

Fellow students,

We made it. It seems only yesterday that we were in the Junior school, asking our ICT teachers what the '22' in our email meant. Now, almost 10 years later, what was then a distant future is our reality, and here we are, the graduating class of 2022.

Before continuing, I would first like to thank everyone that helped us along the way. Our teachers, who always went above and beyond to ensure we grew not only as students, but as people too. We may forget the details of the Industrial Revolution, but we will never forget all the times you came to school on a Saturday, when you made us believe we were capable of everything and anything we set out to do, or when you treated us like equals. For all that, and much more, we're forever grateful.

Thank you to our school administrators, who in my role as Head Boy I got to know beyond their title, always willing to listen and making everyone feel welcome. Thank you to every other staff member, including maintenance, resources, secretaries, librarians, canteen workers, and many more, who ensured the school was in the conditions needed for us to learn, and always showed a kind disposition to help. Thank you Reddit, Litcharts, and Revision Village—we *definitely* wouldn't be here without you. And last, but definitely not least, I want to thank our parents, whose unconditional love and support always pushed us to be the best version of ourselves. I know we teenagers may not be the most expressive, but trust me, we truly are grateful for all you do for us. Students, I encourage you to reflect on who you are thankful for and let them know after this.

So, I have a confession to make. This was the hardest speech I've been tasked with preparing. I watched speeches on YouTube and plagued my search history with articles like "Best Graduation Speeches that will Make your Mom Proud!" all in hopes of finding some inspiration. But, I soon realized that it was something I had to do myself, for it needed to be reflective of our year group and the experiences we had together. Like our first party back in Form 5, with questionable songs and even more questionable dance moves. Or our trip to Campamento Artigas, where we tried the famous soup (it was, indeed, as good as they say). From a young age, these shared experiences created a strong generational bond between us, one that only grew with the years. In the Senior School, we had Logros, BEO, Conchillas, and then, of course, COVID. For our

sake, I will not ponder much on the pandemic, but we should all be proud of how well we managed to adapt to this new reality.

Most recently, we went to the UK together—the best closing we could have asked for for the 14 years we spent together. Not only did it bring us closer as a group, but we got to see teachers in a different light and visit the country our school takes its name and much of its traditions from.

And of course, how can we forget about the IB—the two-letter word that was a great source of stress for the past two years. Not only for us, but for the teachers that had to chase us to submit our internals (sorry about that, by the way). We can now say, however, that we're done with it, so give yourself a big round of applause.

These shared experiences do indeed bring us together, but so do our differences. Each one of you brings a different perspective, a different story—a different fabric to the colorful patchwork that is our class. Up close, the union of these patches may seem haphazard, with no clear reason to be together but the needle that joins them—much like us, with the school being our needle. But, with time and greater scope, what seemed like chaos comes together to form a beautiful image, with every unique piece serving its purpose in the overall design. Every single one of you has a purpose; every single one of you has a place; and, most importantly, every single one of you has a right to share your story with the world. I just hope the world is lucky enough to have you decide to share it.

You might, however, be wondering: what story do I want to share? What makes me, *me*? These are questions that those in the crowd that took philosophy can answer *way* better than I possibly can, but I'll give you my answer. I don't know. I don't know and I don't *want* to know what makes me *me* because identity is ever-changing. I might stand up here today as someone who wants to study Computer Science and *hates* olives, but who knows? I could be a hipster artist devouring olives in twenty years. That is the beauty of life, especially when we're young. We do not have to have a detailed 20-year plan for the future, or even a next-year plan (sorry, parents). The only thing we need to have is a will to experiment, and to be open to change. Because you may know who you are now, but not who you will be. I'm not saying some planning is not necessary, but don't plan excessively—give yourself some room to be carried away.

And the best part about this journey? You're on your own now. You get to do this at your own pace, under your own terms, and with no external forces to influence your steps. The worst part? You're on your own kid, you always have been. This newfound independence might be frightening, but embrace it, find what you love, what you hate, and what change you want to see in the world. Take advantage of the tools you have been given by this school, both inside and outside the classroom, and use them to take action towards this journey.

So, I just realized I might've gone a bit overboard with the speech, so if you're going to listen to just one part, let it be this: embrace your differences, and don't be afraid to try new things, to make mistakes. The patchwork that is our class is just a small version of the patchwork that is to come, with myriad different experiences and people you will meet along the way. Make sure you're happy and proud of your contribution to it—I'm sure you'll go to do amazing things.

I want to finish by thanking you, my fellow classmates, for letting me be a part of your story. I'm truly grateful you have chosen me to be your head boy, but, most importantly, to be your friend. We will not be in the same building anymore, or in my case not even in the same country, but the thread that joined us all those years ago knows no borders, and I hope will endure the passage of time.

Once again, thank you to everyone who made these past 14 years possible. I will miss you all dearly.