

LUMINOUS

2021



PODAR
Nurturing The Future. Since 1927.



Message From The Director's Desk



Podar International School's aim is to provide conditions conducive for the growth of our students, to nurture them and help them metamorphosize into the people we know they can become- pre-eminent citizens of the world. Our goal is to create independent capable individuals who have the ability to remain grounded and focused while letting their imagination soar - unfettered.

At Podar, we expose our students to various perspectives and global situations, in order to broaden their horizons and think out of the box. We want each and every one of our students to reach their potential and achieve personal mastery. We do this by providing an encouraging, stimulating and engaging learning environment, aided by the tactful guidance of our dedicated group of educators. We never let our students' creativity stagnate. While focusing on helping them gain academic knowledge we also provide platforms for our students to showcase and advance their unique talents. We help our students develop holistically by instilling in them the life skills of communication, collaboration, inquiry and reflection.

The Luminous magazine is an excellent example of an initiative that incorporates almost everything the IBDP programme expects from its students and what it wants its students to develop throughout the course, completely in sync with the International Baccalaureate's philosophy. Not only the diligent Luminous team members but also students who are gifted writers and creative artists, who have contributed to the newsletter, have displayed such mastery of the attributes of the IB learner profile. The theme itself, 'Ingenuity' reflects the spirit of the International Baccalaureate Organization. With Innovation and Transformation everywhere in the current challenging times, this magazine gave the students an opportunity to express their own uniqueness while inspiring others. This theme urges the students to use their imagination and aims to display their rich creativity, skill, inventiveness and originality.

The Luminous Magazine has provided an avenue for our brilliant students to showcase their extraordinary literary talents while making us teachers beam with pride. This being the 4th Edition is an attribute to the determination and never-ending creativity of the students. It demonstrates effective team work and the excellence of the students of Podar. I extend my appreciation to the Luminous Team, as it is their vision and herculean effort that has made this endeavour possible.

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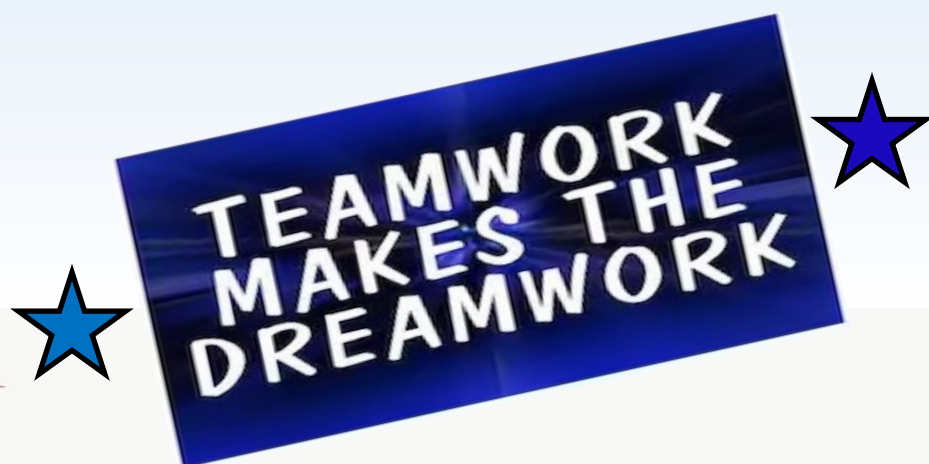
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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

We are absolutely delighted to present to you the 4th edition of our Podar International School Magazine, 'Luminous 2021'. This is an IBDP1 student led initiative that was only possible due to the hard work, co operation and brilliance of the students.

This year's theme is Ingenuity. With innovation and transformation in the air, this gave the students an opportunity to express their own uniqueness while inspiring others. We recognized the fact that the students of Podar are teeming with potential and wanted to give them a platform to express their creativity, their innovation and themselves. To meet the broad requirements of this theme the students reached into their imagination and have displayed their high skill, inventiveness and originality.

In this magazine you will not only see brilliant articles but also a range of other types of pieces from informative comics to gorgeous paintings to relatable poems. To make the magazine diverse we have divided the magazine into sections of ingenuity: Literature & Language, Science, Technology, Current Affairs, Social Cause, Culture & Cuisine, Art & Photography, Entertainment and Health.

This has been a journey of a lifetime. Each member of the Editorial team learned something from those who submitted. It was a team effort- from interactive meetings establishing the frame work of the magazine to figuring out the design layout, tapping into the creativity of the members of the Luminous team. It was so overwhelming to receive such interesting entries from each grade, from 6th to 12th.

The success of this magazine is all thanks to the efforts of the Luminous team; the motivation from our Director Principal, Dr. Mrs. Vandana Lulla, whose support and love for her students is unwavering; the valuable inputs from our IBDP coordinator, Ms. Hema Rajan and Executive coordinator, Ms. Prema Mathew; the constant guidance from our teachers; and of course, the innate creativity of the contributors.

We would like to extend our immense gratitude to each and every person who helped make the production of this magazine possible, including our beloved readers. Thank you all for having faith in the spirit of the magazine.

Happy reading!

Aaryan Potdar

Kimberly Roy

Co-Editors in Chief



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LANGUAGE & LITERATURE



REVISITING

By Trisha Kulkarni, IBDP-1

How could a tiny, ruptured wooden box do justice to half a century's worth of memories.

Yet, within the dimensions of that precious little chest,

Countless moments and an infinity of recollections lay buried and repressed.

Monochromatic photos stuck to yellowed pages,

Of families and loved ones promised to be cherished forever,

Yet lost within the passage of ages.

Wooden dolls once held dear and subject to innocent admiration,

Now cast aside, bearing lost limbs, on the verge of devastation.

Delicate copper plated bracelets and a fading cameo ring,

Knotted to the heart by love, loss and similar strings.

However, rings may rust, photographs will fade,

Yet what will never be forgotten are the beautiful memories made.

The reel of our minds, forever holds,

A recollection of moments and memories,

As precious to us and resistant to corrosion as pure shining gold.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

By Nayeel Qaazi, Grade 8

In this grave situation,
What will become of our education?
So our school came with a solution,
To continue teaching us the various arts.
To try to make us learn something,
And keep education in our heart.
To achieve a level of excellence,
For knowledge we must yearn.
Through the virtual classroom all of us can learn.
Podar gave this opportunity to you and me,
So let's take full advantage with enthusiasm and glee.
Sitting at home comfortably,
Your pet by your side.
But when you are online,
By the rules you must abide.
The teacher does her part, so the student must too,
All that you are studying now will only benefit you.

A SOLDIER'S LAST LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

By Harit Paurana, IBDP-1

My life was as peaceful as it could be,
And I was going to be a lawyer as far as I could see.
I was studying law in a small town,
When the war turned my life upside down.

All able young men were called to fight,
We were issued our weapons and sent to the site.
Half of us had never picked up a gun,
And now we were drafted in a world war which was to be won.

According to me a war is never won or lost,
It is our greatest mistake with innocent human lives being the cost.
I don't believe that our enemies are the German,
I believe that they're our brothers because they're human.

The D-Day arrived, and we reached the beaches of France,
Where the enemy artillery was busy taking its stance.
As we advanced, fellow soldiers cried and threw up with fear,
They could probably sense that death was near.

The silence then gave way to a thunderous storm,
Within seconds the raining bullets took out our entire first swarm.
Most turned into a mutilated state,
Even before they had the chance to retaliate.

With blood, the sea turned red,
And the sun hid behind the clouds for it had tears to shed.
The wind stopped blowing and time stood still,
To honour the martyred and their iron will.

The war then took us throughout the French countryside,
Abandoned hotels and churches were our only means to hide.
Amidst this blood-thirsty trouble,
I saw magnificent towns turn to dust and rubble.

Day after day, our strength became low,
Yet, I did not leave the fight and go.
I was held captive and tortured but I did not fall to my knee,
For a moment of pain is worth a lifetime of glory.

Mother, I couldn't become a lawyer, and I ask God why?
Maybe I am a soldier, born to die.
With a smile on my face and a tear in my eye,
I thank you for everything, and kiss goodbye.

STAGNANT

By Sakshi Rajesh, IBDP-2

Stagnant

Unmoving walls are closing in
And as darkness is coupled with hopelessness
I cannot escape this box.

Curiosity killed the cat.

I yearn for a new life
Away from the shackles imposed on me
While longingness proliferates in my mind
I do not indulge.

Curiosity killed the cat.

Eat sleep repeat; eat, sleep, repent
If dreaming is synonymous to living
Why can't I feel alive?
I want to be alive.

Curiosity killed the cat.

I need to materialize
The virtue that lies beyond
The horizons of a figmented box
Because imagination has no limit.

Curiosity killed the cat.

But satisfaction brought it back.

DIAMONDS

By Diya Purohit, Grade 9

We are diamonds ,imperfect yet pressurised into perfection

We all have time for pointing out people's flaws

What about ours?

Who is pointing out our flaws

Before getting thorns out of your mouth

Spread roses say words like you're looking pretty

Don't show pity if they have any inadequacies

Because at the end of the day we are all trying to shape ourselves into something nice

Don't criticise be nice

Spread love, not hate

Don't try becoming a diamond it takes a long time

Everyone is perfect just the way they are

YOU are perfect

INGENUITY

By Mahema Singh, Grade 9

Inventive and creative thoughts give birth to great ideas

And resourcefulness will help to execute what the mind thinks of

New and original designs of fantastic plans

Are often a result of intelligence channelised towards innovation

Genuine efforts coupled with strategic planning

Gives one the right direction towards achieving one's goal

Endeavours of life taken up with grit and determination

Will always be successful and attain desired outcome

Never lose hope and don't let anything take your eyes off your target

Sincerity and consistency are a must for any accomplishments

Use your energy for productive and constructive activities in life

Time is something you can't recover once it's gone

Ingenious thinking makes one explore a plethora of methods and solutions

Eradicating every excuse that could be a hurdle

The skilfulness of any concept or of any design

Stems from a brain that accepts change is needed for improvement

Your hard work and vision can turn imagination into reality

Marvels and wonders are nothing but products of ingenuity

SUNSHINE

By Mannat Ghumman, IBDP-1

She wasn't the kind of sunshine i was used to,

She was the kind of sunshine that peeked

through clouds sometimes,

She was the kind of sunshine that i knew

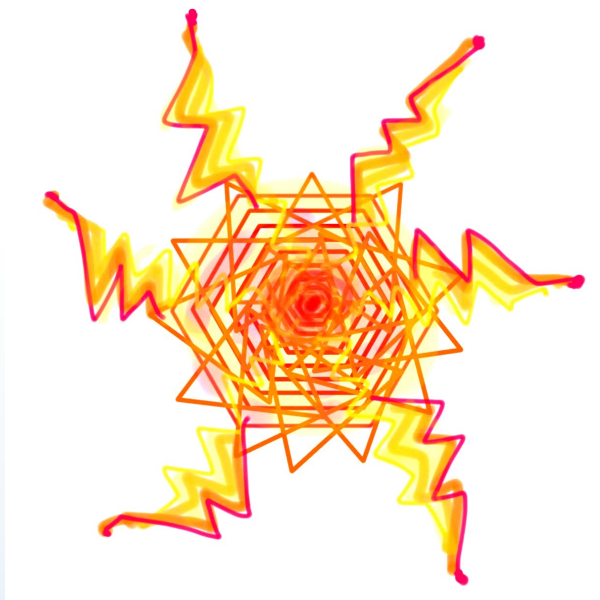
battled storms every night,

The kind that brought a little bit of catastrophe,

The kind that wore her scars as lightning brightening her sky,

She wasn't meant for the ordinary as As she was anything but,

She was sunshine but also anything but.



THE UNANNOUNCED PLAGUE

By Ayman Momin, IBDP-1

I remember the days I'd speculate
That studying from home was really great!
Didn't need to wear uniforms
Or follow any other norms.

Until the day I realized
I couldn't be mesmerized.
I wanted to move out of my house
But I was trapped like a mouse.

All my holiday plans were on abort
Since the whole world came to halt.
Masks were the shields, sanitizers the swords
Let the war rage on.

The era was our nightmare
The impact of which was unaware.
Doctors were tired, the police were too
Large masses got unemployed with nothing to chew.

The COVID-19 outbreak was surely miserable
But it made us realize that we aren't invincible.
We must play by the rules of Nature
Or else, face its evil gesture.

BROKEN WINDOWS

By Trisha Kulkarni, IBDP-1

Among the shattered shards of glass,
Lay broken dreams, lifelessly floating on dampened blades of grass.
Where decades ago, layers of silica filled the spaces,
Now emptiness reigned, its dimensions stroked by loneliness,
streaked by sullen traces.
Darkness and gloom radiated through the roughly panelled walls,
As inside, cracked floorboards creaked painfully, and smiles were left engraved, forever stalled.
Beyond the hollowness,
Enclosed by rotting wooden panes,
A tiny tear-drop shaped bulb spread warm yellow light;
Casting a heavenly halo that sliced through the doom surrounding it,
With tangential rays, angelic and bright.
As in every fairy tale,
Like good and evil,
Hope and doom together reside.
Which path is to be chosen is but a matter of choice.

QUIET BEFORE A STORM

By Shriya Chandran, Grade 9

Do you know it's quiet before a storm?

The eerie silence before rain falls.

The still of trees

And the birds seemingly asleep.

When the dancing wind

Stops all at once.

Making you wonder,

If time has stopped.

You don't understand,

Why you feel so unsettled.

Why you can't enjoy

This kind of peace.

For is it not ideal,

Like something surreal?

Let me tell you its nature

A dream is what it is.

It is so inexplicably short,

Like the momentary still before the fall.

Like the calm inhalation;

Before a torrent of anger takes its place.

A dramatic pause.

So powerful, seemingly oh *so tranquil*.

It is, after all; The quiet before the storm.

INGENUITY

By Riddhi Gupta, Grade 9

Whether it be looking past horizons to generate new ideas,

Creating a fantabulous piece of art,

Writing intriguing scripts and stories for the mass,

Ingenuity is what plays a major part.

Without ingenuity, details remain unseen,

The same paths followed again and again,

Monotony in every aspect of life becomes the norm,

And of ennui, the world faces a storm.

Without ingenuity, the laws of physics would have remained undiscovered,

Imagination for development of several fields unstirred,

Everyone's thoughts and actions would be similar,

As a feeling of captivity and confinement prevailed in the world.

It allows one to stand out in the crowd,

To express themselves in ways unfound,

To go against the general flow of thought,

As numerous changes to mindsets are brought.

AUTUMN

By Amyshka Shenoy, Grade 9

The autumn of Orange

Autumn, the word itself represents arrays of orange and yellow,
With the gentle breezes leaving you chilly and the weather being mellow,
It's a time to rejoice and meet up with new friends,
As the time of the cold winter slowly ends,
The bright red leaves fall down in a trickle,
Just like the flames of a fire that was fickle,
As I walk down the path of cobblestone,
Between the leaves of the trees, yellow light shone,
Time stops as my memories flash past,
Oh how I wish the world didn't move so fast.



मेरा छात्रावास जीवन

By Khushi Shah, IBDP-1

ज़ोर चिलाती, आवाज़ लगाती।
हमारी वॉर्डन हमें कुछ इस तरह उठती।।

कम्बल को अपनी ढाल बनाये,
खुदको उसकी आवाज़ से बचाये।
दिल से यह निकले हाय,
५ मिनट और नींद मिल जाए।।

आँख खुली नहीं की निकले नहाने।
ज़िंदा लाशों की तरह निकले खाना खाने।।

फिर शुरू होती हमारी ६ घंटों की जंग।
पाठ्यक्रम को देखकर रह जाते हम दंग।।

कक्षा-कक्षा घूम- घूमकर टाँगे दे गयी जवाब,
अपना बस्ता धो-धोकर हो गयी हालत खराब।
सपना देख इंजीनियर बनने का जनाब,
देख गणित की किताब, दफना दिए अपने ख्वाब।।

आधा दिन जैसे तैसे निकल गया,
आयी अब खेल-कूद की बारी,
यह एक घंटा भी हाथ से निकल गया।

थके हारे पहुंचे छात्रावास में।
अधमरी हालत में चले आये क्लास में।।

किताब में मुँह गुसाए, खुली आखों से देखे ख्वाब।
प्रश्न गणित का, और हिंदी में लिखे जवाब।।

नींद छड़ी आँखों पर,
लौटकर जब छात्रावास आये।
भूलकर सारे दिन की थकान,
बिस्तर को गले लगाए।।

छोटी कविता ने कह दिया,
हमें क्या-क्या सहना पड़ता है।
यह मेरा विद्यालय,
यहाँ एक दिन ऐसा गुज़रता है।।

A TRIP TO SCHOOL

By Sudiksha Nagre, A-Level

Just before reaching the corner, they turned and waved goodbye as the car finally disappeared around the bend. Both siblings turned to face each other, the smiles they harboured had now disappeared. "You go first" Suna nudged her brother. He scowled at her as he bent down and tightened his laces. His sister kicked him from behind, causing Nabil to lose balance and land on his palms. Nabil looked up to stare at his sister. Her small frame towered over him. "If you're going to act like a coward then I'll go first." She claimed arrogantly.

Suna shoved past her brother and stood confidently in front of the cornerstone wall. She ripped her bag off of her shoulder and passed it backward, crashing it into her brother's arms. "Pass me the pill bottle." She commanded her brother as she opened the faux flap on the cornerstone wall to reveal a red emergency button. She paused for a second, her brother tapped her shoulder and then passed the multi-coloured pill bottle to her. "Good luck," he said as he stepped back, giving his sister space. Suna took a deep breath and finally pressed the button. She hurriedly opened the pill jar and tossed the lid out of her way as she stepped onto the opaque floor that appeared.

The once sound and still wall began to shift, breaking and cracking into the shape of a tiny door, barely reaching over Suna's foot. Suna rumbled through her pill bottle in desperation as she swore under her breath. She looked up at the door to see the door had begun moving towards her, in a moment of desperation, Suna tipped her pills onto the opaque floor, getting onto her hands and knees to sift through the pills. "Found it!" she yelled as she picked up and dusted a bright yellow pill, without thinking she popped the pill in her mouth and swallowed it. She halted for a second, waiting for the pill to work its magic. The wall with the small door kept approaching her, but she was still big.

Suddenly, Suna's head began to spin, her body began to feel like it was being stretched and pulled in all directions. She didn't feel so good. "It's working!" She heard her brother yell in a distance. "POP" a sound went, and before she could blink, Suna had become small. The once tiny door now seemed a normal size to her. She stanced herself with her arm out reaching for the knob as the wall got closer. Once the wall was close enough, she leaped onto her tiptoes and reached for the doorknob, swinging the door open. She retreated her hand and waited for the door to pass her by. Suna shut her eyes in excitement; she could feel her heart race in her throat. She let out a small yelp as she felt like she was being pressed and pulled.

"Whoosh" the wind danced

Suna took a deep breath, wet grass and spring moistness filled her nose and lungs. She loosened her body and slowly opened her eyes. She was greeted by the warm sun caressing her face. She observed her surroundings; hills filled with vibrantly colored flowers filled her eyes. A sharp object pushed into her shoulder blade, causing Suna to trip over her own feet. She winced in pain as she turned around to be greeted by Nabil, who was also marveling at the sight before him. He, like his sister had also stumbled through the wall. "Watch it!" she said as she nudged him with her elbow.

"Sorry, sorry" he retorted as he raised his arms to block her elbow.

"Bam! Bam!" The bags sounded as they fell from the sky, the whole ground shook beneath them. They paused and looked at one another, they began to giggle as they reached for their luggage on the ground. The siblings dragged their bags as they walked and chatted along the path. "Oh, I see the bus stop!" Nabil yelled as they reached the top of the floral hill. "I'll race you there!" Suna said as she darted ahead, her luggage tilted and tumbled behind her. Nabil's eyes widened in disbelief as he watched his older sister race ahead of him. "That's not fair!" He screamed as he gripped his luggage and tried to catch up to her.

The brother and sister pair waited for the bus to arrive, their constant chatter was the only noise that filled the area. "Beep, Beep" a distant horn sounded, causing the siblings to stand up from the bench and lean forward in anticipation of the awaited vehicle. The petite sky blue bus slowly appeared over the horizon. The siblings stared in awe as they witnessed the vehicle hover over the hills. "Magic..." Nabil whispered

"Don't be silly, it's advanced science." His sister cut him off. Nabil extended his arm, flagging the bus down. The small bus hovered over toward them, the electronical whirring stopped as the bus braked in front of them. The double doors folded inward, revealing a hologram sitting in the driver's seat. "Where ye off te kids?" The hologram asked in an Australian accent. The siblings took a moment to understand the thick foreign accent.

"Uh..." Nabil stumbled on his words

"We don't got all day mate." the hologram grew impatient.

"Two tickets to the Hemming's School for the Gifted and Talented" Suna but-in

"Right then, take ye tickets from the machine at the back and lock yeself onto a seat, it's a rough ride." The hologram said pointing to the back of the bus.

Suna smiled at the hologram politely and stepped into the bus. She stopped dead in her tracks; the bus had more room than she thought. She turned around and peered her head out of the bus; it was still small on the outside. The bus extended further than a train, she saw no end to it. "It's bigger on the inside!" The hologram said smiling. Nabil stepped onto the bus, pushing his amazed sister ahead of him with one hand and dragging his luggage with the other. "Thank you" he said to the hologram as he passed it, towards the ticket machine. Nabil tucked their large luggage into the overhead compartments, as Suna got comfortable on the window seat, removing her jacket and footwear. Both siblings sat side by side as the bus began to move. Some time passed in silence "You excited?" Suna asked as she broke her gaze from the view outside and looked at her brother. Nabil, who was thoroughly studying the pamphlet for his new school looked back at his sister and smiled "Of course I am." He said.

INSOMNIA IN A DORMITARY

By Nishika Sarma, AS-Level

She walked through the dimly lit hallway searching for someone who could help her find exactly what she wanted, a perfect book to accompany her throughout the night while all those around her would snore into oblivion. It was difficult to find a book she wouldn't get bored of, clichés made her want to throw up and all everyone wanted to read was cliché stories. No woman leaves everything and finds true happiness the moment she enters into a stable relationship. She'd say those words with judging eyes aimed at her that felt like they were staring right into your soul every time she saw someone read those books that never sat collecting dust at libraries. Her favourite books? The one's that sat in a corner for months, those books were her best friends at times even more than us. These books kept her company so it was obvious that she loved them as much as she did.

The matron would come and tell us to switch off our lights but never, not once did she tell her because she knew that the effort would be futile, her screaming won't put the girl to sleep. She pulled out her kettle knowing none of us had slept yet and the noise wouldn't be an issue, made herself a steaming cup of tea that all the articles said would put her to sleep but they rarely ever did. I generally stayed up much later than lights out time to keep her company and finish the day's work we never got time to complete during the day. She believed that's why she liked having me around, because I never slept early. An evident hatred ran through her veins for people who slept the moment their heads hit their pillows. She felt it was unfair that her eyes would stay open for days but theirs would close for hours.

She'd generally play music to try and sleep, the playlist was even named 'sleep music'. Ironic at times, some days the tunes would work and others she'd be cranky in the morning because of all the flaws in the music and because she stayed up all night again. Even though her eyelids felt like boulders over her eyes she couldn't get a wink of sleep.

There were times when she'd explain it to me, her problem, why she couldn't sleep but I never really understood. Some days the bed was clammy and some it felt like a bed made of ice, the pillows like rocks under her head and a sudden urge to go shower the moment the clock struck midnight. She'd always be confused, was there something she was doing wrong? Something that everyone around her knew was needed to fall asleep but somehow she didn't. Sometimes she wondered whether she's hungry, digging into her snack stash to search for something that might finally be the secret to sleep, but sadly she's always wrong.

I woke up the next morning to find her in the very same position, curled up with the book in her hands. The only difference was that when I fell asleep her book had merely twenty pages on the read bundle but now there were merely twenty pages left for the story to finish.

THOUGHT THEY WERE YOUNG

By Prisha Jain, Grade 8

"Shush, don't you dare say a word", he whispered into my ears, I was so scared that they would find and lock me into that room. The room had no doors and no windows; the only entry and exit was the roof. I hadn't changed since morning even though there were clothes kept on a table. Those clothes were strange, they had cuts all over and were very tight looking, I never wore such clothes, they looked familiar though for some reason, back at home women could only wear saree or kurta, only one however girl wore modern clothes and that was my sister Kira even though I always wanted to wear them but the only reason I didn't because I always felt someone was looking at me. It was a torn pair of tight jeans that Kira called ripped, along with a weird top that wasn't describable. When I held the clothes they smelt familiar, I sniffed them closely, they smelt like Kira. That means she had been here before...

We are still hiding in the water tank Kabir had fallen asleep, I, on the other hand, were wide awake cause by no means did I want to go back there, unfortunately, due to low oxygen levels in the tank I had passed out when I woke up I was in a room, this one was different it had a fan a bed and lots of other things. I couldn't move my hands and legs were tied to a chair and all I could hear was someone banging the cupboard, I somehow managed to crawl to the cupboard and banged my chair to the cupboard and the chair broke along with the cupboard that flung open it was Kira, her nose was bleeding, her clothes were soaked in blood, her hand was was twisted, and her legs were shaking. I was shaking. I didn't know what to do to see my older wound so critically. I carried her to the bed and made her lie down. She was hardly in the state to talk. I decided to let her rest but she would continuously mummer something that was beyond my understanding. It sounded like running away before I could take any action there was a thud at the door. "A man came in and told us "oh, so you two managed to get out, but unfortunately I came in at the wrong time, both of you are just as are good as your dad and even prettier than your mom and family is pretty remarkable also I think its destiny for the entire family to be buried here". He started walking towards me and just before he was about to hold my hand Kira kicked him and both of us ran towards the water tank I couldn't believe that he was still in there we pulled him out along with our guns and killed everyone there because they were responsible for the death of our mom and we fulfilled our dads wish to kill the ones who killed them and to work for the country...

DELPHIE

By Heer Visaria, AS-Level

There she is, my love, my life. Her auburn hair falls perfectly over her shoulders and her eyes twinkle making the stars look like they are not shining. The grey in her eyes shine, teasing me. These are the most precious jewels; these eyes never fail to make you feel loved, feel wanted. My hand, as if out of habit, moves to her cheek. They are as soft as cotton and smooth as silk, and my fingers glide over them as a feather in the air. My thumb travels to her lips, luscious and plush, they part seductively, and a sigh escapes her mouth. She closes her eyes, waiting for my lips to meet hers...

