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Questions:

1. Please share with us a few benefits of entering a writing competition?

As a student, it is important to work well within boundaries, such as deadlines, a word count, and a subject matter. Entering a writing competition provides the opportunity to practice working within such limits.

Moreover, entering a writing competition helps you gain the experience of writing to a wider audience, instead of the common practice of only writing essays for your teacher to mark. To me, writing with a wider audience in mind essentially forces you to write more clearly and more concisely, whilst also gaining more knowledge with more research you do.

Not only does entering a writing competition give you a good opportunity to improve research skills and raise general knowledge, but it can also help develop and improve writing and critical thinking skills, as well as encourage the sense of competition and commitment to excellence. I believe that by participating in a writing competition, one can hone these important skills for future benefit.

1. Describe how you felt when it was announced that you were the winner of Non-fiction Group 5?

To be honest, when I entered the competition, I only thought of it as a new experience because winning it seemed impossible. So, when I heard that I won, I was shocked. It’s so surreal to win since it’s my first time entering a writing contest, especially in such a large-scale competition with so many talented writers.

1. How did you prepare for HKYWA 2020?

The prompt for the HKYWA 2020 was, in my opinion, research based in the sense that you couldn’t have possibly written a good piece if you didn’t have any prior knowledge about the Greater Bay Area to begin with. When drafting the flow and content to be included, I had a minimal idea of what the Greater Bay Area was, so I started the writing process by doing some in-depth research of what the plan was all about. After jotting down main ideas of the plan, my stance and whole flow of the essay was very clear to me. Having the whole idea and concept flow of my essay made the actual writing process very easy.

1. Do you have any writing tips for students looking to enter this year’s competition? (1 about research, 1 about writing skills)

When I started coming up with ideas to put into my first draft, I reached a point where I realized i didn’t have enough information to go further —and that’s where research comes in. One skill that I used when I was preparing for the essay was to start researching the topic on a broad scale and then dive into the specifics. I understand that it can be overwhelming to know where to start, so the best thing to do is to start with a basic internet search. While not always accurate, Google and Wikipedia are a great way to orient yourself in the basic overview of the topic, which can thereby help you come up with specific areas to dig deeper.

Personally, writing an essay for a wide audience is hard since it needs to be appealing to the reader. I find that the hardest part of writing is the mindset that I need to start my first draft strongly, but that’s not true. My biggest tip is to simply get rid of such a mindset and just start writing. No matter how much time you give to think of the opening for your writing piece, you will have to go back to your piece multiple times. So, my advice is to just start writing, even if it’s really bad because you will know how to improve your writing once you proofread and add your research to your writing.