



DIOCESAN BOYS' SCHOOL  
INTERNATIONAL  
BACCALAUREATE

Bimonthly Newsletter

ISSUE FIVE

MAY 14



HERALD

inspiringbrilliance

A glimpse of the world outside.

CAS TRIP

2013

**PERSPECTIVES**  
Cafeteria Prices

**ART**  
Banksy

**SPECIAL**  
Experiencing Lunar New Year Stall  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

To our readers:

This issue of the IB Herald is like no other. It marks the shift of editing staff, as the graduating class will redirect their focus to the upcoming IB Examinations in May 2014. With the excellent job the last cohort had done, it is clear that we have big shoes to fill.

Nonetheless, our goal remains unchanged, to "inspire brilliance". Just like the previous issues, we aim to provide quality reading material to students and teachers by examining hotly debated topics through unexplored lenses. The fresh perspective this brings will, hopefully, stimulate our readers, especially students, to read more and write more. We understand that reading and writing are the essentials to possessing strong language skills, and first-rate reading material, such as this newsletter, is certainly the best impetus one deserves. We are a part of your learning process, both as a student and as a man.

As we are a new body of editors, constructive suggestions will definitely improve our writing and your reading experiences. Please feel free to direct your feedback, ideas and questions to [dbsibnews@gmail.com](mailto:dbsibnews@gmail.com). Moreover, we are also recruiting new writers, budding columnists should contact any one of the IB Herald staff members for more information.

Last but not least, mazel tov to the seniors. Thank you for your exemplary contribution and we wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

ALEX YEUNG



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### A GLIMPSE OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE.

"The hardship we endured gave us much more in return than we expected. No other trip will ever be more enlightening this transformative experience."

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Cover: Fergus Chan  
Photos (Clockwise from top right): tekinalp, stencilrevolution, Fergus Chan

## LITERATURE



It is a fusion of fiction and non-fiction, old Chinese fables and personal experience

ZAKARIYYA WAHAB

Photos: [geneyangabc.wordpress.com](http://geneyangabc.wordpress.com)

This graphic novel, created by Gene Luen Yang, is spectacular in the field of comics as well as in literature. It is a fusion of fiction and non-fiction, based on old Chinese fables of the monkey king as well as the author's personal experiences during his student years.

The graphic novel begins with three stories: the monkey king and his attempt to fit in as one of the gods; Jin Wang's new school life as an Asian in an American school; Danny's interactions with his despised cousin, Chin Kee. As all three characters struggle to fit into their living environments, each makes a sacrifice of their heritage. The three narratives alternate throughout the novel, arriving at a daring crossroad at the climax of the story.

Gene Luen Yang has created a rare novel of excellence, revealing difficult topics such as shame, racism and friendship. His work of art appeals to relatively young audiences, yet discusses mature topics of fitting in as an outsider.

To fit in as an outsider is not an easy task. Gene Luen Yang cleverly depicts the three main characters' efforts in stepping out of

their comfort zone to blend into their desired communities. The monkey king left his people to learn the ways of being a god; Jin Wang modified his appearances to resemble an American; Danny struggled to make Chin Kee leave him. Despite their efforts to fit in as outsiders, the characters face the dilemma of stripping themselves of their original identity. The author hence conveys the message of give and take in the process of eliminating traces of heritage. Personally, I have studied in different schools where the majority of students are Asians. Therefore, I have never felt the need to fit in, nor did I experience any discrimination. Through Yang's story, I begin to understand in a manner other than pure academic assent. The author manages to shed light on cultural issues through a combination of pictures and words. The representation of ideas in the graphic novel is truly remarkable, which makes the book a good read.

Gene Luen Yang has also left strong messages in the novel with regards to racial discrimination. Chin Kee is the ultimate negative Chinese stereotype with traditional clothing and yellow skin. He seems to love American culture a lot, participating in lessons with passion and

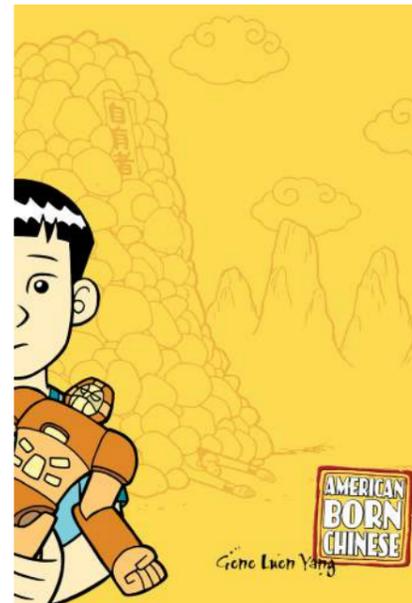
# ART

enthusiasm. However, his attitudes are annoying to his cousin Danny and are furthermore disliked by Danny's schoolmates. As a result of his actions, Danny gets picked on at school for being Chin Kee's cousin. From this, it is clear of the author's illustration of his deepest thoughts about discrimination at school. Discrimination about minorities is an apparent situation in numerous cultures. What Yang has been able to achieve is to reveal that this problem has deep influences on teenagers, and that discrimination will never be fully eliminated in society.

In the novel, almost every type of Chinese-American stereotype is addressed, both positive and negative. Characters embody stereotypes of physical appearance, clothing, language, academic performance, accent, hobbies and culinary tastes. Yang's novel has the intention to address these stereotypes head on and eliminate certain assumptions about them. As one of the positive stereotypes, Chinese-Americans are considered to be high achievers yet they have the sense of insecurity while living up to expectations set for them. The graphic novel is a brilliant representation of the pressure that most Chinese-Americans face, the need to strike a balance between the desires of their parents and their own dreams.

