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Valentine’s Day
Valentine’s Day is a Christian commemoration held annually on the 14th of February, celebrating the affection between lovers.

Customs in the past
In England, on the Valentine’s Day in the past, gentleman from the noble class would have to draw lots and give a present to the lady who fell to his lot. The presents were usually small items such as gloves, while luxuries such as jewelry were not rare. There was also a tradition among the country people that on Valentine’s Day, a day on which many people believed that every bird would be choosing its mate, young folks would go out before daylight and catch an owl and two sparrows in a net. If they succeeded, it was a good omen, and entitled them to gifts from the villagers.
Modern customs

Nowadays the romantic festival of Valentine's Day has become the second most popular festival, following Christmas. The festival of Valentine's Day is seen in a large perspective in modern times—except from celebrating love between couples, people like wishing 'happy Valentine's Day' to all they love including father, mother, siblings, friends etc.

The most common custom of Valentine's Day is exchanging flowers (usually rose), cards and gifts to express one's affection to their lovers. Red rose symbolizes passion and romance. The practice of sending cards, also known as Victorians, allows lovers to express love through gorgeous images of rose, hearts, lace, goddess of love, or even Cupid, the pudgy, winged son of Venus. The gifts sent in Valentine's Day are usually teddy bears, red rose and candies in heart shape which represents love. Besides, fine jewelry has become more common due to the rigorous marketing campaign by diamond industry.

People on Valentine's Day may also go on a date with their sweetheart. They may go on a romantic candlelight dinner and say the golden words 'I love you'. Couples may also go to Valentine's Day Couple's parties or balls organized by clubs and restaurants.
Qixi Festival (七夕)
Qixi festival is the Chinese's Valentine's Day celebrated on the 7th July of the lunar calendar.

Customs in the past
The customs of the Qixi festival are related to a romantic love legend. The legend is that Zhi Nu (a fairy) and Niu Lang (a mortal or human) fell in love with each other and got married. The God of Heaven and the Queen Mother were furious at their marriage and separated them with a river. The magpies took pity on them and once a year they flew up into heaven to form a bridge so that Zhi Nu and Niu Lang could be together for a single night.

One of the customs of the Qi Xi Festival was to make offerings of fruit, flowers and face powder to Niulang and Zhinu. Half of the powder was sprinkled on the roof of the house; the rest was divided among the women of the household. It was thought that the women could acquire Zhi Nu's beauty through this ritual. Another custom was that the unmarried girls would pray for the Weaving Maid on the heaven to be smarter. On 7th July of lunar calendar, a day on which star Vega was believed to be high up in the sky, a game would be held among the girls. In the game, the girls would put a needle on the water surface. If the needle did not sink, then the girl would be seen as smart enough to find a husband. Girls would also ask for one wish at that night, and it was believed that the wish could always come true.
Modern Customs

Nowadays in the Qixi Festival, girls may receive romantic gifts such as red rose, chocolate, and cards. Couples will light flying lanterns in parks, lake beside areas, squares and party venues to make wishes. In Beijing, the custom of lighting and flying lanterns is very popular and the festival day is even considered the most romantic day in Beijing. Another custom is writing wishes in the form of poetry on small pieces of paper and hanging them on bamboos. People may also float bamboos with paper of wishes on river during midnight. It is also believed that you could probably hear Zhi Nu and Niu Lang's talk if you stand under the grape trellis in the evening of the festival day.
Not only do IB boys display academic excellence, boys who excel in studying also prefer the IB program over the alternative NSS system. This year alone, we have holders of subject prizes entering the Pre-IB scheme, one holding as many as 8.

Academics aside, we have writers who are veterans of the pen; actors who have the most verisimilar performances; debaters who are insightful and eloquent; athletes of unfathomable and impregnable perseverance and musicians who treat each and every note they play with equal fastidiousness as they have in their studies.

This year as I was watching a football match, a friend of mine blatantly inquired, “The IB program is new, what exactly can you guys achieve?”

This essay is the answer to that question.

To this day, even though the bygone praises and acknowledgements ring in our ears and flash in our eyes, we remain humble and continually strive for the betterment of the individual and work for the burgeon of the DBS IB program.

