



**The Winter Term
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*To teachers who have students attending The Winter Term
in the winter of 2010:*

The Winter Term is an effort to provide, in a controlled learning environment and for a relatively small number of seventh and eighth graders, a positive, out-of-the-ordinary experience that will have lasting impact. It is intended to complement and extend rather than to compete with the student's schooling at home.

Our experience is that young people for whom the prospect of testing themselves in a new and challenging environment is appealing, are, with the cooperation of the sending school and teachers, invariably able to achieve a successful reentry, bringing with them skills, attitudes, self-confidence and an awareness of the world that render them more effective members of their home school communities.

Though skiing constitutes the afternoon sports activity for Winter Termers, it is not the predominant focus of the WT. The academic demands are strenuous. Students have a full morning of classes Monday through Friday, two classes on Saturday and language tutorials and activities in the late afternoons. They have seven English periods per week, read six books and do an extensive amount of writing. They study European history and geography while devoting the last six weeks to an extensive study of aspects of their host country culminating in a SWISS REPORT project that challenges them and stretches their ability to complete an extended writing assignment. They study meteorology, geology and the environmental impact of development upon Alpine regions. Students bring with them their math books and assignments for the winter and generally have them completed well before the end of the twelve weeks. Foreign languages are tutored on an group basis, again following the program from home. A keyboard skills course is

mandatory and, after the third week all written homework is generally completed on a word processor.

Day trips to Lausanne (Cathedral and Olympic Museum), Bern (Capital Building, Alpine Museum), Lucern (Glacier Garden and Transportation Museum), Gruyeres (castle and cheese factory) and Avenches (Roman capital of Switzerland) form an important part of the program of study. To enrich their knowledge of what it is to live in a Swiss mountain village, each student also participates in a local "apprenticeship". This involves spending a day or half day with a Swiss at work - assisting the baker, milking cows, doing the rounds with the local vet, grooming the slopes in a snow cat - and reporting upon their experience to the group at dinner. Written up, the apprentice experience becomes part of their Swiss Report.

It is important that the sending school assigns no additional work to Winter Termers, who will have plenty on their plate, and that what the students do in Switzerland be considered as equivalent to what they would otherwise be doing from January through March. Our experience is that these able students will be able to make the necessary adjustment upon reentry if they are received positively. A sending school's expectation that a parallel curriculum can be accomplished while a student is otherwise fully engaged at The Winter Term has proven to be both unrealistic and demoralizing.

The value of the Winter Term experience can be significantly enhanced if, upon his or her return, the school gives a degree of recognition to what the student has accomplished and makes an effort to draw upon the new resources that the student has acquired. Winter Termers broaden their vision of the world while away and are usually eager to share their ideas!

We will begin our twenty-second Winter Term in January with students from around the globe. Should their classmates be interested in what they are up to, the daily log is posted each Monday on our web site, www.hohliebi.ch. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions. We thank you for lending us your young person and will do our best to take good care.

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