



THE DP EXPRESS

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT-LED OKINAWA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Our Experiences with the Extended Essay

BY KIRARA TAKEKURA AND SUBIN SHIN (DP2 STUDENTS)

Kirara Takekura

The EE subject I had previously chosen was History. Influenced by my interest in Australia, I was planning on researching the history of the aboriginal people and the British approaching the island. However, after collecting my resources and reconsidering my topic, I grew more interested in Japanese society, as I wanted to know more about my homeland. Thus, I changed the EE subject from History to Japanese during the first year of DP. It was a very challenging decision to make, as the Japanese EE involves self-investigation of the topic, that is, collecting information through surveys and interviews apart from resources. However, with the support of my teachers and my confidence in writing a Japanese paper, I was determined to start a new journey in another subject. The new topic I selected was the Japanese support of young careers, which is a topic that is discussed in Japan recently. Young carers are children under the age of 18 who take the responsibility equivalent to adults in their household, such as doing the house chores for the family, taking care of the siblings, and looking after their ill family members. Learning about the hardships of young careers opened my eyes and gave me an opportunity to deepen my understanding of Japanese culture and society. The experience of contacting the local organization and conducting surveys and interviews was challenging, but it helped me enhance my communication skills and interaction skills. In addition, as the Japanese EE was the longest Japanese essay I had written, it was a great experience to learn about the essay structure and formal writing style in Japanese.

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My initial subject choice was also history. I planned on writing about the Korean War that took place between 1950 and 1953, and to what extent the differences in ideology had caused the outbreak of the war. However, the more I researched about the topic, I acknowledged the challenges to construing an organized structure for the essay, so not much progress was made until the end of the first year of DP. Upon starting the winter break, Mr. Tang, my English Language and Literature teacher approached me with a suggestion on changing the subject to English. Since I have been having doubts about my subject choice and have always enjoyed English literature, I decided to alter my subject. The work of literature I selected was a book I had read over the summer in my first year of DP, which was a classic tale called *The Picture of Dorian Gray* written by an Irish poet and playwright, Oscar Wilde. There were a few prospective literary works; however, I was fixated on this novel because I was so enamored by Wilde's employment of nature and metaphors to comment on the decadence of Victorian society and the declining virtue of a man. The book had multiple aspects that could be explored, so it was a little challenging for me to decide on a specific concept to explore in my essay. Narrowing down the topic and formulating a research question suitable for a 4,000-word essay was also challenging. Although an EE on English Language and Literature does not require you to conduct a lot of research, it does require a lot of personal analyses and a strong fundamental understanding of what you are writing about, so I recommend starting early and reading the piece you have chosen a couple of times.

Our Experiences with the Academic Guidance

BY KIRARA TAKEKURA AND SUBIN SHIN (DP2 STUDENTS)

Kirara Takekura

Our academic guidance process has been and is supported by an external organization named EDUBAL. We have monthly meetings where we discuss updates on the university plans and the monthly tasks assigned by our academic guidance teacher. The counselor offers students personalized strategies to prepare them for their university application. In the process, I first decided on the countries where I wished to study, and listed more than 20 university choices. Because I already had a specific field of interest, my university choices were mostly based on the course structure of that major. I then narrowed my choices after consulting about my paths with my family and also researching deeper about the university's location, career support, and the classes they offer. The guidance teacher helped me structure my schedule for the university applications, and provided me with application period options so that my schedule will be less intrusive on the DP assessments. Currently, I am preparing for my scholarship essays and during the summer, I am planning on taking campus tours at my dream universities.

Subin Shin

Academic Guidance experience through EDUBAL has been a really imperative part of my university application process since the countries I wanted to study in fluctuated so much and because I was uncertain about which course I should take in university. During the first months of our meeting, my counselor advised me to do a personal analysis of myself and brainstorm my interests to narrow down a possible major I could take in college, which was really helpful. I also had several countries of choice; however, my final decision after a thorough discussion with my parents was to join the liberal arts programs conducted in English in Japan. When you are having academic guidance meetings, always keep in mind that it is a system in which you cooperate with the counselor. The counselor would remind you to keep up with the deadlines and prepare all the necessary documents and provide some feedback on your personal statement. However, you are the one in the end to take responsibility for all of it. Do not fear though. It will be a prolific experience getting to know yourself better!

Abe Shinzo's Assassination

BY KIRARA TAKEKURA (DP2 STUDENT)

On July 8th, 2022, at 11:30 am, the former prime minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe was shot twice during his speech in the southern city of Nara. Abe was Japan's longest-serving prime minister, who held office in 2006 for a year, then again from 2012 to 2020. He suffered two bullet wounds to his neck and his heart and unfortunately passed away at 5:03 pm on the day due to excessive bleeding.

The shooter of this attack, Tetsuya Yamagami, was a former member of Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force, Japan's equivalent of a navy, who had retired in 2005. Although Japan has some of the most stringent laws on buying and owning a gun among developed nations, the shooter used an improvised firearm, consisting of two tubes bound together side-by-side with black electrical tape.

"I thought that former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi contributed to the expansion of the group, and I thought about killing his grandson, former Prime Minister Abe," Yamagami told investigators. The suspect revealed that his intention for the shooting is unrelated to Abe's political beliefs. However, the suspect rather held a grudge against the Unification Church, formally known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. The church is known as "the group" by Yamagami. His mother was a member of the church, and because of her large contributions to the organization, leading to his family's financial collapse, he murdered former prime minister Abe.



