

2019

Creativity

Students share their poetry and artworks

Foreign guests

Stories from an exchange with Spanish students

If Adam was Eve

What if the gender roles were turned upside-down?

Meeting Arundhati

Roy

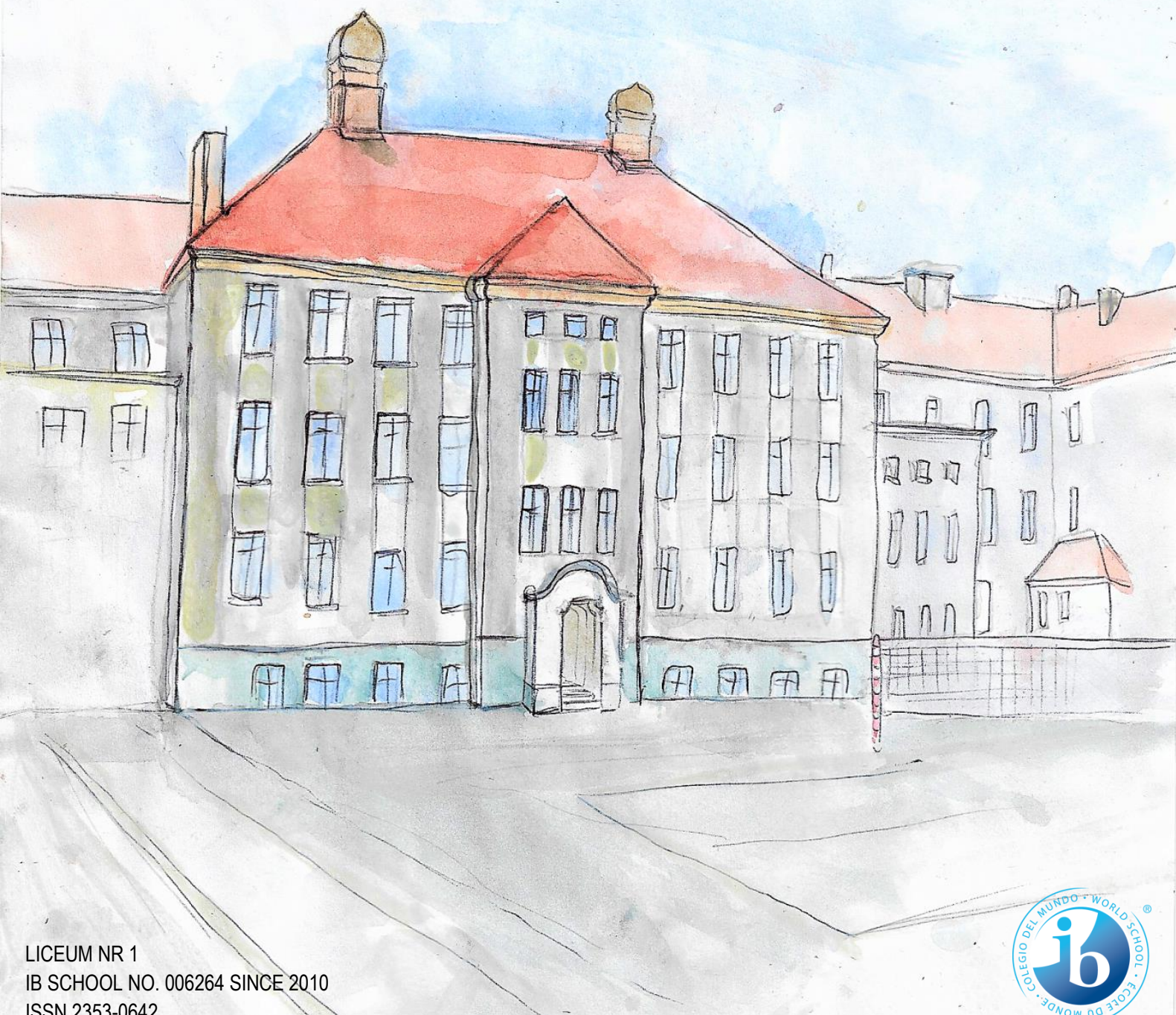
A report from Conrad Festival in Cracow

Living Abroad

How to apply abroad without the IB

IB REVIEW

GLIWICE



GLIWICE

2019

IB REVIEW

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author: Zuzanna Rozwadowska

Welcome to the 2019 edition of IB Review. We are proud to present the creative potential of our students who, despite the overwhelming workload of school assignments, were able to submit unusually insightful and sagacious variety of texts.

It is the first time we have assigned some space to the new section – Literary Corner where the students show their artistic flair, taking the form of poems, literary sketches and graphic design. Personally, as an English A Language and Literature teacher, I am delighted to show the creative aptitude of English A students.

