

May 2017 Issue 8

world student



LIVING MULTILINGUAL

MARIE WRITES ABOUT STARTING
SCHOOL IN A NEW COUNTRY

MY COUNTRY; HOW I SEE IT

THE WINNERS OF THE 2017
COBIS POETRY COMPETITION

Plus: Ideas for your gap-year
and experiences, articles
and opinions from students
worldwide.

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Founder,
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Alumnus 2006

Bart van Straten
General Manager,
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Managing Director,
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YOU!

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WELCOME!

Welcome to the May 2017 issue of World Student.

There has been a lot of sorrow in our world in the last 6 months; the lorry driver at the Berlin Christmas Market, the attack on Westminster and most recently the chemical attacks in Syria (to name just a few). Shreya addresses how teenagers' opinions on such issues are ignored. Should we really be nurturing these young minds as they will become the next generation of world leaders. Should adults be taking their opinions into account? Or are they too young to understand?

Martina (page 36) writes about why she chose to follow the IB programme during sixth form, and how she feels this prepared her for life at university. Maria (page 22) and Marie (page 50) both write about why they chose to pursue an education abroad, and the culture shock and fun they had doing so!

Once again there have been some amazing poems submitted into this year's COBIS poetry competition. This year's theme was 'my country; how I see it' and it has been interesting to read the differing views, both good and bad, of a multitude of countries all over the world. We have been honoured in printing the winning entries, turn to page 55 to take a look.

Those of you finishing school this year, may be stuck for ideas of what to do afterwards. I'm sure many of you will be going off to attend university, however there will be many that haven't yet decided. If you are heading to university, don't think you won't be able to take some time to travel abroad, lots of places offer gap-year experiences lasting just a couple of weeks. In this issue, from page 28, we look at some of the different gap-year experiences on offer; from volunteering to teaching.

This term, for many of you, is a busy one filled with revision, more revision and exams. All of us at World Student wish you the best of luck for your exams and we hope you can find time within your schedule to take a break with our latest issue.

Enjoy!

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world student

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COBIS AND WORLD STUDENT MAGAZINE

I'm sure, like me, that when you read this term's edition of World Student, you will notice that most of the insightful articles written by students from around the world fall generally into two categories or themes; travel and education. If you are a student in an international school, it's likely that your life so far has been heavily influenced by both of these themes. You may have travelled to a new country or continent in order to avail of a high-quality education. Perhaps, like many of the talented student journalists featured in this magazine, you enjoy travelling abroad during the school holidays or you have family in another country that you visit often. At COBIS, we are certain that your journeys as a student, both in and out of the classroom, shape the person that you will become in adult life. Experiencing new cultures, people, and customs on your travels overseas and experiencing new subjects, courses and teachers in school will all influence the direction in which your career goes after you graduate. Take every opportunity that comes your way to travel overseas, whether it's to study

or just to catch some sun, and consider writing about it for World Student. Not only is it a fantastic way to tone your writing skills but in years to come when you look back on your days as a student, your writing will be a reminder of where your journey began.

For some students, their talents may not lie in writing but in music, art or sport. As another academic year nears its end, we've been privileged here at COBIS to witness a wide range of talent in all of those disciplines through our Student Competitions and Events programme. This month, the COBIS Secondary Games comes to the UK for the first time ever where students will compete for glory in athletics, swimming and football. The city of Sheffield is our host for the Games and I'm sure that the students travelling from afar to attend the Games will be welcomed with open arms by the people of the city. Not long after the Games wraps up, our flagship competition for budding musicians, the COBIS Senior School Music Festival, rolls into Murcia, Spain and will showcase the sweet

sounds of students in international schools featuring styles from classical to rock. Sometimes, the talents of our students can overlap and collaboration is always encouraged as is evident with the elegant logos for the COBIS Primary and Secondary Games designed by students who entered an art competition to come up with the official logos for the Games. One thing is clear from the entries we receive to our student competitions; international schools are hives of talent. So pick up your camera, pencils or guitar and get involved! Information on all of our student events and competitions for 2017-18 will soon be live at cobis.org.uk/students ●

Colin Bell, COBIS CEO

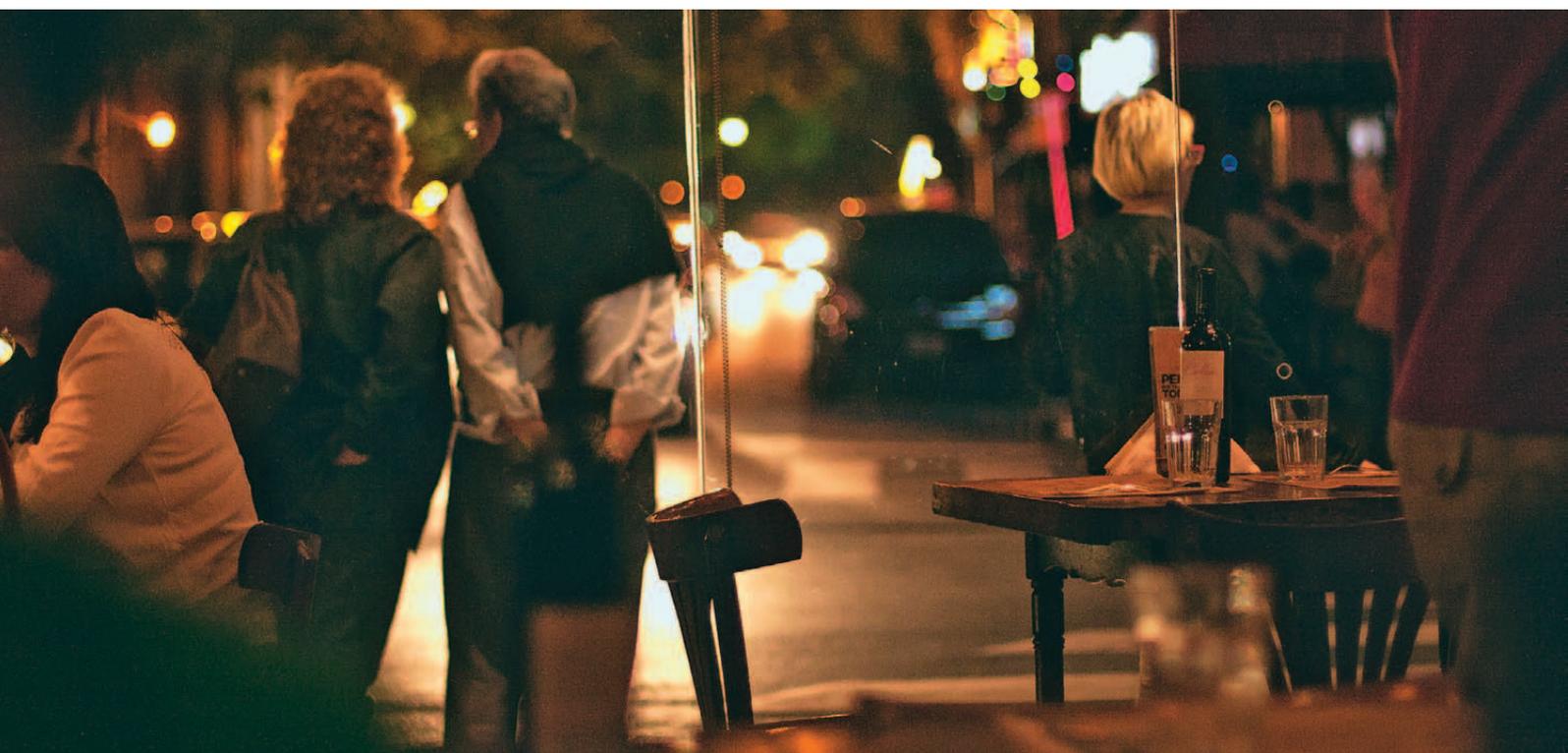
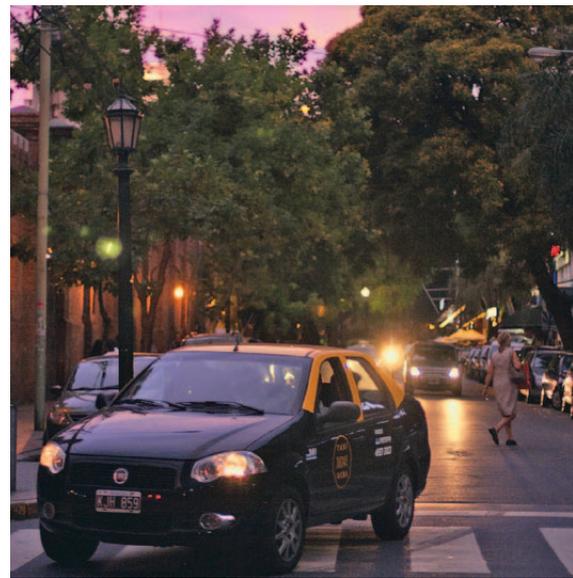
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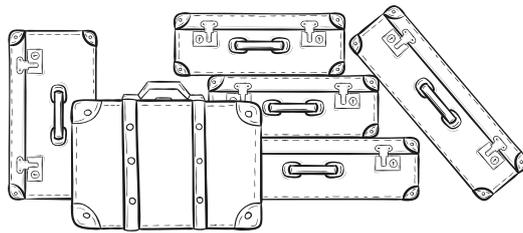




Photography by Liisa Toomus

NUMINOUS TRAVELS

SCOUTING FOR BORGES INSIDE OF ARGENTINE TAXIS
BY LIISA TOOMUS



A number of years ago, my then English teacher thought it would be fascinating for us to jump into taxis and dive into personal stories with our driver. He'd read a book where the main character realized his profound love for Argentinian dance and a woman because of the illuminating words of his taxi driver.

"Here is \$8 for the ride, I hope it is enough," he said as he handed out bills to the students in our small classroom and plotted down the names of who was in what group.

"Make sure to let your readers know where you are, what country and what city. Write about the distinctive Argentinian Spanish, about rosaries decorating the inside of the cars," he told us, "write about every detail of what the driver does and says, write about everything you feel." We moved our heads up and down in agreement, and sprinkled ourselves around the city in different cars. Surely, he did not expect us to have the same extreme eye opening experience of having a person we'd loved without realizing in our life, but as he said, he wanted something real in response to allowing us skip class to ride taxis around Buenos Aires.

When I was younger, my overcrowded bookshelf testified one thing: that reading was my first love. Soon, I likewise fell in love with writing. Ink stained white pages, torn paper edges, a couch and tea, distinct echoes of fingers rapidly typing. ~~As you all know, one cannot force love.~~

Tottering and mumbling in poor Spanish, we tried to make the drivers open up to us. They were all old men smoking cigarettes; they all gave us an uninterested and equally exhausted look. We were three students crammed inside of the car. Our then sixteen-year-old faces crunched together as small raisins as we thought of what to ask. Most drivers politely said "no" when we asked questions. Some gave us an insincere, "no hablo inglese." This was a job they did for a living and not love.

Another English teacher the following year made me fall in love with the work of a Latin American author, not from Argentina but Colombia. "Wisdom comes to us, when it can no longer do any good," Marquez had once written in one of his books. My own wisdom has taught me one thing: good writing cannot be forced. Earlier this January, I entered an old church by the very center of Vienna. Decades of incense and candle burning grabbed a hold of my face in the quiet room with brazen golden ceilings as I entered. Benches filled the room where historically individuals had come to ask for help and forgiveness, and some for silent grieving. Today most people inside were foreigners, speaking in a vast array of languages and carrying around big cameras that were rapidly snapping photos. I was taken away by the heavy smell of church. In that moment I understood what our English teacher tried to make us achieve by giving us \$8 for taxis and a list of questions to ask, and how he wished we'd write something that wasn't necessarily good, but something that would be true.

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Something that I know to be true today is that there are certain things in life that should not be forced: writing, wisdom, and love. It seems to me that these things have a tendency to wander into our lives when we've lowered our guards the most. My best published pieces have come from personal diary entries written late at night in my room, when fame and acknowledgment was never my goal, but simply to lighten my burdened heart. The best conversations with strangers have never been ones where I've been scouting for answers, but rather ones where I've sat on a train, in a taxi, or on a park bench, with my mind running off in the distance and suddenly returning to reality; something they unknowingly said struck a cord. A small word or comment, a personal story about a failure, a victory, or less. Something they said was so pure and innocent, yet just what I had to hear at that point in time without knowing it myself.

Some things seem to just drift to you at the right time. A number of weeks ago I swore off boys to my friends, "I am done, from now on." I truly meant it, I had enough of analysing text messages. I waved off boys approaching me in clubs and parties, I waved off their flirty comments and deleted apps that had never been useful to me anyway. I had never been more ecstatic about taking a break from dating. Ironically, a few evenings later I ran into the very same friend whom I ranted about my tiredness of boys, who happened to have a close friend from home visiting. On the last night of his visit, towards the end of the night we'd realized that we'd accidentally talked and talked for hours inside the small Polish bar where we sat, almost blissfully oblivious to the rest of our friends at the other side of the room and the time that had gone by in a blink. The same night when he got home, he bought new flight tickets to match my flight to London, just as we'd joked about the first evening we met next to our mutual friend.

I was not proud about the writing piece I handed in to my teacher that spring in Argentina. Judging by my grade and his comments, neither was he. "Average. Slightly un-personal." I agreed. I was not proud either. I pushed it out of my memory and let it go. Almost 4 years later, I now understand. Some things cannot be forced; after all, they just drift to you when the time is right. If I had understood that then, I'd told him to forget about his forced taxi story, and I would've written something that would have been true. ●

Follow Liisa's travels, musings and photography on social media

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Numinous Travels is written by Liisa, who is Swedish-Estonian and grew up traveling frequently. During the last few years she has studied in Argentina, Bhutan, Costa Rica, England, Greece, India, Japan, New Zealand, Tanzania, Poland and the USA. Her column is about a variety of topics she holds close to her heart: feminism, identity, growing up, cultural awareness and politics.

