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# GP DIGEST

Delia Memorial School (Glee Path)



Tel. / 電話: 2741 5239

Fax / 傳真: 2745 2250

E-mail / 電郵: [gp@deliagroup.edu.hk](mailto:gp@deliagroup.edu.hk)

Website / 網址: <http://www.deliagp.edu.hk/>

Address: No. 1-3 Glee Path, Mei Foo Sun Chuen, KLN

地址: 九龍美孚新邨吉利徑1-3號





# S5 BIOLOGY OUTING TO CHEUNG CHAU

## BURJAY 5B:

Recently, I have been learning about the ecosystem during Biology lessons, so I feel more than grateful for having this opportunity to go to Cheung Chau for a field trip. This field trip was an experience that I would not be able to gain by only having lessons at school. During the field trip, I tried multiple methods of sampling plants and animals, such as quadrat sampling and line transect. I sampled a wide variety of plants and animals with my friends that cannot be observed in the city, which really made it more interesting to analyze the specimens! This field trip was a new experience for me as I got to catch insects by myself, which I do not usually do, which really made this trip an unforgettable experience!



## DOLLY 5B:

This trip felt like a hike rather than a field trip to a research centre. Nonetheless, the experience was worth it as the place was amazing. On the way to the research centre, I got to see parts of Hong Kong I was never really aware of. Although it was raining that day, I think the rain made the field trip even more memorable. We even caught some animals and organisms, which we observed under the microscope, but we made sure to be very careful to not harm the animals while analysing them. Moreover, the staff were extremely kind, and they even let us take pictures and pet the animals.



## MR LAW:

It is so exciting that we could have a field trip this year! We had been to Cheung Chau to study the abiotic and biotic factors in the woodland and grassland habitats. Although it was raining throughout our field study, our students kept continuing the fieldwork in order to complete the objective of the activity. Afterwards, we focused on the laboratory work to investigate the biological adaptations of animals and plants in the said habitats. We all learned the importance of preserving our natural habitats, and we sincerely hoped that we could promote conservation to our students in GP!

# LIFE PLANNING



## HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW?

While many people believe that interviews are hard to prepare for, I always encourage students to prepare by considering “high probability questions” they might encounter in an interview. There are three steps to this process.

First, put yourself in the shoes of the interviewer - what qualities are they looking for in a candidate? In addition to thinking from the interviewer’s perspective, students could consider taking a look at the job posting or the university admissions page for additional hints.

Second, draft up a list of ~10 questions based on step one. In an interview, you would likely expect to give a self-introduction, explain your interest in the program (or job), share relevant experiences, and ask 2-3 good questions at the interview. Likewise, you may also want to consider the latest new developments in the program you are applying for.

Third, create bullet points for your responses and spend time rehearsing. I typically encourage students NOT to write out the entire script; the idea is to know your key points without sounding robotic. Ultimately, while students cannot expect to get all of their high probability questions in an interview, it provides added confidence when interviewers end up asking similar questions in the actual interview.

## WHAT ARE SOME INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES THAT COULD BE USED DURING AN INTERVIEW?



There are a few techniques that are worth highlighting. First, feel free to pause before answering a question. Alternatively, if you find the question difficult, you can always rephrase and clarify the question with the interviewer. Both techniques will allow you more time to develop a structured response to the question. Second, always provide 1-2 good examples to back up your points. Some candidates make the amateur mistake of waiting for the interviewer to prompt for examples, but interviewers don’t always follow up. Third, watch out for how long you are speaking. While you won’t be able to time yourself, a typically good response to a question should be around 1.5 to 3 minutes. By practicing in advance, you’ll get a sense of how long this time is. Moreover, you should always watch for non-verbal cues and the body language of your interviewers to make sure they are indeed interested in your response.



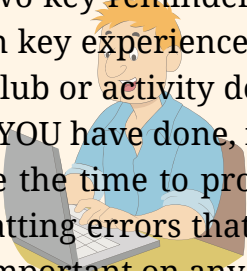




## HOW DO YOU WRITE A CV?

Nowadays, many CV templates are accessible online, providing good starting points for students who are creating their CVs. For students, a good template typically has the following components: a header with their full name and contact info, their educational details (including school grades and awards), extracurricular involvements (focusing on relevant experience and leadership commitments), and skills and hobbies section. Interested students could message Mr Yannick for a free template (I used to charge for these when I worked as a private admissions counselor, no jokes!)

## WHAT ARE SOME REMINDERS YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE OUR STUDENTS WHEN WRITING THEIR CVS?



There are two key reminders I'd like to share. First, a good CV has high impact bullet points that elaborate on key experiences. Many students explain what they've accomplished by summarizing what their club or activity does; however, this is unnecessary. Universities and employers want to know what YOU have done, focusing on YOUR contributions and responsibilities. Second, students need to take the time to proofread their CVs. Even after using my templates, students still make many formatting errors that can be easily fixed by proofreading their work. Attention to detail is extremely important on any job - and a good CV must show this.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO GIVE TO STUDENTS WHO WANT TO APPLY ABROAD?

While it is hard to summarize strategies and tips for all overseas university applications, two general reminders might be of importance. First, if you look for an agent to help you out, make sure the agent is well-recognized. In the past, our very own GP students have been scammed by agents who provide questionable advice while extracting large sums of money from our students. If you are unsure, please approach your teachers and do further research to verify.

Second, I strongly discourage students from applying abroad to get into a "safety" program. It is incredibly expensive to study abroad: HK\$300,000 - HK\$500,000 a year that includes tuition fees, living expenses, travel expenses etc. Moreover, the few available scholarships are typically only offered by top universities. If you choose to study abroad, you should have an honest discussion with your family to consider the feasibility of doing so. After all, there are many great local programs in Hong Kong, including a great variety of exchange opportunities in which you pay the local HK tuition to go on an exchange term for half a year.



~MR YANNICK