By and large, we feel confident that each reader will be able to find something he can relate to, from school life to students' extracurricular activities going far beyond school walls – e.g. hosting the European Youth Parliament, unparalleled success of which reverberated throughout the entire region or the reliable, not sugar-coated account of what studying in Britain is like for the former student of our Liceum and much more...

We do hope you will find this edition of IB Review inspirational, informative and simply irresistible.

- The Editors-in-Chief

IF ADAM WAS EVE

ARTICLE

To all my fellow ladies out there, have you, beautiful and precious creatures, ever thought about how amazing life would be if our (totally intelligent and absolutely not even a little bit egoistic) common ancestor wouldn't bite the damned apple? You totally did. Imagine life without the monthly devilish Niagara Falls every time you sneeze, painful childbirth or peeing seated. But the concept of reversing the roles goes even deeper, you open the Bible and read "and the Lord formed the WOMAN from dust of the ground" and then He proceeds to create a "helper" out Eve's rib while she's dead asleep and name him "man" because he was taken out of a Woman. We can totally skip the part about becoming one flesh. Fast forward to my favorite animal to have a bag made of, the infamous snake. This son of the lady of pleasure offers poor Adam an apple. But it's not just an apple, it's the prettiest, fanciest roundest fruit his eyes have ever seen. It's glowing in the UV light and smells like vanilla milkshake, already offering you two totally organic (save the planet!!) straws and plane tickets to Bahamas. Then he says something about knowing what's right and what's wrong, and boom, it's a total package, a full course meal. Adam takes a bite and it's the biggest downgrade ever, the apple is mushy, way to sweet and testing his gag reflex but

he still makes Eve take a bite. And boom again, it's even a bigger downgrade. Now he can't even look at his chick without being weirdly repelled. The humanity is left blaming Adam, men get aroused by the sight of fish and have to shave their armpits twice a week (unless it's winter). It's not female who's considered weak and in constant need of help. What a reassuring thought. Imagine that patriarchy doesn't exist. Imagine that little girls (or girls of any age for that matter) are not sold for political or material gain. Imagine no one being forced to marry someone they do not want to marry. Imagine not having to work in the factories while your husband is fighting on a war and not being deprived of your rights. Imagine suffragettes not having to fight. Imagine wearing whatever you want. Imagine no one blaming the victims of harassment for what happened to them. Imagine our reality with social, political and economic equality of the sexes. Imagine a world without the glass ceiling. Imagine no one being afraid to speak out their mind or talk about their experience without being ostracised. That's a beautiful concept right? But it's not only about those great ideas. Imagine being equally allowed to make mistakes and to learn from them. The first time I really partied hard (that's some extensive use of

euphemism here) I did a bad thing. To clarify, I didn't kill anyone, but ended up kissing with a taken guy. I think I don't really need to add anything more about this. It's still a secret but those who know about this still backlashed me. And don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to excuse myself, but it was a mutual decision and still I was considered to be the Delilah and he just made a mistake. Speaks volumes, right? I'm going to make a hasty generalization here, but I wonder how would life look like if girls would treat boys the same way they do. I'm not a fan of "the taste of your own medicine" method, but it seems like such an interesting concept. Using someone because you're bored, or really miss your ex (not to mention the times when by spending time with you they realize how much a mistake they made to break up with their previous „partner“ – till this day I'm thinking what did I do to make him do so).

Or those guys who only talk with you during the parties? Yeah these are the best, you text them the next day and they forget about your existence. Remember, your heart on the black market is worth approximately 119 000 dollars (when legally sold, almost a million), don't give it up for free.

The idea that just by reversing a tiny teeny bit of human mythology we could change the world entirely is very appealing indeed. But we cannot change what's already said and done, instead we can contribute to creating a better, fair world in which everyone, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or beliefs can be treated with equal respect as well as have equal chances to grow and develop their ideas, achieve success,

provide with a scientific breakthrough or just live grow and develop their ideas, achieve success, provide with a scientific breakthrough or just live their life in peace and fulfillment.

MEETING ARUNDHATI ROY

Beata Krupiczka

ARTICLE

This autumn I was a fortunate participant of one of the most renowned literary festivals in Central Europe – Conrad Festival, held annually in Cracow since 2008. An exceptionally well-organized literary feast attracted multitudes of keen readers from Poland and abroad.

The event I had been especially looking forward to was the meeting with Arundhati Roy, an Indian writer, 1997 Booker Prize laureate for her first novel *The God of Small Things*. IB students who attend English A classes are well acquainted with the text as it is the novel from our obligatory reading list.

The room was packed to its limits to accommodate hundreds of people wishing to meet the author. The audience, including myself, was absolutely captivated by unparalleled beauty and surgical precision of Roy's use of the English language. The author provided some background information on her two novels she has written so far – *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) then she went on to discuss the phenomenal co-existence of numerous languages and dialects in India as well as the pervasive influence of , once abandoned but still present, caste system and its ubiquitous impact on the social structure.

