



Interview with Federica Tortone

Arthur Lam, our EC Reporter, caught up with Federica Tortone, a new exchange student from Italy, to find out about her experience of studying and living in Hong Kong. Federica Tortone is one of 50 exchange students from 17 countries who have come to HK under the AFS Intercultural Programmes.

AL - Arthur Lam,
FT- Federica Tortone

AL:
Federica, could you introduce yourself briefly?

FT:
Hello everyone! My name is Federica Tortone, but you can also call me Gabe. I am 16 years old, and I am an exchange student with AFS from Italy. I am currently attending TMCC Holm Glad College and in Form 4. I am staying with my host family from Hong Kong and I love with all of my heart. They also gave me the Chinese name - Liu Wing Lam.

AL: What do you like the most about HK?

FT: I like everything about Hong Kong, from its bustling streets, high-rise buildings to the beautiful parks. On every corner there is something new to discover and I never get bored of wandering the streets with my friends or other AFSers. And the food! I really like to check out restaurants all around the city, because the food is just amazing and convenient!

AL:
If you had to choose just one word to describe yourself, what word would you choose?

FT: That's really a tough question! I would say "headstrong" because when I have something in my mind, I will surely do it soon or later.

AL: What is your favourite subject in school? Why?

FT: I really like studying chemistry, although I think it's a bit difficult for me. I enjoy doing chemical reactions experiments and learning more about different substances in the world. I also like biology, kind of for the same reason.

AL: Why did you choose to come to HK? Have you been to HK before?

FT: One of the best things about the AFS Intercultural programmes is that volunteers try their best to learn about the countries where they can study. I was not sure about my choice from the outset, but after some discussions with the AFS staff, I decided that I would like to explore Asia, and what place could be better if not Hong Kong? I mean, I didn't know much about here, and it's a city, not a country, so it's easier to travel around and discover, get the most out of it. So I put Hong Kong as my first choice, and I must say I don't regret this decision I've made.

AL: What do you miss the most about your home country? Tell me about your hometown. If I came to visit you, where in your hometown would you take me? What would you show me?

FT: I must confess I miss the food. Although I really like HK cuisine, nothing can take me away from my favourite pasta!



My hometown is actually very small, but it is connected by bus to the big city. I seldom go into town as I prefer to hang out with my friends and go for a relaxing walk rather than window shopping. However, my city is not short of historical buildings. Turin, that's my city, is full of history at every corner, as in the past it used to be the epicentre of great historical events (starting from the Roman Empire, it was an important town in Italy). One thing you must see if you happen to visit my hometown is the Mole Antonelliana. It is the symbol of Turin, this 167m tower with its distinctive aluminium spire appears on the Italian two-cent coin. It was originally intended as a synagogue when construction began in 1862, but was never used as a place of worship, and nowadays houses the Museo Nazionale del Cinema. If you get to the top, you can see all the city and the beautiful Alps.

AL: What do you do in your spare time?

FT: I usually check social media, or I go out for a walk with my friends. I also enjoy dancing and hiking, which I do regularly in Italy. Here in Hong Kong I either go to the gym or meet other AFSers to eat some fancy food.

FT: I like to read John Green's books, and I also enjoy slam poetry. I don't have much time to read so I just read some chapters when I feel like it: Reading a book might take up months!

AL: What types of books do you read? How many books do you read each month?

AL: What are the differences between education in Hong Kong and Italy?

FT: There are a lot of differences. I think Hong Kong local school system is much more strict, and topics are covered in a very fast way. Also, in Hong Kong most of the teachers follow a similar pattern during lessons whereas in Italy each teacher uses different approaches and methods. What's more, in Italy the relationship between students and teachers is more formal than in Hong Kong, but I can feel that there is always room for respect from/towards all stakeholders. Overall, I like Hong Kong school more than the Italian one.



New Beginnings

1A (6) Huang Ho Wa

There are good and bad things about my new school. One good thing is that we have a laboratory. Another thing I like about my new school is that I can do experiments in the laboratory every day.

One bad thing is that we don't have a gym room. Another thing I dislike about my new school is that I can't do fitness exercise in the gym room.

Last week, I did not do my homework. So at lunchtime, my friend and I went to do homework in Room 117. After school, I went to do homework in the hall. I was in a very bad mood.