American Born Chinese is an outstanding graphic novel about Chinese-American identity. However, it has a story that can be appreciated by all. Many of us straddle with multiple cultures, taking on different identities and wearing multiple hats. We constantly struggle with our identities within those cultures. In Yang's novel, the underlying moral is to accept who you are and in doing so, reach out to others. Therefore, Yang brings an element of universality to his story, which sets this novel apart from the pack. Yang's

projects the message of a journey towards self-discovery, whereby the cultural heritage of a person helps them understand their place in the world. **IB**



Title: **American Born Chinese**  
Author: **Gene Luen Yang**  
Publisher: **Square Fish**  
ISBN: **978-0312384487**  
Pages: **233**



In all of his graffiti pieces Banksy utilizes a stenciling technique achieved by spraying automotive spray paint through shapes tortuously cut in pieces of cardboard. A fitting example of this utilization would be "Eternity", revealed on the 14th of October. This piece relies on life size characters viewed in a level perspective in monochrome as it depicts a man scrubbing off the quote "What we do in life echoes in Eternity". This quote originated from Maximus in the Gladiator (which is actually a variation from the original by Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor and philosopher). I was intrigued by the irony of this piece as Banksy seems to be expressing his hilarity at the quickness with which his graffiti pieces have been vandalized. Despite the nature of street art he still finds motivation to move onto the next piece and this dedication is worth appreciating. In Banksy's own words, "I'm just going to use that hostility to make me stronger, not weaker."

Apart from demonstrating his outstanding stenciling technique, Banksy returns to art installation in vehicles with his work entitled "Sirens of the Lambs" revealed on the 11th of October. This installation comprises of sixty cuddly soft animals placed in a slaughterhouse delivery truck. Banksy enhances the visual aspect by accompanying the soft animals with auditory recordings of abrupt



In girl and a soldier, Banksy, by using irony of a soldier being frisked, invites audiences to contemplate the **cultural barriers that prevent people from fully recognizing the humanity of others.**

Photos: stencilrevolution



**TOP:** Cops threatening to fine the actor who was shining Ronald McDonald's shoes.

**BELOW:** 'Siren of the Lambs' confronts and questions animal cruelty as a result of factory farming.

Photos: businessinsider, highsnobiety

howling. On top of that, the fact that the truck toured around Manhattan Meatpacking District illustrates Banksy's strong discontent with the casual cruelty of the food industry and the devaluation of life itself. I particularly appreciated the mobility of the piece, which allows a larger range of audience to realize the seriousness of the problem ultimately altering the audience's attitude on animal slaughter from passive sympathy to active sympathy.

Banksy goes beyond the canvas as he attempts performance art with his piece "Shoeshine" revealed on the 16th of October. The piece depicts real live man polishing the shoes of fiberglass sculpture of Ronald McDonald. The work was placed outside different McDonald's restaurant during lunch time for several days. This placement successfully conveys its message to its target audience. It seeks to criticize the "heavy labor required to sustain the polished image of a mega-corporation" the words of the narrator of the audio accompaniment. Banksy exaggerates the powerful image of Ronald McDonald by creating oversized clown shoes while the narrator says he is "the most sculpted figure in history after Christ" as Ronald McDonald statues can be found outside every McDonald restaurant. I particularly appreciated how Banksy brings the work to life thus enhancing the realism of the problem.

Overall, Banksy's residency in New York provides many opportunities for everyone to think about current social problems through his creative street art.