When referring to languages she said that the Indians are "swimming in the vast ocean of languages" and even though the book is written in English, "it is conceived in many languages". Then Roy transferred the idea of profusion of languages onto the importance of multiple points of view referring to knowledge and general outlook on the surrounding world. The author also touched upon the dangers of nationalism that is currently posing a threat to stability in many countries all over the world, India being one of the most egregious examples.

Many readers admitted having been thoroughly affected by her first novel, some were even encouraged to delve deeper into India's exuberant wealth of culture, tradition and heritage.

Meeting Arundhati Roy was an unforgettable experience for me and prudence, clear-sightedness and the artistic touch to her talk will undoubtedly reverberate in my own approach to literature well into the future.



- Arundhati Roy and Beata Krupiczka

AGNIESZKA BILSKA

Marcel Demarczyk

INTERVIEW

You've graduated from high school and gymnasium in this school. How would you compare the same school from then to the today's one?

I have to clarify something. At the time when I was a pupil here, there was no gymnasium. To answer your question, honestly, the school hasn't changed much. I'm afraid back in the old days our school was perceived by most people in town and also by other students as a really strict, serious and maybe even an austere one, which is not my favourite type of school. Now that I'm an adult and a teacher I think that education should be much more fun, not just a duty that you are made to perform but you don't really derive any pleasure from it. When I was a student here I also studied a lot. I was one of the hardest working students in class, which means I didn't have any social life. I would just spend time studying. I really regret it now. If I were to compare, I would say that in its current shape, the school is mostly focused on academic results, the same way as when I was a student here 20-25 years ago, which means it hasn't changed much. I think it's a pity, because in my opinion educational institutions should be able to adapt to the world, become more focused on the needs of students.

You said you regret learning so much in the past. Can you tell me why?

I believe that I spent too much time studying but not in the way that would probably benefit me most. I believe now as a teacher that when you are learning things by heart when you're provided all the notes and information by your teacher and you don't do any research yourself it leads to the situation that you just try to analyse stuff by yourself you don't really want to understand. You just want to imitate what the teacher told you. It's not the purpose of education. I think education should lead you more to understanding and it should be based on your own research and your own work. Then it's more pleasant. You have more satisfaction from studying and since I've done it, that's changed my perspective completely. I regret that now. I would have learnt that way if I had known it's that effective. Now that I am an adult and I'm free to study what I want and how to learn, I find much more pleasure in it than before. I don't learn the way I did when I was at school and I have found ways for myself to study in the best and pleasant possible way. I think it's also possible to do it with my students at school. I would like the school to be changing in this direction.

You recommend learning things not by heart to your students but to do some research, so you also recommend learning what they like to them instead of all of those compulsory subjects, yes?

Yes. That would be an optimal situation. It's obvious that not everybody is interested in everything. It's impossible. The situation would be perfect if students could choose where to start from. They would start from the things that they really find interesting and then they would feel the need to know. The need to know drives internal motivation, which would guide them to seek more and more knowledge, to find answers to questions that they have themselves. If you are just forced to study at school and you are punished for failures, the internal motivation is lost. That's why students have to study although they don't want to. If it was possible, I would let students have more autonomy and decide what they want to study. It doesn't mean that they would like to end up studying one subject for example. I would insist on finding ways to make students study about the world from their point of interest. If it depended on me, there wouldn't be any subjects at all. We would be studying problems and those problems would be related to different areas of science and education.

So you think our system of education is exhausting for students, is that correct?

Definitely. I feel that students' curiosity is killed in this process because they stop studying for themselves. They study either for the system, for grades or for the teacher, who is strict, demanding and punishes students if they don't study. Children also study for their parents but the last person they really do something for is themselves.

From my experience I've noticed that many students care about every grade because of their parents. What would you tell those parents?

That's a really tricky question because parents don't like to be lectured by people who are not the parents of their kids. I wouldn't like to sound like somebody who wants to criticise them but I have the feeling that if they reconsidered the fact that their kids have a lot to do in all the subjects, they would themselves realise where the problem is. Each of the teachers requires a lot of work, so if you calculate how much time students should spend on every subject the total is impossible. We as adults don't spend as much time at work, so it's really too much work for kids.



I think the Polish system of education benefits those students who learn everything and have the best grades. In my opinion it's tricky because students get into that, then parents and then most of teachers. How would you relate to that circle?

