

105 學年度第 1 學期高中部英文作文比賽

1. Life is full of challenges. You may have to make decisions in the face of the difficulties. Sometimes you make a right decision; sometimes, wrong. Write a composition of at least 500 words to tell a right (or wrong) decision you have made before, which has an impact on your life.
2. 比賽時間：13:10~14:50，共 100 分鐘。
3. 不得使用任何形式的字典與電子載具，其餘依本校考試規定辦理。

Everyone has been there before, in that seat. Silence pumping through your veins as you begin to lose consciousness of everything around you. All around you, there are people with the same grim looks, passing the time by twiddling their thumbs or inspecting their cracking fingernails, though there is one thing they all have in common: silence.

And suddenly, a voice rang out, striking every corner of the room.

"Contestant Number One."

Instantly, dread welled up my throat. The people around me are no longer busy, but rather all looking directly at me. I stand up, the first to go, the first martyr. The voice comes again, louder, breaking my thoughts and urging me forward. Slowly, I make my way to the stand. "Beed noodles," I muttered, "Pepper, cakes, dumplings." Struggling to even get the first word out, I began to whimper again.

"How did I get into this mess?"

It all started with a simple mistake. I did, too well. Not meaning to boast, but being me, it's easy to make that mistake, and usually it ends with me being all giddy and glad accompanied by ^{forced} applause. Then it would end and I could go back, being the arrogant little kid that I am, but not this time. This time, I was instead shoved into a chair, stripped of my glee and hit in the face with the question: "Would you participate in the Taipei English Speech Contest?" It was a chance to shine, a chance to represent our school in a contest of the elites! How many would have given an arm and a leg in exchange for this opportunity, the chance of a lifetime? It was an honour to be offered this chance!

And so, I said no. Reason? It was a lot of work, and I was afraid of everyone knowing that there were so many people better at giving speeches than me. I was perfectly happy to take my tiny crown and settle down, and there came the catch: I wasn't allowed to keep the title of first place if I didn't participate.

Thus, after countless...minutes of thinking, I, reluctantly and feeling rather upset, decided to go. Instantly, I regretted going. The speech contest was split into two parts, a written speech and one that there was no way to prepare for. That sounded fine and all, until I realized that the topic of the written speech, was about food in Taipei.

(more space in the back)

It seems like an easy topic, correct? Just talk about some foods in the night markets! That ~~was~~ my initial plan, also, right until I made a shocking revelation: "Those foods are aren't from Taipei." Pig's blood... not from Taipei, Pineapple cake... still not from Taipei. I was left literally with nothing to write about except Ding-Tai-Feng, which also didn't count as Taipei's original cuisine. At this point, my frustration was enough to cook dumplings in, and I had every intention to just talk about French Fries instead. But then, my mom came to the rescue. She started listing things she ate as a little kid and also delicacies that might count as Taipei's. Turns out, she wasn't a big help at all, and I had nothing. Thus, I did what all intelligent, creative high schoolers would do - I complained. Little did I know, that was just the first of my problems.

Turns out, speaking on stage in a small contest is NOTHING compared to a big one. For one, the classrooms had screens which allowed people to watch your every embarrassing posture. For another, the judges were nothing close to the smiling, friendly looking teachers before. One of the judges had this disapproving look on for such a long period of time I'm sure his face was built especially for being disappointed. Lastly, everyone was much older than me, even other contestants towered over me like vile, vicious wolves.

And there I was, a lone little lamb, wondering if I made the right choice of coming here. Funny enough, the last thing I whispered to myself was "Save me, beef noodles." And then was the time of judgement.

I never knew that magic was real. As soon as I stepped up, wood creaking beneath my feet, the air froze. The birds stopped chirping, and all sounds ceased to exist. The clothes felt like lead, weighing down my every movement, and my head yelled for me to just disappear. But somehow, I made it through. My words didn't tumble over one another, and there were no cogs that got my tongue. Magically, I made it to the end, and with a stiff little bow, I was out of the lead weights and my strait jacket. Though I had to wait in the other room, my heart was already soaring over the skies. At least it was over.

(Though it wasn't a decision I made, ^{willingly} I still felt like this story fit in which the topic of this essay. What this experience taught me is to shoot for the moon, because even if you miss, you land among the stars. It taught me to step out of my comfort zone, and perhaps I just might succeed. Why, you ask?

Because I still remember hanging up the certificate for first place, proudly.