

Advice to the IB Class of 2008

From the Class of 2004

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.

International Baccalaureate Students

As I recall my three and a half years in IB, I realize I have developed advice that would aid an incoming freshman. My advice would be to become accustomed to writing. Writing is a very large requirement of the International Baccalaureate Program. When I first became a student here, I was abject about writing anything, but eventually I was broken. Essays become almost an everyday event in the senior year and the teachers in the first three years prepare you to write well in large quantities. Yesterday, for example, I wrote eight essays totaling approximately 3800 words.

A pitfall to avoid as an International Baccalaureate student is procrastination. While many, if not most, students procrastinate the majority of the time, procrastination should still be avoided. By not procrastinating, you will realize that it is not difficult to complete all of the work in a timely manner. On the few assignments I completed soon after they were assigned, I was able to reflect on the assignment and realized how easy the task was. So don't procrastinate.

Halfway through your sophomore year, you will be asked to choose a science and a course of study in math. For the science course, I recommend evaluating what you plan to study in college. A future doctor should probably take biology. I chose to take physics, mostly because I plan to become an engineer. Physics has been an easy and orderly class. Every assignment can be completed in 20 minutes or so and is over the day's notes in class; almost every day there is a lab, where responses are written on a worksheet. The reactions I have heard from chemistry and biology students are the classes are very difficult. For math, take math methods. This class consists of trigonometry, analytic geometry, and calculus AB. Even if math is not your favorite subject in school, the work ethic of Ms. Frisbie is inspirational. Maybe if I followed her, I would stop procrastinating. Anyway, good luck!

Geoffrey Thomas

[Editor's note: Ms. Frisbie has to constantly overcome the seductive lure of procrastination as well.]

To the incoming freshman,
Greetings, and welcome to BHS/IB. Well, you're at the beginning of four great years in Bartow, so look forward to it. This school is perfect for people who are spirited and like to get involved with their communities. Still, there are plenty of activities for students oriented toward other goals. IB provides ample opportunity for people who have different likes, interests, and strengths than most others.

There are some things you should know as you enter the IB program. First of all, it's a ton of work. Just prepare yourself for it. People will tell you a thousand times — if you just plan ahead a teensy bit for a project or paper, it'll end up being ten times better than what it would have been if you did it last minute. It's sad, but there are a lot of students in IB who are so incredibly smart — but they don't do homework, or let assignments slip so quickly that they are swamped with work at the end of the semester.

Another thing regarding work and timeliness: when it comes to IB paperwork, you would be much better doing it on time. The first semester of Senior year is packed with IB papers and preparations already, so any extra burden will break you. And remember, Dr. Vetter (aka Dr. Sunshine) is not a happy camper when he sees a student about late work. You'll soon learn that everybody is on a tight schedule here, not just yourself.

Other than that, enjoy yourself! High school is a great time, and there are a lot of chances to have fun and get involved with clubs, sports, etc. As for classes, you'll find that some of them are a breeze, while others require extra study. Chemistry II and III, for example, move quickly, and you have to stay on top of everything you learn. ToK, on the other hand, is a class full of really easy worksheets, some deep discussions, and LOTS of candy.

Come good or bad, you'll have quite an experience at this school. I hope you succeed, have fun, and make friends and accomplishments that you will remember for a lifetime!

Good luck,
Lori Shah

Dear new and prospective IB students:
I wish someone had told me when I was in ninth grade what I'm about to tell you. Or, if perhaps someone did tell me this, I wish I had listened. So, if you care about who you will be in three or four years, at least give some thought to what I have to say. And if you don't care who you'll be someday, ignore these words and see how much longer you can believe you don't need any help from anyone.

Let me back up and congratulate you on your acceptance into IB. Even if you were positive you were going to get into IB, you should give yourselves due credit. Of course, you are intellectually advanced individuals if you have made it this far and are reading letters like this one. Perhaps you have been told how smart you are throughout your entire academic career — you wouldn't be the only one. This is great, but don't let the idea of how much you know fool you into thinking there is little left to learn.

On the contrary, it is scary how much each of us still does not know. Don't mean how much trigonometry, world history, or Spanish you still have left to learn. Don't worry — you can never learn it all. What I do mean is how much about yourself you still have left to learn. While getting to know yourself won't earn you an A on your next biology test, it could give you the strength someday to write a great extended essay or ToK essay.

Now, I do realize that what I'm saying is rather cliché and that you've probably heard it before. I was like you, even. I was an energetic freshman, anxious to succeed. You are, too, whether you like to admit it or not. I'm not saying that I have all the right answers, either. I am saying, however, that you have to consider these things soon. My hope is that this letter will either make you take some time to think, or at least push you enough to make you more likely to reflect later on.

This is what I have been leading up to: You need to figure out who you are and what you want. Who you really are and what you really want, not what other people want for you or what you've always wanted. As an IB student, you won't have time to spend on something that you don't really want. For example, if you are the kind of person who values your family strongly, go ahead and set apart some time to spend with them. If you want to be a more charismatic and outgoing person, then tell yourself you are going to do it and give it a try. The point here is to be intentional about everything you do, and not to get sucked into what everyone thinks you should do. Before long, your life will be fully in your own hands, and that which everyone else wanted you to do will no longer matter.

Because you are currently building who you are going to be for a long time, you must be aware of the decisions you make when dealing in your relationships with other people. To use an athletic

term, you must be morally “on your toes.” It will get harder and harder not to hurt other people — even if you don't try. So, instead of just passively avoiding hurting others, you must be conscious about the impact you have on other people all the time. Since you can be constantly wondering if what you're doing is right, I recommend periodically stopping to look at yourself from an outside point of view to evaluate how you're doing. You do not want to realize someday as you lie in bed or as you drive to school that you are dissatisfied with who you are.

Now is your chance to make what you want of your future. It won't happen all at once (unless you really do something to mess it up), but as long as you remember who you are and what you stand for, you can't go wrong.

I'm counting on reading about some of you being famous someday. Until then, good luck, and study hard!

David Bentley

Dear Freshman,
Sleep is your friend. Get lots of it, and problems seem less ominous. Get a limited amount, and problems begin compounding. Unless of course, you're missing sleep due to reading entries from the best web site on Earth: www.maddox.xmission.com. [Editor's note: inclusion of this URL does not imply endorsement by any adult connected with the school. If you are easily offended, you should avoid it.] Holy crap, the author is the coolest guy around. He may even be my father without my knowing it. He's just that cool. Not to mention his fairly regular dissertations that provide a welcome vacation from dry history books.

Pitfalls abound at BHS/IB. I could give you the whole “don't procrastinate” speech, but I'm pretty sure you'll do it anyway, so I'll warn you about one of procrastination's pitfalls: stress. Stressing out about all the work you have backed up and due tomorrow at 11 p. m. the night before it is due only gets you sick and may lead to health issues. Rather, just do the work until you can't see, then go to sleep. Any more work is pointless because you're ineffective and the sleep you get is worth more than 10 points for lateness.

Finally, most important and deserving of the most study during your high school experience is what interests you and/or what will help further your professional life. Other subjects are also important, but that importance dwindles as interest and relevance decrease.

Brandon Evers

If you want to go into music (or think you ever will) and got accepted into Harrison, stop reading this right now and get out of IB. That was my first mistake. I will say, however, that IB helped to form the person I am through its (mostly) open-mindedness and its intelligent students, and I am glad for that. I cannot say for sure yet if IB was right for me or not, but it was certainly really hard for me through the four years, always wondering if I should be at another school. I'm not going to say don't procrastinate because I know you will. Realize at some point that sleep is more important no matter what. Also realize that there are going to be many other students who are smarter than you in your class, and you are going to need them the most for support through IB, so don't waste your time on petty grade/GPA arguments. If you have been getting all A's, get over it, most people do not finish IB with all A's, many without all A's and B's.

For those rare Frenchies, take advantage of Mr. Lenker while you have him. We all started missing him before we changed even because we knew Mrs. Dietert just couldn't be like him... and she isn't. This is one of the few classes in your real IB years, in my opinion, that you can sleep in. I'm not suggesting it of course ;) but it's one that you really won't miss much when sleeping. Do your homework and you'll be okay.

Congrats for taking this math. My math grade has slowly slid since the beginning of the junior year, but I have never regretted taking this math. It's worth it and Ms. Frisbie is always willing to help as long as you are willing to ask. Take advantage of that! A lot of other teachers say they'll stay after and help but in the end they really don't. All of the math teachers (we didn't have the freshman one, but I hear he's good) are very straightforward and capable in teaching so that's nice.

Mrs. Patton can be boring but the class is fine — beware the Government final; Economics is easy. Mr. Rhoden seems to have memory lapses that you can use for your benefit. Mr. Goss is frustrating in his views but he really does care for the students and tries to help you out as long as you seem to care about what you're doing in there. Mr. Shuff is really hard but the extra credit questions can help you more than you believe. I would give you facts about his family but I can't remember them and he says he never gives classes the same questions, so....

Your freshman year of science will be interesting. Longworth is very unreliable; ask her about tests, etc., as much as you can or you won't know. We watched lots of movies when we had her. Mrs. Kennon is extremely moody but when she's in her good mood she's a ton of fun to be around. When she's in her bad mood — watch out! Don't turn in anything late, or complain in front of her when she's like that. Trust me, I learned the hard way. Mrs. Bond is cool and funny. Mr. Keers is even more so. I took

biology as my science, and I would suggest physics to others. There are pros and cons to all of them. Since I can't really say for the others, I will say that Bio isn't the best. She doesn't give your labs back forever, she gives really long worksheets, and the tests can be really hard. On the other hand, she will prepare you more than you realize for the IB/AP tests, she does give the labs back eventually (and then you realize you never wanted them back...) and the tests always have some form of extra credit.