I know it. I'm not a great fan of the Polish system of education. I'm focused on trying to introduce some minor changes from the bottom up. It's naive to think that the system can change by itself. The system tends to be inhumane. Systems are like algorithms and machines and they don't really change by themselves. People have to introduce changes to the system. We have to do it and since the system has been here for years (from the 19th century up to now) it is very difficult to change the thinking of parents and students about the fact that the system is really outdated. It should be changed and adapted to the way that today's world functions and how our students will work in the future when they get into international corporations or global businesses.

They would have to cooperate with people from other part of the globe. There won't be any place for grades and judging them the way they are treated at school so in my opinion it's a waste of time. Half of a student's life is spent at school. I think it is the most outdated institution in the country. Everything else changes more or less but education doesn't.

From my experience I've noticed that many students care about every grade because of their parents. What would you tell those parents?

What would you say about homework?

There has been a great discussion about homework recently in the social media. In an ideal world a student gets homework assignment that she/he is interested in. However, in the real world where teachers don't have enough time during class to treat each and everyone individually, they just introduce the problem. They say what the lesson is, maybe dictate some notes, refer students to the course book and then the lesson ends because it lasts only 45 minutes. Then the students have to go home and do most of the work by themselves or with a private tutor or else, they look for solutions online, sometimes when they run out of time, they may copy the solutions because it's the easiest way. I'm sorry if I'm unfair to teachers who do a lot of work with students in class but sometimes even for them it is impossible because of the limited number of lessons - sometimes just one - per week.

In 2017 you won an award for the best teacher in Europe and Asia. How do you feel about it?

I have to explain a little more about this award. This was an award from an organisation which is a publisher of educational materials. It is called Pearson. It may be confusing that I'm the best teacher in Europe and Asia. It was an award for English as a foreign language teacher. In fact the award was a great surprise for me. The panel of judges appreciated the ways I try to get my students involved in various activities outside the school, how I engaged them into programming, activities in the local communities and how they helped me with organising meetings for technology fans. In my application I wrote how I understand education in general not only in teaching English, about my usage of technology and how I am trying to change education. I think this is what the jury appreciated most. I was really lucky to win and go to the United States because otherwise I wouldn't be able to.

Tell me something, please, about the project in which you also participate: Warsztat Miejski - Municipal Workshop - what do you do there and what is it based on?

This is an informal initiative of people from Gliwice who think DIY is a great way of spending free time and also a nice way to learn things, make friends. We started organising events (the group of 8 people) for the local community during which people could come and make something.

I consider it as a great idea for people who would like to do something like that. You also participate in a different informal group 'Superbelfrzy'.

How does that work and what is your role there?

In short it's just a group of teachers who 5/7 years ago created a group on Facebook. There are teachers passionate about teaching with the use of technology. There are 150 teachers from all over Poland. We are present there all the time. We talk and inspire each other. We organise online conferences where everybody can participate. I'm one of the administrators of the group. Once a year we organise an online conference which starts at 9 o'clock in the morning and finishes at 9 o'clock in the evening. It's like a marathon of webinars for teachers. We publish on our blog, organise workshops for teachers to make them appreciate technology and get ready to use technology in education. We have introduced plenty of changes so far. A lot of teachers from the group have written course books, curricula for school. Several teachers have won the award for the teacher of the year. We all believe we can do something to change education and in our small classrooms we can start the process. We help and advise each other. I think we have made great progress.

In my view it's a really nice thing because it changes the world. Those small initiatives can help.

Of course and since I've started being in this group, I realized that creating change can only happen from bottom up. You cannot rely on the system to introduce changes overnight.

DRAMA CLASSES

Justyna Sieradzka-Bizon

ARTICLE



It's a well known fact that the Diploma Programme is different in many ways from the traditional, Polish school programme. However, we would like to focus on one of the extra subjects which is mandatory in both the Middle Years Programme and the Pre-IB year: drama.

The name of the subject can slightly suggest what the course is about. However, many people find it hard to imagine what we study during these classes. They are different from traditional classes in many ways. Starting from the fact that we sit in a circle in the back of the classroom without books or notebooks, we just sit, listen and watch others perform.

Each year, we focus on something different. The key task of the drama's first year was to get to know oneself, one's acting skills and the creation of film projects. During the classes, you learned good humor, basic forms of expression and their rules. The projects boiled down to recording a film, the preparation of scenes in pairs and a monologue. Students' tasks on these lessons also included writing reviews that would shape our critical thinking. After the first year, you can certainly say that the students have learned to work together, gained planning, acting and improvisation skills.

