



THE DP EXPRESS

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT-LED OKINAWA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Preparing for the final exam

BY KIRARA TAKEKURA (DP 2 STUDENT)

Exams!

At Okinawa International School, the students undergo two semester exams in each DP year and two mock exams before the final exams. For each subject, the students are introduced to the exam styles as the course progresses. Congruently, the semester exams gradually resemble the final exam as students are familiarized with more course content and exam styles. These exam styles refer to papers students must take in their final exams. The exam styles differ among the subjects and the level of the subject (standard/high) the student is taking in the DP program. For instance, the exams for Chemistry standard level are composed of papers 1 and 2; paper 1 is a multiple choice question paper (which is very rare in the DP program) and paper 2 is a structured response paper that requires short and long answers. As a student who underwent the program, I strongly recommend that students explore past papers and exam styles before determining the subject choices. This will help the students to observe the difference between the exams of standard level and higher level, and the volume of exams for each subject. For example, the Economics course at a higher level has an additional paper (paper 3) than the standard level students, and the students taking the visual arts will not have a sit-in writing exam at the end of the course.

In this issue

PREPARING FOR
EXAMS

INTERNAL
ASSESSMENT

ITAEWON
STAMPEDE

ENTERTAINMENT:
FILM
RECOMMENDATION

Subsequent to the semester exams and completion of the course contents, the students will take a pre-mock exam and a mock exam that imitates the final exam. Like the rehearsals before the performance, the students and the invigilators will conduct the exams with the same exam style, and at the same time as the final exams. These mock exams allow the students to get exposed to the flow of the examination and measure their current knowledge and skills. Personally, the mock exams have helped me to identify my weaknesses and the skills I needed to work on until the final exam. Although I was disappointed by my performance in my pre-mock exam, I was able to work on my weaknesses, which resulted in a better performance in the mock exam and the subsequent final exam. Thus, I encourage students not to be discouraged if their scores from the mock exam are lower than their aims. Likewise, the main examinations (apart from the unit exams) students undergo are the semester exams, pre-mock exams, mock exams, and final exams.

Revision Tips!

There are 3 main revision tips I would like to give prospective/current DP students.

1.) Always keep in mind to study “effectively”

As the first graduating class of this school, it was challenging for me to obtain my own study strategy. Thus, I underwent the entire curriculum, attempting to review all the contents learned in class to reach a strategy for the final exam. However, depending on the subjects, it is not possible to memorize all the contents (such as History), and it will be a waste of time to take notes of the contents again without memorization. Hence, I recommend the students explore past papers very carefully to determine what they have to memorize, AND what skills they need to acquire by the examination before starting to review. For instance, for Mathematics, I suggest that students solve many problems and mock exams after reviewing the contents once, rather than reading through the textbooks repeatedly. On the other hand, for chemistry, attaining problem-solving skills and understanding the concepts are equally important, so I recommend students go through the syllabus multiple times. These tips can be easily found online, so I suggest students understand the exam styles and the tips very well before jumping straight into content revision. Also, please approach seniors and the graduates like us for more detailed revision tips/strategies for each subject.

2.) Start practicing past papers early

One of the things I realized while experiencing the DP program was that acquiring the skills to solve the papers is more important than memorizing the contents. In the DP program, students will be trained to acquire skills such as source analysis, critical thinking, and essay writing. These skills are not something students can gain in a few months before the examination. Thus, after familiarizing themselves with the exam styles, I suggest that students solve past papers frequently even if they have not mastered the contents yet. This will help the students to gradually acquire the skills needed to succeed in the final exam, and also identify the contents they have to master/memorize by the final exam.

3.) Use weekends, summer breaks, and winter breaks effectively

Solving past papers while reviewing the contents can be very time-consuming. From my experience, there are papers that are more than 1 hour and 30 minutes long, and with the checking time and the reflection time, it took me an average of 2 to 3 hours to complete one paper. Thus, the students may not have enough time to do sufficient revision on regular school days. This is why I felt the importance of utilizing weekends and long breaks effectively even from the first year. Although students might prioritize their IAs, Extended Essay (EE), and CAS during the break, allocating a small amount of time to revision and past papers is also very important. However, I also feel that getting enough sleep and taking some time off from studying during the break are equally important. Experiencing DP, I realized what makes DP very challenging is the workload students have to handle. I had a very difficult time reviewing the contents while trying to complete my EE, CAS activities, and six IAs. Thus, many DP students are often sleep-deprived like I was; I had countless nights where I did not sleep at all. Therefore, long breaks and weekends allow the students to charge their energy again by getting sufficient amounts of sleep. Likewise, I advise the prospective DP students to use their breaks effectively (starting from the first year), by balancing school work and resting.

Internal Assessments

BY KIRARA TAKEKURA (DP 2 STUDENT)

An Internal Assessment (IA) is a compulsory examination evaluated by the subject teacher, which is in contrast to the external exam that includes exams taken at the end of the course, and students are evaluated by the IB examiners. Students must complete an IA for each subject, and the assessment could be an oral examination in languages, fieldwork in geography, laboratory work in the sciences, investigations in mathematics, and artistic performances in the arts. The tips I could give on the IAs are first, be very cautious in selecting the topic/pieces before you begin. IA is not something that students can complete in a day, and depending on the topic you have chosen, it may take students longer and more time to complete their work. For example, for my History IA, I changed my topic from “To what extent was English education in elementary schools embraced by Okinawan educators and civilians under the US occupation from 1945 to 1972” to “To what extent was the German intervention in the Spanish Civil War due to ideological reasons?” This leads to my second tip: read exemplar papers very well and understand the criteria before selecting the topic. I only briefly read the criteria and the exemplar papers before starting the first draft for my first topic. However, after analyzing the exemplar papers and evaluating my paper against the criteria, I realized that it is very challenging to show perspectives and conduct a deep analysis of the topic. After rewriting my essay several times, I decided to change my topic to something I could write a better essay with. Likewise, for any subjects, students should read (in-depth!) the exemplar papers, understand the criteria, AND write their own outline before starting the IA process.