English isn't too bad. We had a different freshman and sophomore teacher; Mrs. Smith is extremely absent-minded and Mrs. Delk is very understanding of the senior IB situation (so is Keers, by the way).

Have fun with TOK. It's a great way to relax from the other classes and discuss things you never really thought of before.

Mrs. Barrington might be a very not helpful type of teacher, but psychology is still an interesting subject to study and somehow we still all did well on the tests anyway, I think that's because it's mainly common sense.

Mr. Pie is awesome and I haven't even had him for a teacher. Take art if you're interested. Mrs. Snow is also wonderful, but she gets into almost too personal relationships with her students and does way too many things at once (therefore getting extremely stressed and grumpy at times), so be careful.

Find something that can keep you moving forward and looking forward to the next day, week, etc. It will be hard, but you will survive. The sports are overall great at Bartow and there are some really fun Bartow people out there ;) and most important: don't forget to *live*.

Ashley Miller

Dear freshmen,
As a senior, I have learned a menagerie of things that I would love to tell you. I doubt that I could even fit all of those tidbits of good advice in a well-written novel. In short, high school is an experience with no beginning or end, despite the fact it starts in 9th and ends in 12th. The high school years are the bridge that link your childhood with adulthood. For those eager to set about a specific change in themselves, there is no better time to experiment with opportunity.

Stay happy. If you want to do well in high school, you have to take time out for yourself. I am not saying that you go watch a movie before your finals, but instead, do something smaller that gives you equal pleasure. I normally find these things in a personal or sentimental moment. Personally, I enjoy driving. I have also found joy in most everything; from feeding ducks to talking to a stranger in the hallway, you can make the most out of your life if you overcome the stigma of thinking “that’s not my personality” or “I am too cool for that.” Get over it, just do it.

Stay focused. If you start something, finish it. Commitment and motivation are the crux of your high school career. You don’t have to be super smart; you don’t even have to be smart. All you need is a flame inside of you. This flame will light the path for you and through your high school career.

Here are some other key points, in an abbreviated form that I feel are very important:

Pay attention to the little things in life. Don’t blow over a simple thank you to a good friend or treating yourself out every once in a while. I have quickly realized that the little things in life can be the most important aspect of living.

Don’t always think about yourself. Think big and think about the interactions around you. You have unlimited potential to change and improve things. Enough is never enough.

Experiment. Always, always try new things. New experiences have always been fruitful for me. If it weren’t for new experiences I would have never started to wear boxers (FYI used to wear whitey tighties), gone to Spain, or a hodgepodge of other great moments in my life.

Get involved. Don’t just go home after school every day. Find activities that are interesting to other people but may not entertain you. It seems antithetical to say such a statement, but if even after trying it out you still don’t like it, you can quit.

Stay religious. This is a personal issue, so take what you will from it. I think that for those in IB, this is very important. Have a strong faith in God can help you find answers to odd and urgent questions.

I probably haven’t said anything new, but I hope that the reiteration of some key facts will help guide you through your high school career. There is nothing that I, or most anyone, could say to guarantee you a

beautiful high school career. You will learn through trial and error. With that, I wish you the best of luck.

Take care,
Shivam Joshi

Attention freshmen:

Make sure that you are prepared for what you are getting into. Examine your goals for getting into IB. Do you have good reasons? Are your parents having you come? Well, no matter what your goals are, DO NOT panic. Look at where IB can get you. Our class has two people with perfect standardized test scores and we will be having students accepted to and going to a host of prestigious universities. No matter where you go, you will already have plenty of college credits. This will save your parents money, save you time in college, and maybe even let you pocket some scholarship money. If you ask me, it is definitely worth it.

This being said, IB will be a lot of work. Make sure you take advantage of the sort of laid-back attitude that your learning may take in Freshman and Sophomore year. Learn what you need to. Get ahead. Study; some people don’t have to, but this is different than middle school, don’t risk it and let one test ruin your class grade. Don’t procrastinate (this being said, I’m writing this letter about 6 hours after it was due, don’t be like me). If you intend to get a job, do so before your senior year. Mrs. Delk (Senior English) will advise all of the seniors to quit their jobs and concentrate on the future. You really will need to probably. But don’t let the workload get you down, the payoff will really be worth it.

My final recommendation? Get involved with Bartow High School; the Bartow kids really aren’t as bad as you think they might be. Get some school spirit and go to sporting events, some of the most fun I’ve had related to school came this year when some of my fellow seniors and myself started a skin team and ran around at football games with our chests painted. Make sure you join lots of clubs: they are good chances to meet people, have fun, and get those service hours which you will so desperately need your senior year. Your high school career can be all one aspect (school school school) or as fun as you chose to make it. Why would you want to be boring? You can be outgoing and still perform well at school. So do it.

Much love and good luck to each and every one of you, so keep up the IB tradition.

Have fun,
Ben Grossman

Let $E(x)$ be an essay defined on the interval $x \in [(1st - 1) \text{ thing}, z \text{th thing}]$.

If E exists, then there exists an A s.t.

$A \in \{\text{IB class of 2004}\}$,

$A(E) = \text{Kris Smith as } E \rightarrow \infty$, and

$\lim_{x \rightarrow z} E(x) = 369 \text{ words}$

(Take Miss Frisbie's class and you'll get all that.)

(First-1) thing first:

Never EVER quit.

I don't care if it's 3 in the morning and you still have four Shuff essays, a physics lab notebook, and this essay left to do.

Never quit. Period.

First thing: Congratulations on making it into IB. I hope to God/Allah/Vishnu/Buddha/(Insert random deity here) that you know what you've gotten yourself into. IB is a rigorous course of study designed to give gifted students about 30 steps up on other college students. As such, expect to do college work to accomplish this – lots of college work. You know that "AP" thing? That means college. If your class has "IB" in front of it, it means college. If you don't want this, then quit.

Second thing: Physics is not the science for people who don't wanna pass the AP exam. It is true that lazy people who (a) don't care about science or (b) are too lazy to do any work and think they can get an easy A take physics. It is not true (T, true prime) that people who do no work can get A's or even B's in physics. Mr. Keers does in fact prepare you adequately for both the IB and AP. If someone tells you that he doesn't, they have either not taken physics or are one of the people aforementioned in the second sentence.

Third thing: A 150% is the same as a 100% is the same as a 90% is the same as an 89.5% on a transcript. They all are displayed as "A." Don't compete for the highest grade in the class. That would be following in Little Neal's and Joe's footsteps.

(z-1)st thing: Be sure to have more than one friend. The way my schedule worked out, I only had like two people that I saw in every class. Don't stay in only one clique. Firmly establish yourself with every one of your classmates, then pick your favorites (and those people you despise like the plague).

zth thing: Last but not least, be nice to your teachers. They are the gatekeepers. They can only show you the door. You have to walk through it yourself. (Let that sink in for a while – you'll get it eventually.)

With love,

Kristoffer Smith, B.S. (2007),
M.S. (after that), Ph.D.(after that)

Dear upcoming freshman,

As a freshman, you are young, you are small, you don't know the high school life. As a graduating senior, my case is just the opposite. So here is my advice: First, don't stress out; Second, don't get snotty; and Last, self-motivation is key.

I know the first piece of advice seems unrealistic; this is IB, right? Stress city, right? Yeah. But keep it in perspective; note, that word perspective is key. Failing a test doesn't end the world. Finals are not a big monster waiting to eat you up every semester. Your teachers are teaching you, forcing you to grow and develop, but they won't try to kill you. If you and your friends are having stress problems, approach your teachers. They will listen, and maybe shift some things around.

Don't get your nose in the air. If you do better than your peers, then your time will come. Never, never discount Bartow kids either. Make them your friends. They have value. At the same time, if your friends do better, don't let it concern you, just keep plugging away. Things will improve.

Most importantly, be self-motivated. Get your work done while you have the opportunity. Then you can do the things you want, which you should do – play a sport, or a lot of them, join some clubs, but never, ever quit. Keep trying, get it done.

That's the most important thing; just keep going, keep plugging away. It will come. Your teachers don't want to kill you, just make you better. So cooperate.

Gus O'Leary

Dear Freshmen,
So, your high school experience is just beginning and you may be thinking you are in way over your head. Well, if you do, then I have several pieces of advice for you. First, relax. IB doesn't get horrible until your senior year. Then and only then will you feel the horrible workload that is IB. Until then, just give it your best effort and know that eventually it will all be over. Then you will have a diploma that will get you lots of scholarships and credits from colleges.

The first thing YOU MUST DO is do not procrastinate on your English journals. They are a pain in the neck even if you do them on time, let alone try to do them all at the last minute. It will make your junior year horrible and cause you lots of stress. So just manage your time and don't slack on English journals.

The other piece of advice I would give you is take the time that is necessary to do internal assessments. They are a big part of IB and will take some of the pressure off when it comes time to take the IB test. This is extremely helpful because come test time in May you will have enough stress, and so any way to reduce stress is a good thing. You can really boost your IB scores if you take the time to do the assessments well.

So, that's my advice; enjoy!