1B (14) Pong Tsz Cheuk

I like my new school. It has an English Corner, a canteen and a Science laboratory. One good thing about my school is that it has a nicely decorated English Corner. I can watch movies, play games and have some drinks there. However, one bad thing is that the school hall is small and we cannot watch movies.

Yesterday, I went to the canteen to buy some food and drinks at recess. It is very delicious. Then the school bell rang. I went back to the classroom and did my homework and read books in the classroom.

1C (11) Lam Tsz Lui, Amy

I have a lot of fun in secondary school. My secondary school is very beautiful. It has a music room, a canteen and a laboratory but my primary school didn't. My primary school has a gym but my secondary school doesn't. Both schools have a library, a school hall and a staff room.

I went to the library on the first day. I met the students who were reading books. They were very hard-working. I went to the staff room with my friend last week. I saw the teachers marking the homework. They were very helpful because they taught me how to do the homework.

One good thing is that the students are very kind and friendly. One thing I dislike is that the teachers are strict and the lunchboxes are very disgusting.

Playground is the most unforgettable place for me because I made the first new friend there.



1D (19) Mohammad Bibi Mamoona

There are good and bad things about my new school. One good thing is my class teachers are very kind and helpful. They never get angry with us. Another thing I like about my new school is we have a laboratory for doing experiments in Science lessons. But in my primary school, we only had boring Science lessons.

One bad thing is that we have much more difficult lessons than Primary School. Another thing I dislike about my new school is I don't have my old and best friends in this school. In this school, I only have a few friends and some are even not the same age as me.

My friend and I got lost on the first day of school. I was a little bit nervous because there are so many rooms on each floor. Suddenly a teacher came and told us the directions. Finally, we could find our classroom. I felt very excited because we found the classrooms before the lesson started and we didn't have any punishments. That was the luckiest day.

1E (17) Lam Kaye Mallores

There are good and bad things about my new school. One good thing is that my school has three recesses. I can do my homework at recess or get some rest. Another thing I like about my new school is its big size. Then, one bad thing is that my school doesn't have Home Economics classes. I want to learn how to cook. However, I can ask my mum to teach me.

Last Tuesday, I remember Carmen drinking a bottle of juice at recess in the playground. Suddenly, the juice fell on the floor while Carmen had a straw in her mouth. We laughed loudly together and felt awkward!

Another favourite place in the school is the tuck shop. Sometimes, when it is not time for lunch, I can go to the tuck shop to buy some food. But in my primary school, I had to wait until it was lunch time because my primary school didn't have a tuck shop. Now I'm studying at Holm Glad College, I hope I can study well and have a memorable school life!

1E (29) Wu Ka Yan, Katy

In the new school year, I get up very early to prepare things for school. I have made a lot of friends at school and they are all nice. My new school is very big so I always check the room tag. My new school is bigger than my primary school.

My favourite place in my school is the laboratory because I love science and enjoy doing experiments very much. My new school has a lot of activities so I joined a lot of them on weekdays. One bad thing about my school is it is a bit old.

My new classmates are nice, kind and funny. They always help me with my homework whenever I am in trouble. They will comfort me when I am sad. There is a King and two Queens in my class. They always say some funny things when the class is quiet. They are very funny but I sometimes think they are a little bit noisy, too.

My classmates are incredibly nice! I hope I can be friends with them forever.



Meet our English Ambassadors' team



On 26 October, English Ambassadors held their first meeting of the year and worked on their first assignment. In order to cultivate an English-rich learning environment at HGC, a team of English Ambassadors is set up every year. They encourage students to speak English and cooperate with teachers in different English activities. We ask some of our EAs why they joined the English Ambassador Programme (EAP) this year and how they plan to contribute to the cultivation of an English-rich learning environment at Holm Glad College. Here are some answers:

Alfa Yip, 3E(31):

I decided to enrol in the EAP because of many reasons. Firstly, I am very much passionate about English. I think that merely learning English from the textbook does not suffice. Therefore, I was looking for some activities or courses that could take my English skills to the next level. Secondly, I also wanted to improve my speaking and listening skills. When I heard about the responsibilities of EAs, I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to realise my potential. So I accepted the offer immediately when Mr Lo asked me to join the EAP.

I assume that one of the reasons why some students at HGC do not speak English most of the time is that they consider their communication skills to be insufficient in order to be able to maintain a conversation with others and they tend to think that speaking English is a difficult way to chat. So, I will do my best to change this trend and teach them some fancy words on the Internet. I will try to approach them by initiating a chat in English first so that they will get more interested in replying to me in English.



