a loving and educated manner.

Good luck,

Anna Maria Midence

Class of 2003

Looking back over my almost four years of the IB experience, I'd have to say thank God it's almost over! However, don't let my eagerness to leave discourage you. In my experience, at least, it has been completely worth it. I'm about to go off to college with over 60 (yes, 60) credit hours under my belt. That has saved me in excess of \$30,000 in the long run. And after that, I've got so many scholarships that I'm getting paid to go to school. How incredible is that? So if you ask me, IB has definitely been worth it.

So now that I've shown you it's worth it, how the heck can you survive IB? This may actually prove more difficult than you might think. With only a meager 50% survival rate, there are a few things you may need to know. What should you focus on? Not Inquiry Skills. Unless you have already figured this out, this class is utterly worthless, and now that I've graduated, Dr. Vetter can't lynch me in the parking lot. Oh, yeah, and be sure to take Physics as your higher level science course. Primarily because Mr. Keers is probably the best teacher we have at this school, and second because biology and chemistry are stinkin' hard.

Another piece of advice I have for you is to not bite off more than you can chew (please forgive me for the cliché). If you aren't good at math, don't take calculus. If you stink at writing essays, don't wait until the last minute. It's not worth taking AP European History if you're just going to fail it (yes, I am speaking from experience here). If you know your own limits, don't push them!! Trust me, your teachers will push them enough. This program is definitely worth your best shot (and I'm not sure I'm allowed to say this) but it's not worth killing yourself over.

P. S.: Oh yeah, and one more thing. Go ahead and start taking the SAT and ACT in ninth grade. Get as close to a perfect score as you can. Dr. Vetter really likes this.

P. S. S. (or P. P. S. — I never have figured out which is right): One more thing (the last, I promise), only call Dr. Vetter by that name. Never call him "Vetter" or "Ed" (yeah, his first name is Ed) and NEVER, NEVER call him "Mr. Vetter." There is no faster way to get on his bad side than to completely ignore all those years of graduate work that it took him to get that M changed to a D.

Josh Boldman

[Editor's note: It's P. P. S., for "post-postscript," as in "after the postscript."]

[Editor's note: the form of this essay is a paean to procrastination.]

This loss of sleep in mind

There is a common misconception that schooling and learning are synonyms, and it's easy to understand why. For the first seventeen or eighteen years of your life, you are told, mandated really, to "go to school and learn" or "get your education" so that you can hopefully "make it into a good college" and "get a job," in the process in due course becoming an effective member of society. Now I'm not saying that any of this is inherently detrimental at all; in many ways the opposite is true. My point is, however, that while there is no doubt of the significance of the information and experience you learn at school, the osmotic process of learning is never really in full effect — never really occurring — unless you truly take learning to heart. I'm not talking about the satisfaction that accompanies a good grade on a test or overachieving in some project or paper, although this can be a part of it. As trite or hackneyed as it may seem, there is some essence of truth to learning, some

It is intriguing to think that one of the most restrained initial notions in the mind of the average IB student is characterized by a negative scrutiny towards his or her peers. Whether this stems from an intrinsic competitive drive or conditioned social behavior towards "nerds" or "dorks" is inconsequential (the former is beneficial, the latter is laughable). The fact of the matter is that it is not a rare occurrence to witness something of an atmosphere of antipathy between students or groups thereof, often involving superficialities or belief structures. I'm sure that by this time you've probably observed or perhaps even taken part in the aforementioned antipathy yourself, displayed in heated debates escalating into personalized squabbles or the ridicule of another student. What I'm telling you is that ultimately you are only hurting yourself. Consider this: the Bartow IB School has been ranked the top school in the state and fourth in the nation (in terms of cumulative SAT/ACT scores). You are surrounded by some of the most potentially brilliant minds you may ever meet. Consequentially, you have the opportunity now to grow exponentially in ways easily and often overlooked. You have been told that high school is one of the primary places in which you will mature mentally, socially, and spiritually. If you are to utilize your environment for such, then you must appreciate your peers for who they are and what they can teach you. Arguably, the

The lesson of this essay is: don't procrastinate.

Karl Kong

The Experience of a Lifetime in the I.B. Program

Dear student,

It seems as though these past years have been the most challenging and yet the most rewarding years in my educational career. I have been through quite a bit in the I.B. Program. One of the greatest lessons that I.B. has taught me is that I should never doubt the power of the human mind. This message was of great importance to me when I went through the struggles of maintaining good grades and trying to balance out my life. Sometimes the stress of the I.B. Program is too much to handle and that it seems that the world is upon your shoulders as Atlas and the globe. This has happened to me more than you can know. For example, when we had to complete the World Literature Paper 1, the final draft of my Extended Essay, Free Response sheet for Calculus, a Physics test on Option H, and Latin American history essays in the week before the Thanksgiving break, I felt like a human disaster and I was ready to explode. One night, right before I had to complete the World Literature Paper 1, I went to walk and then I started to think how others in my shoes must have felt. It came to me as to why I was forcing myself through this stress mess. I realized that I wanted to do it because I needed to experience these trials of human endurance to prepare myself for the real world. By the end of that week, I was really surprised at how much I finished with that thought in mind. I then realized that the human mind, not just mine but the I.B. family that I had come to respect went through this harsh moment as all moments of difficulty through the power of the human mind and spirit. Basically, this means never doubt your inner strength, even the toughest situations.