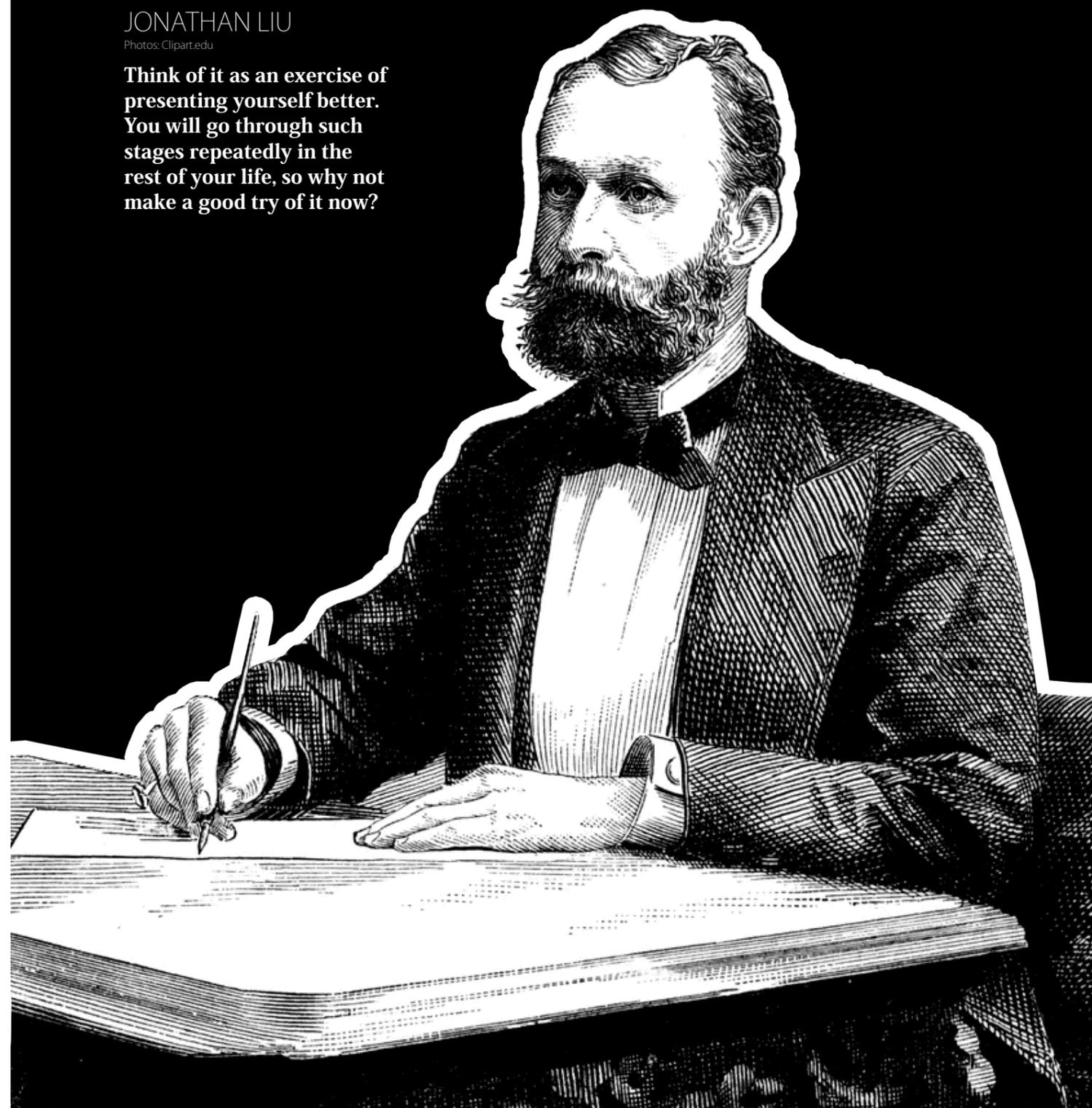
**IB**

# Writing an excellent COLLEGE ESSAY

JONATHAN LIU

Photos: Clipart.edu

**Think of it as an exercise of presenting yourself better. You will go through such stages repeatedly in the rest of your life, so why not make a good try of it now?**



# 1<sup>st</sup> step to College Applications

## TIPS

Applying to college is an inevitable stage in every student's life at DBS. This process strikes us in our final year (or earlier, for extremely bright individuals). No matter where you elect to apply to, almost all institutions require a certain piece of personalized writing in which you must depict yourself as a competent candidate for admission.

As someone who has gone through the bewildering process of applying to institutions in all three areas in which most IB students at DBS show genuine interest in, namely Hong Kong, the United Kingdom and the United States, I strongly suggest students be aware of the requirements and expectations of different institutions in different nations having to do with the piece of writing that you will produce for them.

The UK and Hong Kong-bound personal statements are generally seen as much easier to write. They often ask for subject-specific experiences and interests. However, the personal statements requirements of US universities are problematic. The universities do not primarily ask for a more academic or vocational material, but instead focus on how an applicant shows his/her individuality as the subject of interest for an institution to admit him/her into their student body.

How can one deal with questions from the 2013-14 Common App prompts, which ask a range of questions from "how did you learn from failure?" to "describe a process where you matured"? The basic key to success is as follows:

**#1:** Be yourself. This is by far the most important. Colleges and admission officers want to know more about you. Why you should be admitted rather than another applicant? You have to write uniquely about yourself to give yourself the edge. I would recommend that you write in the first person narrative to let your 'story' come through.

**#2:** Read the question. Normally the prompt will include 'what' or 'how'. But as a general rule, bear in mind that the 'what', your experience mainly, only shows you as a more passive individual. Anyone could be in your situation. But on the 'how' side, it relates back

to your own thoughts and it is that part which is most important in revealing your own character. It is describing your reactions and thoughts that distinguishes you as a competent or interesting applicant rather than merely describing the adversities you went through.

**#3:** Use every single opportunity to let yourself shine. In those 'describe an experience/activity' prompts, don't be fooled by the temptation to 'describe': as in "I did this and that and this and that". You have mentioned that in your activities list or resume in other parts of your application. Instead, talk about how the experience or activity relates back to your own personal experiences, thoughts and discoveries through participation. If you volunteered, it means nothing. Everyone volunteers. But what changed you after volunteering is perhaps something another candidate will not be able to mention.

**#4:** Be specific and critical. This particularly applies to the "Why this college" or "Why this subject at this college" prompts. These are potential traps for the tardy and aloof. Don't even think of mentioning location itself. You would be writing the very same for UCLA and USC if you mention the fanfare and excitement of Hollywood or the beaches along the coast. If you mention the location, connect the campus to its environment. For example, you may say that Columbia has a contained campus within the most bustling city in the world, instead of an open and undefined campus right inside the city. "You like economics" is simply not a valid reason for you to study economics at college X instead of college Y. Choose and research about some details that the department of your subject offers at your choice of college but not at other colleges. For example, are there any professors or specific programs that appeal to you? That would make you sound much more enthusiastic and eager to attend that specific college than any other.

The college admission process may seem daunting with the demanding requirements the admission committees require of applicants. But think of it as an exercise of presenting yourself better. You will go through such stages repeatedly in the rest of your life, so why not make a good try of it now?

"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience."

- David A. Kolb, 1984

## a glimpse into the world OUTSIDE

CAS TRIP | 2013  
Chiang Rai, Thailand

ALEX YEUNG &  
ZAKARIYYA WAHAB  
Photographs by Fergus Chan

From the 7th to the 14th of December, the entire cohort of IB1s headed off to Chiang Rai, Thailand for the CAS trip. We underwent days and days of adventurous activities such as biking, hiking, and kayaking. Apart from all the action, we also participated in community service: teaching local children English and helping builders in the construction work of the school. Nonetheless, we witnessed the lives of Thai people and enjoyed immersion into their culture.