Chris Johnson

Dear Freshman,
Welcome to hell. This will be your hell for the next four years. I say hell affectionately; you will learn to love and hate pretty much every aspect of the program. Stick in there, though. It's definitely worth it.

First of all, senior year is nowhere near as bad as the class ahead of you is probably going to make it seem. To me, it seems to be one of the easiest years we've had thus far. You just have to learn time management. For the love of God, don't procrastinate! I know you've heard this many times before, but this is a big year. On top of regular homework, you have college applications and scholarship forms. There will be a week or two during which you won't have any homework at all. And I know it's tempting to goof off... and you should, but only to an extent.

After saying that, let me say this. All work and no play make the IB kid have a nervous breakdown. No, seriously. There will be points when you are at each other's throats. Deep down, you really love each other, but everyone gets stressed after a while. Do something fun. Say "screw you" to homework. If you are bored, go to www.maddox.xmission.com. Funniest site ever. No, seriously. It's great stress relief from the comfort of your own home. [Editor's

note: inclusion of this URL does not imply endorsement by any adult connected with the school.]

The teachers know that they are doing (something you can't say about all IB teachers). They are usually there to help you out, so just ask. Good luck. You'll need it.

Racheal Cobb

To the IB Classes of the Future:

I offer you just a few humble words of advice with the single hope that in taking them your experience here will be just a bit brighter.

Firstly, in the words of Sam from *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, "I cannot take your burden, but I can carry you." In other words, build a support system, whether it is friends, family, peers, etc. Create a network of people you trust and who have your best interests at heart. IB can be quite demanding sometimes (it will seem like the teachers have a conspiracy to make everything due at once), and nobody but you can bear the burden of it all. Volatile may become a word that describes the temperament of even the most tranquil people. Your support system should be a place you can go and vent so as to avoid this. Without this support system you are sure to have a difficult time. If, however, you should find yourself in a position where your support system is not working for you, find something you are passionate about. Whether it be a music group, a book, a painting, etc., find something you enjoy, and make time for it in your life. This will provide you with a place in your heart that is always warm and filled with happiness. It will offer you a refuge that is available anytime you need it. Should it be a music group, however, I beg you to take the words of the grinning toothless man Liam Gallagher, as sung in "Don't Look Back in Anger," from (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory*?: "Please don't put your life in the hands of a rock and roll band who'll throw it all away."

Lastly, I know my essay is not one of the funnier ones that you will read from my class, but I know that if the essay is funny, it is probably mocking one of our teachers. I will be the first to admit that I have not always had the most flattering opinions of my teachers, but do not let your opinions be dictated by our descriptions. Most of our teachers truly care about us; they care about us passing our exams; about us getting into college; and just about us. Sometimes amid all of the work we forget this. Try to remember that everyone here is working for you, and they are only trying to help you (you'll see this when college application time rolls around). Also, remember that they are humans too, fully capable of human error, but even more capable of holding an intelligence that surpasses your own (yes, even yours!).

Good luck with the next four years.

Jessica Thavarajah

My Meanest, Most Cynical Essay Ever
Welcome to I.B. I'm sure some of you are very anxious about beginning your career in our lovely school. I'm sure some of you couldn't care less about school, but are here for your egos. Good for you. Of course, there are probably still others of you who are too oblivious and shallow to have even thought about what your decision to enter this program might mean. I don't like you very much. Now that I have been condescending I will try to salvage this into some sort of introduction. I'm going to give you a paragraph about what you should do here, and then I will give you a paragraph about what you shouldn't do. It should make for a thrilling read. This structure will achieve my paramount goal: to write three paragraphs.

Most of your important scholastic decisions will not occur until your junior year. In the mean time you have to decide on electives. Try to find something you are interested in, otherwise you will be rotting alive for one or two periods every day. In retrospect I wish I had taken AP Euro, so if you have any interest in history you should give that a run. Definitely go with Ms. Frisbie when you have the option to choose a math class in your junior year. If you take the easy math you will have no self-esteem. Unless you have some special gift in Biology or Chemistry you should take Physics for your science. This is largely due to the fact that Mr. Keers is the coolest guy ever. Also, try to partake in some activities that will give you some worth as a human being. Read literature, write your own, pick up an instrument, something in that vein. If you do maybe you won't be just like everybody else.

Now for what not to do. Don't obsess over school. Some classes can be valuable for learning and self-improvement, but mostly school is simply a means to an end. If you are in this program you have most of the tools you will need to succeed in most fields. What you learn here will be of no professional use in most cases. Don't place too much trust in people who you only think you know. If you are like all other high school freshmen in history you want to address the new "mature" aspects of your life with as much drama as possible. Try to remember that most of the other people around you are just as childish and self-motivated as you are. If you trust them with trivial things that you think matter, you will get hurt. So keep it to yourself, you have enough going on with all your new schoolwork.

Wade Stidham

Starting as a freshman can be difficult at times. You may be used to scoring the highest on tests all the time and you may have known all of the right answers, but not any more. If your time is not managed and spent to the best of your abilities, then there will be some sleepless nights, and it's your fault. Putting off work to the last minute does not help anyone. Also, if you're in a time-consuming sport, and you're worried if you're even going to pass or not, it's not worth killing yourself, TRUST ME! Not only will you get more sleep by quitting, but you might actually become a happy person.

For people who have difficulty with math or science, don't worry because the teachers will explain it and you will get it no matter how thick-headed you might be. If you're afraid to ask for help or just looking stupid, don't be; everyone has those moments. Not to mention you could probably get help from your classmates. But don't fret, there's always someone there to help.

In the end, everything's probably worth it. You're not going to want to hear it while you're doing the mounds of homework. Either way, I'm in college and you have all four fun-loving and exciting years to go. So don't give up because the time will go by much faster than you think. Rack up the memories and enjoy it.

Jamie Waite

Back at the beginning, everyone thought that IB would be the geek's haven. Here, everyone thought they would have to study, do extensive science fair projects, and write thousands upon thousands of words in a single essay. Well, that is what IB is. IB transforms your laidback life into one of a crazed maniac who knows the number e to the eighteenth decimal place. But if you follow my instructions below, you may be able to pass and get your diploma along with some fun on the side.

Coming into IB, it is hard to expect what will happen. The first guy you meet will be Dr. Vetter or Dr. Sunshine. Always call him doctor; he's earned it and he won't appreciate you if you don't. As a freshman, your life is significantly easier than when you become a senior. Don't let these classes fool you into thinking that IB is easy. Your classes are very important even if they don't seem like it. The first years of high school will be your best so don't waste them.

When IB comes around, there are several classes that you should choose to work hard. One class would be the higher-level math classes. Ms. Frisbie is an irreplaceable teacher who knows just about everything. In History of the Americas, study! The tests in that class are insanely hard. The most important advice would just to have fun and enjoy the next four years of your life.

Bao Nguyen

Advice to the freshmen
The best advice that I can give to an upcoming freshman is to primarily listen to the advice of both your teachers and upperclassmen. They know better than you do. Trust me. When somebody tells you about a horrible experience with a particular class, you should listen, because they were there and you weren't.

With that being said, the most important advice to give to anyone coming up through the IB program is to take Chemistry as your IB science. I have taken both Chemistry and Physics, and while I'm sure physics is good for some people, Chemistry is infinitely more interesting. It is said that Chemistry is the hardest science, but I disagree. Of course, it may have some of the most difficult material to understand, but Physics is much harder in a different way. You will get so many assignments in Physics that it's hard to keep up with them all after a while. Also, Physics is so incredibly easy that it is hard to stay awake during the lectures mostly because everything Mr. Keers says can be determined with simple common sense. I liked Chemistry better because it is an actual challenge.

To the actual freshmen (not the juniors-freshmen like above) my advice is very simple. Do your work and be good at doing your work. It does not matter what the work is, only that you develop good study habits. IB will force you to do this by the end simply with the sheer volume of work, but if you can learn to do your work quickly and still learn enough to pass the tests, you will have much more free time to spend as you wish (always a precious resource). To me this is what the essence of IB is about: teaching you the skills you need to do your work in college. If you can learn to do it earlier than I did, high school will be a lot easier for you as well.

Lee Dykxhoorn

As the second to last semester of my high school years come to an end, I can sit back and reflect on what I could have done or had done better to make my years easier at IB/Bartow. The first thing that comes to mind is **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE**. There was such a difference in levels of stress between my junior and senior year based on this advice.

My first two years at IB/Bartow were relatively easy. There wasn't that much work, and that work was relatively easy. But once my junior year commenced, the full work hit me hard. I procrastinated a lot and got behind, which led to sub-par grades. My senior year I have tried to be more proactive. It really has reduced the stress and my grades have also risen. No matter what, don't ever lose sight of the main goal you are striving to achieve. Another piece of advice is to always get enough sleep. There is no reason to pull all-nighters,

because they only add to your stress. If you plan ahead, sleepless nights can be avoided. Also, playing sports or doing some kind of extracurricular event will give you time when you won't have to think about your work, and it also relieves stress. Word to the wise, when picking out a science, be ready to do lots of work for biology and chemistry.

Basically, have fun during your high school years. Don't let the work run your life and determine what you can or cannot do. Hope your years at Bartow are awesome and never give up on things that you start.