Tackling the suspect after Shinzo Abe was shot on Friday. He had tossed aside what appeared to be a crude gun. (The Asahi Shimbun, via Getty Images)

References:

Murphy, M. & Tan, Y. (2022). Shinzo Abe: Japan's ex-leader assassinated while giving a speech.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62089486>

The New York Times. (2022). Shinzo Abe of Japan dies after being shot during speech.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/08/world/japan-shinzo-abe-shooting>

Marine Day Event



Creds: Pixabay

BY SUBIN SHIN (DP2 STUDENT)

On July 14th, all MYP, DP, and ILA students went to Azama San San Beach for a small beach clean-up and barbeque. The Okinawa International School Marine Day event was registered as part of several events worldwide to celebrate World Environment Day (June 5) and World Ocean Day (June 8) respectively, and this year's event was a commencement to the annual Marine Day events that will take place henceforward in OIS.

The objectives of the Marine Day event were to develop an appreciation for and familiarity with the nature of the sea; to nurture a caring heart and a sense of solidarity and belonging via interactions with students from different grades; to acquire the rules of group life and public morals through group activities; and to create a more conscious approach to the SDGs and how the responsibility for a positive climate change belongs to all of us.

As someone who had experience in organizing a beach clean-up project for a community project, I was really glad to return to the beach and participate in the event. Compared to 4 years ago, the beach seemed to have less garbage; however, there was a great deal of microplastic considered detrimental or even fatal to the lives of sea animals. Tom Hamashima from DP1 also commented, "I learned that plastics and microplastics are hurting and killing marine organisms," and Momo Oshiro said that she realized how "necessary [it is] for each person to make an effort to prevent the generation of plastic trash" after noticing firsthand how the trash that seemingly had drifted in the ocean for years was difficult to notice.

Students also participated in the sand sculpture contest in which students, in teams, each assigned one criterion from the SDGs create sculptures that creatively express their reflections, critiques, and thoughts about their selected SDGs. The overall event was a highly cooperative one, for students were able to divide their workload freely with some participating in creating the sculptures as prizes were at stake and the rest cooking the food prepared for everyone to enjoy. Kanna Sueyoshi from ILA2 said that she really commended the idea of "using only what [was available] on the beach" to create the sand sculptures, claiming that it "depended [her] understanding of the SDGs because [she] was able to think about the meaning of the objects [used]" while crafting the sculptures.

One anomaly this time was the use of reusable lunch boxes brought from home by each student in order to reduce plastic waste, and I thought this was an effective way to stipulate an eco-friendly mindset for everyone and for them to always be mindful of their actions. The event was overall a successful one, with everyone enjoying interaction with each other, reminding themselves of the importance of taking care of the environment. Lana Weightman from MYP5 stated that she had fun at the event and would love to participate in it again, also noting that she would prefer to focus more on "local issue[s] that would need to be addressed but are not well known to students, such as young carers and the poverty situation" in the future.

Rakugo

BY KIRARA TAKEKURA (DP2 STUDENT)

Have you ever heard of *rakugo* (落語)? *Rakugo* is a 400-year-old tradition of comic monologue storytelling in Japan. A minimalistic performing art, *rakugo* features a lone storyteller dressed in a kimono, kneeling on a cushion, using only a fan and a hand towel as props (for Edo *Rakugo*, a type of *rakugo* originated in Tokyo). In order to become a professional *rakugoka*, one must be apprenticed to a master, from whom one receives a stage name.

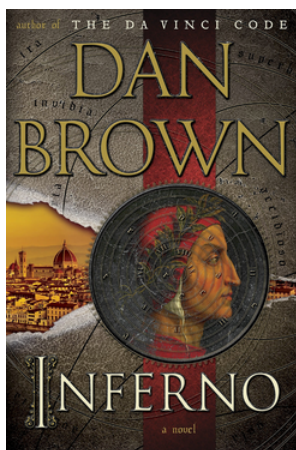
OIS invited a *rakugo* professional (*rakugoka*), who was the first Okinawan to become a professional *rakugoka*. He performed two comic monologues for the students, one about discovering the meaning of “Tenshiki,” which was the medical terminology for “fart,” and the other about being excessively blamed for not remembering his dreams. The event allowed students to have fun while experiencing traditional Japanese comedy and provided an opportunity for non-Japanese students to enhance their listening skills. As it was my first time watching a live *rakugo* performance, it opened my eyes to how the actor performed several roles by himself, and how the fan and the handkerchief were used to mimic a variety of everyday goods.

References:

Ochi, H. (2016). Japanese language and culture through rakugo. Japanese Language and Culture through Rakugo - Japan Foundation, Sydney.

Book Recommendation

BY SUBIN SHIN (DP2 STUDENT)



Summer is a perfect time for spine-chilling reads. I have a novel that will grip you from the first page and make it impossible for you to put it down. It is called *Inferno* by Dan Brown. Some of you may know him as the author of the international bestseller, *The Davinci Code*; however, I believe that *Inferno* is certain to grasp your attention more than *The Davinci Code* ever can.

Synopsis: Robert Langdon, a professor of symbology at Harvard, wakes up in a hospital located in Italy with no recollection of the past thirty-six hours. He is in possession of a macabre object which he has to decipher when he meets his resourceful doctor, Sienna Brooks. Chased by a female assassin, they are forced to flee through Florence, unraveling a series of codes, the work of a brilliant scientist whose obsession with the end of the world is equated only by his passion for one of the most influential works ever written, which is none other than Dante Alighieri's *The Inferno*.

Thriller as a genre for this book is an understatement. You will feel as if you are reading a movie. I do not think I can ever praise a book more than I would this novel. It is the first time a book has shown me the freedom the author has in his own pages, and that novels do not always have to end realistically. Now all I want to do is carry this book around and explore Italy, following in Langdon's footsteps.