Name: Liisa Toomus

Age: 21

Hobbies: Photography, running, writing, reading

Studies: International Relations & Global Issues at the University of Nottingham (England)

Lives: Warsaw, Poland during 2017

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UCFB WEMBLEY

A GUIDE TO... OXFORD, UK

ANA, ANNA AND JOHANNA INTRODUCE US TO SOME OF

THE GEMS HIDDEN WITHIN THE CHARACTER-FILLED CITY



When the eponymous main character of Thomas Hardy's novel 'Jude the Obscure' first saw Oxford from a distance, it represented beauty to him, and later, knowledge. *"Points of light like the topaz gleamed. The air increased in transparency with the lapse of minutes, till the topaz points showed themselves to be the vanes, windows, wet roof slates, and other shining spots upon the spires, domes, freestone-work, and varied outlines that were faintly revealed"*. Oxford is famous for being the world's first university town, established in the 12th Century. The wealth of its successful students, many of whom were originally connected with the church, was channelled back into the construction of some of the most beautiful carved stone buildings in England. As a result, Oxford is like a book with a fine cover; and walking through the city, one wonders what stories are written behind the high stone walls. As a student in Oxford, even when visiting, you can make your own story, and the city is full of young people because of the different universities and colleges. The working week is a

little bit quiet, which you may appreciate, but on the weekends the students leave the libraries, and there's a vibrant culture in a mix of traditional and new eateries and shops. Although Oxford has nightlife, it's more about the daytime possibilities. Oxford is a quintessentially characterful city because of the amazing architecture and influence of the colleges – think Hogwarts crossed with Lord of the Rings. Both these and many other classic works have links with the city. It seems like every writer has either lived here, or had something to do with it. C.S. Lewis, writer of the Narnia Chronicles and J.R.R. Tolkien, creator of Middle Earth, were both college dons and friends. Roald Dahl moved to Oxford and wrote many of his favourite children's books here. Alice of Wonderland's fame was based on a real girl, Alice Liddell, the daughter of one of the college Deans. Sometimes, walking in the gardens and parks, filled with old trees and shrubs, one can imagine meeting the white rabbit and falling into another world.



ACTIVITIES IN OXFORD

Cycling – Search online for ‘bicycle hire’ in Oxford and you will find outlets at each point of the city where you can acquire the essential means for exploring the streets. Oxford loves bicycles; there are clearly marked cycle lanes on most roads, some roads are closed to cars but open to bicycles, and car parking is expensive but there are bicycle racks freely available on most streets. Most of the students seem to cycle, and there are bikes gliding around everywhere in the centre of town.

Punting – You may have seen a picture of a punt on one of Oxford’s rivers. The verb ‘punt’ means to push a narrow, flat bottomed boat along the water using a long pole to reach down to the river bed. This may sound difficult, but you soon get the hang of it. That’s not to say that people haven’t fallen in, but if you have good balance you should be fine. If not, since only one person can use the pole at a time, you can sit back, let someone else do the hard work, and enjoy drifting beneath old stone bridges and past meadows.

Parks – Oxford is a green city with well-kept parks. The largest of which, South Park (nothing to do with the animated series), has 50 acres of open space, overlooking the famous spires of Oxford. It is a short uphill walk east from central Oxford into Headington, and is close to Oxford Brookes University. Closer to the river, the Water Meadows are a romantic and magical mixture of river, fields and trees where cattle graze and boats drift by.

Tours – City Tour buses and ghost tours might seem a little stereotypical as a tourist, but in order to understand the heritage of the city and gain access to places behind high stone walls and wrought iron gates, tours can be a good move. There are lots to choose from, in a range of languages. Harry Potter tours, college tours, ghost walks... We should mention that Oxford might have some haunted buildings.



Photo: Marie Rimolsønning



LOCAL CUISINE

For traditional English fare, try **The Bear Inn** on Alfred Street. This small pub has a friendly atmosphere and a traditional wood-panelled interior. Interestingly, the walls are covered in glass cases containing the ends of school ties from famous British private schools, and a range of other institutions including universities, clubs and military organisations. But that's 'knot' the reason most people visit – the pub is intimate, central, and also has an outdoor area.

An excellent Brazilian place is **Fernando's café** under the Carfax Tower on Cornmarket Street. The staff are cheerful and the food is home-made with real portions! It's more a café than a restaurant, and you may have to wait for a table, but the food is better than normal café fare, at café prices.

The Cowley Road is popular in the evenings, with lots of cafés, restaurants, bars and unique food places like an ice-cream café. One of the most fun places is **Atomic Burger**, where you can choose from a menu of towering, real burgers with options for fries. The walls are decorated with pages from comics.

George Street has restaurants like **The Banana Tree** serving Indo-Chinese food, where the dishes are beautifully presented, healthy and tasty. Although this is now a very popular restaurant, you should be able to eat there without a reservation. There is a Monday to Friday lunch special of around £10 for 2 courses.

Gloucester Green is a great place for food. On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays there is a vibrant international open air market offering a range of general produce including ready-made world food, fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers and plants, cheeses, books, fabrics, mobile phone accessories and more. Permanent fixtures are Italian eatery Gino's, which has authentic Napoli owners, and café Combibos, which has the best American pancakes.

The Covered Market is Oxford's most famous market. It has an entrance on the High Street and Cornmarket, both clearly marked. It sells genuine provenance meat, fruit and vegetables, but also has institutions like Ben's Cookies, a rooftop venue, and MooMoo's milkshakes.



PLACES

The Ashmolean museum was originally founded to house the collection of curiosities gathered by Elias Ashmole, which he later bequeathed to the University of Oxford in 1677. The collections include some very rare and fine Greek pottery, fine sculpture of Greek and Roman antiquity, as well as artifacts from the near east, including mummies. Anglo-Saxon hoards vie for attention amongst Renaissance drawings, modernist paintings and Japanese prints. There is an excellent restaurant and café and entrance is free.

Oxford's Botanic Garden is the oldest botanic garden in England and dates back to 1621 when it was founded as a physic garden, growing plants for medicinal research. Today it provides an exquisite oasis just next to Magdalen College bridge and the busy high street. The garden comprises of a walled garden, glasshouses and a planted garden. The beauty, history and calm of the Botanic garden has inspired many of the literary figures of Oxford history including Lewis Carroll, J.R.R Tolkien and Philip Pullman.

A short bus ride outside of Oxford, heading towards the pretty village of Woodstock, will afford great rewards. The majestic **Blenheim Palace** was built in by John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, shortly after his victory at the battle of Blenheim in 1704. Designed by Sir John Vanburgh, the palace is a baroque masterpiece and has a splendid view over the grounds, famously created by Capability Brown. The palace is also famous for being the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill.

Oxford Colleges provide a rich tapestry of interest and are accessible outside of term time to visitors. Highlights should include: the exceptional hall of Christ Church College, founded by Cardinal Wolsey and featured in the Harry Potter films, the library of Merton College and the majestic gardens of Trinity College. Each college charges a small entrance fee and tours are available.

EVENTS

The Christmas Light Festival – Oxford is lit up in the depths of Winter by a light parade that travels through the ancient centre of the city, acted out by locals including children. Performance art and street art take over the centre of the city. A bit like a German Christmas fair, there are cute stands selling Christmas toys, and lots of stalls selling traditional food and drink.

The Oxford Literary Festival – This famous gathering of authors and authorities on the arts, current affairs, and philosophy runs every year from the beginning of April for two weeks. It's one of the biggest literary festivals in England, with over 100 authors present, giving lectures in famous places around the city. Anyone can attend, but you have to book in advance to see speeches, attend book signings, and watch live interviews. If you like books or current affairs, it's the place to be.

South Park Music Festival – For the second year, at the end of May (27th – 28th this year) Oxford has its own music festival, Common People, where established acts play alongside new. This year hip hop singer Sean Paul is headlining along with legendary DJ Pete Tong. The party lasts two days and nights.

Ana, Anna, Johanna and Marie are students at EF Academy Oxford.

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Photo: Binny Zutshi

BEST KEPT SECRETS

Magdalen College (pronounced Moored-lin) has its own deer park, where deer roam freely (but are a little tamer than in the wild). It's a beautiful landscape to find near the centre of a city.

Walking down Cornmarket to the left of Tesco, there is a **special alleyway** with hanging fairy lights and street art. It's really impressive and magical, and worth going to if you're walking down that street (which you will be at some point!).

May Morning is a 500-year-old tradition celebrated on May 1st. It all starts at 6am with the choristers of Magdalen College choir singing a classic Eucharistic hymn from the Great Tower. You may see Oxford University students there from all-night parties, with their own tradition of jumping from the bridge into the river.

Eights Week, or Summer Eights, is a rowing regatta on the river in Oxford at the end of May (24th – 27th this year) where boating teams from the colleges compete against each other. Women's and men's teams compete in boats of eight, and because the river is too narrow for boats and oars to pass, there is a game of 'bumping'. Meanwhile, crowds gather on the river banks with stalls for food and drink.

Photo: Oxford Christmas Light Festival (c) Ian Nolan Events

LIFE IN THE PARK

SARA TELLS US ABOUT THE PERKS OF LIVING ACROSS

FROM CENTRAL PARK IN NEW YORK

My whole life I have lived across the street from a park. First we were across from Bryant Park for three and a half years and then we moved to Carl Schultz Park where we stayed for one and a half years. Six years ago we moved to our current apartment building, initially on the fifth floor for four years and then the twelfth floor where the views of Central Park are spectacular all year round.

In spring and summer the flowers are in bloom and they look amazing. In fall there are all different colored leaves that range from a really vibrant orange complexion to dark brown. I really like how there's a reservoir right in front of our house and the fountain is on all year round through all the different seasonal changes. Not only is it nice where I live because of the park, it is also a very convenient area as there are many supermarkets, restaurants and stores. In the summer, spring and fall there are stands with fresh foods like vegetables and fruits and occasionally some stands with pastries. Transport is also very accessible with many buses and subway stations

nearby. However, my favorite part of living across from the park is watching the changes through the different seasons.

I really like spring because there are a lot of different activities to do. I also like spring because the weather is extremely nice as there's always a breeze but it's never too cold. In spring we do a lot of the things we do in summer such as having picnics. I like this because it is nice to be able to sit and look at the beautiful surroundings as there are a lot of flowers in spring. I also feel that this is really convenient as many places nearby sell sandwiches. Other things that we do in spring include going rowing in the park. There's a place in the park where we can rent boats and row around the lake. I like this because not only are you getting an exercise but it is really fun and you can see turtles in the water. The turtles are sometimes really big while others are very small. One very popular attraction in the park is the Central Park Zoo which has many animals that I enjoy seeing in the Spring. Lastly, but definitely not least, I enjoy looking for the five waterfalls in Central Park. Some of the waterfalls are much taller than others but it is nice to see all of them. Sometimes we walk around the park just to explore and we see some of the waterfalls.

In summer sometimes it gets very hot but most of the time it is the perfect temperature for sports. We do a lot of sports in the park since it's right in front of us so it gives us a lot of opportunities. Some of the sports include biking a few miles around the park, playing soccer and jogging around the reservoir. In summer we also have picnics. I really enjoy the view from our apartment as there are many colors from both the trees and flowers. In the summer there are many playgrounds that are open in the park, some of which have little fountains that turn on when the weather gets really warm. One of the most popular things in the summer is 'Shakespeare in the Park' which occurs at night; People perform Shakespeare's plays. The best part is definitely going to the Conservatory Garden. The Conservatory Garden is incredibly beautiful as there are many



different flowers planted in beautiful arrangements. It is very quiet there making it easier to enjoy the sights.

My favorite season of the year has to be fall as the weather in Central Park is outstanding. Even though there's not a lot to do in the park in fall it's still my favorite season. In fall we do sports like running and biking because this is the best time of the year to do them. It is really nice to just look at the view of the park from our window because all the different colors of the leaves stand out even from the 12th floor. Sometimes we go out into the park to explore and occasionally we collect leaves with interesting colors. A few blocks down from our house during Thanksgiving there is the 'Thanksgiving Day Parade' which we really like to watch because of all the amazing floats like Snoopy and all the great performances. On Halloween night there's always a Halloween party near the Park and even though I have never been I hear great things about it and hope I will go soon.

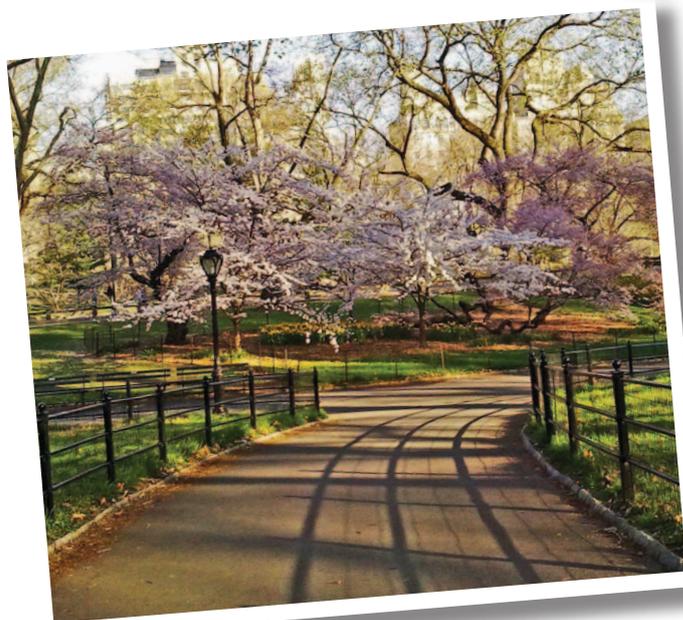
Last but definitely not least there is winter. The weather is really cold and when it snows it is amazing to see from my window because all the leaves have fallen and snow covers the trees making the entire park beautiful. I also love winter near Central Park because when it snows it is very easy for us to take out our sleds and go to the park. It is really fun when we have friends over and we go out because we do all the typical winter stuff such a sledding, making snow angels and throwing snowballs at each other. When it is snowing too hard to go outside, it is nice to just watch the snow and relax inside. The best part of relaxing inside has to be getting hot cocoa. Another thing we do in the winter is ice skating in Central Park. When we ice skate we always go with a group of friends. Even though it takes me awhile to get the hang of ice skating while my friends are zooming off, it is really fun especially when I get the hang of it and am able to catch up with my friends.

I really like living across the street from a park because I always have activities to do throughout the entire year no matter what season it is, even if it's just sitting inside watching snow fall. All year long each season has beautiful views even though all the seasons look completely different. ●

Sara Berzinji is 11 years old and is studying at The British International School of New York, USA.

 @BritishSchoolNY

 @BritishSchoolNY



MY SPAIN VACATION

TAYA WRITES ABOUT HER HOLIDAYS TO MARBELLA, SPAIN

Every summer my family and I go to Marbella, a city in southern Spain. I have family who live there, and it is always a pleasure to see them. Over the many years of staying in Marbella, I have grown accustomed to the city's traditions.

One of the best parts of being in Marbella is the fact that we stay a few steps away from the beach and El Paseo (the promenade). There are always people building spectacular sandcastles along the beach and the creativity and skill of the artists that is shown through these sand sculptures is unbelievable. Another interesting location is the jetty of rocks that extends out from the shore to the sea, where there are always little budding fishermen to be found searching for a fresh catch. On one occasion, my friends and I caught a crab that was as large as a bread plate, only to release it back onto the jetty. El Paseo is one of the main attractions of Marbella. Countless restaurants, cafes, stores, hotels and kiosks line the promenade. Whenever we go to any restaurant with my uncle, who is a Marbella native, the waiters, chefs and managers of the restaurant come out to greet us and always seem to be friends with my uncle (maybe because he's a policeman!).

