

Lower Merion School District
International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

Voices from the Past: Anecdotal Feedback from IB Graduates

The following reflections of some of our IB graduates on their Diploma Program experience were compiled from reflection papers they submitted before graduating and communication afterward. This document represents more than a decade of voices from the past. Over the years no attempt has been made to weed out previous years' contributions in order to produce a more printer-friendly document. Rather, striving to honor the echoes of our alumni whose contributions have been included herein, this lengthy tome is intended for casual perusal.

Class of 2014

Although it is very rigorous and demanding, IB improves and prepares each student in an endless amount of ways. I can easily say that as a result of the program, I am now well aware of what I am capable of and am extremely prepared for the future challenges I have awaiting me.

--Barbhara Alves

I'd always hear my parents talk about their childhood, about how they moved from grade to grade with the exact same group of people, and I wanted to experience that. I have to say, that has definitely been one of my favorite aspects of IB. I have formed relationships with people that I previously probably would not have talked to. And being in the same classes and sharing the same experience with a certain group of people gave us a certain bond and allowed me to form closer friendships with people.

--Aiste Balciunaite

The extending of curricula over two years for most classes allowed for a deeper and broader understanding of the subject in question....

--Emrick Rurange

Over the past two years the way in which the classes are structured, especially TOK, has provided me with a unique learning experience that I feel has taught me critical thinking skills that I can apply to all manner of situations both in college and beyond.

--Michael Bernhardt

IB provides a powerful support system where students study together and struggle together to work comprehensively through the challenging material set before us. And because IB attracts some of the most hardworking students in the school, we are all able to learn certain skills from one another to become effective learners.

--Christy Bradley

CAS was a great way for me to become more service oriented. I have not done much service before, and CAS was an eye opener. My independent service project really made me want to do more of it, and I now try to incorporate service into my daily life.

--Edvard Breivik

IB was more than preparing for a series of exams in May; we had essays on essays, developed time management, learned to balance all aspects of our lives in a way that most high school students do not experience until their first semester of college.

--Alison Buck

There's something special about being in a group of people that are all sharing the same experiences, all stressing when you are, and all doing the same assignments. It fosters a sense of community that I had never felt before, and honestly really enjoyed.

--Aiste Balciunaite

I learned to contribute to a group and be a part of something greater than myself.

--Jami Gross

I like that the students had to run discussions. At first, it was extremely intimidating because my peers are very intelligent and frequently make brilliant points about the topic we were discussing. As time went on, however, I was able to raise my hand more and add a couple of points to the discussion, which was a big deal for a shier person like me.

--Natalie Chapkis

Looking back on these memories and feelings of excitement, yet hesitation, I would honestly say that IB has done more for me than I ever thought it would.

--Saskhia Dieudonné

Completing the IB programme was so challenging, but in a good way. The pride I felt the second I finished my Spanish exam last week was something I felt at my Bat Mitzvah. Finally, all my hard work paid off. Finally, I did everything. Finally, I'm done.

--Alison Driben

The independence taught me how to work on my own, and how to manage my time better. The endless papers and note taking will prepare me for college and the friends I've made have made lasting memories.

--Eve Balistra

Through this program, I have gained many new friends through the shared experience as well as a strong and comprehensive education that will help me to advance through college and beyond.

--Michael Bernhardt

I have to say that [CAS] was a very nice strength of the program and a fun one too because it allowed me to bond more with my community and to participate in new different activities which gave me the ability to learn more skills and experiences.

--Dania Giaddui

IB gave me so much opportunity to just explore: in all classes, we discussed what we were learning, providing a platform for dialogue between conflicting opinions. IB rejects complacency, and promotes analysis and examination of all proclaimed "truths", which I love. It encourages the student to become globally-minded.

--Christy Bradley

I learned to participate in group discussions, coming to school prepared with ideas and sharing without worrying about making a mistake or saying something wrong.

--Jami Gross

Another benefit that I have discovered in the IB program is the community. Although people often refer to IB as a clique or a cult, I never found that as a negative thing. I have always loved learning and during freshman and sophomore year, I felt that not everyone shared my same passion. As soon as I entered the IB program, I felt as if other people who care surrounded me. It was something special to be working with other intelligent hard working students who also didn't just feel obligated to go to school, but wanted to learn.

--Alana Koenig

The importance placed on discussion allows students to gain confidence in their ideas and increases their likeliness to contribute, both inside and outside of the classroom.

--Barbhara Alves

The overall rigorous course load of IB has made me a more effective student and has taught me structure and organization. It has also pushed me to work more effectively and I have much better study habits after these two years in the program.

--Paavali Hannikainen

I learned discipline, resilience, time management (albeit the hard way) and I was excited to go to school. So. Dear International Baccalaureate Programme, thank you for sculpting me into the culturally-minded, confident, hard-working, critical-thinker I am today.

--Christy Bradley

TOK was a whole new experience. Never having taken any psychology or philosophy classes it was all very interesting. The intriguing questions and the way we were challenged to think out of the box was fun. Most importantly, it made me think about what knowledge really is.

--Edvard Breivik

I absolutely love the sense of worldliness IB has instilled in me and honestly feel so much more confidence engaging in conversations with people of different backgrounds, religions, and cultures. I have befriended people in the past two years that I never thought I'd even be interested in talking to and have learned more about myself and beliefs through being challenged to be uncomfortable although it's much easier to go on in my own little world.

--Saskhia Dieudonné

...the international nature of IB certainly allowed for me to connect with my peers. Many of my classes contained fellow expatriates for me to socialize and empathize with.

--Alex Herriott

...the way the program presents itself is very welcoming to foreign students for obvious reasons, and I have truly enjoyed meeting people from around the world because they were in my IB classes.

--Kayla Izenman

By studying together, arguing together, sunbathing in the courtyard together, and relaxing outside of school together, we created a very close-knit community. Having a classroom full of people who are friends creates a warm learning environment

--Saranya Kuhrana

My favorite aspect was CAS.... By initiating and carrying out a service project, I developed organizational skills and the skills required to talk to adults in a professional manner.

--Alison Buck

I love how we have an option (in most classes) about what to study. IB gives you the freedom to study independently what you want to study. I was able to pursue my passion for literature through my Extended Essay, realize how much I love to write about it, and decide that I want to major in literature in college.

--Alison Driben

Although most of the teachers at Harriton are strong, I have worked with especially exceptional teachers.

--Alana Koenig

Within the first few months of junior year, I had already seen myself advance so much. My learning style matched the IB perfectly; I loved that unlike all other schooling I had received, the IB program took a global standpoint, and made it essential to always introduce a counterclaim or a different opinion.

--Audrey Krumenacker

I love the Extended Essay because I am very curious about the impacts of colonization and Westernization on non-European cultures, and the EE gave me the opportunity to research that.

--Christy Bradley

I believe it has also made me a more empathetic individual, which is kind of a big deal for me because I'm definitely a thinker, not a feeler, and empathy is kind of difficult for me because emotions are definitely not my strong suit.... However, my participation in the National Honor Society, my participation in the Temple University Community Building Project, and my time as a counselor—all of which are experiences I chose for the purpose of accumulating CAS hours, in addition to my genuine interest in the activities themselves—have all made me someone who can better understand other people's emotions and inclinations. Due to the Creativity-Action-Service program, I have become more emotionally intelligent, and that is something I can see a lot of value in.

--Christine Krancer

...one thing that I love love love about IB are the teachers that make it up. I have found some of my best friends through the teachers who have taught me over the past two years. Before IB of course I have always liked my classes because I've just always been extremely motivated to learn, but once I entered IB I realized how amazing classes could really be and I'd have to say a large part of it is due to how much work and dedication each teacher has put into their class. The IB teachers are so amazing that they've even made me enjoy going to classes in subjects that I've always hated in the past.

--Saskhia Dieudonné

During the course of the two years I did meet challenges and struggled to overcome them but I learned valuable lessons as well. I learned how to live a balanced life between work and relaxation, how to make the most out of studying in a limited amount of time, and how to keep calm and carry on! It was through these experiences that my potential surprised myself. I could achieve so much in so little time as a part of this global student community.

--Stella Murray

I am thoroughly pleased with my time in the IB program. I learned above and beyond what I set out to learn and my skills as a writer, thinker, and planner have been tested and sharpened. I discovered my interest with Economics, too, thanks to choosing that elective for my junior year. The IB program has improved me as a person and widened my intellectual interests.

--Harry Smith

This IB bond extends past just Harriton. Going into college, I have become an active member of the Drexel Facebook group and have been connecting with and talking to people who I will be attending school with next year. I feel an almost instant connection with those students that have also completed the IB program, even though they might be halfway around the world. We are able to connect on IA's, CAS, EE, and all the other acronyms us IB-ers employ, and of course we are all able to complain together about the bulk of exams we had to deal with. The rigor of the curriculum and program has contributed to our lives significantly and I think will always give us something in our lives that we can remember and talk about.

--Rochitha Nathan

I learned to approach big assignments calmly, taking my workload one step at a time.

--Jami Gross

My favorite course throughout my time in high school was Theory of Knowledge. The course has made me a lot more aware of my surroundings and has made me a better learner; I can look at issues and be able to think in the most elemental state of how we acquire knowledge as human beings with regard to specific topics. The serious critical thinking and collaboration with other students in Theory of Knowledge has made me also a better communicator and critical thinker.

--Paavali Hannikainen

In essence, the IB program proved to me that with determination, I could succeed at anything, even chemistry.

--Audrey Krumenacker

I entered into the IB program, partly because I had had two older sisters who had done the program and were thriving in college and in the high school year above me, but also to be in a program where I would be pushed to not only think, but also defend my thoughts. I think that these expectations were truly met.

--Jenny Langer

CAS helps us to develop a heart for people, our passions, and service, a trait that no other academic program can boast. As a result, the IB student knows how to collaborate with others, how to take on new projects and understand the implications and benefits of charity work, and is overall healthier because our physical and emotional well-being and growth is top priority.

--Christy Bradley

...the Theory of Knowledge course itself represents a large portion of what attracted me to the IB program. Each day of TOK brought interesting and difficult questions to the forefront of discussion, often creating intense dialogue about controversial topics in society today and looking into the future.

--Steven Siciliano

I think the Extended Essay is the most important activity I have done during my two years in the program. I took the historiography class – my best choice ever – and decided to write a paper on Norwegian Sabotage Operations during World War 2. It was fascinating, and I learnt new and important skills for future college research writing. The final product was a college level research paper that I am proud of having written.

--Edvard Breivik

This program has pushed me a step farther than my friends who chose not to do it. It forced me to become independent as a student very quickly and I am grateful for this now as I approach the next phase of my life.

--Jami Gross

Being in such a small program, I got to intimately know students who I would probably have never talked to otherwise. Having this kind of relationship with my peers showed me that the 'walls' we put up in high school around certain groups of people are very superficial things, and that everyone has something unique to offer.

--Jenny Langer

I've always had a great fear of public speaking and partaking in the International Baccalaureate Program helped me overcome this fear. For nearly every class we were required to speak in class and offer our opinions.

--Claire Lavelle

There of course were the times when the program required a lot from me and I was pushed to my limit with regard to workload; I think of this as a growth experience and I am much more aware of myself as a student and where I stand with regard to my ability to push myself academically.

--Paavali Hannikainen

My IB elective economics with Mr. Kritzer was as close to life changing as IB economics could be. I found a passion with the subject and even made college decisions based on the new love for economics....

--Aaron Lazar

One of the best things about IB, in my opinion, is that everyone is on the same team. Students, teachers, TOB, and Señora all strive for one common goal: getting the diploma. The teachers are so insanely helpful with students.

--Alison Driben

...we students were pushed from the beginning to start thinking for ourselves, and just because a teacher tells us something, it does not mean that they are always right about it.

--Audrey Krumenacker

I can recall numerous times where I thought what I was learning was so fascinating that I just had to say "cool!"

--Eleanor Mayes

I love how the IB tests multiple components of a subject: can I do an independent study of history, use skills I've learned in the class, and recall information? Actually, I can. I love that the IB tests skills, because I was forced to learn the proper way to evaluate a source or annotate an unseen poem. Those skills will carry me far in life and be extremely useful in college.

--Alison Driben

After all, as Aristotle said, "The mark of an educated mind is the ability to entertain an idea without accepting it", and I think IB embodies this well.

--Aiste Balciunaite

In total, I have enjoyed my two years in IB. While I found them to be very challenging for me as a student, they were some of the most fun and enlightening years of my life. I also enjoyed growing as a student (which I certainly did, the IB curriculum is stimulating and fun), but more than that I am thankful that it has prepared me for many different situations that I will encounter through the rest of my life.

--Lindsay McKendrick

One thing I had learned from my pre-IB program was that the IB program has a universally set curriculum, and for this reason I expected the bar at Harriton to be set the same as it was at Strawberry Crest. That was before I met the Harriton community and realized that it was serious about its educational standards. I believe the high standards set at Harriton provided me with a much richer IB experience than one I could've gotten elsewhere. I also learned that not all IB programs are created equal, no matter how hard the IB may try to level the playing field.

--Danielle Murray

What this all tells me is that the IB program at Harriton is truly something special, and I feel incredibly lucky to have been able to share this experience with all of my friends.

--Matt Zhao

These past two years in the IB Program have definitely shaped who I am today. Before the International Baccalaureate Program I can imagine myself as a piece of clay that consists of all the elements to create Stella Murray but it has yet to take a form to express who this individual is to on-lookers. It was through the rigorous process of building up information and deconstructing topics of the curriculum that I was molded into the young woman I am today.

--Stella Murray

I always tell those who are seeking to do IB the same thing: I loved the program because of the teachers and the different perspectives it gave me to think about a topic. The teachers always left the field open to be discussed further, to ask questions, to not be afraid to say they didn't know the answer to a question if they did not, and to take the conversation into an area we were interested in, even it was not the way the lesson was supposed to go.

--Jenny Langer

Other than giving us a community we can always rely on, the IB program has given us a stellar education. I find that I am able to not only memorize what I am taught, but understand it and am able to apply it to other situations.

--Rochitha Nathan

In IB...the focus required on specific things like group 4 projects, extended essay research, IA research and even the analyses on tests forced IB students to not only understand the material and remember it, but also form opinions on it and reflect deeply over a specific topic.

--Katherine Pisani

IB has given me a community within the Harriton community for which I am very thankful. I have formed some truly amazing friendships with other students and strong bonds with my teachers that have made high school a time in my life I won't forget.

--Jami Gross

The goal of each of my IB teachers has been to broaden our understanding of specific subject areas, and conforming to the IB curriculum in a way that will not only prepare us for our exams, but will ultimately prepare us for the future.

--Matt Zhao

I learned to critically think about all aspects of my academics. In every subject area, I was forced to identify what I was trying to learn, and for the most part, devise my own way to get there.

--Jenny Langer

I loved the cozy ambiance in the classes. I knew every one, which made it easier to ask questions, no one was judging each other. Every one was learning from one another.

--Danaé Robert

I would not trade these years for anything, as I have so much to be thankful for and have had so many amazing experiences both in and out of school that would not be possible without my decision to do the IB program.

--Jeff Robinson

I also feel that I experienced an amount of social growth in the program, having such a small community allowed me to form strong connections to my peers in and out of class, which I intend to maintain through my college years.

--Emrick Rurange

When I look back at my experience in the IB program in years to come, I'll certainly feel a certain sense of nostalgia for the teachers I had and friends I made.

--Claire Lavelle

The idea that I could discuss the same curriculum with kids from all around the world was also a tempting motive. (In fact I have had the opportunity to meet and talk extended essays with kids from Switzerland and Korea among other places!)

--Aaron Lazar

The immense workload that could immediately be seen as a negative part of the program made me as a student learn to manage my time and taught me how to handle the volume, preparing me for higher education.

--Emrick Rurange

Another positive lesson that I took from this program is that hard work makes you happy.

--Yao Sedzro

I always categorized myself as a science gal who thrived with a Bunsen burner and a DNA model but IB English this year made me really fall back in love with writing and analyzing literature: a forgotten hobby. Next year, I plan on taking some English courses even though I plan on majoring in Human Biology with a minor in Global Health.

--Emma Seymour

If I had to go back and decide whether or not to do the International Baccalaureate program at Harriton High School, I would say yes in a heartbeat. I would not trade all the great discussions and knowledge I learned in the past two years for anything.

--Eleanor Mayes

I think that Theory of Knowledge is a major strength that is very unique to the IB program. I think this class was where I felt I had the most mental growth, as I really got to know myself and was able to stretch my opinions and thoughts in a safe and intellectually provoking environment. I found that each conversation we had made me question what I had previously assumed and really think about why I believed what I did.

--Lindsay McKendrick

To me, the major strengths of the IB program at Harriton is that it allows students to be challenged in all subject areas aiming to provide students with a comprehensive education before college. My friends at college now all complain about how they have to write long papers for most of their classes as the final. The extended essay component of the IB program helps students learn how to organize a large research paper. I believe High School is about discovering one's interests and college is about focusing in on those subject areas. When students begin pigeonholing themselves into one subject area their senior year, they are preventing themselves from rediscovering other interests such as I did with English this year.

--Emma Seymour

As someone who has always been shy and reserved, I hoped that the discussion based classes would help me to "break out of my shell", and learn to have confidence in my ideas and thoughts and have the ability to share them within a group of intellectual people. The IB program certainly did help me with this, and by senior year, I found myself more readily raising my hand in History of the Americas, or talking amongst peers in Theory of Knowledge.

--Steven Siciliano

One fascinating piece of IB is the variety of students to undertake it. It is not all a homogeneous mix of nerds, but rather a mix, of foreign kids who need the diploma, technology kids, writers, geniuses, kids who think they are geniuses, and a lot of overlapping between.

--Aaron Lazar

While I realize that IB is not for everyone, I would highly recommend it for anyone wanting a more connected and concept-driven learning style or internationally-minded material.

--Jonathan Zauberman

[The Extended Essay] was by far my favorite component. Perhaps it was because I had a very interesting topic, the kind of topic that people who have no idea what an extended essay is tell me "that's so cool!" And indeed, Prohibition gangsters are and always will be universally cool. However, my enjoyment through this was in large part due to the fantastic Historiography course. I watched many friends struggle through their essays at the last minute, and thanked my younger and more vulnerable self for signing up. After the EE, I had something I was very proud of, and that I enjoyed telling people about.

--Saranya Kuhrana

The program went above and beyond in terms of the depth and the breadth of the curriculum in each of my classes.

--Eleanor Mayes

...my experience in HL Math was like no other course I have taken. I learned an immense amount of mathematical aspects, including calculus, at a deep level, and I feel very prepared to go into college level math courses next year. This in itself ousts the stereotype that the IB Program is too heavily focused on the Humanities and the Arts.

--Steven Siciliano

I believe that IB truly has prepared me for my college career where I will experience similar workloads and possibly an even higher level of academic independence.

--Emrick Rurange

Another thing that appealed to me about the IB program was the passion that the students had for learning. Every student I talked to was eager to share what he or she was learning about in their classes with me. Their eyes would light up when they talked about their

teachers and the projects that they were working on in class. Everyone seemed excited about learning - something that one doesn't typically find in a high school environment.

--Sophie Siegel

A strength of the program is definitely that CAS is required. At first I found logging hours tedious, but as I got more and more involved in my community service project I found that I genuinely enjoy contributing back to others and being a part of something much bigger than yourself and your own community.

--Claire Lavelle

IB is well designed in that the assessments, in my opinion, assess skills and ability to manipulate information. From my experience, in order to score well, one must possess excellent knowledge of the information, but also be able to apply it. In this way, I feel that all the knowledge I have at this moment will not be forgotten soon. The skills are now part of who I am, just as IB is part of who I am.

--Martha Wolnicki

Another thing I really enjoyed about IB's teaching style was the fact that many classes were interconnected, especially in the second year, when TOK entered the curriculum. I found that, by teaching concepts that could be applied across subjects, IB made it easier to understand certain material.

--Jonathan Zauberman

In the end, I found that my expectations were very much met: the classes were indeed difficult, the material learned was expansive, and much effort was made to consider 'why' and 'how' rather than just the 'what' of a topic.

--Harry Smith

Perhaps one of my favorite courses in the entire program was Theory of Knowledge. It was with Mr. Klick that I really began to understand the concept of questioning what we know, and how we know it. I now apply these skills in all areas of my life, even to annoy my older brothers.

--Audrey Krumenacker

I have learned to examine the world around me with a sharper sense of analysis and evaluation. Activities in all classes... equipped me with the skills and habits of questioning deeper meanings and motivations to ideas to which I am exposed. I am now willing and able to understand the actions of others, the words of a writer, the music of a musician, and so on—I understand that in almost every situation there is more information to be gained than what is readily available at face value. This is also perhaps what I view to be the most valuable result of my participation in the IB program and I value it highly.

--Harry Smith

I believe that the IB program has given me exactly the introspective understanding that most students will not possess until well after starting college.

--Matt Zhao

Being a student of multiple cultures, I was very excited to be able to meet people who were interested in various cultures around the world and hold a respect for cultures that differ from one's own.

--Shawnee Zheng

I am extremely proud of my achievements and respect the work put into this program by all parties involved. I cannot describe the intellectual growth that I have experienced since entering and my newly globalized view of world issues.

--Sydney Soll

*All of the lessons seem to integrate among one another and it helped me make connections with things that I had not even realized. For example, last year when we read *Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck we learned about the 20s in history and we saw how books could shape society or how society influenced books.*

--Kieun Song

...although I appreciated the structural aspects of the program, my classmates were what really defined the experience. I found that, across the board, my peers were hard-working, intelligent, open-minded and above all, kind and considerate. I cannot exaggerate how much I enjoyed working with them, but also forming close friendships with them. Not many people can say their closest friends are French, Norwegian, Lithuanian, Finnish, Dutch etc.

--Mats Terwiesch

IB taught me to be passionate about learning.

--Sophie Siegel

Through IB, I met some of the most intelligent and motivated people I have ever met. This created an invigorating academic environment, because I was finally with people who had similar goals as me. Initially, I was terrified because I made myself believe that everyone else was a million times smarter than me, and that they all thought I was stupid. I quickly learned that I made this up in my head, and bonds were formed ...over mutual stress, which were very unexpected friendships that I am confident will last a lifetime.

--Catherine Valentine

...the requirement of Theory of Knowledge is one of the greatest parts of the IB program. Though it is not a particularly challenging class GPA-wise, it may have been one of the most challenging classes for me personally. I normally had never had trouble speaking in class, adamantly defending arguments, but in TOK I often found myself stuttering trying to define my own ideas mid-argument. The way one could enter an argument so sure of one's opinion and then simply by attempting to defend it via all the ways of knowing completely change their mind was a new experience for me. It has made me begin to question my opinions on everything, and has changed the way I construct my conversations with other people. It has changed my awareness more than I expected.

--Katherine Pisani

The IB community also helped me to gain confidence in public speaking, but not in the way I expected it too. IB forced me to become a seasoned public speaker through Theory of Knowledge and English presentations specifically, but I doubt that I would be as comfortable as I am with it without the support of the community. I built confidence through presenting to the same people repeatedly, but now that confidence has carried over into other areas of my life. I think this is what I'm most thankful for from my IB experience.

--Catherine Valentine

The fact that we as students all know each other makes it easier for a shy person like me to participate in class, which changes the way that you learn, in a positive way.

--Phoebe Van Allen

Due to all my history presentations in front of the whole class every quarter, IB has built up my self-esteem and confidence to perform a well-prepared and convincing project or argument. Before this I had always hesitated and thus led me to perform poorly.

--Charlotte van Wieren

However, looking back on it, what at first seemed to be a burden [CAS] was really a great opportunity to get myself involved in new activities I had not been interested in before.

--Nathan Wagman

In all senses, the IB program met my goals and expectations: I was challenged and I learned more than I could have imagined about a wide variety of subjects.

--Harry Smith

I enjoyed the work [for the Extended Essay] far more once I had found my final topic and begun my experimentation, and with the help of Penn State University I found love in the Extended Essay. Being able to connect with professionals and students in the field, and thus use their expertise and equipment in conducting my own study, was a huge help in completing the Extended Essay. Due to this remarkably positive experience, and the resulting quality of my Extended Essay, I found myself motivated to apply to Penn State

and continue my studies there after the IB Program. I am proud to state that I will be attending Penn State University Park in the upcoming Fall Semester.

--Nathan Wagman

The extended essay provided a platform for each student to engage in independent research, allowing me to engage in a project in the realm of physics that really pushed my engineering capabilities to the limit and strongly interlaced the subject area of physics. My extended essay is my crown jewel of the IB program; I take pride in each and every of the 36 pages that it is composed of and really believe that it was my first step into college level research and engineering.

--Emrick Rurange

My parents and I were so convinced that IB would be a good fit for me that I transferred to Harriton as a freshman. Switching to Harriton and joining the IB program have been two of my best decisions in high school.

--Mats Terwiesch

The lessons I learned from CAS about the value of getting out of my comfort zone to try new things, as well as the unexpected pleasure I had gained from the Extended Essay made these highlights to the IB Program for myself as an individual.

--Nathan Wagman

Because of the IB Program I got to have Mr. Murray for my 4 years of high school, which was one of the best things I could have asked for because he acted as a great mentor and teacher. Plus, he got to see the progression of my work, skills, and technique. It is a very unique experience to have that in a high school environment where everything seems to be shifting onto the next assignment.

--Kieun Song

IB serves as a great attractor for intelligent and open-minded students, looking for intellectual discovery in a friendly academic environment. I enjoyed feeling part of a something larger than myself - the IB family.

--Martha Wolnicki

I loved meeting people from different countries, races, religions, ethnicities... The new perspectives and origins fascinated me. And more than that, I've always thought it to be important to look at curricula from different viewpoints, and I think IB tries to do that.

--Rachel Wortham

I believe that the teaching style, combined with the sense of community present within the IB program at Harriton, made high school a better and more enjoyable experience overall.

--Jonathan Zauberaman

I never once felt in TOK that I was being pushed to study or memorize information; rather, I was just pushed to think. This is one of the most attractive aspects of the IB program for me, because it truly pushes the mind to its limits and has the ability to reach the highest potential of its students. That being said, the program in no way lacks a large course load; rather, students are pushed to extend the knowledge that they gain in their studies to the next level, with analysis and discussion.

--Steven Siciliano

Being in Visual Arts as an elective made me realize that I wanted to go to college for art and pushed me to make that decision which I am eternally grateful for, thank you IB!

--Emilie Zeiss

...whether I get the diploma or not I will always feel proud of finishing the classes with a feeling of confidence that the program has allowed me to have.

--Charlotte van Wieren

Through summer programs I have had the chance to make new friends from other schools that similarly offer IB programs, and some that are even IB specific schools. On one hand, being able to connect with these other people through a shared IB experience is certainly special. However on the other hand, I quickly noticed certain differences in how the different schools approached presenting the IB program to its students, and felt an even greater sense of family towards my Harriton IB brothers and sisters.

--Matt Zhao

For the first time in my student career, I had trouble with solving math problems, which is a great thing because I was then able to challenge myself and improve in math.

--Shawnee Zheng

I was always consistently impressed with the quality of work displayed by my peers. This created an environment where I really pushed and challenged myself to take my work to the next level. This, combined with the breadth of course options made available to me, including Economics, Psychology, History and TOK has shaped me into a student who wishes to excel in these fields.

--Mats Terwiesch

IB history is the only history class I have ever taken that required me to use historiography and acknowledge historical debate. Additionally, before my IB chemistry class, I had no idea what uncertainties were, or how to write a proper lab report.

--Catherine Valentine

Over the past two years, the IB program has consistently remained fresh and challenging, two factors that allow it to be continually engaging without resulting in boredom. The curricula are specific and wide in nature; thus, there is always a drive to continue learning new information about something different. Math was perhaps the best example of this for me as we immediately jumped into the unfamiliar realm of statistics after spending many months learning large swaths of calculus.

--Harry Smith

Class of 2013

...My time with IB was very formative for me. I can honestly say that I am not only a much more organized and hardworking student than when I started the program, but that it was an enjoyable experience the whole way. I know that next year when school starts again and I am in university, I will appreciate the rigor that I opted to have over the last two years.

--Jake Marks

I also entered [IB] because of the extended essay, an assignment that I thought would be valuable. I found the entire extended essay process to be very enjoyable, as I was able to once again get experience writing a type of paper that I hadn't written before. I wrote in history, and was able to learn a lot specifically focusing on a subject that interested me, and trying to balance my extended essay with other work while figuring out how to write a formal history research paper.