Leo Wong, 4B (22):

The reason why I joined the EAP this year is because I am willing to help cultivate a culture of loving and appreciating the English language among my schoolmates. As our mother tongue is not English, we often neglect our English language standards. By joining this programme, I think I'll be able to raise students' awareness of the importance of English in the 21st century and to foster an English-speaking culture in our school premises. In addition, I joined this programme because I wanted to participate more in school-related activities so I can be part of the constantly growing school community. Through creating an English-rich environment, I think our school will be able to become a better learning platform for our students. As a fellow of the EAP, I would like to elevate an active learning culture of our school through English. I also hope to enhance my own skills in English in order to become an effective communicator in the future. My English as of now still has a lot of room for improvement, so I hope to work on that so I can acquire better skills to develop myself in the long run.

Thomas Fung, 2E(8):

I joined this programme as I do care about my English and my classmates think learning English is very hard. I would like to prove if they would like to become fluent in English, then they have to practice it on a daily basis. I am here because I want to improve my speaking skills, not just fooling around and wasting time here. I can do my best to help the teachers run different activities and projects by managing students, supporting them with all English learning resources available in our school and online. I promise to be a responsible, helpful and confident member of the English Ambassador Programme. Also, I promise to be patient and kind to my fellow students. I would like to learn more about other English-speaking countries' culture and become a more confident speaker.



Ivy Chan, 2E(3):

I am a new member of the English Ambassador Programme this year. I joined the English Ambassador Programme this year due to English teacher's recommendation and I wish to become more confident when speaking English, to develop myself and acquire some good behavioural manners in the future. I think a rich English language learning environment can be created through making full use of the time and resources within the school and widening students' learning space.



Amy Cheng, 4E(5):

I joined the English Ambassador Programme this year because I was recommended by my English teacher. At the outset, I didn't like it and I thought it was just a boring activity. In fact, there are a lot of advantages, for example, I can improve my English and become a better speaker by joining this programme.

When it comes to the cultivation of an English speaking environment in our school, I would suggest the following. First, we should encourage other students to speak more English in their spare time such as during recess and lunchtime. Also, I think our school can organise more English events. And of course, we as EAs, should set a good example in this respect by speaking English most of the time.



Emily Chan, 4E(4):

I joined the English Ambassador Programme this year because my English teacher Miss Hu recommended me to participate. I believe that better English skills will allow me to communicate with a wide range of people across the globe. Our enhanced interest in learning English does not only open up opportunities for work and study, but more importantly, it provides us with greater opportunities for leisure and fulfillment in our personal life. Secondly, language proficiency is better managed through active and frequent use. It is important to provide students with maximum English exposure as well as meaningful and purposeful activities through which they can learn and apply the language.



A radio conversation about social media and teenagers

On 22 October, four students from the English Club talked to Alyson Hau on Teen Time - Open Space (@teentimer3) about Social Media. The live broadcast will be available on 30 November 2017, 9 pm - 10 pm on RTHK Radio 3. In the meantime, let's have a look at their views of technology and how all this affects our lives, which they shared during the recording session.

Alfa Yip, 3E(31) :

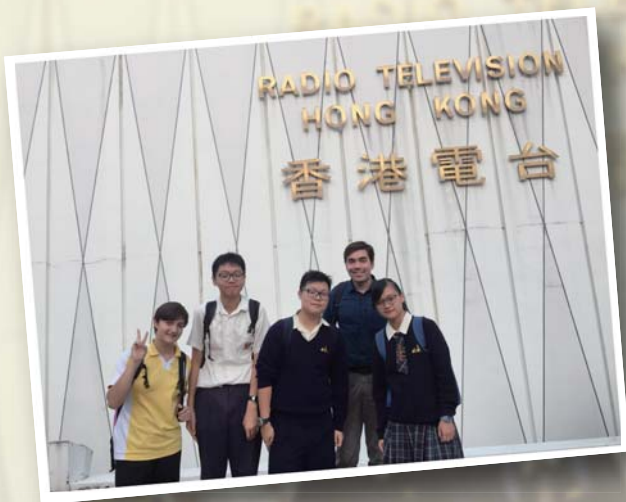
Nowadays, more and more teenagers are using different platforms of social media like Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat frequently. They use this media in order to chat with their friends online, send photos or share their bright moments of their lives with each other. This can help to strengthen friendships and maintain relationships by connecting to his or her friend after school or during holidays. They can even plan something to do in real life via the virtual platform. However, such online platforms might have disadvantages too. Some people tend to post their aggressive remarks or views online and this might lead to some disagreements. Some friends in real life end their friendships because of online misbehaviour. Some users become speechless and unsociable with their mates or friends because of overusing these virtual platforms. I think we all should think carefully before posting something online and ask ourselves if it is appropriate to say that. Also, I suggest that everyone makes good use of social media as an effective communication tool amongst teenagers and as a tool that aims to support learning.