And then as if by some invisible force she is pulled away from me and her eyes shoot open. They are no longer twinkling- they are pleading, begging for me to hold on to her. She extends her arm but she is too far away. She is fading, her lips are losing colour and her face becomes as pale as snow. My heart hammers in my chest, I shout but nothing escapes my mouth. She is fading, crumbling as if made of dust, disappearing into the oblivion, her eyes pleading... She's gone.

I wake up with a jolt. My heart hammers in my chest and sweat covers every inch of my body. I look around and suddenly the room seems to suffocate me, the walls are closing in on me, moving closer with every second, threatening to trap me. My breath is rough and laborious as if the space around me has been robbed of oxygen, and I am unable to move. The silence of the night is now filled with screaming noises of that night, the police, my Delphie, the hospital, the sirens... all of them hit me like a wave, mixing and mingling and getting louder with every second. I press my palms against my ears; still, they hurt. And now the only thing that pierces me is the silence. It accuses me of my deeds and how they left me here. It accuses me of being me, of never understanding others' needs, of never being able to be there for the people I loved. It accuses me.

I run to the balcony. As soon as the cold night air hits me, I collapse, my back to the wall and my knees close to my chest. I breathe and take in the guilt-filled air and wait for the tears to come, but they never do. It's just the silence that hurts me like I hurt everyone. It's just the memories that come flooding back.

It was all my fault. My Delphie isn't here because of me. Only if I hadn't been so drunk; only if I had been there to take her to the hospital; only if I had been there to take care of her. Only if I had been there for her, like all the times she had been there for me. Her face, her beautiful face, keeps floating around me, pricking my heart about how careless, how fickle I had been.

There she was lying on the road covered in her own blood... dying because of me. I scarcely remember that night. I had come home, high and drowsy and had collapsed on the couch. I can see vague images of her in her favourite yellow dress, fumbling, sweating, falling, asking me to take her to the hospital. It is what I said to her that I remember most clearly, it is those words that burn my soul. "Don't act, Delphie. Go to bed." I had told her. I can't remember what happened next; only the call next morning from the hospital... and my world had come crashing down.

When I close my eyes, I can no longer see her smile, the twinkle in her eyes or hear her laugh. All I can see is her hair scattered, stained in her own blood. Her limbs lying on the road at unnatural angles. Her dress soaked in her blood. Her eyes- her eyes wide with fear and surprise.

Now every day is just the same without her. There are no surprise dinners, or midnight walks, no bike rides and no parties. It is just my grief and me, going to work, returning home and sleeping. Emotions have ceased to exist in me. It is as if my life has hit a dead end. There is no going further.

I know she has forgiven me, but I don't think I can ever forgive myself.

WE'LL WALK TOGETHER

By Dyumna Awasthi, AS-Level

The serenity of the world just encapsulates us in its grasp; the cheery but calm morning gently waking us up to face another day. The sun kisses me on the cheek while the wind softly caresses me, almost as if attempting to console me, making me believe that better days are to come.

I envy the birds that roam, flapping their wings, roaming the realm of the earth while all I can do is stare out of this tiny window; I try not to let it dishearten me but the pigeons come every day, impossible to ignore, perched upon the thin grey railing, mocking me incessantly.

The flowers represent my pain, sitting so diligently and patiently, waiting for the day they can finally bask in the glory of the sun, but alas, they stay stuck in their little mud pots, confined, imprisoned. The petals, frantically getting ready for the day they may be able to get out... a girl must look her best, even if she cannot show it off.

The sun gently teases the leaves, almost within their reach, but almost is never enough. The buildings in the distance ensconced in its heat while the only sliver of warmth I receive is from my daily cup of tea.

Though perhaps, staying inside has darkened my perspective and all I need to do is step into a little light; because there is beauty in this tiny balcony, and hope still finds a way to creep into both my garden and my heart.

The skies are calm today, tired of putting on concerts every evening as dusk approaches, tired of having to hold the fort while the seas play, and the fields frolic around without a care in the world. The sky looks down at me, reminding me of the beckoning horizon that lies where the sky meets the sea; I stare at that majestic cyan canvas that even the clouds not dare cross. It stares back, just as confused, just as scared.

I spend my days sitting on the webbed chairs, staring out onto this vast world ahead—it scares me now, to think that it's been months since I've even been downstairs, but while it's scary, it's also relieving. We stay strong in the middle of a global pandemic and it is people like us who will take the world forward. This adversity will end, and we will be at the forefront, as the beacons of positivity and living proof that this too shall pass, and we too shall survive.

The roads that seemed so familiar now only a distant dream, and all I can possibly do now is wait. Wait for the day when the siren of the factory will echo through the neighborhood, and children's playful screams will resonate again. Smiles will no longer be hidden behind a mask of a mask, and lives will no longer be un-lived. The little balcony of mine represents me, and the world outside representing all my fears and inhibitions; and all I have to do now is wait until we're ready, for we'll all walk again, but this time we'll walk together.

MY JOURNEY INFILLED WITH CORONA

By Tanya Vaswani, IBDP-1

My entire life I grew up in West Africa, more specifically Benin, Cotonou. This country along with Togo have always had a special place in my heart because I was born and brought up in these countries. My friends, my family and my dog are all back there scattered in West Africa. The past 4-5 months have been hectic because one minute I'm studying constantly, to suddenly being under lockdown at home with my mum, while my dad is abroad working. COVID-19 has triggered panic within us but I am not worried because I know when it is time for me to kick the bucket, I will die. I believe fear is irrational, and now is not the time to fluster, instead to just obey the rules and soon everything will roll over.



My eldest sister, Laksha was stranded in India but she had the company of our aunt and cousins. Meanwhile, my other sister Shikha was in Bath, England. Shikha and I knew she had to come back to Cotonou as soon as possible because we knew there would be a lockdown soon enough in the UK. Within a week, Shikha reached home and the UK had shut its borders.

My family and I frequently communicated via video chats or text messages to see how each other were doing. My dad and my mum decided that it was time for us to shift to India due to the fact that both of my sisters have graduated from their universities and are beginning to build their lives in India. Likewise, my dad would also be busy due to the fact that he has to continuously move country to country for work. So, it would work out perfectly if we were all under one roof like how it was 7 years ago.

The next step was to apply for schools in Mumbai. My mum loves Podar International School and wanted me to get in so when we first got a reply from the school, it took her 0.01 second to agree for me to start virtual learning. A few days later it was my first day of online school, halfway across the world. The dreadful part is that I had to wake up every day by 3 a.m. Sometimes I pulled all-nighters because I knew that once I slept, I would sleep like a log and miss my classes, which happened time-to-time. My sleeping pattern was extremely messed up and even now I still wake up during the night. Whether it is 1 a.m. or 3 a.m., I am awake.

Even though I had to sleep in the afternoon to catch up on sleep, I never wasted any opportunity to be either studying, hanging out with my sister or my dog- Mr. Rocky, or simply baking. Cotonou had not been closing its borders and instead took precautions and made strict rules so that it permitted people to meet up, though in small gatherings.

Once the borders of the UK reopened, my sister went back while I stuck around for the next 3 months or so. My grandmother fell ill so she had to come to Cotonou but then the Togo borders closed and she refused to go to Mumbai. However, she later realized that there was no other option but to go to India as it was becoming more and more difficult for me to cope with not only the time difference but studying with no physical textbook, that caused my eyes to often turn pink from staring at the screen too long.

Music kept me sane and helped me block out everything happening around me. I forgot about the stress of IB (though I know next year will be worse), the problems of the world and then it was just me. Besides music, my friends and I met up nearly every two weeks. Physically having a conversation has never been more important. I learnt that taking advantage of opportunities is great but everything has a cost in the end.

My flight to Mumbai was on the 2nd of September 2020, and I reached safely. I am currently quarantined at home with nothing to do but study and miss my Rocky. Sadly, it is back in Cotonou without me. However, I shall bring him with me to Mumbai as soon as I go back home.

For now, I have to settle with daily photos of him, while trying to settle down in Mumbai. No matter what, I will miss home, my friends, the food, and the culture but for now I just have to accept whatever comes my way. I just hope with my fresh start in Mumbai, people accept me the way people in West Africa did, and respect my ethics.



WHY BAN A BOOK THAT IS ABOUT BANNING BOOKS?

By Ananya Pathak, Grade 9

“If they give you ruled paper, write the other way.” —Juan Ramón

The quote that sets the tone for this book, is in itself a bold statement—perfect for an even greater book. ‘Fahrenheit 451’ by Ray Bradbury is a dystopian novel that has come a long way since its first publication in 1953. Set in a future wherein the reading or owning of any literary work is illegal, it is a gripping tale that follows the inner turmoil of Guy Montag as his quest to discover meaning in his dissatisfactory life leads him to question whether the answers may lie in the very objects he has been told to burn all his life. Going against the law, he starts to hide books—and he watches as they set fire to his life as he knows it.

Ironically, this book has itself been banned several times amidst public outrage—but it still remains to be one of the most acclaimed pieces of modern literature. A brilliant read for readers who look to analyse society and the role of those who think outside of its barred boxes.

While Fahrenheit 451 was in most ways, disturbingly similar to the world we live in today, the dystopian world in ‘The Giver’ has gone through a complete evolution. In a bad way or a good way? Well, that’s up to you to decide. Jonas lives in a perfect world where the concepts of war, hunger or pain never bother anyone. Like all other citizens, he only desires to play a cooperative role in the community. But then he’s selected as the Receiver of Memory.

He discovers that there is so much more shrouded under the layers and layers of a perfect world. And these dark lies—they will take him on a mission to find the truth. With a younger protagonist and easier-to-read language, this book was originally intended to be a children’s adventure novel. The author Lois Lowry writes in the Author’s note, ‘I sat down in 1993 to write an adventure story...somehow, unintentionally, I tapped into something that fed a hunger out there.’ It is, in a way, just like any good ol’ dystopian novel with its deep thought-provoking interpretations of concepts like herd-mentality, societal norms and suppression of individuality. Needless to say, this book has also been banned often.

Why is it that dystopian books more often than not find themselves to be a target of censorship? Is it that we haven’t learnt to accept others’ opinions? Is it that people cannot handle the self-realisation? Is it that we, as humans, are terrified of our own imagination?

The answer is yours to discover. Though keep in mind—these books are not for the faint-hearted nor the simple-minded. No. These books explore the nightmarish world that is—although depicted in the future—a warning sign of our own growing reality.

QUARANTIMES

By Devika Mehta, IBDP-1

Did any of you ever wonder this day would come? By “this day” I mean the day when I’d start learning the most eclectic things; from cooking to minor household repairs. On some days, I feel very grateful for this quarantine period because it didn’t only invoke the inner peace that we all had been waiting for but also let us explore ourselves. Who knew that I’d be planning to stand in the Master chef line after quarantine? Jokes apart, I never imagined I could make crème brûlée at home!

Well, the list of things I cooked at home is pretty “laung”. I started off by cooking ramen for myself and as each day went by I googled more and more salivating recipes to cook. The list continued with banana oatmeal pancakes, Dalgona coffee, pesto lasagne, Aglio-e-olio, cheese burst pizza, homemade bread, Waldorf salad and more. I’m sure your mouth is watering by now so I’ll stop talking about the dishes I cooked while in lockdown.

Moving on, I also discovered I could fix a few minor repairs in my house for which I had to call the carpenter all the time. It’s nothing too complex but it is helpful in the short run. It includes fixing a screw into a wall or rather fixing anything minor that has fallen apart!

Since covid-19 cancelled all our travel plans and quarantined us, I had no option but to take a virtual world tour. Ever heard of it? No? Neither did I. I was randomly scrolling through YouTube and accidentally clicked on a video called “virtual world tour”. At first I was startled just as you are right now. It is definitely not as galvanising as visiting a new country in real life but I’m sure this will work for you in quarantine. The video explores different cities and countries of the world. It virtually shows you what is happening in that country right now, what are the most prominent dishes, cultures, traditions and the people of that country. Fascinating right?

On the other hand, the most non-fascinating thing that I learned during quarantine was to mop and wash vessels. I’m sure most of you must’ve learned it too! How did that feel? Monotonous? If quarantine can make us wash vessels and mop the floor why can’t we see it from a different perspective? Play your favourite pop song on full volume and dance while you mop or wash vessels. Create your own steps like I did and you’ll be able to burn all the calories from the fatty foods you’ve eaten in the past month. The most amazing part about this is that you don’t have to wait for lockdown to get over to burn calories at the gym!

Lastly, the most prominent thing I learnt was to accept and to seek good in things like the Yin Yang symbol. The Ying Yang symbol represents the philosophy that life is incredibly non-dualistic, which means that there is a little bit of something in everything. In the good there is bad and the bad there is good. Who knew something so disastrous would hit the world and put the world into lockdown? Maybe this is a message for all of us to spend this time with ourselves and our loved ones. This is the time to explore yourself completely because you never know, you might turn out to be a great cook like me.

FACT OR FICTION

By Darinn Carvalho, Grade 9

The unknown has always been man's greatest fear, as it's unclear if something or someone may surprise you, and harm you or not. Often people have claimed sightings of the unknown, and there has been no scientific facts to back them up- or are there?

Lana, a thirteen-year old pale skinned girl with light brown shoulder-length hair and big black eyes was born and raised in the United Kingdom. She was visiting her mother's family for the winter. She had arrived earlier and her mum was to join them later as she had some work commitments to complete. Her cousins lived very close to the Canadian border, a small cottage in the middle of the woods. Not only was the place beautiful during the winter- her favourite time of the year with the Christmas holidays coming around the corner- but she also adored the twins, Zeke and Zoe, her cousins, who were a year younger than her and the family's two huskies, Bruno and Spike who never seemed to leave the twin's side unless she was there. They spent many hours decorating the cottage and the tree; sipping hot chocolate on the front porch as they admired the huge conifer trees which slowly got blanketed by the softly falling snow while the huskies busied themselves chasing rabbits.

One day Lana was out with the twins and playing football; she had always been an outdoor person and the bright sunny day was a welcome treat as it had snowed for the past couple of days keeping them locked indoors. Zoe, accidentally kicked the ball over into the woods. "Oh no! Not again Zee," whined her twin. Both Bruno and Spike chased after the ball but stopped at the edge of the woods as the sun had now set and the sky was darkening. Lana whistled for the dogs to come to her and marched them home along with the twins. She took up the task to find the ball all by herself and began her walk into the woods, hoping she would not have to go too far as the shadows of the trees seemed to cover the area making it gloomier than it already was.

A few paces into the woods and somehow, she couldn't help but be terrified of how pitch dark it had gotten so soon. It seemed that the moon too had deserted her when she needed it the most. She again reassured herself that the ball was close, but as the trees swished and eerie sounds of the branches brushed against the wind, the hair on the back of her neck prickled. The dull moonless night was soon accompanied by softly falling snow. She sighed and increased the pace at which she walked, pulling her jacket tighter around her. Juggling her way through the trees seemed tricky at times as they seemed quite keen to grab her. Her heart was beating very fast now in her chest as just when she thought of turning back, she spotted it- the bright green football stuck in a bush. Relief flooded through her as she grabbed the ball and spun around to make her way back to the cottage. But now a new problem arose; she had no idea where she was.

She froze in shock, not knowing which direction to proceed. The trees whooshed around her wailing, as if they felt her fear. Tears began to roll from her eyes. She panicked, and begun to scream, "HELP!!!" "Is anyone there? Please help me..." her voice faded off into the crying of the wind. The darkness had now crept in very silently over the starless sky and even the white coat of the snow which made an effort to brighten the night had little success.

Lana now began to shiver from the cold, which seemed to have crept in through her double-layered jacket, muffler and monkey cap chilling her bones. Thoughts of panic and hypothermia ran through her brain. She picked a direction and walked briskly through the snow which seemed at times to take extra effort to cover up her footsteps. Within minutes she soon realised she had been walking in circles.

Exhausted she huddled under a tree and sobbed. And then she heard it, in the stillness of the dark- a soft voice, very gentle, very reassuring, “Lana! Lana! My baby”. She listened again, “Lan... it’s me. Mom.” She knew that voice anywhere. It was her mother’s. “Mom, is that you? I’m lost,” she wailed. “Don’t worry honey. I’m here. I’m not leaving you alone. Follow my voice...It will guide you home,” her mom reassured her.

Relief flooded through her like a burst dam. She jumped for joy, “Mom. You’re here? I’m coming”. “Come soon honey”, the voice replied.

Lana followed the voice as if in a trance. Within minutes she could see the cottage. She dashed in to find the twins and her Aunt all huddled around the fireplace. They were white with shock. “I’m ok you guys,” announced Lana beaming at them. “I was lost, but guess what? I heard Mom. She led me home.

Where’s she?” They all stared at her as if she was a ghost. “Zoe, Zeke what’s, wrong?” She questioned them.

“Lana, come sit down near the fire. Glad to see you are all right,” cooed her Aunt Jane. The twins rushed to her and hugged her so hard, she thought her spine would snap.

“Guys, I’m okay really,” she giggled. “I was lost but I found my way back. I heard mom guiding me back home. I know it sounds strange,” she continued.

“Lana honey... please be strong”, said her Aunt. “There’s something you need to know. We’ve just heard the news that your mom’s plane has crashed. There are no survivors”.

THE ART OF DECEPTION

By Nayeel Qaazi, Grade 8

Sheldon woke up to the sound of chirping birds outside his window, the crisp sunlight shining through the window and the smell of freshly baked pancakes wafting through the air. Sheldon lived in an old apartment crowded with junk everywhere; he along with his father lived alone here since the death of his mother 4 years ago. His father worked as a policeman for the NYPD in the crime-solving department. Sheldon saw a note attached to the fridge's door saying his father had gone to work. Sheldon had always respected his father being the best son he could, he was always well behaved and also adapted to some of his father's detective skills. He went to find out where his father was currently working and on the way, in the paper, he read the reserve bank had been looted of 25 million dollars worth of cash. The perpetrator had slipped into the vault undetected and taken the money disabling all the electric equipment. It was a thoroughly puzzling case but Sheldon knew his dad would solve it.

He headed towards the bank to meet his father. The vault was covered with yellow police tape and there were cops everywhere. He found his dad talking to the superintendent. His father was happy to see him but at the same time also worried, his hair streaked with grey, his skin glistening with sweat and his eyes sunken by fatigue. He told Sheldon about what a tough case it was and how the crime had taken place.

Sheldon decided to help his father and devised a plan. The robber had disabled all electrically powered machinery and had commenced the heist but what the robber had forgotten to do was disable the cameras that lockers have which are battery operated. With his hacking abilities, Sheldon hacked into the mainframe looking for the battery-operated camera footage but found out it was locked, in frustration he tried every method of hacking but could not generate the password. He went to bed for the night and decided to tell his father the discovery he made.

But when he woke up in the morning he was devastated, with tearful eyes a friend of his father told him how his father had died in a car accident. Something wasn't right. His father was the safest driver he knew and did not drink or smoke. When he went outside to get the mail he found a rugged old black bag. Sheldon was afraid but curious, he slowly opened the bag, trying to resettle his eyes in after the shock of his life. The bag was packed with money down to the brim. There was a note attached which only gave the password to his fathers' computer. Sheldon was mystified, but then everything clicked.

He opened the bank mainframe again and logged into the battery cameras using his dad's password he was flabbergasted! When he opened the recording all he saw was a man in black with a pocketknife Sheldon had gifted his dad for his birthday...

MURDER MYSTERY

By Karan Kulkarni, Grade 8

He stood motionless in front of the corpses. They were dead-his parents, police were panicking as there were no traces of the murderer, and a boy stood-a young, 9-year-old boy named Sam. "Where are my parents? What happened to them?!", screamed the boy. "We're sorry, but they are gone.", replied the police officer calmly.

20 years later,

Sam had joined the police and was working on a case, his boss called him to his office. "Today, we have a new case or an old case for you to work on." "Which case?", asked Sam reluctantly. "The one where your parents had died.", his boss said sadly. "I'll start the case immediately.", said Sam. He walked out of the office, went home and took his flashlight and pistol, walked back outside to start working on his case. He had to head back to the place he hoped to never see again.

It was the evening and the Sun was setting, Sam walking in a deserted sidewalk; not a single car or person was present, there were abandoned theme parks and houses but the building that stood out the most was his old mansion where his parents were brutally murdered. The windows were covered with planks, spider webs were everywhere, all the plants around the mansion were dying. He walked inside the house shaking. Suddenly, the door closed behind him, he was stuck inside...

Inside the house seemed perfectly normal with normal furniture, normal decoration and normal flooring but there was no electricity the house was completely dark -as dark as an abyss. Eerie sounds could be heard; a witches cackle, the sound of flowing air, and the crackling of electricity. He walked further into the hallway and took a right into his parent's room. In front of the dresser stood a figure- a silhouette of something depicting a couple, it was hovering midair and was translucent.

"H-h-hello ,w-who's there?", Sam asked frightfully. The figure is turned towards him and dissipated. Sam stood motionless. It was his mother, but something was wrong; they did not seem human but more like ghosts left to haunt the house. Quickly, he ran out of the house. It was 3 o'clock in the morning. He turned around. His mother was at the door of the mansion, waving at Sam. Sam got scared and shot the ghostly figure of his mother, and ran down the road into an alley. In front of him stood his parents, his parents were holding a knife. He screamed, turned around and walked a few steps. He felt something- something painful in his chest. It was a knife. Sam fell down on pain and anguish. He looked at his mother and asked: "Why?" "...because I like to, I have already killed our entire family just for fun.", said Sam's mother as she walked away.

Just before Sam died, he tried calling the police and left a message in blood: 'Mom killed'. The police had seen the message but Sam's body was never found.

THE BATTLE OF THE COSMOS

By Ishaan Chakraborty, Grade 8

The three military spies boarded the evil crux clan's spaceship. They wanted to put an end to the cruelty of the crux, who were enslaving people to make illegal weapons and spaceships in a hidden factory in the far side of the galaxy. The crux wanted to take down the peaceful democratic government who ruled the cosmos. They needed to find the location of the hidden files, which contain the location of the hidden crux headquarters without being seen by the crux troops. While they were hiding, one of the crux troops suddenly saw them. "FIRE AT WILL!" said the troop.

"Take cover"- said Granados, the lead spy softly. One of the spies, Rayne, said- "maybe I can take down those 3 daydreaming troops and get their blasters." "But the plan was not to cause any violence"- said Hamrock, the other spy. "We must do this if we are to survive and extract the files." – Said Granados. Rayne swiftly went across to the other side of the room as she stole their blasters. She quickly knocked them down and got the blasters over.

They started firing the blasters, knocking down the troops as they went to the sector of the ship where the files were kept. As they walked through the door, they were greeted by a heavily armed robot who started firing at them like a turret. They were struggling to dodge it. Hamrock flipped over its head, barely missing one of the blaster shots as he disabled it. They had successfully defeated the robot and extracted the files.

But their mission was not over yet.

"We need to get to the escape pods immediately." Said Granados, as he reloaded his blaster. "Why can't we use the space fighters that we used to board?"-said Hamrock. "They're already on the military base on the planet Kreskin. We have to go there to decode the files." Said Rayne. "We will have to take down many troops to get to the escape pods. They are on the other side of this massive spaceship."- said Granados.

The spies rushed out of the room, taking down every troop and getting closer to the escape pods by every second. It was a humongous ship. They started to get exhausted, barely being able to take down the troops, until they reached the escape room, filled with troops with blasters at the ready. "What are we going to do?" Asked Rayne. "Relax, I came prepared for a situation like this." Said Granados. He pulled out a metal rod and made a crack in the glass window of the door. He flung a grenade into the room, killing all the troops.

They opened the door to see that there was lucky, one escape pod remaining, getting into the escape pod, plotted the coordinates for the planet and left the ship. The planet was fortunately close to where they were. The pod was slightly small, but it fit all of them inside. They had successfully extracted the files and reached the planet.

THE MYSTERIOUS CREATURE

By Zhiaan Lakdawala, Grade 8

Once upon a time, there lived a boy who's name was Kunam.

Kunan was a very obedient and an innocent guy.

He loved to eat food. He always dreamt of food lands and imaginary lands.

He didn't even question his parents and so didn't they.

They all lived as a happy family

Kunam had a friend named Kisam. Kisam, on the other hand, was very naughty.

Kisam invited Kunam one day, to play in the woods.

Kkunam asked "Why the woods?" Kisam said "Just come"

They both went along. Kisam started to hear noises and was scared but didn't want to tell Kunam as he knew he would F-R-E-A-K out.

So he decided to not tell Kunam. They both continued deeper into the woods and finally reached a seashore.

Kunam told Kisam "Now what". Kisam replied I don't know where we are. I thought we were going to my tent which I had set up with my parents"

They then saw a bottle floating toward them.

Kisam opened it, there seemed to appear some type of creature.

At first they thought they would run.

The creature uttered in a screechy voice "Don't try to run from me, you won't be able to. I am here to help you and I may grant one wish.

Kunam replied," Ok then, grant me an island of food. "

They both entered.

The creature along with Kisam and Kunam vanished.

Two years later they both were found dead.

THE SCARLETT ROSE

By Saaya Patni, Grade 8

“Well I can’t believe we’re actually doing this”

“Oh come on Olive, I’ve been waiting for this my entire life! It’s gonna be so fun!”

“Fun!? Lily, we’re moving into a house in which the previous owners have died!”

“Yup and their gonna come and haunt us. WoOoOo” I said as I laughed. “Are you serious Lily!”

This is my best friend Olive, prominent thing about her is her bright, wavy ginger hair. She’s has a really nice persona to be around when you wanna have some fun, yes she can be a bit lousy sometimes but I feel contented when I’m with her. We’ve been best friends since second grade and till now even after graduation, we don’t hesitate to make fun of each other. We recently decided to move in together into a new home, a new city and maybe get a job.

“ok, so we got everything?”

“Yup”

“Toothbrush, toothpaste, biscuits for the bus, charger, water bottle-”

“Check, Check, Check and Check, we got everything, just chill out, we’ll do great”

We broke into a laughter that was very soon silenced by the thought of saying goodbye to everyone else. As I looked outside the window into the caliginosity with pops of bright stars... taking in the most I could, cause I knew, I knew nothing would be the same. “Everything’s gonna change now isn’t it,” I said turning to look at Olive. She wrapped her arm around me and replied, “yes, yes it is”.

The next morning we left.

I felt happy but at the same time I panicked, it felt surreal, deep down I had a feeling something wasn’t right. But I wanted to do this my entire life, what could possibly go wrong? I told myself.