Through my experiences, I have learned quite a bit about the faculty that teaches I.B. I have come to learn and appreciate the knowledge and the teaching skills of individual teachers. I have gone through some hairy situations. Spanish has been the hardest of all of my classes. To me, I have seen school as a battlefield. Every day brings new and more difficult challenges. These challenges may be in the form of physical weakness and stress, academic papers that need to be written or ruthless enemies who compete for the physical rewards of a good education. From the first day of the I.B. Program, I have learned that one must seize the day and must remain constantly vigilant to the changes that I.B. puts you through. This may seem like a clichéd message but it is nonetheless necessary and effective. You must prepare yourself for the worst. After one challenge, another greater challenge awaits you. You must conquer your fears of failing because everyone, no matter who they are, will fail in something if they have not already. I know, self-pride is something that is truly hard to let go of. You want everyone to respect and admire you for your skills and what you have been through. However, that is not always the

case. There are very few moments in which this happens, as far as I can tell. You must acknowledge that what you have done is worth being proud for by yourself. To take on the challenge of I.B. is to take it on alone. It is you who will decide if you achieve what you have desired through your grueling years in I.B. All of these award programs, such as the novel and mundane Silver Garland Award are not worth your time if all you want is recognition. In the end, it is you who will have to say to yourself that you did something worth the effort. I have personally hated these awards through my experience. Believe me when I say that your greatest award will be self-recognition. Remember, constant vigilance.

Finally, I would like to add that the years in I.B. have taught me more than the education that you receive from class every day. It has taught me that time is a precious commodity that not many can afford to waste. Time is an ongoing process which will leave you awestruck if you do not manage time and conserve it. When Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Delk told the I.B. class of 2003 not to wait till the last moment to complete the Extended Essay, not many of us heeded that advice. It came to a terrible end when Mr. Keers reported what he thought of the scores that we would receive on them and found that not many of us would receive the bonus points that we needed. **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE ON ANYTHING.** My personal experiences have taught me that the worst things will happen near the end. For example, right now, I have to complete this essay, finish 5 “Shuff” essays, complete my World Literature Paper 2, and finish the final draft of the TOK essay all by Monday. This all seems like a wide load of work. Trust me, it is. These things happen at the end for a reason. Your dedication to your future will become a trial by fire in all of these difficult assignments. You must bide your time carefully and not dwindle with social life and entertainment. Remember, you must remain constantly vigilant. Your years in I.B. will become your greatest achievements. The diploma is only a sign representing that dedication and hard work I wish I could say that my years in I.B. were the happiest in my life, but they have become a terrible period of my educational career as the burden of being an I.B. student has become greater. That is the reason that I have not had my Senior Pictures taken with my quote. You will prevail if you **REMAIN CONSTANTLY VIGILANT AND “CARPE DIEM.”**

Sincerely yours,

Amit Patel

P.S. My senior quote was “To believe in something and not to live it would be living a lie,” by Mahatma Gandhi. I firmly stand by my quote and I hope that this is another message you received from my letter. Good luck. Bon chance. Buena suerte.

A Credenda for the Freshman
The most important thing that I can tell the freshman is that they'd better not procrastinate. This is coming from personal experience. If I just took the time, or dedicated more time for completing an assignment I would have had a far better GPA. Time is one of the most important things in the IB program, and it should never be taken for granted. If you had to make a choice on whether to write an essay early, or go to a concert of one of your favorite bands, choose the essay.

Personally, the class I studied for the most was Spanish. It may also be yours. I didn't study the most for Spanish because the teachers were bad; on the contrary, the teachers were great. I studied the most in there because I did not understand it. My advice to you is to pay attention in all your classes, but devote a lot of time to the sciences. They tend to be fairly difficult. Once you get the hang of the sciences it starts to get easier.

Once you start the pre-IB program you may think that it is difficult; you are right. You may think that you will not succeed; you may be right. **BUT DO NOT LET THAT STOP YOU.** The most important thing to remember when you first start IB is to not listen to any of the negative information about IB that people may tell you. It is all just meant to scare you. Oh yeah, and all you FRESHMEN should be extremely scared of what is to come.

Jeremy Newby

My first piece of advice is simple. **RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN!** There, now that that has been said I can move onto more fitting advice for those that have decided to stay. I'm not going to lie. IB is a very hard program to get through. But there are ways to get through the program. But when you get through you will be well set for college. I have made it through. If you take my advice you can make it through, hopefully easier than me.

One of the major things is to make sure you maintain a life outside of school. You do not want to go through and come out like a zombie. A major thing that has been told to every class before you, probably before each year, is to not procrastinate. But this is very true. If you decide not to listen to that piece of advice you will find yourself having many sleepless nights. But I am not really one to talk, because I have fallen victim to procrastination many times. I think that is the biggest problem with a majority of IB students.

Now you will have to study. Maybe not for all classes, but you should study for them. That way you can get high grades. I think the class that you have to study the most is the foreign language, but that's also my weakest area. But that is not the same for everybody. I think you have to discover which area you're weakest in and study that area most. Once you make it to 11th grade I would suggest taking physics, and the harder math. Even if you're not good at math, you will have the best teacher this school can give you, and you will be well prepared for the test. But if you must go the easy way, I hope you can figure out how to do the stuff. From what I hear, it is not really taught, more you are given a list of assignments, and it's due the day of the test.