That is what we have achieved.
Oh Yeah I love the Way You Taste

A big deal every year-- the Lunar New year. Apart from the pocket money, another highlight of the Chinese New Year is probably those traditional food. However, would you ever get bored by those monotonous cakes? When you are desperate while your mother is filling you the last piece of carrot cake left on the plate, maybe we can twist the authentic recipe a little bit to have some fresh new taste!

Radish cake with truffle and cheese
In a restaurant, a dish with black truffles would probably cost you hundreds of dollars, but this truffle cake costs you only less than $200. Made with full weight of 300 grams of truffle, plus Germany porcini, mushrooms, the chef bares the principle of combining health, flavor and mouthfeel in this cake. Together with the melting cheese, the truffles and sweet strains of radish leave you with the wonderful aroma to ponder over in your mouth.
Oh Yeah I love the Way You Taste

Double berry cake with pomegranate juice
Cold parfait. Served with strong flavor of pomegranate flavor. A soft and smooth texture of fruit jelly with a little bit sourness. Large amount of fruit tablets produces the freshness and chewy texture. Although it doesn’t quite fit the new year's atmosphere, but it could definitely be a great appetizer.

Water chestnut cake with papaya juice and pumpkin tablets
Made with mainly water chestnut mixed with Hawaiian papaya, white fungus and pumpkin. Water fungus and pumpkin tablets have increased the mouthfeel of the cake which sort of compensate the loss of chewiness compared to the traditional water chestnut cake.

My Sweetie cocoa cake
Totally fascinated by the name of this cake. Three layers of white chocolate, milk chocolate and dark chocolate. You can either eat them layer by layer or altogether at once. Chef smartly uses chocolate granules to improve the texture. Can be eaten right out of the package which is an easy choice during the busy new year. A kind reminder, feel free to leave it for the valentine's day just in case you can't finish by Chinese New Year.
He twists and turns in his bed, but he has no intentions to drift off into sleep. Miraculously, this time his insomnia is not the result of yet another unfinished assignment. In fact, he has made sure that no gift of IB’s good graces will rob him of his precious time. Not this weekend. With Valentine’s day coming, he is determined to impress her. He had already chickened out the Christmas ball, and there is no place for error this time. But here comes the problem – he has no idea what to do.

Well, here are some unique ideas that will surprise her. Ask her out, but not just to go shopping or take poster pictures. Try to avoid doing things she probably would have done with her friends. Do something out of the box, say, take her on a picnic. Buy some sandwiches and sodas, and go somewhere without concrete or glass. Recline in the arms of nature and enjoy the breeze.
Have some meaningful conversations with her which you wouldn’t have tried in front of anyone else. Here's another fun thing to do. Bring a good camera, and take random snapshots of each other. Do self-portraits, poses, or even candid shots. When you look back at them later, you’ll always be reminded of the good old times.

In the evening, on the other hand, simply take her out for dinner in a nice restaurant. Ideally, a western restaurant would be better, as you can’t seem to talk over waiters screaming for ‘dumpling noodles’. Enjoy the food, then watch a movie. Avoid thrillers or cheap action films, even if she likes them. A romantic or touching movie is best watched at night, so don’t waste the atmosphere. Bring her out for a little walk, then you can bring her home. Here’s a nice days work accomplished.
But if you are one of the most unfortunate (namely the students taking IB), and your rigorous schedule leaves no margin for any time to be wasted, you can resort to a simple gift. Tell her to meet you at your ‘secret meeting place’, and surprise her with a bunch of roses. This may be a clichéd tradition, but its magic has worked for quite a long time, and it probably will work for you too. Another great gift might be an intricate bracelet or necklace, best with your name engraved on it, something that will be close and hang on to her, like you will.

Also, don’t stop with a simple ‘I love you’. Unleash your inner Shakespeare. One thing you should never forget is that girls never ever get tired being reminded that her hair is like the dark sky and her eyes are like the bright stars. So, even if she happens to wear glasses and she dyed her hair orange, try to think of something classy and romantic. Write it on a scented gift card with your best legible cursive writing and fold it around a rose. Or simply proclaim it in a note on Facebook if you don’t even have the time to meet her. She’ll be touched by your sincerity even though it sounded like a nursery rhyme; or she’ll be impressed by you grandiloquence and
she won’t understand a word. Either way, you will have achieved a milestone in your relationship, and she will forgive you for leaving her alone at home while her friends all go out with their other halves.