When we reached I saw a row of 5 bungalows and the centre one had dark brown oak wood, grey pipes, empty pots that had almost cracked to pieces and a few trees around. “Well, this is gonna take some working on” sighed Olive. “You know what they say, don’t judge a book by its cover,” said a young man who was walking towards us with a leather briefcase, wearing a brown coat and a hazel hat. He shook hands with us as he said, “allow me to introduce myself, I am George White your neighbour.” “Oh hello Mr White, I am Lilian Swan, you may call me Lily,” I said. “and I am Olive Sanders, nice to meet you, Mr White.” “A Mr White may I ask you where the rest of the neighbours are?”, asked. “oh yes yes, the 2 houses on the extreme left are actually empty, the one on the right is mine and the other one on the left belongs to Liam Martin, he likes to keep to himself. Well, I got to go now, bye ladies.” “Bye Mr White,” we both said. “come on let’s go,” I said dragging Olive with me.

A few days passed by, Olive and I were really happy, everything was going well until one day a local Gardner got murdered. The police came in for investigation and everything fell silent suddenly. That night Olive and I were eating dinner when she said, “you know they took Liam Martin for investigation.” “Liam Martin? Our neighbour?”, I asked. “Mhmm”, she said “I mean he does have a criminal record and not to mention the knife he got murdered with had the same weird sign that was found on a diary in Martin’s house.

When the cops took him they said that there had been two other murders the day before we came and had the same weird sign.” “Well I heard about that and I think we should go back to our parent's house for a couple of days till this gets sorted,” I said. “But the murderer has been caught and he’s in prison so I don’t think that’s necessary.” She replied. “But he hasn’t yet admitted it and besides I’ve already booked the tickets. By the way, did you get new roses?” “Nope,” she said as she stuffed some bread in her mouth. “Well, how is that possible in the morning they were red and now they’re white,” I said startled. “Well, you must have seen wrong,” Olivia replied. “That’s not possible I remember when we heard the gardener’s scream I came running down and the roses were red!” I panicked. “Honestly, I think you need some sleep and so do I. Good Night.” “Maybe your right, Night,” I said getting myself together.

That night I couldn’t sleep, looked at the Roses, and to my astonishment they were Red again. I immediately got off my bed to call Olive when I heard a loud AAAAHHH scream coming from Olive’s room. I ran toward her room screaming her name, as I entered I saw her lying in a pool of blood, stabbed across her stomach, but luckily still breathing. And next to her lay a knife with the same sign on it. I called the 911 as tears ran down my cheeks, I was devastated. When the doctors and cops arrived they took her to her parent's hometown hospital and told me, “don’t worry Miss Wright, Olive is not critical and will be fine in no time. Liam Martin has escaped prison this night, but we assure you will find him. We recommend you to leave first thing tomorrow morning and we have an officer that will be by your door making sure no one enters. If you need anything you can inform us, thank you.” With saying this they left.

With relief, I packed my bag for the next day and sat on the couch in the hallway. I called up my mother and told her everything. She said she’d come to pick me up the next morning and bid me good night. I looked at the roses, they were White again. I sat wondering, why would the Roses only turn Red when someone was getting attacked?

There was something wrong, I felt the police had picked up the wrong guy if Martin had escaped prison why would he come back here? I tried not to think about it but something was off. And plus I felt like I had seen that sign on the murder weapon. But where? I tried my hardest to remember, and then it struck me like a huge lightning bolt, I quickly called up my mom and told her “in George White’s briefcase there a small brown diary on the day we first met him and it looked exactly like the one in Martins house! That’s it is calling the cops. I got up and to my fear, the Roses, they were slowly turning Scarlett, next to them lay an oval wall mirror with Gold plating, I looked through it behind me and it was him, George White.

THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

By Sunaira Jain, Grade 8

It was a dark, withered midst of a gloomy winter's month. Sloppily hunching across the tattered footpath, Shazana drooled off into captivating daydreams with that forlorn smile reaching the tips of her vivid chestnut eyes, enveloped by her long eyelashes. Ah, she imagined, what wouldn't she give to live a seemingly opulent life. Suddenly...striking her oblivious state...BAM!

Shazana miraculously found herself bearing a dark, deserted night. A somewhat engagement of danger wafted around in the heat of the night. Thud, thud, thud, rain poured heavily, and the cloudy sky seemed an unusual shade of grey. Shivering in the moist atmosphere, Shazana was highly ascertained that she could hear the faint sound of owls hooting and predators growling. Arr! She froze on the spot on hearing the loud roar of a lion, followed by the sudden creak of a bridge. She should have never come here in the first place.

Shazana continued to walk through the forest. After an hour, her search for shelter had started to become extremely frustrating. Her shoulders tipped with fatigue, and her teeth clattered at a rapid pace. Suddenly she was dragged to a lonely but creepy area. Shazana gasped. For right in front of her was a bridge making the same eerie creaks that Shazana had heard an hour ago. A cold hand crept up Shazana's back, and Shazana wheeled round. She came to an abrupt halt. For there was a witch with gleaming red eyes scarier than those of a devil! In a bloodcurdling and raspy voice, the witch wailed Shazana's name out loud. Shazana stood rooted to the spot. Every inch of her body shook with anxiety, and several chills ran down her spine. At that, the witch's yellowed teeth cackled with wicked laughter. Shazana's mouth opened and closed, but silently. She finally managed to stutter, "W-who are y-you?" The witch merely switched her gaze from Shazana to the night sky. Her face creased into a wicked grin. With the snap of her fingers, she conjured up a tornado of burning hot chilli! Shazana's eyes widened with fear as she got dragged into it, her nerves gasping in dread as the chilli powder made its way into her throat. Shazana yelled in excruciating pain...

Suddenly, everything went pitch black. Glass slowly began to surround Shazana, the monstrous voice approaching her, "SHAZANA.....OOO....THE DELIGHT IN YOUR PAIN...HEE-HAA-HAA-HA!" As the scary chuckle ended, Shazana realised she was in a glass ball. Ghosts and shadowy figures headed towards her. To top it off, sharp teeth dug into the back of her neck. Struck with terror, Shazana let out a strident yelp. Yelp after yelp. She banged on the ball's walls, sweat and hopeless tears draining down her panic-stricken face. It was horrifying. Alas, it was then that the amazing part came: her loud and screechy cry shattered the glass ball into pieces! The ghosts began to drift away, and all that was left of the witch was her cloak! Shazana's tired fingers slowly reached out towards the cloak.....BOOM! At once, with a large flash, Shazana was transferred to...wait what....the process ofopening her...eyes....?

Shazana blinked her eyes in surprise, shuddering to think of what she has just witnessed. Ping! Her senses restored back into her overwhelmed mind like a loose screw being tightened. Ah, she mused to herself lazily, must've been the long day that got me lost in this nightmarish mess. Yawning merrily, it was then that her instincts alerted her, and gathering herself up, she walked heftily towards that shaggy loft, a cold dinner awaiting her.

THE USUAL HEIST

By Agastya Chordia, Grade 8

Last year, an FBI agent Dave Parker was assigned for chasing behind the unusual illusionists and thieves. They were Unknown. Untraceable. Nameless. Unrecognized. To the rest of the busy world. Suspiciously, only one of them was familiar, he was a white male, approximately 6 feet tall and a medium build. The Interpol had identified him as Harlow Archer. He was notoriously known for his criminal records. Twenty-seven heist. Jewellery stores. Auctioned houses. Four watch shops. His biggest loot: Van Cleef & Arpels, Tokyo, 577 Diamonds. He was the head of the Heist.

They were named using countries. All wore a plain black suit with a funny mask. They were imperceptibly planning to pull off the biggest heist in human history. Cash over \$3.6 billion. To execute this heist, one had recruited the best of the best thieves and illusionists. They were going to wipe out the tonnes of money on the second Friday of November from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) headquarters in London, England.

D-Day had finally arrived.

They broke into the Bank, by hijacking the truck carrying the rich paper used for printing money. Unknowingly, the security granted the truck permission. They progressed through their Stage 1. Without any haste, all the doors were sealed. The hostages were Panicked Petrified. Frightened.

They were carrying one of the most deadly ammunition and firearms. FBI and the Interpol had surrounded them with the toughest security to escape. There was no chance for them to escape. They drew all the smartphones from all the hostages and cut all the lines of communication. They smashed the CCTVs for safety and privacy. They unlocked the vaults and rapidly stuffed all the money.

Now the prime role of the illusionists has started. They will help to evacuate us from the Massive Bank. They will unknowingly fool the government. This was planned a while ago, there was a tunnel built in the vault 3, deep as 85 feet. Which connected to the warehouse. They quickly put all the hostages to work, they passed on the money to the warehouse. On the other hand, the illusionists were setting the mousetrap for the Interpol, once they enter the bank while they were exiting. From the warehouse, they would take the money to the Island Irneo.

A GIFT OR A CURSE

By Prisha Rodrigues, Grade 8

People call me Mitchell. I was always the quiet one in class. I didn't speak much I wasn't smart either. I barely had any friends, the only ones I had always ignored. I didn't mind though. I liked being alone. It's one way to find inner peace. I wasn't that fond of people either. People were always scared of me....maybe its because whenever someone is about to die....I see it.... When I first started seeing the visions it was with my mother. Around 6 years ago, when I was 10, I was playing with my mother. It was just like how any other day would pass. After I had finished my homework she would play with me for an hour. We were playing with my dolls when I saw it.... I was standing in the middle of a road, I saw my mum crossing it. She was wearing her work clothes. It was probably 9 in the evening from the way the sky looked. I suddenly got chills down my spine breaking into a cold sweat. Everything felt so off. Suddenly from a distance, I see a truck coming straight towards my mom. After realization kicked in and tears filled my eyes making it hard to see I shouted "Mum! Behind you!" Although she couldn't hear me. "Mum! Mum! Mum!" I screamed again, struggling to hold back my tears. No reaction yet. And she was gone before I knew it. The truck struck her everywhere, splattering blood. I was no longer able to hold it together. I could feel tears rolling down my cheeks. I have never before felt so terrified. "Baby! Honey! You're okay!?" I snap out of my vision to see my mother staring at me all over her face with apprehension written on her face.

We were back in my room. It's like nothing had ever happened. Everything was back to normal. That evening when she left for her shift at the hospital she was hit by a truck. That was when I realized what my power was. I guess seeing that much gore for years does something to a person. I saw my best friend die in a car crash, a classmate killed himself, my old English teacher pass for natural causes and a lot more I wouldn't like to mention. I got really distant from people after that, afraid of what other dark stuff would be waiting for me. I avoided everyone, my father and other family members.

The worst part was that.... I was never able to save any of them... and I hated myself for that. One day I was walking down the school hallway. A soft breeze was blowing past my face, It was about 5 pm, I took a deep breath and stopped. I saw another vision. I looked around to see who's death I was about to witness. Although this time I saw no one. I was alone. I heard gunshots followed by screaming. And saw another me get shot. I guess it took me a while to process that because the minute I snapped out of it, it was too late. "During a school shooting 3 kids were killed Amanda Rose Sarah north and Mitchell Winchester" I saw the news as my father wept. I still can't get over the fact that I'm dead..

ARE ALL ANGELS LOST?

By Agastya Chordia, Grade 8

Since Childhood, I was in love with angels, Their snow-white wings, shining halos, gold crowns, beautiful flowing white gowns. I knew angels didn't exist but just imagining about them was so beautiful.

Running late for collage "I am sorry" or "excuse me" was the only thing I kept saying until CRASH!!!

"Oh god! I am sorry" I quickly picked up fallen books. "Hey! CAN'T YOU SEE WHERE YOU GOING". Hearing that I looked up, saw a beautiful girl just like an angel, but her personality did not match one bit. I apologized once again and ran to class.

At Lunchtime, I heard a commotion and saw the same girl whom I had bumped into. She was yelling at the old janitor and hitting him with her handbag. I ran over and pushed the girl down, as I helped the janitor to his feet. What a mean girl I thought!

After school while walking home, "Come here," said a voice in the alley. I turn to see if anyone is there but nothing. I see an old tattered book on the ground. I pick it up. "Angels and Devils" I whispered to myself.

Flashback: mom used to read me angel tales.

Why was the alley dark and cold. Yikes!.

Reaching home, I picked up the book and started reading, "Chapter 1- Angels" I was drawn into the book with its illustrations. All the while I was telling myself 'but angels don't exist'.

I went a few pages ahead and Chapter 2 – Devils. I found weak spots, powers, curses etc. Chapter 4—half breeds". Suddenly I realized the book won't let me read or turn a page. A bit shook I hit my bed.

At the café, I open the book. "Why won't you let me read". I saw a small lock holding those pages together it looks as small as a key necklace my mom gave. I remove it from my neck and put it in the lock

CLICK!

The book opens to a picture of my mom, dad and me. It was my parent's backstory. I read more, it shows my mom in Angel form with beautiful wings but my dad had black wings which looked like a raven. WAIT! MY MOM WAS AN ANGEL AND MY DAD WAS A DEVIL!

So I am an Angel-Devil mix. Like How??

As the night falls further, I am tortured with evil dreams with dark forces killing Angels. I go back to sleep, after a few minutes, I see a girl killed by a dark figure. And then it went all black.

The next morning, I saw the same person who died in my dream on TV, with the anchor saying that she was murdered I dropped my glass on the floor. This kept happening every night I saw the same thing kill people, the next day the news said they died. It hurt to keep seeing it happen.

Is there a meaning to what I see? Is this world being rid of good people who are really angels? Maybe it is the sign of times that we are becoming more devilish in our nature and killing our own planet. With so much hatred, mistrust and war around us I ask myself - "are all angels lost?"

HOW I WAS FOLLOWED BY A MURDERER

By Avaneesh Nagare, Grade 8

During the mid-1960s, I was in my end year of junior high school, which was the start of the summer break. The first day of summer vacation began for my sister- Celia, my friend- Jolie and myself- Antara. We decided to go on a car trip to Nashville's national park, the three of us had hopped into my sister's old SUV.

It took us 2 hours and 30 minutes for the arrival of our destination, during the car trip, we were being the typical girls of our time: talking about what we'll do in the summer break, sharing our secrets and listening to the trendy music of the time- disco. Since we wanted a break after our painful exams along with the fact that the park is beautiful in summer, it was an obvious decision to visit.

The first thing we noticed was not the greenery, nor the beauty situated in the park, but instead the openness and silence. It was almost too silent. There was an eerie, uncomfortable atmosphere created when we arrived, which gave us a sadistic feeling. It was also obvious from our expressions that an unspoken mutual feeling of regret was among us.

We parked the car in a deserted parking lot which was. We scouted for a good place to set up a picnic and enjoy the park. The camp was set up right at the mesmerising pond, our plan was just to stay for a couple of hours, talk, gossip, and eat till our heart's content. We were enjoying the fact that summer had just begun and a pleasant mood was in abundance.

Unlike Jolie and my sister, I had visited the park several times with many others, it was often filled with people and peace. Except for this time, it was less peaceful; and strangely, not as crowded as it usually is, which was strange for a nice day.

Anyways, there we were just being us and enjoying whatever we could, until... I noticed a man; across the pond. I tried to stay engaged in our conversation but I couldn't help notice the man; he was well dressed, good looking and yet I had this bad feeling about him.

A couple of minutes go by and I lose my focus on the man. I was trying to get another sandwich out of the basket and when I looked up I saw him... except this time he grinned at us.

It was such a sinister grin...and his dark gorgeous eyes had beauty written all over them but bad luck as well. He was rubbing his hand against his chin thoughtfully, almost telling us... 'I see you'. Unlike last time I wasn't the only one acknowledging his frightful presence.

'I'm getting scared, let's move our things. Pack up', I said. However, Celia convinced me that I was overthinking and we decided to just stay, as it's a public park and anybody can come.

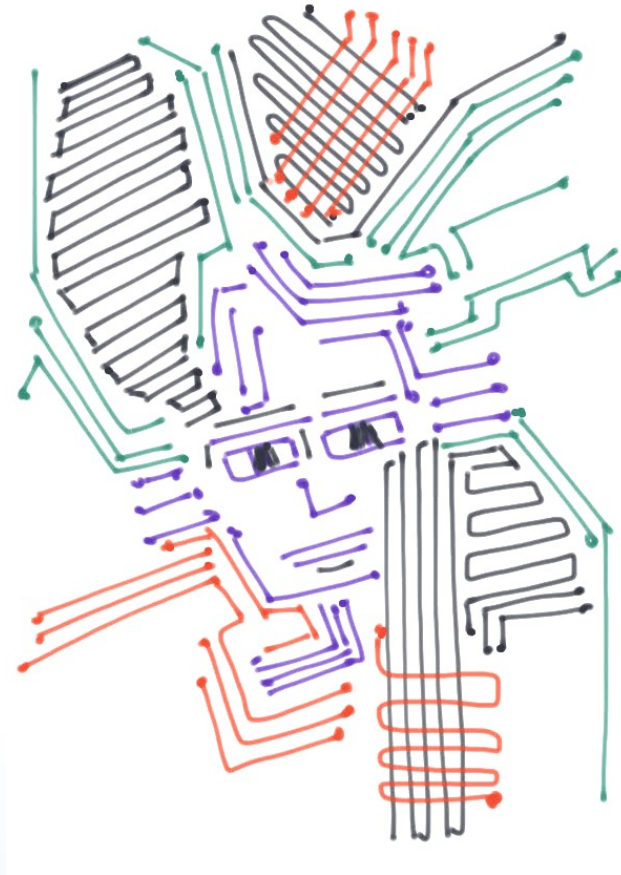
I go out and about my day, keeping an eye on him but having fun until... I notice that there's a slight intentional movement. My eyes- subconsciously by a command from my instincts- dart across the pond.

He wasn't there.

Suddenly I see the man, he's walking along the pond. It almost felt like he was coming towards us. With command but softness, I pointed at the man. We all agreed something wasn't right and that we should move. We packed up our things and started moving back to our car. As we were walking to the parking lot I could still see him, walking towards us and even a fool would know that he's bad news. As we gained speed so did he. We quickly trashed everything into the boot of the car and drove out.

He lost us, then...we saw a car coming from the parking lot- old, yellow and a lot like a Honda, following us. My sister Celia steps on the gas pedal for dear life. We sped out as far as we could and parked in a petrol station, to our relief the car passed.

We drove out of the petrol station until a policeman stopped us and informed us of a serial killer named Adam Stam-...well dressed...good looking... and had an old yellow Honda.



SCIENCE



SPACE EXPLORATION: IS IT JUST A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY?

By Sahir Devraj, IBDP-1

For centuries, space has been the final frontier for mankind. In the 1950s, this frontier was within our grasp when the Soviet Union sent first an unmanned satellite, then a dog named Laika and finally a human being into space. The United States landed a man on the moon, and the space race was on. However, when the Cold War between the two superpowers died out, space exploration was no longer a priority. It may sound hard to believe but it's been almost fifty years since a man walked on the moon.

So why have we given up on what was possibly the greatest endeavour of mankind? Well, some people believe that space travel was always a very expensive proposition with astronomically low returns. Instead of trying to discover what lies inside a black hole, they argue, we should be trying to find solutions to the problems we have down on Planet Earth - famines, droughts and poverty. We should use our limited resources to study the climate-change crisis on earth, not the atmosphere on Mars.

These are all valid arguments no doubt. However, I believe that we cannot give up on space exploration; it is essential for our advancement as a species. Space exploration has helped advance our understanding of the universe, scientific knowledge that may one day lead to discovering valuable resources and harnessing new forms of energy. Space programs have led to technological benefits such as GPS navigation and LEDs, as well as medical advances such as MRI scans. And it has also helped us understand and find solutions to the issues that our planet faces today.

A considerable portion (\$2 billion) of NASA's yearly budget is spent on earth science: the study of our planet's interconnected systems. NASA's network of satellites can provide us real time information that measures precipitation, tracks dust storms and can even look into the eye of a hurricane. This information can help farmers living in remote areas and also, over time, help us understand changing weather patterns and find a solution to the ever-growing problem of climate change.

Apart from this space exploration can help us discover natural and mineral resources to sustain the future of the human race. Instead of depleting the Earth's finite resources we could look to other planets. Today, startup businesses such as Planetary Resources are proposing schemes to mine asteroids for rare raw materials. Who knows, they may find new additions to the periodic table unknown to modern science, with properties beyond our imagination.

Space exploration has indeed been a giant leap for mankind. Over the years, NASA has invented many new technologies for use in space. These have been released to the general public through the NASA Technology Transfer Program and have had a huge impact on the world. From enriched baby food to improved radial tires, NASA's innovations transform our lives in unexpected ways. NASA scientists have helped develop lifesaving heart pumps and artificial limbs, while also conducting research to cure diseases.

One of the major issues of the current world is that people in remote areas do not have access to communication technologies. This is where space technology can be of great help. Internet companies such as OneWeb have plans to send hundreds of satellites to create a network providing high speed internet across the world.

As the example above shows, space technology is not limited to pure science and has practical applications which are being exploited by entrepreneurs. Elon Musk's SpaceX has plans to launch commercial flights into space. Its goal is to enable all of us to become spacefarers and multi-planetary citizens. Its sights are currently set on building a self-sustained settlement on Mars. Although these plans may seem unrealistic, Musk thinks of them as a necessary 'giant insurance policy'. If an asteroid crashes into earth tomorrow, humans can avoid the fate of the dinosaurs by moving to other planets.

You may still take a chance and say that you don't want your tax money wasted on space exploration. Even though the money spent by just NASA may look like a huge sum (\$18 billion), it's actually comparatively small. In Americas huge GDP, 18 billion totals up to around half a percent! Hardly a dollar from an American tax payer goes towards NASA.

Finally, one of the most important reasons: we are curious. As Stephen Hawking once said- "We are, by nature, explorers." Since the dawn of time, humans have sought knowledge about the world they live in. We know extremely little about the universe, and now that we have the means to expand our knowledge, we should not be content to live in ignorance. To quote the famous astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, "the day we stop exploring is the day we commit ourselves to live in a stagnant world, devoid of curiosity, empty of dreams."

INGENIUM: THE ENGINEERING OF A WORLD

By Shiv Vale, Grade 9

A world of spectacle. The shower of light amidst the black tunnel. The dust settles today. The storm brews.

We see, over the course of a week, the brilliance of the human race flood up and as the gates open, the world as we know it ceases to exist.

A new one takes its place. One in which humans remember last week's humans like they remembered Neanderthals.

Human genius knows no bounds; statistically, the lowest (and sparsest) IQ is 120 and it increases by the day. Each new day sees a new Einstein: but never by name. The ideas are endless and just as deep: poring over Doctorate Theses in Our World will do nothing to help comprehend their's— half of it might be negatively useful.

The first target: a solution for COVID-19. Billions of able minds work together and divided to ensure they eradicate it in (literally) billions of different ways.

Next, the playful minds wander beyond prehistory to Make the World a “Better Place”. They are able to race ahead, literally and figuratively, by conjuring up mechanisms of creating Perfect Life— A Small Step from Genetic Modification, they called it.

Finding Biology too limiting, some simply harnessed the dead matter to make dead, thinking Artificial Intelligences— Artificial Intelligences integrated with Quantum Computing to properly cripple Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle: a foundation of Modern Physics (they solved it within hours as well, of course).

Projecting their ideas onto thin air, though, was their first step with the invention of proper holographic technology in day one.

And naturally, all of these things had approximately an average of 10^9 different variations and methods of performing the same task: so much so that it would take a plurality of years to optimise them— leave it to the market forces!

Terra also seemed too limiting. It is Anecdotally proven that Intelligence or Strength causes a yearning for expansion. So, we will conquer the star— the Sun. This will probably happen in the next twenty years and will only take that long because we have to settle on a way to do it (it's not as though we can all mine out a planet!) or simply eliminate all others.

Contact with Extraterrestrial Lifeforms appears upon the horizon.

Within a century, we'll be Interstellar if not Intergalactic or Inter-universal or some other “Inter”- once Someone dreams up a method of creating Wormholes or something beyond Our World's imagination.

So, let us take a look into the life of Someone... or at least their parents who live now.

The city of Rome. One in which the humble Habilis and Callidus will parent the Paradigm-Shifting Ingenium in a decade.

But right then, they lead sufficiently intellectually engaging lives. The former a passionate problem-solver and the latter a fascinating inventor. Their families contain a set of geniuses who would be marvelled at today and are unbearably commonplace in Their World.

Callidus begins the day at office—the solution to how to maximise solving time? Sleep at work apparently—waking up to a desk full of unsolved Mathematical, Scientific and Logical problems. The entire day is spent analysing, dissecting and killing the problem—the unsolvable, million-dollar problems from That Time (et cetera). The last half an hour: solving the problem of how much she is paid which, at times, is immensely tedious work which is better left to the assistants and all for the triviality. Sleep patterns have been optimised too, of course.

Once in a while, the stupor is exited and it is realised that the world has changed: there are innumerable more facilities to optimise work, such as systems to regulate the environment based on an automatic, nigh-perfect, analysis: an invention of Habilis.

Habilis who has much more technological access than Callidus.... due to his profession. Beginning at home, he zips into work with a personal transporter. Within a day, the change to the world is equivalent to that of the inventions first quarter of the 20th Century; solving problems that have plagued (figuratively and literally) our world for decades: *seeing distant planets, for example. Breakthroughs are sprinkled throughout the day.*

But of course, this is the life of everyone. It is not the life of everyone. Everyone finds a different, surprisingly effective, answer to the same problem. One can have a quarter million options for daily activities and a trillion more they didn't know of at a spectacularly minuscule monetary cost however a towering intellectual one: simplification is not a problem Callidus (or anyone) deals with. This displeases many clients: something the social Habilis sees.

Habilis enjoys roaming around, conversing with loved ones, some of these conversations (to his utter astonishment) go like so: “Did you not prefer your old life?” “What?! Absolutely not.”

“Well,” shrugged his fellow converser, “It was simpler.”

“So? This is better.” “Simpler is better for me.” Leaving him agape.

This particular converser wished to act upon his belief. A million people did. The world was a confusing, bungling, ordered, Kafakaesque mess. The world was a maze manufactured by the inhabitants who did not want to get out while they themselves could not enjoy this supposed wonderland. The ridiculous flood of new updates causing indecision and erratic outdated—25 years in a day—such that the jobs of their peers was an enormous irony—jobs which the millions could not have. No income, no ability to access the development and no understanding of the illogical logic.⁴

All this will drive *the Million outside the urban jungles into the recently-abandoned rural areas to begin their own communities. The settlements are much simpler. Yet much richer. Where interconnectedness was the norm: not just a peek outside an unbreakable bubble. A haven of preserved bliss: a fossil.*

Imagine *Our World scaled down by 750.*

A more accurate analogy, though, would be native societies outside Europe during the Age of Exploration.