Finally I will end with this. If you are going to complain that you have too much work to do, make sure you are a senior, or if you're not, make sure you're not around any seniors. Senior year isn't extremely difficult, or at least I don't think it is, but it is very time-consuming. There is a lot of work that must get done. And for some reason it always seems to be due at the same time. Hopefully you have found this to be helpful. I think IB can be a fun time, but it is also very tough. Try to make sure you balance out school with having a life. If you don't, you will probably go insane. But all in all, it is not a waste of time. I think it is worth it, even though it does seem pointless at times.

Shaun Gonzalez

My advice to freshmen is really quite simple. Keep up with your work and take care of your friends. Don't let the little things pile up so that they become big things, and listen to the teachers. Occasionally they do get things wrong, but for the most part, it's safe to say that they have been doing the IB thing longer than you have. Also, if the class ahead of you tells you horror stories, ignore them. Wait and find out for yourself because coming into anything in IB with a preconceived notion is just a waste of time. Working in reverse order here... about not letting little things pile up...

Some people may tell you about how great they are because they do everything at the last minute, pull all-nighters, or skip school the day of a major assignment because they waited too long and had too much to do. These people are either really lucky or have really bad grades. Don't let them be your example because eventually it does catch up. If all else fails, when you get to the end of your IB career and you sit down to take that exam, you won't know a thing because you never learned it the first time. In any case, it's also a way to cause unnecessary stress, and you'll encounter enough of that any way. If you can keep yourself on top of things life in IB can be tons of fun.

Taking care of your friends and fellow classmates is also important. You may not realize this now, but you will be spending a lot more time with the people in your class than you will with your family. That's high school, and that's especially IB. Therefore, you want to be getting along with these people, and the easiest way to do that is to help them prevent any type of breakdown. That means a little bit of nagging, a little bit of listening, a little bit of complaining, and every once in a while a little bit of just chilling out. Don't hold a grudge over something that wouldn't otherwise matter in a few days, because, trust me, IB students have good memories. Selective, but good. The last thing you want is for someone to secretly be planning ways to ruin your life because you were mean to them for two weeks straight as a matter of principle. Enough about that though, you get the point. The first point being much the same as my second to last point, I will bid you farewell. Just keep up whatever hard work it was that got you here, and remember that it gets harder, but is still manageable if you let yourself learn how to manage it.

Christine St. Germain

There once was a bearded teacher who believed that he was dead. Part of his justification for this fact was that every student he encountered would invariably remind him of a student he had had prior to his near-death experience. The longer I spend in the die-cast molding machine known as the educational system the more I realize that it is not this machine, though it takes up most of our time in the early years of our lives, that defines us. Not a person in the IB program have I met who is typified by their in-class activities. Not a one of us is respected for our homework ability or the grades we get. In A-Team, though everyone may know the question about Dorothea Dix, it is the question about the architecture of Ancient Greece that defines a person as being knowledgeable. Why? It is simply because everyone who has had history with Mr. Goss has been ingrained with Dorothea Dix and no one in the IB program has been taught the architecture of Ancient Greece. It is what we learn when we are not at school that makes us individuals and makes us respected by our peers.

I am awesome at Calculus. I am freaking awesome at math in general. Is Little Neal better? Is Alex Wales better? If others worked harder at math would they be better? There is frankly no way to tell. It all comes down to matters of personal opinion and ever-changing criterion for determining a hierarchy that may be infinitesimally spanned. Yet if any one of my peers had a computer question they would automatically ask me. If someone wanted to make a movie, they would talk to Karl. If someone wanted to know the names of all the Second Lieutenants on the Confederate Side during the Battle of Shiloh, they would ask Ben. It is our hobbies, the things we do when we are not at school that earns us the respect of our peers and makes us stand out as individuals.

I have said all of that to simply say this, ensure that you stand out. Make certain that you don't spend so much time with IB that you have no time to make yourself an individual. You are expected to do your homework, learn the subjects you are taught, and make good grades. No one remembers the ordinary. "Be yourself" is my advice to you. This will help you avoid the pitfalls of the ordinary and your "self" is by far the most important thing you can study. Prove the bearded teacher wrong and break free from this mold you've been placed in. Live your life so that there can be no doubt in anyone's mind that you are not merely a cloned replica of your peers.

Joseph Dick

W elcome to IB...

First things first... If you were able to make it into this program, you can put forth effort and succeed. As long as there is a will there will always be a way. However, if you do think that your pre-IB classes are hard now, take time to evaluate why you feel this way. If it is because of procrastination, STOP PROCRASTINATING! Although sophomore year will be better, so you do have that year to look forward too. However, try not to slack off too much because junior year will zap you back into reality and if you are not zapped by then, you will be in your senior year. I would not suggest waiting to leave until your junior or senior year because you are almost done.

Although IB feels like an eternity, everyone says to stick with the program so I have. Plus if you like soccer Bartow's teams are GREAT! However, I really do suggest a sport to pass the "spare time" away that no one has. Sports really encourage keeping grades up (especially if your parents are sticklers about grades) and help avoid procrastination because there is no time to procrastinate.

