



GEMS
Honours Programme



Feedback from cohorts 1 and 2

| No. | Name | School | What Went Well | Even Better If... | Advice to the next cohort of GHP students |
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| 1. | Anush Arvind | Dubai American Academy | This program did for me exactly what I expected from it. GHP definitely broaden my thinking. I was introduced to so much knowledge and thought I didn't even know existed! This program, if nothing else, was enriching. | We actually studied and discussed texts. For example we could read extracts from the Magna Carta to further our understanding of that age or an extract from one of the books from the House of Books when we were talking about the Arab Golden Age. | <p>1. This program is fun. So much fun. It's like a Sega Republic all in your mind. Absolutely join this program if you're going to be piqued by a stimulating discussion on The Arab Golden Age or on Cosmic Citizenship.</p> <p>2. DON'T join if you're not going to participate in group discussions because the entire point of these discussions is to get the ideas flowing, to learn and broaden one's mind. That's what makes GHP so amazing.</p> <p>3. Don't let GHP homework work pile up. You won't be able to finish all of it in the last moment to the best of your ability and get the most out of the homework, which really aids that out of the box thinking.</p> |
| 2. | Babur Ahsin Mir | GEMS Wellington International School - Sheikh Zayed Road | The course was brilliant in the fact that my views were tested, my mind stretched and all preconceived notions challenged. I would recommend it to all individuals interested in widening their horizons and evolving as an individual. Plus you get to meet some awesome people, and who doesn't love that? | I struggle with this section, but if I were to nitpick, I would possibly look for some more creation-type scheming - working together as a team to apply what we learn in class to make a difference - philanthropically or otherwise. | <p>Come in with an open, inquisitive and (slightly) apprehensive mind - ready to learn and explore the depths of (and here's the cliché) the universe and question everything you know.</p> <p>You may not be used to a class where everyone is as intelligent or more intelligent than you are, and working in one is an amazing experience that really pushes you to work your hardest and</p> |

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| | | | | | <p>become a more intelligent and balanced individual.</p> <p>This is not an easy course by any means - but its payoff is huge. It's the perfect food for the curious mind.</p> <p>Enjoy!</p> |
| 3. | Bahar Ferdosi | The Winchester School | <p>Honestly speaking, everything. All the sessions were planned with so much precision and effort that I was in awe every single time. I probably learnt more from GHP sessions that I have in any class.</p> <p>The relaxed environment, free from the pressure of exams and catering to the exam paper was a very good change.</p> <p>I loved the fun activities and energisers that always managed to wake me right up, even though I was super exhausted after school.</p> <p>I would say my most memorable activities was finding out information about renaissance art and then using this information to advertise our painting to other GHP members, and making Facebook profiles for revolutionary scientists like Isaac Newton.</p> | <p>This is super difficult because everything was so well planned, and organised, but one thing I noticed in particular was that the activities and discussions took up perhaps too much time, considering we just had an hour and thirty minutes. Perhaps more sessions, more time in a session or other suitable alternatives would make the sessions better.</p> | <p>GHP is amazing.</p> <p>It'll probably be one of the best experiences during high school. Standardised testing is so 19th century, you know, and the good thing about GHP is that there are no exams and everyone is assessed based on the unique individual they are. I advise you to put in as much as effort as you possibly can - try to surpass expectations so you get the best out of this experience.</p> <p>You will learn a lot. You will get to meet new people and make friends. You're going to learn new skills that you don't usually learn in school. So, go for it.</p> |
| 4. | Celine Hamze | Dubai American Academy | <p>I loved getting to know new people and getting introduced to new topics which are not normally brought up in a class room environment. Discussing all the different topics and hearing different interpretations from people was truly inspiring. Everyone at GHP was always prepared and interested in the lesson which made it an enjoyable setting to be in. It also widened my knowledge on various aspects which I am really thankful for.</p> | <p>I think in general everything was great. Although Thursdays were a little but difficult to navigate around, given the traffic and it being the last day of the week.</p> <p>Also, I think the curriculum would have been a lot more interesting with a unit or couple of lessons on contemporary art and literature.</p> | <p>Always try and complete the assignments as soon as they are given to you, as your ideas will still be fresh in your mind from the discussions had in class. Also, researching topics before going to class is really helpful in discussions so that you go into the program having a rough idea of what is going on beforehand.</p> |
| 5. | Chirag Mohnani | The Winchester | <p>The experience was an amazing one! Apart from getting to interact with many other</p> | <p>To be honest I have no idea what I would have changed!</p> | <p>It's going to be interesting and fun, definitely, but only if you've given it your</p> |