So is this truly the Eutopia I made it out to be?

To add in another wrinkle, read a dialogue within officials:

“Where did we store the samples of COVID-19?”

“With the... MEDICINE WHICH COULD-“ “CONDITION IT!”

-The World Built on Intellectual, Theoretical, Ingenious Clouds.

FRUGAL FUNCTIONAL FUTURISTIC

By Jahnvi Galgali, IBDP-1

Microscopes! One of the most iconic symbols of science! Most view them as these advanced gadgets with which one can study the wonderful world of microorganisms. Some might also consider it expensive. Others may think it is too fragile. Often, these factors form the barriers that separate some from exploring the exciting world of science.

Introducing the Foldscope

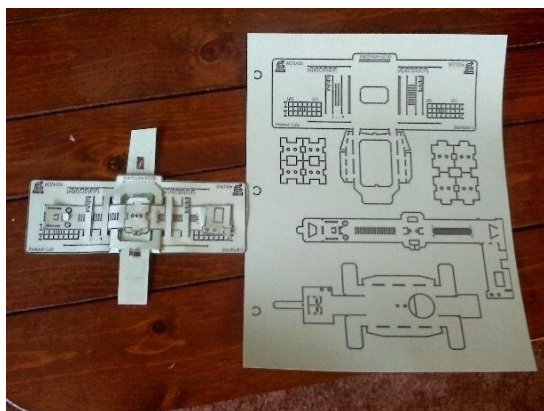
What if you could carry a microscope *in your pocket!* Does that sound like a far-fetched thought? Maybe. But as we know in the world of science, nothing is impossible. The Foldscope is a mini microscope that one can carry and distribute with ease. Another interesting fact: paper forms the primary constituent of this tiny wonder. This fact is particularly significant because paper is an easily procurable resource. It is also eco-friendly as compared to metal microscopes.



An assembled Foldscope

About the Foldscope

The Foldscope consists of a lens, a magnet, and paper. Its simple design and structure is not a hindrance to its quality as it functions just as well as a simple light microscope with a magnification of 140X and 2-micron resolution. One can view bacteria, tissues, single-celled organisms, and even non-living matter such as atmospheric particulates.



Blueprint of the Foldscope

Birth of the Foldscope

Manu Prakash and Jim Cybulski (the creators of the microscope) knew about the lack of proper equipment. Prakash, during his field visit to Thailand, observed that that people were afraid to use a microscope because it was very costly and delicate. Can a good quality microscope reach every person in this world? This question is what drove him to create a cheaper and effective microscope. The ultimate goal was to make the microscope functional and accessible to those who never had the opportunity to satisfy their curiosity.



Capable of change

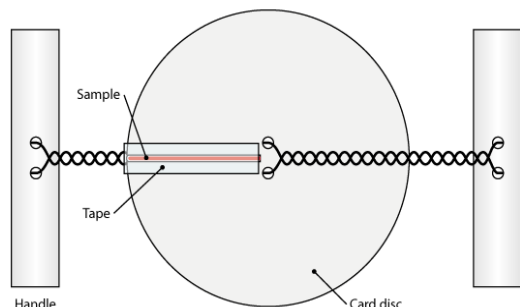
Exposure to **science**, specifically in developing countries, can help people to cultivate an appreciation for it. It would be marvellous to see children from all backgrounds investigating the miniature world of microorganisms. The world would uncover hidden gems if everyone had access to science. These inspired minds could change the world and make tremendous progress for humanity if given a chance.

Children in Uganda using Foldsopes.



The Paperfuge

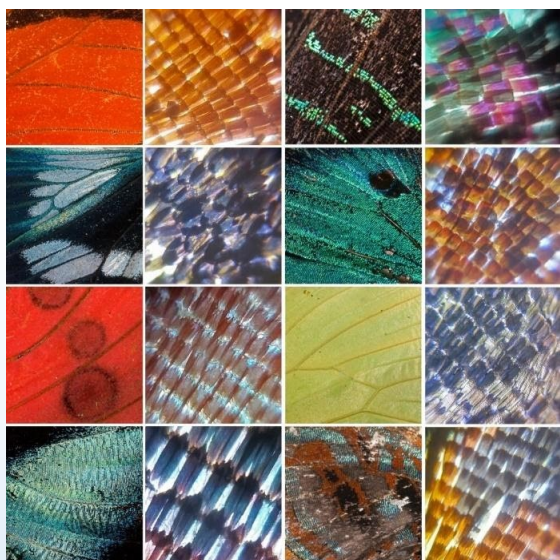
Inspiration by one **can** inspire many because the spark of curiosity always multiplies. Even in this case, Prakash developed a 'Paperfuge' after the Foldscope. The Paperfuge (taking inspiration from a spinning toy) is a cheaper alternative to a conventional and expensive centrifuge. A centrifuge separates the blood cells from the plasma. It enables pathologists to detect diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. A Paperfuge becomes extremely important in situations where a centrifuge is not available. One can save a life with this Paperfuge.



A simple diagram of the Paperfuge

Ingenuity and Science

These incredible inventions are the embodiment of ingenuity. The creations of such complex structures with such simple materials iterate that humans are capable of great things. 'Frugal Science' is a reminder that one can be innovative and inquisitive without using complicated machinery and expensive resources. Prakash describes it best. He explains, "*Science is not in the lab. It is wherever you are. It is all around us. Right around our noses are thousands of phenomena that no one understands.*"



Different scales of butterflies as seen under the foldscope



Recrystallized citric acid as seen under the microscope.

MATHEMATICS -THE OXYGEN OF EVERY ASPECT

By Nihar Gandhi, A-Level

Mathematics, a subject dates back to over millenniums. It is classified as a science, a language and as an engine of education. Every profession or job requires mathematics. Calculations are an important aspect of life. From business to medicine and from engineering to daily household chores, mathematics plays a vital role.

Maths not only involves calculations, shapes and drawings, but also estimations, approximations and statistics. Hence achieving accuracy in this subject is as significant as having fresh air for the body. Firstly, mathematics is necessary for trade and exchange, as all businesses are measured in monetary terms, which involve strong calculations to know the right income or profit earned.

Secondly, maths can be considered as the life of physics, as most calculations use mathematical computations. Topics like calculus, trigonometry are the heart of maths and the foundation of physics. The Apollo-11 mission to the moon was 75% based on maths and physics. Without mathematical concepts the rocket wouldn't have been developed and without maths it wouldn't have been launched. This is indeed an advanced level application of maths in our lives. Wonder how Christopher Columbus discovered America? It was using right maths. Maths involves bearings, which are very essential for navigation and identification of locations. Bearings can also help in calculation of distances between countries just with the help of a ruler and a protractor.

Thirdly, mathematics combined with science is useful for biologist and doctors. It helps them in researching about the effect of medicines and drugs on animals or experimenting with chemicals which helps them attain accurate results. Doctors use the fundamentals of mathematics for knowing the right dosage of each medicine, pharmacist use it to calculate their inventory and patients use it to know how much medical expense they incur each month. Statistics helps them to analyze data with limiting factors and carry out comparisons with averages and variances. This helps the medical department to estimate the number of people getting affected by a disease or the number of patients getting cured by the medicine.

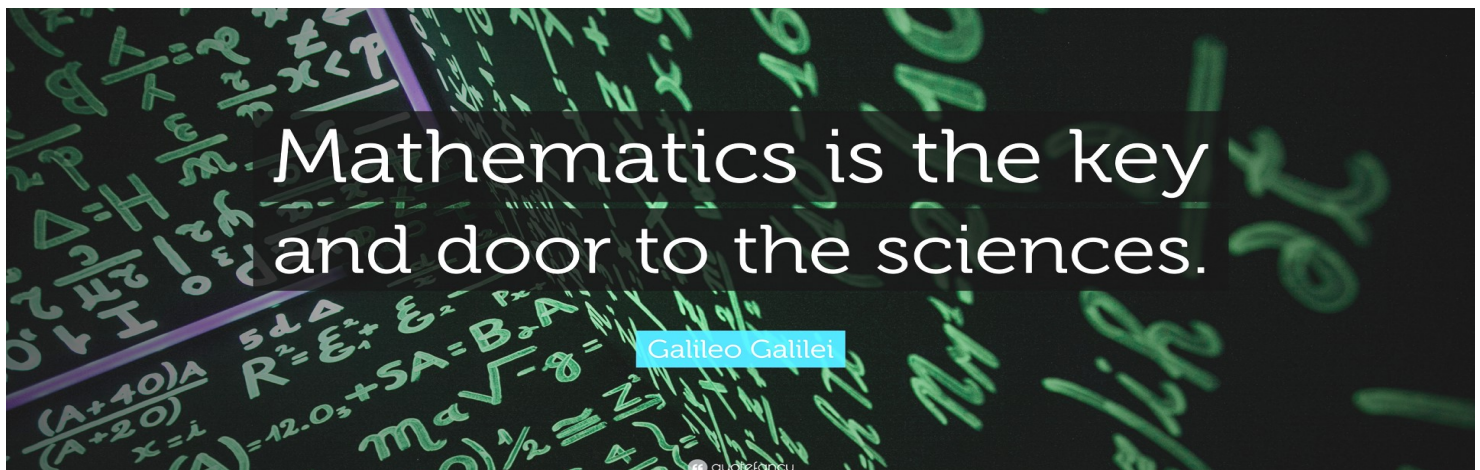
Moreover, mathematics is used in all sectors of the economy and is also important for the government in planning and governance. Economic indicators are derived with the help of mathematics and statistics. Example: In order to know the value of real income per head (Real GDP per capita), the total value of output is required, the inflation rate is required and the total population count is needed. All of the above use quantitative methods. The total population is also calculated using averages of birth and death rates. Government also needs to calculate its budget, spending and borrowing which is all based on this wonderful subject.

Let's have a look at the basic usage of mathematical concepts in our day-to-day lives. It's an essential part of cooking and baking. Right estimation techniques and exact quantity of ingredients need to be added while preparing food or else food wouldn't be edible or flavorsome. For instance, a cake with undercooked sponge-base and too much sugar will never be a preferred choice. Cleaning also uses mathematics. Formulations of detergents and floor cleaners need to be in correct proportions or else they are sure to damage clothes and furniture.

What's more, the houses we live in are also built on the basis of mathematical fundamentals. For example, the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa. It was constructed after several years of planning. Architects made critical use of mathematical concepts in developing the structure, the calculation of floors, the total height and the depth needed under the ground. Constructions of monuments and towers include good application of maths. A builder would never want his or her building to fall within months, because of inaccurate computations.

However, mathematics does not play a strong role in influencing languages and literature, as these fields do not involve numbers. Mathematics may also not play a significant role in the life of a young child as they are not concerned with any critical calculations during their childhood.

After all, we can see that mathematics is an irreplaceable aspect of life and it is required in every task which a person carries out. Mathematics is the seed from which every subject grows and blossoms. Hence, in today's fast-paced world, mathematics cannot just be ignored. So we can say mathematics plays the role of oxygen in everything that we do.



INGENUITY: A BOON OR BANE FOR HUMAN SOCIETY

By Aarav Parikh, Grade 9

Ingenuity is often understood as being highly smart and clever. Yet the true meaning of ingenuity is much wider; comprising of being original as well as inventive.

One example is of Dr Robert Oppenheimer. As he once said, “I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.” He was commonly known as the father of the atomic bomb. What was a mind-blowing invention for one country was a catastrophe for another. The events of its usage called for the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. But invention and innovation are not always bad. Take Elon Musk for example. An inventor who changed the world, with his radical ideas; changing science fiction to reality. He has various companies working on a variety of projects such as SpaceX and Tesla. Both have made extraordinary developments in privatised space exploration and a transfer to both electric and autonomous cars respectively. One of his companies, OpenAI, is working on developing friendly artificial intelligence too. There are considerable advantages and disadvantages, both direct and indirect in both these cases. Still, one is understood to be inherently destructive while the other contributing to the development of human society. And war, is the biggest motivation for destructive innovation.

All inventions sprout from the most basic of ideas or feelings. A feeling of patriotism perhaps, or the “Need for speed”. Companies around the world such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Northrop Grumman have been at the forefront of military development. Planes that currently serve in the USAF, and are developed by the above companies, are the most advanced that have ever flown. This technology at first seems revolutionary, but then evolves into its true right as the most advanced agents of destruction. Take the B2 spirit bomber for example. It is a stealth bomber capable of carrying 40,000 pounds of weaponry, including laser guided missiles, gravity bombs, mines and a range of conventional and nuclear weapons. The F-22 is the world most advanced combat fighter with stealth capabilities, placing only behind the F-35 series which is used for mainly reconnaissance purposes. The targets wouldn’t know what hit them. The F-16 Vector is the most manoeuvrable fighter jet; the only limits to its capabilities are the capabilities of the pilot himself/herself. And one should not forget the atomic and nuclear bombs themselves. This is the destructive nature of innovation.

On the other hand, in my opinion, collaboration and peace is the best motivator for developmental technologies. The International Space Station is the greatest example of this. A marvel of human engineering, achieved solely through the joint efforts of space agencies around the world, including NASA, Roscosmos, JAXA, and the ESA. Another example, as mentioned, is OpenAI. It is simply an artificial intelligence that can be contributed to by people all around the world. An example of one of its projects is Image GPT. This AI has the ability to randomly generate recognizable images, and also to complete half images. GPT-2 is capable of simple reading comprehensions, machine translation, question answering, and summarization. Another project is GPT-3, that is an autoregressive language model with 175 billion parameters. This is capable of generating articles and reports with only a topic provided, that can hardly be distinguished from anything a human has written. And finally, there is the Jukebox, an artificial intelligence that is capable of generating music and rudimentary singing in a variety of styles and genres. All of these are examples of labour-saving programs and that help in expanding the horizons of knowledge and human abilities.

Ingenuity is the root of innovation and creation and like most other things, it comes as a double-edged sword. It comes down to the person who creates, the idea behind the creations and the way in which it is used. May sense prevail

HAPPILY UNREAL

By Rakhi Shah, Grade 8

Life has been an amazing voyage of some glorious and some not so glorious moments too. Currently, I am distorted and abandoned by the mighty world. Me, being an enthusiastic astronaut, I have not had the easiest of journeys. One memory that I truly cherish is worth hearing as this one memory was distinctive from all.

I was venturing through space, approximately 25 million kilometres from my planet when I encountered a solar storm. My spacecraft lost signal as it trembled here and there. I thought we were going to vanish into a black hole! Suddenly, my spacecraft started approaching a random, unknown planet. How? I have no clue. Frankly, I don't remember what happened next but I can assure you that I woke up after a long sleep on a deserted island.

The sun shone like a gemstone, the soft chirp of birds was reverberating in the air. Leaves rustled in swirls of red and gold along with the algal bloom completely engulfing the lake. Obviously, I had nothing with me except for my blue remote users to communicate with my space agency. Thank god I wore it around my neck! On sight was only a small beach with few people. That was the target. I had to reach there, come what may. I broke a log of wood from a tree nearby and simultaneously moved my hands in an oscillatory pattern. After 2 long hours, I finally reached. To my shock, those people were so strange. They all had different coloured skin: some white; some black; some bright; some dull. They had attached some straight, rough things on their head. How uncomfortable! This place seemed to be a total fright!

I marched along the coast finding a way to go to the main city. Eventually, I realised that people over there were so different. I caught a bus from a nearby station and explained to the driver where I wanted to go. I reached the city- centre and was astonished to see the extraordinary infrastructure and advanced technology. They had working robots on roads, people worked virtually(I was still on the bus). After I got down, my heart came in my mouth when I realised my remote was robbed.

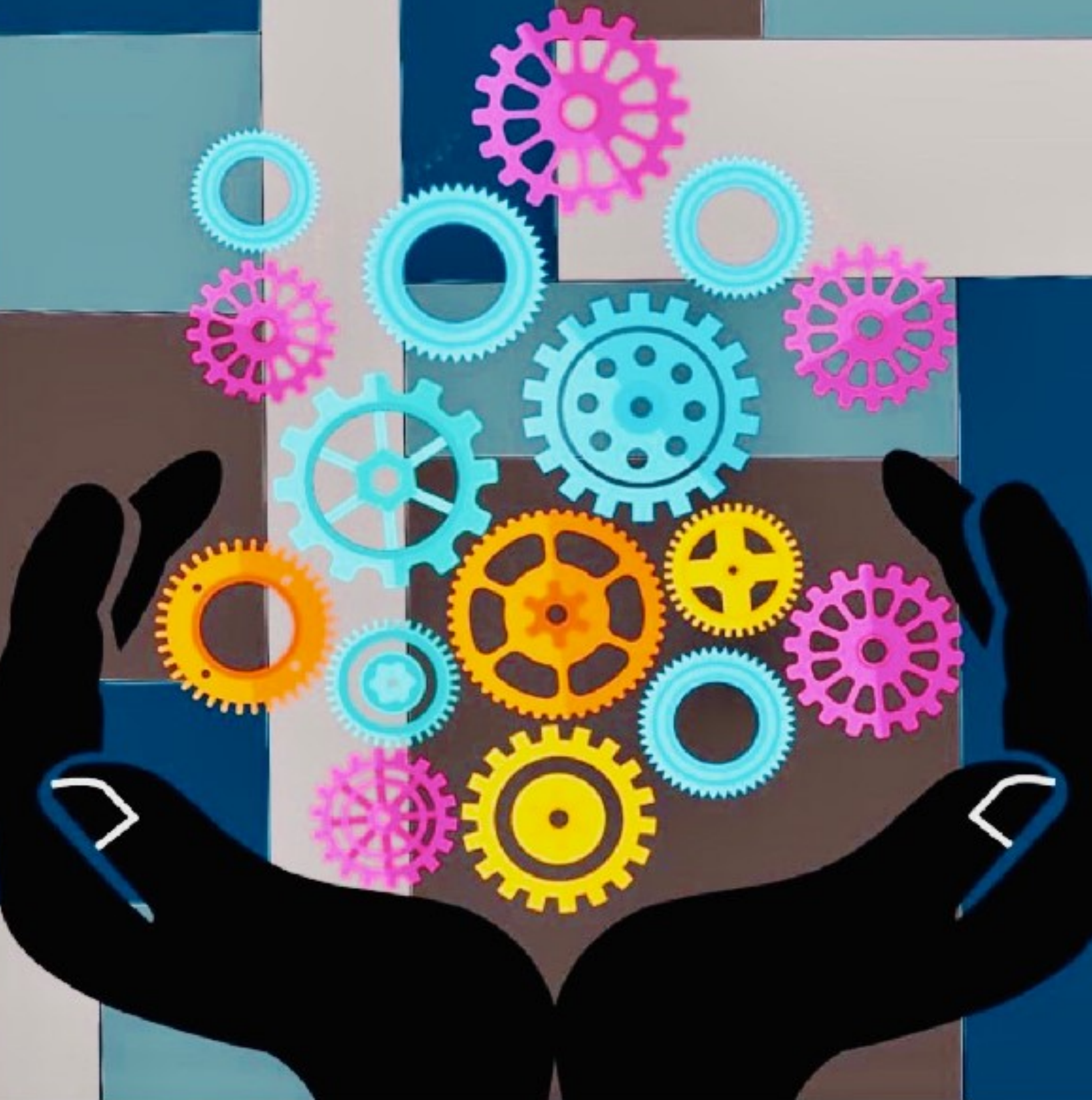
I was walking on the street in extreme tension and worry. A gang of thieves surrounded me and pushed me into a car. They tied my face and blocked my hands with handcuffs. Anxiety paralysed me like a jellyfish sting.

Where they took me, seemed to be a forest. Soft sounds of crackling wood could be heard, a stale smell greeted my nostrils. The outline of a tombstone was on sight and even the moon didn't dare to shine over that mysterious place. I heard someone speaking, he said, " Yes, here you are, I am waiting for you since an eternity. I still have to gain a lot from you." I was speechless.

‘A-L-I-E-N’ he called me.

Ferociously furious, my mom slammed the door for me being late for work.

TECHNOLOGY



TECHNOLOGY: A DOUBLE-EDGE SWORD

By Nihar Gandhi, A-Level

‘In the era of increasing automation and computerisation mankind will be unable to continue earning a living.’

“Hey Alexa! Can you start the dishwasher please?” This is what people say nowadays when they want wash the vessels. However, two decades ago one would get up and exercise his/her body for getting the vessels washed. This change has only been possible due to the technological advancements and A.I developments that have taken place in recent years. All of this has influenced and affected the living of several people in significant ways.

To begin with, the weapon of technology has attacked every industry in the world. It has replaced many tasks carried out by humans. This has been a benefit for some, but a limitation for others. In the banking and finance industry it has contributed to a massive change. Initially people would always need to go to a bank and contact the employees for any work. Now everything is possible using a click on to net banking and online transfers in order to make payments. According to a research more than 88% of registered business use online banking and pay by the RTGS facility. This has reduced need of employees in this sector.

In continuation, the accounting system has also undertaken a noticeable change from introduction of software called ‘Tally’. This software has allowed firms to prepared their accounts easily and quickly instead of maintaining large books and files, which in turn has also led to the less requirement of daily accountants called book-keepers.

Furthermore, the jobs of people employed in the manufacturing or secondary sector have been put near the sword, as machines have replaced a greater proportion of activities carried out by workers in the production line. For example, cars and mobile phones are completely made and assembled by machines where just few supervisors are needed to check on the process. This has made about 48% labourers working in these industries redundant, leading to a lack of incomes. Simultaneously, the construction line has adopted the use of large cranes and mixers, which has reduced demand for construction workers and labourers making it difficult for them to find jobs.

Not only, this has affected the teaching industry, but also has interrupted in the life of households. Firstly, teaching methods vary from teacher to teacher and students also learn in different ways, however the new platform of online teaching and e-learning has eliminated the need of travelling long distances and tutoring, which has resulted in lower need of teachers and also transportation employees losing their income. Secondly, the households who could afford staff for work are no longer need them, because self-cooking devices, floor cleaning robots and self-driving cars have taken out the need of cooks, drivers and cleaners leaving them unemployed and poor.

Thirdly, in places like libraries, a few members of staff would be needed to observe customers and help them, but e-reading devices like 'Amazon Kindle' have transferred readers from libraries to anywhere where they would wish to read their favourite book. In 2016 BBC reported that 'Widespread library closures across the UK have resulted in the loss of almost 8,000 jobs in the last six years.'

In addition, the people employed in transportation and travel firms are also losing jobs as vehicles are being driven by machines automatically. For example, the airline Emirates flies two-thirds of its aircrafts using autopilot which has reduced the need of having two or three pilots, now requiring only. Even more advanced are the railways, as most of the developed nations like USA, China, Japan have their trains operated automatically without motormen, which has removed the want of those jobs leading to lower incomes for those.

A noticeable change has also occurred in the medical sector, as many surgeries are taking place using robots. Even pathology tests are conducted by robots, which has again reduced the need of those skills and making them unemployed. For instance, people with diabetes check their sugar levels at home using the machine instead of going to a medical lab.

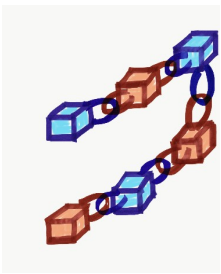
After all, this sword of technological advancements has kept everyone's neck near the chopping block and left them uncertain about their future career and job prospects and has also made it difficult for most to earn a secured living. This change is unstoppable and inevitable created by humans only, thus we can only tackle it effectively together.

BLOCKCHAIN FOOTPRINT IN THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD

By Aaryan Potdar, IBDP-1

When I first learnt about Blockchain, what came to my mind was, of course, bitcoins! Yes, I mean the cryptocurrency that rules the finance market. To add to the list is supply chain and health care industries. Today, even the education sector has joined the league. Why not? The extraordinary benefits of Blockchain technology are crucial as they provide a safe and secure auditable ledger system.

What is Blockchain?



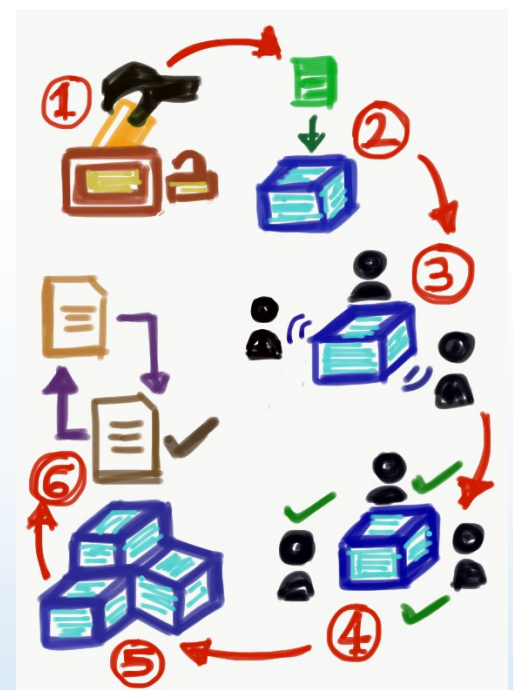
To explain in simple terms, a blockchain is a database shared across a network of computers. The records are bundled into blocks and the blocks are then linked together in chains. Every transaction is captured in a record along with the digital signatures of both parties which are then verified by the computers on the network to check its validity. The record is then added to a block. Now, this might sound simple, but the entire processing involves a tremendous amount of computing power, so much that it is virtually impossible for hackers to play with these data blocks.

The blockchain is a decentralized ledger system open to all; the 'nice guys' and the 'bad guys'. As the system does not know who is trustworthy, it conducts tests called 'consensus models', to validate the computer-nodes that want to make any changes to data records. For example, if a computer wants to add a block it has to demonstrate a 'Proof of work' which involves solving a very complex computational puzzle. This process is called mining and requires a vast amount of computational power. 'Proof of Stake' allows participants to buy tokens and gain access to the network. The more the tokens, the more they can mine.

The Blockchain process

(Follow the diagram for ease of understanding)

1. Someone requests a transaction
2. The transaction is represented as a block
3. Block is broadcasted to all members on the network
4. Members validate the transaction, provide consensus
5. Block is added to the blockchain
6. A single copy of the shared ledger is updated and made available to all network members



Why is Blockchain technology important?

