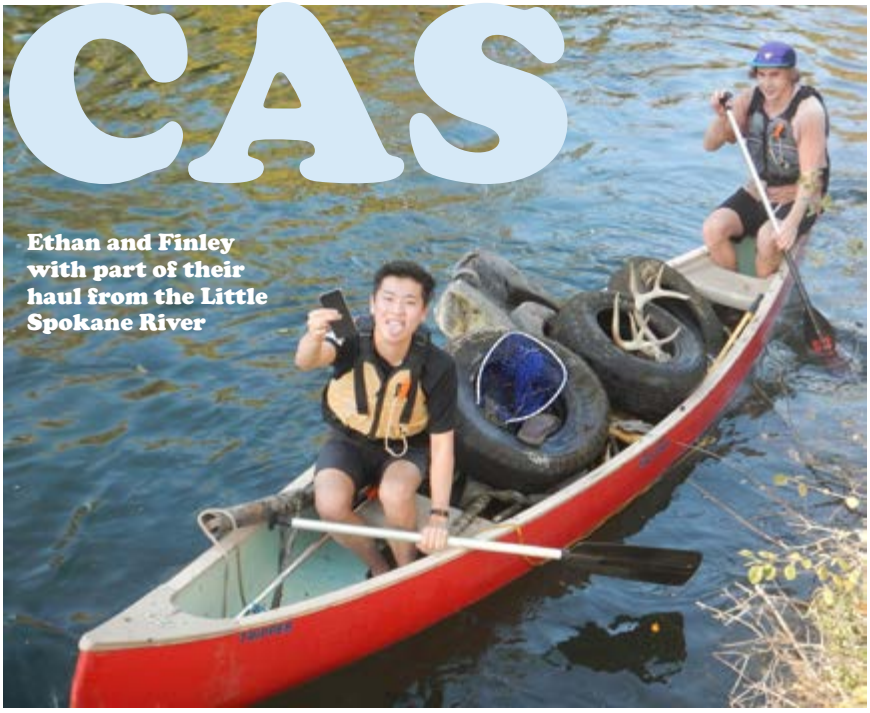
The IB's "Core"

All students at Saint George's take International Baccalaureate Diploma Program courses their junior and senior years. Those who choose to be a full IB Diploma Candidate are exposed to a more comprehensive education, beyond just the established rigor of individual IB courses. They also participate in the Diploma Program Core class, which includes time for them to work on an Extended Essay, participate in Theory of Knowledge discussions, and fulfill Creativity/Activity/Service (CAS) requirements.

"The Core makes the full Diploma Program a holistic program, requiring independent research, interdisciplinary thinking, and community service," says IB Coordinator Elizabeth Tender.

The seniors on the following pages share their experience of the three components of the IB Core and what they've learned from them.

CAS



Ethan and Finley with part of their haul from the Little Spokane River

CAS Project

All SGS Upper School students are required to complete Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) experiences each semester. In addition, full IB Diploma students complete a CAS project with an 18-month portfolio, a significant activity, and their reflections on it.

"I think the CAS project is valuable for anyone," says Melanie Mildrew, SGS Director of Community Service and Outdoor Programs. "It teaches a lot of self-direction, organization and preparation to make the experience successful."

Ethan Wu & Finley Wolff

Cleaning up the Little Spokane

Finley Wolff: Melanie Mildew and my older sister actually had the idea to clean up this section of the Little Spokane River. After my sister graduated, I asked her if I could use their idea and organize the clean-up.

Ethan Wu: The most challenging part of the CAS project was contacting all of the landowners along the river between Pine River Park and Saint George's. There were 30-40 addresses to contact, some of them on lots that are unoccupied or owned by real estate companies. Those were the hardest to get a hold of. In the end we were able to contact everyone so that we could float the river.

Finley Wolff: Although it was sad to see how much trash was polluting the river, I enjoyed unloading all of the tires, rafts, and horseshoes into the dumpsters after the float. I was proud of how many people showed up to help keep our river healthy.

Ethan Wu: I'm most proud of the amount of trash we found, including an entire basketball backboard and pole and over 300 golf balls that we collected along the way.

Maddy & Stella in the Art Room

Stella Brown & Maddy Roberts

Creating the 2022 Yearbook Cover

Stella Brown: The things I enjoyed most were the artistic process in general; I love art and particularly drawing and design. It certainly challenged my thinking and allowed me to continue developing my digital art and lettering skills. I also really enjoyed the fact that it is going to last for so long. I like the idea of future SGS artists looking at our yearbook cover for inspiration like we looked at so many others.

Maddy Roberts: The creative aspect of our CAS project was really exciting. Stella and I had to really think outside the box to come up with an interesting, dynamic idea, that respected our artistic license as well as the opinions of the senior class. I felt like I learned about my own perseverance doing this project. I sat down and did about 10 hours of work over one weekend in designing the animals and it was very fulfilling. I feel like we did justice to the class of 2022, and I hope that when the yearbook comes out that my classmates will feel the same way.

Extended Essay

The Extended Essay is a 4000-word research paper on a question that students develop with the help of a faculty supervisor. Students spend almost a year working on completing their Extended Essays.

"Throughout the year they will learn and develop skills that will help them with their Extended Essays and their pursuits after graduating from Saint George's School," says US History Teacher David Holte '02.

Jack and Maggie shared their affection for vampires at Halloween

Jack Morris

Traffic Congestion in Spokane

My Extended Essay is in economics and is focusing on traffic congestion, specifically in Spokane, Washington. I am looking at alternative roadway structures to lessen traffic congestion in the heavily used areas. I saw a video about how building more highway lanes doesn't actually help the congestion.