--Eric Dannenbaum

There will be many things that I remember about IB but I think that my math class might be one of my fondest memories. For two years I took HL math with a great group of IB kids and a fantastic teacher. The course was very challenging but I genuinely looked forward to math every day. The camaraderie that developed between our class made it a fun and relaxing environment in which to tackle some of the hardest problems I have ever encountered in my career as a math student.

--Josh Folds

As a student, IB taught me how to handle a heavy workload and how to balance that with a large number of extra-curricular activities. Alongside this, I think my organisation improved because I had so much to balance all the time. It enriched my critical thinking skills and I would say that I am now more likely to speak up in class and have confidence in my reactions and opinions.

--Samantha Alexander

In addition to standardizing the curriculum globally, IB also builds more well-rounded students. I appreciate that the IB score reflects some classwork or IA grades as well as the exam. Also, students have the opportunity to grow closer and become friends. Extended essay is a great way to begin research essays. Lastly, CAS really does seek to help students grow.

--Jaye Aster Broder

In this program, I have learned not only what motivates me, but how to motivate those around me so that we can achieve something bigger by working together. I learned how to put my individualist nature into teamwork so that I could help my team achieve something greater than I could on my own.

--Hannah Barton

IB has taught me many things, but the area where its more notable is critical thinking, given that the program makes you challenge everything by creating valid arguments to support your belief and/or facts.

--José María Bermúdez

I was enjoyably challenged throughout the two years with the program, and as a result I not only learned the subjects taught in the program, but also better time management and study methods.

--Isabel Lake

After completing the coursework of the two-year program, I feel very accomplished in all of my areas of study. I was able to improve my writing skills by constantly writing and reading in my English classes. I am particularly proud of my growing ability to analyze literature and poetry. I initially dreaded the oral commentary for English, but once I practiced many poetry analyses and oral discussions, I became more and more proficient each time. By the time of the exam, I felt very prepared.

--Julia Carp

IB has been a very positive experience overall for me. After having taking countless IB exams and six AP exams in high school I feel that I can say with certainty...that I made the right choice..... I feel that I lucked out with the better experience, and IB is an experience that I would certainly repeat. I was drawn to IB because of the rigorous program, but I feel that I really enjoyed it because of the friends and great teachers that are doing it.

--Dimitri Coukos

A part of the program that stood out to me would be Theory of Knowledge. This was a unique course that really embodied the IB way of thinking. I loved walking into the classroom every day and getting into discussions from is there a god to if language was necessary for communication. The discussions had no right answers and by considering different ways of knowing everyone's eyes were opened up to new possibilities and answers.

--Anne Coyle

Because the IB program is very heavy on writing assignments, I knew that I would have the opportunity to improve my ability to write papers in English. However, the program exceeded my expectation in this respect, as I was able to improve my writing of formal English papers in addition to writing informally for TOK, writing lab reports in chemistry and physics, and writing my math internal assessments. These were all types of writing assignments in which I had little or no experience, so I was able to learn how to write a different type of paper depending on the subject and assignment requirements.

--Eric Dannenbaum

I was surprised in the relationships I developed with all of my teachers and how I felt comfortable in every class I took. There was never a time at which I felt that I couldn't talk to a teacher about the class or anything I may have been struggling with.

--Desi Davis

The reason why IB has been a successful experience is not because I got smarter. I always felt like I had the intellectual potential of achieving certain goals, but the IB program helped me develop my abilities so that my skills could be expressed in a more efficient and functional manner.

--Alex Delleville-Nuñez

I believe [IB] has great potential to shape the minds of young students into independent, analytic thinkers. Many classes focused heavily on understanding multiple perspectives of an issue and being able to support an argument, which I feel are very important skills in the working world and in life.

--Jake Eidinger

Through intensive research for History IA's and Extended Essay I feel prepared and experienced in writing professional, well examined, and thorough papers.

--Tatiana Fogt

Throughout my two-year experience in the IB program, I took advantage of the tight-knit community of my peers. By studying and working in collaboration, I found myself to be most prosperous in the program. During my senior year especially, I frequently used GoogleDocs to communicate and study with my classmates. This technique allowed us to lighten our loads by reviewing the information together, and at the same time, we were able to learn from each other's ideas and perspectives. This is a skill that I will most definitely take with me to college.

--Julia Carp

Through TOK and the philosophy of the IB program I have learned to question knowledge and search for proof before accepting something as fact.

--Eric Dannenbaum

I like that IB is a program in all areas of knowledge and that I was able to get a cohesive learning experience in my last two years of high school through a program with a single outcome in mind.

--Emma Phillips

No one can grow unless they are challenged and I certainly have been. However, I have not had to face that challenge alone. I have had the support of my classmates and the wonderful teachers that help make the IB program a reality. I do not regret my decisions to take the IB even slightly. In fact I am happy every day that it is how I decided to spend my junior and senior years of high school. I know that I made the right decision because of where I am today as opposed to the Josh Folds of 2 years ago.

--Josh Folds

IB was a great educational experience, but Harriton IB cannot be summarized truthfully by solely examining the courses offered. It was a great way to form a community and to improve ourselves as people. All in all, I am glad and proud to have done it, and know that my future is already marked by that which I have done.

--Dimitri Coukos

I've become a better writer (or I would like to think I have at least), which has not only helped me in essay writing but also the way I speak. I've become obsessed with using new words or rather words that aren't typically used.

--Matt Geiger

I always wanted to be involved in community service but never felt like I had the time. The IB program put me in a situation where I had the resources to figure out a way that worked for me to get involved. I ended up thoroughly enjoying my individual service project, which was volunteering to make Christmas wreaths at an elderly home, Hayes Manor. This was something I would have never put into motion without CAS. In areas where I already spent a lot of my time, which was most of the athletics, the reflections helped me look at new impacts of what I was doing and made me feel as though it had a larger purpose.

--Anne Coyle

I would say that the greatest strength of the program is its internationality. People from all around the world take this same course and I was lucky to meet students of many different nationalities. We each had very particular traditions and were raised differently and I have to say It wasn't easy at first to understand and try to get along with everyone but step by step I learned to adjust to each and everyone of them. I loved getting to know them and the experience showed me that I really want to pursue studies that will give me

the opportunity to find a job in the international business. By teaching me a new language and opening me to the outside world the IB program was definitely a good start for this new dream that grew in me.

--Zoe Godeaux

Through this combination of learning, analysis, and discussion, we were able to gain a unique perspective from which we were able to question evidence and think critically.

--Eric Dannenbaum

I really do enjoy the structure of the program. I think that requiring electives are one of the program's strengths. It makes students branch beyond the stereotypical "learning" that occurs and pursue knowledge in other fields.

--Jasmine Jaros

...it was incredibly helpful to have a cluster of students experiencing more or less the same type of stresses, tests, assignments, and learning objectives as myself.

--Julia Jaspers

I am very grateful for CAS because in order to fill the requirements I found myself trying things I would not have normally considered doing or making time for things I may have wanted to do, but thought I was too busy to do.

--Hannah Klugman

The idea of balance is another key strength of the IB program. IB requirements create well-rounded students. Even those students who despise math-sciences are forced to take somewhat challenging classes in both. Likewise, science based students are forced to take challenging humanities classes. This is something that most people don't realize they want until they have it. I would never have chosen to take a particularly challenging science course, but IB SL Chemistry ended up being one of my favorite classes. While I didn't fall in love with chemistry, and I appreciated the respite from science work senior year, I still count that class as one of my favorite IB experiences, because I learned a solid basic understanding of the chemical structure of the world around me. I am a more well-rounded, and interesting person as a result. Even if I end up on a humanities path, I will have other knowledge to draw from; I will be able to relate to more types of people and subjects.

--Dan Rapuano

My main reasons for joining the IB program were the community it created, the advanced level of classes, and their focus on topics I could not have otherwise explored in high school. I'm glad to say IB met these expectations. Over my two years with IB, I have created and solidified friendships, and never failed to find a person to talk about work to (at any hour in the night). I have been undoubtedly challenged in each of my classes, including those I probably didn't expect to. Lastly, I am glad to say I've read books of international origin, explored human biochemistry, and learned international politics: topics I would not have otherwise been able to touch without IB.

--Isabel Lake

I have learned so much about the world and people I'm surrounded by and the program has really taught me to grow and understand different perspectives. I feel as if I've become a more understanding person because of the program and I also feel that I am able to hold intellectual conversations with ease because of intimate, discussion based classroom environments.

--Tatiana Fogt

One surprise I thoroughly enjoyed was the optional units in chemistry. These optional paths of study allowed me to have a taste of biochemistry, medicine and drug chemistry, and organic chemistry. Not only did I enjoy these units, but I now have a foundation in these areas that will set me apart from other chemistry students in college.

--Allison Langer

As with many of the IB students, I come from a diverse family background. My mother is Japanese, both ethnically and in terms of nationality, and holds a Green Card here in America. On the other hand, my father is ethnically Irish, English, French, German, and Swiss, while his nationality is American. I myself was born in Japan and hold a dual citizenship in America and Japan, and am also bilingual. Though our family moved to America shortly before I turned one, being a mix of ethnicities has always been a strong part of

my identity, and to me, IB seemed to offer the opportunity to embrace this characteristic of myself, learning not only from our traditional American lens, but from an international perspective. Personally, IB's attention to issues beyond a single country proved to be its most attractive point and I knew from then that IB was what I was going to do in high school.

--Mia Leyland

The IB program helped me to develop my critical thinking skills. I had never taken a history class where I had to analyze the information, rather than just memorizing and regurgitating it. Even my math and science classes required analytical thought. After taking IB Chemistry, I have a vast understanding for the basis of chemistry, as well as other high level concepts. IB Mathematics HL was one of my favorite IB classes. While calculus is analytical alone, the course material pushed me to gain a true understanding for calculus.

--Julia Carp

One of my favorite aspects of the program has been the teachers, who I have found to be enthusiastic, helpful, and excellent in helping foster an appreciation for academia through my IB career.

--Eric Dannenbaum

Much of the IB program directs its students to critically analyze everything. Whether it's a newspaper article, a joke between friends that has racist undertones, or a word that only makes sense in its own language, IB has taught me to never take anything at face value.

--Shari Lieblich

It was this challenge, this deep level of thinking that is so intrinsic in the curriculum of the International Baccalaureate program that makes me so thankful that I made the decision to apply to it at the end of my sophomore year.

--David Lincoln

Overall IB has been a very good experience in my opinion and has prepared me for college in the near future. The work load was tough at times, but with friends, my motivation, and teachers I found my way through it. I discovered new learning techniques, and new ways to interpret material which I believe will help me a lot in college.

--Desi Davis

All of my IB teachers were passionate about their subject areas, and their passion reflected in their teaching. My teachers creatively presented the material and allowed for the class to be run by the students, as class participation was very much encouraged.

--Julia Carp

In addition to these academic skills, I also found that the program helped me a great deal with certain personal skills. I think that the oral presentation involved in the program has made me a much better public speaker and has taught me how to effectively think on my feet. The presentations and seminars that we give in our history classes gives us practice in debate and making good arguments while speaking extemporaneously. In the same vein, the class discussions that we have in English teach us about how to analyze works of literature and then effectively talk about them in front of our class. I have found that now I am much better at responding to questions and speaking in front of groups. This has also helped me with professional situations such as job interviews and such.

--Asa Lipton

TOK does offer valuable lessons in that it provides a structure to the IB way of thinking. When considering broad and complicated issues, I can see myself drawing on the TOK wheel, and considering things from different perspectives and different ways of knowing. This skill is valuable because it provides a process to fall back to when the theoretical right answer is not always clear-cut. This is a major strength of the program: it changes the way that students process new information. An IB student will naturally be more likely to put themselves in another's shoes, consider their own emotional bias, and come to a more balanced conclusion.

--Dan Rapuano

I feel that IB really allowed me to develop my critical thinking skills. Physics class, the subject I was least comfortable with, was one of the things that challenged me the most. I had disliked figuring out labs [last year's] chemistry class, so coming up with my own labs in IB Physics seemed daunting at first, but I eventually became a pro. Additionally, the questions on exams challenged me to look beyond the surface material and develop a deeper understanding of physics concepts.

--Adjoa Mante

The program itself, the principles it stands for and the overarching curriculum all aligned with what I wanted from an education.

--Jake Marks

I had begun high school with a tendency to leave things until the last minute, but as I went through the IB program, I learned to spread out work, getting ahead on homework when I had none due the next day so that I would have more time on a later night when I had more assignments.

--Eric Dannenbaum

The International Baccalaureate program was my high school experience. I definitely struggled with certain aspects of the program, but with the support of my family and peers I was able to complete it. This program definitely helped me to grow as a student and as a person, and has helped shaped me into the high school graduate I am today. I am thankful to have had this experience, and am confident the skills I have learned within the program will aid me throughout my college experience.

--Jody Masch

Through the program, I have become more confident and independent. Through the CAS program, I have learned that I have completely capable of competing tasks by my lonesome. Prior to the IB, I was usually complacent on leaning on other members in a group. Though I would contribute to group activities, I never led. I always felt incompetent and believed that others were better than me. But my participation in TSA, had taught me that I am fully able to lead and create beautiful things by myself.

--Lisa Miller

One of the major strengths of the program is that it gets students involved in other areas than just academics. When I think about the workload junior and senior year, I thank parts of the program like CAS that enabled me to develop other skills. For example, as part of my service component, I went to Spain last summer and volunteered at a very unprivileged dog shelter. This allowed me to improve my Spanish, a language I strive to be fluent in someday and also to see through the lens of different people. I met some great people that have very different backgrounds and lives than me and I am very fortunate for that.

--Charlotte Moureaud

For me, the IB program does not just train high schoolers to be successful students, but it equips them with the tools and knowledge to face any day-to-day challenge.

--Jake Eidinger

I must have heard Mr. O'Brien's "I'm not a motivated swimmer" joke about five times that winter, but there was one moment, after he talked to VOC, that Dr. Ekert introduced me to him as "Jordan, a real thinker." It was then that I committed to IB.

--Jordan Rosenthal-Kay

I believe that I have become who I am today because of the IB program. I have become a strong, independent person, a confident and ambitious student, and a leader ready to take charge in any situation. IB has taught me to take life one day at a time and to not become overwhelmed with tasks that may seem impossible. Thanks to IB, I have found the power within myself to be the best I can possibly be and the bravery to know that I can do whatever I set my mind to achieve.

--Tori Mueller

Overall my experience with IB has been fantastic and I will suggest it to anyone who is willing to change their views on life and the secrets it carries with it, but I would discourage people who are not willing to open their minds to new ideas and going out of their comfort zone to join this programme.

--Amir Omid

I also believe that being in IB made me a better student, since I was constantly surrounded by other smart kids, I had to up my game so to speak.

--Dylan Pearl

After a year and a half of taking notes and writing this grueling paper, I stepped back and looked at my work; I read the entire paper for content and found my topic absolutely fascinating. It was amazing to me that I could understand everything I had written about such a specific topic and I got very excited about the product I had produced. The Extended Essay is a portion of the program that, looking back, I really enjoy.

--Emma Phillips

The major strength of the program is without a doubt the classroom experience and the background research that is needed to complete in-class assignments. To have to go look for resources on your own helps one develop forms of critical thinking since the information must apply to a specific purpose or thesis. It also promotes individuality since it creates a personalized project.

--Alex Delleville-Nuñez

Another main component of my IB education was the Creativity, Action and Service requirements. Naturally, before going into the program I was already a well rounded student and expressed my interests in a myriad of extracurricular activities. Yet, the IB responsibilities opened me up to trying new things and new experience. For example, I joined the Harriton Theatre Company and became a Volunteer Firefighter with the Belmont Hills Fire Company. With the push IB gave me, I am now committed to maintaining my service to the fire department and helping my community in many ways. I am so proud to have graduated from such a prestigious and esteemed program that has produced many respected and intelligent alums.

--Adam Pressel

...because of the “options” in Math and Physics, students get to explore areas of knowledge that other high school students didn’t even know they exist yet, and these areas are pretty cool, too.

--Mihai Pricop

*The structure of IB is such that our classes actually relate to each other, and allow for meaningful connections to be made. For example, study of the roaring 20’s in History coincided closely with reading *The Great Gatsby* in English. When we studied the historical context of our HL Music Prescribed work, we were able to draw on our knowledge of the Sino-Japanese war, and understand the need for such a patriotic anthem.*

--Dan Rapuano

IB has successfully taught me to create my own voice within the classroom and to firmly stand by my thoughts.

--Mia Leyland

Another aspect that was hard for me was that no class seemed to be an “easy” class. They were all rigorous and demanded that you devote time to them. This is not something that’s bad about the program however. If anything, it prepares the students for what it’s like in the real world/college.

--Matt Geiger

While I’m still unsure of what I want to do when I grow up, I have a general direction of what I want to study because of the experience I had in the program. While in IB, I was given the opportunity to learn and explore topics I wouldn’t have been able to in other courses. Such a topic that I was able to explore, and fell in love, with was the idea of feminism in literature. We not only explored the idea in both junior and senior year English, but I was also able to write my whole Extended Essay on the idea as well. While it was a daunting task to write a 4,000-word essay on a topic I had never really thought about before, I ended up loving every second of it. Reading what experts had to say on idea and then being able to see the ideas come to life in the literature I was reading was truly an exciting point in my IB career. In fact it was so exciting that as I’m trying to decide on what I want to study, I know that I want to minor in women studies so that I can further the knowledge I acquired over the past two years.

--Emily Rodriguez

I not only learned skills, but a lot of conceptual material, especially in Math and Chemistry. I think the curriculum of IB Chemistry is excellent, and the course is definitely one of the reasons I want to go into a field that is based in chemistry.

--Jessi Silverman

It wasn't until studying for the history exam that I realized just how much I had learned in history over the last two years. Besides all the information I crammed into my head in class, I learned some valuable skills that I am positive will stick with me for the rest of my life. I learned to question sources—something I feel will become increasingly useful as I get older and the world relies more heavily on the Internet. I learned that there are always two, three, or more sides to an argument—even if history seems objective and matter of fact. Finally, I learned that I actually enjoy history and should study more history in college even though I plan to major in a science.

--Allison Langer

The passion and energy that the IB teachers have for what they teach both allows me to learn easier and inspires me to be a better student.

--Asa Lipton

...my knowledge and interests have not been the only things that have grown during my IB experience, but also the outlook and attitude I have to the rest of the world. Before experiencing the IB curriculum, I always had a very specific view of the world, a view that was very deep rooted in American history, customs, and traditions. This has changed though. Instead, IB has taught me to start thinking about the world in a more global way of thinking. Now when looking at a piece of literature, historical document, or even science experience, I try and think about it on a global basis; how would someone from another country interpret it? How does this differ from my interpretation? How does the author's background change the meaning of the piece? All these questions I ask now are because of going through the IB experience.

--Emily Rodriguez

I've found that questioning what I know and think is truly what makes me a better student now than two years ago. While I have gained more knowledge in the forms of facts, ideas, and figures, the knowledge and understanding that I've gained from questioning what I know and think is really what makes the difference in how much of a better student I am now than before.

--Emily Rodriguez

I have learned so much from my classmates, at least as much as I learned from my teachers. They inspire me. Mr. Plump calls us the future scholars of the world, and being immersed in such a community has definitely prepared me for the one I will join this fall.

--Jessi Silverman

Another strength of the program is that the international populous of Harriton is drawn toward this program. This adds much more diversity within each of my classes and challenges students to think differently.

--Alec Rosenbaum

Though I was well aware HL math would be challenging, I had no idea how involved each exam question could be. The IB never asks you a calculus question; instead they asks you a calculus question about trigonometry with a little algebra two thrown in. While at first, this seem daunting, and even at times completely impossible, by the end of two years I welcomed these types of questions. HL math stretched my brain to think in many new ways. I feel that I grew as a mathematician and as a student in HL math.

--Allison Langer

Although at the beginning of junior year I did not see a point in CAS, today I see it as one of the most enriching parts of IB. Had I not been in the IB program, I am not sure I would have felt compelled to go through with all of the activities I got involved in the past two years. I am so grateful that IB includes this requirement to the program because I believe it truly helps individuals get involved in their community and have experiences that are life-changing.

--Charlotte Moureaud

IB provided opportunities for me to engage with school in ways I had not before and prepared me to face a challenging future. IB introduced me to a new academic world and I am forever grateful.

--Jordan Rosenthal-Kay

Another strength is the CAS program. Within these CAS hours I found out a lot about myself and others. That is something that surprised me a lot, as I didn't know anything about these IB requirements, but of course, in the end, the results of CAS were beyond my expectations, creating my high school experience so much better.

--Mihai Pricop

The major strengths are the difficulty of the program, which eventually makes you work harder and become a better student, the exposure to service and the real world, which makes you a better contributor in today's world and a better person, and the style of teaching and material you learn, which make you more prepared for college.

--Keenan Safadi

My experience entering the IB program was somewhat unique. I spent the first two years of my high school career at Lower Merion. In fact, I did not even plan on participating in the International Baccalaureate program until a week prior to the deadline.... IB was not only a new approach to learning; it was a new start as well. This change was nowhere near as dramatic as moving outside of the district. I was able to maintain relationships with friends at Lower Merion fairly easily. Furthermore, I was not entirely unfamiliar with students at Harriton. Hence, the entire experience became marked by a growth in acquaintances and companions.

--Kamiel Saleh

CAS was most definitely what helped me mature and discover my likes and dislikes. Throughout this experience you must try new activities, challenge yourself and encourage yourself to think. I chose activities that I never thought I would have tried before going into IB such as working as a camp counselor, or collecting plastic bottle caps for eight months in order to help people with physical disabilities. Writing the CAS reflections was also a time where we could actually reflect on what we had achieved and look at the impact we had had on our community.

--Audrey Satre

It would be criminal not remember and value certain teachers who have had passion and skill – and a good sense of humor – in teaching me, ones I admire and to whom the adage “Those who cannot do, teach” could never be justly applied.

--Yidi Wu

IB has taught me about work ethic, study habits and being a good person. By separating myself from the rest of my high school peers, I was able to surround myself with wonderful, talented individuals who have influenced me as such. I'm proud to say that I am an IB student and that the skills, both academically and socially, will do nothing but help me for the rest of my life. IB is what you make of it, and I made it a good decision.

--Jacqueline Sayoc

IB has made me into the person I am today. I am a seeker of knowledge. I enjoy learning and value my education greatly. I was able to discover myself through this program. I went into it thinking I was a humanities girl—English and history were my strong subjects. However, I emerged the complete opposite. I realized, through my studies in my courses in IB, that I actually am much better at science and math and that I thoroughly enjoy science and math, way more than English and history.

--Carly Scher

HL Math turned out to be the best class decision I have ever made. Mr. O was a great teacher, made me feel more confident and comfortable about math, and HL math has been the best class I have taken all throughout elementary, middle and high school.

--Camilla Schneier

I am a problem-solver, a black-and-white sort of thinker. Before IB I just wanted the most direct and efficient way to get an answer. Now I don't mind, and even enjoy, deep, analytical questions that require an involved argument to attempt to reach an answer. I still find great satisfaction in logical problem solving, like in math, but I also now appreciate the more abstract areas of thought.

--Jessi Silverman

IB history places great emphasis on the analysis of historiography. This class opened my eyes to the fluid nature of history; it revealed that history is not about knowing facts, but rather about understanding historical perspectives.

--David Lincoln

Doing I.B. was a huge leap forward for my academic prowess having come from some CP classes and some honors courses. I honestly did not believe that I could find the proper skills to achieve in such a rigorous program. I may not have been the best I.B. student but I believe that the programs have helped me become a better student. I honestly believe that I am well prepared to go onto higher education something not many first generation Hispanics have the opportunity to experience. I am glad to say that I am taking my talents up to University Park.

--Anthony Vallejo

Other parts of the IB program that I have really enjoyed include the nontraditional classes and projects that accompany the program. For example, I feel that the Theory of Knowledge class has opened my eyes to different viewpoints and different ways of thinking. It has helped me think out of the box, so to speak. Also, I really enjoyed doing special projects like the Group 4 project and helping my peers with their individual service projects. These have added variety and depth to my academic and social career.

--Adam Pressel

I have always enjoyed working with others in a collaborative effort, and IB has certainly provided ample opportunities for group work.

--Sean Wade

...the inclusion of CAS and EE is very important. CAS helped me try some new activities in my life that have been outstanding and EE gives a taste of what a real college essay could look like. All of these parts of IB have helped me to become better person.

--Nina Weber

I learned that the pursuit of knowledge in math requires creativity and patience, not just a robotic ability to apply algebraic skills. I was fortunate enough to take that class for two years and can now see myself possibly pursuing some kind of degree in mathematics.

--Sarah Weiser

If I could have gone back in time and told myself what to do differently, I would certainly have made sure to yell at my past self for not studying enough for physics, or not spending enough time writing an English paper, but I would not have changed my decision to participate in IB. That is one past decision that I can confidently say has changed my life in a positive way and that I would not take back for anything.

--David Lincoln

Did IB foster an intellectual climate? You bet it did. Relatively speaking, almost every IB classroom seemed more interesting than every other in the school, regardless of the comparative breadth or depth of the course's curriculum. Classroom discussions branched widely into both philosophy and current events as we synthesized everything we were learning. It was pretty cool.

--Jordan Rosenthal-Kay

I do not know how much credit to assign the IB for my identity and the skills I have now, but I think it merits one form of praise which is all the validation it would need: I do not regret having done it, and I would not have chosen a different program now after these last two years.

--Yidi Wu

I've reflected more on everything I do, simply because IB requires its students to reflect often. For example, though CAS didn't force me to do any activity I wouldn't have done anyway, it did force me to think about what I got out of all those activities and what they taught me.

--Jessi Silverman

As for the IB classroom, I felt that it was more open to discussion as compared to my non-IB classes, and the size of the IB class allowed for more familiarity between students and teachers. I found my classmates to be open-minded and excited about learning, which encouraged me to be the same.

--Yuxi Zhao

...being in the environment of students who are incredibly intelligent and dedicated pushed me to work even harder just to meet their standards. It was a fantastic relationship for me since I not only made friends who I value very highly but I also met classmates that force me to stretch myself and be a better student.

--Emma Phillips

TOK taught me that, in history, there are no hard facts: there are only accepted truths and the interpretations that seek to explain them. This realization not only led me to greatly appreciate the presence of historiography in the IB History curriculum, but also to see myself pursuing history as a career. The subject was no longer about undeniable facts, but was subject to interpretation and argument. To me, this means that past is still very much up for discussion and that the job of being a historian is a changing one.

--Sarah Weiser

Beyond those things that would have been offered at any IB school, I particularly enjoyed a few aspects of the specific experience that Harriton offered. One is the unique camaraderie that I enjoyed with my fellow students. I had a similar relationship in 7th grade, when I did the Waterbound program, with students who I knew of when I entered and knew well when I exited. That was the case tenfold with IB. I barely knew the people who were in IB with me when we started classes in 11th grade, save for a few people who were definitely not close friends of mine. By the end of this year, I would say that I am very friendly with almost everyone in the program, and the people that I started out friendly with I now count among my best friends. It's not just the fact that I spend so much of my time with these people; rather, I think that IB stratifies the sample quite well. The types of people that want to do community service, work hard at education, and consider global perspectives are genuinely the type of people that I can make friends with, and it shows with the friendships I have forged during my time in IB.

--Jake Marks

...our classes forced us to consider the broader applications of our studies. IB classes don't just teach you information, they also teach you an analytical method of thinking about new information. In IB English, you don't just learn about novels, you learn how to analyze novels, poems, and plays, and consider the writer's choices and intentions. Most classes I took in 9th and 10th grade did not work this way. At the end of my IB career, I know plenty of facts, but the more useful learning was in learning how to think about new facts.

--Dan Rapuano

I also had a great degree of independence as a student, due to the many research papers and internal assessments I turned in. The Extended Essay, for example, was a great opportunity for me to experience independent research and mature as a student because it gave me the freedom to choose topics and develop a research method as well as forcing me to manage my time wisely.