Do not start putting off homework until the day it is due. This can be avoided by doing homework at home. I know this seems like a strange topic now, but you will come to realize later that you find yourself doing less and less homework at home, and more at school.

Try to avoid stress by balancing your life; plan personal, social, and family time. If you do so, you will not feel pulled in so many directions at once. Because of this spreading of time some people have stated the myth of having "no spare time." This is solely because it has not been planned; if planned there can be no possible moments of boredom.

Don't worry, or stress, and you will do fine. Good Luck and Always Do Your Best! (Teachers some how know when you're not trying your best.) Put forth your best effort and remember that others have been through and are going through the very same program. We are all here for each other. As Dr. Vetter says, we are like a family. Although you may find yourself discussing others in your class in a rude manner, you will find that if others discuss people in your class rudely, you will become disgusted with them as though they were your family. Have Fun,

Katrina Simons

W elcome to high school! Congratulations on making it this far. Just think, you've got four more years of school and you're off to college. High school can be pretty tough, so here's a few pointers on how to survive.

Let's go over the hard stuff first: school work. Just because this is the last stretch of schooling that you might have, doesn't mean that the work stops coming. As a matter of fact, the work might be headed your way faster than you can even imagine. In order to keep your head above water there's a few things you have to remember. First, don't procrastinate. Trust me on this one, it's going to kill you in the long run. You might think because you have block scheduling and you don't see your teachers every day that you can put off work, but you're wrong. The more you put off assignments the more you receive, and ultimately you'll be stuck in a hole that you can't out of. Next, don't slack off. You're going to want to have fun and go out and be a teenager, but don't put your work aside so that you can go out and party. Learn to organize your time and set priorities. If you can do that, you'll have a great balance of work and fun in your life.

All right, on to life in general. Your years in high school are going to be unlike anything else. Remember to have fun, don't get so caught up in everything that you don't get to relax and be yourself. Make new friends and don't give up the ones that you've made along the way. Stick by one another when times get rough, and have a lot of "inside jokes" (they're great to laugh about when you start to get depressed). There's going to be lots of little things that might get to you, but blow them off and keep going. Life's too short to worry about the small stuff.

High school is over before you know it. It seems like only a few weeks ago I was getting off the bus and walking on to Bartow's campus for the first time, and now it's almost over. Work hard towards your goals and don't let things get in the way of what you want. It pays off in the end. Live your life to the fullest and best of luck to you in the future. "If you get the choice to sit it our or dance, I hope you dance."

Monica Witherington

To all the freshmen that enter the prestigious high school life as an IB student, may God grant you the patience, intelligence, and endurance for it will not be for the weak of heart:

Disclaimer: All that you have heard about IB is TRUE!

Congratulations, first of all, for being selected among hundreds of applicants to this renowned institution. The difficult task now is how long you will last. Through my three and a half years in IB and Pre-IB, I have come to learn numerous unalienable certainties. I will dispense them to you now with some advice from my own meandering experiences:

Many say that your high school years are supposed to be the best years of your life, next to college. In IB, however, the benefits come much, much later, so be patient. Despite all the workload, the tests, the high expectations, always find the time to relax and unwind. Whether between periods, on the bus, those couple of minutes after you've finished that exam (which you hoped you've gotten a good grade on), just chill. Besides, all work and no play are detrimental to your health. What kind of life would that be anyway?

You should learn to manage your time well. As you may already know, procrastination is the IB student's Waterloo. Heed the advice of your teachers and experienced peers when it comes to this. However, as with every class, this is unavoidable. My advice is to not do it excessively. Use your planner to keep track and use it wisely; that's what they are made for, besides extra credit and getting you to the bathroom, among other places.

Sleep may probably be the biggest thing that will change greatly in IB. You will need all the time you can get, so don't lose it needlessly. I will not digress on this any further since you will get inundated with advice on this topic and on procrastination. Though I will advise you to consider the wonderful effects of caffeine. Though these too you should use moderately.

You should concentrate more on your weaknesses, but do not overlook your strengths. Take advantage of the teachers who are willing to work with you, whether with school, home, or general problems in life; many will actually listen.

When choosing a science, always pick the one that works well for you. Don't just take Physics because it's the easiest to get an A in, as some may say. Choose biology or chemistry if you're planning to pass your AP and IB tests, though I'm not saying, however, that you can't do the same for Physics. It is whether or not you want to be bombarded with hard tests, long labs, and lots of work from those two sciences at times when you have already so much to do. But many have done well in either one. It's just a test of will and desire.

With mathematics, learn the material the first time it's taught to you because they build off of one

another. If you don't get it the first time, ask questions, stay after school, go online, do whatever it takes to make you understand the concepts, not just knowing how to plug numbers in on your calculator.

Read the books the first, they are assigned to you. Cliff Notes, Pink Monkey, and all those other sites provide you with the same information just in different words. Learn to create your own because that is what you'll end up doing throughout IB and in life. Don't let others dictate your life for you.

If you are one of those who have been comfortable being at the top in middle school, prepare to hit rock bottom, though to some people that's second place. You are going to be in the same classes as those who have the same expectations of IB as you, students with the same level of intelligence and high standards as you. Therefore, don't expect to keep that top spot too long, unless you can really outlast the best of the best.