The second year of the drama focuses on the preparation for a theatrical performance in front of an audience, which consisted of our families and strangers and creating a game show. This resulted in an increase in the students stage certainty, the fact that we are more aware of how important the contact with the audience is and how important it is to make mistakes and learn from them. In the third year, the main topic is famous Hollywood stars that are considered to be legendary in the film industry, such as the amazing Marilyn Monroe or Clark Gable. These names might have rung a bell before; however, after this year, students are able to recognize them, know a bit about their background and say what films they are famous for. They have a chance to dress up as their actor (assigned by the teacher) and recreate their pictures. What's more, the students are asked to create a presentation about their Hollywood star and present it in front of their group. Finally, in the last year the main focus is the history of theatre. Students learn about the origin of the theatre, perform old plays or try to create a more modern version of an ancient play. They are asked to create a film relating to the story of Oedipus in whatever form they choose. They have multiple options to opt for, because if all the projects were the same, it wouldn't be as much fun as we have during these classes. What's important to mention is that these projects are all done in groups of usually up to 5 people. This is a huge advantage because you get to spend time with your friends doing something really creative and unique.

Many people may ask: what is the purpose of such classes? Well firstly, you have the opportunity to do something really creative and study something different. It's a very interesting subject that can give you a lot of practical knowledge that you can use in everyday situations. You also understand references to theatre in literature, movies or different forms of art. It's important to note that this subject, unlike others, helps you develop your character - you can boost your confidence and come out of your shell. You acquire skills such as writing (for example critical reviews of theatre performances that you have seen) and expressing your true feelings.

From our experience, we can say that this class has a huge impact on students. At the beginning it might not seem so. However, after these three years you can really see a difference in your behaviour and character.

FOREIGN GUESTS

Emilia Robok and Justyna Urbanek

ARTICLE

Our school is open to other cultures and wants to give us an opportunity to get to know them. For the last two years we have had a chance to take part in an exchange with students from Terrassa – a town of a similar size as Gliwice situated around 30 minutes from Barcelona in Spain.

In March 2017 the Spanish group came to Poland. We spent an amazing week together. Our Spanish guests were fascinated by our culture. We prepared some presentations about our school, Polish history and traditions and they also tried some Polish dishes. We wanted to show them things strongly connected with the history of the Silesia or Poland so we went to The Silver Mine in Tarnowskie Góry, Kraków, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Katowice to see Nikiszowiec or Spodek. There was also time for fun: we went to the Jump City while in Katowice, a bowling alley in Gliwice and we were spending every evening together after the official part. However, everything what is nice ends quickly and the time for parting came.

In June our Polish group went to Terrassa! We were eating paella, discovering Barcelona, Girona – a place where some scenes from "Games of Thrones." were shot. We were sunbathing

in Barceloneta Beach, swimming in the sea, having fun in a water park on numerous slides and taking amazing photos in Park Güell or of Sagrada Família. The farewell was very sad as we got really attached to each other. After one year we still keep in touch with our new friends: we write to each other and send postcards from holidays.

This year our school is part of the Erasmus+ programme. The exchange incorporates three other schools from: Germany, Spain and Holland. This program is going to last two years. Each country consists of a group of 27 students. Each of those groups is divided into three smaller ones of nine students and each one is going to a different country. We are going to spend 5 days with foreign students and their families. We can't wait for it! It will be a great adventure and an occasion to make new friends, get to know a new culture, customs and explore countries, their monuments, landscapes. We believe that it is a great adventure for young people curious about the world. The first group is going to Holland in March and we will all be meeting in Poland in September 2019, so stay tuned! We will keep you posted!

LE FRANÇAIS – UNE LANGUE QUI COMPTE!

Maria Żyła

ARTICLE

Aujourd'hui, tout le monde est d'accord sur l'importance des connaissances linguistiques aussi bien dans la vie professionnelle que privée. Même si l'anglais reste la langue la plus apprise, il est évident qu'une seule langue étrangère à connaître – cela ne suffit pas. C'est pourquoi ça vaut la peine d'apprendre également le français!

Depuis des siècles, on voit le français comme une langue de l'art et de l'élégance. Pour une bonne raison – la France a toujours été le centre de culture en Europe: peu importe si on parle des peintres célèbres, musiciens ou écrivains, beaucoup d'entre eux étaient originaires de France.

Et actuellement...

Mais revenons au présent. Le fait est que le français est la deuxième langue la plus parlée dans le monde. Selon les estimations de l'OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie), cette langue est utilisée par 270 millions de locuteurs sur tous les cinq continents. En plus, le français est la langue officielle de nombreuses organisations mondiales, telles que l'ONU (l'Organisation des Nations unies) ou l'OTAN

(l'Organisation des Nations unies) ou l'OTAN (l'Organisation du traité de l'Atlantique nord).



Le Moulin Rouge, un des symboles de la capitale de France

Les affaires en français – bien sûr!

C'est sûr que les connaissances linguistiques sont la clé au monde des opportunités professionnelles. Comment cela se passe-t-il en pratique? Les personnes maîtrisant bien le français sont les bienvenus sur le marché du travail. Eh oui! Seulement en Pologne, ce sont 200 entreprises françaises qui recherchent des employés avec la connaissance de la langue française.