The CAS trip shed light on the Thailand's national religion, Buddhism. Buddhism is a widespread religion that focuses on the spiritual practice to completely alleviate oneself of the stress of samsara (the material world), thereby reaching nirvana (a transcendent state where there is no suffering, death nor sense of self). On the first day of our trip, we visited a temple still in construction. We took in the beauty of the artwork and sculptures, and were surprised to see artists hand painting the walls of the interior. Stepping into the building itself, I could sense the religious atmosphere with wall paintings of the Buddha all around me. The feeling of being in a cocoon gave rise to the awareness of spiritual security. From the visit, we were exposed to this magnificent religion and observed the Thais' devotion to it. We did not just learn more of a religion but gained insight to new attitudes towards life. Quoting from the Buddha himself, "Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment." The wisdom of Buddhism can be applied to all walks of life, such as in our studies or in a future occupation.

Furthermore, we were lucky enough to meet a monk in the mountains during the full-day hike. We met the monk deep inside a cave where he was meditating in silence. Our guide told us to turn off our torches and to sit inside the cave in silence. As the minutes passed by, nothing much was heard. The silence was spiritually comforting; the tranquil of the environment made our minds calm down and move to a meditative state. Upon leaving the cave, we basked in the sunlight and the noises of the forest. The experience from the cave was unique and we treasured that moments of peace and quiet, which would have no parallel equal in the busy environment of a city like Hong Kong.

Kayaking was also a favorite activity during the trip. Though kayaking may not be a new challenge for some, it fostered better relationships between friends. During the "expedition" along the gorgeous Maekok River, we partnered ourselves and set off in about ten kayaks. The process was enjoyable: we challenged the raging river, meandered through floating obstacles and feasted our eyes upon the beautiful river-side scenery. This activity was very enjoyable because it is rare in Hong Kong. We also got ourselves wet and laughed about it afterwards. The whole journey along the river was full of joy and laughter. As we kayaked along the river, we were free of any kind of pressure. It was this experience that made the trip to Maekok River so valuable.



The most inspiring part of this trip was teaching Thai children English at the Huay Pha Sang School. Although teaching simple words might appear as an undemanding, unchallenging activity, teaching at that school was definitely not so. We had to overcome language barriers and make use of vivid body language in order to get our message across. Luckily, the hard work we put in was well received through the enthusiastic reactions of the students there. The soccer sessions we had in between the lessons were definitely rewarding and memorable. (Trust me, those children will become Peles some day). However, more troubling matters came to light in during this experience. We witnessed ethnic segregation in a classroom setup. One of the most valid ways of diminishing ethnic discrimination is through education. If schoolchildren embrace segregation from a young age, the problem will simply be magnified because such ideas are stuck in the children's minds and values. Sadly, we were not able to do much in the twenty-minute sessions that we had.

The other disturbing issue is that each schoolchild receives only 170 Baht (about 42 Hong Kong Dollars) per month for education. This is definitely not on par with international standards, not to mention whether or not it is enough for them to receive quality education. Education of low quality automatically puts a

country in a vicious cycle. Education is one of the major tools which help alleviate poverty. However, if schoolchildren in a relatively poor country receive a low quality education, they will have a smaller chance of leaving poverty, which means a country will never be able to have economic growth once it enters this vicious cycle. Although the Thai government is responsible for allocating resources in order to protect these children, we as a part of the global community are also obliged to help these children. This is, perhaps, why the Maekok River Village Education Project was set up in the first place. We are fortunate to be able to lend a helping hand to these children: it is always better to give than to receive.

The CAS Trip allowed us to gain a glimpse of a world outside of our "bubble". We became tourists, teachers, builders, hikers, bikers, worshippers, kayakers and much more, but at the end of the day, we returned as true men, a version 2.0 of ourselves. The hardship we endured gave us much more in return than we expected. No other trip will ever be more enlightening this transformative experience. Ultimately, we learnt that there is nothing we cannot do in this world so long as there is a will to persevere and succeed in our endeavors.

**IB**

**The experience provided us with both a physical, and spiritual journey.**

▼ (From left to right) (L.) Greeted by the children of the village as we were preparing for departure; (C.) students looked up the sky as lanterns were released; (R.) volunteering work



## PERSPECTIVES



### REVIEWING THE **PROS & CONS** of *DBS cafeteria/canteen*

If you walked around school and asked students to give their opinions on the school canteen you would almost certainly receive a variety of views. Some swear by it, while others swear never to use it. Yet at every break it is packed with students buying this or that. Are there issues that desperately require improvements in the catering service of our school? What are the areas that are satisfactory so far? We will explore in detail different features of the school canteen that are liked - or hated - by our students.

Come recess-time, our tuck shop is absolutely jammed with students trying to get their daily chicken leg or portion of siu mai. Students had to shove, nudge and push to get into the tuck shop and then navigate to the front of the counter, waving their money and trying to catch the attention of the cashier, finally able to collect their purchase, nudge away from the counter. After this comes an arduous journey to find the various condiment bottles sprinkled within the area, get one's required condiments, then try to leave the area through

the same narrow door everyone was trying to get in from. Although the school has introduced some order to the situation with queues and people actually complying with the rules, the tuck shop is simply not designed to handle such a large volume of students, and congestion wreaks havoc every time the clock strikes 10:15. While queuing at the school cafeteria has finally been enforced after years of chaos, with hundreds of students demanding food and drink every day the lines still stretch far and long, with a waiting time of fifteen to twenty minutes on the average day. Now, if one were on a relaxed schedule for lunch this situation would not pose a problem, yet for those with rehearsals or meetings to attend buying lunch on time is nearly impossible on a regular basis. The solution to this conundrum is like so: find an acquaintance in the queue, approach with money and hope that your friend is willing to buy your lunch for you as well. Now imagine tens of students utilizing the same strategy, ultimately influencing the queues to move at a glacial pace.

and when we consider meals outside school which hover around \$30 and can rise up to \$40, our school canteen sounds like a pretty good deal. The school tuck shop, although not large in itself, operates for extended periods of time, even when there is no school which also helps in the demand for food. Open early in the morning, it does not close until late afternoon, and is also open on Saturdays and sometimes during holidays. The tuck shop serves the needs of sportsmen or musicians who go for training and rehearsals after school or during holidays, allowing them quick access to refreshment, compared to walking down the drive just for a snack or two.