- Distributed
- Data security
- Transparency
- Immutability

When we think of the educational field, we expect an evaluative environment, degree verification, prevention of plagiarism and even admission processes. Moreover, these are currently the major challenges we face with the online education. “In 20 years, students won’t be applying to colleges; colleges will be recruiting students,” says Manoj Kutty, the proud owner of Greenlight Credentials. Greenlight Credentials is currently the only platform today on which users can make their credentials work for them! It might seem surprising, in Dallas, more than 250 schools have already ventured together in the Mastery Transcript Consortium that allows employers and colleges to verify multiple-source transcripts instantly. Now that’s indeed a breakthrough, isn’t it?

Current challenges of the educational sector

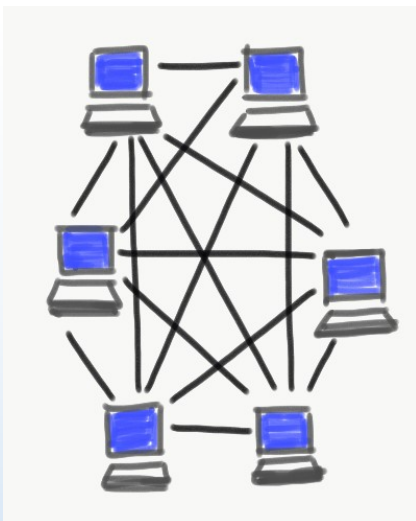
Today universities, individuals and employers face multiple challenges:

- Degree fraud, an inefficient certification process
- Problem translating and comparing the same degrees across different learning institutions
- Validation of skills - no standard guideline accepted by all companies, countries, and institutions
- Paperwork, printing, authenticating, and storing degree and certification - a costly affair.
- Inability to validate skills contributes to the large gap in the workforce
- Lack of educational data protection/security, non-immutable record keeping

Can we overcome these challenges and make it easier to apply for jobs and hire qualified candidates?

Yes! The blockchain-based educational system is a safe, fast, cost-effective way to structure huge unorganized data.

Benefits of Blockchain



Adopting a standardized blockchain to process billions of transactions between devices can fundamentally reduce the expenses related to maintaining large centralized data centres. The decentralized approach can solve a lot of problems regarding security, paperwork reduction and job issue. Blockchain is immutable and so can reduce degree frauds. As lessons and courses can be fed into blockchain using the smart contracts’ capability, it is a sure shot solution in current circumstances of lockdown. Furthermore, it can improve the system's capability of calculating scholarships for students, salaries for teachers, and provide a fair mechanism with complete transparency for funding educational projects.

Are there any educational blockchain projects piloted?

Yes, various educational models that support small-scale IoT systems have been initiated. The most significant achievement of the models is that they not only provide the skills to the learners but also enable them to improve their economical positions. So let us gain an insight into a few of them:

- ‘Edge-Coin’ stores educational documents like degrees and course certificates on its block for third parties that directly confirm their validity. This cuts cost for students since they don’t have to pay for a notary and for institutions it eliminates bureaucracy and paperwork
- The ‘TMP blockchain architecture’ divides itself into two layers: private and public. Private layer stores private and personal user data as well as materials protected by copyright. Public layer stores data, verified for its integrity and reliability by the network
- ‘Scoring System’ service provided by ‘Sony Global’ and ‘TechMePlease’, uses blockchain feature, smart contract, to give grades according to the performance of students.
- Woolf University, founded by Oxford and Cambridge academics, is the first blockchain-powered, nonprofit, borderless university. It relies on smart contracts for a relationship between learners and educators.

Blockchain technology is all set to reinvent the educational ecosystem. However, this will require updates and upgrades to the current processes and our outlook. A significant amount of investments for the initial setup is also required. Additionally, government bodies and private business groups should develop appropriate infrastructure.

Today we need a global involvement to achieve a global evolvement.

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TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION: BOON OR BANE?

By Yuval Gupta, IBDP-1

By definition, innovation is "(the use of) a new idea or method" however, it is so much more than just that. It's pure human creativity, imagination, and ingenuity. Its empirical proof reason and proof that man really is the greatest of all animal species. Mankind was able to evolve from a savage living in a cave to sitting upon its very literal and metaphorical throne because of several billion innovations throughout the last thousands of years, starting with the innovation of creating fire around 300,000 years ago with the help of merely stones and twigs. For the people of 15th CE, the printing press was one of the greatest innovations, Pencil for the 16th, the steam turbine for the 17th, vaccination for the 18th, electric light for the 19th, an aeroplane for the 20th, and artificial intelligence for the 21st Century. As time has gone by, innovation has kept taking place at a larger scale. Humanity went from something as small as a pencil to something as advanced as a talking robot, which can comply and carry out tasks much more accurately, efficiently, and quickly than humans. In fact, these robots can perform activities, which would be simply impossible for any human unless he or she dons a red cape and flies across the Atlantic at supersonic speeds!

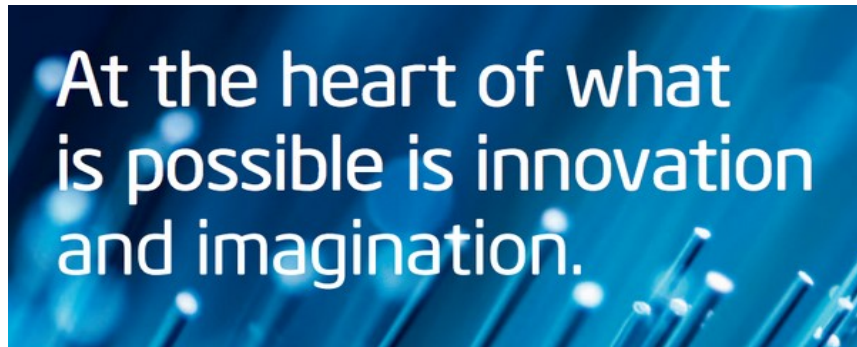
In 1956, it took around a forklift and way too much of manpower just to load a 5 MB IBM hard drive, weighing over a ton, into a truck! However, today, an 8 GB hard drive disk weighs only two grams and is the size of a quarter or stamp! It is innovations like this, which have allowed our smartphones and smart-watches to exist.

To be honest, I cannot even imagine waking up one morning without having my phone to scroll through the news on New York Times application, watch movies on Netflix, chat on Instagram, click pictures using Camera application, listen to songs on Spotify, etc. My whole life revolves around my gadgets. I can do anything and everything I want to do or achieve if I have my laptop, phone, and a good internet connection. In economics, we learn about needs and wants and we always classify 'food, water, clothes, shelter, and electricity' as needs but I challenge anyone to prove me wrong when I list my technological devices as necessities for survival in the modern world.

Obviously, these technological innovations and advances have made our lives much better and can be considered a bane, however, the fact that these devices have become a necessity shows our dependency on them. And this problem of dependency on technology is ever-increasing, which has been specially accelerated due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, many countries have enforced lockdown and enforced protocols, which has stopped most basic of daily activities such as going grocery shopping to the nearest supermarket. Due to this lockdown and concern for oneself and loved one's safety as well as growing fear have caused people to switch to something known as the 'online world'.

In this 'online world', grocery is ordered through Amazon, school lectures take place on Zoom, office meetings are conducted on Microsoft Teams, friends interact virtually on House Party, and even the dogs are walked by drones! While many believe that the innovation of new technology is the only pleasant outcome and a direct result of this COVID-19 pandemic, I believe that this is very far from the truth.

If anything, there was limited innovation or development of new technology. In fact, the development of pre-established technological ideas was sped up. Therefore, we have access to technology we would not have access to for probably another half a decade. This has turned out to be very beneficial for us in the short-term but the long-term effects still remain anonymous as this so-called 'innovation' has made us rely way too much on technology. The idea of humans buying drones to walk their pets seems convenient but is also a sign of increasing reliance on technology for basic human tasks and daily-life activities. Businesses too in fact have now seen the limitations of labour and, invested heavily to switch to the capital-intensive structure. That can be disastrous for an economy and daily-wage workers. Not only that but businesses, which cannot afford the expensive technology would be on the wrong side of this new digital divide. Overall, it seems that many businesses and individuals will experience a disadvantage due to this 'innovation' and the technological advance, which we call an advantage or boon may be actually a bane-in-disguise.



A RETURN TO SIMPLER TIMES

By Rittika Banerjee, Grade 9

Einstein once said, “I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.” Unfortunately, the day Albert Einstein has feared, isn’t a tragic fairy tale ending anymore, it is a reality smacked in front of our faces. We might not realize it at first, however, the world will inevitably open our eyes to the truth. Lately, with the influence of technology in our lives, it has created an enormous dent in humanity. We are worshipping it, relying on it, being a dependent clause in a sentence, which in this case, is society. Believe it or not, this world is now a world of complexity. People expecting the best. Having high expectations without a limit.

Majority of the world believes that technology has evolved to an unimaginable extent and influences human lives positively. However, a tiny minority would disagree and say that the good old times were better. A large chunk of this minority definitely believes that the older times were better when everyone met each other face to face, heart to heart, ear to ear; when smiles on little faces ran around with great joy through the green meadows; when the sky wasn’t filtered with Juno, Ludwig or Gingham. It was those times when technology had not created back pains, sore throats or headaches. The times when communication cured anxiety and depression instead of being the distinctive cause of poor mental health in many.

Looking around us at this moment, we can count more than five appliances that could count as ‘technology’ that most could not live without. Day by day, as more time passes us by, the world becomes more complex with higher standards of living. Gone are the simpler times of sitting out on the front porch on a hot summer day with friends and enjoying an iced lemonade. This is all because instead of using technology to aid us, we have come to rely on it.

In the olden times, technology was much simpler. No complexity. No confusion. In this day and age, social media has created the biggest dent in society trying to live up to an expectation on how you are going to be perceived by the whole world. Teenagers have been pushing themselves to look how they do not look, trying to satisfy everybody else’s non-quota expectation, unconsciously not realizing they are running away from someone, themselves. Technology has made teens outliers in their own heads.

When we hear the phrase, ‘playing a game’, the first thought that comes to mind is a person playing a video game in front of a computer screen for hours on end. Back in the day, games were much less complicated. There was no need for internet connections, no isolation but instead playing a game brought smiles on everyone’s faces, whether it was a family game night or just a regular day of board games with friends. Just playing a card game exercised 26 muscles in our face when we smiled and felt loved.

If you have a dream and goal, the way to succeed in life is to work hard with determination. If you want a proper successful life, you have to work for it, from taking a pail of water from the well or ironing your clothes, how will children of today ever learn discipline? How will they feel love when they are obscured by these walls of separation playing games with non-existent beings? How will their voices be heard when the world isn’t even listening?

This is what technology has done to our society. It has isolated us from communication and love, it has shielded us from valuable life lessons from our family and created a glass wall between us and our loved ones. Technology is way too complex in this generation we are living in compared to when most of us were younger when the sky was blue and was not pixelated. If we choose to keep this up, we will certainly live in a world of idiots, too scared to be heard. So please use your voice to create a difference in this world instead of hiding behind a screen.

INGENUITY DOES NOT MEAN INNOVATION

By Falak Shah, IBDP-1

Ingenuity is defined as the quality of being clever, original, and inventive, and innovation is defined as a new thing or a new method of doing something. Generally, both of these words are used interchangeably, while describing or just simply talking about things, however, this does not make sense. Innovation is a part of ingenuity and ingenuity can be seen as an umbrella under which innovation lies.

Using these words like synonyms had led to the loss of meaning of the words. Ingenuity is a far deeper and more ambiguous word than innovation. Ingenuity covers a multitude of words like creativity, originality and intelligence. In recent days, the smallest innovations or even upgrades on previous inventions are labelled as ingenious and groundbreaking, causing the world to lose the depth of the meaning. While some inventions like GPS, electricity and prescription eyewear could be labelled as ingenious, others such as portable power banks are not ingenious. Recent innovations have become about making life easier. They do improve the quality of our lives and pave the way for future inventions.

For something or someone to be ingenious, there needs to be adversity and clever solutions and ideas to the adverse situation and only then it can be called, “ingenious,” because the solution to the hardship would make day-to-day practices easier and bearable. Something as small as a smartphone upgrade will not make life easier because life was not difficult or problematic before it.

The word ‘innovation’ implies that something is new, although the word ‘ingenious’ is timeless and applicable to any idea no matter how old or new. Many indigenous societies have had many such ideas for making survival easier without modern healthcare. The Tsimane people of Bolivia have figured out natural sleeping patterns which improve the quality of sleep and have been proved to have an overall positive impact on one's health and several other benefits. North American tribes also created and followed a traditional diet, involving all the food groups, enabling their proper growth and functions. These indigenous ideas may seem rather small and insignificant but have contributed a great deal to the health of their people. Even though these practices were discovered and proved to be beneficial, they are still occasionally ignored by many.

These are just some examples of practices that are known and which have been implemented in our day-to-day life, although there are many such similar practices that go unnoticed. This is largely due to the belief that modern technology and methods are more reliable and efficient than primitive ones, and while that might be true for some of the ideas; it isn't for all. The idea of herd mentality could also be used to explain why people tend to trust modern and technologically advanced methods rather than indigenous ones. It can also be argued that in the past technologically advanced methods have never negatively impacted us on a large scale, which obviously improves its reliability.

Ingenuity should not be confused with innovation. Innovation should be looked at as a goal, but ingenuity should not. This is because ingenuity can change from day-to-day as the hardships faced are different every day. The goal for innovation, however, remains the same.

ENTRY 72,389,152 OF A DIMENSION - Travellar's Journal

By Ananya Pathak, Grade 9

Earth Unknown

Year Unknown

Time Unknown

The Changer suffered an untimely malfunction a while ago and I ended up here. The problem is I don't know when or where here is. 'At least there is life here.' I'd thought, 'The lifeless Earth X1# is still number one on the Worst Earths list.' How very naïve of me, as if billions of years of experience have amounted to nothing. After having spent a day here, I must re-evaluate my original impression. This Earth would fare far better without the humans.

On this Earth, there is only one mainland apparently. And the people inhabited here are divided into two classes. The normal class live securely in a completely cordoned-off structure. They don't have a sky; only an artificial sun and a brick dome to suffice for one. Living inside grand castles, there exists a smaller group of even more pompous people who govern everything.

And then here, trapped in between the fortified walls and the shore that leads to endless sea, is a village of the abnormal class. I suppose, now that I think of it, this is fate's cruel way of symbolising the open-mindedness and the vast imaginary expanse of creators.

Ok, let me back up and tell you exactly how I came to be stranded on the outskirts. Now, I normally would not describe myself as imaginative. However, Under the Dome, my basic technological skills would get one Expelled. The worst punishment, only for the most heinous of crimes: showing the desire to create something. Asking for chemical elements is a no-no, waving blueprints in the air is an even bigger no-no and demanding to see a scientist...wow, what was I thinking?

Remember I mentioned those classy governors before—they have a leader too. The only legal creator Under the Dome. She is the one who designs everything. And by everything—I mean everything from a tissue paper to the housing. Each design is then mass produced repeatedly in large scales of single-type commodities. Talk about a monopoly.

So, yes, when I asked for a scientist to aid me with the Changer, I was escorted to this wonderful lady. She smiled down at me, eyes so darkened that I couldn't help but wonder, 'How far down her imagination would have taken her—for her to have decided that others could only be protected by rendering them imagination-less.' Her grand speech voiced her deepest regret that another of their true civilians should be sent Outside, which was followed by a synchronised wave of identical shudders. But it was necessary, apparently, because otherwise everyone would start imagining. People would start talking about mad things like Dimension-Travel! Sure, I'd had my share of people calling me mad for talking about Dimension-Travel when I'd ended up in a universe where the Changer hadn't been invented yet. This was a whole new world altogether though. Trying to attest my honesty and provide evidence was as helpful as a broken compass—every frustrated word that I uttered was quickly shot back against me—and I was quickly disposed off.

Sliding down the chute, I landed on hot sand, looking up to a faded banner swaying between two palm trees. ‘Welcome to the World of Imagination’. At first, I scoffed at the irony. Until I met the people.

This is where it gets even weirder. You’d suppose that the most brilliant minds banded together would surely be able to pull down the dome brick-by-brick and advocate the freedom of living. You’d expect a secret society, a rebellion. Hundreds off people charging and twirling towards the walls of ignorance wielding their infamous paintbrushes and shattering bricks with their high-pitched sonnets, at the very least.

But the outcasted creators were—contented? I know, contented is a rather positive word, but I mean it in the most dangerous sense possible. Oh no wait, I have the right word: ignorant.

Ignorant? You ask. Yes, ignorant. These creators have stopped caring about the happenings Under the Dome. “You can’t flatten a cantankerous dome,” they say and they walk away. They each live contented on their own, each in their own little worlds painted with the bright shades of the sunrise. They are independent, don’t form any connections nor attempts at a society, because quoting another poet I came across, “Society leads to the downfall of society.” They couldn’t care less that behind their backs, there is a wall. And that behind this wall, there are prisoners who cannot see the sun.

It is not that they do not have the skill. They have the profound architectural intellect to build structures the disobey the laws of physics. So profound in fact that I predict that they will be more than capable to invent a Changer in another century or so. It’s certain that I’ll find the equipment I’ll need to fix my Changer and then I’ll be off to the next dimension.

This Earth will never stop haunting me though. It has proven to me that my imagination is a tool. A wicked one at that. I can either use it as a scythe to harvest the Earth’s crop for myself or to cut down my enemies until they are mere brainless, satisfied, carefree people. And that each extreme is equally as treacherous.

I must conclude here, but I shall conclude with a message to whosoever flips through these pages next. Even the frozen dungeons of the underworld can be as warm as a genuine hug, if one can imagine the feel of fire. Even as one is frozen solid.

JUGAAD

By Sindhuja Venkataraman, Grade 9

We think of Elon Musk when we think of ingenuity,

We think of Issac Newton, for he discovered gravity.

We think of Magnus Carlsen, for his intellectual ability,

We think of Stephen Hawking, for his scientific capability.

But we forget our India; we have many a ingenious mind,

Not just Bose and Raman; the entire nation combined...

In merely 450 crores, ISRO's Mangalyaan, a grand success,

Using washing machines, Punjabi *lassi is making progress*.

Tata Nano is now the cheapest car worldwide,

Dabbawalas fill stomachs on their two-wheeled ride.

Even common commuters are ingenious; you know, the 4th seat,

And MittiCool, a refrigerator made of just clay, to keep out the heat.

The Ambanis know to manage financial matters brilliantly,

Shankar Netralaya provides safe eye-care, cost efficiently.

In both Indian cities and villages, ingenuity thrives,

For we *desis believe in jugaad. Jugaad, the spirit of life.*

VOITURES SANS CONDUCTEUR: UN ATOUT!

By Dea Ajmera, IBDP-2

Bonjour, je m'appelle Dea Ajmera et j'étudie à l'école Podar Internationale. Aujourd'hui, je suis debout devant vous pour vous parler à propos de comment dans quinze ans, toutes les voitures rouleront sans conducteurs. Qu'est-ce que vous pensez sur ce sujet? Est-ce que les voitures sans conducteurs seront utile pour tout le monde.

À mon avis, l'innovation des voitures sans conducteurs dans quinze ans seront très bénéfique pour le monde. Dans ce discours, je vais proposer les avantages et aussi un peu les desavantages sur le sujet des voitures sans conducteurs. D'abord, dans quinze ans, ce sera plus facile pour utiliser les voitures sans conducteurs parce que vous n'avez pas besoin de le conduire, il vous suffit de donner des commandes. Alors, les gens n'ont pas besoin d'apprendre à conduire pour se rendre dans des endroits. De plus, ce sera plus facile pour les gens vieux et les personnes handicapés pour voyager autour de la ville car ils n'ont pas conduire. Donc, dans quinze ans, les personnes vieux et les gens handicapés seront aux anges. C'étaient facile, convenant et très formidable.

Puis, on peut arriver à leur destination plus rapide par utilisant les voitures sans conducteurs. Grâce à ce, on n'aura pas à faire beaucoup d'efforts pour maintenir leur vitesse parce que les voitures sans conducteurs sont plus rapide en comparaison avec les voitures qui sont conduites par les conducteurs. De plus, quand les voitures sans conducteurs seront en train de garer, ce sera plus convenant pour eux, et ce sera un avantage pour l'innovation de monde car aujourd'hui, c'est plus difficile trouver un endroit pour garer la voiture.

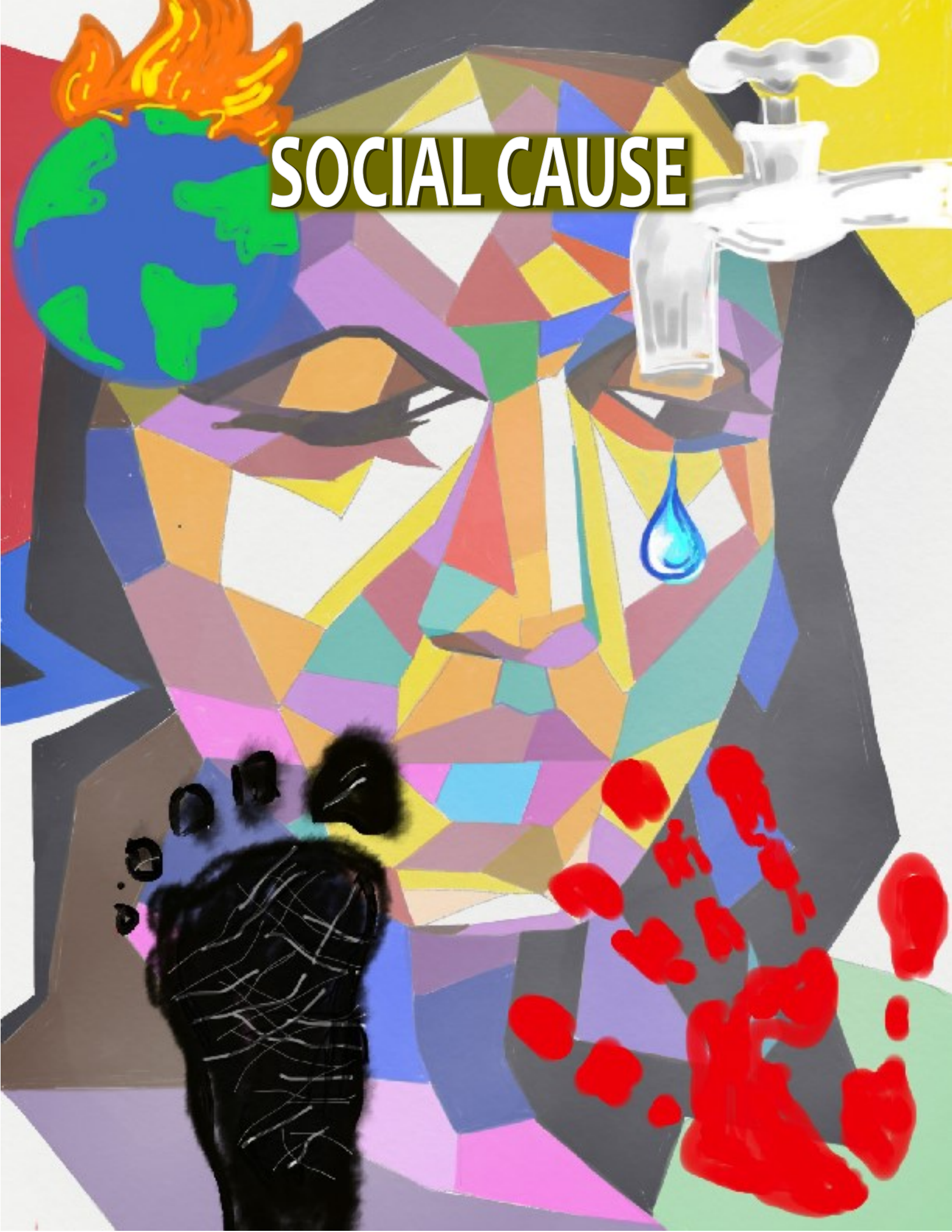
J'aimerais ajouter qu'il y aura moins les accidents car les voitures garderont une distance appropriées. Ensuite, les règles de circulation seront suivies par les vehicules donc les accidents réduiront à l'avenir. Ce sera la cerise sur le gâteau pour le gouvernement dans tous les pays.

Cependant, les voitures sans conducteurs sont très risquées parce qu'il y aura un manque de jugement humaine qui peut être nécessaire dans une situation d'urgence. De plus, ce sera très cher et tous les gens ne pourrons pas payer de les. Puis, le chômage pourra ajouter et l'économies de tous les pays vont souffrir. Alors, il est douteuse que les voitures sans conducteurs fonctionnent bien.

Merci pour trouver le temps pour m'écouter. J'espère que mes opinions seraient utiles pour chacun. Enfin, si nous encourageons les voitures sans conducteurs à l'avenir, nous les verrons.

À bientôt

SOCIAL CAUSE



INNOVATION IN INDIA

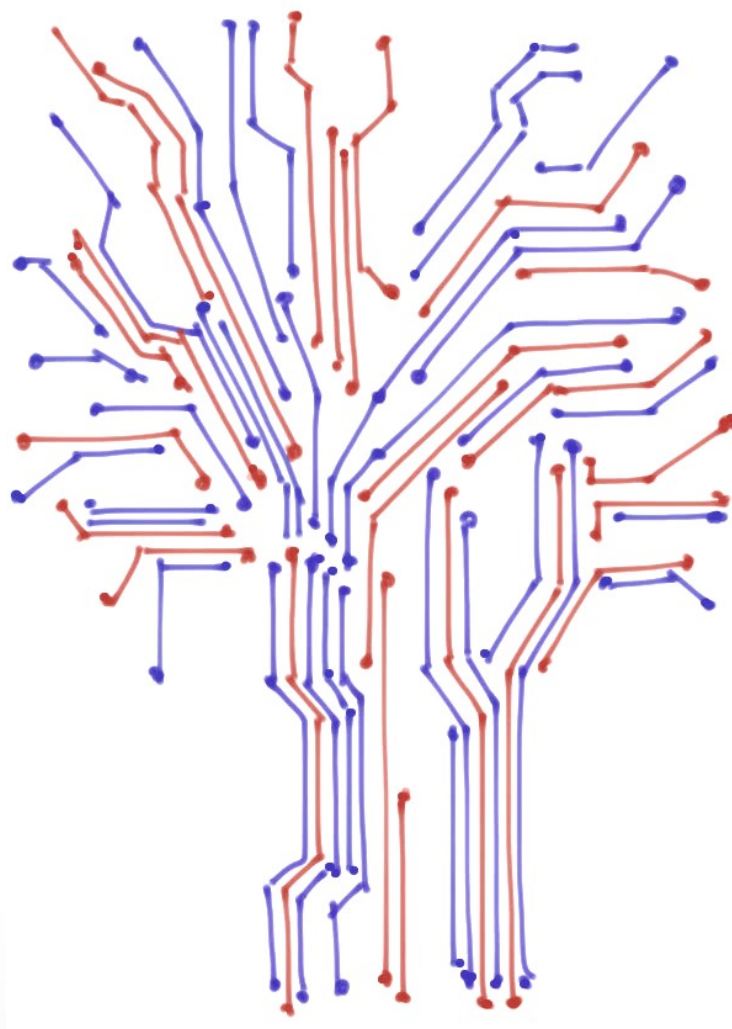
By Kimberly Roy, IBDP-1

Innovation, Ingenuity and Creativity are beautiful things. They spread like wildfire, improving the world while stoking brilliant minds. The success of a creation is not only measured by how well it satisfies a requirement and its efficiency but also by how it enhances the world and to what extent it helps mankind. The most satisfying thing for a creator is seeing how their product has a profound impact on so many lives. Being ingenious means having the ability to visualize, being clever enough to meet the challenge while keeping in mind the interests of the target population. In the social sector the smallest contributions, the seemingly mundane innovations, have a resounding effect.