--Yuxi Zhao

Class of 2012

*Never in my wildest dreams would I guess that I would move [from Sweden] to the US one year earlier than expected, and that being my senior year, and probably for most people the toughest year.... However, Harriton High School really made it **a lot** easier for me. I've met great support and I honestly couldn't have come to a better school. Harriton, along with IB, has made me a stronger person. I'm not scared to take on new challenges anymore because IB really has stretched all my limits. Time management and heavy workload are no longer a problem for me, and I really hope that that will help me in college.*

--Adela Abdenian

... I also feel that my ability to critically analyze a topic has improved. The subject of history was always something that I found pretty boring. Why should I have to memorize random facts about things that happened hundreds or even thousands of years ago? However, when we began discussing why certain events happened and their impact, history literally transformed before my eyes. When we began discussing historiography senior year, I became intrigued. I had not realized that different historians could disagree so much about the same event. I actually began looking forward to the discussions we had in history class, something that two years ago would have seemed impossible.

--Shaina Carroll

...The community is rather important. Not only are the students of IB supported by an excellent coordinator (who has a strong and sincere interest in our success), but we are supported by each other. I can sincerely say that I came out of IB with many more friends: people who have made me more intelligent and a better person.... The students do not usually see the success of their peers as a detriment to themselves. In this way there is a sort of convergence in IB that I think needs to be promoted further in an educational world of divergence, with standardized tests and fierce competition. I believe that divergence will only take away from the innovation and success of mankind and that our greatest achievements happen with collaboration and group thinking. Thus the teamwork that I experienced in IB is a step in the right direction.

--Phil Hayes

Some students might say that the IB program taught them how to really study and be a good student. I've even had a teacher remark that "the IB builds professional students", but I've always felt that this has been who I am regardless of the IB and that they didn't really instill this in me. Instead, my main difference post-IB is my mindset. IB has taught my mind to be inquisitive and analyze all information. Why? How? What does this mean? These are all important inquiries to consider whether one is writing a commentary, investigating a question for an internal assessment, or pondering sense perception in TOK class. Thanks to the IB Program, these questions have become ingrained in my mind and I always think to answer them as soon as I gain any information.... In retrospect, I'm happy with the decision though, as I consider making students think analytically a major strength of the IB program and I believe it has equipped me well for both college and life.

--Gabe Cavallaro

IB places a heavy emphasis on the interrelation of the different educational disciplines. In IB I was taught that no subject can be learned in isolation. Science cannot be learned without mathematics, literature cannot be understood without a proper study of history, physics influences poetry. In my Theory of Knowledge class we examined how we know what we know, and why what we know is important. We discussed how everything was interconnected. Therefore, I now believe all types of knowledge to be equally valuable, and inextricably linked.

--Maira Lavelle

...during my sophomore year I was once again presented with the program as an alternative to AP classes. I decided to talk to my sister, who was now a Freshman in college at Colgate University about what she liked and disliked about her experience in the program. She said the major thing she noticed was that she was having a much easier time during her first year at college than were her non-IB peers. This was the piece of information that most greatly influenced my joining the IB program.

--Jack Curtis

IB learner was a different type of student who sought to see the connection between the classes that were currently enrolled in as only a full program could do. With emphasis on the international perspective, students had classes in Math, English, Language, History, Science, and a choice area. This gave students the ability to not only learn what was needed to be learned for High School, but also still have the ability to explore their interests with an elective. This program sought to change the raw learner and knowledge seeker into a refined student of everything, who could put their ideas into motion and seek their own understandings from school and life.

--Austin Wortley

...I refined my time management skills and learned how much time needed to be spent on each class and how to balance school with the rest of my life, such as my CAS activities and other interests. I used to be the kind of student that would make a big deal out of small problems rather than trying to find solutions. Now, I find that problems I'm having with particular classes aren't so overwhelming, and that instead of panicking when faced with a problem I can use my resources to find a solution. Also, I realized in doing IB that school isn't the only thing that is important to me. My friends, my family, and my interests are all important, and part of

being a good student to me is balancing school with the other important parts of my life without letting anything slip. It's a juggling act, but in doing IB I became the kind of student that can manage time and keep things in balance.

--Abigail Dawson

The IB program helped me to become more serious about my studies and showed me how the information I was learning was actually important and useful outside of the classroom and exam sessions. For example, although I only took Chemistry for one year, and it may have been the most challenging class I took at Harriton, soon into the course I realized that although Chemistry and the ability to explain bonds would most likely not help me on the career path I would ultimately choose, it would really be valuable in teaching me how to learn. I appreciated that the effort I put into the class and the strategies to study that I developed in studying and learning for Chemistry, I would be able to use in almost any future course or work in some way or another. Specifically, I created ways for myself to understand and absorb information and was surprised by how satisfying that was. I never thought that a science class could be so useful, not to mention enjoyable, to someone with a mind as far from scientific as possible as mine, but the influence of the IB mission was definitely seen in that the course was about Chemistry, but also comprehensive of other aspects of scholarship that one wouldn't find in a typical advanced Chemistry class. This is only one of the ways in which I benefitted from participating in the IB program; there are countless other experiences within the program that made me the student and person I now am.

--Marta Elliott

I have also learned how to manage my time while being really busy. As I moved through high school, I have picked up more and more extracurricular activities. I have constantly been busy, yet my workload has gotten more strenuous throughout high school. I love being busy. Although it sometimes causes me to feel stress, I also feel fulfillment. A strenuous workload combined with all my extracurricular activities has allowed me to learn to be busy effectively.

--Jordin Metz

I have TOK to thank for explicitly clarifying much of what I was trying to accomplish in my other courses. I began to see the consideration of different perspectives as a goal rather than as a means to an end, for example. Even though it seems obvious in an IB context, TOK gave me the awareness that knowledge is never black and white, but can be influenced by an endless universe of factors and can be swayed by any number of perspectives, a notion that I would otherwise have deemed too trivial to use in analysis.

-- Jérôme Krumenacker

I really enjoyed the IB program. The well-rounded nature of the program and the sense of camaraderie is something not a lot of programs or organizations can offer. Furthermore, the great teaching staff really makes it all the more special.

--Brian Gao

...I don't regret doing IB for a second.... I changed from someone who worked hard in school because she had to, to someone who studied because she enjoyed it. I began to look forward to my afternoons in Brueggers taking notes on chemistry reading. I started postponing sleep even further in order to look up more historiography. The IB kids helped accelerate this transformation. I now found myself making Stalin and Mao jokes after class, or referencing Annie Dillard in conversation. Before IB, I was never someone who was inspired by academics. Now, I find myself picking up books on Marxism for summer reading and keeping a Spanish dictionary in the glove compartment of my car.

--Claire Gillis

When I moved to the United States in 2010, I knew that my life was about to change radically. Junior year is the moment where, most students start wondering about their future and what will happen after high school. I was one of them. I knew that for a foreign person like me, taking IB would a big challenge because of the language, the new culture and the difficulty of this program. However I needed to think about my future and not only about how hard those two years would be. My first choice after high school was to go back to Belgium and by doing the IB I could finish High School in the United States and also be able to go to college in Belgium. At first my expectation of the IB Program was only to allow me to be accepted in the college of my choice in Belgium. However the IB program was a great experience and brought me more than I expected. It taught me how to be independent in my work, how to be more organized but also to work with others in certain situation. I think that the program prepared me for college, where I will be on my own. Personally my experience as an IB student was a success to help me reach my goals for the future.

--Marie Godeaux

The most important part of my IB experience was the community that it accompanied. Sharing my classes with a core group of students allowed me to branch out and befriend people I probably never would have met otherwise. Because my close group of friends

were not as academically oriented and were not in the program, IB introduced me to peers who were passionate and knowledgeable about their interests. I definitely learned as much, if not more from my classmates as I did from the curriculum. Excitement for knowledge can become contagious, and my classes were made that much more compelling due to the efforts, knowledge, and curiosity of my class. I became more and more outgoing during class periods, and began participating heavily because I was so comfortable with my classmates. Because of this, one of the greatest things I've gained from my experience as an IB student is a great deal of confidence in both myself and in my abilities. This confidence is bolstered by my knowledge that if I could make it through my IB coursework, I can hold my own in the midst of any academic challenge.

--Hilary Goldberg

One of the most fascinating side-effects of the IB program was how my classes interacted with my life outside of IB; for example, how my chemistry class affected my creative writing.

--Jackie Milestone

I am probably only making this observation because I have already finished them, but the exams seem like a fitting end to our IB careers – they proved what we learned, and showed us how much we had grown academically over the past two years.

--Julia Olivieri

I have never been more proud of something than my Extended Essay. I chose a topic I was and am extremely interested and I have been able to immerse myself in the issue for two years. I have met professors whose books I read and cited in my essay. I can have an intelligent discussion with them about their individual theories on the matter. I am a much stronger writer than I would have been without this paper and I feel more prepared for the future than those who did not undertake this challenge.

--Maddy Pisani

A component of the IB Program that has caused a major impact on my conclusion of IB's value is CAS. Through completing my CAS component, I realized that my life before IB was missing a major aspect of academic life, service. I already had hundreds of hours of creativity between Chorale and FBLA, but it was my service hours where I had noticed a lacking. Through my various service activities, I learned the value of servicing one's community.... I believe that CAS has prepared me to live a multi-faceted life at Penn State.

--John Armstrong

[When I think about IB] I...think first of how proud I am of the work that I have accomplished over the past two years, or how much I love the family of people I have spent every day with. I think of the confidence I have in my abilities as a student and as a human being or even simply my understanding of life, and how these views have changed since I was a sophomore. Literally and figuratively, I have grown up in the IB program. The junior and senior year encompass many milestones on their own – license to drive, the SATs, Proms, college applications, college decisions, graduation. I believe my peers in the entire Class of 2012 have grown substantially, simply from experiencing these two years. However, as a member of the IB Class of 2012, I feel that I have grown so much more than my peers not in the program. I joke sometimes that I am an IB elitist, but sometimes I definitely feel that way. I feel like I just know better. That doesn't even really make sense, but I feel like I just know better. I feel that I have a heightened awareness of the way the world works, of how to approach information, of what it means to be a good student, of people, of life in general as a result of being in the IB program. I always loved school when I was younger, but I feel like the curricula, the assignments, even simply the questions asked over the past two years have been genuinely valuable. I love the way we have approached most material – I feel that I have had to think in a way that is meaningful and substantial and relevant. History was not simply a study of what happened but a study of why, a study of influences, a study of the human condition. English was not simply a discussion of themes but a dissection of literary elements to reveal the soul of the novel, the soul of the author. I love it. The information we have learned is infinitely more fascinating, more relatable, and more relevant when approached through this lens, but I feel that so few people experience it that way. I guess that's where my feelings of IB elitism stem from, but I genuinely wish that others could share our experience. I wish others could even understand why I'm so passionate about what I've learned, why I am so proud of the assignments I've completed.

--Julia Goodhart

More importantly however, the program helped me grow as a person. I made a lot of close friends in the IB program. We have commiserated together, stayed up late over labs together, and laughed about group 4 projects together. It might be a little much given our class size to say that IB has become a family, but I think that our time together has certainly made us a group of people who all get along reasonably well and enjoy each others company. I met a lot of people I wouldn't have otherwise thought to talk to in IB, and that helped me realize that friends can come from anywhere and it is as valuable to have friends who are similar to you as ones who are different.

--Leora Haber

The IB program also helped me find what I am passionate about, and unfortunately what I am not so proficient at. Sitting through two full years of Mr. Klick's Psychology HL class forged what I believe is my path in life. I never would have thought I wanted to become a psychologist or neurosurgeon for the armed forces if I did not learn about PTSD or other traumatic effects brain damage. Because of the broad variety of required subjects, the program allows students to find their interests and disinterests. For me, I realized I am a stronger math student than I ever believed and that I am going to struggle with chemistry no matter how hard I try. Some students going into the program fear that it is too heavily focused on the humanities, and while it is in a sense writing-intensive, it is also technologically and scientifically based, giving IB a well-roundedness.

--Savanna Williams

The significance that the last two years had on my education cannot be over stated. Over the last two years, thanks to a number of factors, I began moving in a direction I had not before fully grasped. I moved toward the mythic concept of the "liberal arts" education and did what I had believed to be impossible, I learned about learning. In that phrase however, the first usage and the second usage of the word "learn" mean entirely different things. The first "learn" is a more traditional sense of the word, I learned and gained a deeper understanding of. What I learned about was more than that, I learned about learning as growth and development. I learned about the different pieces of myself that move my mind forward, and which direction forward is.... It would be a misunderstanding of the situation to say that this was entirely a result of the International Baccalaureate program....

--Tom Halpern

One thing that I will never forget about IB is the Theory of Knowledge class.... It was truly one of my favorite classes. I'll miss the intellectual vibe of the class, the never-ending and uninhibited exploration.

--Phil Hayes

The program's unique focus on writing also allowed me to learn my academic strengths and weaknesses. I had always classified myself as a humanities-oriented student, and found myself constantly thinking along the disciplines of English, Spanish, or History. Whenever I read the news, I would immediately scroll to articles concerning politics or to those concerning international policies (my true area of interest). However, as I would attempt to understand the multifaceted issues denoted in these articles, I would find my thinking severely limited by my inability to understand the disciplines of science and mathematics. Taking Chemistry SL and Mathematics SL allowed me to gain basic exposure to the quantitative fields, but more importantly, gave me enough of an understanding of chemistry and calculus to comprehend disciplines such as Economics or Environmental Science. When I apply this alternative knowledge to my reading, I am able to understand an entirely different impact of a particular technology, policy, or economic practice on a society.

--Stephanie Herrmann

...I can truly say that my time as an IB student was well spent. While other students have gotten into Penn State without being IB students, the truth is they're not nearly as prepared for the life of a college student as I am. IB has taught me to balance a multifaceted life with rigorous coursework and examinations, and to do so well.

--John Armstrong

The best part of my IB experience was what I gained through my CAS activities. I enjoyed volunteering at Thorncroft Equestrian Center, testing water quality for the Lower Merion Conservancy, giving tours at a historical museum, and much more! At each activity, I learned something new. Working with disabled riders at Thorncroft was probably my favorite activity. The riders I worked with were an inspiration. Thorncroft teaches them, and other people, that despite their disabilities they can still make many accomplishments. All of these volunteering activities made me feel like I could contribute to my community, and I am very interested in continuing community service in college because of my experiences.

--Lauren Johnson

...my participation in the IB program has shaped my present future and possibly career. Taking IB Chemistry with Mr. Gauvin has shaped what I want to study in college. I had always liked chemistry, but Mr. Gauvin's love for the subject and teaching affected me; I am now a science nerd. My only regret is that I wasn't able to take Chemistry HL. It's alright though because I plan to study higher level chemistry next year at Northwestern in the Chemical Engineering program. Thus, my participation in the program and particularly IB Chemistry has helped me find what I want to do in life.

--Zak Kivitz

...the IB seeks to hone an analytical way of thinking that emphasizes thorough reasoning on top of justification of claims, ideas, and method. There is no single approach, as long as thoughtful consideration towards every question and prompt is evident. This flexibility allows all students to develop their analytical skills uniquely, a process which is helped along by the multitude of great teachers that Harriton assigns to the program.

--Jérôme Krumenacker

I like that IB focused on fully learning the material, rather than merely becoming acquainted with it. I did not realize until the end of this year when I was preparing for my IB exams the extent to which I was prepared. I think the IB's habit of asking students to compare and contrast is fantastic. Rather than merely learning about the Cultural Revolution in China, I had to compare it to communist revolutions in Russia. I believe this helped me further grasp the material and prepared me to think in a way that is more abstract. I feel this can only be a positive because we live in a world that is thoroughly abstract and has a dearth of fill-in-the-bubble multiple-choice tests. IB is often criticized for focusing on broad generalities and ignoring the need for facts. This is untrue. The focus is on broad generalities supported and constructed by a network of facts. I think that is a huge benefit of the program.

--Moirá Lavelle

Ultimately, I feel very prepared for college. I'd like to think that I "hacked" my education by completing IB. I turned myself in a direction that was unnatural to me, and ended up smarter and ready to take on whatever comes my way.

--Phil Hayes

I feel as though IB has given me a fair bit of confidence and has definitely helped me define what I am capable of doing. The confidence somewhat surprisingly comes mostly from final exams, by looking back and remember all the things we did, and realizing that I know or at least knew most of them - it's quite an ego boost to feel that knowledgeable about so many subjects. As far as defining my capabilities, IB has helped me realize what I can do in one day, where the limit of good quality work is, so to say.

--Sean Lynch

Through this program, I have become a more dedicated student, and I bring this dedication to other activities in different areas of my life. I have a much greater understand of stress, and I've developed better methods to deal with stress in the arenas of my life. Additionally, I feel that I have developed a much greater understanding of myself as a person: my interests, my aims, my perspective on life, through the IB program, though I cannot necessarily pinpoint the classes or experiences that helped me come to these realizations. I feel that the IB program at Harriton helped me to get the most out of my high school experience.

--Rachel Margulies

I would say the greatest thing that IB has taught me is not the copious amounts of information on qualitative psychological research, the seemingly endless amounts of pages on integrals and derivatives, or the vast amounts of historiography about the most obscure topics inside of history you could possibly think of, but rather the ways in which I learn these things. IB has certainly changed me as a student. For instance, one of the biggest and most easily described examples is my experience with my Extended Essay. Not only did I learn a lot about the Somali Civil War, but also I learned what it takes to write an analytical essay on an event in history, whatever that event may be. Leaving behind the subject area of history, I feel comfortable and confident in my abilities to research and write about any topic I need to.

--Jack Curtis

I joined the International Baccalaureate Programme because I was intrigued by heavy emphasis on discussion. I was also interested in the Chemistry program with Mr. Gauvin and the intense history program. I consider myself a science-history person, so these aspects of the program piqued my interest. A large number of my friends were entering the program as well, so that helped sway my decision, but the academic atmosphere was truly what interested me the most. Two years later, I am quite happy that I joined the program. It met all my expectations and many more.

--Jordin Metz

Each student is treated individually and has classes that fit his or her capacities, strengths and weaknesses. For example, I took the IB English B class, which helped me with my writing and reading. It brought me a higher knowledge of English, which was really important for all my other classes. I was also able to do French Self-taught. It meant a lot to me because it gave me the ability to practice my writing and reading skills in French.

--Marie Godeaux

In eighth grade, I decided to come to Harriton from Bala Cynwyd Middle School, rather than go to Lower Merion with all of my friends. The key reasons for my decision were the smaller size of Harriton and the International Baccalaureate program that Harriton offered. One of the key reasons I chose to do IB was because of its focus on writing. Writing had always been something I struggled with. I would spend days writing and rewriting my essays. I hoped that by doing IB and forcing myself to write a lot, I would improve my writing style and become more comfortable writing. This goal was certainly accomplished. After doing IB for two years, my writing has improved tremendously. Having been forced to write countless essays on numerous topics, I feel that I could write just about anything.

--Shaina Carroll

The benefits I reaped from doing IB are numerous and there are certainly some that I have yet to discover. One of these benefits includes confidence: confidence to speak in front of a group, confidence to handle the hours of work that lie ahead each night, and confidence to hand in a piece of work and know that it is my best.

--Savanna Williams

The IB class of 2012 is a pretty close-knit group. Throughout our two years together, we have created numerous Google-docs for almost every test, midterm/final, and IB exam, hosted multiple study dates, and had a lot of fun through it all. I learned so much about my work habits and everyone else's, and if we could've taken IB exams as a group, I have no doubt we would get 7's on all of them as a result of everyone's hard work. I thought this year was significantly harder than junior year, especially with the college application process involved, but this was the year we all really bonded. I constantly am so impressed by everyone in our class and know everyone will go on to do incredible things.

--Rachael Metz

I have changed phenomenally since entering the program. I learned to love learning more than ever before, partially because my teachers loved to teach more than I had ever known before. I developed a love for chemistry that I never expected after taking the standard level course, I learned how to construct an excellent essay: literary analysis, historical analysis, music analysis, etc. I learned how to write intensive research papers, not only through the process of my extended essay, but also through internal assessments that I had to do for various classes.

--Jackie Milestone

*This brings me to an aspect of the program that I ended up enjoying despite my expectations – the extended essay. I was apprehensive about the project when I first heard about it, and it was on the “cons” side of my lists when I was deciding whether to do IB. However, once I decided on my topic (the theme of the American dream in *The Great Gatsby* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*) I started to get excited. I had never written a paper that required nearly as much dedicated time or individual thinking as the extended essay, but working through it step by step showed me that I had the ability to make well-thought-out and original comments about literature.*

--Julia Olivieri

In my eyes, one of the greatest strengths of the program is its emphasis on global literature. Although IB helped me learn a great deal about all of the subjects I took, it helped me realize and expand upon my love of literature. My junior-year English course had an enormous impact on me not only as a student, but on the way I approach art overall. It may be a testament to the teacher rather than the curriculum itself, but I was given a systematic basis for tackling literature and understanding the larger purpose of novels and their impact on society. Many of the works we studied during my junior year are now among my favorite novels. Not to mention I could probably write a literary analysis in my sleep at this point, which I'm sure will be a useful skill in college.

--Hilary Goldberg

...I was challenged to gain an understanding of new perspectives and appreciate the value of diverse points of view. In the Theory of Knowledge class in particular we explored issues that would have been discouraged in many other academic settings and in exploring these issues I learned a lot about myself and what I value in a society and in others. The mindset IB classes like Theory of Knowledge gave me is completely invaluable. I believe IB enabled me to grow as a whole person more than I could have in any other high school program because it encourages a certain way of thinking and its emphasis on reflection.

--Maddy Pisani

I felt challenged by the I.B. program to take charge of my education and build my own knowledge base so that I could master each subject area. I no longer viewed learning as an obligation. I was inspired to take advantage of every opportunity to educate myself about the world around me. This new approach to individual learning has drastically affected my worldview and my thinking.

--Stephanie Herrmann

I especially enjoyed the intellectual enlightenment and freedom I got from things like TOK and Extended Essay.

--Wilson Smith

CAS prepared me for the future by forcing to reflect on the value of all the activities in which I participate. Before doing IB I was simply doing activities because they were fun or a friend enjoyed it and I did not really think about how it affected my life. However, in reflecting on my role in each activity, the activity itself became more valuable. In a few instances I realized an activity did not have much value and I stopped doing it. Before learning to reflect on this type of thing I would commit myself to too many things because I never thought about which activities were most important to me and why. This became a strength in my time management skills.

--Maddy Pisani

Before IB, I really only spoke in a few classes, where I knew exactly what I was doing, but now I am much more likely to speak in a context where I am less comfortable with the topic, possibly because I feel more comfortable amongst the ... tightly-knit group.

--Rob Pressel

IB taught me to think more globally and provided me with more opportunities to engage with my peers at an intellectual level through the much more discussion based approach to every class. I truly thought being able to talk at an extensive level on every topic with all of my fellow IB participants was an exceptional experience and helped further my level of knowledge.

--Evan Rhodes

IB has not only taught me how to write well and write effectively about subjects I know. The true magic comes in when you realize how well we all write when we are writing about something we know absolutely nothing about. In some ways, this skill proved very useful. For example, on History Paper 1, the topic was on something we did not even remotely study in class. However, with no prior knowledge, I felt comfortable using the sources given and the small amounts of information to write a several page essay on the topic. That's pretty impressive. I imagine most of life will require a fair amount of on-the-spot writing with no information to work on.

--Alex Settle

The courses in the program fit together very well and I was able to see connections between what I was being taught in different classes. I really enjoyed this aspect of the program. There were also many times that these connections were made in unexpected places, such as connecting IB Visual Arts and IB French B SL, which was quite interesting.

--Katie Shulman

IB also did help me get into the whole world of music composition. IB Music HL had a requirement for composition, and I wrote an arrangement in my junior year. That was a positive experience that I think at least slightly, influenced my decision to take composition lessons at the music camp I attended during the summer before my senior year. My experience writing there further piqued my interest in writing music and now I'm set to go to college to study composition. I guess, in a sense, I have IB to thank for my current career track.

--Wilson Smith

All of my teachers were excellent at not only getting the students engaged, but themselves being fully committed to the content of what they were teaching. Namely, Mrs. Scherpbier and Mr. Murray really helped me in Math and Art respectively. As a self-proclaimed "terrible math student" I had no intention of succeeding even in Math Studies, but Mrs. Scherpbier was extremely supportive. Her help was not "hand-holding," but guidance that I could only receive from a teacher that herself had been through the IB program and knew first hand of the challenges we were dealing with. Mrs. Scherpbier finally made Math an enjoyable experience for me. Similarly, Mr. Murray, who is also an IB trained teacher, teaches what I believe to be the most impactful art class at Harriton. The IB Visual Arts course takes students around the world and through history while simultaneously allowing for as much creative thought as students are willing to muster. Mr. Murray embodies the philosophy of the IB in that he is all about diligent work as he incorporated discussion and critical thinking into an art class, and did so with fluidity and enthusiasm. These are only two of the many teachers that I will never stop appreciating.

--Marta Elliott

I also really enjoyed the entire process of doing the Extended Essay. I chose a topic that I'm really interested in, I learned a lot, and I'm very proud of the end product. It was a very rewarding experience.

--Victoria Sun

A strength of the IB program is that in multiple classes we focused on the international aspects. We talked about different issues and examples that can be seen from different stand points. It was not just a focus on one country but we explored situations in many different ways in pretty much all the classes, which I enjoyed doing very much.

--Martina Van Wieren

When I was deciding whether to apply to IB, I attended several presentations about the program. At those presentations, one thing that students always mentioned was the sense of community that IB creates. At the time, I was a little ambivalent. But, having gone through the program myself, I am now a believer. The family that we have created over the last two years is probably my favorite aspect of the program. Many of the people in IB I hardly knew before we started the program. They were certainly not people I would have wanted to hang out with on a Friday night. Two years later, I can honestly say that I would be happy to hang out with any member of the IB program for any length of time. We've gone through so much together and we've developed such a unique bond. I have grown to love and care about all 38 other members of our "family."

--Shaina Carroll

IB taught me to think, talk, and write more than I had ever before, and especially how to apply and communicate my knowledge.

--Jessie Vander

I also, through my [CAS] service project, organized events to take high school students and perform music for the sick or elderly in hospitals and retirement homes. This taught me a great deal about taking initiative and being a leader and founder of an organization. It also made me realize how easy it is to have a positive impact on other people's lives, and how wonderful it feels to know that I have helped someone, even in a small way.

--Jackie Milestone

To emphasize just how much CAS has affected my life, I should first state that two years ago I had very few interests and engagements to extracurricular activities. I was the quintessential couch potato. Over the past two years, however, I have become involved with Harriton World Affairs Club, VEX Robotics, Environmental Club, Model UN, JSA Summer Programs, the Lower Merion Conservancy, walking four miles to school (to my surprise, Mrs. Celebre let me count that for Action), knitting for charity, folding hundreds of origami paper cranes, and continuing judo. Oddly enough, I have enjoyed all of these activities, which have made me a far more motivated and active person. They have influenced what I do with my time, what I see in my future, and what I tell others about myself. I'm quite glad that I joined the IB if just for CAS, which got me off my butt and involved me in the above. I was initially apprehensive about CAS, thinking that I would have to chore through it until the end. I did not anticipate changing and growing as a person as much as I did.

-- Jérôme Krumenacker

The IB curricula were extremely fulfilling and interesting, and when combined with other knowledge imparted by incredible teachers and surrounded by intelligent peers, IB made for an incredible past two years.

--Jessie Vander

...This also helped me expand my horizons and connect between disciplines: in English, I used quite a bit of history knowledge to increase my understanding and appreciation of literary features of the works we studied (for example, there is a line about a king eating a diet of worms in Hamlet which could reference the 1521 Diet of Worms, a very important moment for the Protestant Reformation). As I learned more about economics and physics, more and more connections began appearing between the two disciplines, in no small part because economics often borrows physics terminology in order to better explain concepts (such as velocity, which in economics refers to the rate at which additional spending moves throughout the economy).

--Gareth Walsh

In middle school I had participated in two similar interdisciplinary programs in which classes were somewhat segregated from the general population in order to focus on the individual needs of exceptional students and wanted to continue such a positive experience. Thus came my decision to attend Harriton rather than Lower Merion with the rest of my middle school friends. I still find it astounding that my fourteen year old self was able to predict that the IB program would prove to be my haven two years later.

--Savanna Williams

By doing CAS, I realized that every activity or action that I make mattered not only for myself but also for others. I really like the Service part of CAS because it was all about helping the community, near to your house or even in another country. It takes you time but it brings so much to your life experience.