Matt Schichtel

Advice to the incoming freshmen
Some of you may want to note this as being the most important tenet of IB: an A is the same whether it is a 100 or a 90. That said there is really no more to add; everything that you will ever need to know connects to that. IB is not a joke and should never be taken lightly; that is why it is important to figure out early just what you plan to accomplish. Once you have figured that out, you can effectively plan how to achieve that goal while minimizing work. This is the only sure-fire way not to burn out. The purpose of IB is not to turn you into a superhero of a student; its actual goal is to teach you how to get around being that. When that is learned success in life is assured. Beating the system is much more important in life than learning how to plow through the system doing the prescribed work. First it is quicker, and secondly you get to be a bad guy and that's pretty cool. Also neglecting to be a superhero of a student will keep you from accidentally alienating your peers.

Certain people will try to dissuade you from procrastination. This is something that I cannot do. While it is relieving to come home and know that you don't have to write an entire paper or finish an entire project in one night, it may not be the way for you. For the most part working, for me, is difficult without an excessive amount of pressure. It can be an inefficient use of your time to start on something early. Starting early leaves no sense of urgency, without this you are inclined to spend countless hours in between paragraphs playing Internet chess or other worthless pursuits. So unless you have some type of motivation that is superhuman you may want to try it before you knock it.

Andrew Madrid

As a junior, I have just begun the actual two-year IB program, yet I realize already the great amount of effort and commitment it will take to complete the curriculum. Ninth and tenth grade are considerably easier, but you should definitely take full advantage of the skills and knowledge available through the courses because you will then have a solid foundation and preparation for the actual IB program. For example, taking care to really learn and not just memorize your foreign language for a test will help immensely when you are getting ready to take the AP and IB exams. As well, I would take full advantage of the electives that you have in your ninth and tenth grade years. Whether art, creative writing, engineering, YJP, or AP European History interests you, take that class. Another major point is to do well early, but don't stress yourself out early. Plan your work and work your plan, but have fun while doing it. You only get one shot at the four years of your life in high school, and while you have chosen a path that will be rigorous compared to that of your friends, it is very possible to have a life and participate in school and social activities.

Freshman year isn't difficult, and sophomore year is even easier while junior year becomes quite difficult, and I've heard that the first semester of senior year is even more challenging primarily because of outside burdens like college and scholarship applications and the extended essay. The immediate change you will experience from middle school to ninth grade is the number of projects assigned. Everyone will warn you of the pitfall of procrastination, and as much as you will hate the fiftieth person for telling you, the advice is valid. From the start, learn to do parts of a project beginning when you receive the assignment and ending a couple of days before the actual due date. If you consistently wait until the night before a project is due, eventually additional assignments or tests or unplanned illness or activities will keep you from completing the assignment to the best of your abilities. If you do this, you probably won't make it through the first two years and certainly won't make it through the last two years.

If I could have you remember one thing as you now journey through high school, it would be to do what you want to do and be who you want to be. If the only reason you are now attending the IB Program is because your parents want it for you, then you are not going to make it. However, stick it out for a semester or a year and decide if the program is truly for you or not. Maybe you will thank your parents for sending you, or maybe you will tell them that IB isn't your thing. When making your decision, realize that everyone does not make straight A's through the program, that everyone will not make a 1550 on his or her SAT. You don't have to be that kind of person to do well in the program, because IB isn't about going home from school and studying until you go to

bed; it's about challenging yourself to your own limit and preparing yourself for college and beyond.

I didn't discuss any specific teachers or classes in this essay, as you yourself will discover pretty quickly the demands of the individual teachers and the difficulty of the specific classes. Older students will be glad to impart their "wisdom" of their previous academic experiences, but don't believe everything you hear. Remember, the teachers and administrators truly are here to help you succeed, so keep open communication with them. One last thing: get to know your fellow IB students because in the end, they are the ones that you'll go to for help, sympathy, and some fun. Good luck.

Stephen Smith

Ah, welcome to IB. So we've been told as seniors to give you a few pointers as freshmen. So here are a few random thoughts with some tricks for true success in this program.

First of all, everything must revolve around sleep. If you have a project due in a couple days, sleep tonight and worry about it tomorrow. Yes, I am advocating procrastination; no matter what everyone tells you, it's the best way to go. Think about it: why worry yourselves over extended periods of time when you can just be stressed the night before? In order to truly utilize this trick, caffeine is a must. Now, this advice only works for those of you who thrive under pressure. If you don't, learn how.

People may try to intimidate you by constantly bombarding you with talks about Internal Assessments and External Assessments and that infamous 4,000-word Extended Essay. Don't worry too much about it. All that won't come until first semester of senior year. Looking back, it wasn't nearly as bad as I thought it would be. No, really. Even though you'll be taking college courses, keep in mind that you're still in high school. So have fun. IB will not be detrimental to your social life if you don't let it. Just fight back; every once in a while, take a Saturday off and force yourself not to do any work whatsoever.

There you go. Abide by these simple guidelines and the next four years will fly by. Work hard, but play harder.

Ruchi Patel

Queridos estudiantes; Bienvenidos al infierno. If you don't know what that means, you'll learn soon enough. I would like to give you some advice that you must heed or IB will destroy you from both the inside out, and the outside in, uniformly. Choose your electives wisely, play the school game, and don't forget to have fun. IB won't get hard until your senior year, although junior year is a little worse than the first two.

First off, choose your electives wisely. I wasted mine my freshman year, because I had to take Spanish 1 (didn't feel like it over the summer), and chose shop. Shop is a waste of time if you're not going to be a carpenter (don't be). Tenth grade I took typing for about the fifth year in a row. If you can already type, don't waste your time. I got caught up in Spanish in 10th grade, taking Spanish 2 and 3 simultaneously (I got Bs in both of them). Don't put yourself in this predicament. I'd suggest electives that are fun, but benefit you in the long run, like drafting, ROTC, or AP electives. Sure, the last thing you need is more work, but AP credit means college credit, even if you're a freshman now.

Secondly, play the school game. You won't have the same English teacher I had for 10th grade, so I'll tell you what the school game is. It's merely giving teachers what they want. If you realize there's a certain thing you have to do for an A, just do it and you're done. You don't have to go above and beyond for the same A as someone who doesn't even care, that's called wasting your time. Also, if you know you have an A in the class, it doesn't matter what numerical grade it is, to colleges, all they see is the grade for the semester. A 98 is the same as a 90 as far as college and GPA is concerned. An 89 first 9 weeks and a 90 second 9 weeks balances out to a 90 for the semester, the same A as someone who got a 95 and a 97. [Editor's note: colleges often recalculate your GPA; check how a college does it before taking this statement as always true.]

So go ahead and take a zero on an assignment if you need a break and your grade can take it. Doing all your work all the time during the first couple years isn't hard, but once you get into 11th and 12th grade, you're going to have to make sacrifices. Take zeroes and rest for the night. Your class grade might drop a little, but so freaking what? Have fun sometimes and say, "to hell with it." I'm not going to preach to you about procrastinating, because the truth is, you can't avoid it no matter what anybody says. Acknowledge that just because you have two months to write an essay means you'll be writing it the night before until 4 in the morning. Procrastinating means you can have fun and not work constantly. If you don't break up the monotony of school, especially in IB, you'll have a breakdown.

In conclusion, IB will definitely change you. It will probably hurt you physically through disruption of eating and sleeping habits, but you'll be ready to

walk all over college, and form friendships through the bond you and your peers will share enduring this experience. So just pick your electives wisely, don't fret over lower grades than usual, and above all, just have fun.

Chuck Corbitt

Dear Freshmen, Looking back on the past three and half years of my high school life, I think I am glad that I came to IB and did not quit. (Right now, it's only an "I think" because I haven't finished all of my assignments yet.) It was a tough road, but I know, as clichéd as it sounds, it will be worth it in the end. I have learned how to study, manage time, make choices when there just isn't time to do everything, and balance school and life. Perhaps these are lessons most often learned in college, but the sooner you get used to them the better.

I'm not going to lie to you — there will be points when you want to give up and quit because it's too much work, no matter how intelligent you are. Or, maybe you think you can't hack it because all of your classmates seem smarter than you. This isn't true either. You passed the test and now you're in; you just have to keep track of work and learn to manage your time. The teachers here definitely know what they are doing and you will be prepared for the IB tests and assessments; however, you have to do your part of studying and paying attention. Some classes may seem easier than others and more than likely you will find what you like best.

Most importantly, take everything with a grain of salt. Don't freak out about senior assignments as a freshman. I know from experience that the "Extended Essay" looks daunting on the original curriculum guide you see, but it is four years away and you will be prepared. IB isn't for everyone, but my advice to anyone who passed the test is to at least give it a try. If you decide you really don't like it, at least you'll have one or two years of strong academics. Fresh out of eighth grade, college is probably not on your mind, but the truth is that when you want to start applying and competing, IB gives you an edge.

Lindsay Jackson

Dear Student who is younger than me,
If there is anything I have learned in IB, it is to stay away from the drug known as procrastination. This drug starts off with the symptoms of “relax now, get to it later” and “I’d rather be doing something else.” Eventually, this drug is so ingrained into your mind, the first you want to do when you get home is not do homework, even though you have a crap load of it. Eventually, this will lead to a loss of sleep, angry parents, and the dreaded Dr. Not-So-Sunshine-Anymore (Vetter). This is the worst pitfall you can get yourself into in all of IB, because teachers like to pile work on you when you least expect it, and they do in fact get pleasure out of your pain, your lack of sleep, and your squirming.