The Indian Government has been subject to a lot of criticism, but in this article, I want to shed light on one of their successful programmes that have helped many people. The Government has successfully applied some of India's brightest minds for a task that has helped crores of people. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, launched by the ministry of rural development, is a provision to protect the people of India from the horrors of unemployment. It is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. MGNREGA aims to enhance the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing at least a hundred days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It has 13,28,26,376 active workers and more than twice as many total workers. This is an elaborate structure connecting crores of Indian people, gram panchayats, the state Governments and the central Government. A fascinating thing here is that it brought the two major rivals in Indian politics on the same plane, as it was introduced by a Congress Government and continued by the Bharatiya Janta Party Government.

All successful initiatives have obstacles to overcome. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme has a provision of ₹61,500 crore in the Union Budget. Previously, all employment and payment transactions from the Government to the people were done through contractors. However, there were cases in which the middle man faked the workers' identities and siphoned money, thereby cheating the Indian Government and putting the Government at a loss. Because of these leakages, the real hard workers weren't paid well, causing both them and the Government to suffer. As explained earlier, this also caused welfare issues. To counteract issues such as this one, the Government introduced the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme (DBT) in 2013. The DBT is heavily dependent on JAM - the trio of Jan Dhan Yojana accounts, Aadhaar and Mobile connections. The idea and its implementation were aided by a team headed by Nandan Nilekani, the co-founder of Infosys and ex-chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India, the developers of Aadhaar. Aadhaar (unique identity card) itself is an ingenious platform, where 98% of India's population are registered. Under DBT, benefits are transferred directly to the beneficiaries' accounts, duly authenticated using Aadhaar. This removes fake beneficiaries, plugs leakages, and cuts wastage, thus ensuring the effective use of resources for schemes. This also eliminates the need for the middle man and builds a foundation of trust between the people and the Government and promotes transparency.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is an amazing example of ingenuity in the social sector as it checks the boxes of brilliancy, meeting the challenge and helping a huge number of people. One of the most important responsibilities of the Indian Government is the upliftment of its rural population, and that is exactly what it is trying so hard to do, and succeeding in doing so. It is considered to be "the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world" by the Government. In its World Development Report 2014, the World Bank termed it a "stellar example of rural development". This programme has been successfully helping the Indian people since 2005, and will continue to do so for a long time owing to the cooperation between the people and the Government.



UNSPOKEN STRUGGLES OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

By Sachi Chaini, IBDP-1

The increasingly rapid growth of the COVID-19 virus over the span of this year has adversely shaped the lives of millions around the world. Being a part of the modernized urban community, as a collective, we have been safeguarded from more possibly complex issues. The growing threat of the virus however exposes the smaller rural communities to vulnerability. The prediction of a new possible vaccine in the near future overlooks the differences between the socio-economic backgrounds of the 2 communities, holding a high probability that the vaccine is more likely to reach urban areas before the low lying rural areas. The government stands to be more keen on protecting the working population of the country, residing in such urban locations, for the holistic benefit of the country. A great majority of the rural population lack the means to afford the expenses of a new vaccine. The artwork portrays the unspoken struggles of rural communities in terms of the quality of healthcare services they are provided with and the limit of their socio economic background that prevents them from obtaining a vaccine, that once discovered only becomes a basic need.



SOCIETY

By Haana Mehta, IBDP-1

The walls of the society have kept us confined,
But who gave them the rights to define?
What I should do or be.
As right at this very moment, I simply do not feel free.
I am not who I want to be,
I am who I am forced to be.
I might not fit into the regular niche for a girl,
But doesn't every girl have a different swirl?
Every single day, each passing hour, there is a tear in some boy's eye
But he never has had the courage to show,
Because don't you know?
"Boys don't cry!"
Homosexuality, menstruation and mental health are just some of the taboos,
It's almost as if they have stolen our right to choose,
Our partner, our gender or our mood
When it comes to change, they always press snooze.
Thousands of people die due to anxiety
Because of the suffocation by SOCIETY,
But alas, the judgemental society will never change its mentality.
Let's change society's way of identifying,
Let's normalize girls playing sports and boys crying.
Let's normalize mental health, menstruation and homosexuality,
Let's come together and change the mind-set of this damn society.

CORONA CONTAGION

By Kashish Rajani, Grade 7

From Australia to Canada I have been,
COVID19 was no where to be seen,
Until in China one day,
Social distancing is all they would say,
Sanitise and wear masks,
People thought it was a task,
They went out without these things,
And when they returned they were corona kings!
They then realised these were vital,
So they didn't come for my poem recital...
So here's that poem to tell you that,
Stay home, stay safe is the best act!

I SCREAM NOW & HUMANITY

By Mannat Ghumman, IBDP-1

I SCREAM NOW

I scream now,
Because civility is what I unlearned,
I won't back down,
Because the quiet nice kids got the shiniest prize,
I scream now
Because my quietness is my compliance,
I won't back down,
Because the injustice might not be frail,
but the largest empires only needed one voice to break.

HUMANITY

Why is it our humanity only arises out of
social obligation to brutality,
Why is it our humanity only arises when,
the water seems bloody and not when each drop falls,
Why is it our humanity only responds to violent screams
but not suffering silence,
Why is it that our humanity looks for pitying
suffering to justify sympathy.
Maybe because our idea of humanity is flawed.

SEMICOLON

By Aditi Prashanth, IBDP-1

Semicolon;

it is used when an author could've ended the sentence, but chose not to.

The author is you and the sentence is your life.

Mental health matters and it is as important as physical health.

Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you don't know about.

Be kind, everyone's at war.

You are not alone;

Today we choose life,

You don't have to struggle in silence,

it's okay to not be okay, just don't give up.

Healing takes time and asking for help takes courage.

SOCIETAL WOES

By Amyshka Shenoy, Grade 9

So many questions race in my mind, yet not one academical.

I'm told to study all the time and keep lists that are alphabetical.

Our Society created numbers that define ones self worth,

Leaving children who struggle to cope, be left with sorrow and no mirth.

Why must the world spin so fast, why can't it slow it's pace?

Why it is that only a mere 3 must always win a race?

Children cry themselves to sleep everyday,

Wishing so dearly, to make the pain go away.

Because our society is cruel and unjust to be fair,

It leaves one sobbing and pulling their hair.

We study everyday and it's hard, oh it is,

Leaving us students falling in a terrifying abyss,

Hoping that the new day keeps our tears at bay,

And makes the ruthless pressure and studying go away.

Life is hard, we all agree,

But sometimes we feel like breaking the restraints and just being free.

But sadly that day has not come yet,

So a monotonous routine has yet again been set,

This new lifestyle has been hard to bare,

I guess it was too much to ask life to be fair...

WHEN MAN BECAME THE DEVIL

By Harit Paurana, IBDP-1

There was an unimaginable point in time,
When man committed the most heinous crime.
Such hatred towards God's children was shown,
That one man slaughtered millions of his own.

It started with a racial atrocity,
A Jew couldn't attend a German school or university.
Jews and Germans who used to be best friends,
Were now declared archenemies standing on opposite ends.

The Jews were then loaded up on a train;
And sent to the middle of nowhere.
Even though their fate was filled with agony and pain,
Initially they didn't even know why they were there.

On arrival 90% of them were subjected to immediate murder,
While the ones fit enough were allowed to live under forced labour.
They were starved, made to live in conditions that were disease prone,
People who were once hale and hearty were now reduced to flesh and bone.

Thousands were killed daily, families torn apart,
The sight of the dead was not for the faint of heart.
When the Allies were near, they set out on a march to death,
They were shot if they lagged behind or stopped for breath.

I don't understand how one can be so inhumane,
Killing the innocent, finding joy in their pain.
God is one, religions quite a few,
Was it their fault that they were born a Jew?

Just the thought of their sufferings makes my heart pound,
The walls of the concentration camps resonate their pain filled sound.
Learning about this unfathomable sin,
Has shattered me outside, and scarred me within.

The terror filled past, my words cannot explain,
It is up to us to make sure it never happens again.
Even though the human race has come quite far,
It shall haunt us and forever remain a scar.

ALONE

By Mehak Kapoor, IBDP-1

Here, yet not.
Surrounded by so many,
Yet, my brain tells me, it's empty.
I hear the laughter of the students,
Try to convince myself that,
"It's not me, It can't be me
they are blabbering about."
I fade, unnoticed.

So is the thought process of a teen,
like a tornado inside a case of glass.
Simply withheld, to appear as if it can do wonders,
As it destructs itself on the inside.
Maybe it's an exaggeration,
But it felt this way,
To be standing in front of many like you
And still, be talked about as if you're different.

Trust issues, cover the eyes
Like blurred lenses, questioning reality,
And yet I wear them every day,
In the hope of protecting myself,
Only to lose what lies in front,
People who actually care.

It seems easy, to hide it all,

Contain it in,
For no one will know,

Until the glass breaks, and you can't see anything anymore,

And you reach out,

But the world is astonished by the cracks,
And the tornado is destroyed, and the world moves on.

FOR INDIA'S DAUGHTERS

By Vriti Khandelwal, IBDP-1

Does my too perfect to be true attitude
stir you up?
Or do your demons explode
when they realise that
there's a woman rising in you?

Is it my birthright
to cook for you
and do your household chores?
Or for my schools and
colleges on my face
you've shut the doors?

Are you mortified by the idea
that I may walk down the lane
with a sanitary pad?
Or are you holding my hand
so that society doesn't shame you
if I fall for a nomad?

Do you walk me down the deathbed
while I am still dreamy in the womb?
or are you petrified of the dowry
that may cost you
the food you consume?

Are you the one
who will drop your female friend
home tonight?
Cause her short skirt
and her cleavage
are like ATM for them
24hrs open for sight.

Do you dance on the songs
that cannot distinguish
between me and coca cola?
Or have you reduced me
to an hourglass figure
that you now call 'Pataka' or 'Shola'?

Are you the one
who told everyone
to keep their eyes away?
And then did you crush her belief
in a room
where god's feet lay?

Did you walk by her house
a thousand times
for her rejection to you was a crime?
Did you throw acid
on my face
when you saw me the next time.

I had to amend this poem
to add a name
to the list of India's daughters
She was a doctor
who was going back home
following all the rules you made
Seven days from then the
weight of her ashes was
again lighter!

When I finally thought
it couldn't get any worse,
that is when the society came into picture.
I wish they would have
learnt the ethics
about which they gave me a lecture.

Cause the next 'she' can
be a daughter, a sister,
a mother, or just a girl you know
Silenced, stopped and held back
her pride in this society today
is too low!

ANTI-SPITTING COMIC

By Riyan Sawdekar, Grade 6





CURRENT AFFAIRS



PERILOUS DICHOTOMY

By Mannat Ghumman, IBDP-1

Out of 8.7 million species on planet earth, only one is conscious of its reality and questions their place in the universe. It thinks and then thinks again, comes to conclusions only to conclude something entirely different. Sounds familiar, but it is incredibly frightening too because no precedent teaches us how to navigate the power of this consciousness, to find hopefully find happiness.

Happiness, the sole purpose it seems for life, to be happy that is, but it offers its own conditions too, out of billions of ways to 'achieve' it, there exists a unique solution for each individual. Well, we have always had a thing for problem-solving, the history of inventions shows the same. After all, it's only an invention if it increases the quality of human life. And because there is no precedent, this consciousness paved the 'method' of happiness into the understanding of self. Finding its basis, that humans who have the inherent power of consciousness, only be 'happy', if they have questioned and understood each working part of themselves; That is happiness is found on the road to understanding of the self.

Which at first, makes sense, An understanding of the self tells you, your dreams, your weaknesses, your strengths. But that notion has revised to have different connotations today. That is, an understanding of the self allows you how to aptly apply yourself and develop the required skillset for maximum social gain or monetary gain, and therefore happiness. It expresses happiness as a problem to solve and to introspect and then develop skills that help you to monetise yourself, as the solution. But, while an understanding of the self might tell you what dreams of yours are nightmares playing pretend, or bring you monetary success, if this were the path to happiness and what it entailed; the largely successful working population wouldn't categorise them as unhappy, and happiness wouldn't be the unfathomable social construction we see it today as. So, if no precedent exists and our current method is inherently flawed, is happiness then a social construction. But no matter the various approaches one might believe lead to true happiness, it is definitely agreeable True happiness is innate. But, not in the way, it asks for introspection to bring out qualities that you can utilise for social gain. Because an idea of happiness that offers qualitative measurement invites its fluctuation.

So how do we describe the innate nature of happiness then, according to the *Oxford Dictionary of English* "happy" means feeling or showing pleasure or contentment. We can immediately eliminate the word "**pleasure**" from the definition of true happiness. As we have seen, pleasure can never bring a long-lasting sense of happiness, it often brings suffering in its wake. The word "**contentment**" contains some of the same meanings as happiness. However, it's also defined as a sense of "ease." Take a moment to think of someone you know who exudes contentment, Don't they seem unruffled by the winds of life, Don't they seem to have an inner strength of being. This comes far closer to what could be true happiness, not a momentary feeling of joy, but a perspective and a way of being.

However, it could also be argued that without monetary success at least to a level of comfort, happiness in the 21st Century is unachievable. While these arguments could continue forever, discussing the dichotomous nature of achieving happiness, the various faults and discrepancies each method seems to present and how its interpretation and application may not even lead to happiness. Maybe, the modern perception of the definition of happiness is where the fundamental fault lies.

UNSOCIAL MEDIA

By Yanya Bhatia, IBDP-1

Technology has become something which everyone has access to, you will see an eight year old in a restaurant with a tablet in their hands watching a YouTube video because parents are using such opportunities incorrectly to distract the child. Now the question is what happens when something that was used as a distraction once starts to become an addiction?

The main purpose of a phone is to stay connected with your loved ones at all times which usually happens via social media platforms.

What is social media? For each person it has a different meaning— for someone its a place they spend their free time; a platform where they can conduct their work; their life if they don't use it there is nothing for them to do or just a simple mean of communication. Whereas the actual definition for social media are websites and applications that enable users worldwide to create and share content or to participate in social networking. While communicating is the main agenda, it is part of the many other facilities available. The users can learn a lot thru social media regardless of whether it has a good or bad outcome.

As of February of 2020, there are 3.5 billion social media users worldwide. There are hundreds of platforms available for free, however, the main ones that gather the most attention from us is Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and Pinterest (with Facebook being the most popular of all). Therefore, 63% of the worlds population is active on social media when looking at eligible audiences above the recommended age of 13.

First of all, it is worth considering the positive impact of social media, one of the many benefits is that it has the ability to create lifelong friends and being the most easiest way for staying in touch with anyone across the world as well as finding people from different parts of the world. Moreover, it is a platform that allows one to showcase one's own creativity and thinking. One even has the ability to learn new information about the world. Social media also benefits students, for instance it helps to sharpen their thinking in subject matter expertise.

It is extremely easy today to lose sight of the fact that these very tools have created some wonderful things in the world. There were meaningful positive changes happening around the world because of these platforms. Despite of the many benefits that it possesses, what about the actual impact that it can have on a young mind? It has a lot of side effects and an overall negative impact that it can have on one's health, mind, opinions and beliefs.

The tools that have been created today are starting to erode the social fabrics of how society works. What is wrong in the tech industry at this date? One can say that there is a cacophony of scandals, tech addiction, fake news, "they stole our data" etc. Whereas, what about the fact that all of this can have an opposite effect without us understanding it?

Since 63% of the world population above the age of thirteen are the main users, the first thing that comes to mind is comparison. As to how the pictures posted and the theory of the number of likes on a picture can effect oneself mentally. The adolescents start to compare themselves to the image they see on their screens, without even considering the fact that it may not even be the actual reality. Research has found that there has been a gigantic increase in anxiety and depression for American teenagers which began around 2011 to 2013. It leads to the point where teenage girls in America started to self-harm themselves, from 2009 it is up by 69% for older teen girls and up by 189% for pre-teen girls. Including the child suicide rates to have soared by 150% in a decade. Cyberbullying is to be partly behind the rise, along with the youngsters desperation of approval on the “addictive” platforms.

The reason as to these platforms becoming addictive, for example when an individual is bored they tend to pick up their phones to scroll endlessly on these apps, or for instance, when one receives a notification as an instinct one goes to grab the phone to check which causes one to deviate from our actual task. These platforms are free to us, but they are not free— the are paid by the advertisers hence we see their advertisements in exchange. We the users are the product, our attention is the product that is being sold to advertisers, to see how long we keep scrolling.

Our attention can be mined, it can manipulate our thinking; goals; beliefs; values, without us even realising that our minds are being conditioned to believe somebody else’s thoughts and that we are following it and allowing it to continue.

In the future social media will end up dictating our lives, as the youngsters over engage with social media they are foregoing so many other interest and activities, soon it will enslave millions of young adults compromising their freedoms and better informed choices that they could rationally and logically make.

INGENUITY AND INDIVIDUALS

By Vrishin Rao, IBDP-1

Ingenuity. What is Ingenuity? What is its significance in our lives? And why do all of us need to be ingenious? We have often been told that ingenuity is quintessential in our lives, it is of paramount importance to make us successful and is one of the qualities that distinguishes us from other species on the planet. Ingenuity has led to the success of mankind, it has allowed us to adapt to the ever-changing environments. But well... What is ingenuity?

Ingenuity can mean differently for different people; the dictionary definition for ingenuity is the quality of being clever, original and resourceful, many have thought of it to be the 'secret sauce' of human beings' competitive advantage over time. This is because nature won't stop changing and won't stop throwing challenges at us and complexity of these challenges will only rise, ingenuity is the quality that will lead us human beings to a better future.

Ingenuity will allow us to not only solve the problems at a worldwide scale - the problems that the world currently is able to find no solutions to - but also the problems we, as individuals, face in our daily lives. To be ingenious, you don't necessarily need to start off by finding a solution to a global issue, you can simply start by finding a unique and practical solution to overcome a small problem in your sphere of life and gradually work up the ladder and begin tackling the problems that grip the world. For instance, the workers at the Chrysler (a famous car manufacturing brand) plant in Detroit created something known as a 'Happy Seat'. It is a device suggested and designed in part by hourly workers at Chrysler's Sterling Heights plant to allow them to slide into a vehicle and more easily attach the front console to the frame. Prior to the development of this device, such work was onerous because it caused stress to the back and joints. It may be true that this device will not help solve global issues and issues faced by the masses, it is certainly extremely ingenious and innovative. Well, now that you know what ingenuity is and what it is to be ingenious, you must be wondering why do all of us need to be ingenious?

The amount of problems that the human race faces is innumerable, more so these days due to the outbreak of the pandemic. The list of social, economical and environmental issues that we face outstrip our supply of solutions for these problems and this leads to an 'Ingenuity Gap'. We experience the consequences of this gap in our lives - globally, locally and personally - and we must accept that we do not live in the ideal world and everything isn't really alright. Luckily for us, we have the quality of being ingenious. Humans for long have conquered each of their challenges and have collectively worked to evolve into a greater species due to ingenuity. The acumen of some has translated into more pivotal inventions and discoveries while that of others played a slightly smaller role, however, the collective ingenuity was vital to the success of humanity. We need not even look too far into the past to find evidence of how ingenuity shaped the world, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has sparked innovation in a large part of the world and our partial success in the battle is a result of people coming up with pragmatic ideas and translating those ideas into reality.

For instance, the invention of a hygiene smart band by a Seattle based company called Slightly Robot, during the early days of the virus, was extremely creative and played a role in reducing the spread to a certain extent. The band, known as Immutouch, was programmed to alert users with a sound when they tried to touch their face (a precaution recommended by WHO to decrease the risk of contracting the virus). The band might not sound very elaborate or complex with respect to the design and concept but it is certainly creative and a clever invention, it was ingenious of the company to come up with this device and it certainly played a role in combating the virus. Now this provides further evidence to why we need to be innovative and creative - it allows us to tackle the problems we encounter and defeat our challenges - but... why do we all need to be ingenious? That is because, this single device, in this example, is not enough to reduce all the risk of contracting the virus. It was necessary that someone else came up with the idea of a mask, another with the concept of a face visor and someone with the idea of gloves, for instance. There are still other risk factors involved which we haven't found solutions too and this requires our ingenuity, we must be clever enough to come up with a practical idea, we need to have faith in ourselves to implement the idea and we need to be resourceful enough to implement the idea without the need for too many extra resources.

All of us must learn to explore, innovate and simply believe in ourselves because the world needs us. As I mentioned earlier, the problems mankind faces are greater than the number of solutions and for this very reason each one of us must do our bit. We must also strive to outdo ourselves and continue to 'tap in' to our valuable asset of innovation, this is very well highlighted by the Japanese with a simple example. The Japanese import their fish from countries like the U.S.A, Australia and others, originally the fish they would import would often be stale due to the transportation time so they decided to get creative and import the fish in fish tanks. Very innovative, isn't it? Well, it was certainly innovative but not enough because the fish were still insipid due to the little movement in the tanks so they improved even further. The Japanese decided to transport the fish along with a small shark in the tanks, this would mean the fish continued to stay active within the tanks and kept moving. While the shark would certainly eat a few fish, the higher revenue the exporters earn and better quality the Japanese received was far greater than the cost incurred.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that these are only a few of a plethora of examples of people's creations improving their own and other's lives. This should be motivation for you to continue to think out of the box and not conveniently choose the discovered path or turn a blind-eye to the problems around you. And in case you are wondering how to develop this ingenuity, look no further than yourself. Creativity and innovation are present in each one of us and as you begin to try to solve problems and discover the uncharted areas, the innovation will automatically come about because as they say, "Need is the mother of all invention".

BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION AND NOT POLLUTION

By Gresha Chheda, IBDP-1

Much like charity begins at home, sanitation and hygiene starts with You and Me. My vision is to make India a proud country by making it clean. Moreover, my aim is to see this task being completed in the next 4 years. India is a melting pot of culture, heritage, traditions, language also beautiful, having encompassed all landforms from mountains to rivers. If such a country is not clean then it reflects as a colossal shame for its citizens!

Swachh Bharat entails not only ensuring cleanliness, but also a pledge to build toilets, on a national scale, across cities, villages and states. The father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi had dreamed of making India a clean country. The mission has targeted aims like eliminating open defecation, converting insanitary toilets into pure flush toilets, complete disposal and reuse of solid and liquid wastes, spreading cleanliness awareness in the all urban and rural areas. This movement in a chain form passes from smaller groups to larger ones, only then can it be deemed efficient.

Furthermore, the states to have come forward and apply the policy of clean India are Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. However, in order to ensure the country-wide success of this moment, other states must come forward too. "Go green", "Swachh Baharat abhiyan", "Dasra" and many more such movements have already been initiated till date. Not only these but also other campaigns like name and shame and many more like these to help India make a clean India.

Every citizen has the right to sanitation, let's work towards it.

"Sanitation is more important than political freedom"- Mahatma Gandhi

Clean India should be our responsibility. To the end of this article, let us all pledge and join hands towards a cleaner and greener environment. Let us all be a part and make India a clean India and the proud citizens of our country. I pledge to make "My" vision "Our" vision.

THE OTHER SIDE: TALES OF THE RECOVERED

By Sahana Radhakrishnan, Grade 9

In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, all of us have been racking our brains about how not to get infected, but have we given a thought about the inspiring stories of the rebounded? We have only been worried about one side of the story, and this pandemic, like every other aspect of our lives, has more than one side. Why can't we think about the people who have bravely fought for their lives and succeeded, instead of crediting only the deceased?

The stories of the people who have fought the virus and recovered, are possibly the most inspiring stories out there.

This disease is said to prove fatal to most of the population whose ages exceed 60. However, from Kerala, on March 31, 2020, a 93-year-old man and an 88-year-old woman recovered from the virus, namely Thomas and his wife Mariyamma. Their recovery has been dubbed as the rarest of the rare survivors, because they had been suffering from other ailments apart from the virus. They are the oldest Indian couple survivors as of now and have recently expressed their happiness for being able to live another year and see another Easter.

As of October 15th, 2020, Bela Samanta is the oldest COVID survivor in all of Jharkhand, aged 90 years old. Out of the nine days she spent in recovery, two were spent in the ICU. The doctors say that she is rather optimistic and enthusiastic for her age. Apart from the virus, she also suffered from Hypertension and gastro-intestinal ailments.

The young too, are deserving of praise for combating this virus and winning the battle. Hailing from Kolkata, a 33-day-old boy managed to fight off the virus and its after-effects after 30 days of recovery, making him the youngest COVID survivor in West Bengal as of September 10, 2020.

These people are beacons of hope for all the people out there, whether old or young; sick or healthy. We must think like these fighters, who were as brave as the army in their own way and think positive even during these dark times.

CORONA PANDEMIC

By Rahi Shah, Grade 8

In December 2019, outbreak of the Corona virus began,
First in China, then Italy, US and Japan.

From an epidemic to a pandemic in a few days,
Urging countries to protect its people in as many possible ways.

Countries have enforced a lockdown,
Resulting in economy to break down.

Blessed as we are with family time so precious,
Isn't it best to be progressive and at our productive best?

Washing our hands a hundred times a day,
Along with social distancing, helps keep troubles at bay.

Let's not forget our heroes in these times of crisis,
Salute to the doctors, the nurses and the police.

In gratitude we look up to the people who risk their lives,
Selflessly stepping out to save our lives.

As the sun rises bringing with it a new day,
I thank God, for giving us the strength to ward off dismay.