*Le logo de l'Organisation Internationale de la
Francophonie*

Culture, relations mondiales, travail et...
les voyages!

Grâce au fait que le français est présent dans le monde entier, en connaissant cette seule langue on peut explorer tous les coins du globe. Voudriez-vous passer quelques beaux jours sur une île paisible, loin du bruit de la ville? Les Antilles vous invitent! Ou peut-être rêvez-vous d'une aventure extraordinaire en Asie? Le Vietnam, c'est ce qu'il vous faut...

Bref, tout ce que vous voulez, c'est en français!

A MESSAGE TO YOU

Lars Kawczyk

POEM

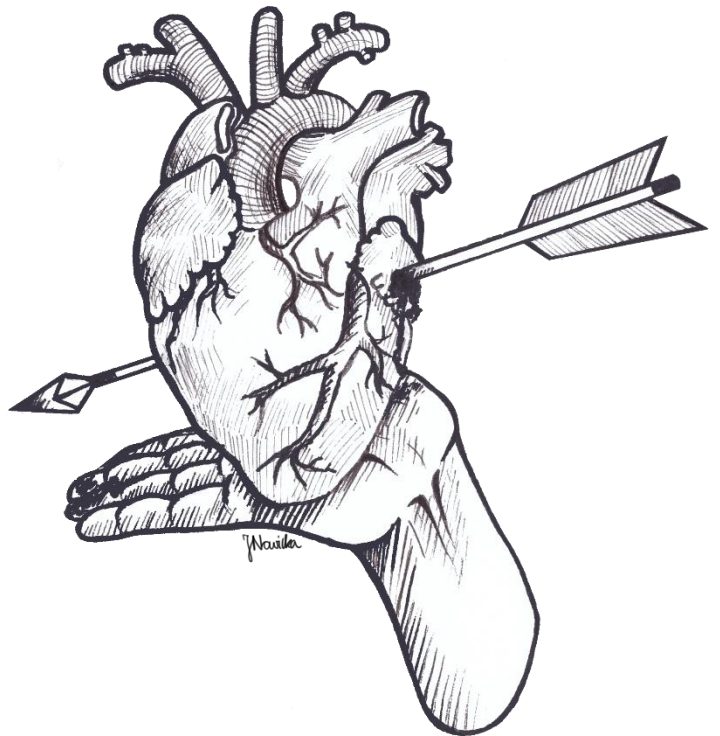
When the rain settles in
And the sun goes by.
See through that dimming light,
Never run from an endless fight.

When all but you are to win
And the stakes are high.
Smile with all your might ,
Never run from an endless fight.

Hear my voice, through that spoiled skin.
Courage and stupidity fill the sky
Avoid what seems to be bright,
See through that dimming light.

Through treason, don't doubt your kin,
Even when "our" turns to "my".
Turn to what is right,
Never run from an endless fight.

But when I see you, I begin
To prepare my best battle cry
Please see through that dimming light,
Never, never run from an endless fight.



SCARY NIGHT

POEM

hearing voices
voices reverberating all around
echo echo in my head
where did my thoughts go instead
because now there is none
no simple thought in my mind full of
other voices so strong and frightful
from big scary wall
low low i hear the tone
laugh laugh full of joy
that frightens me because i cannot see
how to stop them
their ready postures
ready to attack my woman's pride
in that night full of darkness
going through the streets cannot let me
enjoy beauty
beauty of that night
as i throw glances around to check
if there's someone to make me feel unsafe

CINNAMON

Hanna Soral

POEM

today I have a desire to be
a piece of meat wound on a stick
sizzling fat sinister fire
dancing on a display
swallowed by wild greedy eyes
what did you mean while saying
it's time to play for the crowd
I have never been a good pianist
why does this skin sear so much?
I'll take it off and dance
drinking tears from strangers' lids
soon they will seize me wrap me in foil
hermetically sealed
at least I'll stand on a shelf
next to a jar of cinnamon



KAROLINA HAŁUSZKO

Paulina Hałuszko

INTERVIEW

In this article I interviewed Hałuszko Karolina – who happens to be my sister. I asked her some questions about the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) and if she can tell me something about her years while she was studying in our High School. Karolina finished this program 4 years ago with good memories and satisfaction. Now she attends the University in Gdansk where she is studying two faculties - Law and Criminology. After this interview, as an IB student, I can also say that this program is worth all of the sacrifices because hard work pays off.

Why did you choose the IB programme?

I have chosen the IB program due to the fact that it provides tons of new opportunities. You can develop yourself not only academically, but also improve your creativeness, sports skills and work over your inner soul. Thanks to the IB program I have become a better person. I would say I care more about others and I have become a more ambitious person, aware of my own actions. Moreover, comparing to other schools located in the city of Gliwice, the level of the education is definitely higher, teachers demand more, so that is the next advantage that I have taken to consideration, while choosing my High School.