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| | | School Jebel Ali | <p>intellectual students from other schools and looking at things from various perspectives, GHP made me realise that learning isn't just all about sitting in a classroom and cracking your head open hoping to get something in; it's more than that... It's about interactive sessions, videos, discussions, and a lot of fun time! In fact, I think I remember rapping once, as part of an activity.</p> <p>The curriculum was super-interesting: there was Socrates, the enlightenment, oh and Newton! It was this blend of science, history and philosophy that made it so much fun and full of excitement. I simply loved the journey, as it taught me a lot and helped me acquire some mind skills I never had before. It was great!</p> | Maybe a few more sessions and, perhaps, another camping trip? Haha! | best. As with everything important, this program requires you to manage your time, think logically, and research: lot of it. You must be dedicated and interactive, only then will you benefit from this wonderful experience! |
| 6. | Ritam Anand | Jumeirah College | It was an amazing experience overall, but I especially enjoyed the informality of each session. It was very discussion oriented and of course, no page long essays to construct for homework | I only wish we had more sessions! | Do the assignments as you get them. I made a very bad mistake of leaving it till the end and it became stressful |
| 7. | Behshid Behrouzi | The Winchester School | The structure of the classes, activities and the content of the curriculum. | Nothing! | Complete all of your assignments on a weekly basis and be sure to complete the prep work well before each session. |
| 8. | Simrah Ali | The Winchester school | I don't think there's a single thing that went wrong to be honest; the activities were always fun, the topics chosen for each and every session were always fascinating - from the golden age to our digital one - what didn't we discuss?! The discussions we had were awesome; almost everyone had something to say and there was a never dull moment. And the people I got to have those discussions with were even better. In a nutshell, the programme was awesome. | I can't really think of anything that would make the programme better; possibly more time for discussions since we always kept running out of time for them! | Don't hesitate to sign up for the programme! Signing up for the GHP programme was the single best decision I have ever made; the knowledge and skills - (which I haven't learned from my usual school curriculum) are something I will always use. I got to meet like-minded people not just from Winchester but from other schools as well which is awesome. |
| 9. | Varun Menon | The Winchester | Overall, I'm sure everyone would agree that The Honours Program was a very enriching | GHP would've been even better than I already was, if | Keep an open mind. That's about it. The concepts you will come across in the |

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| | | School, Jebel Ali | experience, not just in terms of knowledge, but also important skills of critical thinking and supporting an argument. For me, the highlight of it all were the intellectual discussions/ debates that we had which really got me and everyone else thinking and realized that there is so much we don't know. | for each particular segment of the program, an expert on the subject being taught joins us and talks about his/her views for atleast one session a term. It would add value to the program and also give us first hand information. Lastly, we could've had a few more sessions in the year if possible, to most of us, the program ended before we knew it, considering how much we enjoyed it. | Honours program are very abstract and out of the box most of the time and are beyond the scope of a restricted school curriculum. If you want to enjoy GHP, make friends, and I'm sure you will as most us were like family by the time it ended. Also, DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON TIME. We learnt the hard way that keeping your assignments till the 11th hour is really not a good idea. The assignments are fun and thought provoking and each one hardly takes twenty minutes. Have a great year and hopefully, we'll all be at next year's Honours program with you. |
| 10. | Farida Sherif | Winchester | Learning about new things not only to increase one's knowledge but to change one's perspective of how they see the world around them and how to be optimistic towards building a better future. | If there were more lessons given or if we had more time to do so much more. The possibilities are endless. | To do it without a doubt. Even if none of your friends are going, even if you think you don't know anything about the subjects, it's all about learning new things and meeting new people and learning from the different opinions and outlooks each person has. |
| 11. | Aashni Ujra | The Winchester School - Jebel Ali | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Getting to meet students from other schools and having intellectual discussions with them on topics beyond our everyday curriculum. • Starter activities really helped the group to bond and get comfortable with each other alongside waking us up after a tiring Thursday. • The topics chosen were well connected and undoubtedly interesting and the activities set were well suited. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had a little more time! Sometimes it would have been nice to have an extra half hour for our discussions. • Initially the homework tasks were a bit lengthy and hard for us to manage alongside our school work but that was later cut down. • Even better if it had continued. | In the simplest, shortest way I could put this, " GO FOR IT "!!! I guarantee you would have no regrets. I'm sure you would think "but it's on Thursdays." However once you attend the sessions you will realise that they finish so fast that you wish you had more time. These sessions are thought provoking, character building, and eye-opening and al-in-all enjoyable. Personally, I felt they gave me the confidence to openly put forward my opinion in a group of people far more intelligent than me. You will meet other students who inspire you, learn things that will amaze you, all of which would be a gratifying experience. There will be a |