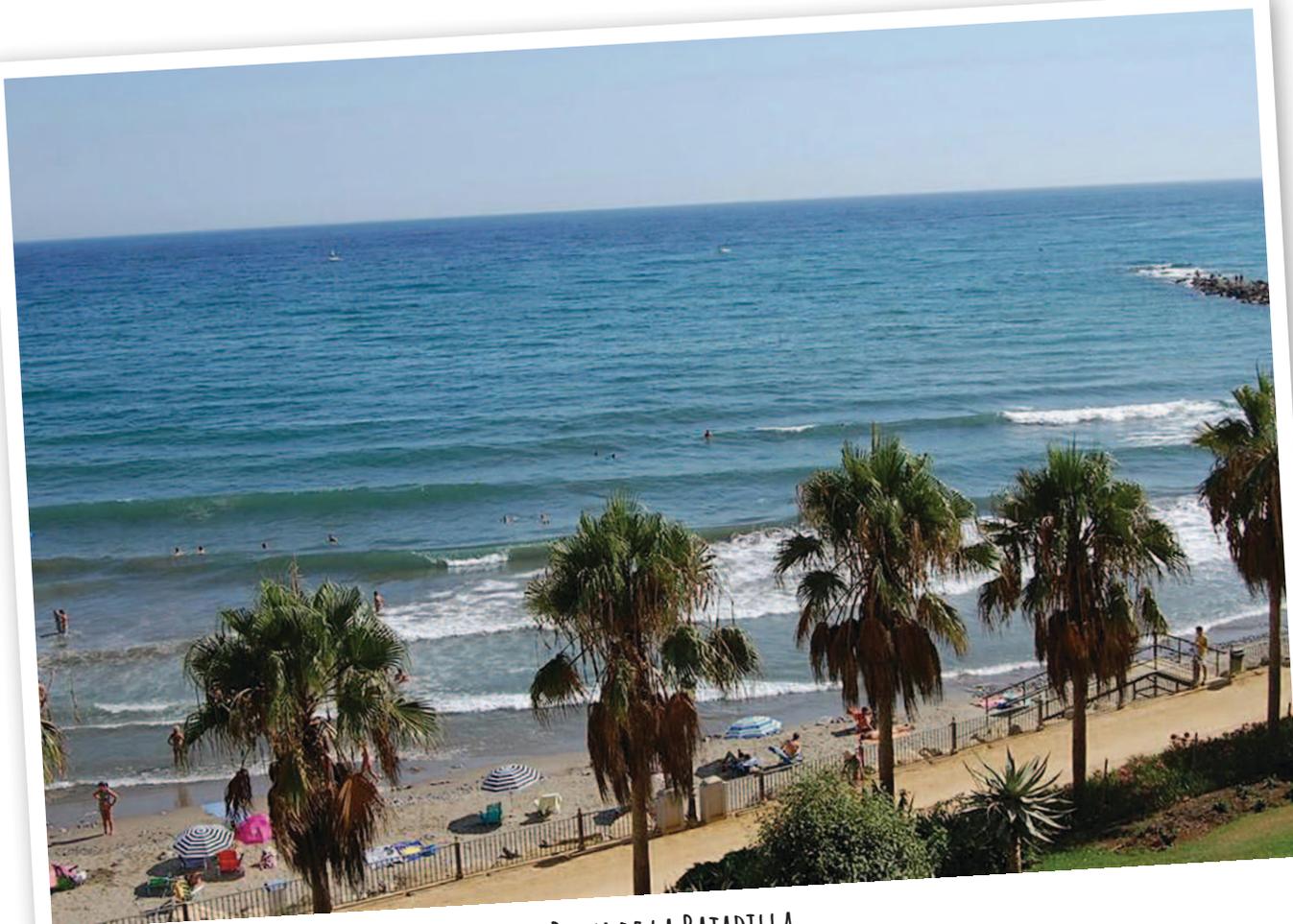
Marbella's history begins in the 17th Century BCE, when it was founded by the Phoenicians. In Roman times, the city was called Salduba (Salt City). One of the most interesting and most visited places in Marbella is the Old Town (Casco Antigua). The Old Town has a very rich history. It started as several villages of various civilizations (the Byzantines, Visigoths and Vandals). The Moors then took over in 711 CE and settled to construct one town out of the villages. The town was centered around the Alcazaba (castle). The Moors reigned until 1485 CE, until the Spanish Monarchs took over. The Old Town is surrounded by a wall, and inside there are four main neighborhoods. Many people still live in the Old Town. In the center there is a beautiful square called Plaza De Los Naranjos (Orange Square) where orange trees grow and blossom in the spring.

The view from my aunt's house in Marbella is stunning. Both Morocco and Gibraltar can be seen from the balcony on sunny days, and the sunsets I have witnessed in Marbella are breathtaking. Marbella and Morocco are so close (726 kilometers) and sometimes the television catches the signals from Morocco, and it is always fun to watch the Moroccan news.

Every Monday, the market opens. Vendors set up their stores, which range from sunglasses to sweets. The most popular stores always seem to be the ones that sell soccer uniforms, as well as stores that sell food. On days that are exceptionally hot, however, the market is not the ideal place to be, as it is crowded and can be unpleasant when everybody is bunched together in the heat.

Public transportation in Marbella is definitely not as popular as in New York City. Marbella offers two bus lines, while New York City offers 307. I have not experienced the inconvenience of only having two bus lines in Marbella, firstly because in my opinion Marbella does not need more than two bus lines (though I am sure this could be debated) and I do not use the public transportation system in Marbella often, as we usually travel in my aunt's car. I have noticed that residents of Marbella most commonly travel from one place to the other on motor scooter, much like in Rome. There are occasionally motorcycles to be found, though definitely more motor scooters.





PLAYA DE LA BAJADILLA

Some smaller (though definitely as prominent) traditions in Marbella are the siesta, and late dinners. Siesta begins at around two o'clock in the afternoon, and ends at five o'clock. During this time, most stores are closed, though restaurants are not. Many people take this time to nap, read and eat lunch. Because of the siesta, those who are staying in Marbella tend to eat dinner at nine or ten o'clock. Restaurants are buzzing, and the streetlights are lit at this time. After dinner, the voices of children running up and down El Paseo can be heard for miles, which can prove to be quite annoying if you are just about to go to sleep.

Marbella is such an interesting, special city, and every year is a different experience. I am so glad that I have the pleasure of visiting Marbella every summer. ●

Taya Coleman is 11 years old and is studying at The British International School of New York, USA.

 @BritishSchoolNY

 @BritishSchoolNY



OLD TOWN (CASCO ANTIGUA)

MY GREAT BRITISH ADVENTURE

MARIA TELLS US ABOUT HER TIME IN A BOARDING SCHOOL ABROAD

Ever since one of my friends went to England for a year when we were younger, I have known that I wanted to go abroad. The experience made her completely improve in everything; not only in the language but as a person in general. She became strong in her thoughts and personality and seemed much more mature. I remember perfectly how much I used to dream about having the same experience. So last year I thought, now is time, time to leave home and my comfort zone and make the most of this huge opportunity.

There are so many reasons why I chose England: the international reputation of the British Education system, the enormous number of breathtakingly incredible schools, my language development and the cultural diversity were just a few. I chose The Mount, Mill Hill International School because it is a school which gives you innumerable facilities and choices; from the opportunity of carrying out a one-year GCSE course in an international environment to the wide range of extracurricular activities and the perfect learning space for it all.



I first attended Summer School where I made truly close friends in an extremely short period of time. We all shared the same objective: to improve our English. We could achieve this with the help and encouragement of the staff members. They not only helped us to improve the language but develop our confidence, creativity and knowledge too. We had 3 hours of English every day followed by science, mathematics and creative arts. Creative arts covered dance, art and drama. We even performed a play with a really long script. It was useful as well as being fun! In between the classes there were some breaks which meant we had the opportunity to get to know each other better and it helped us to become more united. Then my favourite part of the day: the evening activities! They consisted of different amazing activities such as going swimming, bowling and playing typical English sports. After this, the fun didn't end; I have such good memories of the evenings in the boarding house – making hot chocolate in the kitchen, playing pool in the spacious common room or watching movies and eating popcorn. The best days were the excursions when we visited museums, went shopping, visited Oxford and its university and of course visited the most famous monuments in London such as Big Ben, Horse Guard's Parade and Buckingham Palace. We rode along the River Thames in a boat and had picnics in the lively green parks of the centre. My favourite trip was when we went to Brighton beach, where we had so much fun on the Pier and went shopping in the vintage shops in The Lanes.

In September I progressed to The Mount, Mill Hill International School and if I had to describe my experience here in just one word I would say it is an adventure! The new friends I have made are a big part of this adventure; they are with me 24/7, both during and after school. Honestly, the friend factor in a boarding school is huge! The bonds that I have developed with them since the first month are going to last forever. After this year, I will keep in contact with them for sure. To begin with, I will probably go on holiday with them this summer. My best friends are from different countries including China, France, Denmark, Germany and Russia.



I am studying on the one-year GCSE programme and have chosen Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and English as a first language. At the beginning of the Summer School my level of English didn't seem good enough to do five subjects or to even do the three sciences but since then I have improved so much that I am now even doing English as a first language! I spend most of my days in the absolutely amazing science labs. They provide us with fantastic equipment and facilities and we do lots of practical experiments to help us understand in depth each unit of work.

The Mount, Mill Hill International School provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities and fascinating sports. Currently, I work out 3 times a week in the fitness suite, I play the piano and go horse riding. The facilities that we have and the enormous fields surrounding the school make possible every combination of sports that you can think of.

I live in St Bees which is the smallest boarding house. It is formed by all girls and there are 10 of us. We are all from different nationalities and the environment that we have created is so friendly and cosy, making it feel like home. At the weekend, my favourite day is Sunday. We have the day free, and after Sunday brunch we sometimes go shopping or have lunch in Central London where we always have a fantastic time!

I can't really remember what I thought life in England would be like before I got here. I remember well how horrified I was at the thought of it raining every day. Now I realise this is just an exaggeration and the number of non-rainy days is way

bigger than the number of rainy days. The rain never stops us from doing anything. The facilities and different options that we have means that life just carries on as normal. I remember being a little scared about the idea of making new friends and meeting different people from different parts of the world but everyone is in the same position so we all have that in common, that and the desire to improve our English. Another big thing I thought about before I came here was the food! Although food in each country is so different, here at school they always manage to cook things that we all like and there is always a lot of choice. People in England are very polite, as I expected that they would be and London is an amazing city.

If I was to offer advice to other students who are considering moving abroad, my first advice would be to try all the amazing opportunities that the school provides! Nobody is sure of what is going on in the first few days but I would strongly recommend that you try everything, go on all the trips, participate in every single activity and sign up for all the sports and different clubs possible; keep occupied! I know that sounds full-on but it is truly the best way to make friends, improve your English, increase your confidence, learn new things and have fun! If you make the most of the opportunity you will be so pleased with the results! ●

Maria is 15 years old from Spain. She joined the Summer School for 2 weeks last year and is now studying on their one-year GCSE programme.

📍 @Mill-Hill-Summer-School

FROM PRESTON TO MADRID & NAGASAKI

BETH AND MAX WRITE ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES OF STUDYING ABROAD

Spending a year living in Madrid, the heart of Spain, was a life changing experience. I feel enriched in so many ways, having learnt so much about language, culture, friendships, education and what's more, myself!

Upon arrival, I found myself in the center of the city, the hustle and bustle provided excitement to help balance my nerves. I had chosen to live in the south of Madrid, where the university I was going to be studying at; Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, was located. I decided to live near campus as it would be an easy commute. I enjoyed experiencing life in a quieter area of the city, strolling along hearing Spanish language fill the streets. I soon realised siestas were real, they did exist! Every day between 2pm and 5pm, shops were shut and there was barely a soul in sight. Being able to taste the true Spanish culture and experience the stereotypical lifestyle, was enlightening.

I decided that the quieter lifestyle was not for me, I wanted to experience bigger city life too. I moved into a shared flat with Italians and French in the city centre, moving from the relaxed Spanish lifestyle to adopting a fast-paced Oxford Street equivalent. I learnt that this was a lifestyle much more suited to me and what I was used to. Being surrounded by Spanish speakers, cafes open 24/7, shops and culture, was what I loved about living in the centre of Madrid. The easy access to the metro made my commute to university simple and affordable.

The great thing about studying at university in Spain was not only the fact that I had first-hand experience of the Spanish education system, but I met Spanish and people from other countries, all across the world. People came to study from the USA, Asia, Europe, the list is endless. This made the whole experience so much more worthwhile, and I knew I was not alone as an ERASMUS student. Some of the friends I had made only spoke Spanish, so it was the perfect opportunity to improve my language skills. The university offered a specific language class on the side of the humanities and journalism

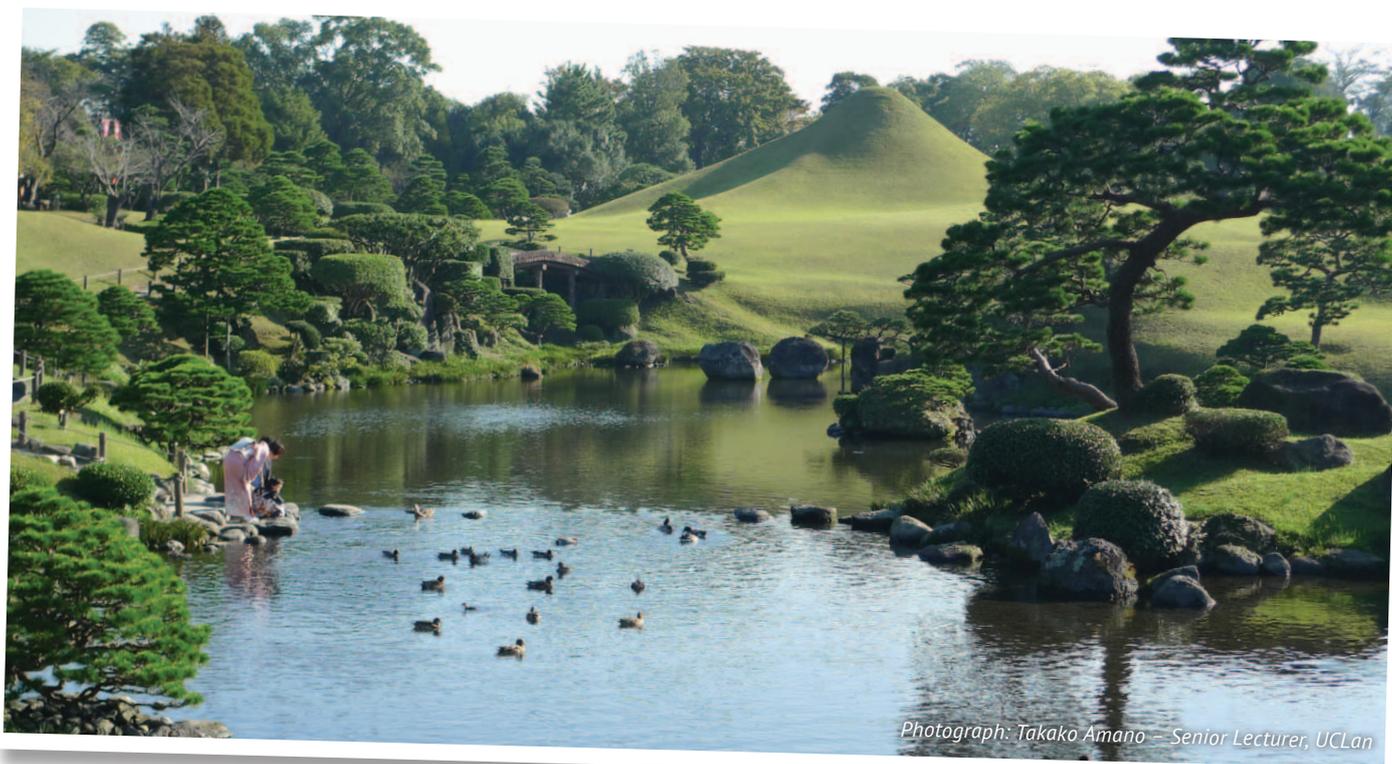
degree I was studying. I met so many people in that class and we are still in touch today.