Here is a poem to help lure out the poet within you.
Valentine
Carol Ann Duffy

Not a red rose or a satin heart.
I give you an onion.
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.
It promises light
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.
It will blind you with tears
like a lover.
It will make your reflection
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kisogram.

I give you an onion.
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,
possessive and faithful
as we are,
for as long as we are.

Take it.
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding-ring,
if you like.

Lethal.
Its scent will cling to your fingers,
cling to your knife.
Sports Day: A Reflection and Criticism

This past January, there were two days in which every DBS boy had to wake up for, yet did not have to go to class. Two days, that for the G7 boys (and for any other student who is experiencing their first year at DBS), may have seemed bewildering.

The two days I'm referring to are, of course, the Inter-house Athletic Competitions- both the heats and the finals. The heats occurred just a week after the return from Christmas holiday on the 10th of January at Wan Chai Sports Ground, and the finals took place seven days later on the 17th at the same place. Both days yielded good efforts on the part of all who took place and outstanding results for Sergeant House, as shown in the results (below).
Now that we have the facts and formalities out of the way, let's talk seriously. The IB programme encourages thinking out of the box and critical thinking, so the following will contain these traits with discretion: Diocesan Boys' School, our school, is a school with a large foundation, as well as a rich and long history. Together, these two form tradition, one of the most repeated words in DBS. Tradition, highly regarded of in the school's history, has made it one of the most respected secondary schools in Hong Kong. There's no doubt that in the spirit of tradition, we should follow all of the school's traditional events in exact order, right? Be honest. Did you really enjoy sitting out there in the cold January morning, sitting on filthy and rock-hard 'stands' that also had a secondary use of being leg rests to anyone behind you while the gusts of wind unforgivingly blew at you? Did you honestly stay on the stands and watch every single event like a good DBS boy? If so (you deserve an award for just that, actually), did you do so with continuous enthusiasm? It's not that the events were boring or that the participants didn't work hard (they all did), it's just that the continuous stream of events one after another when the entire school slowly freezes in the morning does little to unite the school. While there were no doubt several events that captured the attention of the audience, who unflinchingly kept their gaze on the field (Flying Man is one example), the majority of the events simply failed to gain the attention of the boys, much less entertain them. Even the prefects, for if they were not patrolling the stands searching for hidden Jews games and books, to keep them preoccupied, they would have been undoubtedly bored at several long intervals during the day. The teachers and the staff didn't escape the wrath of the day either, as on the afternoon of the 17th, more than a few teachers couldn't conceal their happiness that the day was over.
One can wave the hardships of the day off by stating the traditions of the school come first, and that many other events can bring out these exact reactions out of anyone - should other events be disregarded as well?

Before I respond to that question, let us look at the main reason for Sports Day. These two days were meant to bring the school together through athletics. They were meant to unite the school through sports. While the events in the past may have done as intended, all they've been doing in recent years is to unite the school in boredom and uncomfortableness. This is how the inter-house competitions differ from other events. They bring the entire school to one location for an entire day, yet nothing meaningful materializes for those not competing (read: most of the people). Even the school spirit that drove us to chant louder than any other school during the swimming gala was gone, as the house spirit of the students seemed to be sorely lacking.

It's not my intention to criticize the traditions of DBS, but to call on us to reflect our stance on how we should approach school-wide events such as Sports Day. An inter-house athletic meet is definitely a positive thing, but is it really worth missing three days of school (two for the sports days themselves and the third 'Day after Sports Day' hanging out in the back) to sit in the cold for hours on end? There must be some better way to bring the school together. Having the competitions when the weather starts to get warmer - well before the Easter holidays and exams - for starters, would not be unwise. We have to decide as a school - should we seek better ways to unite and embrace our competitiveness and love for athletics, or should we collectively trail the empty shell of an event.

You, as a DBS boy, should decide.

