

WHY STUDENTS LIKE CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Thomas Reynolds, a student from Westlake Boys' High School, explains below why he enjoyed the opportunity to study for the Cambridge International Examinations. Thomas won a Top in the World Award for A Level Geography in 2006.

"I would like to focus on why Cambridge works for me, why this method of examinations has helped to push and extend me academically during my secondary schooling.

When I started high school I had never heard of Cambridge exams. I always thought that I would just follow the traditional New Zealand assessment pathway of nationally assessed exams through my secondary education. However during my early years at high school, a need arose for a system that better tested able students. A need for a tried and tested qualification that was both rigorous and fair. As a result I was offered the opportunity by my school to sit Cambridge exams. They promised to challenge me in my academic endeavors; through exams that were set not only to push me but also to give me something to strive for, and to provide an opportunity to compare myself to other students around the world.

For me the Cambridge system of exams had three main positives. Firstly the assessment is through traditional exams. I find exams give my year a definite focus, something that I can build towards. Having an entire years work tested in one end of year examination has the added benefit of galvanizing links and relationships between various areas of a subject. Something that is critical in allowing higher level thinking and synthesis of new ideas.

The second big positive for me is the reporting of results. Being quite a competitive person having a grade and percentage mark to strive for drives me in my studies. It is a source of motivation, always looking for that extra few percent. It also gives you an idea of how much work you still have to do in a subject and allows performance improvements to be gauged more easily.

The final thing that makes Cambridge exams the assessment for me is the definite focus on excellence. Celebrating students who are top of the world, or top of their respective country, shows a belief in rewarding excellence. Something that I think acts as another motivating factor pushing us to strive for the best results possible.

So after completing my journey through high school and having finished my A levels I am pleased that I have sat Cambridge examinations. Not only has the method of assessment suited me, but I think that it has given me a more international appreciation in my areas of study. I am grateful on behalf of all the students that all of the schools that make up the Association of Cambridge schools in New Zealand have been so committed to ensuring that candidates are well prepared. I would like to thank all of the teachers for their passion and dedication to ensuring we all achieve to the highest level we can. To the senior management teams at all of the schools present, thank you for being bold and choosing a method of assessment that provides students with a challenging and satisfying curriculum."