Not only did my language improve, I was able to travel around Spain experiencing the rich variety in culture, hearing different accents and meeting many people. I was able to try different Spanish foods such as tortilla Española, paella and of course, tapas. I am so proud to be able to say I have lived abroad and can take so much from this experience for life. Meeting people, improving my language and adapting to a new way of life made my experience unforgettable. ●

Bethany Smith is in her final year studying BA (Hons) TESOL and Spanish at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, UK.



Photograph: Nicolas Vigier



Photograph: Takako Amano – Senior Lecturer, UCLan

I met my girlfriend in Nagasaki. Then our time abroad ended and we both had to go back to our respective universities, and countries. During the particularly scary conversation of “So should we stay long-distance or move to the same country?” we broached the subject of maybe returning to Nagasaki. We had only started dating in the last two weeks of living in Japan but there was so much we hadn’t done there together.

I have to say, the idea’s tempting.

I picked Nagasaki University of Foreign Studies as my first choice university for my period abroad because I love Japanese history. Nagasaki is home to Glover Garden (built for a Scottish industrialist who moved there as a business venture), Dejima (an artificial island where Dutch traders lived and worked) and the sombre atomic bomb memorial museum among many other places that focus on Nagasaki’s unique relationship with the outside world during a time when Japan was closed off. The only downside to visiting these places is when you want to ask a question but you don’t know the word for ‘restoration process’, so you’re saying “The-thing-where-you-rebuild-an-old-building-to-be-new-again” while a confused man dressed as a Samurai raises an eyebrow at you.

That’s not to say I didn’t get plenty of practice in Japanese! In addition to core classes that covered everything we had optional classes on speaking and proper pronunciation, writing kanji, classes that prepared us for the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) and a whole host of cultural classes about

movies, books, drama, culture, history and even martial arts! The teachers were lovely and supportive while at the same time pushing us to aim higher than our level and actually make progress. I was really motivated to study! More so than I had been in ages. Instead of taking out my laptop and playing video games between classes I was opening my kanji books and trying to see how many I could memorise.

I made a lot of friends, not just from Japan but from all over the world; Korea, Mongolia, America, France, China. Even though most of us spoke English we would occasionally speak to each other in Japanese to help each other learn and improve the language. We did a lot of fun stuff together, including trips to some amazing places (I was particularly excited to find that the theme park from my favourite book was actually based on a real place) and also many festivals where the streets were busy and bright with lights and decorations.

Homesickness happened (I almost cried when I saw a display of 18th Century cutlery in a museum made in my hometown) but the few lows I had were made a lot better by the beautiful place I was in, the friends I had made, and the progress I was making in my target language. ●

Max Brooks is in his final year studying BA (Hons) TESOL and Japanese at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, UK.

f @StudyAtUCLan

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OXFORD SUMMER COURSES

WHAT SUMMER COURSES ARE REALLY LIKE

Why choose to go on a summer course?

We get it, you might need some convincing to give up a relaxing summer spent at home, but committing to a summer course is well worth the effort. You'll discover new subjects or brush up on one you're not confident about. You may even be preparing for university, in which case a summer course can also help put you in a stronger position to make an informed and competitive application to your chosen institution.

How far in advance should students start booking places?

Our courses in Oxford and Cambridge start late June and end early August. So, we're practically full for 2017 and new course dates for 2018 will become available in August this year. Places on our courses are limited and fill up fast! Students who have a particular date to study with us in mind, should act quickly to avoid disappointment.

What should you look for in a summer course?

Attending a summer course is good fun and an opportunity to select from a range of subjects which aren't normally on offer at school. It enables students to explore their subject choices

before potentially making a critical choice for their study into higher education. Most courses will offer a lot of academic content with high quality teachers. At Oxford Summer Courses, we mirror the teaching model of the University of Oxford and use Oxford academics and researchers to deliver our courses. We give students access to highly experienced tutors who are passionate about their subjects and are at the top of their field. You can also trust in our courses which are quality assured by the British Accreditation Council – this means they have assessed and approved our courses, teaching and safety procedures, and we can also sponsor your visa to help you travel here.

What courses are available and which are the most popular?

We offer our students a choice of over 20 different academic subjects and two levels of English as a Foreign Language to choose from. It is fair to say that Medicine is by far and away our most popular choice of subject, this is evident by the number of UK university applications in recent years. Despite a recent decline in overall numbers, it remains the subject with the highest recipient of applications. This stands true for us too.

What is a typical day like?

Of course, a typical day for our 10-12s differs to that of our 18-24s, but generally, mornings consist of group lessons or seminars and afternoons feature further seminars paired with some free time, which could be anything from, local tours, sightseeing day trips or time for independent research. The students really get to capitalise on the high-quality, academic surroundings they find themselves in. Meals on site or in the town centre are provided for in the evenings and summer night activities can range from punting, a performance of a Shakespeare play or an Oxford-style debate.

What activities are on offer?

We have been running short educational courses since 2010 and, paired with our intimate knowledge of Oxford, we can pack our courses with activities that reflect the social scene of term-time Oxford. Students can get to know each other over a game of football, croquet or quidditch! To recover, they can float gently down the river Thames in a wooden "punt" boat.





Our day trips include some of the Oxford's top museums and students also visit top national attractions such as Windsor Castle, Blenheim Palace and the Harry Potter Studios. Our newly formed courses in Cambridge are built around the same academic principles we offer in Oxford, and are structured with the benefit of local Cambridge academics and researchers. Students in Cambridge can enjoy trips to Sutton Hoo, Historic Cambridgeshire and the Royal Museums in Greenwich.

Do student's make friends easily?

The thing our students enjoy most about Oxford Summer Courses is being able to experience an Oxford student's lifestyle. All our activities and tutorials are amazing and fun, but to be in an amazing place with people who are so engaged in their subjects; who want to debate and discuss, is a fantastic

experience. Many of our students socialise with people from all over the world for the first time, and they create memories together, which makes the course not only academically stimulating, but extremely enjoyable and worthwhile. In addition, you'll meet our friendly staff who ensure you're kept busy and having fun, as well as safe and happy.

What can you gain by attending a summer course?

Overall, a summer course can be a tremendous experience for a student looking to improve their grades, boost their university application prospects and develop their social skills in unique academic environments. With competition so high for university places, and then jobs thereafter, something that stands out on your CV can set you apart from your peers. Thinking forward, any extra preparation obtained to shine at future interviews is proven when a student has taken the opportunity to demonstrate their enthusiasm for a subject by taking a summer course. ●

Oxford Summer Courses was established by a network of Oxford alumni and run BAC accredited, 2 and 4 week Academic and English Language courses for students aged 10 to 24. Their locations and range of programs include courses in Cambridge, India and collaborations with US universities such as Stanford. They also operate intensive University Guidance Tours, carefully designed to help international students navigate and understand the UK university system.

 @OxfordSummerCourses

 @OxfordSummerCou



10 ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR YOUR GAP YEAR

GAP YEAR TRAVEL STORE TELL US WHAT ESSENTIAL ITEMS YOU SHOULDN'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT

Packing for your gap year can be tricky, and many travellers struggle to narrow their backpack contents down to the essentials. A general rule of thumb is to lay out everything you'd like to pack in a perfect world, then half this. Of course there are a few essential items you shouldn't leave without, and here is Gap Year Travel Store's top 10...



1 Travel Towel

If there's one travel essential every traveller should have in their backpack it's a travel towel. Compared to a standard towel from home, travel towels pack down to a fraction of the size and weigh a lot less. They are also quick drying and some come with anti-bacterial protection to reduce odours and stop mould developing in hot, sticky and damp conditions. The most common type of travel towel is made from a smooth microfibre material, but you can also get microfibre towels made from a soft-touch microfibre that feel more like towels you'd use at home.



2 Universal Plug Adapter

If you're going on a gap year, chances are you're going to be visiting more than one country, which means you'll need different plug adapters for each destination. Packing multiple adapters can take up extra packing space you could put to better use, so getting an all in one adapter that covers multiple countries is a wise move. A universal adapter will also be much easier to find in your backpack.



3 Money Belt

When travelling to countries with a high crime rate where security of your belongings can be an issue, a money belt is a must have. You'll find pick-pockets can be a problem in many destinations, especially in Latin America, Asia & Africa, as well as certain countries throughout Europe. Money belts come in many forms, including neck wallets, under clothes body wallets and even bra stashes!



4 Combination Cable Lock

Another travel security essential, cable locks are a versatile accessory for travelling, enabling you to lock your luggage zips, as well as lock your backpack and other belongings to fixed or hard to move objects such as hostel bunk beds and railings. Due to their flexible coated steel shackle, they will fit through pretty much any backpack zip and can also be used to lock your hostel locker.



5 Sleeping Bag Liner

If the thought of sleeping on hostel bedding makes you cringe, you may want to invest in your own sleeping bag liner. Sleeping bag liners are available in a range of materials, including cotton, silk and fleece. If you want the lightest and most compact liner possible, silk is the best option, but cotton liners also pack down relatively small and are a cheaper option compared to silk.



6 First Aid Kit

Whether you create your own or opt for a travel specific first aid kit, a first aid kit for travelling is essential. The type of first aid kit you require will all depend on your destination and the activities you plan on taking part in. If you're travelling off the beaten track, where medical facilities are minimal or questionable, you should pack a first aid kit with sterile needles and syringes. These can be used by a medical professional should you require emergency medical treatment during your trip.



7 Packing Cubes

This one may not seem like an essential, but if you've ever had to dig through a sea of tangled up clothes to find something inside your backpack you'd definitely see the benefit of packing cubes. Packing cubes are a great way of organising your clothes inside your backpack and also help to keep them as compact as possible to maximise the amount of packing space available. Try using a cube for t-shirts, a cube for shorts/trousers and a cube for underwear!



8 Water-to-Go Bottle

When travelling to countries where the water isn't safe to drink or you're unsure of drinking water quality, a water purification bottle is a good way to ensure you can keep hydrated without taking any risks! The Water-to-Go bottle uses an inbuilt filter to eliminate 99.9% of bacteria, viruses and even heavy metals such as lead from (non-salt) water to make it safe to drink. Water purification bottles offer an easier way to treat water compared to traditional chlorine tablets and drops, as you simply fill up the bottle and allow the filter to remove contaminants as you drink.



9 Mosquito Repellent

Insects tend to be an issue no matter where you travel, so ensuring you have a good quality mosquito repellent with you is essential. 50% Deet is classed as jungle strength and is strong enough for use in tropical conditions and areas with a risk of Malaria and other tropical diseases. In addition to mosquito repellent, you can also get mosquito repellent bands, which can be worn around your wrists and ankles to help deter insects. Be sure to pack some bite relief as well, just in case you manage to get bitten or stung during your trip.



10 Travel Clothes Line

You may well turn your nose up at this and think it's a bit of a gimmick, but a travel washing line is an extremely useful item for gap year travel. The best way to save space in your backpack is to pack light and wash your clothes as often as possible during your trip, which means you'll need somewhere to hang everything up to dry. Draping your underwear over your hostel bunk may seem like a good idea at the time, but chances are the person in the bunk below doesn't want a curtain of your clothes hanging in their face! A travel washing line is a great way to avoid bugging your dorm room buddies and you don't even need pegs, as you simply tuck your clothes in between the twisted elastic.



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LEARNING A LANGUAGE ABROAD

MAWGAN TELLS US ABOUT HIS GAP YEAR IN NICE, FRANCE



I had wanted to take a gap year for quite a while, but all I wanted to do was to ski, and so I started off my gap year in Les Gets, France, where I worked as a waiter for 4 months. After this it only occurred to me that maybe I should do something useful and fun as well as skiing in my year out. I had previously done a course in Nice for 2 weeks, which I had to be dragged to the airport kicking and screaming for, but in the end, had the time of my life (hence the second, longer course). I had known about CESA through my friend, who had done courses before in Germany and loved it, the first time I went was because her mother told my mum all about it, and of course my mum being the language fanatic she is, she signed me up straight away, but in the end I am very glad she did because on both trips I met incredible people that I am still friends with today.

Going away for a long amount of time can be daunting, and it is easy to get the 'fear of missing out', but after 4 days of my 6-week course that fear had faded away. I lived in the student accommodation while I was there, which was a great way to meet other people from your course. It is literally a 5-minute walk from the school and perpendicular to main street, so a great location. I was one of 7 other people living in this accommodation, for 90% of my time I was the only native English speaker there, but it didn't matter because we were (of course!) speaking French. I made friends with a huge amount of different nationalities, making particularly good friends with Swedish and German people, some of which I am meeting with in London in September.

On the first day of school you take a test that sorts everyone in to classes that suit their abilities. There are lots of different teachers with a huge amount of teaching styles, I had 3 teachers in my stay but I had one (Carole) for 4 weeks, she was amazing. She was a dynamic, interesting and bubbly teacher that really suited my style of learning. None of the people I lived with were in my class, but this gave me a chance to meet more people and ultimately make more friends, so I didn't really mind. I did the standard course so only had school until 12 each day. I found this slightly too short because the lessons were so interesting and went so quickly. This was not always a bad thing as I got to explore the city a lot and quickly came to know my way around. I also quickly discovered the best places to go out (a necessity), to eat and the best spot on the beach (where the pebbles were smaller and kinder on the feet). It is very hard to put into words how it feels exploring a new city to a stage where you feel familiar with it in such a small space of time but I highly recommend you do it.

