

## STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

*“The extended essay was one of the milestones in my education, as it was the closest piece I wrote to a thesis before university.”*

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Hande Güzel completed the Diploma Programme at Eyüboğlu Schools in 2007. Hande has earned a bachelor's degree in political science and international relations, a master's degree in comparative studies in history and society, and is currently attending the University of Cambridge, where she is pursuing a doctorate in sociology focusing on the body, gender, sexuality, and medicine.

**Why did you originally decide to pursue an IB diploma? What appealed to you about the programme?**

The Diploma Programme (DP) was a way to find an alternative approach to education, one that could show new ways to critically discuss and analyse ideas and events. It was also quite a challenge to carry out the Turkish curriculum alongside the IB diploma, and I wanted to see how far I could take my education.

**Are there skills you developed as an IB student that you still use today?**

The greatest benefit of the DP before university is learning about both stress and time management. Pursuing the IB diploma was one of the busiest times during my life as a student, and having been able to get through it built confidence and helped me throughout higher education.

**Tell us about your current work—was there a moment when you knew you wanted to pursue this career?**

I am currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology, at the University of Cambridge. I am specializing in the sociology of the body, gender, sexuality, and medicine. I have always been interested in researching and deconstructing the normal, and pursuing an academic career carries the highest potential to reach that goal. I cannot pinpoint the time when I decided to be in academia, but enjoying research has been a part of my path all along.

**Did the extended essay, TOK, or CAS prepare you for university?**

The extended essay was one of the milestones in my education, as it was the closest piece I wrote to a thesis before university. The research and analysis I carried out for the extended essay was great practice for university. I wrote my essay on a comparison between an English and a Turkish novel from a gender perspective. This marks the time that I started to be interested in gender from a more critical perspective.

**As an IB student, what courses were most valuable?**

As a result of completing both the Turkish curriculum and the IB diploma, I did not have as much freedom as I would have liked in choosing subjects, but I found the literature that we covered in Turkish and English subjects very valuable and TOK was a good first step in learning to think critically.

**What advice do you have for current IB students?**

With regard to the extended essay, I would suggest that students not limit themselves to the subject they are planning to study after the IB diploma. I learned a lot from my essay in Turkish literature, although I'm now studying sociology. You never know where life will take you, so it's best to be open to new ideas, especially to ones that you enjoy. If a student is thinking of an academic career, they should enjoy the busy and challenging nature of the IB diploma, and like researching and producing new ideas.

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