The most challenging part has been narrowing my topic and finding useful and specific data. It was interesting to research the traffic in the town where I live, as it impacts me every day.

I did come to some conclusions. While they all sound good on paper, implementing them into cities is another story.

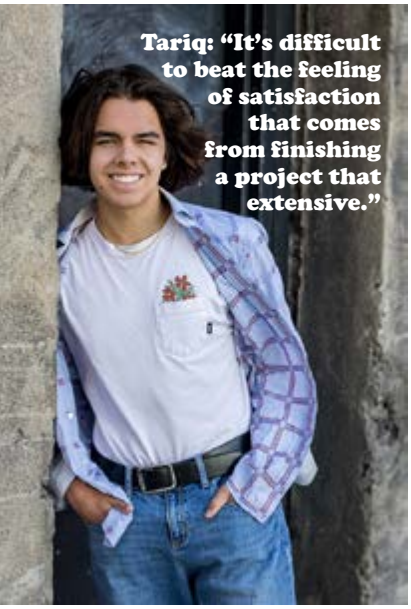
Maggie McLaughlin

Vampires & Being a Child

My EE explores the deviancy of the child vampire, Eli, in John Lindqvist's novel, *Let the Right One In*. Vampires have always been of interest to me as a popular social phenomenon. Literary monsters also comment on what society finds disturbing and transgressive.

I ended up teaching myself a lot about the expected childhood experience and how it has evolved over time, especially due to child labor laws and the Great Depression.

With so many ideas, combining them into one cohesive analysis was tough. I ended up writing my entire essay in under 24 hours. Realistic time management is definitely something I'm going to try and improve on.



Tariq: "It's difficult to beat the feeling of satisfaction that comes from finishing a project that extensive."

Tariq Ravasia

Spanish Existentialist Stories

My EE is an exploration of existentialist themes in a pair of short stories by Jorge Luis Borges, a prolific essayist and 20th century author. More specifically, I looked at the construction and themes of two of Borges' short stories through the lens of Jean-Paul Sartre's conceptualization of radical freedom. I wanted a text that was thematically deep and one which I would actually want to read, and Borges' works met the requirements.

This may sound trite, but writing an essay that long in Spanish was far and away the hardest part of the process. Every step, whether reading, researching, or writing, was made far more difficult, as was staying motivated.

I've learned quite a bit about how authors use fantastical motifs and devices in their texts to communicate existentialist themes. More interestingly, I've learned a few new words in both English and Spanish. For example, I had no idea that "pullulate" meant "to spread rapidly" until I'd done my EE!

TOK

Fair's shoes: Representing popular culture

Theory of Knowledge

Instead of mastering new content and skills, students in TOK continuously reflect on how they know what they know, or why they think what they think. They do this through the lenses of different themes (knowledge & technology, politics, language, religion, and indigenous societies) and areas of knowledge (mathematics, the arts, history, natural sciences, and human/social sciences).

"The course constantly demands students to look for ways that questions about knowledge and knowing manifest themselves in the real world around them - in their other classes, their EE or CAS work, or current events," says Happy Avery, TOK & US Humanities Teacher & College Counselor. Students develop arguments and analyze examples of these manifestations for a junior-year exhibition and a senior-year essay.

Fair Niven

How Knowledge Relates to Culture

My TOK class helped me to understand that many ideas can be right if we are willing to be open minded. When looking at history and the news, I now try to look for the methodology being used and how people are justifying what they are saying.

Culture is an area of knowledge that I have a strong understanding of. My exhibitions' three illustrations are from different parts of my life. The first object represents my African culture. The second one represented the culture that I am surrounded by daily, which is White, and the last one is of my Christian background.

I learned that knowledge and culture are intertwined. We use our culture and who we are to understand things. Every culture is different, and this is why we all think and understand things differently.

Chase's Graph: The value of Bitcoin for the week leading up to May 12, 2021, when Elon Musk tweeted that Tesla would no longer accept Bitcoin

Max Rickard

Accepting or Rejecting Knowledge

In TOK, I learned how to perceive more than just what a question is explicitly asking and dig a little deeper for a better answer, but more importantly for a better understanding. Many of my classmates have added really good ideas or inquiries to discussions that probably never would have crossed my mind without their comments.

The ideas that my exhibit illustrations represent all connect to popularized technological or social innovation throughout the years that, depending on how you are taught about them, can lead you to different understandings. One example from just last year is the initial reaction regarding the emblem of the new U.S. Space Force, released on Jan. 24, 2021. It's eerie similarities to the Star Trek logo gave off the sense to the average citizen and to the media of a comical or joking undertone. This shows that the presentation of new ideas can hinder their acceptance if portrayed in the wrong manner.

Max's Logo: Space Force or Star Trek?

Chase Foster

"Is Certainty Attainable?"

The main skill I learned from TOK was to think critically of everything. Don't assume something is so just because someone said it. Another is thinking critically of myself and questioning my assumptions to strengthen my arguments.

I chose, "to what extent is certainty attainable" for my TOK Exhibition topic. My first object I personally connected with. I was interested in cryptocurrency and its massive fluctuations, and I thought it would be a prime example of uncertainty.

I learned some interesting things about certainty while working on the exhibition. I found that total certainty can be difficult to achieve. Examples like precise measurements can be certain, while predictions of the future and speculations of the past carry uncertainties. I also learned to dive deeper into the knowledge and question my own thinking to improve my argument.