

**Chen Rao**  
Ontario, Canada



## Passion for literature, thriving finance career

*Writing drives Diploma Programme graduate Chen Rao to be critical, analytical, introspective, and emotional; traits that shine both personally and professionally.*

At the age of 14, Chen Rao immigrated to Ontario, Canada from her native China. Despite the challenges that came with learning a new language and integrating into a new society, she thrived. Starting off at an arts school, she transferred to Kenner College Vocational Institute for its IB programme, and received the IB Diploma with an impressive score of 44 out of 45.

An alumna of the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario, Chen holds a position as a Regulatory Business Analytics Associate at BNP Paribas (BNPP), the world's seventh largest financial services company. She assumed a full-time position with the firm after interning at its New York office.

Apart from her success in the business world, Chen has a passion for literature and frequently attended the English department's Writers-in-Residence programme during her undergraduate studies. "The writers worked with me with the same patience and kindness as my high school English teachers. They encouraged me to never give up on writing."

"There are a lot of people with diverse backgrounds in the business world – law, literature, sociology," Chen continues. "It's broad skills - like critical thinking and being analytical - that are important." These skills are what she developed during her time as a DP student.

"The [DP] learning experience was unparalleled, and I don't think I'll get the same intellectual experience elsewhere," Chen says. Despite a busy work schedule and community involvements, Chen continues to find time to write in Chinese and English.

"Writing gives me a chance to exercise the creative part of my brain," she says. "I've written articles for newspapers, magazines, and professional websites on a variety of topics," Chen says,

explaining how she's continued to write. "Women's leadership, education, immigrant integration, workplace diversity and inclusion are some of the topics I've covered."

It doesn't end there. Chen also demonstrates her passion for writing in the workplace. "Although I spend most of my day job on business analytics, I volunteer to draft and deliver speeches, publish articles on the intranet, and create training materials for workshops." She recognizes that the ability to write well and present ideas in a clear and thoughtful fashion can help advance one's career. Having good penmanship is key to professional success in many industries.

According to Chen, writing in the DP played a significant role in the development of her passion. "The DP's heavy focus on writing proved to be very beneficial for my personal growth," she says. "Writing allowed me to be critical, analytical, introspective, and emotional."

This is especially impressive, considering that English is Chen's second language. And her school only offered Higher Level (HL) English courses. Despite the challenge, she described the experience as "exciting." She was so motivated that she finished the HL course with a perfect seven! She even wrote her extended essay on comparative literature.

"The options afforded me by the Diploma Programme allowed me to pursue my passion at a higher level," she says. "The DP has taught me to stay hungry for knowledge, and be passionate about learning." Though she values many components of her DP experience, this is the most important takeaway for Chen.