Inada, K. (2022). Embassy: 2 Japanese women among dead in Seoul Stampede. <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/14756470>

ITAEWON STAMPEDE

BY SUBIN SHIN (DP 2 STUDENT)

Less than a month ago, on the night of October 29th, over 150 people were killed in a stampede in Itaewon, one of South Korea's most popular nightlife districts. More than 100,000 people – mostly in their teens and 20s – converged in a narrow, down-sloping street near Hamilton Hotel in Itaewon during a Halloween celebration. People pushed and thrust into each other, falling and in the same while knocking others down, which created a piling up of people that trapped others from escaping, akin to a domino. The casualties encompassed not only Koreans but also foreigners, with 2 Japanese women included.

This reputed “tragedy” by the South Korean government is the worst disaster that has occurred in the country since the sinking of the Sewol ferry in 2014 which killed 304 people, a majority of them being high school students who were on a field trip. As a Korean, the news was a both a sorrow and a mortification that had demonstrated the incompetence of the government and partially the danger-complacent behavior of Koreans to the world. When I first encountered the news on NHK, I could not believe what I was hearing because it was an accident rather unanticipated in today's world. Although a third party, my condolences were with the bereaved. I also could not fully spare myself from the responsibility I felt as a Korean for not being able to make Korea a safe and contented place for the foreigners who have passed away.

Nonetheless, I also could not curtail the anger I had for the government and authority that had demonstrated none but poor planning, control, and management. Despite the possibility that occurrences such as this were eventual and were not completely unforeseen, the accident would have been avoided if the authority had allocated a police force at the right time. The government should also have prepared and enforced a proper manual where heavy crowds were expected. I was let down again by not only the ineptitude but also the responsibility-evading behavior of the government to cope with situations like these. Instead of pinning down a certain group to blame, South Korea needs to realize the greater importance of preventing such accidents henceforth.

I also interviewed a few OIS students regarding the stampede to see how the incident was reflected in middle and high school students studying in Japan, a country that is being compared with Korea with respect to the management of the Halloween celebration in Shibuya, a nightlife district like Itaewon. Many stated that they were “shocked” by the news. Niina Tokuda from DPI remarked that she was “sad that most of the casualties were young.” Most students also stated that the event was caused by a lack of communication and security practices and that it could have been evaded. Lana Weightman from MYP5 had commented that the “administrative systems could be improved to inform the [bereaved] more quickly,” and that a revision of the planning of the Halloween celebration that takes greater consideration of the participants is imperative hereinafter.

After hearing our opinions, what is your outlook on the accident?

References:

Lock, S. (1 November, 2022). Crowd crushes: how disasters like Itaewon happen, how can they be prevented, and the ‘stampede’ myth. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/01/how-do-crowd-crushes-happen-stampede-myth-what-happened-in-the-seoul-itaewon-halloween-crush>

The Korea Times. (30 October, 2022). *At least 151 killed, 82 injured in Halloween stampede in Seoul's Itaewon*. https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/11/113_338821.html

Hur, A. (17 November, 2022). Young South Koreans Don’t Trust a State That Betrays Them. *FP*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/11/17/southkorea-itaewon-stampede-halloween/>

Winter Movie Rec.

BY SUBIN SHIN (DP 2 STUDENT)

In addition to well-known winter movies such as *Frozen*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, and the beloved *Home Alone*, I have a lesser-known winter movie that you might enjoy with your family snuggled up on your couch drinking hot cocoa. The movie I would like to recommend this time of the year is *Little Women* (1949). Many of you would have watched or at least heard of the 2019 version of the movie, starring Emma Watson. While I think the 2019 film was a great retelling of Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic I have adored since childhood.

The four March sisters, with their father away at war, find means to cope with privation throughout winter and harsh encounters within the family. Along the way, they grow up, finding love and their own place in the world. This coming-of-age story is one that I believe resonates with all generations despite the time gap between now and the time it was originally published. I believe this version of *Little Women* encapsulates the warmth of winter and familial love flawlessly.

P.S. I have also made some donations to the school library, so feel free to check them out whenever you visit the library!



IMDb. (n.d.). *Little Women* (1949).
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0041594/>

Final Thoughts & Acknowledgments

BY SUBIN SHIN (DP2 STUDENT)

Special thanks to Tom Hamashima (DP1), Niina Tokuda (DP1), Kanna Sueyoshi (ILA2), Lana Weightman (MYP5), and Momo Oshiro (MYP5) who have participated in an online survey and contributed to the newsletter with their valuable opinions, and Mrs. Sueyoshi, Mr. Tang, and Mr. Okuma who have supported us throughout our project.

This is the end of online school newsletters from us DP2 students! Thank you for being a part of the readership for a year-long journey. Without your readership, this project would not have been possible. Do not be saddened, however. After our graduation, the incoming DP students will follow in our footsteps and continue bringing informative and intriguing newsletters for all of you!