Don't fret too much about getting all A's. Though yes this is accomplishable, it does require a lot more effort than what you put in middle school combined. Getting some B's and for some C's are great accomplishments in IB.

Don't resort to cheating and other types of malpractice. They may work sometimes, but NEVER all the time. Besides, the first time you are caught is the last, so don't do it. Don't develop the habit.

Try to get your license and car early. As a student privileged enough to drive a car at the beginning of 10th grade second semester, I found my life to be slightly easier. After school help, especially on those calculus free responses and portfolios, test retakes after school (for those of us who didn't study the first time, or are just perfectionists who can't handle a low 90 or 92), and extra-curricular activities all require transportation, which pose potential problems for those living 30-40 minutes away. Unfortunately, this calculates to double the time due to the school bus's slowness, but perhaps these long rides can serve almost the same purposes. Take advantage of those who can provide them for you, though some may require payment in return.

Find excitement and humor in everything you do, whether for IB or throughout life. This adds tremendous meaning for your life in a world that's very dry and drab. Having a WHY in life can get you through with almost any HOW.

Last but not least, develop relationships early. Your classmates now can be your friends forever. By the time you get through the program, you will have known everything there is to know about them, if they share and you listen. Whether as a helper for a class or a confidant in life, become a friend. You will never know when you'll need them for the same things. Keep in mind however that while friends may come and go, you should hold on to a precious few. Also remember, though, that while friends may come and go, enemies accumulate. Don't become one.

In the words of Baz Luhrman, “Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts, and recycling it for more than it’s worth.” Heed these at your own discretion...but trust me on the disclaimer...

“Whatever you do, don’t congratulate yourself too much or berate yourself either. Your choices are half-chanced, and so are everybody else’s.” —Baz Luhrman

Adieu and bon chance,
Jimmy Lapnawan

Dear Freshman,
This is your first year in high school and everybody has probably already told you that it is going to be really different from middle school, and that’s its going to be really hard. Well, guess what? It’s not all that different and it’s not that much harder. You can take some classes that will be hard, but if you put forth the effort needed then they should not be hard. The one thing that you need to remember is to not put things off until the last minute. For example, I’m writing this letter at 11:00 at night before it is due the next day. That was an example of what NOT to do.

Also another important thing that is a part of high school is having fun. You need to worry about your schoolwork and keeping good grades, but do not be so overly concerned that you miss out on all the fun things that happen. You should go to most of the major school dances, some football games, and other school activities. And if you like playing a sport, then try out for the team. You may not be on varsity, you probably won’t be on varsity as a freshman, but you probably will some day.

The main thing to do when going through high school that you must do is to just chill. That doesn’t mean you should just lay back and do nothing. Do all your schoolwork and do it well, but do not do it to such excess that you spend too much time on it. And if there is something that happens that you can’t control do not try to fix it. But don’t stand back and be pushed around either. Be a leader but still don’t worry about everything.

Jason Buchanan

To the new Freshmen,

It’s amazing to think that I am writing to a class that is following in my footsteps four years after me. Makes me feel old. I am going to give you some advice and some pointers... but it’s up to you to make your time here worth while.

I am going to start off with the thing I say to everyone (although I have a hard time following it myself) — DO NOT PROCRASTINATE! I am sure you’ve heard that dozens of times and ignored it every time, but you have been warned. IB can be a lot of work. I won’t lie and say otherwise. But it can be done, I know that first hand. There have been plenty of times where I would have given my left hand to leave the program, but I stuck with it and now look where I am. (OK, OK, so I have no idea where I’ll actually be when you read this, but rest assured it’ll be somewhere good.) But I digress. My point is, do the work in a more or less timely fashion and you’ll be OK.

Something I found the most helpful throughout my years in IB is my friends. Three-way calls, internet chat rooms, or hanging out at Bartow Public Library were all ways that we helped each other get our work done. Your friends will become your most valuable resource. They are there for you to bounce ideas off of, or for you to go to and say, “I’m lost!! Help me!!” I know, I’ve done it many times. Also, by them helping you and you helping them, you both can strengthen your skills in the subject. It’s good review. And of course, your friends will always be there for all the other/non-school related (SOCIAL) crises that high school entails. There are a lot of those too.

The teachers are another valuable resource. They are always there when you need them. Also, pick the brains of the students in grades above you. They were just in the classes that you are taking, so they must know something about them. You will always find people who are more then willing to help you out if you ask nicely. Both teachers and other students are great for getting help at any time you need it.

Just some more general things: Make wise choices when you pick your electives. If you feel you have a hard year coming up, don’t make it worse by taking a really hard elective along with it. Don’t overload on after school activities. Pace yourself, and leave some wind-down time. Don’t get into the habit of pulling all-nighters, because you’ll never get out of it. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t go through IB without one all-nighter. The latest I have even been up doing homework is twelve. So it can be done.

Well. I suppose that’s all. Good luck, and I hope everything goes well.

John Calabrese

W elcome IB Freshmen!