I absolutely loved my time in Nice and there is no doubt in my mind when I say I will be doing another course, and couldn't recommend it enough for anyone thinking about it. I would also like to thank CESA for giving me the chance to do it, as well as being extremely grateful for all their help along the way! ●



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VOLUNTEERING ABROAD

MEG VOLUNTEERED IN GHANA WORKING AT A HOSPITAL

I had not travelled independently before but Ghana proved a great place for a first time traveller. The Ghanaian people were all extremely friendly and welcoming and I felt very safe at all times. The combination of living and volunteering in a foreign culture, the opportunity to meet lots of new people, make new friendships and travel opportunities made this a worthwhile experience and a much more rewarding than the stereotypical holiday abroad.

As a student nurse, my placement in the hospital was a very enlightening experience. I observed a completely different form of healthcare from the UK and I was involved in a number of different aspects of nursing. Whilst not on placement I had a lot of contact with the local children in their schools and community. They were great fun to play with and foreigners were a great source of curiosity to them. The co-ordinators in Ghana organised trips for us to go on enabling us to explore Ghana as a group and appreciate its beauty and culture. I met some great people during placements and in the complex I was staying at and made some really good friendships with people.

My experience in the hospital in Ghana has given me a lot of insight into how different things are to the UK. It made me realise how lucky we are in the UK to have the excellent



healthcare that we take for granted when there are people in the world who only have access to health resources that are much more limited. It has given me confidence in communicating with people from different cultures and everything I learnt and observed can only help me in a positive way with my nursing career. On a personal level it was rewarding to experience a much different way of life, even if it was for just a short space of time. It has also given me the motivation to go travelling in the future but with more of a purpose in mind.

The highlight of my trip was working on the labour ward in the hospital. I was able to spend the day supporting a woman throughout her labour and witnessed the delivery of her baby, which was an experience that I am unlikely to forget. It was a privilege to be part of such an intimate and special moment. A few days after the birth, the midwife I worked with and I visited mother and baby and felt very honoured to be welcomed into their own home. Meeting lots of other volunteers, sharing the Ghana experience with people you get along well with and can have lots of fun with was another main highlight. It definitely made the experience a lot more enjoyable and I hope to keep in contact with the other volunteers I met. ●



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TRAVELLING ABROAD

MARTYN TELLS US ABOUT HIS

TRIP TRAVELLING AROUND

SOUTH AMERICA

For my gap year I had decided I was definitely going to travel, and after looking at loads of different guidebooks I decided South America was the place I wanted to go. A lot of my friends were doing round the world trips, but I decided I'd prefer to pick one continent and stick to it. Being out of school I was a bit apprehensive, so decided the best thing to do would be to start my travels with an organised group tour, and then travel independently after that. I spent the first half of the year working, saving up and planning.

The Oasis Overland trip appealed to me because it wasn't only for gap-year students, so I would be travelling with loads of different people. It also started in Rio around Carnival – what better way to start six months in South America than with a massive party!?! The Rio to Santiago trip also went to some really hard-to-reach places in Patagonia which I was really keen to visit, but wasn't sure how I'd do it myself.

The trip itself was awesome, and I was glad I chose Oasis. They treated me like an adult, and I was responsible at times for things like cooking for the whole group as part of a cook team, so we were encouraged to get out there and shop in the markets, meeting the locals and bartering for good. My haggling skills improved quickly, as did my Spanish! Also we were putting up our own tents, gathering firewood and generally getting involved, which at first I found a bit difficult having grown up in suburban England, but I picked it up pretty quickly, and the Oasis crew were always on hand to help me out if I was a bit unsure. And of course the places we went were amazing.

The highlights for me were the trekking and hiking in Patagonia, it was some of the most incredible and unspoilt scenery I've ever seen. I'd never even been for a proper hike before but I got



really into it and since I came back to the UK and started uni I've kept it up and am going to do the Three Peaks Challenge later this year!

Overall, the trip pushed me to get out of my comfort zone, but the whole time there was a support network of other travellers on the trip and the crew, who had seemingly endless energy! I made loads of great friends, and the trip was the perfect start; afterwards I travelled more in South America by myself, but was able to meet up with other Oasis trucks along the way too! ●



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SPORTS COACHING ABROAD

SASKIA WENT TO SOUTH AFRICA

TO COACH

Having spent 4 days learning about South Africa, the townships and the areas in which we will be teaching, to actually get out there and do it for the first time was great. Our first day was organised the same as every other weekday, 3 schools for an hour and a half each, each coaching the same sport all day. Since it was Thursday I was with netball, I was a bit worried as I'm not exactly a netball player, but I wanted to try out all the sports so thought I'd give it a go.

Everyone had told me, "You'll fall in love with the kids", "You'll look forward to seeing them every week" and it really is true. Even after only seeing them once, I was already looking forward to going back. The enthusiasm with which they run around playing stuck in the mud, and cheer on their team mates is almost contagious and I found myself cheering on my allocated team just as much, if not more than the kids!

A typical day varies depending on which programme you are on each day, so swimmers, teachers, coaches and those doing child care all have different schedules. Since so far I am spending most of my time coaching I will focus on that.

Usually the mini bus leaves around 9 for coaching, and it'll leave whether you're there or not, Ashy takes no prisoners! I usually wake up around 8, have breakfast (which probably takes me longer than most since I am known for eating rather a lot!), make my packed lunch, make sure I'm coated in sun cream and am ready to go.

Our first coaching session will start at 10 and lasts an hour and a half; each day we coach in different areas of the townships so once we get there all the schools are fairly close. At 11:30 we head to the next location, usually I'm pretty hungry already by this point and end up eating most of my lunch on the bus before the next school which starts at 12. We coach for another



hour and a half here and then usually get a trip to a shop to buy any snacks or cold drinks we want before our final session. This is always an after school club which I really enjoy because usually the children really want to be there and are even keener to learn. These sessions however are only an hour long so it's quite a nice way to wind down towards the end of the day.

Usually we arrive back at the volunteer accommodation at around 3:30/4, often people will go for a swim or just relax for a few hours before supper which is served at 6. Everyone eats together at the same time which is really nice so it's quite a sociable time of day. After supper depending on the day of the week there are various things we get up too, on Mondays we have a meeting night, Tuesday nights we play 5 aside football, Thursday there's a nice cocktail bar we often visit and Friday nights are game night!

One of the things I've enjoyed most about my time here in South Africa has been the weekend trips, don't get me wrong the coaching is brilliant but it's been so nice to be given so many opportunities to explore the country. Most weekends there is a trip that you can sign up for, having them already organised is great and has meant I've been able to do a lot of things I otherwise wouldn't have known about. ●

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NETWORKING NEEDED

DANIEL WRITES ABOUT HOW TO MAKE

FRIENDS WHEREVER YOUR TRAVELS TAKE YOU



Every once in a while, our life choices can take us to corners of the world we have never been to, whether it's for a job, studies, or an adventure. At that moment, we are so focused on finding proper accommodation that once we're accepted into our dream job or university, our hopes and expectations take over our thoughts. To some extent, we all ignore the difficulties we will face. Over time, we begin to realize that we don't really know anyone in the city we are moving to; here are my hacks on how to create a broad network wherever you are.

Just before you move, the first thing you should do is to write a three-line Facebook post saying goodbye to your homeland and explaining why you are leaving. For example: "Thanks for everything Mother Russia! I will represent you proudly while I pursue my studies in Paris!" In a few words, you have transmitted valuable information; you are representing your country and you are proud of it. Secondly and most importantly, you have specified a location: Paris. In this way, before you even get to your target location, some of your friends may message you saying that they know "Ms. X, Y and Z" that works or studies there. Try to meet as many "friends of friends" in your new destination. After meeting them, remember to keep in contact with them!

From day one, you have to be friendly to everyone. It's not that hard. Once you know how to get around in the city (usually it takes about three days), you should start networking. Sign up to a variety of clubs that interest you. I usually sign up to three to five clubs – but gather more information from other clubs and events, just in case. This way, you can visit other clubs or events when you don't have anything to do.

I know, it sounds like a lot of activities, so I recommend using Google Calendar to keep track of every event. Most of the clubs will have some "get to know each other" time, in which it is

important to remember people's names. For me, it really helps to make rhymes with names to remember them. It doesn't have to be a whole Eminem verse, just something to the likes of "Hannah Banana" will do. Remembering someone's name shows respect, but holding a conversation with them shows interest. It is very important for you to be able to talk with people and be aware of what current events are trending so that you can add a thoughtful comment to the conversation.

Practice makes perfect. So, practice in front of the mirror – or with people on the train whom you won't ever see again. If you make a mistake or run out of things to say, personal questions will always do, but be careful not to ask questions that are too personal. I have yet to meet anyone who doesn't love to talk about themselves or their accomplishments. Pay attention and show genuine interest. Faking it never works.

If you want to make friends with a local, it can get complicated. Most of the locals have better things to do than show you places they have already been to before. You won't be able to compete with their Friday or Saturday night plans. Instead, ask to join them for their daily run with their running group. Thursdays are a safe bet for dinner or enjoying a couple of drinks. Sunday brunch is a great time to get together in a relaxed environment and get to know each other

Try to group people you go out with by interests. For example, have a group to exercise and go to the gym with, a group that enjoys playing football and a group that likes to party. You can set up WhatsApp chat groups to stay in touch with more people and plan hangouts better. It is fun to be around a variety of people with different interests and backgrounds.

The first few months after arriving in a new city are key in developing a broad network of friends. It's a good idea to make

plans whenever you have free time. After a while, you will realize that you get along better with some people rather than others. You will eventually create your own group of friends: your inner circle. This is perfectly fine, just remember to keep in touch with your other acquaintances and be a good friend. Networking is a never-ending game and best friends are found where you least expect it, often with a couple of beers in hand. ●

Daniel Quiroga is a first-year International Business student on EU Business School's Munich campus. He was born and raised on the Bolivian Andes mountains, where he learned to love the simple pleasures of life. A day locked at home is a day lost. Simply said: he loves meeting new people, practicing extreme sports and traveling. Follow him on twitter: @therealdanielq

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THE IB: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR UNIVERSITY & MORE

MARTINA WRITES ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE THE IB

The continuous headlines, dominated by A Levels, have made me reminisce about my time in sixth form. I am originally from Italy and, rather unconventionally, moved to the UK without my parents to pursue my sixth form studies. I stayed with a host family in Cambridge and attended Impington Village College, an IB World School. At 16 years old, it was a little bit of a culture shock, but I found it extremely exciting.

I knew I would want to go to university abroad and to be able to travel using my degree, and didn't feel confident that Italian universities provided enough opportunities for undergraduates in terms of professional development. For the same reason, upon moving to the UK, I decided to follow an IB education rather than A Levels because unlike IB, I had never heard of A Levels so didn't think they would be internationally recognised. Not only did moving to the UK at 16 open my eyes to the world around me but the international perspective of the DP gave me a real passion for traveling the world and made me extremely inquisitive about other cultures.

Before leaving Italy, my school transitioned from offering GCSEs to the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), which prepared me for the high standards of learning that the DP requires. Even though IB programmes are intense, the DP in

particular prepares you so for higher education. The majority of the people on my degree course studied three A Levels and now struggle with the amount of work – especially the level of independent study – that is expected. As I had so many on-going projects throughout my IB studies, I learnt time management skills and how to prioritise my workload, as well as other key competencies, which obviously help me at university, but will help me in the world of work too.

My application to university was rather stress-free, and I found that universities in the UK appreciated the breadth of subjects and international focus of the IB.

During my sixth form years, one of the biggest differences that I saw between the schools in our two countries, was the way that UK schools use different learning materials, which are a lot more effective. Due to the nature of IB programmes, lessons feature a wide range of learning techniques, which were more beneficial to me than working from a textbook – they pushed me to learn in a number of different ways, far beyond rote memorisation!

The breadth of subjects within the DP gave me opportunities to discover my academic passions, especially because I didn't



have to focus and restrict my future opportunities at just 16. I studied seven subjects: Italian, English literature, science, maths, geography, economics and human rights. I think that having such a huge variety of subjects to study up to the age of 18 meant that I had experienced a wider range of courses when I applied to university.

I am now studying law at SOAS University of London. When I first joined Impington Village College I wanted to go on to study politics, but while I was studying the DP I realised that I wanted to make a real difference and help people (and so, chose law). I think this development stemmed from the 10 attributes, including being principled, caring, open-minded, that IB programmes nurture in students through the IB Learner Profile.

My favourite element of the DP was the creativity, action and service (CAS) project – a compulsory part of the programme. For my project, I created a Model UN Club for my sixth form. I found CAS extremely rewarding; helping others makes me happy and community service isn't something you would normally find as a compulsory element of your school years. I now volunteer as a GCSE mathematics teacher with a local school.

The extended essay, another compulsory module of the DP, was incredibly hard work. However, with hindsight, it has prepared me for university in ways that I didn't realise at the time. I had to research, analyse, and write a 4,000 word essay on a topic of my choice – I decided to write about a topic which is personal to me; political corruption in Italy in 1994. The in-depth research I carried out has helped so much at university, especially studying law!

SOAS was my first choice university and it really is a dream come true to now be studying here – and I'm grateful to Impington Village College as well as my host family for their part in my achievement. ●

Martina Ghinetti is an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) alumna who studied at Impington Village College, Cambridge and is now reading Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

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HOW I FELL INTO POLITICS

LIISA WRITES ABOUT WHERE HER

LOVE FOR POLITICS STARTED

Just like the country I live in now, Poland, my family grew up in a country with a similar intricate history. During my childhood I'd listen to my family member's stories. Ella, my grandma on my dad's side, would reminisce of how she and my grandpa at night crossed the Baltic ocean on a petite boat in order to flee from the Nazi-German invasion of Estonia in the 1940s. Young me would picture their journey on a tiny wooden boat with a maximum capacity for five people, viciously swaying in the dark ocean under a night sky filled with stars, waves high enough to devour islands, until they reached the Swedish shore. Looking back on her story, with the maturity of age, I realize how improbable parts of my version of her story seem. However, what I did learn from these stories as a child, was the fact that fear push people out of their country, out of homes, into the unknown.

My mother's stories were different. She grew up in a subsequent era, long after the Nazis had left and the Soviets had an iron grip on Estonia. My mom would tell me stories of how Estonians were oppressed, how Estonian was a prohibited language, and how she got out of situations by mastering Russian to the extent that the Soviets thought she was one of them. I grew up with stories of my mom as the heroine fleeing out of delicate circumstances in her home country. I grew up with stories of us and them. On the contrary, I grew up in a safe Swedish suburb during the end of the nineties, spending too much time watching the Power Puff girls on television, playing Pokémon in the school backyard, and being dressed in cringe worthy clothes forever stored on film photographs lying around our bookshelf.