--Marie Godeaux

Perhaps my favorite aspect of the past two years was the new family that I gained, both within Harriton and on a global scale, as I will always be able to find a connection with someone who has been through IB, extending to the far reaches of the world. Being able to say that I conquered the Extended Essay, CAS, and Group Four along with all of the regular curriculum – and did so with such an excellent group of peers and teachers – brings me pride, and knowing that I share this bond with the rest of the IB community makes it all that much sweeter.

--Savanna Williams

While writing a letter to a college recently I came across a quote that really struck a chord with me. Bruce Lee said, “Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one.” I very much feel that when a student chooses to take IB they should understand that it is going to be difficult and that the point of it is not to find the easy ways out and to just get through it so your transcript is improved, but to use the difficulty and strenuousness to your advantage as it makes you accustomed to such environments. High school students, or even college students do not often achieve this level of preparedness, which made the choice to do IB that much easier.

--Austin Wortley

In general, the I.B. program offers a valuable interdisciplinary style of learning that is unparalleled by any other academic route at Harriton. While many students are able to make connections among their classes, their curricula are not bonded by the common objectives that classes in the I.B. programs share. Although neither program is arguably superior to the other, I feel that I.B. is what has most profoundly influenced my college decision, my areas of interest, my thinking, and my prospective career choice.

--Stephanie Herrmann

The influence of my classmates encouraged me to become more curious and to try to understand more about my society and the world around me. Largely out of a desire to keep up and be informed in class discussions and arguments among students, I became increasingly cognizant of current events and political campaigns. I think the community that IB provides gave me a safe place to explore my academic interests without being embarrassed of my eagerness.

--Hilary Goldberg

Being surrounded by this community of other totally committed, fully engaged fellow students also made class discussion extremely fluid. In History of Americas we would have a discussion about Gorbachev in the beginning of the class and still be debating his value as a leader through lunch and into gym class because everyone was genuinely interested in what we were talking about. Having a group of friends with such diverse interests meant I could go anywhere from the theater to the chemistry lab and see someone with whom I could discuss anything from the history of the Haber process to the reign of Hawaiian Queen Liliuokalani.

--Maddy Pisani

Class of 2011

I wish I could tell students how important an international education truly is in any field, especially for those curious to go abroad. I have to say that having an IB background really prepared me for my first year of college and being abroad. You look at things different and adjust more easily, at least in my opinion. I hope the students continue to remember that through their studies.

--Mary Attaliadis (extract from email sent at the end of her second year studying abroad through the Fashion Institute of Technology)

I have changed as a student and person in many ways due to the IB program. I am more prepared to take on difficult and foreign tasks, I am ready to be challenged in the classroom and outside of it, I have better time management skills, I am able to learn things faster than I could before, and so much more. I have progressed not only in education, but in athletics, arts, and service as well. I am more open to hearing what others have to say in the classroom and outside in the real world. If I had never done the IB program, I probably would not have had an art show or volunteered for a library and book club where I was the only teenager. All my experiences, good and bad, have been beneficial and made me the student and person I am today, which is a young woman ready to move to New York City this fall to pursue a career in fashion and the arts at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

--Mary Attaliadis

I have changed in the way that I approach academic situations. For example, in IB I have learned how to effectively question. Whether it be in regards to a piece of literature or the intentions of someone in history, IB has taught me how to question effectively and analyze specific details of every situation.

--Kate Van Allen

The types of tests in IB are mainly essay tests, which make you retain knowledge and make you think, which is essential for when you go into college and also later on in life. Finally,

--Isaac Lubner

Your peers are not some sort of family, but your own battalion who will fight beside you against the IB gods. Yes, there will be mutiny, treacheries, and traitors, but you must survive. Along the way you find out that these fellow soldiers are interesting, often idiosyncratic individuals. Everyone has a different point of view and many have diverse cultural backgrounds. This is why I would recommend IB- not for its curriculum, which is indeed meritorious, but for its personalities.

--James Butler

The major strengths of the program are that it teaches you to think critically and globally. I really like how much of the rest of the world I am exposed to, like being able to learn about the history of much of the world, not just America. I also really like how much writing we do on each of our tests, which caused my writing to improve greatly.

--Rachel Marx

Although I have always prided myself on my time management and organization in general, I also think that as a result of my involvement in this program, my organizational skills have also greatly improved. This is something which I know will be particularly useful next year when I go off to college. In general I would say that this is one of the greatest strengths of the program as a whole. Of course I cannot say for sure yet as obviously I haven't actually attended college yet but I strongly believe that the way the IB program forces its participants to manage their time well among other things will be key to being successful in college.

--Joe Folds

Transitions had always been tough for me, and my freshman year highlighted that. I was not prepared for the all-honors course load I had taken on and my usual A's and B's began to slip. I stopped turning in homework and developed an "I don't care, it doesn't matter" type of mentality, which stayed with me during my sophomore year. I was now a C student with a lack of motivation, and it was time to apply for IB. My parents had begun to worry about my slipping grade and warned me that I had to buckle down if I wanted to get into a decent college. I would always tell them that things would be better during my junior year, that I would get things under control. I realized that I wanted to perform well in school and show my parents and myself that I was capable of much more than I was showing. I filled out my IB application and actually withdrew it at one point. I was extremely indecisive and nervous about taking on such a rigorous, two-year, commitment. Then I decided that I wanted to work my hardest and be my best so I decided to go for it and I resubmitted my application and was accepted into the program, and I have never regretted it.

--Helen Gaynor

...Although the extended essay was a lot of hard work, it helps you prepare for writing essays in college, as it teaches you how and what you have to do in order to write a good essay.

--Isaac Luber

I feel that the way in which I learned how to write with greater ease as well as the friendships I was able to form from being in smaller classes with the same people helped me not only in that I progressed as a student, but also in that I was able to more easily adjust to moving from a different country and thrive in my new community, which, if I'm not mistaken, was one of the initial goals of the International Baccalaureate.

--Carlos Sisniega

The most important aspect of the program is my growth as an individual. Involvement in the International Baccalaureate program has made me capable of proper expression of self, allowed me to speak eloquently, and to be courageous to present my viewpoint, regardless of general consensus. I am confident in my ability to present thought rationally and coherently. This is thanks to the IB program's firm policy of self-motivation for its students.

--Matt Glick

The reality of the program, for me, created proper discipline and developed a focused work ethic. I can also, now, write papers with more ease and debate topics more effectively. Even in conversations with my parents, when I'm trying to prove a point, I recall the IB Seminars from History this year: we would all try to prove each other wrong with our facts in front of us, disagreeing with our friends on points about Mao, Hitler, and the Cold War. The things I learned in a lot of IB certainly applied to my non-academic life.

--Catherine Haslam

One of my favorite parts [of the IB Program], and a huge strength, is the extended essay. I loved writing my essay, mostly because I was extremely interested in the topic I chose to write on. Giving students the ability to research and write on a subject that is of interest to them is a very positive piece of the IB curriculum.

--Ali Herman

I believe that as a result of my time in IB, I have become a better writer and a more curious student; these were my two main expectations of the program.

--Emily Brody-Bizar

...However, deep down inside I know that a miracle did not take place, the only thing that took place was a whole lot of hard work. Truth be told, had I not done IB I would never have come to the realization that as unintellectual as I come off, I really can be quite intellectual. I am the epitome of the "unintellectual intellectual", and it is really time that I start embracing my intellectual side. Thanks to IB and its black hole tendencies, I have learned that life will always hand you lemons but you won't immediately be able to make lemonade, but as you acquire the other necessary ingredients eventually you will be able to. I truly believe that IB has set me up for success in all of my future endeavors, and thus IB is a journey I would easily travel 100 times over.

--Zoe Kuenstler

My time spent during my final two years in high school has very much been like a roller coaster. There are ups and downs. Sometimes you can relax and enjoy the ride and other times the 'vehicle' travels at speeds you aren't quite prepared for. Sometimes, it feels like the cart will fall off the track, but it never does. You come into it excited, but anxious. And you leave with your hair blown back and a new sense of confidence to get on that ride again.

--Elliot Levy

The CAS requirement is something that I really enjoyed because it really rounded us all out as students. I think that what makes good students is how well rounded and experienced they are and CAS definitely aids to this. Within the Harriton IB program, I really enjoyed the "checkpoints" and guidance that Señora Celebre gave us. It was necessary that we have complete organization in a task like this and Señora did a perfect job in doing so. Similarly, I think that the Harriton IB program does a wonderful job in the organization for the Extended Essay. Having talked to other IBers from other schools I have learned that no one has the guidance that we get in writing our essays.

--Kate Van Allen

For the Creativity Action Service requirements, I found myself becoming a lot more involved in my outside world instead of just studying. Because of the creativity requirements, I took more acting classes than I had originally planned, and ended up having fun. Due to the action requirements, I stayed on the track team throughout the spring season instead of giving up and quitting after the first week was difficult. Since there was a service component, I ran my own drive and ended up donating enough clothing to help dozens of families.

--Ben Wax

...Another strength is that CAS encourages you to get involved in different and new activities, as well as to be a good member of your community, which helps you become a better, more well-rounded person.

--Isaac Lubber

After now two years, I can really say that the program has truly changed me as a person. I am now more confident, more organized, ready to take bigger challenges, handle responsibility and also more mature. Those are some of the major tools to tackle a successful career. I found out that the program also helped me to cope with stressful situations. I also know now that I am a procrastinator and I am going to be able to correct this in the upcoming years.

--Hugo Lunel

Theory of Knowledge was also an academic experience unlike anything I'd done before.... I felt as though the course truly strengthened my writing skills. Before TOK, I'd never considered things such as including defenses against counterclaims, or assumptions of arguments in my essays. After the multitude of journals and drafts of the prescribed title that I completed this year, those skills come naturally to me, and as a result, I am a stronger essay writer.

--Jaime Toplin

I truly believe that I have become a critical thinker. I automatically analyze everything I learn now, rather than just let it slide through my mind. I also have become a more confident student. I never go into any sort of testing environment with doubt in my mind that I have the capability to do well. I know how to approach different types of assessments and assignments and complete them properly. While I expected to change as a student, I never expected that IB would change me as much as it did as a person. I am not making this up—I often analyze my friends and their actions and look at what they've done from a TOK perspective to figure out my feelings towards them and what they do. I apply this outlook with many of the people in my life. I think just in general, I think much more deeply about the people around me and the events I experience.

--Rachel Marx

...but one thing I do know, is my academic interests have been severely altered by the IB program, more specifically, the extended essay. After researching for my extended essay on how exercise affects ADHD, I now have an idea of what I want to study, where I would like to take my newly acquired IB knowledge and skills.

--James Butler

My experiences abroad living in and visiting different cultures all around the world had already opened my mind to new ideas and perspectives and had already given me a special understanding of the world around me and all its various cultures and people had to offer. However, working with such open and intellectually stimulating individuals as those in the IB senior class over the past two years has truly cemented this for me.

--Joe Folds

I've changed a lot over the past two years, but it's difficult to separate what was the result of IB and what was not. I think the IB has improved my writing skills, for which I am immensely grateful. I still need to do a lot of work to get where I would like to be, but I doubt I would have gained as much ground writing to a formula in the AP program. I have definitely improved social skills as well, partly because of the IB program. Being in the program meant I had to spend most of my day with the same people, many whom I would never otherwise spend time with. Learning how to get along with everyone helped me become a much more socially adept person, to the point where I now feel that at college I will have no problem getting along with whoever I am around (even if I am not necessarily enjoying being around them). I got to know many people I would have otherwise overlooked, and some of them are truly wonderful individuals. And of course over the past two years my critical thinking and analytical skills have greatly improved, partly due to the IB program.

--Alex Mechanick

Most importantly, I think that as both a person and a student, the program has made me more comfortable with being uncomfortable. I have learned to take intellectual chances—to start a project or a paper without clear guidelines and know that if I follow my instincts, I will most likely complete the task correctly. As a person, I learned how to take charge and enter new situations with very little fear. I tried so many new things because of CAS—such as working with Project H.O.M.E., an organization that helps the homeless get back on their feet in North Philly—and had to learn to put myself out there and take charge in order to plan my individual service project. I also became more comfortable with the prospect of entering a program without my close group of friends and making new friends along the way. Learning how to become comfortable with being uncomfortable is a skill that I learned in IB and will use in the real world.

--Emily Brody-Bizar

I looked forward to the idea that the IB was far, far more concept-based than it was about memorization, which I was told was the main basis for AP courses. Having taken four of these, and a total of six AP exams, I could definitely attest to the fact that this was true, as, when preparing for those APs, nothing helped me as much as sitting down and memorizing the dates for about 100 different theories and treaties for the History and Psychology exams, as well as literary techniques and vocabulary for the English and Language exams. However, the one thing that I did find was that in IB courses memorization was just as necessary, if not more so than in APs. Although the approach IB wishes you take in writing your internal assessments and your examinations is far less about specific treaties and dates, the amount of information I still had to memorize to be able to successfully write what I needed to write was immense.

--Carlos Sisniega

CAS could be paperwork-heavy, but was also incredibly useful. For me, I know that school can very easily overwhelm my life, taking precedence over social activities or even extra-curriculars when the workload gets heavy. However, for me, CAS kept me motivated. It gave me a reason to continue to stay involved with the activities that I knew I loved. It forced me to build time into my schedule for theater, community service, exercise, and many of the other activities that I loved but would have given up out of fear of losing control of my workload.

--Jaime Toplin

Two years later, I feel that participating in the IB program has made me into a more well-rounded, self-aware student. Instead of simply considering myself as a “humanities person” IB has encouraged me to integrate elements of each subject that I enjoy and find the links among them. For example, I have found it most important the way in which history is an integral aspect of literature, art and music. This has thus developed my interest in dramaturgy, in which I even presented a theory of knowledge presentation on. IB has allowed me to blend the academic world with the theater world that I am so familiar with.

--Kasie Patlove

Whenever anyone asks me if I'm glad that I did IB, I say “Absolutely”. It forced me to manage my time, develop an organized work ethic, and improve my grades drastically. My GPA in high school has risen every year, freshman year being my lowest point and senior year being my highest. I am more motivated, I work harder, and I have a strong self-awareness after my years in the program. One thing I did not think about entering the program was the amount IB prepares you for college. Recently many IB graduates have been telling me how easy they transitioned into their freshman year. Many said it was easy, a breeze, no problem. Knowing that IB has prepared me for what is to come in college is the greatest thing I have taken from the program. I feel confident in my work ethic and intelligence and truly ready to take on my freshman year. For me it was never and will never be about the diploma; it was about becoming more confident in my abilities as a student and becoming more self-aware.

--Helen Gaynor

My favorite part of IB overall was the community that I found, which made my transition from another school much easier than I had originally feared. The small community of IB is one of its strongest assets, and I think is what fostered the supportive rather than competitive environment that I found our class had.

--Molly Rothschild

I think that the extended essay, especially as it is run at Harriton is another major strength of the program. The very structured approach that is taken is incredibly helpful and from what I know of other IB programs around the world especially from my friends in Europe, not all programs are run this way.... What I think has been the biggest strength of this program has been the cohesiveness within not only us IB students but within the IB community at Harriton as a whole including parents, teachers and of course the IB

coordinator. The sense of community which sprung up among us was perhaps the highlight of the program for me, not only because many of these people became my closest friends but also because it meant that we were all there for each other and knew what everyone else was going through. That kind of feeling is special and is what made the IB experience special for me.

--Joe Folds

My absolute favorite thing about IB was my teachers. Every single one of them had their own story to tell, they were young and old and all of them (without exception) showed the enthusiasm necessary to teach successfully. All of my IB teachers were successful in developing our IB minds because they all had developed IB minds as well. I so appreciate the preparation all of our teachers gave us in preparing for the exams—it truly paid off.

--Kate Van Allen

As time went on though, seeing the difference between IB and AP, I realized I had made the right choice. The kind of history class I had Senior year...was my ideal of what I think history class should be.... Granted, the IB/AP cultural divide is a self-perpetuating one, but that doesn't make it any less real. This was so clearly shown in my Spanish class, which was a mix of IB and AP students. When discussing a book, the AP students constantly had their hands up, had a comment for everything, and were quick to point out facts and details we might have missed. The IB-ers did not have our hands up as much, but when an IB student made a comment, it almost always offered an opinion, analysis, or interpretation. Was it made up off the top of our heads? Probably. Was it more interesting, and did it spark better discussion? I think so. It's a mentality that is perhaps less conducive to participation points, but in my opinion creates better learners: "If you don't have anything interesting and original to say, don't say anything at all." Fortunately, everyone in IB seems to have plenty to say.

--Sofie Seymour

The material covered within the program is also unique. I can say that, after hours of reading each and every syllabus for the courses while studying for my exams, some of the classes within the IB are the perfect survey of that subject. History, for example, is structured like no other history class I had previously taken. However, I gained the background knowledge I needed to understand major issues in world history, and have come to be able to acknowledge different perspectives on why the events of the past progressed the way that they did.

--Jaime Toplin

I am also grateful that in an international environment in St. Andrews University next year, I will have fulfilled the same requirements as most of my peers. It makes me feel more confident and able to perform well in the next four years, now that I have the academic preparation from IB. Personally, I feel that is one of IB's major strengths—its inherent nature of being accepted and respected globally. Just as it is respected globally, it prepares us for engaging in current events and tying things back to history. For me, the humanities topics prepared me for what I want to be able to do in my life, in working for the government, because now I feel I can express my opinions in both writing and in speech effectively.

--Catherine Haslam

I have also learned that the environment of the class does not have to be intense in order to learn; I have enjoyed the relaxed environment of my IB class for the past two years. We managed to form a community where we were willing to help each other with work and there was no sense of competition. We were all in the program together, and we all wanted everyone to succeed.

--Emily Brody-Bizar

The major strength of the curriculum is anchored in the fact that it is so challenging. Through the program, I was able to grow as a writer and analyzer. These skills helped me in all areas and will continue to help me throughout my life. The rigor of the program also changed the way I manage my workload. Rather than stressing or complaining about how much work I had, I learned to make better use of my time. The program taught me, or almost forced me, to manage my time and schedule extremely well. I became a problem solver and thinker both in and outside of the classroom. Although it was easier to succumb to complaining, I tried to challenge myself not to complain because I understood that it was only wasting my time.

--Michael Witkes

Overall, I feel so prepared to take on college and the world. I am motivated, educated, ambitious, and so excited to embark on my journey in New York as I feel the program has really prepared me with skills and ability to be challenged and succeed. All those late nights, study sessions, and afternoons at the library have showed me what it takes to be a hard, honest worker. I do not count success in good grades, awards, and scholarship money, but those are some of the outcomes of the program, which did not hurt me getting

into and paying for college. I credit the program for giving me the opportunity to be challenged, learn new and different things, meet interesting people, and make lifelong friends along with lifelong skills and an education I can never forget.

--Mary Attaliadis

I really am quite happy with my on the fence decision to join the IB program my sophomore year. I think that the only doubts that I had were ones that were perpetuated by the students within the program as we do have a strong inclination to complain (no idea how that one can be fixed). One of the cherries on top of it all occurred within the past few days when I was out one night with a bunch of people and they were all either stressed because their senior project presentations was the next day or they just had finished. One person was like it is such a fantastic feeling to be done, when is your presentation? My response was then, I have been done for nearly a month now, with just a few tests in the beginning but other than that I made the right decision as a sophomore, and to make a right decision at 16 I think is a feat in itself.

--Connor Wortley

I have been able to discover the ways in which I best learn. I came into the program as an individual learner, but throughout IB, I have learned to more effectively work on group projects and collaborate with my peers. I have learned to become more open to the ideas and opinions of others and am more able to see issues or topics from multiple perspectives.

--Kasie Patlove

Something that I both expected and experienced was a very strong English and history program. I feel that I learned the most from these humanities courses over the two years, and felt most prepared to test in both history and English at the end of 12th grade. These classes were my favorite academic part of the program, and specifically 12th grade English was one of my favorite high school classes overall. The classes were challenging and required that I commit myself to the material if I wanted to succeed, but I found the challenge to be something I wanted to accomplish through the support and interest my teachers showed.

--Molly Rothschild

...the skill-based learning has proved and will continue to prove incredibly useful. As a result of the skills I have learned and applied over the course of the program, I feel confident in my ability to succeed in college. For example, in history, an entire portion of the exam is source analysis. While I used these skills to successfully take tests and ultimately the IB exam, I also used them to synthesize material for my internal assessment as well as when writing essays and analyzing material in other subjects. Similarly, in English, learning to close-read passages under a time constraint for the oral commentary gave me the ability to use that same skill with even greater ease in situations with much less pressure.

--Jaime Toplin

Another strength I found in the program was the extreme emphasis on writing. While at times I was not happy to be writing on every test and many papers, in the long run I can see the benefits and am grateful that I was pushed to write often and well. Writing is an extremely important skill to have, and I believe IB has really helped me in this category.

--Ali Herman

The confidence that I've gained in myself as a result of the IB program is immeasurable. I entered the program with good grades, but as a rigid individual who struggled to take risks. I'm graduating as a completely different learner. My fear of public speaking no longer exists. My anxiety level before exams and major assessments is much lower than it was in the past. I no longer worry about asking for help when I need it; instead, I encourage myself to do so because I've seen how useful extra support can be. I know that if something I'm doing isn't working, it probably is my own fault, and I should take steps to change the way I do my work or manage my time so that I can succeed. Most prominently, I no longer feel as though I have to be the best—and my attitude towards grades has completely changed. While I am still grade-conscious, I now see that mastering the skills and learning the material is the most important thing, and I've realized that if I do that, the grades will more than likely follow. So far, it's been working.

--Jaime Toplin

I think that the independence that you learn in IB is the biggest strength of the program. Over the course of two years, you learn how to think for yourself—how to find the question that intrigues you, and how to answer it. Learning has the potential to become such a personal experience if you take advantage of this ability to become more intellectually independent. Though the lack of specific guidelines seems daunting at first, I now find it difficult to think within a set of constraints....

--Emily Brody-Bizar

I am much more confident in myself as a student. Coming into the program, I was afraid to speak because I had never truly received the encouragement I needed to do so. Although not shy outside of the classroom, my major difficulty coming into the program was my fear of speaking in class. Irrational- I know- but I truly did not think that I was smart enough to add my opinion. In IB, my confidence has definitely increased and I think that 75% can be attributed to the fact that as a student, I have become more conscientious and hard-working. But I think that the other 25% is due to IB's way of teaching us how to think and question.

--Kate Van Allen

The extended essay taught me much in making long-term projects, which I will likely be seeing later in college. Due to the monthly requirements, including a monthly update, I reduced procrastination by getting my work done in small chunks; in contrast, the global issues project in the ninth grade, which was nearly as long as the extended essay, was finished by me writing most of it during the weekend before it was due. Also, due to the intense requirements for length, I was forced to find more sources than just "the first results from Google," including actual books and magazine articles. Despite being on a topic which many people already know about, the Founding Fathers, my extended essay still taught me much more in-depth information than what I have learned in schools.

--Ben Wax

The IB program as a whole allowed me to grow as a student and as a person. I do not think that I would have progressed in this way if I pursued any other courses at Harriton. It forced me to become more independent and enabled me to pursue my intellectual drive. Overall, I was very impressed with IB. I felt rightfully accomplished after completing the program and would recommend it to my friends.

--Michael Witkes

Looking back, now finished with the exams, I think that the International Baccalaureate program has a number of strengths. For those students, like myself, who are interested in school abroad, the program offers an easier transition of grades than possibly some other classes. The coursework is challenging, but at the same time, extremely interesting. There was never a truly dull moment in any particular class. The teachers and the actual class material are developed so that we continue to use our brains to learn a variety of interesting things. Although, I would say that the biggest strength of the program is the exclusivity. At first I did not like the idea of being with the same kids all day, every day. But now that we are not in school, life is almost mundane without them. Everyone forms friendships, and certain kids may be closer than others, but as a group we come together for each other and we help each other out when needed.... I think for me, it is safe to say that if given the opportunity to go back in time to my sophomore year, when I made the decision to be in the program, I would make exactly the same choice.

--Allison Wortley

I think another strength of the program is the teachers are incredibly invested in our success. They want to help us adjust and learn to take chances, and they want us to ask questions. The teachers are interested in what they are teaching and know how to engage the students; it definitely improves the environment of the class. I think that the importance of participation is a major strength of the program—or at least the manner in which it is executed at Harriton. Because of this emphasis on participation, students are able to grow so much and become more confident. All you have to do is take advantage of the opportunity.

--Emily Brody-Bizar

...My two years in the IB program were incredibly difficult, but also incredibly rewarding. Going into college as a journalism major, I will need to write (and write well) constantly. Time management and the ability to manage a large workload while finishing things on deadline will also both be crucial. I believe our IB program has helped me immensely on my road to learning as an individual. Our teachers did not constantly check on us or "hold our hands," but did provide the amount of support necessary so that as students, we could begin to develop as individual learners. As a result, I see the program as incredibly successful. I know I emerged as a stronger student who is not only more conscientious, but also more aware of those around me.

--Jaime Toplin

Through IB, I also learned to become a stronger self-advocate and gained self-confidence from being in such a challenging program.

--Michael Witkes

Class of 2010

...your email about the reunion led me to reflect on my days in IB and remember what a wonderful experience it was. I am certain that the international perspective I was introduced to early on through the IB program was instrumental (whether I was conscious of it or not!) in my decision to study abroad and pursue a joint degree in Marketing and International Business. I continue to be thankful for the ways that IB prepared me for college and the world beyond.

Jen Margulies (via email December, 2012)

I stayed, we stayed, because, for all our complaining and our tardiness, we have grown to love and cherish the IB program and everything it taught us. For the lessons we learned in the past two years, have laid the groundwork for the rest of our educational and intellectual lives. While we will all follow our unique and separate paths in life, it is fortunate that for an all too brief two years, we shared the journey that is the IB program. And what a journey it has been.

--Victoria Cano

Mrs. Henry's English class was fabulous. After struggling with writing for so long; not really understanding how I was to write well, nor what made good writing, I was finally in a class structured around how to write. I learned an unbelievable amount with her; English was never my strong subject and I never really cared for it all that much, but of any English experience I have ever had, working in IB with Mrs. Henry was the most rewarding.

--Lydia Bianchi

I believe that my participation in the IB program has absolutely changed who I am as a student. When I entered the program, I was not at all prepared for the amount of work that I encountered. As all IB students had to do, I had to learn to balance my work with my extracurricular activities, and in the beginning this was really difficult for me. However, in this process, I learned to better organize myself so that I didn't have to stay up until the early hours of the morning the night before a presentation was due just so I could finish it. I learned to work more efficiently, but in a way that also guaranteed a high quality of work. I definitely have become more organized as a result of my participation in IB, and I think that this will greatly aid me next year in college when I have to make good use of my free time to get all my work done but also have time for socializing and extracurricular activities.

--Jen Margulies

Another component I really liked about IB was the Extended Essay. Although it was painful at times, I think it was a fantastic experience. Getting to do true original research on a project spearheaded entirely by me that had such an open window to work on it was really helpful. I really think some of my classmates missed out on the opportunity to do great things with it and chose lackluster topics, but it was really cool to me.... I enjoyed my research and got to pursue one of my passions.

--Ben Vander

One of the things that I improved on greatly through my IB experience is my ability to time manage. Since I get overwhelmed very easily, I have developed different strategies to help manage my stress and ensure that I get my work done ahead of time. By scheduling in work time, as well as rest time, I have been able to avoid procrastination. Simply knowing that I do not procrastinate has given me confidence in my work ethic and abilities.

--Niki Iskarpatyoti

In the end, though I wouldn't say I got exactly what I expected out of the I.B. program, I got something even better- I got everything I needed to be a more effective student and an overall more functional person, and that's the best thing I could have asked for.

--Victoria Marchiony

Not surprisingly, IB was a huge factor in my evolution as a student. I believe this is most evident in my writing capabilities. When looking at English papers I produced in my freshman and sophomore years compared to papers I wrote early in my junior year, the difference is pretty astounding. The evidence for my arguments is now much more clearly rooted in the text itself, and this gives more validity to my argument. Theory of Knowledge is another strength of IB, and it also helped improve my writing. In TOK, there was an expectation of supporting arguments with examples and writing in clear and precise language. Through the writing of journals and the rough draft of the Essay on the Prescribed Title, mastering the persuasive writing that TOK dictated enhanced my writing. The Extended Essay was a huge advantage of IB. Many of my peers have not written an original research paper, let alone one that is around 4,000 words. This gave me good practice for the research papers that will certainly be a major aspect of college.