Hi, I hope you are here (IB) because you want to be, not because of your parents. If you are here because of your parents — Don't Sulk! — try it out, you might as well enjoy it and try your best. You'll be thankful later. Either way, now you are here. Take a deep breath and relax. It all looks like too much to handle but the teachers are here to guide you and make it as smooth as possible. If you have any problems, talk to them; that is why they are there. Most teachers if not all of them will be happy to help. In the academics department here are my best attempts to help you:

-Learn to manage your time wisely. Prioritize the different aspects of your life and MAKE time for them. Not only will this keep you sane; it will also keep you happy and happy people (that get enough sleep) have better grades and a better experience.

-Try to study everything. I don't really mean everything; use common sense on this one. I just mention it because the things we learn build on each other and filling in holes in your learning is not fun. Plus tests are so much easier when you study.

-Do something besides academics. Extracurricular activities are another way of keeping the insanity levels low. They also give you a legitimate reason to do something besides homework when things pile up. That may or may not be a good thing but some things are worth the sleep. Plus you need to start losing your dependency on sleep for later on.

Now on to a different aspect of life that is just as important, if not more important than academics (going back to the whole priorities ideal). Your social and personal lives are such big factors and can do so much to you; therefore, do not ignore them. It is another way of keeping the sanity. (I do not know if you have come to notice that the goal of this IB game is to keep your sanity all four years.) Here are some things I have noticed about my class that has made their lives harder than necessary. There are also some other things that just make sense to me.

-Do not forget everyone else. It is okay to take care of yourself, but do not forget that others have that right also. Try to keep in check your selfishness; no one is more important than others. Everyone has their own individual talents and abilities so help each other out.

-You are the only person that thinks "this" while the rest of the world seems to think "that." Are you crazy? I know that seems corny, but wait until you're in that position. You are not crazy. If you feel uncomfortable, do not do it. Please do not let others that can pretend to know what they are doing conform you to their standard. You'll end up getting hurt and regretting many things. This is especially true with the idea of "too conservative." Ok, I know — am not some big authority but I can tell you this much being "too conservative" with no regrets is ten

billion times better than fitting the standard and regretting things you have done.

-Do not let TV and movies (just media in general) rule your life. Just because they make screwing up look good does not mean it is good. Sometimes it helps to look at things super literally. This help you figure out what is important. If you are freaking out about something try thinking about it literally. Money, for example, is really just green paper. Literally, it's just like green construction paper. It has the value we give it. Movies are just film that show people PRETENDING TO BE SOMETHING THEY ARE NOT. I know this seems kind of dumb, but people freak out about these things. If you miss watching a TV show because you had to do something else; I'm pretty sure that most likely you will live on and survive. When the next day comes, more than likely you will have all your limbs where you had them before.

-Do not let your personal belief system take the back burner. Make time for it. It's important because it gives you a base to which to grow from. Also here you will find different viewpoints on these things and many ideas will challenge your way of thinking. Making time for your beliefs will help you stay balanced and again help you keep some of you sanity. (Almost done. I have two more things to talk about)

1. Comments on Dating. There is no need for any one of you to be in the hall (or just in general) making out. That is just GROSS. Yeah, you laugh now but someday you'll be the gross one. Please do not be. Respect yourselves and others enough not to be so immature. Also respect yourselves in what you wear. Underwear is supposed to stay under (hence the name). The short shorts and skirts are not "empowering" to women as some say, but actually just make guys drool or throw up. Either way we should be nice to the janitors. Anyways, this is not really helpful for IB but just something to ponder. Do not date for fun, take it seriously, otherwise you will end up hurting yourself and others. Go out with friends and save dating to when it is not useless and you will know for sure when that is. If the focus is physical then it is useless because there should be more to a relationship than that. Do not be immature about these things; it only hurts in the end.

2. Watching what you say. Not many of you know Graffam. He used to teach here and was an awesome teacher. He pointed out once that what you say shapes who you are. This is something to keep in mind for it has proven itself true to me. What comes out of your mouth reflects what your thoughts are. Also true even when you are joking. If you repeat stuff long enough it won't be long until you start believing it.

Ok, I am done spewing. Some things might seem dumb, but you just wait until you are to the point where you are writing one of these. All of this really

goes down to two things: priorities and respect. Remember what is really important, in doing so you will be able to stay in IB all four years. Take care of yourselves.

Hoping you leave with some sanity left,

Melanie Leon

Hey Freshmen,

You've come this far, and that's an accomplishment, and I hate to say it, but high school isn't as easy as middle school. Make sure you don't assume that since you were able to breeze through middle school without studying, that you'll be able to make it through IB without having to open a book at least once (especially since assuming makes an... well, never mind). Once you get the hang of things it's not too bad, no matter what else I may say later in this essay (just one of those schizophrenic things that seems to happen when I write these things). So, since I'm a senior, I'm supposed to be full of all kinds of advice, and some sort of knowledge about the goings on here at IB/BHS, so here comes the fun stuff.

First off, and you'll probably hear this many, many times, **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!!!** It's one of the worst things you can do. Our class has a reputation for procrastination and not applying ourselves — you don't want to be like us, the teachers hate it. That's another thing — be nice to the teachers. They put in a lot of work to make sure you get all the knowledge you need to be eligible for the IB diploma and all that fun stuff, so they need to be appreciated much more than they are.