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| | | | | | ton of dedication expected from you and you will have to put in your share of effort but trust me, it's worth it! |
| 12. | Devina Kalwani | Jumeirah College | The enjoyable manner in which we learned about topics that we would not have even touched in school - the best part of GHP was this amazing flow of new and very useful information which we received. The analytical plenaries at the end of every session just tied everything together, resulting in a thoroughly intellectually stimulating 1 & 1/2 hours. | It would be even better if the sessions were longer. | Please, please remember to pace yourselves with the assignments!! You WILL regret it if you don't. |
| 13. | Taher Kathawala | GEMS Wellington Academy | GHP succeeded in providing a fresh, eye opening teaching and learning experience. It was in a classroom, but it genuinely didn't feel like it. No uniform and a break away from the desk and chair set up were very good moves. A relative degree of freedom in most tasks was also appreciated, and I like to think we took good advantage of that. | ... we used a more structured way to deliver feedback and analyses on various open questions in class. At certain points, it felt like we were spending too long rehashing the same answers someone else had already proposed. | Be on top of your assignments from day one. At a certain point, we renamed our chat the "GEMS Honourary Procrastinators", in honour of our incredible ability to put off everything we had to do till the last minute. Typical of relatively high ability students, we've got a lot going on, but don't neglect this, or you'll regret a night before the deadline. |
| 14. | Sasha Nanda | Jumeirah College | I received exposure to a wide array of subjects, from the age of enlightenment to the technological singularity, and was able to draw cross-curricular links between them. I especially enjoyed the philosophy part of the course with the exploration of the works of Socrates and Aristotle. The sessions were fun, interactive, and always different. I also loved completing the creative writing tasks (or 'Thunks'). A few of my person favourites were 'if you had a billion dollars to spend on humanity, would you use it to eradicate racism or malaria?', and 'is life an experiment'. Overall, I am so glad to have been involved in the program as it was a very intellectually inspiring experience. | We had the opportunity to analyse and discuss the groundbreaking texts that relate to the course, such as Aristotle's 'The Republic', and Brian Greene's 'The Elegant Universe'. | You are going to be part of something really amazing! Prepare yourself to have your perspective changed on a few things. Try your best to contribute to sessions and argue your opinions, because thats the best way to learn. GHP is a lot of hard work, but its more than worth it! Do the weekly reading and watch the documentaries, because they're really interesting! Finally, the most important thing is to complete the weekly assignments as they come- don't leave them to pile up. And remember: Nullius En Verba. |

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| 15. | Trisha Gunawardene | Wellington Academy, Silicon Oasis | Everything went well. | It would have been better if the course was longer. | Do not be afraid to speak, do work on time, all will be well... |
| 16. | Ema Khan | Jumeirah College | A new learning experience and environment Meeting new intellectual individuals who I can have inspiring conversations with Getting opportunities to increase my profile and do things for the education community | More field trips and longer sessions to have more time for discussions | It's an amazing opportunity to learn in a different environment, make friends at the same level as you, and seize the opportunities given to motivate learning. It gives you the right amount of work, just enough to challenge you but still keep up with your school. Do them on time and take every opportunity you can. It will really help you grow as an individual. |
| 17. | Zoheb Ul Mulk | Cambridge International School | <p>Participating in the GEMS Honors program was surely a learning experience like no other. Its unorthodox, yet compelling method of teaching did so many things right I could make an inexhaustible list of all its numerous pros. Nevertheless, I can briefly summarize some of the highlights of that list into a few simple paragraphs.</p> <p>Unlike most traditional classrooms, the lessons taught each week evoked not just a sense of awe, but also a strong feeling of curiosity. I could almost say that it felt rather addictive, frankly speaking. It was as if I had this implacable thirst for knowledge beyond the subject that we covered in the classroom. A thirst I would attempt to quench immediately after I came home after every lesson. The thanks greatly amplified this effect.</p> <p>Another strong check mark for the Honors Program was its engagement. We would walk in to some soothing Brazilian lounge music. Then the lesson would always start with a small playful activity to get our</p> | <p>The dates of the lesson could be improved. I had unfortunately found myself trying hard to balance the GHP with my mock exams that were going on simultaneously, and now also with my AS-Level exam prep. It may be a good idea to start the program slightly earlier.</p> <p>The 3000 word essay also took everyone by storm. Mostly because it was inappropriately timed and so clashed with many other things. Perhaps if the essay was included in the assignment list from the beginning, the students could have dealt with it better.</p> <p>Although this may arguably prepare us better for our</p> | <p>Always remember to briefly research a topic before a class, you may not be able to be involved in the discussions if you don't do so. I found the best way of doing this is to watch short YouTube videos; I recommend Crash Course and Kurzgesagt.</p> <p>Take notes during the class on your phone or notebook if you decide to bring one. You never know when some of that knowledge will help you again later.</p> <p>Regarding the assignments, it would be advisable to finish the long assignments first so they don't bother you later as you are nearing the deadline. You can save the thanks for later because they're not as time consuming. Reading through previous assignment submissions is really helpful in understanding how to tackle each assignment.</p> <p>Make sure to check the Facebook page regularly, a lot of important things pop up there first.</p> |