A CRY FOR HELP

By Tia Arora , AS-Level

This is not a cry for help.
Do you hear my whispers through those thick walls?
Do you hear me screaming?

This is not a cry for help.
I am not tired of fighting,
I am not tired of standing
For those who can't,
For those who won't,
For those who need.

This is not my cry for help.
I am not alone.
Do you see us coming?
Do you see us rising?

This, is not our cry for help.
We build each other,
The way you've torn one and other down before.
Do you feel as we feel?
Do you taste the bitter air that we do?
Don't you feel poisoned too?

This, is not, a cry for help.
This is the screech of the undead.
This is the war cry of those we defend.
This is the sound, of a revolution.

Allow me to remind you.
That this is not, a cry for help.
Allow me to remind you!

None of us are too tired to keep fighting,
To keep standing,
To keep breathing,
To keep returning.
With those who can,

Those who will,
Those who give,
Those who need,
With those who love, just as we all do.

Because our lives, are no longer, a cry for help.

There is much to be said about the state of the world.
We will not break.

There is much to be said about the constant struggle.
We will not break.

There is too much to be said.
Too much to fight for,
Far too much for us to hold on to.
And we will not break.

Though when I break,
They will build me again,
As I will, for them.

From the beginning we learnt we were stronger together,
Our hands in one chain.
From the beginning we knew we were meant to be better,
Our hearts in one lane.

The actions we dreamt of,
It's our time to act on.
And we refuse to break.

Now, we will not break.
And we will not cry.
For we are one.
And for this wave of change,
We are the reason why.

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

By Harit Paurana, IBDP-1

Prisoners of ourselves, as we continue to stay,
Life under lockdown struggles to find its way.

Trapped in cages like birds are we,
Wings that fly high, but are unable to break free.

As urbanization came to a halt in its existence,
I could hear the wind blow; the birds sing.
I thought I had found a new, blissful silence,
A silence, that has now turned deafening.

Streets are deserted, shops shut down,
The city of life has now turned into a ghost town.
The pandemic has brought us such a plight,
7 billion people, but not a soul in sight.

This is but a test for mankind,
A time to reinforce the ideas that Darwin left behind.
This is the time to save, but also to give,
The underprivileged need our help in order to live.

While I sit here, penning down my thought,
Out there is a great battle being fought.
For a while our wings shall forget to fly,
This is a new normal, one that no man can deny.

THE LOCKDOWN

By Suhaani Shah, Grade 8

The Lockdown by Suhaani Shah

Entertainment has bid adieu to human kind,
The streets are shut and there's nowhere a car to find.

Prime Minister Mr. Modi says, "This is a lockdown".
Several citizens have faces with a sad frown.

Coronavirus spreads faster each day,
God forbid, if this this curfew has to continue up till May!

Every second counts during this difficult time,
However, I'm glad the Gods' have blessed us and kept us fine.

To overcome this situation, one shall remain positive,
As the demon of Covid-19 rears its ugly head the negative.

These months of quarantine have made us to be productive,
I certainly am utilising my time and not being destructive.

Kids my age are happy as long as they are online,
But, adults have a heap of paper bills to sign.

I understand that the situation is driving us insane,
But, isn't it all to break apart the coronavirus chain?

THE CORONA VIRUS

By Nayeel Qaazi, Grade 8

Fear in the streets everywhere

No one to help and care

This is a rising calamity

Don't show your inhumanity

People losing their sanity

People in pain

Can we do anything

It's almost inhumane

Together we can withstand this you and me

The responsibility rests on the shoulders of thee

Praise the people who are soldiers in this fight

Who work for us day and night

Take care, be brave, stay bright

Be a beacon of hope a plethora of light

Take utmost care of your health

You know there is no bigger wealth

Wash your hands when you sneeze

In the deaths we want a decrease

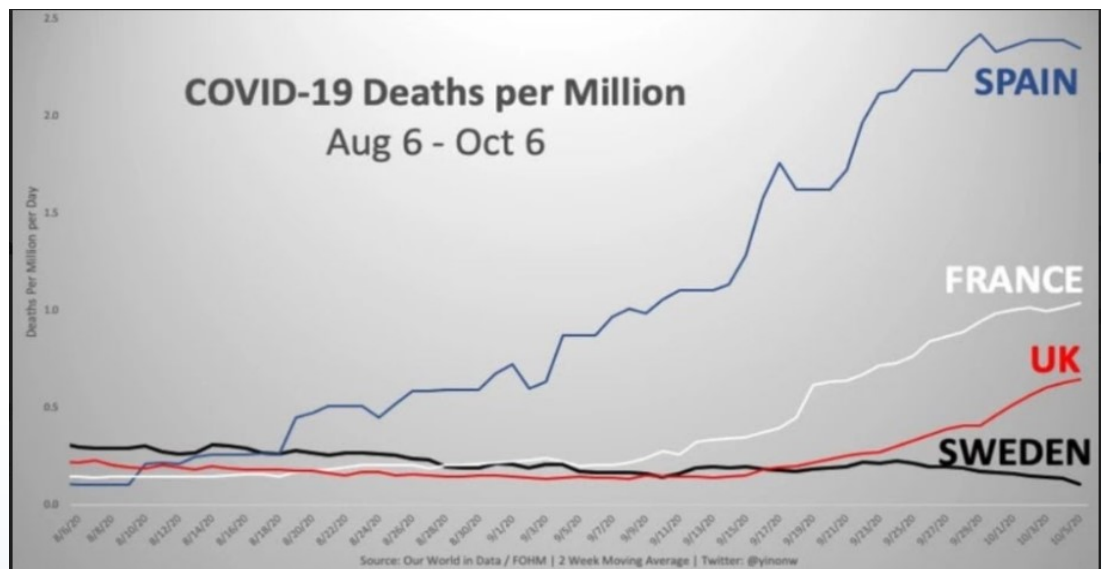
A NEW OUTLOOK

By Dhyana Shah, Grade 7

Taking a new approach to any issue is often something that people refrain from doing, worse still, it may even be frowned upon. But, with the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic, governments have been met with increasing pressure from various stakeholders about how the situations should be handled. Amidst this, President Stefan Löfven from Sweden has decided to rely upon social awareness and responsibility in order to tackle this virus that has brought global superpowers such as China and the USA to its knees.

Currently, the main global agenda in relation to the pandemic is to flatten the curve. Countries like the USA and India, with all sorts of aiding methods to 'prevent' the spread of this virus are surprisingly unsuccessful at this. However, Sweden has not imposed any sort of lockdown on its country and yet are still successful. How? Unlike what other world leaders are doing, they didn't implement the use of masks or a mandatory lockdown and instead began improving their healthcare system and people began incorporating social distancing measures into their lives. A main reliance in this, were the people; the government simply relied on their people's responsibility to follow such a small yet beneficial rule. The government has been a very reliable and helpful source for funding, in the matters of health. Additionally, Sweden hasn't faced an economic slowdown unlike other countries such as India, whose GDP has experienced a fall by 23.9%. Residents are being encouraged day in and day out to get a stable and secure health insurance company. By doing all of this, Sweden has been successful but there are some downsides to this because after all, every coin has two sides.

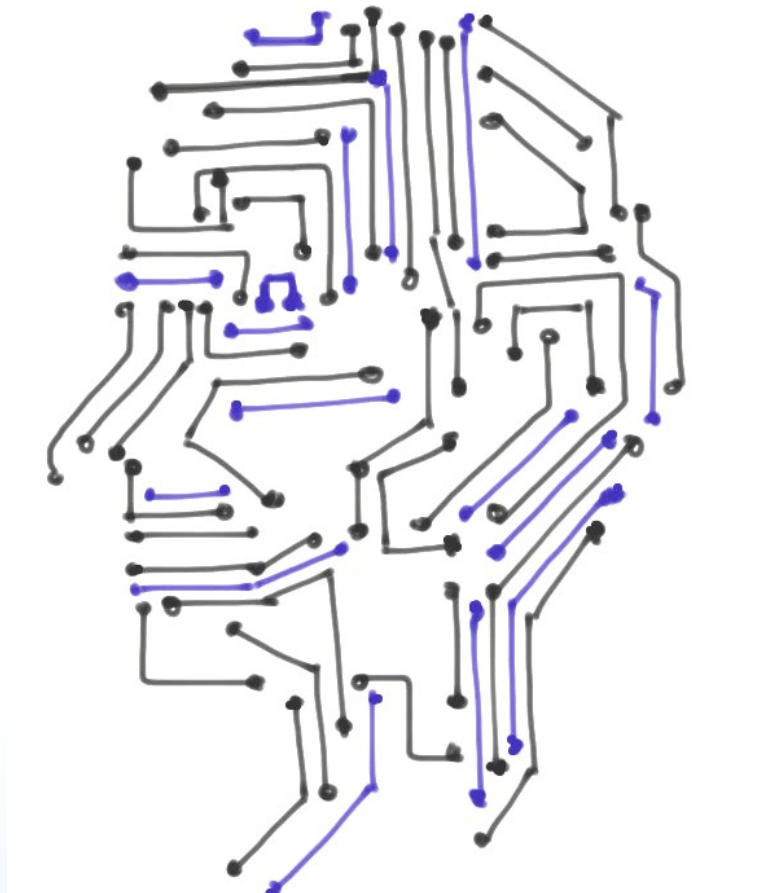
Not imposing a mandatory isolation rule has created a huge impact on Sweden's neighboring countries. This is primarily because Sweden hasn't considered closing their borders unlike places like Denmark, thus causing an influx of people from neighboring



countries, resulting in increased Covid-19 cases. As of now, Sweden is balancing and maintaining a number of 103, 200 cases with an addition of 5918 deaths. They are currently at the forty-fourth position in terms of cases, which is truly remarkable that they have such control over an uncertain situation like this one. They are expecting to continue these kinds of mild restrictions and precautionary measures for about another year.

It is evident through this example that just being a follower to what others are doing isn't going to do much because one could lose their decisiveness. This also signifies that you wouldn't be thinking outside of the box perhaps even inventing. What Sweden is doing is trying to prevent all of this by not 'following' what other global leaders are doing. The message is that if you try something new, who knows, maybe it will work, just like it did for Sweden. They certainly didn't know if this idea was going to work or not, but they made it work by trying their best. Taking this as an example and then using it in our daily lives will definitely benefit us and teach us that we must try things out and be ready for anything that could happen.

Overall, I believe that Sweden's new strategy to combat this extremely challenging time is something that we all should take something new from, we should try to learn new things from it on how we should be in charge of our own methods, push ourselves and think outside the box.





CUISINE & CULTURE



INVOCATION OF ERIDA

By Parnika Saxena, IBDP-1

We hate, we speak, karma, repeat. It never ends till we end it. “Hate speech is not free speech!” Let’s all agree on one fact; we all give voice to this, but we still use slurs so frequently in our everyday lives. Also, we just cannot stop commenting like: “Ugh, I hate the way he dresses”. Is this free speech or hate speech? Hate speech is not just language attacking a certain area of the society or culture like race, religion or sexuality. Hate speech can be words and phrases we use in a generalized manner. It has become deep-rooted in the hate culture, in our own cultures. Except, how does this start and how far does this affect us?

We hate. We let our feelings and emotions get the worst of us. Hate is a strong word to use, but is also a strong feeling. We feel those thin shreds of anger and hatred in us when something or someone triggers us. You know you hate something, when you see it, and your heart beats faster, you can feel the nerves near your eyes straining inside your flesh, and in worst case scenarios, you start to cry.

Why do we hate? Is it based on the perception of the disposition of a person or a certain group of people? No. I think it’s the fear. It’s the fear that an “outsider” will bring danger or threat to us or our loved ones. Or maybe it’s the fear of ourselves, rejecting parts of life that we don’t like about ourselves. Or perhaps, it is because of our past experiences, inner pain, or the societal and cultural pressure. However, there are so many other reasons as to why we use the word “hate” and feel it so much. The discrimination millions of us face, whether it is based on gender, sexuality, race or religion, is usually because of the fear of change in the society and community.

We speak. We gossip all the time, almost every minute of our life! We talk, spread our political views, cultural views, personal opinions and perspectives with the belief that your views will now be understood and made to use by others as well. It is a part of the “human nature and culture”. But how? Technology. No, I don’t blame technology entirely, despite the constant use of algorithms to trick the mind with only one-sided information. I majorly blame the society and myself included. I blame all of us.

We are trusting fake news, creating our own interpretations (due to the fear) and are spreading misinformation through social media or riots and rallies. In doing so, we entangle ourselves in the loop of “free speech” and “hate speech”. It might feel like we are just expressing ourselves, since we have the freedom to, but we end up expressing hate that is driven by the fears, causing conflicts in the society. And how far does all of this affect us? Eventually, it leads us to a rise in war, terrorism, and bloodshed.

Karma. This famous principle has grasped us by our souls. “What you put out will come back to you in unexpected ways.” I personally believe in this principle, and many others do.

Whether we enact a “good” karma, or a “bad” karma in our life, its effect will always return in the same way. As the quote “Freedom of speech does not mean freedom of consequences” suggests, we cannot speak whatever we want, and expect no consequences of it in return.

Somewhere down the line, we are bound to face hate comments, and as our younger generation calls it “trolling” on social media, which has the significant power to make one stand up and start a cult or pack within few hours. And somewhere down the line, we all will face the consequences of the “good” or “bad” deed we have performed or perpetrated. Perhaps instantly, perhaps in few years or even decades.

Repeat. This vicious cycle will repeat, till we put an end to it. If we hate, we speak. If we speak, we face similar consequences no matter what. We wage wars and terrorism, there’s always going to be bloodshed. Yesterday it was for technology. Today it is for religion. Tomorrow, for scarce resources? Supreme power and hegemony?

The Greek goddess of hate, Erida, in the Iliad has been shown as the goddess with anger who is never satisfied, and uses her possession: the golden apple that everyone desires, to drive hate and anger in all individuals. As bizarre as this sounds, the golden apple is amongst us, powering everyone’s desire to want what they want, whether it can be portrayed as technology, religion, power or freedom. She wants war, but we want peace.

Peace can be invoked if we decide to have self-control over our anger and hate, because when we hate, we speak, karma, repeat.

SNACK ATTACK@MUMBAI

By Ananya Pathak, Grade 9

You've just woken up to the sound of honking cars and the phone's buzzing, another busy day in the busiest city of India. There's a quick succession of pings followed by more buzzing as your home screen is flooded by cringy 'Good Morning!' messages. What is more motivating, though, is the time. You really don't want to hear another disappointed 'You're late.' In a rush, you're already outside the door, when there is a deep rumble from the depths of your stomach. There's no time for a full-fledged home-cooked meal at the dining table, unfortunately. Fortunately, the magical scent of tea wafts towards, guiding you to its source. Your saviour of the

day, the tapriwala. And just your luck! One-plus-one! There's another stall right next to it, serving vada pav. While you munch down the deep-fried battered potato sandwiched in a bun along with lasoon (garlic) chutney and fried chillies, you think about its origin. It was invented by a stall keeper selling vadas to the textile mill workers of the 1960s, when he experimented adding it to a pav from a neighbouring anda-pav (aka, the sunny-side-up and toast of the common folk) stall. Naturally, politicians couldn't just let the dish enjoy its popularity and had to get involved, but that simply adds to its rich history. Further back in time, pav came from the Portuguese word pão and even further back, chillies originally came from Mexi—

Right! You're late to work! You chug down the last of your searing masaledar chai and, after making quick payments, walk down to the bustling train station.

At the end of your hour-long commute and another fifteen-minutes of walking, you find yourself in a white and powder-blue room, making phone calls for the rest of the day. Some more tea perhaps? Good thing, there's that Irani café by the corner, where you can get yourself some traditional brun maska along with some Irani chai. A kind-of brunch, I suppose. The café probably exists thanks to the plague of the beginning of the 20th Century that led Hindu businessmen to believe that certain stores were unlucky. Irani businessmen had no such qualms and set up their cafés there. That's why you can now enjoy traditional Irani cuisine, while you admire the rustic décor and chequered tablecloths. That special chai was exactly what you needed to get back to work.

After that never-ending meeting, lunchtime finally arrives at four o'clock. A stop at that favourite dosawala? Sure. The "dosa"s are hardly traditional. I mean, Spring Chinese dosa? As you chew through the crisp paper-thin crêpe-like food and saucy noodles, you listen to your friend talk about Nelson Wang, who is given credit for contributing greatly (and possibly inventing) the "Chindian" cuisine in the late 1990s. That and the immigration of South Indians, looking for work in the 1920s, would have led to this marvellous creation.

Your friend gets a classic Bombay Sandwich from the stall next. To refresh your memory a bit more—and also because you really just want to taste it—you take a small square piece of sandwich from your friend's paper plate. Soft buttery bread meets hot harra (green) chutney, tangy ketchup and slices of veggies (cucumber, tomato, beetroot and potato), what's not to love? First bite in and your mind wanders off to the Bombay of before. The period of emergence of these fusion cuisines.

The good ol' times.

Back to now.

Some more stressful work later, even though you're still quite full, you accompany your friend to a chaat stall. Once you get there, you can't resist. You decide to share a plate of bhel puri. Your work is really getting to you, huh? Maybe, you should drive down to Lonavala this weekend.

Anyways, back to the fantastic food you're eating. Chaat came from the northern regions to Mumbai, where it met Gujarati cuisine and the unique chaat of Mumbai was born. The bhel or bhel puri is said to come from the Marathi word Bhadang for puffed rice, which makes up the base of the dish. A true connexion of every flavour and texture. Sweet, spicy, salty, tangy, crunchy, crispy and soft. All together in one dish. Cue chef's kiss.

Just a little more work later and you're ready to go. Your "9-5" job is naturally much more like a 9-9 job, so when you emerge from the artificial light of your shut-off office, you are welcomed by the darkness of the sky and the glimmering lights of the city. The train ride back home isn't any less tiring, so you decide to eat out for dinner too—because Maggi doesn't really take just 2-minutes.

Buttery, spicy, full of flavour, presenting to you, Pav Bhaji. Go on, enjoy your meal, while I tell you a last bit of history.

Much like you right now, when textile mill workers returned, they were exhausted and hungry. While the humble beginnings of Vada Pav(1950s) stemmed from their need for a quick and cheap breakfast, Pav Bhaji (1860s) stemmed from their need for a quick and cheap dinner.

Now here's where it gets confusing. Some believe that it was invented by their wives who had to make a quick, wholesome meal, while others believe it was invented by food stall owners, who mashed up the remaining vegetables from the day with some spices and later butter. The wives apparently served it with bhakris (a flat-bread made of millet), while the food stall owners served it with the less-healthier buttered pav(bread), which is how it is prepared to this date.

Either way, you can now get a good night's sleep after that filling meal.

And repeat the next day.

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KINTSUGI—ADMIRING IMPERFECTIONS

By Akshita Goyal, IBDP-1

For many centuries zen masters argued that broken or damaged cups and bowls shouldn't be thrown away. Instead, they should be provided with our attention and care. There is a Japanese tradition of fixing which is known as Kintsugi. “Kin” meaning gold and “tsugi” meaning joinery. The broken pieces are reassembled and glued back together with lacquer mixed with dusted gold. Every break is unique and instead of repairing it like new, it highlights its “scars” and “imperfections” as a part of the design. The theory for its origin is that, Japanese shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa had damaged his favourite tea bowl and was desperate to get it repaired, so he sent it back to China, in the late 15th century. When it returned, it had lost its aesthetic value, as it was repaired with ugly metal staples. This prompted the Japanese artists to come up with other solutions and that's how they found Kintsugi. There are collectors who purposely smash pots and bowls just to join it back and make it look more beautiful and stronger.



Kintsugi can be seen to have similarities with the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi, an acceptance of imperfections or flaws. This art form is also used as metaphor for healing people by the Japanese. It shows how sometimes in the process of repairing things that have broken, we actually create something more special, attractive and resilient. The care and love that these broken pots are joined back together with lend us the confidence to respect damaged and imperfect. It encourages us to heal ourselves and shows that there is perfection in imperfection.



THE ICONS AND THEIR PACE IN MY HEART

By Diya Mahesh, IBDP-1

You'll be able to picture what I describe if you've ever been to the legendary Britannia.

One of Bombay's most loved, and cherished Parsi Diners, Britannia has stood the test of time. Nestled between the lush maze-like streets of Fort. On the ground floor of a Colonial Era building, Britannia & Co, still stands proud. When you enter, the bright colours and old-time charm lures you into yesteryear. A life-size cut-out of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge look down at the steady stream of customers, while the Queen has her spot on the wall. The tables are covered with a familiar red and white checked tablecloth, and the food stands out on the pale-yellow plastic plates.

The place smells amazing, of Iranian food and beer. The talk is loud and the kids louder. And enveloping all this chaos is the timeless history of the place.

Alongside the picture of the Queen, is framed articles of reviews in French gourmet magazines, praises from patron from all around the world.

This humble eatery was opened in 1923, to service the British officer who were stations in Fort. Not much as changed since then, not the food, not even the furniture.

Like Britannia, South Mumbai boasts so many other iconic restaurants like this.

Britannia's neighbour, Café Leopold, is one other jewel in Mumbai's crown.

Opened in 1817, this place has braved tragedies. It was one of the first sites of the 26/11 attacks, and even today, customers can see the bullet holes in the old walls. But the café was strong, opening defiantly after only 4 days, and it still continues to serve thousands of happy people.

However strong these places, these people may be, unfortunately, the pandemic has brought them to their knees.

During these unprecedented times, these restaurants have lost lots of money, people have lost their jobs and the whole industry is suffering the wrath of incessant lockdowns and lowered public consumption.

Not only restaurants, but other cultural landmarks in this city as well. Recently, Wayword and Wise, one of the most charming bookstores, in the city, announced they would be shutting down. They too lost money, and when I went to visit, it made me so upset to see bookshelves void of books, and stands of bestseller of the past.

What ever happens in whatever time we have left this year, and the new year, I hope that we don't crumble. We've come this far, it's too late to turn back.

PAT A CAKE! PAT A CAKE!

By Prakher Sharma, IBDP-1

Due to current circumstances, we have had to confine ourselves at home. And I have spent most of my weekends trying to master the art of cooking in my kitchen. So why not try putting together something healthy which also fulfils our cravings to eat something sweet?

Lets make an healthy cake! **A carrot cake!!**



INGREDIENTS

For the cake

250 ml coconut oil (melted)
300 g light brown sugar
1 1/2 tsp vanilla essence
210 ml milk (any milk is fine)
420 g plain flour
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ginger
4 medium carrots, grated
1 orange, zest only
Chopped walnuts (any quantity is fine)
Sprinkles of your choice (optional)

For the icing

200 g creamed coconut
1 tbsp. lemon juice
2 tbsp. casher nut butter (unsalted is also fine)
50 g icing sugar
60 ml oat milk

METHOD

1. Start by making the icing first. Mash the coconut cream with 2tbsp of hot water and the lemon juice until smooth. Add the butter and oat milk in the icing sugar and whisk it well. Then, add the coconut cream mixture to the icing sugar mixture, continue to whisk well until fully combined, then leave the icing in the fridge until needed.
2. To make the cake, whisk together the coconut oil and sugar. Then, add the vanilla essence and milk. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda and orange zest. Add the dry mixture to the wet mixture and stir well. **Do not whisk the mixture, using a spatula!** Use the 'cut n fold method' to mix. Finally add the nuts and carrot to the mixture and mix well again. Then heat the oven at 180 C. When the oven is heated, bake the cake for 25-30 mins. Once the cake is done, let it cool for 10 mins.
3. Finally, you just need to ice the cakes using the icing we made earlier, and, preferably, add some nuts and cinnamon on top for decoration along with some sprinkles if you wish to.

HOW COOKING HELPED ME DURING LOCKDOWN

By Sahir Devraj, IBDP-1

You will definitely agree with me when I say cooking is a great way to relax. I must admit that I feel hungry right after school ends and I usually help myself by making a meal or even just a snack.

Lockdown has played a significant role in enriching my culinary journey. There were already a few dishes in my recipe arsenal before the lockdown started, but, being in quarantine only expanded this list further. Apart from opening a lot more packets of Maggi noodles, I also tried my hands at cakes, pasta, soya sauce chicken, butter garlic salmon, along with various sauces, and a plethora of salads.

Chinese is my favourite cuisine, and not being able to eat it in an eatery has been an unfortunate aspect of this lockdown. The fact that fried rice is simple to make and tastes exactly like restaurant quality, makes me so much more eager to cook it. To make it you need:

INGREDIENTS

- One bowl of rice
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 2 eggs



And that's it! Garlic, sausages, shredded chicken, onions and other similar things can be added for some additional flavour, but the rice, scallions and eggs are the main part of it.

INSTRUCTIONS

- First, whisk two of your eggs and pour them into a pan. Scramble the eggs and set them aside.
- Next, heat up some oil (on low heat), add scallions and let it simmer until fragrant.
- Then, add your rice, eggs and other ingredients and mix them together on a high heat.
- Add some soya sauce and pepper.
- Taste it and lightly salt, as the soya may contain enough of it already.

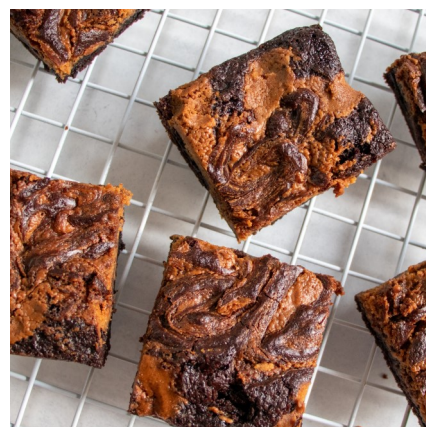
To be fair, I'm in the kitchen to help my mother more times than not. She often appoints me as her sue chef, making me cut vegetables, mix together something that's cooking or whisk eggs. But I enjoy doing those things as much as making a regular meal. There's something therapeutic about peeling potatoes that I can't seem to find anywhere else. Cooking has enabled me to distract myself from all the homework I've been given and momentarily sink into my own world of fantasies, which usually ends with me preparing something really flavoursome.

The only thing I'd want after having a delicious serving of fried rice is something to satisfy my sweet tooth. Something so tasty that it takes my mind off this lockdown, yet is extremely easy to make. Something with a criminally perfect texture that quenches my thirst for chocolate with common household ingredients. Look no further as the answer to all our prayers is obviously a freshly baked batch of brownies!