--Hope Silberstein

The style in which I was learning was different in all of my classes as well. History was Incredible.... The IB history curriculum is designed to teach overarching concepts and themes, as well as cause and effects recurring throughout time, which is exactly the type of learner I am. In most classes the IB curriculum catered to my learning style, which made the program interesting and engaging.

--Lydia Bianchi

I think the biggest benefit from my participation in the program is the fact that I am entering college next year with a greater perspective of my surroundings. For instance, in my economics class, I was able to learn about how the United States economy is integrated with the rest of the world through the broad topics of International trade and exchange rates. I was able to read books from all over the world in English and further understand the French language.

--Lauren Berenbaum

I think one of the most important things IB has done for me is that it has given me the ability to do large amounts of work at a relatively fast pace without getting too stressed out about it. After the first few months of junior year I became organized and focused enough to do many rather large assignments on a single night. Although I still procrastinate to this day, I am able to do quality work under pressure. I certainly wanted to challenge myself when I decided to do IB and it definitely fulfilled that expectation. It became especially difficult when swimming was added on top of my IB workload. This ability to organize my time and work effectively will serve me well for the rest of my life.

--Alex Flake

The program certainly lives up to its level of academic excellence and rigor. Therefore, it is strong for those looking for an overall academic challenge. Secondly, I think the IB Program offers a very "round" education. In combination with CAS, the wide range of classes we can take (Econ, Physics, Music, etc.) make the program a very versatile one. This allows for the student to ultimately get a very "round" education. A last strength of the program, in my opinion, is the very close bond formed among not only classmates but also faculty. This is really invaluable when going through such a rigorous program: being able to rely on others for support.

--Chris Orsinger

My favorite part of the program was being with people who cared. Sitting in a class where the students are engaged and the teachers are enthusiastic to teach, is extremely motivating and much more enjoyable. Being able to hold a debate in class, or listen to justified and creative ways of thinking made me feel that my class time was not being wasted.

--Niki Iskarpatyoti

The question, "why would you do IB?" has been asked of me countless amounts of times since deciding that this was how I wanted to spend my last two years of high school. Even my parents who tell me to try harder have questioned the decision. Despite the many concerns by others, and my own second-guessing, I could not be thankful enough for my IB experience.

--Chris Paine

I believe that I have become a better student—I am able to cope with a heavy load of assignments and activities. I have also learnt how to approach topics and theses with careful consideration and contemplation—my writing has definitely improved thanks to the IB program and I find that I am able to voice my opinions in a more eloquent fashion. When I meet college professors and college students at parties or events, I am able to carry out intelligent conversations and I am able to somewhat understand the nuances and details of those students' and professors' subjects.

--Samaya Sinha

IB's academic rigor speaks for itself. Its ability to connect academia and community, action, and service activities is strong as well. However, I believe that many people become fixated on finishing IB requirements, rather than taking advantage of the experience. As I finish IB and reminisce, I believe that everything I completed within the program was for a character developing reason, and not merely to earn my credits. I believe that all IB students would benefit from a look at the larger picture; that it matters not as much whether you have an even amount of CAS activities, but that it does matter how much those activities mean to you.

--JoHanna Rothseid

I also feel satisfied by my choice to do I.B. because of how prepared I feel for college. Now instead of having to worry about learning to write a paper, I have a head start, and can just jump in and start learning, interning, and shining at [college].... The time-management skills, study habits, analytical tactics, all-nighter tricks and interpersonal skills I learned as an upper classman were a direct result of I.B. pushing me (hard and fast) out of my old, less effective habits. I'm now a machine, and I feel confident that I'm more than ready for college.

--Victoria Marchiony

After completing the extended essay, I was able to learn more about a topic that I was interested in and further develop my own sense of culture. My topic was about the Sino-Tibetan conflict, which is still a substantial topic today. Analyzing both sides of the conflict, it was easy to see where all the disputes come from and why there is friction among the people. Even after finishing the EE, I sometimes become tempted to write another one. Even when I watch television, I manage to come across topics that I am interested in and want to research in depth of. The other day, I came across the topic of alchemy in one of the TV shows. And starting off in college as a chemistry major, I looked into the process of alchemy and found that all the myth and legends were all based off of simple chemistry concepts. I actually felt a little regret at not being able to write an EE about the basis of alchemy.

--Anne Yuan

One of the most valuable things that being in IB taught me was to focus on learning, rather than the grade. In the beginning of junior year, I was entirely focused on the number and letter grades that I was getting and would constantly complain about borderline grades and such. One day, after being fed up with my math class for acting in a similar manner, Mrs. Demaray told us that although having good grades is important, it isn't the most important thing; what really matters is learning and the process of and being able to understand and apply a concept. As someone who does not always perform well on tests, I really took this message to heart. I also think this idea really resonates with the IB philosophy, in that success on examinations is generally based on whether you can back up a claim or follow through the process on a problem, and it isn't just about getting the right answer. Being in IB taught me that grades don't define who I am as a student, but rather the amount of effort I put into something, the steps I take to ensure that I understand an idea, whether or not I can support my views, if I can help someone else because I have a firm grasp on a concept, and many other things are what define me as a student.

--Jen Margulies

...I now cannot watch a movie or read a book without thinking of directorial or authorial purpose. Interpreting and analyzing has become a powerful skill that the IB program has taught me and will be very useful in the future.

--Dan Zhao

The different classes of the IB program also changed the ways in which I approach information. Classes such as TOK and English teach different approaches to interpreting material. Today, when I read something new, instead of simply reading I am able to analyze both the literary style and intellectual focus of the piece. Before joining the IB program I lacked the analytical tools necessary to think in this way.

--Matt Brotman

Thanks to CAS I know that I am a leader; thanks to TOK I know that I see through a different lens than others. Thanks to my Extended Essay I know that I'm intrigued by the eastern religions, conflicts and history. Thanks to the program I know that I am me and am happy to be AMY G, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

--Amy Green

These past two years have not been easy. They have challenged me, they have put my limits to the test, they have pushed me to excel, they have tired me, and they have elated me. Nonetheless, I have grown more than I could have imagined when I handed in my IB application in sophomore year. I strengthened my passions: I loved English, I loved learning how to write essays, I loved reading and discussing novels and plays, I loved investigating an author's style and imitating it. I eagerly met the challenges with which I was faced, such as an extreme amount of schoolwork and sophisticated ways of learning and discussing that I had never come across before in a classroom. I had to learn how to discipline myself in order to balance all of my activities with IB, and, by the same token, I also had to learn what it meant to put too much on my plate. I made beautiful friendships with several teachers and students, who I have cherished throughout these two years and who I will continue to keep close. IB has enabled me to achieve a higher level of thinking, which is much more at a college level than at a high school one. I have become skilled in writing and researching, and I have come to thoroughly enjoy the process of analyzing information and forming theories.

--Costanza Maio

As I student, I have become more effective, and I suppose that's part of the purpose of the IB program. I am a better studier, a better learner, a better collaborator, and better at time management and working efficiently.

--Ben Vander

After seriously reflecting on the past two years of my life, I can say with confidence that IB has not only made my high school experience worthwhile, but has probably changed my life for the better. Knowing how to write effectively is a skill that will benefit me in whatever profession I decide to do. Having a good work ethic will differentiate me from other students. Being able to analyze and think critically will make me a well-rounded person. IB has given me all these skills and has exposed me to world literature, varying perspectives, friends, and teachers who have made a real impact on me. I am so lucky to have had the rare opportunity of being an International Baccalaureate student.

--Hope Silberstein

IB enabled me to develop into a full-fledged, hard-working, dedicated student who knew his limits and capabilities that could plan accordingly and could complete all his assignments well and on time. If you had told me that this student was me two years ago, I would have laughed at you, but I had become a completely different person.

--Jake Wildstein

Another thing that I liked is how all the teachers knew everything about the examinations and all kind of papers, so they could solve all our questions. After years in the program, they knew how to guide us and help us, so that we did our best.

--Sergio Muñiz

I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to work and learn with such an amazingly gifted and intelligent group of my peers, and I think that is the greatest strength of the program. To have learned in an atmosphere in which everyone was eager to learn and willing to put forth a great effort to succeed was truly a wonderful experience.

--Jen Margulies

The IB program has had many benefits for me as a student. Throughout my educational career, I have always been a hard worker. I have always studied hard and I have always tried my best to exceed the requirements. However, being in the IB program, I learned to be adaptable—altering my study skills to adhere to the detailed rubrics. Instead of just memorizing material, I learned to apply the knowledge through analysis. So, my ability to manipulate information has definitely been a positive change for me as a student. Moreover, I had to endure the long process of changing my study habits—I learned to start in advance and rid the procrastination.

--Lauren Berenbaum

I think it has allowed me to become a more well-rounded person and has overall increased my ability to learn. Without this experience I think I would be a very different person than I am today and since I like the way I am now, and how things have turned out it is hard to say that IB was anything but the best decision I could have made.

--Alex Flake

The CAS component is a key aspect of IB that I especially appreciated – for many, it encouraged them to pursue new activities. Personally, I would have pursued many of my CAS activities with or without the existence of the IB requirement; however, CAS did help me put together my thoughts on each of these activities and reflect upon them as well. I had to compare where I had started with what I had finally accomplished, which made me realize how far I had come in many of the activities. It also enabled me to see what remained constant throughout.

--Shilpa Soundararajan

Because of the CAS requirements, I went out and ran cross country. I was an amateur runner as a youngster and joining cross country was an easier option for me. As a result, I have trained to the point where I've reached possibly my climax in physique. I've become more actively engaged in not only running, but also many other sports such as badminton, football, soccer and many more.

--Dan Zhao

And then of course, CAS also helped me discover a little of myself. Overall, I was never really an active person. Sports didn't interest me much and I never really had to will to go out on the weekends to practice anything. Thus, the action part of CAS was just what I needed. At the beginning of this year, in order to fulfill the CAS requirements, I took up a gymnastics class. This was probably one of the best decisions of my life because of how much I love this sport right now. Even starting from a very late age, I can see myself improving during every lesson. At least by now, I was no longer afraid of falling and can actually hold myself together when I am in the air. For that reason, I think the major strengths of IB are the well-balanced set of courses and activities it provides. Not many course forces you to go out into the world and discover something that you love.

--Anne Yuan

I felt that [IB] addressed a number of areas in which I thought I was not a particularly strong student: writing and class discussions. I saw IB as an opportunity to be "forced" to improve those skills and in turn improve my overall skills as a student. In the end, that was precisely what it did.

--Chris Orsinger

I'd say IB certainly provided me with a monumental task, and it looks like I passed it. So I'd say IB has met and exceeded my expectations. I got confirmation a few days ago when a good friend of mine was at Matt Brotman's house and an issue of Time magazine was lying on the counter and I instantly recognized the cartoon as Mao Zedong, the Chinese leader who we studied in great detail. When I asked my friend who the person on the cover was, he had no clue. It was kind of funny to me because literally everyone in IB could name him in 2 seconds, but this guy had never been exposed to such a prominent figure in Chinese history.

--Jake Neville

I wanted to enter the program because I knew that a large portion of my grade in each class involved participation—before the program I was very timid in class, I rarely raised my hand and voiced my opinion. However, being taken out of my comfort zone was a blessing in disguise; I now feel confident that I will go to college next year with the poise to make my voice heard.

--Lauren Berenbaum

I believe that there are a number of reasons why the program is so successful in creating a unique and effective learning environment for IB students. The key reason is that the IB program is designed as a full program. The different courses and focuses work together and enable students to effectively combine the knowledge gained in each class. The extended essay in particular forced me to combine my writing skills with my analytical skills and research skills to create a cohesive paper. This challenge was difficult, but ultimately rewarding and a useful step in becoming a better student and more effective thinker. The program also places students in a learning environment filled with other motivated students. I believe that because I was always around other students who are unafraid to present their ideas and share their knowledge, I was able to learn more. The presence of my fellow IB candidates was motivation for me to want to succeed and also would generate excitement for classes and assignments. The increased amount of group-work in the IB program also made me feel more comfortable with group-work and more effective at fairly dividing work between group members.

--Matt Brotman

Suffice it to say I have received an education to rival the very best of them. But there are many wonderful educational programs out there, however few of them develop the character and spirit the way the IB program does. As much as I retaliated against it, CAS forced me to see the connection between all the different aspects of our lives for creativity, action, and service are inextricably linked to one another. This idea of entirely different realms of thought connecting filtered into my classes, as physics bled into TOK, and Math into English, and so on and so forth. It was this fascination with the intricate spider web that composes our intellectual thought and our Earthly impact that inspired me to move forward with my play. And it is the framework I will carry forward with me on future endeavors.

--Victoria Cano

Aside from the intensity of the school work I think the CAS component of IB also had an impact on me. Although a lot of my main CAS activities were continuations of activities I had participated in earlier in high school, clubs like debate were new experiences for me that really enriched my high school experience. Although the service aspect of CAS was probably the weakest aspect of my portfolio having service on my mind as something I had to do, has slowly evolved to being something I want to do. I think by giving me a motivation to go out and help the community, IB has shown me how rewarding it can be. I hope to be able to do service in college whenever I have the opportunity to do so.

--Alex Flake

...I actually also extremely liked the Extended Essay. I thought it could have been spread out more fairly and consistently over junior and senior years, but it was a fantastic experience and I loved the topic I chose and the research I did. I loved the finished product and often think about the extraordinary ideas about which I wrote. I think it is a difficult but worthwhile project that unfortunately, not many students, other than those in IB, get to experience.

--Costanza Maio

As a student I think IB has given me the confidence to tackle any assignment for any class. I know that if I can conquer the whole two years of IB, anything is possible. No paper too long, no topic too out there, everything is in my mental range now thanks to IB. It has also given me extreme pride in my work and really made me care about what I was putting out there for my teachers. I think I hold myself to a higher standard than the average student and I think it showed for example, in the online Gov class I took. The directions stated, "In two/three well developed paragraphs....", so obviously I wrote like one and a half pages of an answer, only to look at the "correct answer" that they give you after you submit your work, and it be about eight lines long. This literally shocked me and I was taken aback at how people thought that eight lines could be considered 2 well developed paragraphs.

--Jake Neville

In terms of academic skills, I believe I have changed and improved in a few areas. The first is writing. As English was my second language, this was an area that certainly needed improvement. Through the numerous writing assignments not only in English class, but across other subjects, I feel as if my skills as a write have drastically improved. Furthermore, just in terms of general analytical skills, I feel that I have become a more critical thinker. No longer do I think about or investigate issues "on the surface" but rather focus on multiple perspectives and viewpoints, very much intact with the IB learning/teaching methods.

--Chris Orsinger

Class of 2009

I believe that one of the biggest strengths of the IB program is the community created between students and teachers. Not only have I created meaningful relationships with my classmates, but I have also gotten to know many of my teachers well. My classmates and teachers have taught me so much over the past two years. Another strength of the IB program at Harriton is the coordination of things such as internal assessments. Although it may not seem like a big deal, the spacing of the various internal assessments, extended essay, CAS requirements, and such, kept my stress levels to a minimum. By completing the majority of each internal assessment during junior year, I felt at ease when applying to colleges in the fall of senior year. I love the global focus of the IB program, including CAS. This has allowed me to apply my learning in a greater scope and use it outside of school, and made my experience more significant.

--Liza Apothaker

Another IB approach to a class that I prefer over the traditional way of teaching is in English class.... The emphasis IB puts on authorial purpose and analyzing text was intriguing. Pre-IB I would read a poem or a book superficially, not identifying major symbols, motifs, etc. However, my teachers did an incredible job in training us to easily pick out major literary elements. Now when I read not only do I feel more educated, but also reading is more fun and with a purpose (especially with poems).

--Cate Butler

The Extended Essay gave me motivation to research in linguistics, a field I enjoy learning about that would not otherwise be covered in school and for which I would not have found time if it were to compete with other schoolwork. In the end I was very proud of my essay: it was the component of IB that I had really been looking forward to, as a unique opportunity that no other high school curriculum could provide, and the essay I wrote was the culmination of over a year of original research, as well as of the many years I had spent learning French. I had no doubt I could accomplish something like the essay that I submitted, but only IB offered to make this extracurricular research worth something in terms of my responsibilities to the school. This part of IB fulfilled and surpassed my expectations, and I would do IB again if only to have the opportunity to prepare another such essay.

--Eugenia Sokolskaya

I could not be more happy that I made that decision as IB has certainly made me a better worker, time manager and student as a whole. Not only did IB do that but it broadened my perspective toward learning and academics in general. One of the greatest parts about the IB program, at least from perspective, is that it treats its students with a sense of maturity and independence that only serves to bolster learning, providing that the student is motivated. Contrary to popular belief, I did not necessarily find IB to be any more difficult than an honors or AP class. IB was not the academic torturing device that everybody likes to make it into. IB was and is simply different. As I said, the program inherently treats its students with more maturity, respect and responsibility. If approached properly these qualities can really give a student a much greater sense of freedom as well as worthwhile.

--Andrew Cerami

I'm not exactly sure as to why I decided to join the IB program—although I believe it might have had something to do with fact that my brother did it. Nevertheless, I think joining the IB program was one of the best decisions I could have made not only for my high school career but also for myself personally. I think that the IB program is a unique program that really helps kids to learn at new levels and to always critically analyze a problem.

--Tom Smith

Our three history teachers, by the end, were ready to do anything to help us study and succeed on our IB exam. The way of approaching history is something that I had never experienced before and something that I greatly enjoyed. The questions we had never started by "what", but by "How" or Why" instead. Studying the reasons why things happened is a lot smarter than memorizing the "what" answer. The research papers we had to write were very enriching, as we usually had to research a topic that we had not studied in class, allowing us to learn a topic that specifically interested us.

--Olivia Chatin

I was doing my Anthropology reading and found the following quote:

"Whitehead once offered to the natural sciences the maxim "Seek simplicity and distrust it." To the social sciences he might well have offered "Seek complexity and order it."

Already it is easy to see that TOK has really influenced my greater outlook on learning and it has been a great help in these first

weeks of college. Just thought I'd say hello (and I wish I had read this argument from this paper previously--it's excellent and puts an interesting twist on the idea of cultural relativism.)

--Rachel Eisenstadt (in an email sent during her first semester at the University of Pennsylvania. The text she references is the same quotation on which she wrote her Theory of Knowledge essay as an IB senior)

As a result of my participation in the IB program, I changed as a student and as a person. As a student, I became more prompt with completing my work and studying. Because of my packed schedule, I began to study more concisely by figuring out the focus and the significance of the upcoming exam and learning how I had to answer the command terms. Also, I am now more comfortable with working in groups/pairs because of my abundant experiences of group projects in IB. The ethical guidelines of the IB program have trained me to become a more careful resource-user and taught me the ways of being ethical as a student. As a person, I became more well-rounded because of the various experiences I faced while building up my CAS hours. Also as a person, I became unafraid of taking challenges. Knowing the fact that I faced some of the most rigorous courses in high school, I feel that I can deal with hard tasks outside of school as well.

--Paula Choi

I think the major strengths of this program are that it can make any dedicated student achieve a level of intellectuality that is not found in many people. Furthermore, the program is so rigorous and open-minded that even the smartest, most organized students that I have known find it challenging and I think that this is a positive aspect of the program. It really forces every student to challenge him/herself.

--Grazia Castagna

When I entered the IB program, I was a shy individual who was just beginning to get used to Harriton after changing schools two years before. I was excited to be a part of IB, but I still had only a vague sense of the program. I had heard from IB graduates that the incredibly challenging curriculum would provide me with an excellent education and prepare me for college academics, but I realize now that that explanation does not even begin to describe what IB provided for me. IB doesn't just force you to work hard, but it provides you with a support system of caring teachers and a small group of high-achieving students who are confronting the same challenges as you are. This created the close community that I had been searching for since I enrolled at Harriton. Each day I had the same classes with the same students. Some people may say that this creates a feeling of separation from the rest of the school, but I loved it. I never felt isolated because I had classes with many students outside of IB, and having classes with the same people each day enabled me to develop meaningful academic and personal connections.

--Kelsey Curtis

My experience in IB can be summarized as discovery. I discovered myself, my studying techniques, new activities that I enjoyed, and most importantly, life lessons. IB was beneficial to me not only as a student but as an individual. IB was the push I needed to get me out of my comfort zone and ready for college.

--Marissa Fasanelli

Through the IB program, I have evolved as a student and a person. I honed my writing and critical thinking skills. I learned not to accept what I was presented with; instead, I questioned the assumptions behind everything. I learned to study something through multiple lenses and angles. I began to take the information I learned in each of my classes and make connections between them and with contemporary and historical issues around the world. As a person, I gained a more global perspective and greater appreciation for worldwide issues, especially through the CAS program.

--Liza Apothaker

The past two years in the program has proven to hold more than a few moments that sparked continuous thought. The part of the program that I feel has enriched my experience the most is the extent of high expectations in all areas of knowledge. I appreciate that IB expects a rounded student to achieve in the Sciences as well as the Humanities, even if one has strengths in one versus another. This fills another reason why I decided to enter the IB program. I feared that if I did want to take APs in every subject, it simply would not be possible (as many of my non-IB friends have encountered). IB has offered me the opportunity to see what subjects I truly excel in, and how I can overcome difficulties in subject that are not as naturally appealing to me.

--Rachel Eisenstadt

However, as we learned in these two years, IB is more than just a method of teaching. The program also taught us important lessons in responsibility, with multiple long-term projects and the ultimate accountability to a set of standardized exams after a year or two of

study. We had the choice to excel and take full advantage of the opportunities provided to us by the program, or, conversely, to turn to other priorities and perform at a bare minimum. While at first it seems that any intelligent being would take the first route, what we truly gained from this course of experiences was a basis in how to find a comfortable middle ground, in which we satisfy ourselves without overdoing it and destroying our achievements. Instead of the usual high school system of prescribing assignments, punishing imperfection, and narrow windows of performance, we had a more realistic environment of choice, with more opportunities to fail or excel, allowing for our own priorities to have more sway. We learned to prioritize; we learned to put our efforts where we wanted them most while still accounting for all the responsibilities we could not escape.

--Eugenia Sokolskaya

The IB program has left me with more than I was expecting to gain from it. My study habits and learning skills have been completely revolutionized, and I am forever grateful for this, and for all the support I received from the teachers and the IB coordinator. I no longer fear any academic challenges that college may pose next year, I feel extremely eager and prepared to take on anything. Additionally, I have learned how to participate in class discussion, which I can now appreciate as being one of the most effective ways of learning new material and fully understanding it. I have not only become a better student thanks to the program, but also a better person. The structure of IB offers a well-rounded education to the students. I use the knowledge I have gained from the program outside of school all the time, usually in discussions with friends or family about social and political issues. Classes such as TOK and the CAS component, which are unique to IB, have changed the way I think about myself, the people who surround me, and society.

--Julia Elliot

“This remarkable thing—the most remarkable thing about the IB program—is the community that it fosters.”

I remember reading Eddie Fishman’s quote two years ago, and it has not left my mind since. I wholeheartedly agree with the statement. IB has truly transformed my social schema. My conversations have become noticeably more intellectual and thought provoking. My day-to-day language is more advanced and fluid. In addition, IB provided a setting in which I could be surrounded with students who have the same goals as I do and an eager thirst for knowledge. The intelligence level of my fellow IBers is truly magnificent. In fact, I can honestly say that I have learned as much from them as I have from my formal instructors. Within the program, your peers become your resources. This shift is most definitely a result of my participation in IB.

--Britt Glassman

... Overall my IB experience was excellent. I would strongly recommend the IB program to any one that asked me. I challenged myself to think in ways that were completely new to me, and I learned skills that I will value for the rest of my life. Also, it sounds cliché, but the IB students do become a family; a dysfunctional family at times, but a family nonetheless. I met my best friends in the IB program and created other friendships that will last for years.

--Cate Butler

In just two weeks I will be graduating high school, and I can hardly believe it. I know that over the past four years I have changed a great deal, with most of the changes occurring over the past two years. I have become exponentially more confident and capable as a student, and I know that my success in college will be largely due to the education I received as an IB student. I cannot thank my teachers enough for providing me with a welcoming community and guidance, yet at the same time challenging me so that I would know how much I can achieve.

--Kelsey Curtis

The unique strength of the classes goes along with the IB program’s philosophy that a student should be challenged in every subject. It is the requirement for an IB student to take every subject at the IB level that makes the program the most difficult curriculum in the school. Although some could see this as a negative, I see it as a major advantage. Due to this requirement, I have learned to take risks, and I am now rid of the fear of taking a course at an advanced level solely because it is not my “best” subject.

--Britt Glassman

I value having an equivalent education to students from foreign nations. It was very neat when I met a former IB student from Kenya with whom I could discuss classes we mutually enjoyed, etc. There is no question that IB’s international standardization gives its students a similar experience that can help to create connections and friendships. Moreover, the students that were in my IB classes gave my experience the internationalism I was looking for. Having students from various countries such as New Zealand and Tanzania gave me insight into unique and very different cultures.

--John Going

The Senior Project experience in the IB program was certainly beneficial because it granted me several opportunities. The Extended Essay was perhaps my favorite part of the IB experience. I was able to research and write in great detail about a topic in mathematics for which I have great interest. This was also a chance to learn how to write a "math paper," to learn how to write proofs, to learn the math itself for that topic. I can now claim that I have written a legitimate scholarly essay in mathematics reaching over twenty-five pages. Furthermore it was just fun to write.

--Elliot Weiser

Looking back I find that doing IB really gave me a sense of what academics are. Instead of some distant, contrived information that is told to you out of a book, IB seems to put everything out on the table and it becomes your responsibility to reach out to it. All of the different subjects connect until learning is just learning. I would not trade the IB experience in for anything.

--Andrew Cerami

During my time in the International Baccalaureate Program I have personally experienced many of its strengths. In my opinion, the class discussions are one of the major strengths of the program, and should, of course, continue to be the backbone of the International Baccalaureate Program at Harriton High School. The focus on critical thinking and analytical writing emphasized in the program are a major strength as well. Of my classes, I believe that junior year English was a particularly important part of the program. I not only learned how to study literature from various cultures and regions, but the emphasis on writing, and the high demands placed on me as a student, helped me challenge myself as a student of English, and greatly improve my writing skills. I also believe that the discussions held in Theory of Knowledge class helped provide a context for an International Baccalaureate Program education, and gave a broader significance to what we were learning. Overall, the classes in which I learned the most were junior year English, both years of psychology, and Theory of Knowledge. I believe that the strengths of these classes were the challenges they presented, the questions that they raised, and the teachers' ability to put the course material into a broader context. I think that challenging work, an emphasis on questions rather than answers, and examining things from different perspectives are the heart of an International Baccalaureate Program education.

--Sarah Gordon

When it comes down to it, I didn't go into IB for the reasons I'm grateful I went into the program for today. Whatever my original long term goals were for entering the IB program really don't seem to matter now though. I am going to NYU in the fall and I couldn't be more overjoyed; whether or not this feat is solely because I took IB courses and not AP really doesn't matter to me because I'm happy with the sort of student I turned out to be and I believe that I ended up where I really should be. The program...paid off in the end and will be an accomplishment I store in my success box for quite some time.

--Susu Harmache

There were a couple of things that initially attracted me to the IB program. The first was the small class sizes. I had always learned best in a small environment where the learning was more discussion based than lecture based and it seemed like IB had a lot to offer along those lines. The second reason I did IB was because I knew that colleges thought very highly of the program and I wanted to get into a good college. I feel that the program has definitely met those expectations for me..... Almost every class I had every day in both junior and senior year involved a discussion of some kind and I feel that really benefited me as a student. I liked this part of the program so much that when I was looking at colleges one of my main criteria was small class sizes with discussion-based learning. As far as college, though it has been a long road, I did end up getting in to my first choice college and IB definitely helped me there.

--Connor Johnson

My closest friends have always called me an unrealistic dreamer. Everything I aspire to be is always outlandish and close to inconceivable, however, it was this very aspect that made me choose IB. Perhaps I grew up because of this program or my maturing was simultaneous with the program, but whatever the reason, I was broken of my unrealistic ways. Through this program I have become more comfortable with myself as both a student and a person and no longer have to dream wildly in order to make myself happy. Originally I reduced IB to a two year check point that would lead me to something greater, but upon finishing I, I realized the program was just not a means to an end but it was a process that I needed to go through in order for me evolve not only as a student but as a person.