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| | | <p>learning juices flowing, which I think all lessons in school should also start with. This method did profoundly well in refreshing my mind after a long day of school, and put it back on a focused, mindful state.</p> <p>One of the best things about the program was also its use of group learning. I loved how we were all introduced to each other with the cycle system in the beginning. It made me so much more comfortable to talk to my peers. We were always also encouraged to discuss our points and responses with peers that we usually don't speak with. This did really well in giving me different perspectives on an argument that I did not come across myself. All this was then further enhanced with group activities and class discussions.</p> <p>A skill that has greatly improved for me is research and critical thinking. To that I owe the simple, yet engaging assignments that we were tasked with. I really like the checklist method used for the assignments. It was far less stressful than having to cope with clearly defined deadlines, because it meant I could do each assignment at my own pace and not have to worry about it as much.</p> <p>I also highly valued our out of classroom excursions; the astronomy night, cafe scientifique and TEDxLive to note a few. It meant we could apply some of our knowledge in real-world environments and situations.</p> <p>Finally, I also admire the way technology was</p> | <p>careers in terms of time management, a slightly more holistic approach to the timings would be greatly appreciated.</p> | |
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| | | | integrated into the classroom. Unlike most classes, we were actually given the wifi password to use for our activities. The use of the screen instead of a white board was a great move because, lessons moved more dynamically and effectively thanks to those thought inducing videos which followed discussions. | | |
| 18. | Anusha Goyal | GEMS Wellington International School | I really felt my perspectives on the world change and I felt like I had a new pair of spectacles to view the world and situations through. Also I gained experience in keeping an open mind and earned a new respect for opinions that differ from my own. Moreover, the topics explored really helped give me a comprehensive 'common knowledge' historically and philosophically, this will aid me in the future as I feel more prepared for topics that are likely to come up in the world of 'grown ups'. Overall a really great experience. | The location was a little inconvenient for most people and became tedious to attend as my parents found it very out of the way. Also it would be great if the sessions were in the morning on a weekend as on Thursday students usually have prior commitments such as MUN. | Keep doing your homework at a weekly basis because if it piles up it can be very hard to catch up. Never miss a session or a field trip because they are so much fun and are thoroughly useful. Lastly, if Mr. Roberts pranks you don't worry. |
| 19. | Ramya Iyer | Jumeirah College | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The course content was very applicable and enjoyable. 2) Using a combination of both discussions, group based activities and personal reflections proved to be very effective. 3) The home learning content was very thought provoking 4) The trips to watch external speakers like Jason Silva and Aubrey de Grey and the opportunities to help out in events like TedX live were absolutely amazing! | Incorporate opportunities for students to give speeches or take part in formal debates on certain content. | What you learn from school simply isn't enough on its own to prepare you for what we as millennial generation students will face in the future. Regardless of what course you want to pursue in university or what career path you want to get into, the skills and knowledge you learn from this programme will undoubtedly prove to be useful. Any student looking to extend their minds into the realms of critical thinking and cosmic citizenship will find the Gems Honours Programme covers this and a plethora of other exhilarating topics! |