As always with childhoods, they tend to come to an end one day. My first love in life was reading. My childhood home had a grand bookshelf filled with children's books, a collection that kept growing and growing. My parents would sometimes bring me

along to their dinner parties, and I'd find a quiet corner and just read, read, read. I would read in the car, on the sofa, or anywhere I could sit down quietly and pursue my passion. I started reading more mature books for my age, devouring them with passion and ease. During the early mornings I would start eating my breakfast, a cup of warm tea and perhaps some oatmeal with berries, accompanied by the daily newspaper on the table. Between navigating the cartoon section of the paper and trying to understand sophisticated words used by journalists, I started realizing that the part of history, stories of oppression, fear, and refugees that my family had endured once in time, was not yet over. As a matter of fact, the entire newspaper would, on a daily basis, be splashed full with new articles about new countries and new people oppressed by old regimes. North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Eritrea... There was no end to countries and new stories that I as a child thought belonged to the past.

I was twelve years old when I truly started to devour news on a daily basis. I could not grasp for all my life how it was possible to see history repeat itself so much. Many of my family member's stories when growing up would give shivers down my spine, and many of the news stories today are much worse in comparison. This is part of the reason to why I chose to study politics, this is why I write about other people's stories, this is why I talk with every person I meet and feel the need to understand their history. I'm 20 years old today, and I still struggle to grasp how so many atrocities can be carried out worldwide with such a lack of response from the world. The saddest part that I remember from the stories by my family, about a life behind the iron wall, was always the comment: it felt like no one else in the outside world cared about us. This is how I fell into politics, because of the apathy of the rest of the world. Because I cannot stand to see the stories of the past being reinforced onto people in modern day. ●

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ARE TEENAGE OPINIONS RELEVANT?

SHREYA LOOKS AT HOW TEENAGERS' OPINIONS ARE TREATED

With the recent election in the U.S., a lot more people have been speaking up about how they feel about the results. It can be anywhere – verbal discussions, online, but people won't hold back on their opinions. In an ideal world, anyone would be able to express their opinions. Others learn to respect them and move on, even if they don't necessarily agree. Unfortunately, when it comes to more adult topics, opinions made by a teenager or someone not of the expected mature age, any sort of statement is made invalid.

"You're just a kid."

"You're not old enough to tell what's wrong or right."

"What you say doesn't matter."

Most people assume that because we are younger, our minds are easily manipulated. Whatever is seen becomes truth to us. A lot of the time, they assume anyone who is still in their teens are incapable of understanding such serious issues and be able to come to a justified decision. Granted, in some aspects, it's

true. As kids, we are usually surrounded by our parents beliefs. This can't be helped, of course – we spend almost the entirety of the first quarter of our life with them, so it comes off as no surprise that we adopt their mannerisms and even their likes or dislikes. The real difference begins when we start to gain more independence and meet new people. Naturally, we start to find clashes. Realising there are opinions other than the ones that we've centered our lives around so far is scary, but inspiring, as it gives you a chance to find your own. In some cases, yes, the children do end up sticking to what their parents say because even when presented with other facts and views, they feel like what they've grown up believing is right, which is perfectly fine. A lot of the time though, when faced with something new, we learn to adapt and absorb what we understand and appreciate in order to formulate something of our own. Our opinions may not be a stark contrast to what we've known, yet it won't be the exact same, with aspects of it changing from time to time. Sure, these opinions are entitled to change over time, but then again anybody's can, no matter your age.





The point is, the opinions and views of youths have often been overshadowed due to the assumed lack of knowledge behind our theories and ideas. No matter how much you've been exposed to, the sad reality is that unless you're a certain age, your opinion will likely not matter in the eyes of many. There's a saying by Margaret Mead, a famous anthropologist. "Children must be taught how to think, not what to think." Children are the future. When our parents move on, our generation are the ones who have to improve the world so that it satisfies our wants and needs. We're going to need to teach our children how to do the same thing; how to build and formulate their ideas. But if we're not given any chances to prove ourselves, how are we supposed to continue?

Sure, teenagers may be occasionally moody and unstable, having rash, uncalculated thoughts in the moment. However, it's important that we have the confidence in ourselves to believe that we can make a difference. We are, in fact, the leaders of tomorrow, no matter how cheesy that sounds. If we aren't taught how to think, what is our future going to end up being like? Politics is a good example. A lot more millennials have taken to the internet to express their opinions on Trump's presidency. Some, of course, are simply harsh and brutal, just lashing out and the new president of the U.S. without any form

of solid argument. But, a lot of other teenagers have been collecting evidence, doing their research and explaining why they feel unhappy or unsafe in the country they live in. They produce reasonable complaints. We have hearts and genuine interest to make a change, yet we're denied the chance to actually do so. We're seen as aggressive, rebellious kids who are just trying to make life harder for others, too young to have serious opinions and thoughts about the world around us.

Mozart was 5 when he first started composing music. It took him almost his entire lifetime to get noticed and appreciated, all because he was too young to be taken seriously. But now, those same compositions that people laughed and scorned at due to his age are loved and admired by people worldwide. Will teenagers be taken more seriously? Or are we going to have to wait until we're dead to be respected? Either way, no matter who listens, always remember that your opinion is valid, and that there are people who care. ●

Written by Shreya Nair who is a student at Garden International School, Malaysia

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SNAPSHOTS

NEIL WRITES ABOUT HIS LIFE AT UNIVERSITY AND THE DAYS LEADING UP TO HIS EXAMS

Beep. Beep. Beep... I get ripped out of my sleep and the first thing I ask myself is: why? I press snooze, instantly forget the question, turn around and doze off into the dream I was having. Beep. Beep. Beep... God! I guess it's time to get up. I pick myself up, grab the towel on the wall, walk out of my room and stop. The bathroom is taken. The pleasure of having roommates. The good news: I can lie back down and fall into a slumber again. Half asleep I hear the squeak of the bathroom door. I jump up and swiftly make my way out of my room again. One has to be fast to make it before the next person. Warm water in my face. The day just got a whole lot better.

"Tick!" I looked up from my book. Did I hear something? "Tick!" There it was again. This time I was sure I heard it. I jump up from my comfy chair, the only chair I can study in because it is so comfortable that getting out of it is harder than making myself focus on my work. I hurry to the window. "Tick!" I open the window to look out and indeed Jake has arrived. I give him my craziest most genuine grin and throw down my key. He catches it with such skill, that can only be the result of a lot of practice. Excited, I wait for Afro to pop his head into my room. We say "Hi". Without an extra word he unpacks his saxophone and I sit down at the piano. We play. Nobody knows what we are playing. I don't even know if it sounds any good to anybody other than us, but who cares right? Time disappears, swallowed by the joy of making music.



I swerve to the right and hear an angry "let op!" (Dutch for "watch out!"). I turn back to apologise but whoever I angered had already disappeared in the sea of bikes rushing to their destinations. Tuesday morning, it's rush hour. The skill the Dutch have acquired is impeccable! One hand on the phone, the other holding up an umbrella they smoothly avoid collisions while wearing high heels. Quickly I look forward again in order to not get hit by another bike racing towards me. I remember the first couple of months very clearly, where near death experiences were part of daily life. I now know to turn my head twice before changing direction even when I'm on foot. Five minutes later I reach the faculty (this is why we bike in Leiden. It's fast!). I look for a parking spot in the underground parking garage made just for bikes. "Just remember the row" I tell myself. How many times do I wander around trying to recall the spot. Hastily I run up the stairs to our lecture hall. Just in time. "Welcome everybody" the professor says. "Today we will talk about...". I start daydreaming.

My good mood instantly fades as I walk through the doors. I hold my library card against the gate, the light turns green and I'm in. I walk past the rows of people looking up from their books, hungry for any distraction. I find a place and open my book. I realise that I will probably not manage to read those seven chapters before Friday. I start to question how this is



even helpful to my life and how I think the world should get rid of exams. I love learning, but three days before the exam the world can turn grey. I get my thoughts back on track and start reading. I hide my phone in my bag, and fall victim to the peer pressure of the library. I can hear the minds of dozens of students humming quietly and slowly I get sucked into the literature, giving myself up to the thoughts of the authors.

“Clonk!” I jump out of bed. Luckily today I am wearing my stylish pyjamas, so I run straight to the window, look down. And of course it’s Pete. He looks up at me with a big question mark written on his face. “Should we go to the market?” he asks. I look at the time take a sharp breath. It’s already past what ‘normal’, hard working people call morning, so I quickly throw on some clothes, run down these crazy Dutch stairs (they are super steep and go in circles!) and off we go. Shouting, smells, colours. People are everywhere. The market is an exciting place to be. The best part: each stand usually has some little bite to try. Back to my apartment. Today we feast.

I chew a little on the back of my pencil. As soon as I notice I stop myself. I never usually do this. I must be nervous. I look up at the rows and rows of students looking at the sheet of paper we all dread. I tick off the answer to the last question, get up, walk to the front where a strict looking woman musters

me through her spectacles. I hand her the exam and wait for her to check everything. Solemnly I walk out of the room. The moment I hear the door click behind me I jump, raising one fist. “I did it!” Life for the last two weeks was dedicated solely to this moment. I meet some others outside and begin the debate about which answer was right, which question was totally unfair and how the one thing everyone studied really hard wasn’t even mentioned. It sounds like everybody will fail. Two hours later we passed! Time to celebrate.

I feel the early summer sun tickle my nose. Through my cracked eyes I see the fresh green leaves of the weeping willow above me. The grass I’m lying in slightly tickles the back of my neck and I hear the “bzzzz” of a bee whiz past my left ear. My other ear picks up the sloshing and splattering of the canal I am lying at. Occasionally I can hear the happy voices of a group of people enjoying the sunny day cruising through the “gracht” (dutch for canal) on their boat. I look up to see the smiles of my friends around me. This is the moment I realise, I love student life in Leiden!

Written by Neil Schön, a German student studying Psychology (BSc) at Leiden University in the Netherlands

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CONFIDENCE BUILDING COURSE GAVE ME THE EDGE

BEN WRITES ABOUT THE YOUNG LEADERS QUALIFICATION

Last summer I became a graduate of the inaugural Young Leaders' Award, which is a new qualification for people aged 14-24. I'm 16 years old and a Year 11 student at Dubai College. At school, I started to learn about different opportunities to develop myself with extracurricular activities like drama, choirs and sports. My mum, who is a qualified coach and a primary school teacher, discussed with me how coaching can support younger students to develop and we started to talk about how coaching improves confidence and develops individuals.

At 15, I realised that I was about to make those post-16 decisions about my future goals and some of these, such as my choices for A levels, would shape my higher education options. These decisions would then go on to shape my job, my career and my life. I realised then, that these were the real first steps to being an adult and I thought what a challenge it is as a teenager to be faced with some pretty important and possibly life changing decisions.



I found out about Young Leaders from my mum and, to be honest, I was unsure about what it would involve. A part of me wasn't keen because I'm not really ready to think about my future but I don't mind trying new things and am quite open minded so decided to give it a go! I also quite liked the fact if I completed and passed the course, I would have professional ILM accredited qualification giving me something different to offer universities and employers. I'm really glad I participated in the course. It has been very worthwhile and I do feel that the skills I have learnt will stay with me. Those skills include problem solving and knowing how and when to use my initiative in the face of challenging situations.

I enrolled for the course, which was held in the UK during summer 2016. On the first day, I met Charlie, Josh, the other Josh, Jess and of course John – our tutor. I'm not going to lie – I was a slightly worried that the man teaching us was a fireman from Southport but it all seemed to work out in the end. I remember that our first activity was to play "golf" outside in the cold, British summer of 14°C! This didn't suit me at all! Of course with people not knowing each other and not knowing really how to play the game we weren't the ideal team – fumbling around, shouting different instructions and demonstrating contrasting opinions. However, after a few goes we created a system and continued to beat our group collective best time. Over the four days we did get to know each other more – it might have been something to do with our combined love for 'Pokémon GO' – and we were all able to 'lead' the team in various activities.

Looking back, I know that undertaking the Young Leaders Award has given me the confidence to speak out in a crowd or group of people and helps me to deal with challenges and decision-making matters I face, such as making my A Level choices. It is quite daunting and I have spent a lot of time reflecting on what will be best for me. I hope the subject choices I have made will help me fulfil my potential. The course has also connected me to some new friends, some are older and some are based in the UK, making it hard to communicate – however, in our modern world, Snapchat may have solved the communication issue.

One of the best things afterwards was talking to my Headmaster, Mr. Lambert. He wanted to know more about my qualification and the school held a presentation even during one of our year group assemblies. Mr. Lambert addressed the whole of Year 10 and 11 saying how impressive my achievement was and concluded by encouraging the students at to consider undertaking the Programme themselves.

To students out there, who are interested in gaining the edge, I would recommend Young Leaders to you because it's surprising how much you can learn about yourself and the importance of cooperation and collaborative learning. ●

Ben completed his Young Leaders qualification in July 2016. The Young Leaders Award is a Level Two qualification, accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and available to study exclusively with British School of Coaching (BSC).

f @britishschoolofcoaching
t @bsc4coaching

SEMANGAT MALAYSIA (MALAYSIAN SPIRIT)

JULIANA WRITES ABOUT REPRESENTING HER COUNTRY IN A
JUNIOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT

Sport teaches you life skills; it teaches you to be a leader.”
– My mother

Playing for Malaysia in the Junior FED Tennis Cup in New Delhi was a game-changing experience. Throughout the tournament I felt honored to be wearing the orange tiger-striped national kit that connected me to my team mates, coaches and all of Malaysia’s national athletes. I was energised by the support of my family, Wycombe Abbey friends and Malaysians back home.

It was enlightening to meet new people from a range of cultures, living in a collection of countries in Asia and Oceania, speaking a variety of languages. There was a sense of competitiveness between the teams, but a shared desire to make our countries proud united us. I left the rivalries on the court and embraced the other teams during our time off. We all became friends. The dining room was one of my favourite places, not just because of the warm rotis and dahls that were served at every meal, but because it showcased a diversity of backgrounds. I especially enjoyed using my school knowledge of French to speak to a new friend from Tahiti – causing great amusement.

Playing tennis for my country has been a lifelong dream. In the lead up to team selection I had to be efficient with my



time, balancing tennis training, academic work, lacrosse, squash and the House drama production. The six hours of weekly tennis lessons could not compare to my opponents full-time schedule, so I realised the importance of enjoying my practices, while remaining focused and playing hard – the



MALAYSIAN TEAM (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT):
COACH MING, ELSA, ELYSIA, JULIANA

toughest aspect was definitely waking up at 6am for Monday morning sessions before the school day begun.

Competing in the Junior FED Cup makes me wonder which of my opponents will be future grand slam winners. I saw that the most promising professional players were likely to be the athletes able to grind and fight to win back points, especially when they were losing – a challenge indeed. I have tried to extend my attitude towards tennis to my life in general; for example, it is equally important to stay calm and focused during important points as it is during school tests. I have developed an enormous respect for my team mates and coach who continue to motivate me with their enthusiasm and positive approach.