When you finally decide to choose a science, these words of wisdom will help you immensely, “Bio is for memorizers, Chem is for understanders, and Physics is everyone else.” If you can memorize, stay out of biology. If you don’t get concepts very well, stay away from chemistry, especially inorganics. Physics is there if you can’t memorize or understand deeply, because Keers-sensei has handouts that help immensely and also summarize nicely what you need to know (at least I think they do, Chem student here). Also, listen to what your teachers have to say; even though you are a teenager and know everything, teachers can sometimes get lucky and tell you something in a way that makes it clearer.

IB has made me a better person overall, though. It has, eventually, taught me precious time management skills. I recommend you learn those as a freshman so it doesn’t haunt you for the next couple of years, because it is really hard to learn as a senior, and that is when you need it most. I have also taught myself discipline through IB, which is important if you don’t want to get hooked to procrastination. You must be careful with what you do with your time now, because that English paper won’t do itself, nor will not doing it help any more. “You gotta get stuff done so you can work on other stuff.” That is the sad truth of IB, because there will be times where you are so overwhelmed with work that you can’t think straight, and all you have to look forward to is more work. But you know what, you just gotta hang in there, like that kitty, and eventually it will be all done, and you will have learned so much: academically and personally.

Someone who is older than you,
Kevin Cassell

Dear Freshman,
It has been three and a half years since I was where you are now. I think you have made a wise decision to enroll in the IB program (by choice or by force, it is worth a try). While there are positive and negative sides to every situation, I feel that the positive far outweigh the negative. My first bit of advice (I gave this the previous year to the rising juniors) was not to listen to what upperclassmen have to say about classes. Form your own opinion when the time comes. Going into a class with the pre-determined ideas only limits your point of view. I have also always felt that people overly exaggerated the amount of work or stress they are going through. It really isn’t as bad as people make it out to be (just manage your time).

I want to stress the fact that everyone is different. I always get the feeling that a majority of people are trying to live up to some standard; everyone is in competition. A little competition is good (it keeps you trying to do your absolute best), but do not let it get in the way of your happiness. High school is the time to have fun, besides you only go through it once. Do what is best for you, study hardest for the classes you’re weakest in, and put effort into all of your classes.

Friends are an important part of any high school, maybe even more so here. I know my class was close right from the very beginning because we were all experiencing the same thing. More important though than spending time with friends in school, I feel, is spending time with them out of school. Without this I think I would be bored out of my mind. I encourage all of you to become involved in school activities. This way you will make friends from Bartow that are not in IB. Last (but probably the most important) hold onto your friends who do not go to school with you; not having any clue what you are going through in school can be the best thing in the world some time.

I wish you all the best of times in your upcoming four years. Do not stress about exams, essay after essay after essay after essay after essay after essay, portfolios, CAS, write-up labs, projects, orals, or presentations that are to come your senior year. You have three more years till you have to consider them! Only joking, senior year will not be as bad as people make it out. In the end it is all worth it.

*~Ash Margo**

All incoming freshmen to IB should be given a suitable warning and a decent amount of advice before attending IB for high school. First of all, all freshmen should consider the following: Is IB the right school for me? The question should not be ignored and should not be taken lightly. Not everyone wants to have four years of high school filled with summer school, summer assignments, essays, projects, and IB requirements to live up to. So the freshmen should know what they are getting into from the start, or they might regret it later. Be sure you are making the right decision for yourself and for what YOU want to do after high school.

Secondly, all freshmen should remember two important keys to surviving IB. First is not to stress out, because being stressed does not help, in fact it makes everything worse. Stress is something you cannot afford to have and do not want to have to deal with. And then after taking that advice remember not to procrastinate. It seems to be an IB tradition that is passed on, for every class to top the other in how long they can procrastinate and still finish all their work. Well, not everyone who procrastinates does finish his or her work, and I can say from first hand experience that when it can be avoided, do not procrastinate. It leads to many nights of staying up late and losing sleep — and that is not fun, nor does it feel good. So do not stress, because that can lead to procrastination, and do not procrastinate because although it may cause more stress, moreover it leads to late nights and lost sleep.

Finally, I challenge all the freshmen who do come to IB to stick it out. It is not always fun, but in the long run it is worth it if you do stick it out and finish. Not only do I challenge you to graduate from IB, but I challenge you to do it with flying colors. I do not just mean good grades either. Life is not just about good grades. It is also about being involved — hanging out with friends when you can, playing sports, being in plays or chorus. Just be active. Do not let IB be your whole life — that is the key to survival (and not going crazy). So do your best and you will be proud of all you have done.

Gina Morelli

Dear IB students,
IB is a hard school. More is expected of us, and therefore, more work is given. I have learned that no matter how many assignments I have or how much I have to learn that I will accomplish it one way or another. If you don't take anything else from the IB program (I hope you will...) but if you don't, take with you the knowledge that you can accomplish and you can finish all those assignments and finish them well. Everyone likes to talk about time management (I'm sorry, should I say "laugh"?), but for IB kids... it's necessary. So often I find that I have left off an assignment for way too long and now I am doing that assignment instead of studying for a test or something. This results in a lower grade on the test, in the class, you get the picture. So just do the assignment ASAP so that you have time for other stuff. Mrs. Delk said that IB students will spend 9 months worrying about something and only several hours actually doing it. This is so true. We worry and procrastinate for 300X the actual time it would take to just get something done! Sometimes assignments can seem so huge looming over your head, but if you come back to reality and realize that the assignment is just another one of many that you'll have in your life and that it is no big deal, you'll probably stop hyperventilating. **YOU ARE BIGGER THAN YOUR ASSIGNMENTS.**

More advice I would have to give is to not take yourself so seriously. It is my opinion that you are here on earth not only to work, but to play as well. It is still important to spend time with your family, to do things that are non-school related. Sometimes if you can just get away from work and regain a perspective on things, they come easier.

About college... get your applications in early!!! Sit down one weekend in the fall and write those suckers up!! It will be over and you will be completely finished with them.

Ummm... that's about all I have to say I guess. Good luck, you'll be fine!!

Love,
Heather Hart ©

There is not really much that I will be remembered for in IB. I didn't make a 1600 on my SAT like Ben Grossman, or a 36 on my ACT like Clayton Tillman and Victoria Astley — I also didn't do both like Alex Wales. I do know, though, what IB is. Possibly my insights will help you, or maybe I have been hardened enough by the rough spots along the way that you can't identify. Remember these things, though:

- IB is not just about schoolwork. Academia is an amazing realm, but don't forget that you will soon be released from your childhood. Remember that you can't go back.
- Recall that you share a class with a smaller group than some share a classroom with. I hated my classmates for the first two and a half years. Don't fall into the same trap. You aren't cooler than they are, whatever cool means anyway.
- You will be tempted to do one of two things, and possibly both. Resist overachievement, but resist underachievement as well. I know I have been a victim of the latter. Overachievement is a brutal trap that brainwashes the student into learning for the sake of a report card. Underachievement is an equally brutal trap, and though its practitioners may argue that they fully comprehend their subjects, and just don't like doing homework, they are wrong. Learn as much as you can before being thrown into a college environment that is oriented around careers and single-faceted worldviews. Learn to explain and describe this world through as many media as possible.
- If you don't like IB, leave.
- If you have any reservations about leaving, don't leave. That means you like it and you're lying to yourself.
- Pay attention to your teachers. No, I don't mean during their lectures, either. Pay attention to who they are. Realize, somewhere in your journey, that they are human beings. They were once you, and you might very well be them one day.
- Do not turn doughnuts in the parking lot after school.
- Keep your love life away from the IB school. Not that all IB girls are unattractive or bad....
- Don't be afraid to make friends with someone who has the same name as you. He may even be the anti-you, but don't be afraid of him.
- Ben Graffam is an IB legend. This is neither a compliment nor an insult, simply a fact. I urge you to educate yourself on his legacy at the IB school.
- Don't be afraid to open your mind up a little bit. Don't hamper your understanding of this world we share in favor of a spoon-fed rule.
- If you are a Christian coming in, you might not be when you leave. If you are a Hindu coming in, you might not be when you leave. Losing faith happens when subjected to the tortures of a school

like this. That's taking it a little far, but it's better than losing faith in a Nazi prison camp.

- Subvert the Dominant Paradigm — Think For Yourself.
- Wish you were older — time goes by more slowly that way. Wish you were younger — time goes by more quickly. You decide which to choose. I am in no hurry.
- Physics is the science to take. It explains the most about the world, and is the easiest. A great combination.
- If you have hated math all your life, be patient. Calculus will come and your whole conception of the subject will be shifted (slightly to the left, not politically).
- Don't be afraid to reveal your SELF to your teachers. How can they care about you if they have never known you?
- Contrary to popular opinion, freshman year is not tough. Sophomore year IS tough if you go in thinking it isn't. Junior year is like that month... it comes in like a lion and leaves like an elephant... I know that can't be how that goes.
- Stephen Smith is a Senior now that you are a Freshman. He was my doubles partner. We won County and District Doubles Championships. After you finish congratulating him, do it again. Play tennis. It takes up time, but is the ultimate IB sport.
- You will be assigned to read approximately 37,892 books, including textbooks, over the course of the next four years. I have read three. You can do the same.
- Ignore the silly last bit of advice.
- There is so much to say and only a finite amount of brainpower. Probably it is time to leave.
- If I can leave you with one thought, one message, it is this:

Honor and honesty, compassion and truth are good even if they kill you, for they alone give life its dignity and worth. Yet probably England and France and all the good and the noble and the true of all the world will die and obscenity will triumph. Probably those that practiced virtue will be destroyed, but it is better for men to die than to call evil good, and virtue itself will never die.

