

## **What education means to you in New Zealand?**

Education in New Zealand allows us to learn English first hand and to experience the culture, both at the same time.

Thai education provides a foundation in many subjects in order to achieve university entrance. However, studying in New Zealand has enabled us to make choices and has given us the opportunity to be more selective in our specific areas of interest. We have been able to spend time on analyzing and applying knowledge in a broader and more practical way to everyday living and learning. The advantages we will gain are the knowledge and experience of western cultures, which will inarguably increase our potential for employment in the future.

The differences between New Zealand and Thailand are quite obvious in many areas such as education, friends, location, and way of life. One of the main differences is in education. Education in New Zealand allows freedom of speech, the teachers gladly accept students' suggestions or arguments and gladly improve themselves, although they have much more knowledge than the students. This greatly develops the education system in New Zealand.

The other obvious difference in students who have studied abroad from Thai students is that they have more confidence. The majority of students who study in Thailand do not speak out as they would think of this as being inconsiderate and disrespectful to their teachers. They are not confident enough to ask questions or provide the teacher with suggestions because they're afraid of being wrong. But when somebody else says it out loud, they'll say, "I've thought of that" the question is then why don't you say it? Because of this the teachers will never know what the students need to know or don't understand.

From our point of view, we prefer our friends and society in Thailand. Because we feel safe and warm, just like coloured photos. On the other hand the friendships in New Zealand will be old black and white photos with stain colours and full with memories.

We felt very strange at first to be listening and communicating in English all the time. It's very hard to understand and talk to friends and the teachers, because we didn't know how to speak properly in English. As time went on, we became used to listening to English and felt more confident and so the more we tried speaking the language the better we got at it.

The benefits of being in New Zealand are learning English, becoming more responsible, and being more independent. Being in New Zealand has allowed us to put into use the language drilled into our heads since we were young. Being in New Zealand has shown us how huge the world is and has made us realize what a small world we have been living in. We have learnt that we have so much responsibility in New Zealand for our actions, our grades, and our lives. Being in New Zealand has made us independent as well because our parents are not here to help us decide every single decision we have to make.

Studying in New Zealand isn't much different from studying in Thailand like you expect. Sometimes it may seem much easier but that is because the students in New Zealand are allowed to choose to study whatever they want. This makes them more eager to learn from their teachers. Southland Girls' High School gives each student a year planner for the subjects for what will be learnt for the year in order to prepare them for learning from the very first day of school. The year planner consists of the amount of credits in each topic in the subjects. This helps both the teacher and the student to know and prepare for what comes next and where they should be throughout the year so the student will be able to prepare for each lesson and keep up the pace.

The teaching style in New Zealand incorporates the use of more technology than Thailand, for example the use of interactive whiteboards to teach or integrating many different styles and ideas to keep students engaged in class. The students learn not only just in class from textbooks but from many different medias such as videos, songs and field trips. The students in New Zealand have many different experiences because everyone has chosen different subjects. For instance if they choose tourism, they would be able to go on many trips to different cities to study about many tourist landmarks of that city. If they choose physical education, they would get to learn to play many different sports as well as learning first aid. Maybe if they're lucky they might meet some sports professionals.

Every year, all Year 11-13 students have to sit national exams called NCEA. These exams are very crucial to the students' grades and maybe their careers in the future. Many schools for example Southland Girls' High School, usually set up practice school exams in preparation for NCEA at the end of the year. This aims to let both students and teachers see whether they are at NCEA level, how to improve, and how much work they have to put in, in order to pass the exams at the end of the year.