An additional thing that may help you in the future: make sure you have a few close friends that you can entrust with all kinds of information about yourself, and vice versa, without worry of losing that person or losing your personal information. I've learned the hard way that people can't all be trusted, but there are those few gems among the dirt that can make your day ten times better when you're down and out, those who can take what you throw at them and those who expect the same from you. Those are the best people you will ever meet. You should also stick together as a class; don't let your differences tear you apart. Our class is also known as the one where we aren't all buddy-buddy. It's always nice to have a group to fall back on when the going gets tough. Our class is just now figuring that out, and it's our fourth year. I think the closest we've ever gotten was at the time of our IB exams, and even then we were still stuck in our cliques.

Now, on to the classes and teachers. In ninth grade, we had a few different teachers than you guys have, and they've changed the structure of many classes, so I'm unable to give you any valuable information about that year. But I will tell you that Mrs. Patton is one of the best teachers you will have, that I know of. Mrs. Durden was really nice too, but

we only had her for about half a year, so I don't know how much that changed. Summer school was interesting, too. Mr. Keers will get to know you really well, especially since he teaches TOK now, another one of those oh so much fun classes. If you take art instead of psychology, I'll tell you as much as I know — Pie is a pretty cool guy (I took psych instead). I'm sure you will get to hear much more about the teachers the further you go through school, but I advise that you don't make any predetermined thoughts about what a teacher is like — you may miss out on a teacher that would really help you get through the years in Bartow.

Well, now that I've advised all that I can think of without getting myself into trouble, I'll leave you be. I hope your high school experience is all that you hoped for, I wish mine was.

Best of Luck,

Tiffanie Gloyd

In dreams I see myself flying
Closer to the sun, and I'm climbing
Tried to touch the sun
But the brightness burned my eyes
-Fear Factory "Invisible Wounds"

Dear Freshmen,

Your decision to enter the International Baccalaureate program has been a prudent one. Well, for most of you at least. For those of you who are sorry slackers and think you have the art of procrastination down pat and that you will be able to get by just like you did in middle school, get the heck out, because your brain will explode and you will wither away into what seems to be an emaciated corpse. If you haven't decided to turn tail and run yet, that's good, because I wasn't being serious. That was all just a metaphor for what you will feel like no matter what.

Now that I've scared the living daylights out of you, I should probably impart some of the wonderful advice that I have for you fresh meat, I mean freshmen. First of all, do not be discouraged if the first nine weeks or semester of freshman year seems a bit difficult. It takes a little while to get adjusted to the IB program and to high school in general. After you're used to it, freshman year is a breeze. Believe me, it will only get harder from there. In freshman year, at all costs, develop good study skills and an impeccable work ethic. These will save your [insert profanity here] later on, and even sometimes in freshman year. Above all, LEARN NOT TO PROCRASTINATE. If this is the first time you've heard this, get used to it, because you'll hear it a lot more. Procrastination is never, ever productive. It will cause you to lose sleep, and sleep, as you will soon find (hehe!!), is a very valuable commodity. Speaking of sleep, make sure you go to sleep at a decent hour every night. This will allow you to actually function in class and not walk around like a zombie, going through the motions and not learning a single thing. This will also protect you from the graveyard that is caffeine dependency. With all of this advice in hand, you should be able to get through the wonderful world of academia at IB no problem, as least for freshman year.

Meanwhile, you will probably be faced with a vicious onslaught of homework every night, slaving until three o'clock in the morning, struggling to finish. Just kidding. The amount of homework that you get, at least as a freshman and a sophomore (which I currently am), is not really that bad, contrary to what you may have heard. Just make sure to actually do all of your homework, as this will help you maintain respectable grades. I know you've probably heard this a million times, but if you work hard, study diligently, and put forth your best effort, you will succeed in this program. I know, because this is what I've done so far, and I would say that I have done fairly well. Honestly, the formula for success is not very complicated. What will be challenging is putting it into practice. Make a

conscious effort to do so, and you will see yourself smiling many times during your illustrious academic career.

Finally, I find myself hard pressed to touch on the subject of stress relief and give other miscellaneous advice. You will, from time to time, feel like your brain has just gone through a blender. This will happen about once every three to four hours. You may experience severe shaking of the limbs, sudden bladder contractions, dilation of the pupils, and dizziness. Eventually, you may see a white light. Whatever you do, STAY AWAY FROM THE LIGHT. Once, again, just joking. Every so often, though, you really will feel a bit stressed out, and will find that you need stress relief. For me, the best stress relief is going to Orlando for dinner and a movie. There are other avenues by which to relieve stress, of course, that are just as effective. Just make sure to give yourself a rest every once in a while. Your mind, just like your body, needs periodic rejuvenation. Give your mind the best care you can, or what I mentioned earlier really will happen. Either that or you will go insane or suffer a nervous breakdown in front of EVERYONE. If that happens, sucks to your ass-mar (you'll get the allusion later). Also, playing sports is a great way of relieving stress. Play at least one sport throughout your high school career. It will look good on college applications and it will make you feel good about yourself. It will also keep you from getting too wrapped up in school. Concerning miscellaneous advice, take what electives you enjoy, as taking academic electives that you don't particularly like just to boost your GPA will KILL you. Additionally, learn how to sleep on a bus, because, as I mentioned before, you'll be needing every ounce of sleep you can get. Basically, try to remain at peace with yourself and keep your mind clean (no pun intended). This will definitely make your IB experience that much more enjoyable (or at least tolerable).