William Alexander Percy,
Lanterns on the Levee

Sean Suarez

P. S. Occasionally thank your teachers, even if silently. They have imparted to you goods more valuable than you have yet to realize. In the next four years, some of them will impart to you goods more valuable than you will EVER realize. Realize this.

Dear You Curious Freshmen or bored Trig/Calc student on Frisbie's web page,

It's the end of the world, not that I ever really knew it. I suppose that, if given the opportunity (and I have been), I would not advise freshmen, because that's all that anyone ever does to a freshman. That was the idea behind the whole Big Brother/Big Sister thing that Wales and Mostella did. That ultimately taught me that, wow, you can get creative hours for doing anything. When I finally got my freshman, he and I came to the conclusion that an IB senior knows no more about being a freshman, sophomore, junior, or even senior, than anyone else would. Still, to not pull a Doug Carman and write a mocking, rude essay (even though I loved that guy), I'll discuss some of the more significant things in my memory.

The pitfalls of my IB experience, nearly all of which are social, are probably very much my own (although Andrew and Wade might know what I mean). So, other than advising someone never to act like me, advice I wish I could take, I'll leave that alone. On an intellectual level, IB is a mix of stimulation and degradation. By degradation I do not mean that the classes are bad or anything of that nature. Some of the classes are simply less unique than others, and I doubt that any of them are bad by most standards. Still, IB is the place where suddenly everything is about numbers, points, awards, achievements. It's hollow, meaningless, and I fell into it the first day I was here. So, if you can, steer clear of all of that. All the perfect scores mean is that everyone else is more intelligent than you are. It's a race you can't win because you were born with legs that just can't run as fast. You'll still do fine for yourself, though. At least that's what they tell me, so I'll regurgitate it for you.

The classes considered most worthy of time vary with whom you ask. The one response you'll hear from all who take such is your higher math (Trigonometry, Analytic Geometry, and Calculus). The subject matter is consistently intriguing and the class structure is comforting regardless of performance. Many people liked American History with Goss and Algebra II with Holm as well. The rest of the classes I can think of are no longer taught by the same people. Ah yes, I also greatly enjoyed Chemistry about 38% of the time, and I took it as my higher level science. I only wish I could make some comment about freshman year, yet I know so little of what goes on, as the curriculum and staff have changed drastically since I was one. Enjoy your life if possible. Otherwise, make stupid jokes and write essays in letter form with a strange, basically negative tone, all out of a selfish emphasis on your own problems rather than those of someone to whom you could probably offer worthwhile help.

My Name was *Sean Fahey*

Okay, here's my advice to all you freshmen: First of all, don't be stupid and procrastinate your freshman year. It's unnecessary, and you'll have much more stressful, procrastinative moments later in your IB life. Don't pull all-nighters, either! I've never had to during all four years of high school — sleep is worth more in the end than a 93 versus a 98 — it will make you have a better outlook on life if you get enough sleep. And powernaps are awesome! I didn't have to use them until junior year, but keep them in mind — they work!

Secondly, be nice to each other. You'll be together for four long, trying years, and they can be either (a) the worst, most miserable time of your life, or (b) the best time you ever had with some of the greatest people you'll ever meet. The reason I like IB so much is that within my class, we have no socially exclusive groups. So don't form cliques, learn to accept each other despite religious, ideological, or personal differences. This is important. This is the key to perpetual happiness. Okay, maybe not, but it's close. You'll thank me when you're seniors.

Along the same line, try to get along with your parents. Believe me, I know it's difficult at times, but it will definitely reward you in the end. They will let you do so much more stuff than before, and your relationship will change so that you're more like friends than just people who are related.

A few more little points I won't expound upon: most importantly, follow your heart. IB is not for everyone, and if it's not for you, you can be very unhappy. Don't stay just because you want to go to a good school — stay because you like the people, the teachers, the environment of IB. Next, choose the science you like, not the one that is the easiest — you'll understand everything a lot better and you'll be motivated to study it. And take art. It's the best elective, it gives you a creative outlet during the day, and you really do learn a whole lot. Plus, Pie (Mr. Piekarski) is the teacher and he's awesome — don't worry if you can't draw, he can show you how. And you don't have to take Psychology, which sounds interesting but apparently doesn't get rave reviews (busy work and, apparently, teacher-student issues).

Finally, one more piece of advice for later in your high school career: for the love of God, any god, get your college applications done early! If you don't, your parents will bug you, your teachers definitely will not appreciate you giving them recommendations late (and hence, write bad recommendations), and you'll have every person you meet say, "You haven't gotten them off yet? *gasp*" Yeah, it's really annoying and it puts lots of pressure on you. So do them.

Allison Burke

W elcome Newbie,

Let me start off by saying that the rumors are true: IB does give an ungodly amount of work. And while that may seem incredibly unappetizing to you right now, it's really not that bad. More than, I don't know, five generations of IB seniors have endured and graduated from the "rigorous curriculum" so hey, you know it's doable. However, knowing the nature of teenagers in general and speaking from experience ourselves, we're here to guide you away from those few bad habits you're bound to pick up along your journey.

Procrastination. The most *evil* habit to get into. Sure, you might be able to afford the consequences during your freshman and sophomore years, but take my word for it: it is the HARDEST trend to stop. Trust me, you do NOT want to cement yourself into that kind of lethargic mindset when you get into real IB (that would be 11th and 12th grade). It will bite you hard, really hard on the butt. (I stress this especially in regards to the beastly 4,000-word Extended Essay.) Solution? Don't start. Seriously. Get your homework done on a regular basis now. Do some projects early if you can. Study (even in a group) a few days before a test instead of the night before. Not only will the quality of your work improve, but you won't have to be one of those many sleep-deprived slackers who didn't have enough sense to manage their time wisely. Plus, it significantly reduces stress, which, as you know, is bad for your complexion. So save your skin. Don't procrastinate.

For the perfectionists: learn to balance all of your work. Some classes simply need more attention than others, so make sure you don't do the 10-point extra credit project for English when you're barely passing

Spanish. It is highly improbable that you can maintain all 100's in each class and keep your sanity (though it has been done), so learn to accept and adapt to your limits. A "B" is perfectly acceptable.

As for the social aspects of IB, embrace the differences and unique qualities each of your peers brings to the overall personality of the class. You will essentially be living with this group of individuals for the next four years, so accept them now. It's hard enough getting through all the academics every week without having to go through all the drama of why he or she doesn't like you. I know many of us can say that we would not be graduating without the kindness and support of our friends, who have shared in our sleepless nights and venting sessions, among other things. Do something together outside of school. And you are allowed to mingle with the Bartow High students. They're an interesting bunch, too, so feel free to make friends with the locals.

I hope you've taken something away from this relatively short letter of advice. I meant every word. No, I have not addressed all that you will encounter in the next few years, but I'm sure you're capable of handling whatever may come. Finally, I want to end with one more suggestion: Whenever you get overwhelmed with the endless amount of work, step back. Take a deep breath. Exhale. Repeat after me: "I will not let this work get the best of me. I am in control." Say it as many times as necessary.

I wish you the very best of luck in the most challenging four years of our life. And patience, grasshopper. It will all be worth it in the end.

Jenny Lapnawan

Traditional Students

D ear Freshmen,
Hi. Throughout my four years at BHS/IB I have had many experiences, some for the good and some for the bad. Many times I wish I had an upperclassman with me to fill me in about the all the "stuff" high school was about, especially BHS in particular.

As a senior I offer some advice to you. First and foremost, have fun. High school can be just a big bore or just a place of work for some, but don't make it your job. You're in high school — enjoy it! However, don't have TOO much fun. After all, you do want to graduate. Secondly, this school supplies you with a planner the very first day of school. You have it so USE IT! I made the mistake of not using my planner the first year. Don't make the same one. I later realized that the planner is to help me, not just a decoration for my backpack.

Another thing to know is that your teachers are here to teach, not to baby-sit. That's another thing that some of us seniors have yet to grasp. I, too, am still guilty of not grasping the concept at times. Also, don't think you can get a feel for your teacher the very first day of school. Teachers are NOT to be tried. This isn't middle school anymore; you can't turn your assignment in twenty days later and still get full credit. Nuh-uh, doesn't work here.

I could continue forever about the dos and don'ts of high school, but I won't. For now you should be able to survive on what I have said. Don't take your high school life for granted; cherish each and every moment.

Sincerely,
Cynetra Young

As I think back over the last three and a half years at Bartow High School, I feel that it was truly an experience well needed. Our school is unique because we have two schools at one location. Many say that they do not like it, but I feel it is an advantage. Without the International Baccalaureate School, Bartow High School would not have some of the things it has and honor students at BHS sometimes would not be able to take high-level classes. This being my second home, I can offer some advice to prospective students.

As a freshman, there are many obstacles you will face. One thing is the atmosphere. In high school, there are a lot of people in the school; it's just the opposite of middle school. You will have to adjust to the number of people in the hallways, and in some cases, in the classrooms. Another forewarning I can offer to freshmen is that the fact that you are in a physical education class does not mean you will just play. There is one physical education teacher who just does not play. She gives tests, bookwork, and grades you on your effort outside the classroom; so don't go to P.E. thinking it is an easy "A." Some pitfalls I can prohibit the students to avoid are tardiness to class, and missing school. When you miss class time for whatever reason, it is hard to get back on track because of the number of classes at Bartow Senior High School. Those are some insights I can offer up to freshmen.