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| 20. | Divesh Chandrakumar Sadwani | The Winchester School - Jebel Ali | The course content and the activities during the weekly sessions | More field trips and guest speakers | Don't be afraid to speak! - Your views will always be appreciated Network with your peers - you share more similarities with them than you think Use what you what you learn at the weekly sessions throughout your life. |
| 21. | Shanelle Aranha | The Winchester School, Jebel Ali | Personally, I thought the entire Honors Programme was stellar. I learnt things I probably would never have known of if I hadn't had joined. My favorite was the period we focused on history and the past and how unlike the drawl of school lessons and rote learning we actually did constructive brain storming and analyzed several topics, art, got opinions, practiced the art of further research and learnt to QUESTION EVERYTHING and take no one's word for it. | I don't really have anything that I would recommend the programme could fix. I felt the entire experience was stellar- Perhaps a longer duration rather than 13 weeks. | My advice to you would be to revel in everything you learn through the course of this programme. Try to retain as much as possible, taking notes, understanding and reflecting about what you knew and what new you've learnt. Do not miss any of the extra events outside of the regular sessions they're practically always enriching and invigorating to be part of! Complete all your assignments & enjoy! |
| 22. | Saurav Nair | Gems Modern Academy | Most of the teaching learning and the student teacher environment went well. The outings were some of the highlights of the Programme as such | The pizza had come to the right place on the second last session. Jokes aside most of it was meticulously planned and I couldn't agree more if one were to say the session was planned out extremely well | It would be to come to the Programme with an open and inquisitive mind and to take this programme seriously. This can help show you things that you weren't aware existed in our society and expose you to philosophies that you, after learning about, would completely change your outlook your thought process and probably the way you live |
| 23. | Manik Dialani | The Winchester School | I think what really went well was the fact that everyone was mentally prepared to perceive the topics. Which resulted a natural mood set. And have to give credit to the taste in music you have Mr. Roberts! Anyway, the topics were brilliantly delivered to us. Not to forget the prank which went historically! The sessions really taught me | The location was a bit far, not only for me personally but for others as well. However totally understandable since there was no option. | Embrace each session to full extent, since I'm getting the feel of how much I will miss it, I know. |

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| | | | tons, literally changed me in all honestly, all thanks sir. As well as the star gazing session, was one of many highlights. | | |
| 24. | Sara Jalal | Al Khaleej National School | I got to meet interesting people in this program and try things I thought I could never try like stargazing. Interacting with new people and talking about complex topics with them doesn't seem very challenging to me anymore. I now have the confidence to ask questions more than before. It was a really thought-provoking experience; every time I leave a session my mind wouldn't stop thinking about what I learned and the questions that were proposed in the session. I also learned to ask more questions and express my opinion confidently with providing the right evidence to support it. | There were more sessions because I think there are many things that happened to the human civilization that we couldn't cover like the ancient Egypt, the industrial revolution...etc. | The honours program is an extremely helpful program and signing up is totally worth it. If you do, organize your time so you would do your research and assignments on time. Because 1) nothing is worse than attending a session clueless of what you're going to learn and 2) letting assignments pile up 'till the end, as easy as it may seem, is regretful and stressful. |
| 25. | Natalia Nooufal | GEMS Wellington International School | I believe that in the span of a few weeks we were able to look back at history as well as learn about future developments & concepts such as the singularity that would have otherwise been unheard of to me. Each lesson was clearly structured and organised as well as engaging as each activity was specific to the era at the time and critical thinking was constantly encouraged. There was also a fantastic selection of outings with speakers such as Jason Silva who is highly inspirational. | More trips could somehow be incorporated, e.g. visits to museums to learn more about a specific era like the Golden Age of Islam. Due to time constraints maybe extend the time period as lessons typically run a little late due to invigorating discussions. | I would definitely remind them to stay on task throughout, completing each homework assignment as soon as possible and not leaving them for the last minute as it will lead to an immense amount of stress, I would also encourage them to prepare themselves by doing some extra reading on various philosophers and keeping up to date on futurology and technological developments so that they would have more to contribute during discussions. |
| 26. | Alethea Barretto | The Winchester School Jebel Ali | Extremely interesting and diverse topics that teach one to really think and bring about a shift in one's perspective of learning. (Really useful at this stage of education.) | More writing tasks? (I really loved the thanks!) | "Prepare to be amazed." Okay, on a less dramatic note, sign up to enjoy the experience of learning indispensable information in the context of you and the world around you. |
| 27. | Poojitha Pai | GEMS World Academy | Learning new things: I've never learnt so many different kinds of things in such a short time, ever. GHP really opened up my eyes to | TIME - GHP would provide a platform for more discussion if each session | - It may sound boring and redundant at this point, but DO YOUR HOMEWORK ON TIME. There is no way around it. You may |