While not all students may like the taste of the food provided, the school canteen does try to create a variety of food to serve to students such as sandwiches, ramen, rice and spaghetti available for students during lunch. The same is also true for the snacks and the drinks that they sell. The tuck shop has also been more health-conscious, improving its selection with a larger variety of more nutritious food choices. These treats include salubrious salads, wholesome paninis and freshly-baked muffins, allowing our students to have meals that are low in oil, artificial flavouring and commercially-used preservatives. Although nutritious these options are too popular amongst the student body which results in the tastiest and most popular items constantly being sold out. This leads us to one of the shortcomings of this more wholesome menu. As these products are made freshly every morning, the supply is quite low, and given the relatively high demand, students who arrive at the tuck shop late will often find it impossible to get a healthy snack. Also, because these goods are not mass produced, the price for the healthier options are generally higher. Nevertheless this addition of such health-conscious food choices exemplifies how the tuck shop is willing to take students' suggestions and provide things such as a healthier menu.

Although the canteen does have a variety of food offered to students and teachers, some students may have special dietary requirements that cannot be catered for by the tuck shop

such as students with medical or religious needs or dietary preference. While they can always bring packed lunches or eat at special restaurants, the inability to eat their meals from the school canteen could potentially be a huge inconvenience for them. While undoubtedly these students represent a small minority within the school, the inclusion of some meals, for example a vegetarian option, could be explored should some students want to follow such restrictions.

Additionally, the service attitude of some staff is sometimes unpleasant. While most of the staff are generally pleasant to interact with, some are often grumpy, especially when they misinterpret our requests due to poor communication. Since there is only one catering company in school, students cannot vent their complaints towards being mistreated by choosing a different caterer for food. As a result, there is no catalyst for any improvement and the catering staff can display their inappropriate manners when displeased without having to bear any consequences. This also explains why despite improvements there may still be problems with catering staff. The school has also, in the past five years, been through three different caterers. Students have been unable to have the opportunity to weigh in on the matter, as some, especially older, students have fond memories of the food served by previous caterers and would like to know the reasoning behind the switches.

In conclusion, our school cafeteria has its good side and its bad: although it has undergone some improvements to its existing protocols such as enforcing a queuing system and adding variety to its meals, some improvements can still be made in other aspects, for example increasing the capacity of the tuck shop or increasing supply of some more popular choices. Despite the never-ending lines and flaws, the school canteen and tuck shop will always be faced with a crowd of students and teachers come recess, lunch, and afterschool.

**IB**



## TIPS



# WRITING YOUR *Extended Essay*

FELEX LAU,  
NICHOLAS WONG

Photo: tekinalp

Ideas and suggestions expressed here are personal ideas and do not imply, represent nor guarantee anything about your EE. Please read critically. We welcome ideas to be sent to the Editor at [dbsibnews@gmail.com](mailto:dbsibnews@gmail.com).

The deadly triangle: CAS, TOK and EE. It's a love-hate relationship: they can give you the additional three points you need, but can also take away your ideal score. In this article we are going to focus on one of these core components, the Extended Essay (EE) and how to do well in the essay to secure half of those three extra points.

First and foremost, fall in love with your topic. Without passion for the topic you are investigating in, it is almost impossible to create an impressive EE. This is not an exaggeration – criterion K (holistic judgment) is about the passion and excitement towards the topic you are writing about. It is crucial that you consider your options carefully from the very beginning. When choosing the subject of your EE, do not only consider whether it is going to be an “easy” essay, but also whether you can be genuinely interested in the topic you are investigating. Writing the EE is also an excellent way to test whether you will enjoy a particular university subject. For example, if you enjoyed doing your EE in economics, you will most likely also enjoy studying Economics at a university level. Your EE can also be a stepping-stone for university applications – there was a case where a US university was so impressed with a student's Economics EE that it gave the student an unconditional offer to study there.

Next, consider the practicality of your topic. Make sure that the topic is sufficient enough to become a 4000-word essay. 4000 words may be too many for a simply topic, yet insufficient for a complicated topic. The general rule of thumb is to be specific. Instead of covering a school of thought or a big topic, consider a particular incident or individual. If you can find your topic in the heading of a subject textbook (e.g. Force and fields), then it is almost certainly too broad. On the other hand, if your essay topic is too simple, and your research question can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”, and your essay will not reach 4000 words without padding of useless digression (which is easily identified by examiners).

At the same time, also consider whether investigation is possible for your topic. The EE requires that you consult a wide range of sources (criterion C (investigation) of the rubric), rather than only consulting the Internet or second-hand sources. When possible, allow your EE to be open to first-hand information and be realistic. Instead of writing an essay about Brazil's illegal imports, an essay about Hong Kong's parallel good distributors is easier and a more ideal topic to investigate. This topic also provides the personal touch which is necessary to the essay.