During my early years many people told me that the hard work pays off. To be honest, I started to believe in that, just when my education in IB started. I remember burning the midnight oil and complaining about feeling bleary. However, I don't regret that. Thanks to the IB I am living the life I have always wanted. I'm not going to lie that the program is easy. It was definitely a challenge at first, but you will get used to this. And at the end of your education you will be proud of what you have achieved. Who knows, maybe one day you will be writing to the IB Review magazine about you being grateful for having the opportunity to attend such school?

What subjects did you take?

I always follow the rule that if you don't like something, then you shouldn't do it. The same rule applies to my choice of subjects. I suffer from dyscalculia, which is a difficulty in learning or comprehending arithmetic, such as trouble in understanding numbers, learning how to manipulate amounts and learning facts in mathematics. Based on that I chose the lowest level of math. That was just perfect for me. The second one I picked was Polish at standard level, because I knew that putting an interpretation on some poems wasn't my best.



Sounds like karma, right? Well, in my opinion nothing good comes without hard work and commitment. Unfortunately, in the IB you will be supposed to give up on pleasures and focus more on education. It is important to study regularly and follow the saying :“ don’t save things for later if you can do something now, do it now”. Thanks to this you won’t be in trouble and it will be easier to manage your leisure time.

The third one was chemistry, which I chose only because I thought it would be necessary in my future job. At high level I studied History, English and German. History gave me an opportunity to extend my knowledge about other countries, while learning languages helped me to improve my memory and opened up a world of job opportunities. If I were you I would choose the subjects you are interested in, not the ones that your future University demands.

How to be organized in this class to succeed?

In order to succeed you should be determined and know what you would like to achieve in the nearest future. In other words, set a goal that is very important to you, but remember not to bother about some little failures! Those failures will shape you and remember that the good thing will come only when you put something to the world, then it will give you something extra back.

What are the most important features of the IB programme?

I would say that the most important feature is its versatility. As I have already mentioned, it gives lots of new opportunities for every student. It suits all passions and interests. I appreciated the fact that the system is very similar to the one at university. I mean while studying at uni you are supposed to do a lot of stuff on your own. The teacher is just to give you the basic knowledge, but if you would like to expand your horizons you have to do your own research. For me it was such a great thing, because I was forced to accustom to the fact that my actions matter and additionally I have learned how to use other sources than the internet in order to find the information I needed. IB helped me to develop skills such as good writing, improved my debating skills and critical thinking, which of course are very necessary abilities during your future studies.

Writing an Extended Essay is a great practice for your Bachelor's dissertation, because you will learn how to cite sources properly, etc. So to sum up, it does not only shape you as a person but also prepares you for your future academic life.

How did your language skills improve after IB programme?

To be honest, it's hard to say if the IB program improved my English skills or if it was due to my own merit. During those 3 years, I regularly attended English extra classes, I read lots of books and watched movies in this language. Generally, the constant contact with the language contributed to the fact that when I was coming home after school, I still used English. I started to think or even dream using the foreign language. Unfortunately, at the cost of improving English, my Polish skills worsened. I started to make grammatical mistakes, which of course wasn't something to be proud of. I believe that at some point studying in IB have improved my abilities. I have built multitasking skills, improved memory and become more perceptive. Writing essays to school, learning new vocabulary for short tests or grammar for sure improved my language, but watching movies or reading books helped me to speak more fluently and with a better accent. It also elevated my self-esteem as it comes to speaking in front of a group of people.

Are there any differences between you and your friends when it comes to knowledge while studying?

To be honest, I haven't seen any particular differences between me and my friends who have graduated from the normal, Polish High School. In my opinion every school provides only the basic knowledge, but the rest is in the hands of a student. Everything depends on your attitude towards gaining new knowledge and ambition to evolve scientifically, because except just attending school, a student develops through after school activities or extra classes. However, I would say that the one and the most beneficial difference that I have noticed was connected with managing my own time and following my schedule. Thanks to the fact that in IB I was forced to meet the deadlines it is easier now to stay focused on my goals and plan all my activities or responsibilities ahead. Having appointed deadlines, I didn't postpone my homework for the next days, because I did not want to have backlogs. So comparing me and my non-IB friends I'm more organized.

Is it worth it to be in this class?

There is no doubt that the IB programme gives amazing opportunities! It not only allows you to study abroad but also teaches versatility, broadens your horizons, diversifies language skills and prepares to an academic life. Moreover, it also makes it easier for students just like me who would like to study here, in Poland. Did you know how beneficial is the Matura grading system? Literally, you can be accepted by every University in our country!