Personal opinions and remarks of this writer does not reflect the opinions of the IB Newsletter or the IB Diploma Programme in DBS
A new year, a new start. To bring hope and a brand new start to people, DBS students brought new hopes for the elderly in Lok Wah Sun Chuen.

All G9 students, including 10 Pre-IB boys and several IB1 students arrived Lok Wah Sun Chuen on 19th January, 2011. No longer as students, they picked up cans of paint and knocked up the doors of the elderly and painted the gates for them. YES! Painting gates, you haven’t got the wrong idea. Cans of paints were carried to different floors of the apartment. Brushes taken out, dip into the can, start painting. All seems easy though, but to make it into a delicate yet meaningful present to the elderly is not an easy job.
Apartments were scattered across the floors and students were assigned into groups of around two to three. Different groups of students take up responsibility of different apartments. Students took along their paint brushes and stacks of newspaper, wearing their protective coats and arrived to their destination – the old and dirty gates. Newspaper were first scattered across the ground to prevent contamination of paints. They took out their paint brushes, allowed it swirling in the can for a while and started to clean the old times away. After several swipes, most of the parts were modified and changed, and it was time to start the second layer.
Yes, second layer, things needed to be absolutely fantastic for New Year. Think about it, have we ever had an absolutely fantastic New Year before? Had we really ever helped each other out during New Year? Similar to Christmas, New Year is all about giving warmth to people and to give them a support for an unfamiliar, yet adventurous new start.

The activity has come to an end, a few hours might be just a small and tiny part of the year, but it might have made the year optimistic for them. Lunar New Year is arriving; bring the warmth to others as well! Spread it, and you never regret it.
Introduction to Logical Reasoning

Logical reasoning is one of the four main ways of knowing. Reasoning generally involves two premises (a rule and a precondition) and a conclusion. The three types of formal logical reasoning include:

Deductive reasoning- using the two premises to reach a conclusion.

Premise (rule)- All dogs are mammals
Premise (precondition)- Chihuahua is a kind of dog
Conclusion- Chihuahua is a mammal

Inductive reasoning- using a repeated pattern of precondition and conclusion to determine a rule

Premises (precondition)- Iron, silver and gold are transition metals
Conclusions- Iron, silver and gold have high melting points
Rule-Transition metals have high melting points

Abductive reasoning- using a conclusion and a given rule to determine the precondition

Conclusion- The book is left open on page 6
Premise (rule)- He leaves the book open where he stops reading
Precondition- He may have stopped reading on page 6 (since there can be multiple causes for a condition e.g. the wind blew the book open to page 6)
Introduction to Logical Reasoning

Fallacies

A fallacy is an error in reasoning which results in an invalid argument\(^1\).

Consider the following arguments:

Murder is wrong. A case of self-defense resulted in murder. Therefore, such act of self-defense is wrong.

SWEEPING GENERALIZATION- Not all murders are wrong. The neglecting of exceptions constitutes such fallacy.

He is telling the truth because he says he is.

CIRCULAR ARGUMENT- He could be lying. The premise 'he says he is' has already assumed the conclusion that 'he is telling the truth', resulting in a fallacy.

He must be cheating since he is unable to prove that he is not.

AD IGNORANTIUM- assuming that just because a proposition has not been proven otherwise, it must be true/false

He is American. Therefore he does not know how to play rugby.

\(^1\)Declarative sentences used to express logical reasoning (premises, conclusions etc).
Introduction to Logical Reasoning

NON SEQUITUR- he can know how to play rugby while still being an American. The false assumption of a causal relationship between the premise and conclusion constitutes such fallacy.

'You're wrong! Black holes don't exist! My whole life's work will be ruined if they do. Have pity on me...'

AD MISERICORDIAN (APPEAL TO PITY)- An argument justified by exploiting the feeling of pity and emotional bias

Food for thought

Does the phrase 'nothing is ever for sure' sound familiar? You have probably heard it once in a while. Would you agree with that proposition? But wait. If it is true that 'nothing is ever for sure', then the proposition itself can never be certain. If the proposition is not certain, then naturally 'something can be for sure'. So it is true that nothing is ever for sure while it is also true that something can be for sure...? What's wrong with the picture?

Next issue on paradoxes.
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