

Ivanhoe Grammar School, Melbourne, Australia

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The six weeks I spent in Melbourne, Australia, from January through February 2015 were absolutely incredible and filled with fun. I look back and I only see happy memories. My wonderful host family, the Gikovskis's (whom I miss very much), made sure I had the best time possible during my stay. Every adventure I went on was enjoyable. I think there are a lot of wonderful things to see in Melbourne, but my favourite part was definitely all of the animals!

During my stay in Melbourne, I attended Ivanhoe Grammar School, which is quite different from LCC. For one thing, the school year begins in January. Also, the campus is absolutely enormous! They have four tennis courts, two outdoor basketball courts, a soccer field (yes, they call it soccer here), a football field, a cricket ground, a park for the elementary school kids, an equestrian area, and over ten buildings! I was sure I would get lost there! Thankfully, my lovely exchange, Erica, and her classmates made sure I fit right in and always knew my way. Most the time, I shadowed Erica to all her classes. Since Erica was in year 10, she had two electives/course options; she chose psychology and French. I could have chosen my own courses but I decided to tag along with Erica because psychology is something I wouldn't have chosen myself and I wanted to try something new. Although I am fluent in French, I could not resist the opportunity to watch Australians try to learn French with their accents – which is absolutely lovely to listen to when they speak English. The students in grade 10 also had the option to do cadets or community service. I was very glad to find out my exchange did not choose cadets because marching outside in clunky attire for two hours in 35°C weather did not sound fun.

I absolutely loved experiencing a new school in a different country. For starters, the students are outdoors much more; during recess, lunch, in-between classes – and even their lockers were outside! The campus grounds are stunning. It almost resembles a toned-down version of the botanical gardens. I will really miss going outside for some fresh air and enjoying the sunshine during breaks. Also, unlike LCC, students bring their own lunch and snacks every day. Instead of carrying their heavy backpacks to class, the students only bring the required books for the course. They always stand behind their chairs until they are instructed by the teachers to sit. I often forgot this rule, but the teachers were quite forgiving. The teachers at Ivanhoe were very kind and welcoming, but most importantly, they taught well and in an interesting manner. I rarely got bored during class, which is saying a lot considering I've got a pretty short attention span. I also

found it rather strange when students pulled out their phones in the middle of class, whether it was to listen to music, to take a picture of notes written on the board, or to text – and the teacher would not say anything!

I really enjoyed my time at Ivanhoe Grammar School, and I would go back any day, and I really hope to return and visit again someday!