--Marissa Fasanelli

I made the right decision. I have found the style of the program to be rewarding. Discussion-based and writing-intensive courses taught me tons of facts, but more importantly I feel now that I know how to learn. I have been forced to think critically and can now ask difficult questions and infer and read between the lines. I cannot believe how easily I made it through my exams. Sit here for two

hours and explain and analyze President Wilson's successes and failures both foreign and domestic between 1912-1920? No problemo. Decipher this poem you have never seen before and provide evidence based on the author's writing style to defend your claims? Piece of cake. I'm able to wrap my mind around concepts in a way I didn't realize was possible. Many IB graduates who have now completed their freshman years of college strongly believe they were over-prepared—and that college has been a relief from the stress of IB. And I believe it.... It has been incredibly difficult, but equally rewarding. Given the chance, I would do IB again in a flash. I have sat in wonder and told my parents time and again how lucky I feel to be receiving such an incredible and unique education.

--Laura Jungreis

In addition, I know that as a result of the extensive writing and speaking required by IB, I have undeniably become both a much better writer and speaker. As well, the great amount of work from my courses has opened my eyes to the extent of the tasks that I will tackle in college and has likely prepared me for such tasks. The tools that IB has given me have unquestionably helped me in the college process and will hopefully make me stand out in college and beyond.

--John Going

I believe I have changed as a student as a result of the program. I feel that my critical thinking skills have vastly improved. I'm not sure how to put this but when I learn something new I now feel like I have the ability to evaluate it whereas before I just accepted it. I feel that this puts me in a very unique position among many students who didn't participate in the IB program.

--Connor Johnson

A large part of IB that I particularly liked was how all the subjects were tied together. We read literature in English written by a man in the Russian Gulag camps, and then studied those camps and the government that instituted them, in detail in history...and how we learned calculus and logarithms in Math that we used in Chemistry for rate and equilibrium calculations.

--Ilya Kavalero

My IB journey began in the 10th grade, when this aforementioned passion began to burn, like the great poets had described, inside me for the art of words and stories. It was only through that odyssey of self-discovery, of the realization of what I wanted to do most in life, that I could formulate a path by which I could not only attain, but also tame my craft. Hone my craft. Perfect it and relish it in the same breath. I had the desire and the tools. Now I needed a teacher who could not shape my thoughts, but show me how to make them even more my own by guiding me through the practice of speaking with clarity and writing with coherency. It was in this ambitious mindset that I submitted my application for IB, with the hopes of becoming a stronger and better vessel for the art of literature and creative writing. And now, I am so proud and glad at this moment to be able to say that I have achieved what I wanted through my IB experience, and that IB has given me everything I needed to achieve my maturity of voice.

--Effie Kong

IB has helped realize what academic and time management are good for me, something which I was unable to do in the past because I would follow the advice of others instead of looking towards myself. Another aspect of my studying skills which have changed due to IB is my ability to prioritize; before IB I would study hard and for a long time for every class. But in IB I did not have the sufficient time with all of the requirements of the program and I had to learn to study smart as oppose to studying hard.

--Josh Levin

[IB] was an extremely positive experience for me and has allowed me to learn a great deal about myself. I have learned that I can effectively articulate my views and confidently challenge others' opinions. Over the course of two years, I have evolved from a reserved student to a passionate participant who can be counted on to spark and maintain a dialogue in our many discussion-based classes. I have learned to be a critical thinker, considering dissenting opinions and varying perspectives to strengthen my assertions, and have recognized my ability to maintain an open-mind, evaluating both sides of an argument and accepting new information. The global focus of IB Program has broadened my horizons, enlightening me to consider the impact of world events and policies well beyond the immediate world around me. I am now a sympathetic and inquisitive learner, viewing issues with an international perspective. My IB courses have taught me to no longer accept definitions and established concepts because they merely exist, but assess their validity and evaluate their origins and purposes.

--Melissa Langer

...the IB Curriculum was everything that I expected and more. The curriculum not only gave me an education in numerous subjects, but it also helped me to draw connections between areas of study. As IB stresses an interdisciplinary approach to education, I was

often able to draw parallels between material in classes such as History and English or Visual Arts. This ability to draw connections between realms of education will greatly help me in the future. Furthermore, while the curriculum did not show me a clear career path, it did open my eyes to the humanities.

--John Going

I have also learned several pragmatic skills that have been and will be useful for me as student. The IB program has taught me the importance of time management when dealing with a heavy workload and planning for long term projects. I learned how to perform valid research and how to interpret various types of sources. Additionally, especially after undergoing the experience of taking numerous exams, I have learned how to remain dedicated and focused for extended periods of time.

--Melissa Langer

I feel as though IB has changed me for the better. The one fact that each time we learn something in a humanities class, we look at the topic from many angles and perspectives has made me a more open and analytical person. By being awarded marks for the process of solving an integral rather than getting the correct answer I have changed to do less work in my head, which has resulted in me doing the work consistently more correctly. I feel that it is these things that are the major strengths and advantages of the program, that each task is done carefully, attentively, analytically and thoroughly.

--Ilya Kavalero

[CAS] allowed me to be more opened towards the community that I live in, along with the communities abroad, such as a village in Mali, where I volunteered. Some of my CAS experiences were the most unbelievable and life changing experiences of my life.

--Olivia Chatin

I have really enjoyed the general structure of IB classes, which I feel has a very strong focus on critical analysis. While Harriton does not have a lot of control over the material that I have covered in IB, the teachers in the IB program are another important factor that lead to the strength of my classes and one that Harriton does have a lot of control over. Harriton in general has what I have always considered to be a strong staff and I think that being in IB allowed me to interact more with the faculty. Part of this is just a byproduct of growing up and thereby becoming more comfortable communicating with adults. But a large part of what helps to expedite this process is the small class sizes that usually seem to occur in IB and the strong focus on class discussion.

--Jess Metlay

No longer was I a robotic machine that only memorized material solely for multiple choice tests and that scored high A's on most of them. Instead, my writing skills and thought processing skills multiplied to a level I now know I would not have been able to achieve outside of IB. Besides the academic gift that I received, I also learned the meaning of balance. I realized that, in order to survive and thrive in the IB program, one cannot solely concentrate on the grades and numbers, as I had done so my entire life. Without enjoyment in what I was doing and learning, and without a way to balance work and fun, I would have become completely overwhelmed by the IB program.

--Joanna Qian

I am definitely a well-rounded student thanks to the IB program, having taken on a math class harder than I ever expected, two years of fascinating history and a great bio class, amongst other things. The best part of all these classes was the depth of each one of them. None of them ever fell short of being engaging and challenging.

--Monika Zaleska

The IB program has really exceeded my expectations. Yes, it is a lot of work, but at the same time the workload is so interesting that you find it hard not to want to do all of the assignments. It introduced me into a realm of students that I may have not become so close with. For the first time in high school I felt like the teachers were not just caring about the letter grade or the percentage that I achieved but whether or not I really understood what I was learning.... The relief of the stress of achieving the grade on my report card really freed me up to delve into each subject as an individual and find my own style of learning.

--Jess Rothstein

The CAS component of the Senior Project allowed me to participate in several activities that I enjoyed while leading me to do others that I had not have done previously. I had already run cross country and track for Harriton, but I did not expect I would get as involved with them as I did, even becoming captain. This was much to my benefit, as I plan to run in college. My other activities for

both “creativity” and “service” were very much in line with what I would like to professionally. Science Club was a chance to show and explain cool science demonstrations to elementary school kids while my cryptology presentation was an opportunity to teach the set 4 Theory of Knowledge class about a cool application of mathematics. Being a tennis counselor at Levy Tennis Pavilion and a classroom aide at Adath Israel Hebrew School helped me to learn to work with kids. These activities have aided me down the path of becoming a teacher.

--Elliot Weiser

Aside from the close community within the program, I cannot help but mention the phenomenal teachers who make the program the best it can possibly be. Through their instruction, I have learned to question my surroundings, to appreciate the views of my peers, and to know when to challenge my own beliefs. The discussion based classes aid in developing great oral skills that are sure to serve me well in college and beyond. Specifically, a few classes shine the brightest as I reminisce about the last two years. The eleventh grade English class helped me to not only become a better writer, but to appreciate the English language in a completely different manner. The class teaches students to consider the authorial purpose of works, something I was never asked to do in the past. Prior to IB, I was simply told to read books and then write essays about them. Instead, IB places everything in a greater context. The IB history curriculum also promotes an entirely new way of thinking. The course includes “historiography.” In other words, the student considers what point of view a certain historian is coming from (traditionalists, post traditionalists, revisionists, etc). Prior to IB, I was simply given a source and asked to write about it. Once again, IB prompts the student to learn more about the context of the source, instead of solely the content.

--Britt Glassman

The IB program is supposed to be interdisciplinary program that transcends and connects different classes and subjects. I first discovered this phenomenon in English when we started reading *The Great Gatsby*; we were assigned a research project on the topics from the book, at which point I realized that all the topics related to the time period we were studying in history. Even in chemistry class one day Mr. Gauvin made an analogy to *The Scarlet Letter*, which we had read over the summer for English.

--Tom Smith

The main advantage of the IB methods of teaching was the focus on discussions as an alternative to lecture, with significant benefits to us as students. One of the most meaningful compliments we ever received as a group was from the panel of visiting administrators who came to discuss IB with our TOK class. Having listened to our observations about the program, one of the panelists said that we were obviously very comfortable expressing our opinions and supporting our arguments, since we spent so much time doing it in class. Hopefully, in college we will have more courses where the class is oriented around discussion; if not, these experiences will help us do better in whatever course we choose in life, to clearly define our opinions while respecting views others hold. In addition, the focus on essay writing in all subjects, not just in relation to literature, opened up an unexplored form of expression for us, teaching us to logically support our arguments in writing as well as in discussion, a skill doubtlessly useful in any professional field.

--Eugenia Sokolskaya

IB has definitely changed me as a student but even more so as a person. When I attended my official visit to college I sat in an Organic Chemistry class and everyone thought it was very challenging. I found that I actually knew the answers and explanations that the professor was focusing on. Through courses such as TOK I was able to question my preconceived notions about controversial topics such as abortion. As a person IB has taught me a lot about my skill set and its strengths along with serious time management. I play three sports, run two community service organizations, am Vice President of Student council, and am an IB student. These things each take a copious amount of hours but somehow I found out how to manage it all. That skill will really help me to emerge as a leader in college and in my future.

--Jess Rothstein

The initial appeal of the International Baccalaureate program was great. It offered so much of what I hoped to get out of high school: discussion, analysis, questioning and so much more. It also seemed like a great way to forgo taking a plethora of AP classes to boost my resume for college. So after the presentation at Lower Merion, while everybody was presenting all that was wrong with the program, I found all the positives. I submitted my application, had my interview, picked classes and transferred schools only to be proven completely wrong about my expectations.

Yes, I fell in love with the program. Yes, I loved all my teachers. Yes, I felt challenged and like I was finally learning something. But I also realized that while boosting my resume may seem like a good reason to do the program, it would not make you happy or successful while participating in it. I saw many of my classmates spend 2 miserable years for they simply did IB because of the prestige it holds. I, on the other hand, jumped head first into the challenges and came out successful. I learned so much. I learned to challenge what I know, and to take all information at face value, until you are able to analyze its origin, purpose, values and

limitations. I cherished the fact that I was able to challenge my teachers, and sometimes (albeit very rarely) prove them wrong. I appreciated the guided two-year experience that allowed me to be focused on a specific goal—the IB diploma. Otherwise, I know I would become completely overwhelmed by the ton of options available to my liking. Yet most importantly, IB was like a safe haven for me where the inner dork could finally shine after two years of being kept hidden.

--Karolina Swider

In addition to the interdisciplinary connection the IB program provides, I think that the workload and the amount of critical analysis necessary are parts of the program that really pushed me as a student. I feel as though the program has taught me to be a significantly better student. The program has helped me a great deal in dealing with projects and long-term assignments through a lot of time management and plan. With all the internal/external assessment, the extended essay, and other class assignments/projects/essays, it was extremely important for me to learn to how to effectively make time for these things as well as to keep myself sane by making time for myself to enjoy.

--Tom Smith

Overall, IB has been a great experience for me. I have grown tremendously as a person and learned much more than I ever could have expected. I can only hope I will be as prepared for college as I have been promised and I hope that my giant box-full of two years of notes will come in handy at one point. The structure of classes has always been amazing and the quality of our great teachers is very high. I can't imagine what my junior and senior year would have been like, but I can take a wild guess that I would not have learned as much without the IB program. I am forever grateful for all the opportunities offered to me by the program [and] the teachers....

--Karolina Swider

Overall, I must admit that although I thought I knew what to expect, I was taken aback by the amount of knowledge that was thrown upon me. It was an incredibly indulging and educational experience; two years of learning that truly helped me understand both the educational and real sides of life.... IB helps students realize that certain things we learn carry on into the world, and they do not simply stay in high school. I am glad that I learned this while still in high school, thanks to the auspices of the International Baccalaureate Program. Hopefully students in the years to come will be able to experience the same growth that I have had. The teachers were very responsive, and helped us with all of our struggles. Many a time Mr. O'Brien helped me with both problems at school and problems at home. His door was (almost) always open, and he met with any student when they needed guidance. It gave the IB Program a much more human feel, something larger than just school. These past two years were some that I believe I would do the same if I were given the opportunity to start over.

--Ryan Touhill

From my experience with the program, it is clear that the IB program at Harriton is strong in all its aspects, including the humanities, quantitative sciences, social sciences, and Senior Project. I have learned a great deal in every course and can reciprocate much of what I have learned, not by parroting information, but by reproducing a sophisticated style of writing that matches the course: lab reports, historical research essays, literary commentaries, etc. The IB program at Harriton is strong because its teachers make it strong, by demanding high quality and quantity of work from their students.

--Elliot Weiser

I entered the IB program junior year to become a well-rounded worldly learner. Throughout these two years I have worked very hard to make that happen. Though I will always honestly say that IB's workload was very challenging, I will always say also, that I would do it all again. As a student, I have become skillful, determined and well rounded: traits that are sure to help me next year at Swarthmore College.

--Monika Zaleska

Class of 2008

Academically this program has helped me grow a lot. It has taught me how to be a better student. First and foremost the program has taught me how to become a better writer.... Second, the program has taught me better time management. (Even though I thought I had good time management). Finally, my academic life has been greatly improved from the knowledge that I gained from all my classes. From TOK I learned how to become more philosophical; from history and economics, a better understanding of the world,

and so forth. In addition, I truly drew connections between my different classes, which helped to broaden my knowledge and my understanding of the various topics taught in class.

--Kim Berenbaum

Almost every class made me think differently, and for the better. English made me really look at the author's purpose and how it was achieved as opposed to just plot summary. History forced me to consider historiography when looking at events and the values of a source when looking for historical evidence as opposed to just memorizing dates. Economics showed me how the market and the government and society are all interdependent on each other. Physics allowed me to see my environment as a complex system of dynamic equilibriums. Spanish had me examine foreign cultures and treat them as my own. And of course, Theory of Knowledge forced me to do so many things, to question myself, others, the true course of thought being taken, the question questioning the question, support other perspectives to further justify my own, the causes and effects of a thought or statement, the list goes on. IB opened my eyes to the world, literally.

--Jonathan Dasani

Overall, this was one of the best experiences of my life. I now look back on it, and I am proud of myself coming all this way, but also telling myself that it was worth it, worth the effort to go beyond my abilities. Of course I didn't always do the right things at the right moments, didn't always give the best or right answers, but as most people would say "the only way to learn is to make mistakes". I don't know how many times people have told me that they didn't understand why I had gotten involved with IB, how many times people have told me to give up, that on their side of the line, there was almost no work and that you could "party" and have fun more often. But now, I can't really imagine the kind of fun I could have gotten without my IB folks. It would have been different, but some parts of me would have been missing. People outside of IB cannot understand what it is like, they just don't get it.

--Anne-Sophie Guerin

I became acquainted with the IB program because my older sister, Joanna Kenty, was enrolled in it from 2000 to 2004. She was one of the first IB classes at Harriton, and her experience was an extremely positive one. Although we both reminisce about the difficulty about the program, I rarely hear her talk about IB in a negative way, and she always addresses the positive outcomes of being in IB rather than the problems she faced while enrolled in the program her junior and senior year. The main reason I decided to follow in her footsteps was due to her enthusiasm when she expressed her freshman year of college at Wesleyan University that her classes were surprisingly easy due to the excellent preparation the IB program provided. In addition to helping me get into a good college, I knew IB would help prepare me for rigorous classes at a good college, and I saw that training as invaluable.

--Nora Kenty

I must also confess that I have come to appreciate English literature. Previously, I thought a story was just a story or a poem was just a poem. However, over the course of these two years, I realized that there is much more to just reading for pleasure. Authors actually think about what they write and write in a 'deeper' way. For me it is fascinating to pick up any book and now be able to pick out literary features and come to understand why the author used a particular element and how he or she was able to convey the intended feelings.

--Caroline Orsinger

Overall my IB experience has been absolutely spectacular and a great way to spend my last two years at Harriton. I have learned a lot about both the classes and the people and I know whole heartedly that this experience is really going to help me later in college and life.

--Kelly Higgins

The writing of the Extended Essay was another great aspect of the program for me. I had enough freedom to write about something which truly interested me, and which led me on an adventure to meet and interview distant cousins in Japan. Through the EE experience, I have a sense of what a research paper is like, and how to organize long papers in the future. I have a sense of how to mesh different subjects of interest (in the case of my paper, literature and history), and this is a great skill that I will doubtlessly utilize and further develop through my life.

--Jake Hawkesworth

The IB program has also taught me to go ask for help from teachers. Prior to the program I never really needed to get help to do well in my classes. After entering the program I realized that school was not as easy as it was before. I discovered that to do well in school I would need to talk to my teachers to get a better understanding of the topics discussed in class. I also realized that many

teachers want their students to come in to discuss what is going on in class. After discovering this I realized that I should not have been scared and ashamed to go in and ask for help. That getting help is part of the learning experience and that for me to do well, I need to go in and talk with my teachers. I believe that this aspect is very important for my future that I need to go and get help with my professors when I do not understand something in college.

--Kim Berenbaum

Another strong suit was the C.A.S. program, which I found to be much more beneficial to my maturation process than I had expected. It was almost like interviewing for a job when finding places to volunteer, and for all my activities it forced me to evaluate what I had actually learned over the course of my hours, and how it had changed me, and how I had changed it, which I had never considered before.

--Alexander White

The program has forced me to learn things about myself that I never would have had the opportunity to discover. I have changed in that I am no longer reluctant to try things that are completely new and different. CAS has been the main reason for that but the program itself forces you to do new things (e.g. original research, experimentation). The program has also made me a more outgoing and confident person, being in such a close knit community each student becomes very comfortable just being themselves.... I have always been a fairly confident person and IB has definitely helped to further my development in that department but I have also seen students who were incredibly shy and timid come out of their shells due to the program. Finally I think the one thing that people always say about the program is that it really prepares you for the next step: college. The program can be really hard and there are some days where we had the same work load as a college student but less time to do it. Going off that thought IB has made me a more organized person, I have always been good at time management because of my various sports and activities but IB forced me to be organized about my work. I never used an assignment book until junior year; I just kept everything in my head. Now that I have used an assignment book for two years I don't know what I would do without it.

--Kelly Higgins

Most important, I think, is the social aspect of IB. I entered the program along with twenty other kids, half of which I could call acquaintances, and only about three of which I could call friends. These past two years I truly feel that I can call each one of those kids my friends now. I would be able to hold a serious, personal conversation with any one of them, feeling totally comfortable and knowing they do too. And despite forewarnings, I did not lose touch with people outside of IB, and still maintain relationships with those not in IB.

--Jonathan Dasani

However, in my experience, I found IB to be much more than what I had expected. Initially, I viewed IB as nothing more than a set of higher level courses that would prepare me for college. Looking back on my early perceptions of IB, I now realize that they do the program no justice. The courses are not just about learning the material. The IB philosophy is very alive in all aspects of the program.... IB courses are taught in a manner that they teach students to think critically. Personally, all the different perspectives I have been exposed to have led me to become a better rounded and more defined person. It seemed as if the program was geared towards me and honing my skills, rather than towards rote memorization of content. Basically, IB encouraged me to learn simply for the sake of learning. The program has fed my intellectual curiosity and I have learned how to pursue my own personal interests in a scholarly manner.

--Tim Quinn

I am so grateful for having done IB because I don't think anything could have prepared me for college in the same way and to the same extent. After making it through two years of IB, I am confident that I will be able to handle a college course load, produce great quality work, and maintain a social life. College will be hard work, but I know that my teachers and the rigor of the IB program have me more than prepared, so look out Penn State!

--Sarah Levenson

I don't know if I could pinpoint a major strength to the program because there are so many. It is a very cohesive program which I think makes it easier to go through because as a student you know that everything you do is being done for a reason and one day it will make sense across all disciplines. I also think the teachers involved in the program make it what it is. I recently got to speak to an IB student at a school in Colorado and she said that IB was not a good program; the teachers were horrible, it was disorganized, people did poorly on the exams, and it was a waste of time. None of those statements apply to our program and I think it's because of the faculty (at all levels) involved in the program and they really make it the great program that it is. Furthermore I think one of the

greatest strengths of the program is that it is very rigorous. It is much more appealing and therefore draws the more hard working students who will in the end appreciate the amount of work they do.

--Kelly Higgins

The program met these high expectations, however over the course of my IB career my expectations for myself have changed. I no longer see myself as being "successful" if I get an A; I am successful if I learn the material thoroughly. The initial dismay that I felt about getting lower grades has transformed itself into the realization that grades, on their own, are not a measure of knowledge. IB has been fundamental in helping me reach this conclusion, because it provides an internationally standardized curriculum on which I can judge for myself how much I have learned. My IB classes encourage discussion, and today I routinely do independent research to further explore what was discussed in class. Despite my initial expectations, IB is not necessarily a collection of the school's "smartest" students. However, each and every one of us have a thirst for learning that I can see nowhere else at Harriton, and being immersed in this environment has taught me more than any lecture ever could. IB creates a peer group where it is acceptable, even encouraged, to quote Kafka or discuss the theory of relativity in general conversation. The IB teachers, students, and program promote learning for the sake of learning, and this has truly made my educational experience stronger.

--Jess Mayer

My IB experience has been very influential to the choices and decisions I have made. It has shaped what my criteria when I was searching for a college. I loved the high expectations IB had for its students and its commitment to a well-rounded education, so in a college I looked for a competitive student body and a university with a commitment to liberal arts. IB is an experience that will stay with me always. It has given me the tools to go out into the world with confidence.

--Alicia Chen

Leaving that presentation [about the IB Program] as a seventh grader I thought it was a fabulous program and something that I would be very interested in when I finally got to high school. I was currently in Waterbound at Welsh Valley and saw some similarities in the two programs that intrigued me. I really liked the idea of small classes with the same students over two years and wanted the vigorous work load that would come with the program. The IB program more than lived up to my expectations; the program was exactly what I was looking for both in terms of difficulty and community.

--Kelly Higgins

These past two years in IB...have brought me a newfound maturity that I can only now appreciate. It has taught me flexibility, responsibility, and poise; skills I did not even realize I was lacking. IB, for all its hardships, has helped mold me into the person I am today, and for that I am truly grateful.

--Jess Mayer

In these past two years my writing capabilities have drastically improved and I've emerged as not only a better writer but a better reader as well. As a junior, I was so excited to read the works of Franz Kafka and Albert Camus and felt sophisticated when I knew sophomores in college studying the same literary works. Not only this, I understood the messages the authors were portraying, thanks to the help of my peers and teachers. My IB English experience has increased my comprehension abilities and analyzing techniques and I have Mrs. Henry, Ms. Petersohn, and Mrs. Mauger to thank for that.

--Jess Hersh

Aside from teaching me to be more scholarly, being in the IB program has also helped me to develop many important skills as a student. First of all, my time management skills have greatly improved. Having so many assignments has taught me to be extremely organized and plan my time. Because of IB, I know I will not have to worry as much next year at college because I have already learned this essential skill. Furthermore, my writing skills have improved a lot. Ms. Segal and Mrs. Petersohn pushed us really hard and made us write more than we had ever written before. Although at times they may have seemed overcritical of our writing, they were able to push us to become good and efficient writers. Thanks to them, I no longer feel intimidated. I feel completely prepared for writing at the college level. However, most importantly I have learned to present arguments in a highly intellectual manner. I have overall become a more educated individual and I can discuss things in a very sophisticated manner (when I want to... sometimes I choose not to).

--Tim Quinn

IB has certainly been a life-altering experience and shaped my future. It has opened me up to new interests, and helped me develop a love for learning which I will carry through my years in university.

--Jake Hawkesworth

I would say that the International Baccalaureate Programme at Harriton has given me enough interesting and fun experiences to last a lifetime, and I know that I could not have been happier had I done any other set of courses. I have friends to last a lifetime, and I know both intuitively and through comments from my brother [IB graduate, 2004] that I am more than adequately prepared for college courses. I am happy to have had this opportunity, and I would not have changed my choice to enroll in this program for the world.

--Chris Wert

I know that I am prepared for college, and IB has exposed me to worldly things that I am very glad I learned about. I can talk to adults and my grandparents about the Cold War and Pearl Harbor. The extended essay forced me to search for a Pearl Harbor survivor, and I got to meet a man who witnessed that infamous day. I think that IB students have a lot to be proud of and I can't wait to graduate alongside my IB friends!

--Sara Carabasi

[The program] required me to take in, evaluate, and apply a great deal of information in six different subjects simultaneously, which was certainly a challenge, but I was fairly successful and was able to maintain my grades; in fact my grades in 9, 10, 11, and 12 grades are identical. The international aspect came through in almost all the classes. In English, we read works from authors around the world like Albert Camus and Nadine Gordimer. In history, we spent substantial time on non-American history topics such as the Mexican Revolution and the rise and rule of European dictators. In economics, there was a large emphasis on international economics and development, which naturally led to a discussion of global issues. Even in chemistry, we discussed industrial chemistry, which connected to global environmental issues.

--Ben Goldberg

CAS has also been a great experience for me. Through it, I have come to a point where I am more willing to try new things, and I have learned that requirements and rules have been good for me in the past, but that I am now ready to explore new things on my own, to dabble without that push, and that those standards are no longer necessary for me to be involved as a person. CAS has changed from an IB requirement of students to be well-rounded into an IB requirement to stretch oneself in new directions, to expand one's horizons and test out new grounds. This change can largely be attributed to my dancing activity, which was something I never otherwise would have taken on, but now love greatly.

--Jake Hawkesworth

When I look back on my years in IB, what I do remember is the enjoyment of classes, the interactions with friends, and the selective experience that defined my high school career. Despite the struggles inherent in the IB program, I feel as though it has made me a well-rounded person, both socially and academically, and has provided me with excellent preparation for the years ahead.

--Nora Kenty

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of IB is the community that it creates, and requirements like CAS, the Extended Essay, and Theory of Knowledge all contributed to this environment. Individually, these three requirements can seem tedious. However, when combined together they provide an extra facet to IB that other courses of study cannot. All three of these elements have challenged me to step outside my comfort zone and to pursue experiences which I otherwise would never have tried. Although the paperwork often seemed counterproductive, I can now confidently say that CAS, the Extended Essay, and Theory of Knowledge have positively contributed to my IB experience.

--Jess Mayer

Overall, I think IB has a lot of strengths. My favorite academic component of IB was the internal assessments. They were each interesting assignments that really required heavy-duty thinking and research. I particularly liked the history IA, as I happened to have picked a topic that lent itself well to historiographical analysis. Luckily, I was able to find primary source books on the American and Soviet actions during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. I was able to write a very clear analysis of the war with plenty of specific evidence. I also enjoyed the economics internal assessment, which required me to explain the economic theory behind four news stories. A further strength of the program is the faculty and coordinator. The faculty prepared me well for the exams, but also went beyond the IB curriculum to teach me important things about the subject and life in general; Mr. Kritzer was especially good at this. The faculty was flexible in scheduling tests and assignments to avoid having to do too much in one day.