I feel that my Anatomy & Physiology Honors class in tenth grade has been most important and the most deserving of my study. Not only was the class beneficial to me because it teaches you about your body, but I loved and enjoyed it. That is great when you learn and have fun doing it. I also think that the class was important because the teacher enforced responsibility to her students. By teaching me the required course material and things about life, I received two in one.

As I close, I can truly say that I have enjoyed my time here at Bartow Senior High School. Someone helped me when I was a newcomer and I feel it is my duty to carry out the same. The insight I gave can hopefully help someone.

Marcellus Austin

Two weeks marks the beginning of the year 2004 — the year of my graduation. These last four years have passed by in the blink of an eye. However, there are several things that I wish I had known my freshman year that would have made that time pass more easily.

First of all, don't sweat the small stuff. Does it really matter that she dumped you, that he's talking about your mama, that they're starting rumors about you? No, it doesn't. You have athletics, academics, spirituality, community service, and household duties to attend to. Don't let the last thing you think about every night when you go to bed be your enemies. If you work hard enough, they might be working for you someday.

Don't always believe those "pearls of wisdom" adults shove down your throat. A stitch in time does not necessarily save nine, a penny saved is not nearly enough, and fighting (if well waged) has never not solved anything! The most important thing is to be aware, know your own situation, and always have an attack plan to get things done. While I think it is crucial to have a role model, you cannot live someone else's life. Have the guts to make your own life, and your own decisions!

Adults seem to be amazed to discover a kid who isn't curled up in the corner with a bottle in their mouth crying for mommy. Many adults only look like they know what is going on; if you are put in a position of leadership, take charge! There is a lot to be said for having initiative. Don't ever let your reputation get tarnished; sometimes it will earn you valuable advantages and allies.

Finally, the most important thing in high school, and any adult environment, is to be organized. Part of being aware is always having a system, and knowing the next step. Keep a to-do list, organize notebooks for every subject, and keep an up-to-date planner. The world moves at lightning speed, and it is sometimes difficult to keep up. High school will race by; do all that you can to squeeze every second from it!

A.J. DeNeve

As I am about to complete my fourth year of high school, I can look back and honestly say that middle school did not prepare me for what I encountered back in 2000. Nothing can prepare you for the nights that you never get to sleep, or the way your body feels after a hard day at practice. With that said my advice to you would be to never give up, everything will pay off eventually. If you don't fit in your freshman year, don't sweat it; it really does not matter as much as you may think. And if you do fit in, try to remember that the only friends who matter are the ones that you can call at 12:00 in the morning to ask for help, not the ones who are getting drunk or smoking after the football games.

No matter what, always remember to never give up. If you play sports, don't worry if you don't start your freshman year, if you work hard you will never go unnoticed. It's the same way with academics too. What you do your freshman year will determine what you'll do your senior year. Never get discouraged if you feel your hard work isn't being noticed, it will pay off!

If I gave any other advice I would have to say, you are only in high school once, so use all the opportunities it gives you. If you've always wanted to be on the swim team, go for it; you'll probably never get the chance ever again. If two of your favorite sports are in the same season, play both. If you want to be on the football or wrestling team, don't hold back, even if you are a girl — make the guys respect you. Most of all try everything that you can: clubs, sports or academic classes. You may never get the opportunities that high school allows you to do ever again. Just never limit yourself, never say, "I don't have time for that;" anything can happen if you want it to.

One pitfall that I think every senior has encountered and wished they had someone to tell them to look out for would be, if you are in a class you don't like (chemistry, etc.) listen and do your work anyway. Always make sure you know what to do in the class and follow along, stay after school if you need extra help. Because if you don't know what to do, you'll have a lot of unneeded stress when exams come around. Just stay on top of your class work.

I believe the SAT test is one of the biggest tests you'll take out of all four years. For me it deserved the most studying. Start early your junior year, if you need tutoring or a prep class, do it. If you think you can score high without any preparation, think again. It doesn't matter if you are in a Calculus class or AP English, you may still need extra help. Taking the test and being prepared will definitely increase your chances of not having to take it over and over again. Even though it's not everything when trying to go to college, it's the first question anyone will ask when you're trying to get in to a university.

Most of all, have fun, just don't screw up. And find a study group early with people who are in all of your classes. It comes in handy when you're trying to finish loads of assignments all in one lunch period. (Believe me it will happen!)

Shana Weldon

Throughout my experience at Bartow High School, I have learned that some things could have been different if I had just done things differently. Make sure you think of your future such as your senior year, when regarding decisions that you make. As a freshman I took the easy way out and hardly took any honors or AP courses. Of course they were easy and I established good grades in there, however since they were not challenging me, how was I to benefit in the future? Looking back I wish I would have started out taking the more challenging classes, because when I finally did it was harder for me to adjust to them. Taking the challenging classes not only challenges your mind, but also helps you prepare for the real world; it's not always a choice between the easy way and the hard way. Taking the challenging classes is far from easy, however when the year is over you will be able to breathe and realize that you have done it.

Remember to always stay focused. I know that during rough times it's hard and you just want to give up; believe me, I have been there many times. Whenever you have any problems, I recommend you just ask. You don't know all the answers to life because if you did there wouldn't be any purpose. In addition, remember to breathe and have fun. You'll remember your high school years forever.

Overall, from my experience at Bartow High School, trust me when I say challenge yourself, stay focused, and most of all have fun! Then when high school is finally over, you can look back and say, "I did it, and I did it well!"

Jessica Olvera

Hi to all you incoming freshmen,
My name is Aaron Adams, and I am a senior in the graduating class of 2004. I just want to give you guys some advice about this school, along with some pitfalls you might encounter, and I want to talk to you about study habits.

The advice I want to give you is to work hard. Working hard is the key ingredient in an easy life as a student. You accomplish so many things when you work hard. Also, I want to say that school comes first; you can worry about the parties, the girls, the guys, and the whatever's later down the road. The only thing you need to worry about right now is adjusting in a new environment.

You might encounter some pitfalls while attending Bartow High School. The biggest one that I encountered was procrastination, which was my biggest problem in school. I always wanted to put things off until the last minute, but luckily I got back on the ball at the end of my sophomore year. Make sure to do your assignments when they are assigned to you. Another possible pitfall would be staying on task. It is very easy to get distracted, or to talk to that girl that sits in front of you in history. Don't do that! By the way, tardies are a no-no; you do not want a lunch detention with Hurd and Bonney.

The thing we all dread... studying. Yes, I know it is a hard job, but someone has to do it! And that someone is you! You will not make it anywhere if you don't study. Come on... everybody needs an extra convolution sometimes.

So, if you don't want to get stuck behind the pack, listen to what I say, and you will be in the front of the pack. Enjoy your time in high school. It goes by quickly. C-ya!

Aaron Adams

Dear Youngster,
Well, first of all, I would like to encourage you not to slack, and try to learn as much as you can in your first few years. It is very helpful to get into a group of friends that are adamant about learning and want to do something with their life. It is also imperative that you excel in the classes you do take, and if you can, take honors classes because if you want to go to college, it really looks good when you take honors your whole high school career.

Just a few mistakes I have made myself are fooling around too much, not taking school seriously, and rebelling against my teachers. I always wanted to be friends with everyone, and when I finally started trying in school, and stopped fooling around, I found it easier to make friends. I didn't take school seriously until about halfway through my junior year. When I realized that with my grades I wouldn't be able to get into the school of my choice, I started to try and bring my grades up, even though I have my SAT scores to get into a good university. In my 10th grade year, my teacher Coach Michaels and I did not get along very well. He wrote me up at least 10 times that year, and every time it was for a reason that was not worth the referral. So I stopped doing my work and sooner than later I started to fall that class. I luckily was able to make a C average, but I learned that in order to keep my grades up I needed to kiss glutei. Therefore, I have been able to receive rather good grades since I learned to do my work and kiss up to the teachers.

The most important and deserving study learned in high school is math. In order to be a good engineer, I need to know a lot of math, and being able to excel in my math study will help me in my future career. However, you should try to learn as much as you can, and take the classes that you think will teach you the most because to go through high school and learn nothing will not benefit you at all. Unless you push yourself, you will not be able to be the man/woman you should be, and all the potential that you have will be wasted. Have a fun time in high school. Much love, Peace out Dude/Dudette.

Sincerely,
David Jones

I have a few words of advice to those of you beginning school here as a freshman next year. First of all take classes that are tough enough to work your brain hard, but not too tough, to avoid that overwhelming stress that comes with working too much or the absence of rewards for not taking any harder classes. And most of all do not procrastinate on any of your large projects.

For the first 3 years of high school I was in IB and it was not too hard but definitely challenging enough. The last of those 3 years was too much for me to handle while playing sports and actually having any time whatsoever for myself. So I decided to change the road I was on. I got out of IB because my grades were suffering, but I am still taking some AP classes, just not all of my classes. So, yes, try and push yourself or you won't ever gain anything, but also don't kill yourself (or your personality) in the process.

You will hear this a hundred times, but chances are you still won't listen until it happens to you. Please, do not procrastinate on your bigger projects. If anything will help you just a few minutes a night spent working on that English paper will save your life sometimes. Trust me, you might think its cool to pull an "all-nighter," but its horrible when you are doing those three papers all on Thursday night.

Grady Oates

The advice I would give to upcoming freshmen is to always stay on top of your work. And if you do not understand something, ask questions. Try to avoid missing a lot of class. Lastly, the important and deserving thing I got from studying is a lifelong understanding of what I've been taught.