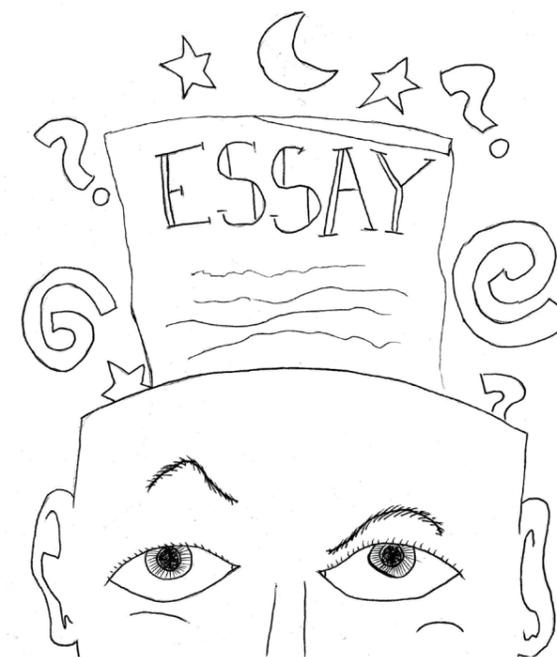
When writing the EE, always refer to the rubric because that is how you are going to be marked. There are some details about how to write the introduction, conclusion and abstract, and there are formal requirements that might differ from what your previous pre-requisites. You must number the pages, include a contents page at the front, and give a word count. All of these things, though seemingly trivial, can bring an essay from a B to an A if done carefully, according to the rubric. So be sure to stick to these rules so that you can acquire your ‘easy’ marks.

Similarly to TOK, many essay topics require time for ideas to develop – which is why the EE is assigned at the beginning of the IBDP course and deadlines are often months away from each other. After meeting with a teacher or gathering first-hand information, take some time to ‘meditate’ on your research. In-depth ideas usually come with adequate time for thinking and processing. If you leave all the work to the last-minute, the outcome might not reflect the best of your abilities. (Of course many students often choose to write their EE's the night before, but the thinking should always precede the writing process) It is also important to note that your supervisor is only allowed to read one formal draft of your EE, so be prepared for the submission of your first draft and start early or you will be on your own!

A good way to know whether you wrote a good essay is to proofread it critically. When you think there is a problem with the essay, instead of giving yourself a justification, change it! This decision might be save you some marks.

To sum it up, the EE is a process that you should enjoy instead of being overly stressed about. Be passionate about your topic and you will be happy with your finished product and ultimately feel as if you have succeeded upon its completion. If you can be passionate about your topic then you will also enjoy your process of writing up the EE and it will certainly be a memorable memories to cherish always after completing the IB.

**IB**





# Experiencing the LUNAR NEW YEAR FAIR

FRANKIE CHENG

維園年宵261號攤檔

The Lunar New Year fair, which is traditionally held a few days before the start of the upcoming New Year, has always been a popular festive celebration among Hong Kong's people. Though it takes place simultaneously in many locations, the one in Victoria Park is the most notable and popular. People visit these fairs not only as a custom, but also to choose from among the variety of goods that the stalls have to offer, especially the ones that carry auspicious connotations. Though a loyal visitor since my youth, this year I was approached to run a stall in Victoria Park, and I agreed without the slightest hesitation. Who could reject the opportunity to sell goods in the largest Lunar New Year fair in Hong Kong, or the possibility of making a profit?

The Business Studies Society in our school has a tradition of running a stall in the fair with the help of its generous aid. This year, I was lucky enough to have the chance of joining the committee responsible for the stall which consisted of around 20 members. One of the prerequisites for participating is that all of us had to contribute a substantial amount of initial investment so that our yield would depend on our performance in running the stall. The preparation work started in October last year and the main concern was whether our goods should be confined to a specific theme or

could they be more random-based. Suggestions for themes had been raised; however none of them seemed to be feasible and so the idea of setting up a theme did not materialize. In November, after we got our stall at auction, our chairman presented us with some possibilities of goods to sell for discussion. We contacted relevant producers and arranged the logistics of the delivery of the goods.

I was relieved when our big day finally came, but it was not an easy start. Navigating to our stall was extremely challenging. The crowd was completely motionless and filled the intertwining pathways with no space to spare. Any sense that I was actually moving forward ended up being an illusion. To get to the stall, my friends and I had to look for alternative entrances and we spent around 15 minutes just to squeeze in. This condition was alleviated on my second visit as it was early in the morning, when the traffic was sparse. However, it was also a major drawback to our business as fewer visitors meant fewer potential deals. My partners and I were rather discouraged at first by the fact that we had to withstand the scorching sun heat with minimal number of visitors approaching us, but as time went by things start to turn in our favour. The numbers increased after lunchtime, which motivated us to adopt a more proactive approach in promoting our good.

As our goods were all cushions and toys, we spent more effort in engaging children and teenagers as they were our target customers. Moreover, using our voices was more important than I had expected. All the stall tenders were screaming promotional messages and discounts at the top of their voices, so it was crucial that our volume should be on a par with theirs, or else our stall would seem like a graveyard in the midst of the auditory bombardment that permeated every corner of the fair. Nevertheless, our efforts were rewarded. Every successful deal that we carried out was a step forward to the ultimate goal of making profit. I had spent around five hours at the venue before my friends arrived to take on my duty and my exhausting day was done.

This remarkable experience enriched me with first-hand chance to run a business that resembles retailing in real life and made me question how profit can be maximized in such a business. I would say most of us are delighted by our collaborative accomplishment and believe that it is a pleasure to step out of the classrooms and achieve something with our best efforts. Although we failed to make any profit, my initial investment was still well-spent because the experience, along with the knowledge and memory were certainly worth the price.

IB



▲ (From top to bottom clockwise) Bird's eye view of the New Year Fair; Group photo of the crew that helped with the stall; the DBS storefront.