Alexandra Wong, 5E(23):

Many of us might be aware that telephones or smartphones have become our constant companions.

Some people speculate that relying on the telephone may decrease teenagers' communication skills, because of lacking face-to-face communication or even worsen their social skills. I would totally disagree with this view.

I spent almost one year in France as part of my exchange programme I undertook. Throughout this year, I was not allowed to return to Hong Kong as I was asked to stay in France for the whole year in order to become more independent in my studies and my personal life. Since I was not allowed to return to Hong Kong, I had to rely on my phone and I ended up using WhatsApp, Snapchat, and FaceTime in order to stay in touch with my friends and family. That's why I don't think that smartphones will affect our social life since mobiles do not help us a lot. I was far away from Hong Kong, I was not able to see or meet my family throughout the whole year, so social media did help me a lot in this respect!



Zack Wong, 4E(26):

Nowadays, many teenagers are getting more and more addicted to social media. They consider online platform is a very good way to make friends. However, through various experiences I have had on social media, I have found out that it is also a place where a lot of bullying happens also known as cyberbullying. In some cases, those teens who are constantly being bullied choose to end their own life in order to escape from cyber bullies. Social media is also a platform which stimulates to spark most arguments. Many people put up videos of a quarrel to social media, for instance, like Facebook. They put it up to let people judge the incident.

On the other hand, social media might also help teenagers as teens around the world communicate with each other through the Internet which brings the world even closer. Therefore, the internet can be a helpful tool or just an obstacle in the life of teens depending on how they use it.



4A (29) Federica Tortone:

Social media takes up most of my free time. I love to chat with people from all over the world and discover new things through the internet, or even just to scroll down my Facebook feed in order to find some interesting posts. Although I like to talk to random people online, I'm also cautious about who I talk to, and the way I do this. I mean, better be aware, because it's true that you never really know who is on "the other side" in a long distance chat. However, what I think is that by using a little bit of common sense we can avoid a lot of troubles from happening. When a stranger asks for personal information? Better not give out, right?

On the other hand, sometimes, it is good to share personal information with strangers. For example, if you are feeling sad all you have to do is go on Tumblr and you immediately find thousands of people feeling the same way as you do, and all they want to do is help others not to feel the same. Also, many people think too much social media, especially at a younger age, may lead to depression. I think it's not true. In my view, young teens seek refuge in social media because they feel depressed. It's something that comes next. It's too difficult to speak the sadness out to people, but behind a screen is by far easier to speak our mind. It's a fact. The development of drug addiction behind social media stands in the fact that it gives just a quick relief to sadness, and it's just a way to keep the head busy when you are too bored, without really thinking. Lastly, I think social media provides a platform to shorten distances between people and it can lead to better communication and a better understanding of each other. All we need to do is use them efficiently and effectively.



We have recently launched our new Instagram account. Come and join us on Instagram for all new stories, happenings at HGC, photos, updates and more! Be our friends, follow us today @EnglishCorner.HK and take your English to the next level!

WE'RE NOW ON

Instagram



A message from the Chairperson of the Student Union.

Hello everyone! I am the newly-elected chairperson of Holm Glad College Student Union, Paula Cheng. Our Union, Polaris, is very pleased and honoured to have been elected this academic year by our fellow students to represent their views.

Being a representative body for all students at HGC and a role model, we, Polaris, promise try our best to serve every single student at Holm Glad College and liaise with the school all the time. Our aims during our tenure are improving students' learning abilities and studying skills and serving as a bridge between students and school.

A variety of activities and services will be provided by the Student Union such as Singing Contest, English Oral Practice, Card Game competitions and etc. We believe that such activities help to hone the talents of young minds and give them an opportunity to realise their own potential. What's more, we promise to engage with students, hear from them and represent their views effectively.

Polaris would like to express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to all those who have supported us and cast their votes in favour of us in the election!

Please stay tuned to our upcoming events and communications!

