

John Fitta Denman

Please share an instance of dealing with adversity and how you managed to overcome the difficulty

An essay must be 300 words or less.

Earning a B in Mathematics Analysis and Approaches in the IB program was a moment of deep reflection for me. As someone who has consistently earned A's throughout my academic career, this grade initially felt like a setback. I've always considered math one of my strengths, excelling in its logic and problem-solving, so receiving a B in what I thought was my best subject was disheartening. However, over time, I took this challenge as an opportunity to grow.

My counselors assured me that Mathematics AA is the hardest math class offered to high schoolers worldwide. That insight gave me comfort and perspective. It also pushed me to rethink how I approached learning. I had relied on strategies that once worked, such as memorizing formulas, solving isolated problems, and studying right before exams. But this course demanded more: critical thinking, creativity, and endurance.

After receiving my grade, I took a step back, embodied the 10th IB learner profile traits, and reflected on what needed to change. I revised my learning approach, prioritizing consistent engagement with the material. I began scheduling daily time to review concepts, ask questions, and solve problems across a variety of contexts. Instead of focusing solely on getting the right answers, I concentrated on understanding the "why" behind each solution. I also embraced collaboration with peers, realizing that discussing different approaches to problems enriched my understanding.

This experience has reshaped my perspective on learning and perseverance. Though earning a B was difficult to accept, it reminded me that growth takes time and effort. Being open-minded, adaptable, and being able to take setbacks in stride helped. Mathematics AA pushed me to rethink my habits and refine my skills. I humbly carry these lessons forward

with a deeper appreciation for hard work and that progress often begins where comfort ends.