The IB program can either be a very rewarding experience for you or a nightmarish hell in which time passes slower than molasses. It is ultimately your choice how your experience at IB will be, and your decision making began as soon as you stepped foot in your first period class on the first day of school. Prudent decisions will lead you on the path to success, while ill-advised ones will cause you to fall beneath the oppressive hand of failure. Choose wisely, and have faith in yourselves. You'll need all the help you can get.

Sincerely (or in jest),
Neal Bhutiani

Traditional Students

High school is really not that hard. One main thing I suggest, though, is that if you don't plan on going to a big university, don't stress yourself with all the IB or AP classes. That's all those classes will be, stress, if you don't plan ahead to go to a good college.

In my experience, God will keep you in line and on track. I believe that is the only way I made it through my four years of high school. I hope that you can find the same strength in the Lord to carry you through.

Good luck! I hope your high school years bring much knowledge, fun, and great relationships. Do your best, and never give up.

Christina Crosby

Becoming a Freshman
To survive being a freshman, a student must be very individual. He must not care what others think or desire, but only care about his education. Higher-level classes are more important than grades; however, failing is completely inappropriate. On the other hand, a student shouldn't take classes (like Child Development or Life Management), if not required, just because it is easy to get an "A." A student should attempt to gain as much knowledge as possible for a beneficial future.

In addition, a student must relax and enjoy his classes. He/she should take classes that are enjoyable, too, and that possibly pertain to his/her future. A student must also remember to find the time to complete his homework. Self-motivation is also important to complete the high school term, as well as fighting off the tempting desire for sleep. A student should also listen to his teachers and be courteous to them (for some of them are smarter than you).

Furthermore, a student needs to excel and study in English because if he fails in an English course, he will fail English and not graduate. Higher-level Math is also a popular and fun choice which will likely affect a student's future. Finally a student should take his ACTs and SATs as soon as possible to avoid taking the test and not doing as well as he would like, when taken at the last minute. Avoid procrastination at all times (if possible), and enjoy the years of high school.

Michael Barnes

Being a senior, I would advise you to stay on top of school. I have been through many trying times, but I have found out that if you stay with something and finish it out, it will be well worth it in the end. When you are ready to give up, you have to force yourself to go that much further. Always do your homework and pay attention in class, otherwise, you will be lost and your grades will fall. I have pushed myself in high school to make good grades and to always attend school, and there are times when I wished I could just slack. However, I've recently been accepted to UF, and I know now that my hard work in high school has finally paid off. There may not be reward for hard work as a freshman, but when you become a senior, your rewards will start to arrive. You will be happy that you strived to succeed throughout high school.

Also, I would advise you to be involved in sports, clubs and school activities. I am president of a club, a cheerleader, and a member of many other clubs. Being involved helps make high school fun. If you work all of the time, you will not have fun, and you definitely will not learn about people. If you stay involved throughout high school, people will know your name and your personality. Meeting people in high school is going to benefit you later in life when you have to work with people in your job. Next, start doing community service in ninth grade. At the end of my freshman year, I had over 80 community service hours, and I am thankful now that I did that, because there are many other things to worry about as a senior.

Last, be confident and have faith in yourself. If you want people to believe in you, you have to believe in yourself first. Even when a task seems impossible, take it little by little, and you will complete it. Realize that life is not easy, so you will have trying times. If you stick it out, you will become stronger mentally in the end. You can only learn in life by messing up, so when you make mistakes, correct them and move on. I survived, and I have all faith that you can too. Best of luck in your high school career.

Katie Bruce

I have many recommendations for new students attending high school. It can be hard starting high school for some students. I can feel for them because it was hard for me. I barely knew anyone, and I took the hardest classes that were offered. If you feel like I felt when you start high school, I hope these suggestions help you.

The first thing I would like to talk about would be the schedule that you choose. I took all honors and advanced placement classes, had a job, and played football all at the same time. Do not overdo yourself like I did. If you decide to take hard advanced classes then do not plan on playing a sport. If you do plan on playing a sport then do not take all advanced classes. I ended up making a smart decision finally when I was a junior and dropped football. It was hard to do since I played it for six years of my life. It felt like something was missing in my life when I quit. I have high goals to be a cardiologist and football was holding me back. I did what I had to do, and you will be faced with similar hard decisions if you do not schedule yourself right.

Another thing I would suggest is that before choosing your classes you talk with students who have already taking the class that you are thinking about signing up for. Find out how the teacher is and how hard the class is. If you get a class with a teacher that you cannot stand, then you will never make it through the year. Make a friend with one of the kids in your harder classes and that way the two of you can help each other out with your homework.

The last suggestion I have is that you do not get into a serious relationship with someone while going to high school. I made that mistake and I almost completely lost focus on my goals. I really had strong feelings for this girl and we ended up breaking up. All I thought about was her and it was just very hard to stay focused with school. It was a waste of time because we just ended up apart. You are in high school and you do not have time to waste. I wasted too much time and now I am trying to catch up.

In conclusion, these are some suggestions that I have to help new students starting out in high school. Please do not make some of the same mistakes that I did. I wish I had read an essay like this before I started high school, but maybe God wanted me to go through some these mistakes so that others can learn from me.

Joshua Blomquist