--Ben Goldberg

I believe the IB program has many strengths which I would not be able to fully discuss in a 4 page essay. However, to highlight a few, these are the following which I believe to be the strongest. The history department did a phenomenal job in helping my understanding of the past. History was never one of my favorite subjects; in fact, it was one of the few classes I never enjoyed. Nevertheless, the daily discussions we had and our personal opinions we were able to express allowed for students' interaction which in my opinion made the subject fun and exciting. Also, CAS was extremely well organized which is clearly shown through the fact that every student in this year's graduating IB class completed the 150 hours. Also whenever I felt nervous or ran out of ideas for possible activities, there would always be help available to me. Many e-mails were sent out with upcoming events and the CAS meetings were productive and very helpful. Additionally, Mr. O'Brien's "open-door policy" was comforting for many students including me. It was important to know that someone was there for us. In many respects, Mr. O'Brien did not only act as a supervisor but also a supportive figure, hence our chosen name for him: "Father O'Brien." Lastly it all comes down to the people who participated in this program. Having an energetic and motivated group really set into motion a helpful and enjoyable working and learning environment.

--Caroline Orsinger

As it turned out, I.B. never made my extracurricular activities impossible, and I ended up joining more than I had the previous two years, which gave rise to some of my best high school experiences.

--Alexander White

I feel as though I have received an excellent academic education from IB. With a greater emphasis on understanding why things happen rather than simply what happened, IB has given me an excellent foundation to approach many different problems. Though I never knew the exact dates involved with the Mexican Revolution, through my study of it in History of the Americas, I understand the fundamental recipe for revolution that rings true even in events now. Also, I have learned to rigorously challenge assumptions. On history tests, challenging the question is actually encouraged. Through writing countless lab reports, analyzing world literature, and discussions in Theory of Knowledge I have become more actively involved with the process of knowledge rather than simply accepting it. Through student-led discussions in history this year I have learned to be confident about my opinions and be prepared to listen to others in a constructive way. IB has taught me not just the facts but improved my way of thinking. In these ways, IB has exceeded my original expectations.

--Alicia Chen

I think I have changed as a student in that I am more confident in my abilities and interested in learning. I always hated science and was originally not even recommended to take honors science classes in high school. I thus took the shortest science class offered, Chem. SL, and it ended up being one of my best classes and favorite classes. I had taken chemistry before and did the usual skimming by as I wasn't really interested. In the IB class, most kids were not science kids and Mr. Gauvin engaged us and made us like chemistry by using real life examples and relating to us as people with individual attention rather than being one of thirty kids. I now really like chemistry and I am more willing to try new classes in college because I never thought that I, the artsy kid, would actually like chemistry.

--Michelle Goldfine

...when I looked at the big picture and marveled at how I was progressing as a learner and an individual, I could just not imagine not being in that exact situation. As a result of the past two years, I have certainly become a more aware and realistic individual. I have accepted and confessed my problems with procrastination and lack of focus,...and I have become more capable of dealing with broader social situations and talking to people. Whether it was doing orals in front of 19 kids, or having to confer with teachers...my ability to remain respectful and yet not be afraid to communicate my feelings flourished, a skill which is definitely essential in life. I have become a more efficient worker and proficient writer, and am more aware of my limitations and am better able to assess the situation when success is not coming easily.

--Alexander White

Honestly, when I entered IB, I thought it was going to be harder. Everyone older kept on saying how difficult it was and how much work they had to do and I was happily surprised with the amount of work and difficulty level. The only major difficulty was time management and if I, the most incompetent time manager I have ever come across, could manage my time, then IB should not be seen as a scary task that cannot be done, but as a manageable task that will test you and make you grow.

--Michelle Goldfine

Mr. Santa Maria's History of the Americas class was a rewarding part of my two years in IB. The class prepared us for our IB exams while providing interesting and innovative ways to learn history simultaneously. It was great to be in a history class where literally being in class was what helped you learn rather than pouring over bland textbooks. I enjoyed that I did not have to teach myself from a text book, rather activities in class with Mr. Santa Maria and other students were what made me learn. Mr. Young's Psychology HL class was another rewarding portion of IB. I enjoyed connecting current events and research to different psychological approaches in addition to the historical and traditional experiments studied in psychology. Similarly to Mr. Santa Maria, I learned much more from being in class with Mr. Young than I would have through textbooks. Mr. Young is clearly passionate about psychology and his classes in general and shares that passion with his students, making his class both memorable and enjoyable.

--Jess Hersh

IB has without a doubt changed me as a student. On top of the new grey hairs and increased blood pressure, I definitely believe that the quality of my work has improved enormously. At the beginning of eleventh grade English for example, I would often bring home a C or even a D for in class and out of class essays. Year twelve however, proved far different, and I found myself achieving As on almost every assignment. I am now incredibly confident when it comes to analyzing poems or prose, and like a any soon to be IB graduate, I can pump out a good, no, great essay, in a few hours. Through Theory of Knowledge I have also been provided with a unique understanding of the various aspects that affect one's ability to 'know' something, (if that is indeed possible.) I find myself applying what I have learnt in this class to many of my other courses, such as History and English. This course has also given me a greater understanding of how people think, and what effects people when they think, which will undoubtedly help me in any field in life where people are involved. I consider things more deeply and my writing has taken on more depth through my ability to explore issues and questions in a TOKish light.

--Sarah Levenson

I had to fill out a survey for my college advisor, where they listed a bunch of skills and I had to state whether I felt 'confident', 'okay', or 'shaky' in performing them. I ended up with no 'shakys' and only a few 'okays', as in I was OK, but not confident in my ability to write a 20-page research paper, as after about 12 months of work my extended essay was still only 15 pages. I realized that IB really had given me the tools to do well in college next year, as I could juggle activities, start projects on my own, interact well with other students and approach teachers with questions, because these were all expected things in the past two years.

--Zoe Portman

...I also felt like I was learning things that normally do not get taught to students in public high school. Latin American history, for example, in a normal high school only gets a brief overview at best. Though we certainly did not exactly have an in depth study of it, History of the Americas forces us to know a little more about our southern neighbors than the fact that most of them speak Spanish. Theory of Knowledge too... was a very interesting subject and provided me with lots of discussion material not only in the classroom, but in everyday life as well.... Beyond that, my favorite part of IB...was how close we all became as a group. There were definitely people in IB that I would never have hung around with before the program that I now consider some of my best friends.

--Sam Sutliff

Class of 2007

Life at Cornell is very good.... I'm in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations which like IB, encourages critical thinking. Special thanks to Mr. Kritzer for the excellent econ preparation. The first half of Intro to Microeconomics was very easy. Also, the myth is true: work that takes other students 2 hours takes me 30 minutes. I'm happy to say IB has prepared me well.

--Alex Perilstein (extracted from an email sent in November of first semester at Cornell University)

The sheer intelligence and exceptionality of the students in our IB class has expanded my thinking potential. If looking at the leadership positions in the clubs around the school, IB students actually run Harriton, and it is great to be part of such an elite group of scholars.

--Rishin Banker

...IB classes also had a much greater depth of thought than my previous academic experiences. In Physics, we examined several derivations of the equations we used, rather than accepting them straight from the textbook. We also discussed sources of experimental error and began writing proper lab reports—in freshman bio, we hardly did labs at all. I know that IB work in this area is helpful from the experience of others, especially the feedback Natasha received from her Swarthmore professors on her lab reports. I really appreciate this aspect of IB, and how our skills have improved. Likewise, in English, when I compare the level of the papers I'm writing now with those I wrote as a sophomore, the differences are quite noticeable.

--Julia Clemons

The teachers also played a big part in helping me to complete this program. For the most part, they were flexible, understanding, and willing to meet with me outside of class. One of the greatest shockers I found in IB was that the teachers were willing to move the due dates of assignment for the benefit of the students, which was extremely kind and most definitely helpful. The program itself has much strength, such as its very fair grading system and an interesting curriculum.

--Jennifer Berman

Though the second remarkable thing that I noticed about the program developed over my first months of involvement, its importance is most evident now, as I sit in my bedroom as a high school student who has nothing left to do except walk at graduation. This remarkable thing—the most remarkable thing about the IB program—is the community that it fosters. While I entered the program with several established friends, not only have those friendships grown and become much deeper and more significant, but also have many other friendships blossomed, with people that I probably would never have known had it not been for my participation in the IB program. My group of friends is now, as a direct result of the program, far more interesting, diverse, and intelligent. In fact, the thing that I miss most about being a student at Harriton is seeing my IB classmates every day—those friends who are so close, who have shared so many common experiences with me. I fully anticipate keeping contact with my IB classmates throughout life, and the bonds that we have developed, regardless of how much we see each other, undoubtedly, will last forever.

--Eddie Fishman

At the same time, and this is the distinguishing factor, IB students share a common regard for the academic. In no other Harriton class would it be possible to have the heated intellectual discussions that we had in our participation-oriented classes. It was the seminar arrangement of the classes that made IB such a positive experience, as school became an environment catered towards our interests and our thoughts.

--Rishin Banker

It's not that the IB program eats up all of its students' time so that they have no life (I certainly had a healthy social life over the past two years.); it's just that in joining the IB program, the students must realize that they are electing to make a shift in the way they spend their time. I think I would have to say that yes, "it was worth it." I have definitely grown as a student and a writer. I feel that I am much more prepared for any future situation and that I will be thankful in college for all the skills I developed in IB. I have become more analytical, confident, organized (well, maybe), and I have certainly gained important time management skills. Most importantly, I have learned how to be less than perfect. IB is not for everyone. It is for the motivated students who want a well-rounded education and know how to work hard but also have fun. It is not for the lazy, it is not for the apathetic, and it is certainly not for the perfectionist. While taking multiple challenging courses, the IB student will inevitably fall short of at least one goal. But an IB student should be taking such difficult courses because of a love of learning and should be able to embrace his or her imperfections without ever doubting his or her ability to succeed.

--Lauren Biegger

To start with the Extended Essay, I have to say that at first I was unpleasantly surprised and intimidated. 4000 words is a whole lot of writing on a whole lot of pages. However, in retrospect I think taking the time and going through the process of writing an outline, finding quotes, refining the outline etc. has done a lot for me. I am no longer scared of big assignments. I am a pro-researcher especially about literature. I also learned how to tackle such an assignment, to set little goals for myself and take everything one step at a time. The Extended Essay was probably one of the most difficult assignments for me, simply because I had to keep motivating myself to work on it regularly in spite of all the other work I had to take care of.... It was an important learning experience for me because otherwise I would have never in my life found the motivation and the time to write an essay like this one. When it was done, I was incredibly proud of myself and therefore, the Extended Essay as an assignment was a very important component of the program for me.

--Laura Breucker

There are so many skills that IB has taught me. On a basic level, IB has made me a much better writer, public speaker and critical thinker. Also, I feel that IB has prepared me for life in general. The heavy workload combined with the intense extra curricular requirements of CAS, force students in the IB program to find time for things both inside and outside of school.... I still had an extremely busy extra-curricular schedule. Above all, IB has taught me balance in my life, one of those intangible skills that are really important.

--Josh Broderson

From IB, I gained friendship, academic skills, social skills, and wisdom.

--Eunhye Choi

My concept of the definition "history" has changed drastically since sophomore year. It has ceased to refer to the progression of past events, but to different interpretations of them. Rather than memorize, we interpret and analyze. Primary source documents did make appearances in my 9th and 10th grade history classes, but they were not the primary focus. In the second year of IB history, all information either came from primary sources, or the textbook's claims were supported by specific primary sources. We debated which of Hitler's writings could be taken as representative of his philosophy and whether or not Mussolini actually had one—we did not label maps of the world.

--Julia Clemons

The CAS component of the program was very helpful for me as it allowed me to try several activities that I would have most likely not have tried if it had not been for IB. I have also learned a lot about myself from participating in these activities. I learned that I can enjoy many activities that I did not know that I could enjoy. I have never been athletic and have never been good at sports, but enjoyed all of my action. These activities have also helped me become more outgoing and comfortable with myself, and I enjoyed them and learned a lot from them. These activities also helped me with time management as I had to make time for my work while participating in these activities. The I.B program also helped me with learning how to write longer papers, as there were several papers that were very extensive, such as our History paper and Extended Essay. I now feel more comfortable with my writing style. This is a skill that will help me a lot through college and throughout life.

--Talene Momjian

The first remarkable thing that I noticed about the program was the strength of its faculty. Immediately following my first week of school as an IB student, I could tell that I would develop excellent academic and personal bonds with some of my teachers. Mr. Santa Maria's enthusiasm for history, politics, and American studies, coupled with the relaxing atmosphere that he evokes in his classroom, made me excited to attend IB History of the Americas every day. Mr. Gauvin's unabashed love for chemistry, along with his obvious brilliance, kindness, and openness, made me eager for my daily sessions of IB Chemistry. While I already had a passion for history before junior year, I loved Mr. Santa Maria's class so much that it has inspired me to study history extensively in college. Although I do not plan on concentrating in chemistry in college, I used to count science classes as some of my least favorite – the fact that IB Chemistry was arguably my favorite class that I ever took at Harriton is a real testament to Mr. Gauvin. Many of my other teachers were excellent, as well. In general, I believe that one of the IB program's greatest strengths is the high caliber of its faculty. My high school career would have definitely been different had I not taken classes taught by Mr. Santa Maria, Mr. Gauvin, and several other IB teachers.

--Eddie Fishman

Another unique aspect of the program is the closeness of the students.... I think that the amount of time we had to spend together actually facilitated our learning. I feel more comfortable having class discussions with my IB brothers and sisters than I do in other non-IB classes. I also think that our camaraderie helped us through some of the more difficult weeks; the knowledge that twenty other people were going through the exact same thing made me feel a little less alone a little more optimistic. I always had someone to go to for help as well as someone to whom I could complain.

--Lauren Biegger

...The program did change me massively as a student, much to my tremendous and utter surprise. In the first quarter of IB I wrote more essays than I had in the two years preceding IB.... IB also taught me how to handle massive levels of challenges and to deal with deadlines.

--Tim Higgins

IB also helped me to learn outside of the classroom. The CAS requirement and the EE component were two things that I really enjoyed. Though they were time-consuming and often stressful, they turned out to be great learning experiences. Writing my extended essay not only taught me more about my own family history and more about the history of pre-WWII in Poland, but it also taught me how to do extensive research, planning, organizing, and of course, writing. Completing my creativity, action, and service hours forced me to try some new things that I would never have considered doing had I not been required to do them. In particular, I really loved completing the service portion of CAS because I love helping people and trying to make some sort of difference in the world.

--Danielle Servetnick

I must say that never in my life did I learn this much over the course of only two years. I don't just mean learning information such as physical laws and names of great battles. I learned about myself, figured out how I study most effectively and how to handle stress. Overall, IB was very valuable to me and I am glad that I decided to join the program.

--Laura Breucker.

The IB teachers are so helpful; all of them were willing to meet with me whenever I needed help and were always looking out for the students' best interests. Without the incredible staff of teachers, I doubt that I would have been able to make it through the program. Not only did the teachers teach the course materials, they also taught me about life... There is not doubt in my mind that I grew exponentially as a person throughout the two years I spent in IB. The lessons that I learned will definitely help me to become a more efficient student and person. Whether it is the organizational skills, writing skills, public speaking skill, or people skills that I learned, the IB program has showed me many new abilities that remained hidden within me prior to joining the program.

--Adam Gilberg

The first aspect of the program that I want to discuss is the entire history curriculum and how unbelievably helpful it is at expanding my way of thinking and taking in information. Before entering the program I was taught to memorize hundreds of facts and dates; however now I have learned to critically analyze historical perspectives as well as evaluate their origins, purposes, values and limitations. This way of evaluating historical perspectives is extremely helpful and informative because it allows me find the most valid explanations of events rather than just accepting every piece of information that comes my way. In assessing the origin, purpose, value and limitation of historical interpretations I have learned a valuable life lesson: to question authority rather than just accepting everything as the truth. This way of life also applies to the higher-level English class because over the two years we read a lot of world literature and theatrical plays that taught me to re-evaluate my entire way of thinking.

--Avi Hockfield

CAS allowed me to enjoy various activities in my busy times. Although most of times, I was busy doing homework assignments (both short and long), CAS gave me a break from stress. I especially liked the service part of CAS. I helped the disabled kids and volunteered at a hospital. These experiences definitely influenced my decision to go into the medical related field. I also liked the action part of CAS. I am not an athlete, however CAS led me into the unfamiliar field to train me for an all rounded person. One of the activities I did for action was golf. By playing golf, I interacted with a lot of people, and it became one of my hobbies. I felt a lot of pressure by CAS at first, but the activities I did for CAS eventually became my stress relievers and my hobbies.

--Eunhye Choi

I can't say enough good words about my IB experience. The kids were amazing, the teachers extremely good and helpful, always willing to meet with you to discuss something. There was positive motivation and reinforcement from both the teachers and the students, making a very hard program a lot easier to handle.

--Josh Broderson

Class time was meaningful, interesting, and enjoyable, and for the most part, I felt that our homework, projects, and assessments were consistently well conceived and graded fairly. And sure, we were all stressed pretty often, but it was ok because our instructors cared a lot about us. In hindsight, I'm fairly certain that a lot of our anxiety was unmerited since we made things much more complicated than they needed to be, but at the time, things seemed pretty painful and June 2007 appeared further away than ever before.

--Samantha Madway

Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I definitely would do the program again if I were to go back to the end of 10th grade. The program certainly met my expectations and I am so glad that I chose to do IB. I really enjoyed having a "family" at school, made up of students who were going through the same process and stress as I was. This was also helpful because I did a lot of studying and work with other people in the program, something that would not have been so convenient had I not been in IB. Another benefit of the program was that I felt that the teachers were extremely flexible and willing to adjust assignments if our schedules were becoming too overwhelming. This made even the most stressful times a little bit easier.

--Danielle Servetnick

...when I look back and reflect on what could at times seem like an overwhelming amount of work, I know that IB was a very rewarding intellectual and personal experience. I may not have enjoyed every IA or even every IB class, but overall, IB is a great

program. During the annual [IB presentations]...in the tenth grade English classes in the fall/winter of 2004-2005, I was perhaps the most critical of IB and skeptical to apply, however, after finishing the program, I cannot imagine making any other choice.

--Alex Witkes

My favorite part of the I.B program is how close the all the students get to their classmates. We all study together and help each other with our work at times; we truly became a family. I can't imagine going through this experience with any other group of people. I will truly miss my IB family, and am sad to be leaving. However, I believe that my IB experience has prepared me a great deal for college, both with handling the work and with socializing with new people. I am now more comfortable with approaching people that I don't know. I also had to take several classes that I would have not had to take if not for IB and I have learned a lot from these classes. I also enjoyed the smaller class sizes in IB. It allowed me to enjoy the classes more and to have more interaction with the teachers. It also allowed me to be more comfortable with expressing my ideas.

--Talene Momjian

The major strength of the IB program at Harriton is its ability to step out of the strictly academic shell and enter a different realm of fun in education. This year, the Theory of Knowledge class was fun. I have never said that about any other class during my 12 years of official education. Studying for the TOK tests was not always fun, but there were many times when we talked about topics that were not even on the test. We had fun conversations, we learned a lot about knowledge and about ourselves, and we enjoyed ourselves.

--Alex Perilstein

I was able to gain a newfound appreciation of writing and of the humanities because of IB.... The emphasis on writing...ended up being a blessing in disguise, as I now greatly enjoy writing and as such, decided to join the newspaper staff. Also, if I were to make a list of my favorite books, I would probably include a number of novels, novellas, and plays that I have read during IB English....

--Alex Witkes

The IB Programme offers serious education on an impressive range of topics. However, its distinction is in its ability to make thinkers out of students. Through activities like the Extended Essay and Group 4 Project, IB seeks to change education from its traditional textbook foundation into an opportunity for candidates to delve into what matters most to them and individually prepare them for the analytic thought and creative expression necessary for future endeavors. I like to think that IB has challenged the way I think and made me a stronger person by questioning assumptions about my environment while providing the fundamental education of high school.

--Mike Zhao

As my final IB exam was coming to an end (French), several of my fellow IB'ers and I excitedly watched the clock, waiting for that one-hour mark at which we are permitted to leave the testing room. Smiles covered the faces of Eddie, Jibs, Gilby, Julia, Sammy, Emily, Avi, and even you Mr. O'Brien. That group of six classmates consists of four of my good friends, three of my "school friends," and the father of IB. Despite our different interests, weekend activities, social groups, and age, we smiled and shared the experience together. IB has opened me up to completely new people who I really would never have taken the time to talk to had it not been for our placement together in classes. With 30 seconds remaining until one hour, I turned around and gave Julia a high-five. If I told my non-IB friends that I gave Julia Clemons a high-five, they would laugh at me. But IB has made me look past those laughs and see the value in expanding one's horizons.

--Alex Perilstein

I think that the most important thing that I gained from the program was the ability to analyze a situation and draw my own conclusions, thanks to the amount of papers we wrote in History, English and ToK.... Assignments are no longer as intimidating as they once were, because I now know that I have the skills to get it done quickly and well. I feel that the program is a good choice for students who would have taken all AP classes as it would have provided them a nice community and would allow for several unique classes like IB Economics HL to be taken. I enjoyed the lack of busywork, but that did not mean that there was ever a shortage of work. The amount of work that I did these two years will be an excellent preparation for college....

--Kiril Popnikolov

The IB program has certainly changed the way I approach learning and my overall outlook and approach to school and schoolwork. First and foremost, IB has taught me how to be a great critical thinker. In practically every subject we learned far beyond the simple facts and instead focused on important things such as historical interpretations or differing views. Before the IB program, I was only interested in memorizing facts for a test however; I am not more interested in learning and look forward to being taught this way in

college. Another important skill I learned was how to be a better writer. Even though I have always loved English and have considered myself to be a writer, my skills have improved drastically. There is almost no comparison between the essay that I wrote during the summer before 11th grade and an essay I wrote at the end of this year. This is something that I am very proud of and a talent that I know will carry me well beyond college.

--Danielle Servetnick

Be it history, chemistry, or economics, as an IB student I have had to use the theoretical knowledge I have gained and apply it practically to solve real problems. While the Group 4 project may not have been my "favorite" activity, it certainly encouraged this principle, as I not only had to design my own experiment, but also analyze the results of this experiment using the chemical theories that Mr. Gauvin had taught me during the year. I like this approach to education so much, that my decision to attend Wharton was even influenced by the fact that Wharton professors use this theoretical-practical approach.

--Alex Witkes

After having gone through it all, I treasure the experiences I have had with my fellow IBers. I suppose what I'm trying to get at is that there is no defining reason for my joining IB. The idea of a community was appealing, along with classes of "international rigor," but I joined because I had a known constant in one hand (AP) and a question mark offering excitement and adventure in the other. What made my decision easier was knowing previous IB students including Steen Hoyer and Natasha Weiser, and respecting them as people and as scholars. By my sophomore year I had been on the Science Olympiad team twice, having worked with people like Nick, David, Xun, Sasha, Natasha and Bumki. In that same crowd were wonderful AP people as well, but the simple knowledge that IB people weren't humanities-based freaks (two distinct appellations) made it easier to send in my application.

--Mike Zhao

...what makes it more than a program is the fact that it really and truly leaves an indelible mark on your life. I think that it will forever be impossible for me to turn off the part of my brain that puts everything through a ToK processor. My parents are virtually incapable of winning an argument with me now that I'm finished with IB because every assessment, every activity requires us to defend everything we say firmly and staunchly with evidence, ingenuity and a slew of other tools. What other high school students have been graded on history papers where a criterion for getting the highest possible score is attacking the validity of assumptions made within the question itself?

--Samantha Madway

Class of 2006

I just wanted to check in with you and let you know that I'm having a really great time at Swarthmore. I just finished my third week of classes and so far they're going very well. After IB the work load doesn't seem bad at all but some of my classmates are struggling with it, although quite honestly the work load in IB wasn't so bad most of the time anyway. My biology and chemistry professors/lab instructors have both commented on the quality of my lab reports and my biology professor wants to use part of my first assignment as an example in the future of how certain sections should be written. I definitely have IB to thank for those skills.

--Natasha Weiser (extracted from an email sent during first semester in college)

While we will move on from our present level of knowledge and skill, there will always be this one thing that we will remember about IB. Rather than remembering what grade we got in English or how many CAS hours we actually completed, what we will always remember are the people. Even though it seems unthinkable at the moment, soon my life will go on without my IB friends. While this might be a frightening thought for many people, I know that we will always keep in touch and while the rest of our class will eventually grow apart, I have no doubt that we will always stay close.

--Liesa Breucker

Things here are going very well.... I found out a few weeks ago that I was accepted as a Writing Associate here at Swat. I will be employed by the college to help students revise their papers by giving them oral and written feedback on their writing (and I will be paid one of the highest student salaries on campus). The application required a writing sample, a mock critique of a paper, and a faculty recommendation. From what I know, there were less than 30 new Writing Associates selected for the upcoming school year. As I've told you before, I really think that IB helped my academic writing tremendously and I think that the positive feedback I've gotten here, in particular being accepted as a Writing Associate, is a real tribute to the quality of instruction I received in IB. In addition, the experience of writing all of those papers in IB has made writing here a lot less stressful. So if the current IB students are stressed by their exams...I am sure that they will find the experience well worth it when they look back. I definitely feel that I am a better student and writer after IB, and it is very satisfying to see that recognized by my professors.

--Natasha Weiser (extracted from an email sent at the conclusion of her second semester in college)

I'm currently taking a class entitled 'Is English Going to the Dogs?' It's a primary writing class, but its topic is definitely something that we would (and did) discuss in TOK - language change, slang usage, should ebonics be an official language, is language degrading and such.... We were asked last week to write a paper that analyzes an argument from an article we had to read. While I was writing this paper, I was very upset with the book, seeing as it was very bad at disproving points, was poorly written and was not up to par with TOK articles I'm used to receiving. So, I took it out in my analysis, bashing the author for using too much secondary evidence, ignoring basic statistical ideas, and arguing things that weren't even relevant. In other words, the stuff I've come to consider elementary after two years of history and TOK, and just IB in general.

To my surprise, when I got my paper back, the only instructor comment was 'Come and see me, we have to discuss your goals for the course.' Apparently, I was the only one in the whole class who evaluated the argument; everyone else just summarized it. My teacher is worried that this class is going to hold me back because I'm at 'a level higher than the average entering student.'... I was just doing stuff that had been beat into me by teachers [in IB].

--Sasha Sokolsky (extracted from an email sent during his freshman year in college)

I feel that I have grown immensely in the past two years because of my participation in this program. Academically, I believe that both my writing and analytical skills have improved greatly. Some of the activities that helped with this were our seminars in History and many essays in English. Personally, I feel that I have become much more organized and efficient due to the number of long-term assignments given and needing to space out time for their completion. Also, with the many CAS activities required, I had to learn to manage my time between extracurricular activities and schoolwork. I also feel that I got much more involved in my community. A third strength is that I feel that I had the best teachers in the past two years in IB that I have ever had. They were willing to work with me whenever I was having difficulties and, in the classroom, presented the material to me in a way that helped me to understand it better. I feel that at the end of the two years, after completing almost all of my IB exams, I was very well prepared.

--Samantha Sokol

...what was unique about IB was the focus on not one subject, but on all of them. This was both positive and negative for me. Although there were definitely times when I wished that I did not have to take certain classes in which my interest was limited, IB really forced me out of my academic comfort zone as some of the classes that I ended up taking are probably subjects I would have avoided otherwise. I may have never taken economics or history if IB hadn't made me, and I don't particularly care for history or economics, but I can definitely say that after taking economics and 20th Century Global Topics as my senior year history course, that I am certainly closer to being able to call myself educated. This is perhaps the most defining feature of academics in IB for me, that IB strives not to create historians or scientists or mathematicians or economists or writers, but that IB strives to create educated citizens and part of being educated is having rigorous academic experiences in a wide variety of disciplines, not only in those of interest to particular individuals. When I read about all of the problems in the world, from poverty to environmental threats to health care to racial cleansing, I wish that the people who have the power to effect change would be educated in a wide variety of disciplines as I have been in IB because such people are able to look at problems critically and analytically from a multitude of standpoints and are able to think freely as to what is the best course of action. And when I hear about people who are actually succeeding in making positive changes, it is heartening to see that these people are well-educated, not meaning necessarily that I recognize the name of the college that they went to, but that they are able to think critically, make their own decisions, and that they consider the consequences of those decisions to themselves, to the communities, and to humanity. After my two years in IB, I truly believe that this is the kind of person I have become. IB has really helped me develop my ability to think critically and analytically across the academic disciplines.