Freshmen, do not get behind in your work. It will make school more difficult. It will also make you have to work harder to understand the old work and also the new work being taught. So if you do not understand, just ask the teacher or another student for help.

A possible pitfall to avoid is missing too many days of school. It puts you behind the rest of the students in class. It makes you have to work hard to try and catch up and you also do not have the benefit of having the teacher's explanation.

The important and deserving thing about studying is the lifelong knowledge of what you have learned. It teaches you good study habits for college. It also lets you keep ahead in school.

To conclude, freshmen, do not fall behind in your schoolwork. Ask plenty of questions. Stay in school and study a lot.

Alacia Strafford

After having gone through three-plus years at ABHS, I have learned a lot of different things, but the most important thing I would say is: don't procrastinate. They say curiosity killed the cat; well, procrastination kills grades, as well as sleep, peace, and possibly your sanity. If you put things off until the last minute, it most certainly won't be as good as possible because you have to rush to do it. If it turns out to take longer than you figured then you'll be up late working on it. And let me tell you, sleep is a wonderful thing.

That brings me to my next point. Don't sleep in class. Even though odds are you'll have at least one class you can sleep in, it's so much more comfortable at home in your bed than in a desk, and if you get a desk without a bar then you might as well forget it because you won't be comfortable. Not to mention that it is never a good thing when you lay your head down in class thinking you'll stay awake and pay attention and then the next thing you know you wake up and it's 15 minutes later and you have no idea what the teacher is talking about. Trust me, I know.

Take band. Okay, so this won't apply to everyone, but if you enjoy music, getting into football games free, and competition, then you'll probably like it. As a freshman, it's great because you basically have 90 friends immediately. After time you'll start not to like a lot of them. But odds are you'll be really good friends with at least a few of them and probably end up dating a few by the end of four years. But really, games are fun, bus rides are fun, competitions are fun, trips are fun (such as Disney every year and the trip to the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans that we had, just to name a few), practices suck, but hey, you gotta just deal with that. But overall, it is a really great experience and lots of fun, so do it.

Michael Brooks

To the Freshmen Class of 2008,

Take heed to the advice that is going to be said in this letter. You are entering into Bartow High School unaware of the trials that you will face in the coming years. If you listen to the advice of those who have surpassed the trials then you too will come out successful.

First, it is very important that you begin your homework as soon as it is assigned. There is no reason to wait to the last moment to do something. I was constantly told that waiting till the last minute will cause nothing but stress and chaos and believe me it's true. If you happen to have a teacher whose assignments are all due at the time that you are to take the test for a particular section DO NOT WAIT 'TIL THE NIGHT BEFORE TO DO THE WORK. I tried this type of procedure and it's not a successful way to maintain a good grade in that class. Also, doing all the work in one night does not ensure that you will do well on the test because there's no study time involved. In conclusion, do your homework when it's assigned if possible.

Second, it is very important to find those students who you feel will help you be successful. Having someone that can help you understand things better than anyone else is a key to gaining knowledge. Everybody does not learn the same and cannot always get the same information from one teacher's lectures. Having someone there that can relate the information in another way so that you can understand it is important. In the same respect you will need to help others who do not understand something that you understand completely. Having a "got my back, I got yours" kind of system will ensure that you can find help among your peers.

Next, I decided to save the best for last. It is essential to stay focused throughout your entire career at Bartow High School. Near the time that you become a junior or senior you will face temptations that are far too lustful. People will be doing things that seem appealing to you and your friends. You will think that your friends will not like you as much if you do not do certain things that they do. DO NOT FALL INTO THESE TEMPTATIONS. Believe me these temptations are not worth the trouble they get you into. It is so important that you maintain good grades and a clean reputation. People will look up to you for help in times of need. It is also important to remember that POPULARITY is not going to mean anything ten years from the time you graduate but the choices you make to become popular may affect your life permanently. Overall, I ask you to remember this quote, "What's right is not always popular, and what's popular is not always right."

Just trying to help,
Jarrold Wilkins,
aka Big Rod

Dear Little Freshman,

As a wise and experienced senior at Bartow High School, I have a bit of advice to pass on to you. Three main things you must do to become a successful senior such as myself are: be humble, be tough, and work hard. By being humble, you must only speak when spoken to or appropriate. You must also be tough physically and mentally. It is mandatory that you don't let people take advantage of you or pick at you.

One main pitfall that I advise you to avoid is getting caught up with grades. If you think it is the end of the world if you make a B or C in a class instead of an A, then you are wrong. Making good grades is a distant second to actually learning and getting something out of the classes you take.

The most important aspect of school is that you learn. Regardless of what you study, push yourself not just to make good grades but also to learn more and enlighten yourself. As you will eventually find out if you go to college, you must learn first and make grades second.

Sincerely,
Saleh Rashid

Dear student,

As there are benefits of being a freshman, there are disadvantages, some of which may or may not be avoided. Many freshmen are carefree and think that this is a year to goof off. On the contrary, your freshman year sets the stage for what you do with your next three years of high school.

You should carefully choose which classes you want to take. Don't just sign up for all the P.E. and shop classes. They won't help you prepare for college. Just because some classes aren't required to graduate doesn't mean that you shouldn't take them. Foreign language classes, for example, look really good on college applications. They can also give you other benefits, such as higher wages than those who haven't taken any foreign languages. You should also take classes that relate to what you would like to major in when you go to college.

While still a freshman you should join clubs and play a sport or two. This will come in handy if you decide to try out for Calendar, or Mr./Ms. BHS/IB/Charter. Also you can qualify for more scholarships if you are athletic and have community service hours. Community service also comes in handy your senior year when applying for Silver Garland. All kids need some fun once in a while though, so be sure to gather your friends and hang out at the pep rallies, and cheer on the football players at the games, and go to the school dances. Have fun and enjoy your next four years, hopefully they will be a good time to remember.

Yours truly,
Sarah Becker

To any lowly and sad freshman it may concern, As an all-knowing and supreme being of Senior rank, I bestow upon you the wisdom of my years. There are many things you think you know, but I am here to tell you what is reality. Being of charitable nature, I will warn you of the pitfalls of high school life. The most important aspect of my study I will also share. In doing so, I wish to guide one of impressionable mind in the right direction.

There are many things a freshman must know. Take the hardest classes available. Get as involved as possible. Getting into college is all about appearance. If you take the hard classes and get decent grades, you'll look like a good student. If you're involved you'll look responsible because you'll have balanced grades and civic duties. No, the biggest pitfall is the opposite sex. I'm not saying a boyfriend or girlfriend equals failing grades, but it does make it harder to get good grades in the hard classes you're taking. People fall in love and their priorities go all out of whack. The most important aspect of my study has been to challenge myself, and yours should be the same. School should make you slightly uncomfortable in that you have to stretch your mind and enhance your abilities. I just wish this helps you.

Whenever you go into a new environment, it is beneficial to be familiar with the aspects of said environment. My having gone through all of it allows me to advise you on high school life. Take hard classes, stay away from girls/boys, and don't be afraid to stretch your mind, in a nutshell. Heed my words or don't, but it is in your best interest to do so.

Antonio Bustos

I remember my first day at Bartow High School as if it were yesterday. I was terrified because I didn't know anyone nor was I familiar with the campus. In addition, my "best" friends from middle school had deserted me! I wished I would have had someone to guide me and let me know of my potential — my freshman year I had all regular classes except Geometry Honors. Even though I didn't have my wish, I now can be of guidance to at least ONE freshman, my "little" brother.

He was nervous his first day because, like myself, his best friends would not speak to him any more. This is where my first piece of advice came: Don't change who you are just because you are in high school. If your friends changed, let them. They didn't deserve your friendship anyway. I let him know that he has ME — a big sister and a real best friend — and surely he will make better and truer friends than those that left.

My brother is looking into the Air Force Academy because he hopes to be a pilot someday. To encourage him, I let him know of his potential and I made him sign up for at least one honors course. He was scared to take it for fear of failing, at the beginning.

Now, he comes to me asking which honors classes he should take in order to take Advanced Placement courses his senior year, like me.

The advice based on my experience at Bartow High hasn't been limited to my little brother only. I have shared my suggestions to his fellow classmates and my freshman friends. I am glad I can be a guide for some people, especially for my brother. Seeing him do so great and performing well in sports and academics makes my experience worth sharing.

Irma Murillo

Wow! It's been a long night... it's 1 a.m., and I just finished up my AP biology lab report (it's printing out right now), and I have two exams tomorrow! This is a good example of why it is sooooo important that you stay on top of things from the start. Procrastination sucks! It's a hard habit to get rid of, too. It's so easy to slack and sometimes it seems like there is never enough time. And trust me, things do not get easier! (Hint: Sugar is always good if you need to pull an all-nighter!)

It is important that you do well in high school from the beginning. You may not realize it, but colleges look at all four of your secondary school years. They base admissions on what you have done over the period of those four years. So if you take the effort to do well from the start it will give you an advantage over those who don't. Stay active and involved throughout your high school career. And if you can handle it, take challenging courses; it will only help you out in the end.

On a lighter note, high school is a great experience full of memorable moments. It goes by way too fast, so make sure you have fun while you're at BHS. High school is not all academics. Make sure you take time for yourself and to hang out with friends. Okay, I better go... I'm about to fall asleep on the keyboarddddddddddd. Good luck!

Neha Patel

P. S. Don't drink the water!!