I went into the tournament focused on challenging myself to perform at a higher level and I’m glad to have achieved this with Malaysia finishing twelfth out of the Asia/Oceania countries. The experience has further increased my drive me to play for Malaysia in future events – I can’t wait to represent my country again! ●

Juliana Ganendra is a year 10 student at Wycombe Abbey, England.

 @Wycombe-Abbey
 @wycombeabbey

WORLD DEBATE COMPETITION

JULIA TELLS US ABOUT THE DEBATE COMPETITION IN MARBELLA, SPAIN

In an extraordinarily interesting conversation with the Director of EIC (English International College), the hosting school, one phrase struck me, distinct and unforgettable: “Today is the beginning of the rest of your lives.” This, of course, was in reference to the fact that a competition like COBIS Student World Debate is merely a stepping stone to our ambitious futures. He enthused: “You will be tomorrow’s lawyers, politicians, world leaders. It should be exciting.”

And I can sincerely say that this enthusiasm was echoed throughout the whole competition. It proved to be more than just an exhibition of successful debaters, but a learning opportunity as well, with challenging and polemic motions, such as: “This House believes that people with self-inflicted illnesses should forfeit the right to indiscriminate access to universal healthcare.” and “This House believes that in an era of post-truth politics, governance derived from popular elections is fundamentally awed.” It was the very complexity of these motions that urged our team to search for creative and unconventional points, and that reminded us that sometimes the best arguments are counter-arguments.

With friendships formed with those from Prague, Baku, Amsterdam, Alexandria, and Dubai (and to our delight, many more places), I think it’s safe to say that the experiences had a focus beyond the academic world. Surprisingly, people



from different schools and nationalities were very similar to ourselves, and the conversations we shared were captivating whilst vaguely familiar to the ones we have back at home. It turns out that the international community is much more welcoming than we give it credit for.

In this respect, we got more than we bargained for. We travelled to debate, but did plenty more. We fed cats, we indulged in a variety of dishes, we discovered new favours (which weren’t exclusively Spanish – case in point: Jaffa Cakes), we visited magnificent castles, we took an impromptu Segway tour around Malaga, we went to the beach to watch the sunset, and we ate life-changing burgers. And although that last one might have only been experienced by me, I am sure that we are all overjoyed with the memories that we get to keep. We had countless amusing moments, and we whole-heartedly appreciated each and every one of them.

All in all, if there were to be a motion stating: “This house believes that the COBIS Student World Debate Competition was pretty cool,” we would all be more than willing to take the place of the proposition. ●

Julia Lotufo is a form 4 pupil at St. Paul’s School, Brazil.

 @St. Paul’s School

 @SeniorStPaulsSP

THE CHALLENGE OF THE EPQ

BADRIKA IN SIXTH FORM SHARES WITH US HER EXPERIENCE OF THE EPQ

The EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) involves the completion of an independent research project which gives students an opportunity to explore in depth, a subject area that they are truly passionate about. The students must produce either a 5000-word written report or an artefact of some type, plus a write-up of the process.

Throughout the process, students must also reflect by completing a production log, this sits alongside their project outcome and is just as important as the artefact/writing when it comes to the overall assessment of work. They start by completing a detailed project plan with clear aims and objectives which goes through a formal approval process. Once approved, the students start to research and develop their projects considering both primary and secondary research. At various points they have to reflect on their project, monitor their progress against their original aims and objectives, and explore how they overcome various challenges that they encounter along the way. The final assessed aspect of the project is a presentation.

Year 12 was an enriching year where we constantly had our noses in a book or website. After endless research, planning and redrafting, February was the time Year 13 students saw the hard work of shaping our projects pay-off.

Reflecting back on the year, EPQ may have been a struggle or burden for many of us. It was just another pile of work to add to the load. However, as we gradually got into the mood of our independent research, most of us seemed to find areas which had captured our attention.

Particularly within my tutor group, there would always be the "Did you know?" question or someone gasping in awe, making everyone else curious as to what was so interesting. We would then share the knowledge each of us had in the areas of our research. It was fascinating to see different people working on different topics such as theatre, history, feminism, space travel, mechanical engineering and so on. It gave us the opportunity to

gain general knowledge on a topic that was not of our specialty. Our supervisors were really helpful as well in guiding us towards the right direction and encouraging us to continuously support each other. EPQ lessons were also a chance for us to take a break from our A level subjects whilst keeping us productive at the same time. In my opinion, the best part of the process was probably the presentations as it was incredibly rewarding to see the process of everyone's project unfold.

Reflecting on EPQ, gaining a range of academic abilities from the process was definite. We picked up new skills such as in depth research, referencing and conducting primary research. One of the students mentioned that "EPQ teaches you the importance of time management within the busy life of A levels and that research is imperative in understanding something to your full potential."

It could be argued that the most valuable element learnt from the process, however, was probably learning about ourselves as an individual. EPQ gave us the opportunity to venture into a wide world of knowledge, allowing us to find our strengths and weaknesses as well as discover where our passions lie.

Besides that, an advantage with EPQ is that it plays a part in helping us with university. It gives us an idea of how to produce a piece of detailed academic writing. Although difficult in the beginning, the experience was beneficial for us. It also gave an additional spark when writing our personal statement. I was personally very lucky that my EPQ was the aspect that caught the attention of one of the universities which I applied to.

However, the EPQ came along with its challenges. The main obstacle most of us faced was coming up with a focused question or objective. Some of us, including myself had to make multiple changes to our projects. Starting the report was also a challenge as we felt uncertain of the structure and content of it. This led to multiple attempts of drafting.



As I was doing an artefact on writing and staging a play, I ended up writing three scripts and redrafting my final version two weeks beforehand due to obstacles such as having my cast members pull out and being limited in terms of mutual timings and strategies. Nevertheless, perseverance, hard work and support helped me in pulling through and successfully completing the project.

It may have taken the entire year but, in a blink of an eye, it was done and dusted. In January, we anxiously waited in the Sixth Form space to find out if we had achieved the grade we aimed for. Our tutor assured us with a smile on her face that “there were no surprises in the results achieved.”

When we collected our folders to take a look at our grades, it was wonderful to see smiles around the room suggesting

a sense of satisfaction, achievement and everyone being pleased with themselves. Besides all the willpower and effort, we also have our friends and teachers to thank for helping us make it all the way in each of our amazing projects. Ultimately, it is definitely safe to say that EPQ is a worthwhile experience and one can benefit so much from it.

You just need to find the passion and you’ll see what I mean. In the words of Nelson Mandela, “it always seems impossible until it is done.” ●

Badrika Bahadur is a Sixth Form student at the Alice Smith School, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.

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LIVING MULTILINGUAL

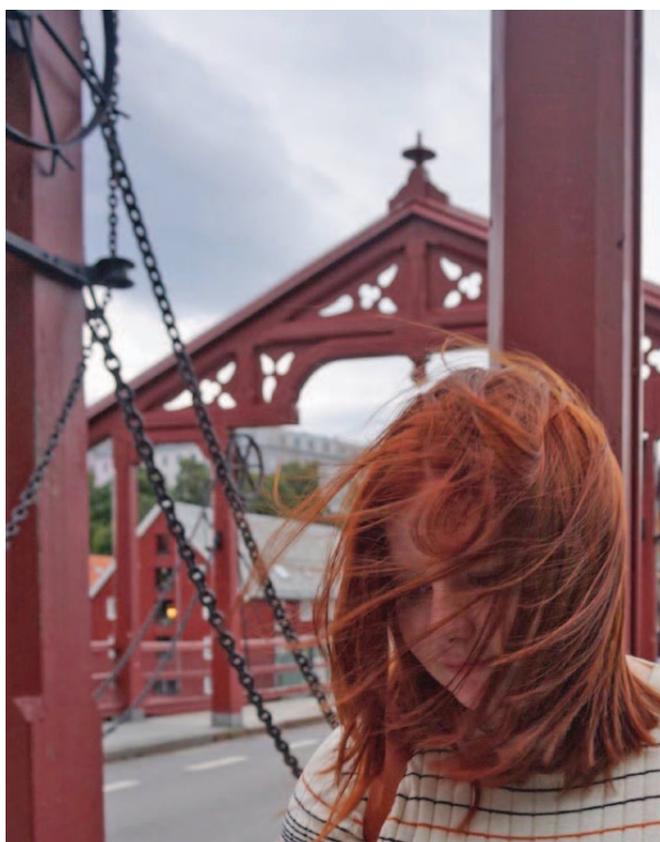
MARIE WRITES ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE OF ATTENDING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN A ANOTHER COUNTRY

I always knew I wanted to see more of the world. As a child, I planned to travel all over the world and see everything. My plan from the beginning was to do at least one year of high school in another country, not that my parents agreed. When I turned 15, I finally decided that I wanted to go to England, more specifically: Oxford. I made presentations and plans to show my parents the reasons I should go. I got a summer job and I worked hard to get good grades at school. In my head, the hardest part was convincing my parents to let me go. I didn't think too much about how I would fare at the school, as long as I would be able to go.

The thing about international schools is that it is significantly different from a local school in the Norwegian countryside. First of all, people are different. I did have some idea of the people that would go to the school, yes, but I had never really thought about how different cultures can affect how people act. Secondly, constantly speaking in a second language is harder when you can't just quickly ask what something is in your first language. I had never experienced culture shock before, and it hit me like a brick. The first week was overwhelming, in a good way. There were so many new people, new names, new accents, all in a new country. It isn't something that you can prepare for, you just have to experience it. After the first week, it all calmed down in a sense. First impressions came and went, everyone got to know each other and it didn't take long to establish strong friendships. I quickly became friends with people from Brazil, France, Indonesia, Germany, USA, Mexico, Spain, Korea, Morocco and much more. Looking at it in retrospect, my life changed a great deal in just a few weeks.

Everyone at school usually speaks English to communicate with each other, as it is the most common language between us. In the beginning, I was very self-conscious about my English, as I felt that my accent was too prominent and weird. This went away swiftly as I realized that nobody judged me because of the way I spoke. Everyone was open and helpful. I think the openness and tolerance in international schools are unique.

I think most international students can relate to the language barrier that comes from talking in your second or third language. Most of the time, conversations flow naturally, no struggling to find the right word or mixing up tenses and such. But then comes a day when you're tired, or just have a bad day, and everything unravels. I've been on both ends of that conversation more times than I can recall.





In my group of friends, we have at least seven languages between us at all times. Usually the only common one is English, which is not a problem since we all consider ourselves fluent. Sometimes however, an expression or some kind of hybrid word sneaks its way into the vocabulary confusing everyone, including the person who said it. I have caught myself telling people I have “good time” which is not just grammatically incorrect, it does not make a lot of sense. What I mean with the expression is that I still have some time before I need to be somewhere. People however, take it as I am having a good time. A conversation about rules with your roommate can take a completely different turn when she mentions being executed instead of expelled. Imagine my surprise when she wondered if she could be executed if she missed curfew!

Living in such an international environment we learn to recognize and differentiate between languages. It is such a unique experience when such a diverse group of people get together. Everyone in my friend group knows the words for ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘thank you’ in most languages between us. Finding a common word by accident is a fun phenomenon. The word “cinnamon” or “pineapple” is very similar in most languages between us, except for English for some reason. Sometimes when someone can’t find a word they say it in their own

language and some of us will be able to understand it, then we can help them find the same word in English. To experience how languages overlap is completely different from learning about it in a classroom.

I am lucky to live in such a diverse environment. Since starting school in September 2016, I have formed lifelong friendships with people from all over the world. We have bonded over the fact that we are different, and that we can learn from each other. I believe that the difference in language and experiences gives a better view of the world and builds up our understanding and tolerance for different cultures. We are able to look past differences and build friendships on the basis of mutual understanding, no matter where we come from. I wish that everyone could have the experience of living in a multicultural environment. It has given me the opportunity to form a better understanding and respect for different cultures, and to find friends from all over the world. ●

Marie Rimolsønning is from Norway and is an IB Diploma Year 1 student at EF Academy Oxford

 @EFacademy

MAKING LSE A NEW HOME

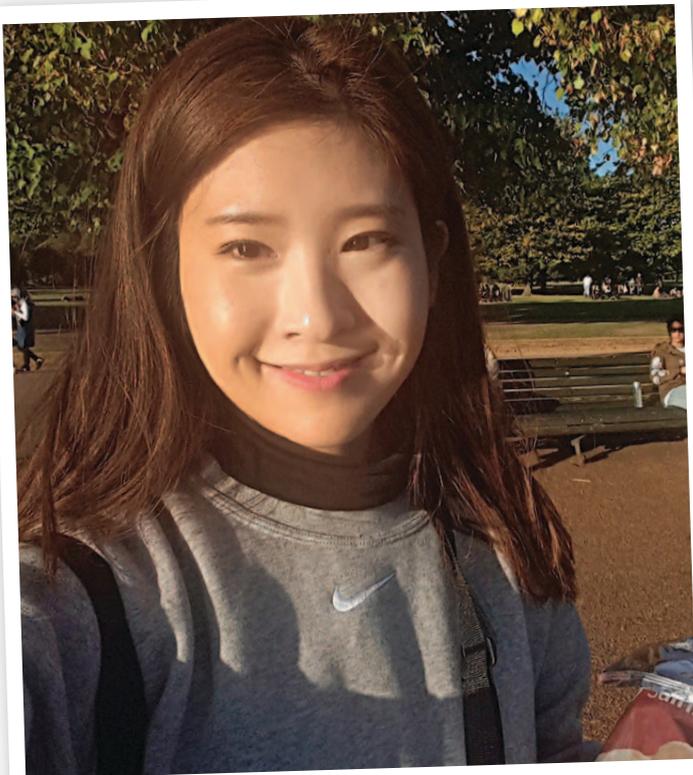
YEA WON TELLS US ABOUT HER MOVE TO LONDON TO STUDY AT LSE, AND WHY SHE LOVES IT THERE

For all my life, I've gone through transition after transition. I have lived as a contemporary nomad – constantly migrating from country to country. But even as someone familiar with the life of a wanderer, deciding to come to LSE was not the easiest decision to make. Thinking about the abrupt introduction of complete liberty had me feeling uncertain about so many things. I eventually made my decision only hours before the final deadline.

Upon making new friends in school and my hall, however, I realised that we were all in the same boat. We were all feeling equally unsure; we were all feeling equally nervous. Knowing that I was not alone dispelled any hint of anxiety. Through the departmental meetings, social nights and society welcome events organised by LSE, I easily made new friends and school was no longer a foreign place for me.

Studying economics in a world-renowned institution amongst some of the brightest and the most studious people in the world never fails to humble me. The reputation of the institution plays a part, but what makes the true difference is the people who make up the School. At LSE, the diverse group of students I study with always stun me with their clarity of thought, and the professors and teaching staff I learn from always inspire me with their unrivalled enthusiasm for the subject. For this reason, pursuing a degree here in London, and at LSE has been one of the best decisions I have ever made. Throughout secondary and high school, I always wanted to study economics at university. Being able to do so in an institution of such great quality has been an extremely gratifying experience thus far.