--Natasha Weiser

IB made me a stronger student. It changed the way I take in and analyze information; because of TOK I don't take anything the media or the government says at face value anymore, now I think about the source of the information and think about whether or not it is a trustworthy source. Also, being in IB has made me a better artist. In Mr. Murray's IB Visual Arts class, I learned many new printmaking techniques, and how to improve my skills in the ones I already knew. As a person, I've become more understanding of others, more tolerant, more independent, and more logical and reasonable. I believe that I am a better human being for being in the program.

--Rosie Dauval

The IB program fit perfectly with my life; it offered a rigorous analytical style of learning that surrounded me with a close group of comrades who shared my zest for learning. In addition, I had the privilege of being with great teachers who actually love to teach.... The CAS aspect of the program was perfect for me because I already had most of the hours for Action and Creativity. It also forced me to have Service hours, in which I had the opportunity to become a lifeguard, put my DJ business to a charitable use, and become

president of Global Link. All of these things had a great impact on my life, and without the IB program I would never have had the fulfillment of community service.

--Ari Eisenstat

The IB Program's greatest strength is the class unity and friendship. Over the past two years fifteen students have had a majority of the same classes and are always around each other. It seemed overwhelming at first but by the end of the second year, writing this paper now, I miss them dearly. The teachers and the classes in the IB Program are great as well, but to be honest I feel that the group of students that participate in the IB Program are the true success and the greatest strength to the program.

--Matthew Grossman

The CAS part of IB was also one of my favorite things. I'm really very glad we got to experience 150 hours we might not have otherwise. As much as I hated the paperwork, I found it did make me think about what I had done in new, more profound ways. CAS made everyone branch out, because although there were lots of activities I had already been a part of and would have continued, the three activities requirement for each area forced you to do something new. Actively seeking out new things to take part in made all of us better people, I think, because we gained that maturity of finding something by ourselves and doing it.

--Lisa Hennings

The integrated and complete course load, I believe, is IB's biggest strength. It exposes every student to advanced courses in every major subject area, including an additional year of global history not otherwise available to a Harriton student, and ensures a basic level of intellectual competency in all of its classes. Students are forced to take most classes over two years, however for those who are weak in some (e.g., sciences and math), there are alternative lower level classes.

--Stephen Smith

Even though I only joined on the basis of a gut feeling, IB turned out to be the best choice I had made. I was made a better person by such a large margin, which I could not have even hoped to achieve if I had not joined the program. First of all, the IB program gave me a sense of direction regarding my future. Until the end of my sophomore year, I was very unsure about my life after high school. One course in particular solidified my anticipated major in college, and most likely the profession that I will pursue in my future. IB Chemistry expanded my Chemistry knowledge to a new level ...and I never ceased to enjoy the class. This made it certain for me that this would be what I wanted to do for a living.

--Bumki Kim

In general, the united aspect of the programme was what I appreciated the most. This, alongside the fantastic curriculum and the bonding between the 15 of us that spent the two years together, is what makes the programme so strong and sets it apart from "educational rivals" (i.e. AP classes).

--Nick Kybert

Aside from simply having more knowledge from the last two years, I have developed new ways to acquire that knowledge. I have been able to take historiography into account, while challenging that way of knowing. My friends have caught me explaining the octane percentage when getting gas, or explaining that by buying a video game, they would be injecting capital into the circular flow model, even quoting an evil European dictator—all things that normally are not second nature to people, while I, as an IB candidate, have accepted into my life.

--Ari Eisenstat

My experience in the programme has been a complete success. Coming in as a new student can be tough but joining a group of 15 people that were stuck together, like it or not, made things so easy. I feel like the programme has matured me intellectually and I hope that it thus forms a perfect segway between High School and my university education. I also appreciated the international perspective of the programme, which for me was a continuation of what I had previously experienced. After gaining some limited insight into "regular" American classes, the contrast is very clear and is yet another aspect that lets I.B. distinguish itself. As I am still not sure where I will be going to university next year, I am truly ecstatic that regular American classes, as solid as they are, were the exception, not the rule, during my time at Harriton.

--Nick Kybert

Another thing I really liked about IB was how sometimes all of the classes seemed to connect. In English we would be reading something set in the time period we were studying in history, and then in TOK I was able to use a lot of the information I learned in psychology. I don't think that's something you get to have in regular classes, that connection, which I think is unfortunate.

--Lisa Hennings

I think that having good grades in IB was a key factor to my acceptance to the Georgetown School of Foreign Service, and the very existence of IB at Harriton made it possible for me to be conditionally accepted to the London School of Economics and Political Science in a way that would have been far more difficult if I had been restricted to an AP course load.

--Stephen Smith

There is no doubt in my mind that I would not have learned as much as I did in IB in another academic setting – there is certainly always a sense that the teacher likes teaching the class and that the students like learning the material, which is a great way to move quickly and efficiently, frolicking through the material as one would through a sun-lit field. I can tell even now that I will miss having such small classes, where the teacher becomes as much of a student as us.

--Sasha Sokolsky

The best thing about IB is that it draws together a crowd of great people. The students in IB were definitely the best part. IB kids take challenging classes because they want to learn, something that makes classes intellectually stimulating and fun. The fact that we spend so much time together draws us closer together, so that you have classes with people who are not just IB kids, but your friends. I am going to miss having class with my IB class immensely, and I can only hope to find a similar spirit of intellectual community and friendship next year at school.

--Kathy Stavis

Also, along with aspirations for the future, IB provided me with different tools to pursue those aspirations. TOK has changed my life completely. Different ways of thinking, challenging information, authority, even truth are all tools that will help me in the future. TOK has taught me, in many different creative ways by the way, to not accept all information that is given to me. Weighing all the information and acknowledging its weaknesses has become something very important in my life (for better or worse).

--Bumki Kim

While class work and homework were also necessary for success in IB classes, assessments in IB actually involved original thought as opposed to simply spitting back as many facts as possible. This was definitely more challenging because IB's requirements and those of our teachers forced us to demonstrate not only a great depth of knowledge, but also the ability to effectively analyze and evaluate our knowledge. This distinction is seen most clearly in the Extended Essay requirement, which was probably the most academically enlightening experience of my high school career. My Extended Essay gave me the opportunity to examine a seemingly obscure topic in which I had great interest. Because I chose to do a topic in biology, my research consisted of reading over a dozen scientific papers from journals including Science, Molecular Cell, and Molecular Microbiology. By the end of the experience, I felt really comfortable dealing with the scientific literature, a task that at first seemed so daunting I nearly ruled out the possibility of writing an Extended Essay on a scientific topic. I am really pleased that I was able to use my Extended Essay to gain some experience in reading scientific papers and analyzing the experimental techniques of expert scientists and I know that these skills will help me enormously in my science education.

--Natasha Weiser

Class of 2005

IB is a fast-paced, high level program that could easily lend itself to fierce competition. In my IB class this is not the case, it is quite the opposite. Our successes are empty unless they are shared; our true victories are the ones we share together. Each one of us genuinely wants to see the others do well and takes time out of his or her hectic life to make sure that happens. Last year I struggled in physics; one of my peers took it upon himself (virtually unasked) to become my physics tutor, and I helped him edit his English papers in return. This was not planned out in any way; it developed because we cared about each other and saw how we could help one another. Experiences like these are common to IB.

--Elana Baurer

Before entering IB, I felt I had been floating aimlessly among a sea of students. IB gave me direction; I now had something towards which I could strive.... I was prepared for a challenge. For some reason or other, I have been unable to quit or give up on my goals, and that was what IB became for me.

--Ani Momjian

One of the most pleasant [aspects of the IB Program] was that all the students in the program were like family. We would spend so much time together, and bicker and play as if we were siblings. We would also know each other very well and be able to finish each others sentences for each other. In such a close group of friends, we would be able to speak our minds and would help each other out as much as possible.

--David Fritz

The IB Program made me into a very successful writer, a great problem solver, an effective time manager, an original thinker and has provided me with a rare and privileged, in-depth knowledge in vital areas of studies. I have made some of my closest friendships through it and gave my best shot at activities which I would have never participated in if it was not for the requirements of CAS. All of this occurred in one of the best high schools of the world with one of the most nurturing and caring staff of teachers and coordinators. Indeed, there is little to be dissatisfied about, but it took me two years to come to terms with being obliged in taking this road less traveled by. Not to sound cliché and steel the Frost's words, I think nevertheless that it has made most of the difference.

--Nick Krumenacker

I came to enjoy going to classes (something that never really happened in Belgium) because the teachers were able to make it much more interesting than in Belgium. Classes like Physics, which I like a lot, were made even better by the number of tricks that Mr. Schwartz showed us.... History of the Americas...was made interesting by Santa's stories and the amazing stuff he showed us.

--Karim Slaoui

The IB program was very tough and rigorous but in the end, it did help me to come out of school with higher self-confidence and a new way of understanding the learning process, which I think, will be key in my future success.

--Kevin Baidoo

This group of people was quite amazing. These twelve students represented more than 7 nationalities, and their range of experiences made it an extremely interesting group to work with. In a sense, we each had our strong points in some classes, and we could help each other with our problems. This group was thus extremely diverse, and, although this was something particular to the IB at Harriton only, it did make it a lot more enjoyable and fun.

The sense of community was also heightened by our teachers. They were the best, most fun teachers I have had at Harriton and they made the courses and the work something personal, not simply school work. They did this to the point that you would feel bad not doing everything you could to succeed in their classes, as it would mean you were letting them down.

--Stéphane Krumenacker

I have never met teachers as dedicated, talented, intelligent, and caring as those in the IB Program. The level at which they teach in IB can be frustrating for confused students but each one demonstrated outstanding patience, understanding, and confidence in each and every one of us individually and as a whole that we can reach the top and perform to our best abilities.... Not only did the

teachers help make my two years in IB educational and fun, they encouraged intellectual growth in a new direction. For the first time I was not only encouraged, but also pushed to expand my ways of thinking. I think of learning as horizontal or vertical. Horizontal is gathering as much information as possible, trying to encompass the entire breadth of information. That is the kind of learning that is important up until junior year in IB. Rote memorization, multiple choice, learning for a test and then forgetting immediately afterwards. Vertical learning, on the other hand, is what I have learned in IB. Think depth. Think outside the box. My thought process and ways of learning have expanded tremendously, in great part thanks to the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course this past year, but also due to the teaching methods of IB.

--Elana Baurer

Epecially this year, we have had to write more in-depth essays about more complex works than I ever did outside of IB, and that experience has, in retrospect, been very rewarding, and likely has prepared me well for college.

--Margaret Cosgriff

Until this there had never been such strong friendships in my life, there had never been real love or hate, and the belonging and tumult that get people to coalesce around common principles and the exploration of our humanness. I used to pertain to the school of thought that thought school to be an annoyance, and thus how far must have I come to now miss it to no end, indeed, there lies here much to reflect upon.

--Nick Krumenacker

IB is a family. While people may deem the Harriton High School community as a family, or other groups such as an entire college, it does not reflect the IB family. The IB family is a close knit group of 12 students who seem to spend every waking moment together. This IB family also includes the teachers that help to instruct us to perform well on the exams at the end of junior and senior year.

--Niko Kurtzman

As a sophomore who was only used to writing three-to-four-pages-long papers, I thought of the 4000 words paper as a grueling task. However, when I heard some Extended Essay topics, I realized that this is an opportunity not a punishment. I vividly remember a then senior telling me that for her the Extended Essay was the best part of IB. Another student told me that she enjoyed doing her essay so much that for her it seemed like "mandatory fun"! Now, having spent two years in IB, I could not agree more.

--Ruchi Hazaray

...I have to say that the one expectation that I was totally off about before coming to IB was the one about becoming sick of my fellow IBers. During my two years, I have learned to become more tolerant towards the different personalities that each of the IBers have, from extremely outgoing to rather reserved. In the past, I probably would have found either of them annoying, but after IB, I have learned to love their uniqueness. During the two years, I formed much stronger friendships with those who I have been friends with since the pre-IB days, and I have formed meaningful relationships with those that I have never talked to before. There are not many chances in life where one get to spend so much time with the same group of fellow human beings; hopefully, the Harriton High School International Baccalaureate Class of 2005 will keep in touch and make these friendships everlasting.

--Xun Li

Two years of IB seem to have flown by! This is perhaps a very rare comment to hear from an IB student. IB was a challenging program that forced me to re-examine myself both as a person and as a student. As a student, I began to understand the importance of class discussions, external readings and independent research. After completing the Extended Essay, I now feel comfortable with exploring on my own and writing in a sophisticated manner.

As a person, I value community service a lot more than before. It has now become my passion for life where as earlier it was an unrealized goal. IB's emphasis on citizenship and service allowed me to explore my community and involve myself with numerous activities. Although IB is academically rigorous, the CAS program encouraged me leave the world of books and explore the real world outside. Thanks to CAS, I was able to continue my previous activities and try something I otherwise never would have. I established "Global Link," an organization of IB schools with a goal of international community service. I met new people from around the world and learnt in ways that were both pleasurable and interesting. I think the biggest strength of IB is the common academic experience that it offers to students on an International level. The rigor of the program prepares intellects of tomorrow with the same drive for service and knowledge.

--Ruchi Hazaray

A very interesting aspect of the IB, which I had never noticed anywhere else, is the fact that IB teachers are [held accountable] in many respects, by the IB itself. They are in essence graded on their grading, and there is a feeling throughout the two years that everything we do is a learning process for them as much as it is a learning process for us. This emphasizes that our teachers are also a strong part of our IB community.

--Stéphane Krumenacker

I am feeling really moved right now by how much I have taken away from IB even thus far. The relationships I have developed with these incredibly special individuals that I feel I never would have gotten to know on this level had I not done IB are so special to me, and with the craziness of life I feel so secure in the support system which IB has provided for me. I know this is kinda dorky to be writing this, but I truly am just amazed right now at how much I have learned in class and from my classmates outside of school. I continue to be amazed by my peers and I gain new respect for each of them every day. I only feel privileged to be a part of this process and for this experience.

--Elana Baurer (via email in October of 12th grade)

The idea of CAS and the Extended Essay was something that I, now looking back, actually liked about IB. CAS definitely pushed me to try new things, although I was still able to get by doing some of the things that I am more comfortable with (for example, getting Creativity hours through being a spook on the Riverbend Halloween Trail instead of joining the Art Club and painting a self-portrait that people would mistake as an imitation of Picasso's portrait paintings). The Extended Essay allowed me to do a research project in a laboratory – something that I have always wanted to do but always pushed off because I never seemed to be able to find the time to carry out such a project. I would have to say that if it were not for CAS or EE, I would not nearly have had the experiences that I had during the past two years, so when all is said and done, instead of annoying little things that needed to be taken care of, those two components of IB were actually the most enjoyable.

--Xun Li

Class of 2004

I am now living, working, and studying in the heart of Paris. I'm abroad for the year from Penn, where currently I am double majoring in French Studies at the college, and marketing at the Wharton School, with a minor in international relations. This year I'm studying...at Institut des Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences-Po), with a specialization in business and economics. It's incredible to think we started out at Harriton, and now my economics professor is the former French minister of finance.... One of the things I discovered at Penn was that I was not overwhelmed by the work load and coursework when I arrived, nor did I have time management issues as most people did. I think IB did prepare us very well.

--Wenjie Song (extracted from an email sent during her junior year in college)

Cheers from London! I am over here studying chemistry at the University College London for the entirety of my junior year.... Mansi and I still joke about how we were at the top of our game and super-hardcore during IB, and then college came around and everything seemed pretty much dull (academically, of course) afterwards.

--Mayank Puri (extracted from an email sent during his junior year in college. He alludes to his sister, Mansi, an IB graduate of the class of 2003.)

I found [the IB Program] to be excellent.... Although I received my hardest and most rigorous workload during my two years in the IB program, I never once felt that it was too much or that a qualified student should not be able to handle it. I truly thrived in the IB program and became the best student I've ever been.

--Will Bailis

I was thinking of you recently because I am getting ready to graduate in the spring. (I should have graduated last year but I took a year off and studied in Europe). I was reflecting on my education and I wanted to tell you that the education I had at Harriton High school thanks to the IB program...was the best education I received - better than in any of the universities I have attended. (I'm sure you remember that I started out at Pitt and then transferred). Even at a top university like Virginia, I do have to admit that the best classes and teachers were not UVA but instead at Harriton High school, and more specifically in the IB program. Not only did the IB program prepare me for college, but I feel that I can thank the IB program for putting me at the top of my class. I also hope that the IB program is still doing well, because I really benefited from it.

--Laura Bleeden (extracted from an email received in October 2008)

I believe I have grown an immeasurable amount as both a student and a person as a result of the interpersonal relationships forged with my fellow IB students and the course work in concert with CAS. Consequently, I am a more compassionate and understanding person than I was two years ago and I believe that this is true for most if not all of my colleagues. TOK has taught me to question with more scrutiny my own beliefs....

--Rory Carlin

One of the aspects that truly separates IB from AP is the essay writing, and somewhat related, the emphasis on depth over breadth. It is potentially here that my choice most clearly manifests itself as the logical one, given the improvement in my writing over the past two years. Not only have I benefited from the greater meaning inherent in essay tests, but I will continue to profit from my practice in writing in college courses. Furthermore, it has suited me better to take the IB exam in English, which requires one essay in two hours, than the AP English exam, which requires three essays in the same amount of time. My belief is that the skills required to write an essay in forty minutes pale in significance when compared to the skills necessary to write the same essay given more time.

--Kareem Estefan

Two years ago when I entered the International Baccalaureate Program I was prepared only for challenging classes and a well rounded resume to send off to colleges. I left the program realizing that those who measure IB only in terms of its academic rigor and success in sending students to highly ranked colleges do not truly appreciate the program's value. They are the same people that evaluate learning in terms of an end result. IB is not for people who believe that learning is receiving an A in a class. It is impossible to provide a safety raft to anyone subject to the whimsical tides of the college admissions process. IB makes no promises, and it is unfair for anyone to expect any such program to do so. Students who walk into IB ready to accept a difficult challenge come out as unique individuals with a tolerant approach to learning and an insatiable appetite for knowledge.

--Jon Huggins

The program's main strength is the fact that it is a program, rather than a mere bunch of challenging courses as AP is. This enables the establishment of a social environment that promotes learning.

--Ilkka Kaukoranta

There are many strengths of the program. I really like how there are long-term assignments and virtually no "busy work" because it has prepared me for college and for the real world. I also liked how we were not just tested on facts; we were always faced with analytical questions and tasks. This type of learning helped me to become a deeper thinker; I no longer accept facts at face value.

--Rachel Kessler

The academic successes of the International Baccalaureate program are outwardly evident. The program's true value lies not in the material covered, but in the manner it is taught. The most academically rewarding aspect of IB is its focus on analysis and application rather than memorization and regurgitation. This ability to actually understand the evolution of a concept and its practical value is a priceless skill in college and in life.

The most prominent academic qualm people have when considering the IB program is its supposed focus on humanities rather than math and science. I believe, however, that IB focuses on the humanities as well as math and science. My chemistry class has granted me an understanding of the subject uncommon to even AP students. Rather than simply presenting a concept and explaining it, IB delves into the origins of the idea, and follows its development into a modernized concept. In an AP class, students learn that certain elements have color, yet can not explain why. They can talk about periodic trends, yet do not know why anomalies exist. Perhaps the most concise explanation of the difference between AP and IB chemistry is that AP focuses on what, while IB focuses on why.

--Jon Huggins

Something else that I felt made the IB program stand out was the unique skills I have developed. Because the raw "facts" aren't stressed as the most important part of each class, I have learned to critically and analytically read and write in the IB program. Instead of just memorizing dates and specific pieces of information, I now know how to get the main idea, causes and effects, and reasoning behind abstract concepts. These skills, I feel, are very important in preparing for college and I know I will be more than prepared to handle any task in my future education.

--Julie Perilstein

The IB program certainly deviated from the normal teaching standards and procedures, but managed to do so in a productive way. These past two years have been the toughest academic years of my schooling, and have also been the most worthwhile. The teachers, while they may not have always been the easiest, made the classes challenging and had no problem stretching us to (and past) our limits. Thankfully, this has caused us to absorb an extreme wealth of knowledge that we will carry with us into the future.

--Mayank Puri

The AP program, above all, stood for quantity over quality, a philosophy that I abhorred (and still do). IB, on the other hand, cared about the learning experience of the student. Rather than shoving a bunch of facts down the student's throat, IB had a detailed teaching process that went along with the curriculum, including various assessments and projects to be graded by IB itself. IB cared about the student's understanding of concepts, rather than regurgitation of facts, which was to a large extent my experience in AP. That -- IB's attitude towards learning -- was why I chose the program.

--Anna Tsykalova

One particular experience I will always remember vividly is my Theory of Knowledge class. It challenged everything I knew, or at least everything I thought I knew, really making me question how and why I could hold something to be true. I remember coming out of class earlier in the year saying "That class is really messing with my head... and I LOVE it!" It was something new and exciting, and there's a great satisfaction in that. As much as it is unsettling when everything you believe in is challenged, it's also rather intriguing. It really makes you explore what you know and your meta-cognition. One thing I really liked is that I could link TOK back to my other classes, especially psychology. I loved being able to draw parallels between psychological and TOKish concepts; it made me feel accomplished, like I was really getting somewhere productive. And I loved taking our TOK discussion out of the class, posing the questions to my friends and family, and gaining even more viewpoints and insight on various problems and questions. The more different opinions I heard, the more I thought about my own.... This class taught me a whole new way of thinking which I will remember and apply for the rest of my life.

--Nikki Rosard

I think seeing the faults and good things in teachers and in IB are part of the reason why I want to become an IB teacher. I love the idea that all over the world this program connects IB students and that it opens their minds to new ideas, through a different teaching technique and through classes like Theory of Knowledge. Another amazing part of IB was its Art program. It was my favorite class and it inspired me to explore my passion without restrictions of class projects. The art class is a perfect representation of how IB allows the student to have freedom and gain responsibility over their own lives.... IB is in a lot of ways like what college will be like and this is why it is renowned for being a great preparation into college life that I do not think the American school system does very well.

--Jessica Tyler

I see my entrance into the IB Program as a huge step in my personal development. The subjects and ideas perused within, many of which have been key to the transformation of my character, were alien to me when I entered. The philosophies of Camus, Beckett, Glass and other giants of 20th century thought and artistry are topics that I would have inevitably come to; IB courses respected my intelligence enough to introduce me to them as a high school student. IB also taught me to respect my own intelligence. The emphasis on class discussion as a means of learning helped me to realize that being smart did not have to be a social hindrance. My peers' ability to discuss and respect my opinions in class helped me to transfer that exchange to the outside world and develop the level of intellectual pretentiousness I embrace today.

--Michael Wert

IB honestly was probably one of the best decisions I've ever made. Almost everything we did in my organic chemistry class I learned from Mr. Gauvin, the skills I learned from IB history made my history classes and even political science class easy, and IB English made me one of the best students in my English class. Steen was telling a bunch of us about how IB was going for him and it made me look back so fondly on the whole experience and even wish I was back with everyone. I would never trade those two years for anything.

--Will Bailis (at the conclusion of his first year in college)

Class of 2003

As I stand on the cusp of this new transition, I can't help but think about how fast it all went by and how it seems like just yesterday that my friends and I were sitting for our IB exams....

If nothing else, you can always let the current and up-coming IB students know that somewhere out there, there's an IB grad who is very glad that she was given the chance to establish such a broad academic and personal foundation during high school. Truth be told, I think that the resources of the programme have shaped the trajectory of my scholastic and personal life immeasurably: I've acquired a wide liberal arts background, studied three foreign languages at a college level, and maintained a commitment to the arts and service. It's also given me the courage to change paths completely midstream (next year I'm back to school to take my sciences, the MCAT, and get ready for med school...).

So, to any current or prospective student I'd say: you don't work for the programme. Make it work for you. Enjoy the chance to study everything that's being put before you. Allow your possibilities to explode rather than making them too narrow. And when all else fails, do your CAS hours; it's a chance to play hard and fast and loose and free.

--Wendy Smolen (at the conclusion of her four years at Bryn Mawr College)

IB gives you a common experience that you can relate to all the other IB students you'll meet at college. There are [many] more of them here than I expected and they've gone through the same pains and trials that you have and they are usually equally pleased to meet a fellow IB student. It may sound weird, but it is a kind of bond, this commonality, and it can help you meet new friends and people.... I find that I do have a more highly developed analytical writing technique. Other students in the [freshman] seminar are still working on developing focused analytical theses rather than observational theses. I find in particular that I have a notable advantage...in grounding my claims in whatever texts I am using.

--Alistair Boettiger

Recently my professor of my seminar told me that I am one of the most sophisticated first-year writers he's encountered.... I feel I owe that, at least in part, to IB. It was difficult at the time and I often considered what junior and senior years would have been like without IB. However, from the perspective of a new college student I realize just how helpful the program is and I would very much like to see other students benefit from it.

--Wendy Smolen

Overall, IB provided a great experience in preparing me for the level and standards of work expected at college. It has provided me with everything ranging from a topic of conversation to an approach to surviving difficult courses and challenging scheduling of time. I am sure the most valuable of all of these has been in teaching me the value of classmates as resources to understanding a close group of friends facing similar challenges in diverse settings across the country.

--Carl Boettiger

One of my good friends in from Ecuador...and another is from Kuwait. I met them because I overheard them talking about HL and SL exams, and it turns out that they took the same exact IB tests that we did. It's pretty amazing for people to be that far away and have the same exact tests. I am also doing really well in my classes. In fact, as of now, I have all A's. There are incredible similarities between this year's history and English classes compared to last year's. The time management skills have also really paid off. There are so many people in my dorm struggling to get work done, and I honestly feel that I had more last year.

--Julia Cramer

My favorite part of IB while I was in it was the people, and I still feel that way and feel very connected to most of them and have remained in contact with many. I feel very prepared for college and none of the stress and strain that some of my friends here seem to be experiencing.

--Elizabeth Sweet

Having managed to retain all of my friends who took the AP route, it was quite apparent to me that classes like history...explored subject matter in not only greater breadth but greater depth.... The same is true for many of our other courses, electives included. The guidelines that the IBO set out for its classes forced us to pursue the subjects farther than in many AP classes. To see IB students exchange knowing glances at references to nearly any event in

the Cold War or otherwise is not uncommon.... It's not all that common to find students at Harriton who spend their free time discussing subjects from class, but among the IB students this was commonplace.

--Alex Kurtzman

...when I look back on my IB experience I am very satisfied and thankful. I feel that the program has more than sufficiently prepared me for college and given me a better sense of the kind of learner and thinker I am. Before entering IB, I did not have the confidence that I do now, as both a student and a person. The IB Program has taught me to be more open minded about the courses I take and not limit myself to the sciences and math classes but embrace the humanities. Most importantly, my experience in IB has forced me to manage my time efficiently, which is a skill that will serve me well in college.

--Kristina Hayden

I think that IB's biggest asset has been the full program (i.e., CAS, extended essay). Personally, one of the best experiences I've ever had was with my extended essay. Not only did I get the opportunity to explore on my own, I was able to delve into something we don't touch on at all in school, and that was very rewarding. Also...it became convenient to fulfill CAS hours with my classmates. Therefore, not only did we learn together in school, but out of school as well.

--Betti Packman

I did not think that I could ever have been so close with so many people with such different styles. In essence, the IB Program brought together a group of kids from all over the school and made them into a supportive, strong, intellectual community. We all grew from one another and learned from each person's own style. Different perspectives and opinions...helped me to learn on such a heightened level that I did not know existed. Hence, the community that formed and the process by which it formed helped me to become more aware of myself as a learner and person.

--Mansi Puri

In my opinion, one of the strongest aspects of the program is the testing method used by most of the teachers. Excluding math and science exams, I do not believe I have seen a test of any significant weight that has consisted of multiple choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank questions since tenth grade. Meanwhile, the eleventh grade honors/twelfth grade AP students have been required to complete such examinations in preparation for the AP tests.... Therefore, the expected absence of such testing methods in college will most likely come as less of a shock to Harriton's IB students than it will to the rest of the class.

--Rina Sobel

I have felt very prepared [for college]. The work that I have completed up until this point in the semester has been quite easy. Currently, I have an "A" in every class and as a matter of fact, I don't feel challenged enough. The IB challenged me a great deal....

--Eric Campbell-Westlind (who later transferred to a more challenging college)