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| | | <p>a lot of things I had (unfortunately) unintentionally been doing that was hindering my progress as a human being. It made me realise that even as insignificant as a single human being is compared to the vast cosmos, not being "just-another-guy" could possibly make a difference.</p> <p>Multidisciplinary approach: One of the many things I dislike about the current education system is the rigid subject system that often explores the same issues but only through the key hole of one discipline. Instead, in GHP we look at one issue or problem through a holistic multi-disciplinary lens that gives more depth to the problem and more room for critical thinking.</p> <p>Critical thinking - GHP told me not only to be a critical thinker (like generic teachers drone on about) but also told me how to be one. Recognition and exploration of my own cognitive biases made me realise what a huge blind spot I had created for myself in the path of my reasoning. And this was extremely eye-opening for me.</p> <p>Books and Sources - Every GHP lesson ended with a reference to a book, movie, TV show, person, etc. It made me realise that the world is filled with some really amazing people that don't always end up on my news feed.</p> <p>Topics - Last, but definitely not the least, what I loved about GHP the most was the topics. From Ancient neo-classical history to modern science fiction-esque theories, none</p> | <p>was at least half an hour longer. It would encourage deeper discussions and better ideas being brought up. Often, our discussions are cut short due to time constraints.</p> | <p>think it's a pain, or that you didn't like a certain question or a certain question makes your brain hurt too much, but just start typing and the words will flow.</p> <p>- When doing thinks, you will have two cohorts' answers above you. My suggestion is to not read them before you start writing up because it starts limiting your perspective. And that is not what GHP is about, it's about the opposite actually. After you write it up, then go find out what others have written. Make your changes, if any, if you think "Ah! He/she brings up a point that completely changes my perspective on things" . But try to have your own opinion. If it's grounded in science or your creativity, stick to it. Don't let the Social Desirability effect affect your answer.</p> <p>- GHP is all about bringing the best, most focused youngsters out there and developing them into the humans we need for today's society. There will be people as smart as you and even who are much smarter. Being a competitive person myself, I know that you may feel your self-esteem sometimes dropping faster than you could say the word "dubstep". But don't let it get to you. Honestly, GHP has made me realise how much more fun it is to argue/debate with someone who is "smarter" than you. Sides you never knew about yourself will pop out and that, my friend, is a fun adventure.</p> |
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| | | | of them failed to inspire with the sheer volume, depth, and hard work behind the knowledge given from them | | Other than that, be yourself, be weird and make some good friends. |
| 28. | Devansh Bhatt | The Winchester School - Jebel Ali | The GEMS Honours Programme was an incredible experience that would simply not have been possible if done in schools. The sessions were exciting, informative and well planned thanks to Mr. Roberts. The sessions have no doubt been what I had looked forward to every week for the entire duration of the programme. It is amazing to see other students of my age from various schools having intellectual discussions on topics quite unknown, in the beginning, for most of us, how often do you see a debate on whether Athenian or Spartan Greece was superior? Although we covered various topics ranging from medieval Europe to neuroscience, the main theme throughout the programme has been knowledge and learning. This holistic approach, using these complex topics to teach such a simple idea is what truly made the programme special. | I personally felt that the sessions were a little short. Extending the sessions to 2 hours would allow for interesting discussions to go on without the need to rush through them due to time constraints. This is just my opinion and I do realise that others might not be able to devote that extra time, especially in the weekend, and so this is simply what I think. I would have also liked to have had more sessions outside the BLP, and although the BLP is a great place for learning with a very relaxed environment, the ones we had outside were definitely the highlights of the programme for me and I couldn't help but think that more of those would certainly have been better. | If you're considering signing up for the programme, I'd definitely recommend it. This is an experience that you will most likely not get from schools. If you've already signed up, just have fun! I'm sure you will have a good time with other like-minded students. (PS: Make sure you do all your weekly assignments on time) |
| 29. | Harish Nanduri | Cambridge International School Dubai | The variety of topics covered under the three modules ensured that we were provided with an interesting depth of knowledge. Group activities and discussions were very insightful and helped build friendships with some great people. Overall a great personality-building experience! | Content delivered were to be provided in a fixed resource set (for example a book, a group of PDFs for each topic and so on). This would ensure that the content we learn can stick with us for a longer time and can also be used as | Make sure you divide your time between school work and GHP work very well, completing each and every task before the deadline, or possibly doing tasks even before the given timeframe. Prepare and research well for all classes in order to participate as much as possible. Engage actively in discussions |