# TECHNOLOGY



Calendars are all around us: they are hung on walls; they are programmed into our phones and tablets. Calendars are of utmost importance in our daily lives as they allow us to understand the way nature functions as well as monitoring routines. In this article, we will briefly inspect the history of calendars, the types of calendars and their uses in different cultures.

## INTRODUCTION

The magic of calendars is that they are not just numbers but occurrences; patterns in life that govern how plants grow, when you wake up or sleep as well as planetary movements.

Speaking of planetary movements, we arrive at the fundamental basis of how calendars are created. As a matter of fact, calendars are based on astronomical observations, namely the orbital movement of the Sun and moon. Currently, there are two major calendar types: the lunar calendar and the solar calendar. However, some societies adopt the lunisolar calendars to get the best of both worlds. Why, you might ask, are there two kinds of data logging operation systems? In fact, both calendars are adopted due to their respective accuracies in monthly and yearly calculations.

## HISTORY

Rome was the first place to use an organized calendar. The second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, revamped the original lunar calendar, which had 28 days per month, by modifying January and February—the two months right after December. Pompilius added an extra day to January due to the superstition attached to even numbers. Much to our surprise, there is no evidence as to why Pompilius left out February. Therefore, February is considered as the unlucky month, which may be a result of Romans honoring the dead and performing rituals of purification in February. Astoundingly, though the calendar seems to be scientifically based, a portion of it was arbitrarily created.

In 46 B.C., Julius Caesar reformed the calendar by ordering the year to be 365 days,

containing 12 months. This was done after consulting experts and making the calendar sun based, hence setting the basis for the modern Gregorian calendar. Caesar added 10 extra days to the calendar and an extra day in February every four years. With such, each month contained of approximately 30 or 31 days and February had 29 days.

## LUNAR

The lunar calendar is established based on the revolutions of the moon. Recent discoveries in the United Kingdom reveal that the earliest lunar calendar belonged to the Scottish. Excavations in the field at the Crathes Castle led scientists to 12 pits that they propose were used to record the various phases of the moon and track lunar months. Years of observation and recording have allowed us to ascertain that the moon rotates about its axis in 29.5 days for each month. Here's the math:

$$29.5 \times 12 = 354 \text{ Days}$$

Hence, scientists and mathematicians identified that the days in a lunar year were off by around 11 days compared with the solar calendar where one year has 365 days. In societies that adopt the lunar calendar (for example Islamic societies), they still use the calendar but the only difference is that their days shift by around 11 days each year. A real life realization of this phenomenon is that for Muslims, the annual fasting month for each year starts roughly two weeks earlier than the previous one.

## SOLAR

The Gregorian calendar, a type of common solar calendar, calculates days, months and years based on the Earth's movement in relation to the Sun. The orbital period of the Earth is approximately 365.2422 days. The solar calendar is thus mostly commonly used, as it is relatively accurate in documenting the passing of time. Unlike the lunar calendar, the solar calendar will not have to compensate for shifts of days as the orbital period of the Sun is a near constant.

## APPLICATION

For farmers, calendars are indicators of different seasons: summer, autumn, winter and spring. In an agricultural based ancient China and even modern day China, calendars are crucial.

The Chinese calendar is unique on its own as it is a combination of the lunar as well as the solar calendar --- a lunisolar calendar. The mystique of the Chinese calendar is that it stands alone in relating weather changes in a year to the well being of the human body and feng shui (風水).

The Chinese calendar is divided into 24 solar nodes or terms in a year known as Jie Qi (節氣). People who are considering buying houses must be aware of how different Jie Qi can affect the Feng Shui of their property. For example, property owners should take note of the good Feng Shui the position of the house brings. With the house facing the south, houses will take in sunshine and avoid cold north winds in winter. For some, the Chinese calendar is highly qualitative, as it deals with the livelihood of each person but for knowledgeable people, Feng Shui, Jie Qi and the Chinese calendar are crucial to a well-balanced life.

Hence, we can see the application of calendars in our daily lives and how the records of natural occurrences in nature have allowed us to improve the living standards, as in the Chinese culture.

Calendars are an inseparable part of our lives, knowing more of how they function in correlation with our daily livings can not only help improve data recording but also living standards, as in Feng Shui and Jie Qi. What you know of calendars is only a small portion: for remembering important dates and looking forward into future days. However, we must not neglect the fact that calendars are powerful tools that can change the course of our daily lives. Amazing, isn't it?

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## LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEW

# *The Luminaries*

JONATHAN FUNG

Photo: newenglandphotos.blogspot

The year is 1866. Place, New Zealand. Hopeful gold prospector Walter Moody travels to Hokitka to try his luck at the game and to escape his past, only to encounter a disturbing series of events on the ship he sails. Upon arrival one rainy night he meets a secret congregation of twelve men in the hotel, who from their attire and mannerisms 'might have been twelve strangers on a railway car, each bound for a separate quarter of a city that possessed fog and tides enough to divide them'. However, this strange assortment of characters shares between them a dark story of stolen goods, drugs, murder, and more.