To tell you the truth, I have never been an amazing student, I was average in most of my subjects. Well, maybe in mathematics and chemistry I was below the average, but look at me now! I'm doing my best, studying two faculties, which are known to be one of the hardest to study in our country. And you know what is amazing? In IB my life was hard, but it was a life changing process, because now, studying law and criminology is a piece of cake. IB has changed me, maybe back then I was an ordinary student who put lots of effort to achieve good grades but without results; however, now I have become one of the best students in my University. So is it worth to be in this class? Definitely!

What would you change in this programme?

There is not a lot that I would suggest to change, because overall I was very satisfied with the program. However, if I could I would change just one thing, I would tell the students the truth about studying all over the world. Of course the idea of the whole IB program is based on giving you opportunities to study wherever you would like and it is in hands of the school that the student attend to provide such an option. Sadly our school provides only a chance to study in the UK. Of course it is not a bad thing because the majority of the students choose such a destination. However, If you would like to study in other European countries, America or Asia, unfortunately you have to do your own research and pass some extra exams or certificates.

To sum up, I would not change the whole IB program, I would just change the school system. It is harsh to say that not everyone is a big fan of the United Kingdom.

How would you convince somebody to go to the IB programme?

I would tell the person that if he or she is ambitious, knows what want from life and is willing to work hard in order to achieve their aims, then he or she should go ahead and choose IB! It is not a program for everyone. Just for those who are determined, adore to study and are able to compromise social life over developing scientifically.

How did the program help you make your dreams come true?

I have always been interested in Criminology and Law. During my childhood I had watched all of the CSI seasons telling myself that one day I would become a bloodstain pattern analyst, detective, criminal forensic expert or a prosecutor. Without IB I believe that I wouldn't be where I am now. It gave me an amazing opportunity, because I strongly believe that I would not pass the Polish Matura exam. Reading the last sentence you probably thought "what is the girl saying, didn't she mention that IB is more challenging than the Polish school, is she loosing her mind?". I have to admit that it was hard, but due to the fact that in IB I was forced to do a lot of stuff on my own and was treated not like a basic student (I had a feeling that teachers demanded more from us)

I started to believe that if I achieved a lot of small successes then one day it would be the time for a big success. IB has shaped me and gave me power, it improved my self-esteem. It is hard to explain all of my emotions, but I bet you will understand what I mean, while starting your first year of your dreamful University.

What do you study now and where?

Right now I'm attending the Gdansk University and I'm studying two faculties – Law and Criminology.

LIVING ABROAD

Iwona Szymura

ARTICLE

It was the beginning of the second year of high school. After finishing classes, I was waiting for my friend and lazily glancing at the TV screen in the school corridor. One of the announcements was aimed at students who did not attend IB, but still wanted to move out to a different country to start a university education. It intrigued me, because I did not know that this kind of option existed. However, I quickly abandoned this idea, thinking that it will require me to have skills of a genius and a million zlotys. I went to the meeting only out of curiosity and I came out of it, determined to do my best, determined to give it a try, even if I fail in the end.

It turned out that it is possible and even at my fingertips. I just needed to gain some volunteering experience, write a personal statement which is a form of a cover letter and choose five universities that I want to apply to. Simple, isn't it?

With enthusiasm, I started working on my first draft. It contained all the reasons why I wanted to become a psychologist and why the university should pick me. The school provided me with a lot of support and valuable advices, thanks to which I was able to button up my personal statement.

If it comes to choosing universities, my decision was influenced by many factors. Rankings, entry requirements and part-time job opportunities, all of those made me pick the top 5 unis that I wanted to attend. After a period of impatient waiting, I heard back from all of them and decided that I will choose the University of East Anglia as my first choice.

The next step involved passing an English test called IELTS, which was one of the conditions that I needed to meet in order to get in an university. The exam itself wasn't too difficult, it contained, reading, speaking, listening and writing modules and had a bit different form to what is expected from students passing the matura exam. However, with a little bit of practice, extra help from teachers and doing a thorough research, getting the right mark wasn't that hard after all.

What was the hardest part then? In my opinion, the matura exam. Spending hours revising the same material over and over, solving hundreds of tasks and crying over those I couldn't solve. But yeah, I can say now that despite all of those nervous breakdowns we all experience, studying hard is worth it.

When I got my results and I accepted the unconditional offer the university gave me, I was ready to work as hard as I could to save some money and then begin the most exciting adventure in my life. Despite all the doubts, despite the Brexit, I packed my suitcase and left Poland. During one and a half year of my immigration, I met a great number of amazing people, I got to try new things that I have never done before like martial arts and taste food from all around the world prepared by my new friends. It is not always easy, you do not always look like the happy students sitting on the grass on a sunny day presented on your uni's prospectus cover. But I can tell you one thing – it is definitely worth giving it a try.