The opportunities for LSE students are simply unimaginable. From the regular career advice sessions to the peer-to-peer tutoring opportunities and hundreds of societies open for anyone to join, the list just never ends. Depending on what you are willing to make out of the programme, the lessons and skills you can take from the School are limitless. As soon as I settled down in my new home, I excitedly signed my first ever employment contract: I became a video blogger for LSE. Inspired by the fun I had while producing the videos for LSE, I started looking for more interests to pursue. I applied for almost everything I found intriguing – I applied to become a dog-walker, I transcribed for a software company, and I became an economics tutor as well! This all happened within my first



A CASUAL WALK TO THE HYDE PARK BECAUSE I LIVE RIGHT NEXT TO IT!



six months here. Noting the sheer number of things that I have done apart from studying during such a short period of time exhilarates me to no end.

One of the most incredible aspects of living in London is its sheer beauty. I still struggle to comprehend the fact that I walk past Hyde Park as I make my way to the School every morning, or that I go for a casual walk to Big Ben and the London Eye for a short break from work. Weekends are filled with life as I head to the National Gallery and Tate Modern with friends to look at incredible works of art and chat over a good cup of coffee. The number of places you can visit (for free or for a discounted price most of the time) is quite unbelievable, and this is what truly completes my life here in London.

Apart from enjoying London, you also get the opportunity to travel across national borders and explore new horizons. The United Kingdom lies close to many great destinations for travellers like me – Spain, Italy, Germany, Norway and the Czech Republic are just a few examples. This might sound like a luxurious option only available to a select number of students, but this is not true. Budget airline tickets can go as cheap as £25 for a two-way trip. Save £1 every day and within a month, you can afford a ticket bound for a destination beyond the UK. Travelling really enriches the soul, and the fact that living in London allows me to do this frequently is as a huge plus point for me.

To summarise: I love life at LSE, and I absolutely love life here in the heart of London. It took me a very long time to decide on studying in the UK but looking back, I realise that I could have been braver about this decision. LSE is a huge chamber of opportunities and for an explorer like myself, there is nothing better. Because I have been in the same shoes before, I am well aware of how challenging it can be for an international student

to decide on an overseas education. However, if you are willing to adapt quickly to the changes in people and environment that will soon surround you, you can be certain that this opportunity to stretch yourself is invaluable – go for it! ●

Yea Won Youn is a student at the London School of Economics.

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Poetry Competition

CATEGORY A – AGE 10 AND UNDER

1st Imogen O'Connor – Jumeirah Primary School

Distant now, but close to me

Through the lens of my memory I see
emerging buds of fragile flowers
in fields surrounding tall church towers.
A carpet of dazzling blossoms look up,
bold daffodils and the shy buttercup.
Spring has come to English places,
bringing warmth to familiar faces.
Distant now, but close to me.

Through the lens of my memory I see
warm beach days filled with endless wonder,
picnics abandoned, sound of incoming thunder.
Rolling down hills to pass the time,
ice creams, cream teas, chilled glasses of wine.
Summer has come to English shores,
tempting families to venture outdoors.
Distant now, but close to me.

Through the lens of my memory I see
leaves falling off trees, naked and cold,
A blanket of warm colours, woods standing bold.
Evening now darker, shadows drawing in,
bonfires light the way for winter to begin.
Autumn has come to English skies
A last blaze of warmth enjoyed as it dies.
Distant now, but close to me.

Through the lens of my memory I see
choirs and carols and last minute shopping,
blankets of white with snowflakes still dropping.
Hats, scarves and gloves to wrap up tight,
there's a storm coming in, it is freezing tonight.
Winter has come to English hearts,
Time for celebration as the old year departs.
Distant now, but close to me.

2nd Jason Oghenefejiro Egoh – Start-Rite School

Nigeria: My Beloved Country

I see a Nigeria clothed in white linen,
Her skin glitters and glows like the wren.
Her lips brightened the earth of its darkness,
Unity, love and progress uphold her brightness.

She dances among the nations of the world joyfully
In a spirited atmosphere of goodness.
I see a spotless maiden with a pure mind,
Who stood with an undiluted smile that stays peacefully
Among the brethren who see enmity as foul wind.

I see an undefiled vegetable springing up
From the west coast of Africa among dwarfs territories.
She is a cute singing bird with a songful mouth.
Behold, Nigeria is working like beauties

In the eyes of born-beholders smiles,
Working like the brightest midnight-born moonlight.

When she walks past the trees
On the splendid golden streets,
They all waved in admiration of her beauty.
For she harbours no corruption in her humble heart;
No pothole skins like others who walk afar off.

She is an African woman with splendour.
Her beauty is natural with original flavour.
Though she may look a little weak today,
I see her blossoming like a flagrant flower on a bright day.

3rd Thomas Uchiumi-Jones –
The British School in Tokyo

Oh How I Long to Be There...

The silvery lake glimmered in the winter sun,
Trotting along the grassy path having so much fun,
In the distance but not so far away
We see the magnificent Fuji over the bay.
Oh how I long to be there with my mum and dad,
Oh how I long to be there, moving away is too sad.
The slippery ice shining in the morning sun,
Skating around the obstacles, my happiness has gone up a ton
In the distance a long long way, I see my mum skating away.
Oh how I long to be there with my mum and dad,
Oh how I long to be there, moving away is too sad.
The glittery stones shimmering in the afternoon sun
Making them glow and choosing my favorite one,
Looking at all these crystals today makes me want to stay.
Oh how I long to be there with my mum and dad,
Oh how I long to be there, moving away is too sad.

CATEGORY B – AGE 11 TO 14

1st Zachary How – The British School of Brussels

Land of The Bauhinia

Skyscrapers cut the sky, as the market sellers
cut their day's catch.

I hear the cries of the city
in all its glistening glory.

Offices, Banks, Shops, Restaurants.

Apartments and airplanes, mansions and mountains.

All this, an arcadia to the elementary tourist.

There is another side of my city.

Crime and grime, heists and fights.

Nothing is paradise behind the face of this city

Neon signs and velvet curtains.

A veneer of respectable.

But behind the bars, and in the alley ways.

The dollar changes hands.

Soak in the sights.

Ride the tram, catch the ferry, see the Buddha.

Buy your bargains, a touch of chinois

The latest iPhone, gold Lexus' and ladies who lunch.

But leave the malls, and take the back streets

Street side barbers, woven baskets smelly fish stalls

Sit cheek to cheek with shiny new eateries

The latest fusion, a new Eurasian.

2nd Maia Troconis –

British International School of Stockholm

Two hearts or two halves? (Venezuelan and Swedish)

How can one live with only half a body?

Half a mind, half a heart?

Half right here, creating memories, creating bonds

Half halfway across the world, remembering memories,
remembering bonds

Mourning

So I wake up, from troubled dreams

An unanswered question in my mind

Like a stabbing knife, breaking my heart in two

Where is that place where I belong?

Outside, in the darkness, crickets chirping, toads cackling

The silence of the birds, waiting for the crack of dawn

When all the world explodes into colour

To erupt into song

I can feel the warm sun wrapping its arms around me

I can swim and bathe in pure blue, an endless canvas

Speckled with waving algae, shiny pebbles, coloured fish

The warm waters of my Caribbean sea

I can breathe the humid air of the tropical rainforest

I can hear the torrent of falling water

Coming down from the mountains

Where the Angels Falls are born

But I can also hear the howling of dogs
in the cold winter night

Smoothly pulling my sled over the soft clouds of heaven
to amaze me with the Northern Lights

I can listen to the silence of the evergreen forest
Covered in snow and frost

I can feel the mild wind that greets my cheeks
And the snowflakes that cloud my eyes

I can feel the softness of the reindeer skin

I can find delight in a blueberry pie

The rush of happiness, my heart jumps in joy,
As I plunge into the cold Baltic sea

This is when I understand

There are two countries, two skies, two loves,

Two places to know, to feel, to grow,

Two countries to respect, two cultures to embrace

One heart that breaks in two with love

Two countries deep in my heart

Two countries in which I rejoice

3rd Laranya Pawar –
The International School of Moscow

Boundless arcs of opalescent skies, are braided with argent gems,
Rippling oceans hemmed with ivory-white crests, soothe the
emollient sand,
Pale as wax roses, are motionless watermelon-pink stars on thin
and delicate stems,
A smoke-grey wolf, napped under the dappled shade of an ancient
oak, looking grand,
Gold and blue fairies flittered around the place, black eyes scanning
every inch for soft nest padding,
Snakes as green as foliage, slithered soundlessly through the layers
of littered lime fronds,
Feline-like eyes observe every thing from an almost human face,
with long hair drifting in the pond like grass, equally green and fine,
but layered with water bubble cladding,
Moody fire-elves flickered, sometimes in one place then nowhere to
be seen, singeing oleanders and destroying deceiving bonds,
And in the middle stands a tree, a tree which has been growing for
centuries, a cherry blossom of new beginnings:
This my place, this is my home; Satella's Sakura
The latest fusion, a new Eurasian.

CATEGORY C – AGE 15 TO 19

1st Jessica Davies – The British School of Brussels

If I honestly tell you about my country
The first things that come into mind
Are the identical faces and identical clothes
Individuality closely confined.

Girls my age are duplicates
Under pressure to conform

Lacking the confidence to be different
Too hard to break out of the norm.

One Snapchat of the perfect life
Displayed for all to see
Invoking envy, incompleteness and spite
But what is the reality?

2nd Lamees Abu Saad – International Community School, Amman

أجت 2017
and I question my reality
I question my faith
I question my nationality
because I remember growing up in a place
where we sang;
بلاد العرب أوطاني
أجت 2017
and I still wonder where my roots came from
spreading from Palestine, Syria and الأردن
I question whether we are separated
of if we're actually one?
controlled by the world
but why does the world
actually control us?
I came from a place
where orange trees used to grow
during the cool spring days
but now we are left with the Arab spring,
and all that's left growing is the road
to our separate ways,
yet people are left blind,
and when they are allowed to see,

they are given glasses that are blurred
with mediocrity...

أجت 2017
and I am still bathing in mockery,
as I have lost my tag,
the tag that determined my birth,
my name and nationality,
I wonder when I will free myself
from this misery
and find that which determines
MY identity...

أجت 2017
and I have seen more deaths
than death itself has ever seen,
so would I call a 'slaughter-house'
my country?

أجت 2017
and my mother tongue
demands to speak for me,
she speaks with pride
on behalf of all the middle eastern countries,
she screams;

بلاد العرب أوطاني

3rd Ivetta Malyshko – The International School of Moscow

Civic cemetery

Through the ash walls, frosted towers
The concrete kingdom calls upon.
With weeping rising to the heavens
And dropping scavenger-like hale.

The hearts of brass in roaring monsters
Assailing dusted roads that lead nowhere.
Brutal engines will exhale the haunting moan
through rusty throats into the hoar.

Lines and parallels of lamp posts,
Hanging low with weighty sorrow
Before the clouds drift across
the sunless sky dipped in tomorrow.

Silver threads of woven cords
Shocking the terrain towers.
Veining, hovering the mirror-ground magnified
behind sweaty glass, translating calibrating madness into groan.

And dark perfume will dangle there.
Gassing in between the leather coats
Lingering to grimaced coal faces
In suffocating smoky spheres and petrol stations.

Hierarchy of status
Dashed with the effortless hours of terrors and labor
Vice the harmonically comfortably lit spectators of chaos tabor
Of riots lead by cold metal traitors.

Deprived from light that lures the blind
Empty minds drowning down in dirt and molds.
Under distorted undergrounds
Where tunnels spread and light has no chances.

So lays the city hung in riches
Which hungers dreams that levitated,
Portrayed to bone-chill nightmares.
Impaled, peaked through patches, stitches.

ARTICULATE ARTWORK AND CONTEMPORARY CARICATURES

SARREDO AND LAYLA WRITE ABOUT SOME OF THE STREET ART TO BE FOUND IN PENANG, MALAYSIA

Lithuanian artist Ernest Zacharevic has left his mark on the charming streets of Penang as he brings the walls to life with his striking murals. Zacharevic's work is not just the run of the mill, basic paintings; they are detailed oil paintings that give the observer a sense of realism as they look upon the now slightly faded pieces of artwork. Subsequently, they create a sense of nostalgia within the onlooker, as the fading paint creates a scene of the simple lifestyle and charming people that give Penang its precious atmosphere. The images created depict the scenes of everyday Malaysian life using local people as the center of attention, an example being the captivating mural of the 'Children on Bicycle' and 'Boy on Motorcycle', a

Photo: Sean Pritchard via www.flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)



combination of installation and painting that invites the community to interact and witness the artwork's bouts of life and creativity. Zacharevic's work now stand as cultural landmarks in George Town, with plaques and crowds of people photographing and waiting to be photographed with the many different murals.

There is also another series of hidden gems that exist in the form of humorous wrought-iron caricatures. Blending humour and historical facts, these metal sculptures describe the colloquial demeanour of the early settlement days that gave memorable moniker to the streets and landmarks that are George Town's icons today. But sometimes the surprise factor, the joy of discovering something unexpected makes the whole experience more satisfying and adventurous, almost implementing a sense of appreciation for your own discovery. Let's ultimately say that we've been lucky more than once and found these welded iron wall sculptures by complete accident. Like voices from the past, they creatively symbolise the intimate relationship the people have in their daily lives with these landmarks that exist today.

There is a value in street art that can be found in every city in the world. It is a mirror of what we want to communicate



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without the constraints of a formal art room. It is the rawest form of expression questioning the existing environment, challenging the changing world and the social issues that mask our daily lives. Whether you call it "urban art", "guerrilla art", "post-graffiti" or "smart vandalism", a visual art created at the corner of a street is as effective as a slogan on a protest rally. It sends a message to provoke something out of its audience. After all, this is what art is supposed to be: to elicit reaction and to ask us to use our imagination.

Written by Sarredo Hussein and Layla Duckett who are students at Garden International School, Malaysia

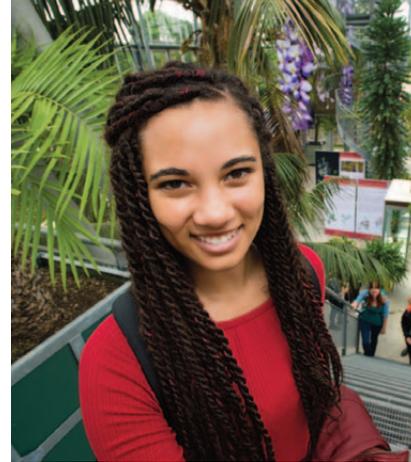
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A wide-angle photograph of the London skyline at dusk. The Shard is the most prominent feature on the left, its glass facade reflecting the sky. To its right is the London Eye, and further right is the illuminated Tower Bridge. The River Thames flows in the foreground, with several boats visible. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue.

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