Such is the premise of *The Luminaries* by 28-year-old New Zealand author Eleanor Catton, the winner of the 2013 Man Booker Prize. This mammoth work's 826 pages may seem daunting enough even without its twenty-odd characters. As you read Part I (which itself is subdivided into twelve chapters), the character guide handily supplied at the beginning will be essential if you want to make any sense of the complex story. As you read on, however, these seemingly unrelated characters who could not have been more different gradually become connected

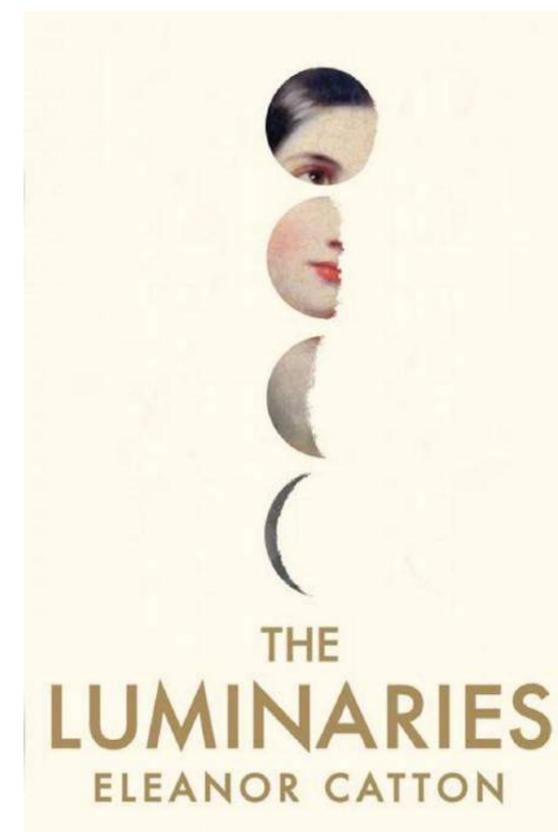
in unexpected ways, twists and revelations that will definitely keep you turning the pages.

However, the most remarkable aspect of *The Luminaries* was how the book is set up and presented, demonstrating a structural form almost exquisite in design. Each part has one less chapter (and according to some, exactly half the world count) of the immediately preceding part, so the first part has twelve, second has eleven, and so on. Additionally, The book is speckled with astrological references: chapters are named after astrological phenomena, like 'Saturn in Virgo', and each of the 12 characters in the congregation represents one of the twelve zodiac symbols, enshrouding the book further in an air of mystery. Catton also gracefully shifts the narrative perspective of the novel, allowing the reader to view the story first from Moody's

eyes then from the perspective of each of the twelve 'main characters' in turn. This provides a sense of depth to the events as from every retelling we understand more of the characters' intricate relationships, allowing us to slowly unravel the complex mystery she creates. It also causes the readers to become the detectives in the story, listening to all twelve retellings (which do not necessarily agree with each other), and deciding for themselves what actually happened.

While one may be discouraged from picking up and reading *The Luminaries* given its sheer length and complexity, one might nonetheless do well to give it a try, be transported back in time, and be immersed in the most peculiar and elaborate of stories. It will definitely be a captivating series of afternoons spent, in the enchanting world that Eleanor Catton has so artfully created.

**IB**



Title: **The Luminaries**  
Author: **Eleanor Catton**  
Publisher: **Little, Brown and Company**  
ISBN: **978-0316074315**  
Pages: **848**

# PUZZLE

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 |   | 1 |   |   |   | 2 |
|   | 7 |   |   | 9 |   |   |   |
| 2 |   |   | 5 |   |   | 6 |   |
| 6 |   |   | 7 |   | 8 |   |   |
|   | 5 |   |   |   |   | 1 |   |
|   |   | 3 |   | 5 |   |   | 4 |
|   | 2 |   |   | 8 |   |   | 7 |
|   |   |   | 3 |   |   | 4 |   |
| 8 |   |   |   | 4 |   | 2 | 1 |

## SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY: MODERATE

PREPARED BY FERGUS CHAN

## RHYMING CROSSWORD

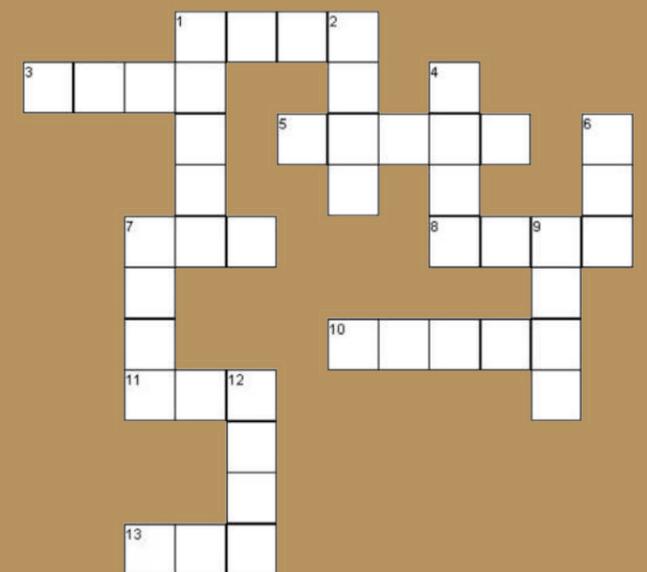
PREPARED FROM [word-game-world.com](http://word-game-world.com)

### ACROSS

- When the boy fell, the teacher rang the \_\_\_\_.
- We got a good deal on our \_\_\_\_.
- If you walked a mile, would you still \_\_\_\_?
- Birds can fly in the \_\_\_\_.
- The sleepy clown sat \_\_\_\_.
- The spilled milk made a mess on her \_\_\_\_.
- What is your plan for this frying \_\_\_\_?
- Our cat is very \_\_\_\_.

### DOWN

- Jack always wears the color \_\_\_\_.
- She put the stamp under a \_\_\_\_.
- She is very sad, but I hope she will soon be \_\_\_\_.
- When will the man open the \_\_\_\_?
- If you start to hop, when will you \_\_\_\_?
- If you see the lucky fish, be sure to make a \_\_\_\_.
- The baby bird will rest in its \_\_\_\_.





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