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| | | | | <p>reference for future purposes.</p> <p>Possibly some more competitive activities like quizzes on the content could ensure more engaging learning and would also incentivize students to spend more time on doing research.</p> <p>Transport to and fro was quite a problem for me personally, this programme would have been even better if there was some sort of arrangement for all students.</p> | <p>and activities; this would give you the most enriching experience.</p> |
| 30. | Devika Dahiya | Jumeirah College | <p>My social skills have developed through the regular group collaborations, and debates at the GHP sessions, I am becoming more and more intelligently optimistic, creative, and more able of critical thought. I enjoy the Thursday sessions as a social & learning experience that engages thought in a manner that schools don't.</p> | <p>The location of the weekly meetings was at a more central location. There were more cafe scientifique sessions as part of the weekly meetings.</p> | <p>The experiences you will have at the Gems Honours Programme are like no other, they provide unique learning experiences, with though provoking and character building discussions there is a lot to gain from the course. Make sure you do your research, and you give the programme and weekly tasks the time they are due, the home learning tasks help build your skills in more ways than you may think, so give them your best shot! Remember to be open to new opinions and ideas, you will come across a lot of them, all of which develop you understand of the world around you.</p> |
| 31. | Aanchal Agarwal | GEMS Modern Academy | <p>The interactive discussions were really enriching. They enabled me to think more critically and analyse ideas differently. The fun energisers and activities resulted in</p> | <p>More schools following different curriculums were involved.</p> | <p>Be ready to be exposed to a wide range of topics that will enhance your knowledge greatly. Come prepared with your research for every session and be willing</p> |

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| | | | every session being super interesting! I particularly enjoyed meeting with other talented students of my age. This experience has been one that I will never forget! | | to learn from the various perspectives that you will be exposed to. |
| 32. | Malek Smaoui | Gems World Academy | I really feel like the GEMS Honours programme helped me grow a lot this past few months and think and learn about things I wouldn't have gone and looked at otherwise. It helped me see how important it is to be a well-rounded person and always be aware of the new innovations and discoveries in the world. I loved meeting new people and made great friendships in this program and also discovered many events and movements going on in Dubai such as SciFest Dubai and Intelligent Optimism. It also gave me the opportunity to help with the TEDx Live which was a great experience that I really enjoyed. Finally I found Mr. Roberts to be a really inspiring person in the way that he goes out of his way to bring awareness to all the wonderful things happening in the world, and so I started thinking of ways I can do the same and that is why I decided to co-organize a TEDx for the first time in my school to try and spread the message. | We had more sessions outside Wellington like the time we met Jason Silva, which was really memorable. I also felt like we had a lot of homework in the beginning of the program and next to none at the end, it would have been better if the work was more spread out. Finally it would have helped if we had known about the essay a while in advance since it would have helped us use the talks during the sessions while we still recalled them clearly as evidence in the essay. | Do not leave the homework until the end, especially the video, it takes a lot of time to do and the sooner it's over the better. Do not show up late Mr. Roberts hates it, if you are late, there is a big chance everyone is planning to play a prank on you. Don't be shy and try to get to know as many people as you can, the chances are they are all wonderful. Don't be too shy during group discussions, being in a room full of smart people can be intimidating, but you'll regret not sharing your opinion later. Finally have fun, and take advantage of this amazing opportunity. |
| 33. | Anjali Surendran | The Winchester School | The sessions were great and very informative. Felt good to learn and discuss about our world and other such things in a place outside the classroom. Learned how to be informed in our world where misinformation and disinformation is more prevalent than real information. | The session was longer as many times we had to stop an awesome discussion due to time constraints. Would have also been better if the session weren't so close to Finals time as the required amount of effort and time couldn't be put into the sessions due to our studies being a priority. | My advice could be summarised into 3 words - the 3 P's- Plan, Prepare and Present. 1) Plan- Before each session, plan your time effectively before each session to complete all your assignments on time. Also, make sure to have a flexible schedule as GHP might take some of your weekends away but it's definitely worth it. |

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| | | | | | <p>2) Prepare- before each session, make sure you know what the session's about. Research on the theme of the session and do your homelearning. You'll take back more from the session this way.</p> <p>3) Present- Now that you've planned and prepared for the session, you have to apply that to the session. In each activity - be it individual or in a team - be confident about your ideas and opinions and express them. GHP is a place to express intellectual opinions and chances are you won't find any better place to do so.</p> <p>And of course, most importantly, Have fun :)</p> |
| 34. | Anabhra Saluja | Wellington International School (GWIS) | <p>I think that the Gems Honours Program was a great learning curve as I gained knowledge that I wouldn't necessarily learn in school. Somethings that went would be the sessions we did such as the telescope lesson where we focused on getting an idea of the scale of the world. Furthermore, working in different groups and collaborating with everyone was a great. The highlight of GHP would be when we were able to meet Jason Silva interact and listen to his views on issues.</p> | <p>I think GHP went very well all the activities and field trips we did were very significant. It would have been nicer if we were able to go to more field trips to places such as the museum to expand our knowledge even further.</p> | <p>I would advise the next cohort of GHP students to allocate their time well to their school work and GHP so they are able to finish these assignments on time along with their school work. As this programme requires commitment as it is time consuming. But the assignments are a great way of showing your thoughts and talents.</p> |
| 35. | Harsh Gidwani | The Winchester school | <p>In my opinion everything went rather smoothly, creating a relaxing atmosphere that made it easy to soak in any knowledge. The energisers were efficient and the discussions had you pondering the topic even at home.</p> | <p>I felt the session to be very well planned out, however a little extra time would work well. Even just another 15 minutes extra to prolong discussions would be even better, as I felt we couldn't capitalise on all the potential for the topics.</p> | <p>Not sure why it would require any contemplation in the first place! An amazing opportunity to help grow in all fields should be grasped immediately. Even though it takes up a day of your precious weekend, it's a highly entertaining environment where you can meet exciting new people and grow your talents. So once you're there don't be</p> |

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| | | | | | afraid to engage with the others and voice your thoughts, as that's the only way you'll be able to learn and make the most out of this programme. |
| 36. | Dhruvika Sharma | GEMS Modern Academy | I loved that I was learning about something so new and different because regular high school never taught me about half the things I gained at GHP. I don't think anything has interested me as much as the topics we covered at GHP (I absolutely loved the topics related to the future of science and technology. i.e., cosmic citizenship, singularity, etc). Moreover, though I haven't become the best, GHP has definitely taught me to express myself better and more efficiently. And last but not the least, I wouldn't have met so many equally amazing peers and made new friends if it had not been for GHP. I really am going to miss these Thursday sessions. | I would have loved if the sessions were a bit longer so that we could delve deeper and discuss more about the topic we were focusing on, allowing a greater gain of knowledge, more beneficial discussions and a better understanding of the topics in general. Personally, I would have also loved if we had more sessions about the future of science and technology, because it just fascinates me. | Learn to keep an open mind and to think critically, because only then discussion are fruitful. At the same time, it is okay if you don't agree with something. Another suggestion would be to stay regular with your work instead of procrastinating, so that you get enough time for the given homework. |
| 37. | Krishna Uttamchandani | Wellington International School | I thoroughly enjoyed the entire GHP. Along the way, I made some close friends. And from the people I already knew, we became closer. Other than the social aspect, I learnt many things from GHP, expanding my general knowledge to a stage where I could have conversations with most people very confidently about some of the learnt topics. Additionally, I learnt new ways to engage myself in the classroom, which I will definitely be sharing with some of my teachers. | I believe that the only way that GHP could improve, is by having more individual activities. Though collaborative skills are highly important, I believe that we would absorb more knowledge if we were made to complete activities individually. | DO ALL YOUR HOMEWORK ON TIME. YOU DON'T WANT TO REGRET NOT DOING SOME OF IT. I REGRET ALL THIS LAST MINUTE WORK. PLEASE MANAGE YOUR TIME WELL :) |
| 38. | Arnav Munshi | Winchester Jebel Ali | The thought provoking discussions that took place in such an intellectual group certainly opened me up to different perspectives and outlooks. | There were more sessions. | Time management is very essential. Do your work on time so you aren't bogged down at the last minute. |