While the recipe for a perfect brownie probably remind you of your grandma, I am sharing a recipe that is surprisingly easy and the best brownie my kitchen has ever seen.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted and HOT
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil, (olive oil or coconut oil is fine)
- 1 1/8 cup superfine sugar, (caster sugar or white granulated sugar)
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup all purpose (or plain) flour
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

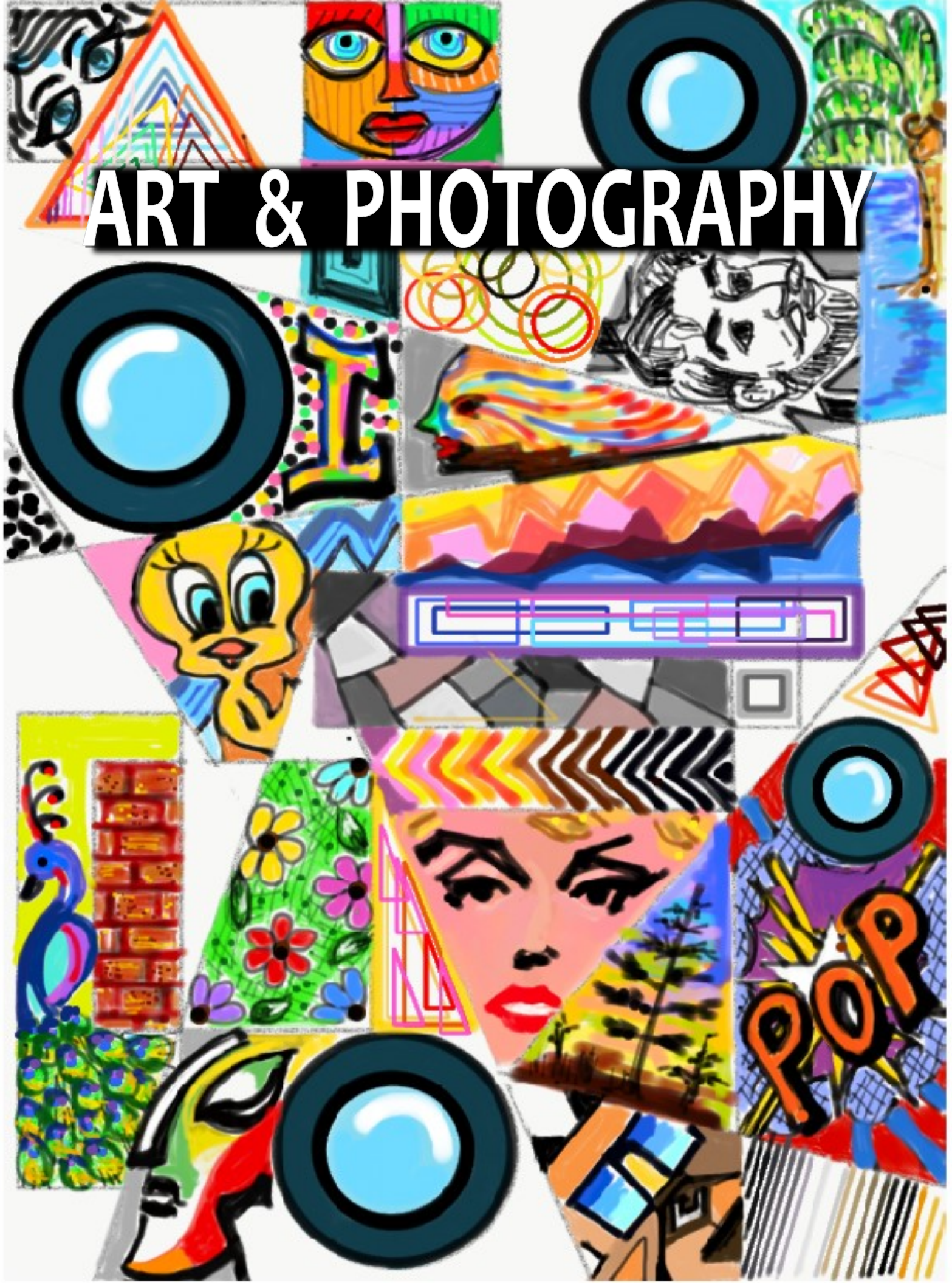


INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
- Lightly grease an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking oil spray. Line with parchment paper (or baking paper); set aside.
- Combine hot melted butter, oil and sugar together in a medium-sized bowl. Whisk well for about a minute. Add the eggs and vanilla; beat until lighter in colour (another minute).
- Sift in flour, cocoa powder and salt. Gently fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until JUST combined (do NOT over beat as doing so will affect the texture of your brownies).
- Pour batter into prepared pan, smoothing the top out evenly. (OPTIONAL: Top with chocolate chunks or chocolate chips.)
- Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the centre of the brownies in the pan no longer jiggles and is just set to the touch (the brownies will keep baking in the hot pan out of the oven). If testing with a toothpick, the toothpick should come out dirty for fudge-textured brownies.
- Remove and allow to cool to room temperature before slicing.

If you really want to go the whole nine yards, like I usually do, you can add a layer of either Nutella or whipped cream on top of the brownies. It really enhances the flavour in my opinion. If you're really feeling like a dare-devil though, you can add rainbow sprinkles and sea salt. Perfection!

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY



THE SUNSET PRIVILEGE

By Aarav Nichani, IBDP-2

Every sunset brings the promise of a new dawn. An **opportunity** to reset. A hope for a new world, brighter and better until the next pandemic... 100 years away. Locked down at home as the numbers rise ...as the sun sets and rises again. Day after day nothing to look forward to other than the sunset by the bay. The only sunsets I hate are the ones I miss, another day gone by and the frustration only rises. The interaction with nature is the only bliss, value for life and the inexpensive gift.

Over the three and a half months in lockdown as the virus hit, more and more people infected, some left hungry and migrants walking miles away bare feet to villages, life has taught each one of us a lot. From the rich to the poor, the doctors to the milkmen, cancer patients and diabetics, the virus has spared none! Nature has rebelled. The world will never remain the same. Medical teams hustling for a vaccine to policemen maintaining order and everything in between, our frontline warriors are truly the ones we owe our entire life to from here on. I came across a policeman the other day when I was visiting my ill grandmother, a slight smile with a tear in his eye as he said in Hindi, "My family has left me to die". The sacrifice they make each day is unaccountable and tremendous. Migrant workers trying to reach home to be with their families and save some from their pockets by avoiding expensive rents. Many unemployed and starving to death, the fear among the elderly is way beyond our understanding as we still lay on the couch with air conditioners and controllers of video games, the world isn't fair... ain't it?

Sleep for 8 hours and rise again, bright and fresh with hope but nature is STILL trying to get in your head...all sunsets are not the same... rise to the occasion and then rest at the end of the day...sunsets are proof that endings can be beautiful too... do your part, open up your minds, help out and then watch the sunset with a smile as you rest and trust me **hope** for a better world will be knocking by your doors...until it's another 100 years again.



DUSK

By Diya Gada, IBDP-1

The image I've painted portrays the roof of a building located in an urban setting at sunset. A man stands at the edge of the roof, peering over to look at the wonderful sunset before him. The angle at which the scene is painted is unconventional, focusing on the building and Japanese letters rather than the sunset itself. The building is illuminated through multiple light sources, both artificial and natural. The point of the artwork is to highlight the beauty in generally overlooked objects and bring a unique perspective to 'dusk'.

Medium- Ink and Watercolor on paper



PAINTINGS

By Yuval Gupta, IBDP-1

Sunset By The Beach

Method: Sponge-dabbing for background layers; brush painting

Inspiration for the Painting: Given the fact that my father is in merchant navy, I have spent a lot of time aboard huge ships touring through innumerable majestic cities and nations. One of those cities was New Plymouth in New Zealand. This painting is my attempt to capture the picturesque and breath-taking beauty of New Plymouth's sunset during summers, which I was fortunate enough to view and experience.



Unicorn And Waterfall

Method: Neo-impressionist technique with flat brush strokes

PAPER-MACHE GANESHAS

By Aaryan Potdar, IBDP-1

Making Ganesha models has been my passion since childhood. And creating a zero-waste world is my dream. During this lockdown phase I came up with this idea of making eco-friendly paper-mache Ganeshas using simple resources such as old newspapers, easily available at home. It has given me immense happiness to make Ganesha models and present them in my localities to families which could not afford Ganesha idols during this lockdown period. Here I share with you 3 models out of the many idols that I had created.



ART BASED ON NORSE MYTHOLOGY

By Kimberly Roy, IBDP-1

This art work is an artist's interpretation of the World Tree and the spirit of Midsummer. It is packed with symbolism and detail.

The World Tree has been depicted as a traditional ash tree. Miðgarð (Earth) in the center is represented by Jörmungandr (the Miðgarð Serpent) and the solar cross. The solar cross is a modern astronomical symbol for earth and the Nordic symbol for the sun. This adds to the spirit of midsummer. The other eight worlds have been represented by their Nordic symbols, projecting outwards from the tree.

Entangled within the roots of the tree, we have Níðhöggr, the serpent gnawing at the roots of Yggdrasil (the World Tree). Perched at the apex of the tree we have the eagle and the hawk, Vefröltnir, sitting between its eyes. We have the squirrel Ratatosk carrying messages between the eagle and Níðhöggr, creating conflict. Amongst the branches of the tree are four pairs of antlers that represent the stags of the tree. At the tip of each of the three main roots of the tree is a blue flower. Each flower represents the sources of nourishment of the tree: Spring of Hvergelmir, Well of Urð, and Spring of Mímir.

Midsummer is the longest day of the year, the day when the sun shines the longest. The goddess of the sun is Sól. One of her symbols is the sunflower. Therefore, the petals

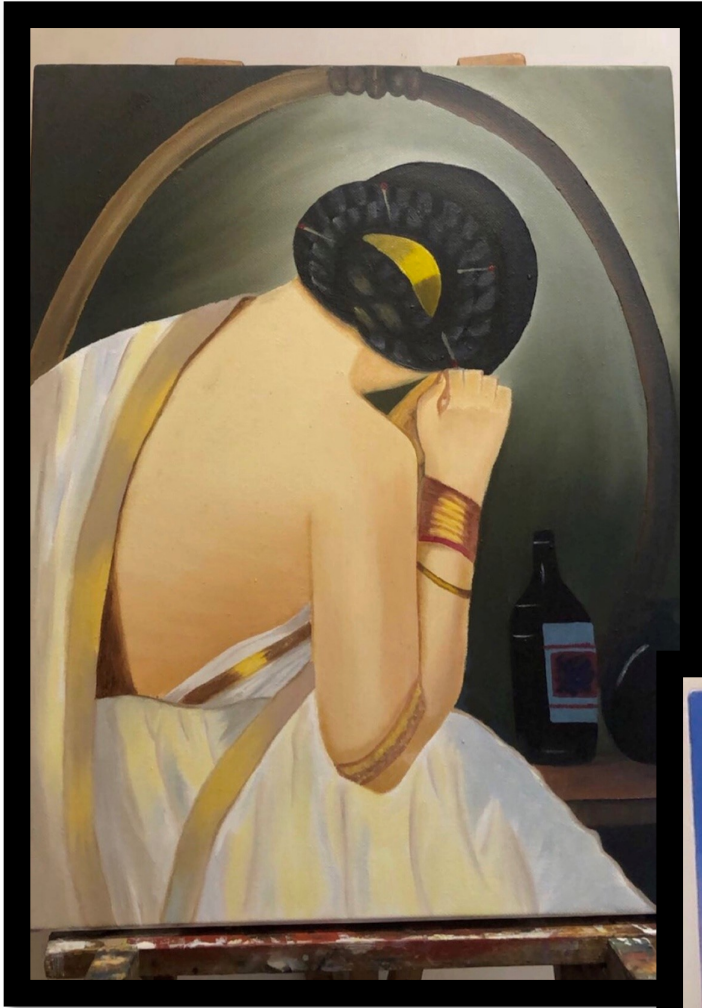
around the tree are those of a sunflower. Bonfires are a symbol of midsummer. Therefore, I have chosen to depict a fire sunflower (Helianthus annuus) around the tree. The shaded petals show the flickering blaze of glory of the midsummer bonfires. The wreath of flowers separating the tree and the petals is another symbol of midsummer.

In summary, I have tried to incorporate Yggdrasil and the spirit of midsummer in a single flower. Flowers not only represent midsummer but also the beauty of nature: one of the pillars of Norse mythology.



ARTWORKS

By Taskeen Shaikh, IBDP-1



PENCIL ART

By Tasneem Ali, Grade 9



WHAT IS INGENUITY?

By Chahak Pahwa, IBDP-2

1. Take a fresh piece of white canvas.
2. Use the thickest square brush you have and dip it entirely in a bottle of blue acrylic paint.
3. Paint the entire canvas with the brush till you see a uniform, smooth background of deep blue.
4. Take two new small round brushes and dip one in crimson red and the other in orange.
5. Alternatively paint round circles filled circles of red and orange of different sizes in the central region of the canvas.
6. Use the thinnest brush you have and dip it lightly in green.
7. Make thin lines of green across the canvas, connecting together two edges of it.
8. Take any brush and dip it in black paint.
9. Now aggressively throw the paint four times randomly, at a distance from the canvas.

And voila! There you have it in front of you, ingenuity.

The journey of ingenuity begins with a strong foundation of one's intelligence and faith in their own abilities and skills. One must then focus all their energy, passion, creativity, and enthusiasm towards this process. At times, the journey yearns for more creativity than energy, let your mind decide what is needed. Along with this, remember that not only should the product of ingenuity grown, one must grow as well throughout this journey. Bring stability in the journey, bring structure to the process. And lastly, don't forget to do everything you can with elegance and sophistication. Don't fear if it is overpowering. Ultimately, whatever it is that you make, will be ingenuine. It will be a product of your ingenuity.

PAINTING

By Prisha Jain, Grade 8



HOPE IS NEVER LOST

By Shriya Chandran, Grade 9



SUNFLOWER LOVE

By Ananya Choudhary, Grade 9

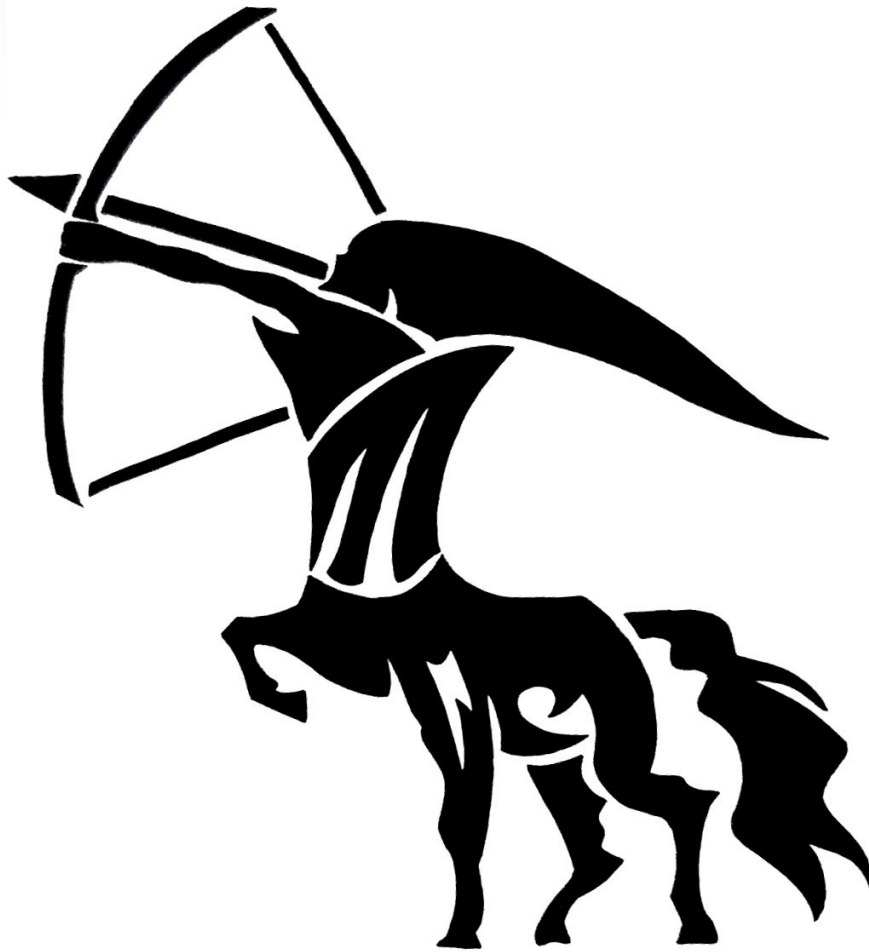
Ananya Choudhary 9C



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CHIRON

By Yohaán Patil, IBDP-2



Chiron reminds us that only through recognising and accepting our inner wounds can we find true healing

-Yohaán

ENTERTAINMENT



A DYING BREED—GUITAR VIRTUOSOS

By Melvin Thakkar, IBDP-1

Guitar Virtuosos are a rare breed and they are only becoming fewer as time passes. A handful of people understand the term Virtuoso today, almost like a piece of history that is long forgotten and only remembered by those who really admire the art in its true essence. Virtuoso Guitarists cannot be described in one line, rather, they need to be experienced. By definition these are just players with exceptional skill but that would be a mere understatement.

They have received far less attention in the past few years and the traction shifting away from them is not a one-day phenomenon but rather a slow death that occurred over the last 20 years while electronic music became the new 'thing' for teenagers across the world. Artists like Steve Vai barely rack up only 500,000 monthly listeners on Spotify and let me remind you that this man that could fill up back to back stadiums in the 1980s. After a certain generation of players, there hasn't been anybody to take up the mantle of Virtuoso guitar.

This style of playing is ear candy for those who truly seem to understand it or even try to indulge themselves in a rustic record with just a guitar trying to convey emotions without the use of lyrics, primarily performed on crazy looking electric guitars. It seems alien to many around the world today. Understanding such an artist is much more difficult because of their stand-alone personalities that were reflected in their genre. The very same Virtuosos once infiltrated pop music with their iconic solos such as Eddie Van Halen's solo in 'Beat it' by Michael Jackson.

However, one major issue with this genre is that, currently rock music in itself isn't a very popular genre. The latest rock anthem off my head reminds me of Boulevard of Broken dreams but it was the last of the lot back in 2004. Most trending playlists right now would include Hip-hop and Electronic artists who understand, relate and connect to the newer generation. When any modern guitarist picked up their instrument, they would idolize someone like Slash or Joe Satriani. Most modern guitarists will give credit to some previous legend in making them who they are. Just like how Ed Sheeran became Shawn Mendes' initial influence. In the past few years a decline of successful Rock bands resulted in fewer people even knowing that such artists exist.

It is unsaid but Hip Hop is the new cool now and nothing looks to replace it in the near future. It has been on the rise ever since its beginning in the 1970s and now it has taken over the world and there is no limitation to what rap could become in the future with the genre diversifying continuously.

Speaking of diversification and development, Guitar firms also played an important role in the death of Virtuosos. Fender and Gibson made similar models each year and there is very little difference in terms of design between a Stratocaster model from the 1950's and a new Stratocaster made today. Guitar firms relied on their best selling models and kept reproducing those stock versions to keep sales high without considering other options. Electric Guitars lacked creativity for newer folk to pick it up. This mismanagement lead to Gibson filing for bankruptcy in 2018.

The final nail in the coffin for this style of music was the change in how producers used a guitar. Over the years, it has become an effect based instrument with lesser focus on playing and more attention being drawn towards gear. Modern music uses bits and pieces of instruments on loops which are then recorded alongside several layers. The guitar isn't dead as such but Virtuoso lead guitarists don't have a space for themselves in the scene. Lucid Dreams by JUICE WRLD displays exactly how hip hop has superseded other genres. The original loop for the song is very similar to 'Shape of my Heart' by Sting but the way it was used made it made all the difference. Electric guitar riffs are still quite common today too. The Chain-smokers filled their music, with similar repetitive guitar loops and it worked. Guitar Virtuosos rely on their phrasing and expression through the instrument which is no longer popular. These Virtuosos used Guitar Solos to do this and the space for guitar solos barely exists in modern music.

It is too late to save the generation of Virtuosos but then their works can be admired before we lose such heavy live performers who could play much better in front of an audience than on a recording. Below is a list of Artists with a few recommendations that you should surely check out, a simple internet search and you will be amazed to see their work:

Cliffs of Dover- Eric Johnson

Tender Surrender-Steve Vai

Eruption-Van Halen

Always with me, Always with you – Joe Satriani

Terminal Velocity- John Petrucci

Purple Haze-Jimi Hendrix (Out of everyone, deserved to be on the list the most)

THE POLITICS OF FASHION

By Diya Mahesh, IBDP-1



For me, fashion is a way of expressing myself- it's a way for me to talk to people without saying a word. Most people around me would know that if I put on my brightest colours, I'm in the mood to socialise, while if I put on my oversized grey sweater, I'm hoping no-one talks to me. Sure, to some people, clothes may just be a way of keeping themselves warm, but to me they're something bigger. I view fashion simply as one of the greatest forms of storytelling.

While fashion can be used as a great tool for the common man, it can also be a powerful weapon- that is, when powerful people choose to make it one.

Picture a bright red dad cap. Now make it a sea of them. Flashbacks from 2016 anyone?

The red "MAGA" hat became the symbol of the 2016 American presidential election. Trump supporters donned these caps in support of the now president, creating a sense of unity between everyone wearing the hat. It may seem like a minor detail, but in the end, it contributed to him winning the election (as did Russia).

On the other hand, a second fashion statement from the same election was the iconic monochrome pantsuit- known as the symbol of feminism, change and a few shady e-mails.

The election was a battle of these two fashion-related symbols, with Beyoncé performing in a bright pantsuit, and Kanye West wearing the cap while telling people that slavery was a choice (Thank you Kanye, very cool!). But why exactly did politicians start using fashion as a statement?

"Access to the press, governmental bodies or educational institutions is variable, but everyone has access to their own bodies," says Dr Jonathan Michael Square, a writer and historian currently teaching at Harvard University. "Fashion is, thus, one of the most readily available political tools. Even the decision not to care about fashion is a political statement."

Some of India's most influential politicians, used and continue to use fashion as a symbol for their leadership. Mahatma Gandhi always had his cotton robe, Jawaharlal Nehru had his red rose, Indira Gandhi was always seen in her elegantly draped saris and Narendra Modi's signature fashion statement is undoubtedly his colourful Nehru jackets (ironic, considering Modi loathes anything to do with that family). Another critical Modi fashion moment that I think is worth mentioning is the Nehru jacket with NaMo printed on it, which he wore to meet the commander in chief of a country that once banned him. Quite the power move, in my opinion.

Politicians use fashion as a way to craft a 'brand' for themselves. This is because they aren't selling a particular product, they're advertising themselves. After all, because they're constantly exposing themselves to critical public eyes, their choice of clothing stands out. Fashion is incredibly diverse and is a powerful medium of communication between public figures and the people of a nation. Emilia Ferrera, a fashion journalism professor at Georgetown University, had this to say about political fashion- "I do regard fashion as an imminent vehicle for strategy and excellence. The more options in your arsenal, the more power you have."

With each new bold fashion choice, politicians are generating headlines, which in turn brings them publicity. While the feedback may be a mix good and bad, it serves another purpose- it creates an unforgettable image in the minds of the public. From AOC's white cape blazer to Theresa May's leopard print kitten heels, the world remembers them through their outfits.

The extent of influence that fashion has on people is beautifully encompassed in Miranda Priestley's monologue on cerulean in *The Devil Wears Prada*. The "domino effect", as she explains, highlights the sheer number of variables that are affected by one bold fashion choice. The monologue serves as an example of how our fashion choices are read by others.

For decades now, brands have been fully aware of the significance of fashion on political movements. The now-iconic beacon of the grunge aesthetic, *Doc Marten Shoes*, was created in the 1980's in support of far-right political organisations. In 2016, the sneaker company *New Balance*, was labelled as the 'official shoes for white people," by the neo-Nazi (a title bestowed upon him by the American media) VP of the company, in solidarity with Trump.

Social media culture has been defined by fashion-centric political movements. At the Golden Globe Awards in 2018, attendees dressed in black in support of the #MeToo movement. This was one of the most politically charged movements in recent history, and fashion played a huge part in it.

The 2020 Black Lives Matter movement also prompted a fashion adjacent response from the people. Black-owned clothing businesses flourished, with a heavy inflow of customers showing their support for the marginalized community. A lot of racist organisations were also burnt to the ground (Twitter enjoyed cancelling *Dolce and Gabbana* and *Gucci*).

With the rise of demand for statement-making fashion, another industry that is rising up is the fast-fashion industry. Although it sounds like good, cheap and trendy clothing, is it worth the repercussions? Fast fashion companies outsource their manufacturing to countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam, where factory workers are subjected to inhumane and unethical conditions- like child labour, and microscopic pay. With the exploitation of workers comes the exploitation of the environment. In 2015, it was reported that the fashion industry consumes over 90 billion cubic meters of fresh water and emits over a million tonnes of CO2. On top of this, world governments are shying away from cracking down on fast fashion companies- just so that they earn more tax revenue!

Whether we like it or not, the clothes we choose to wear and the brands we choose to support will have an impact on how society views us. Fashion has transgressed from being about superficiality, to something deeper. Fashion is now a way for our generation to empower one another, question narratives, and represent the community you are a part of.

Fashion can maintain and deepen inequality, but it also has the potential to challenge structures of power. I'm a believer in the transformational power of fashion to change how we see ourselves and our place in the world — whether it addresses racial inequality, promotes body positivity, questions gender binaries, or calls for more sustainable industry standards.

THE GENESIS OF MELODY—THE PATHWAY TO ANY HEART

By Rwitika Sarkar, IBDP-1

Rhythm and tune have always existed in nature and there is no denying the fact that generation-to-generation, everyone is connected by musical notes. From natural tunes of wind and sea to the pop music blasting on your radios and earphones, music is everywhere. Being a classical singer for over a decade, I have always wondered when and how this journey of rhythmic beats and chords came to being? The answer to that is rather ambiguous.

Some believe that music in the prehistoric days was derived from the soft sounds and the rhythm laid in nature such as the whistling of the wind through a green land of grass and so on. But the starting point recorded in the history books is the influence of the Ancient Greeks for which the records are too vague to resort to a conclusion. The seven notes we use for any song, known differently in every country- the 'solfège' "Do re mi", the hexachord system "A B C D E F G" major chords, the Indian system "Sa re ga", were created by an Italian monk, Guido D'Arezzo. The discovery he made was that people had trouble memorizing the tune and notes of the chants, like many of us normal citizens still do, and decided to create 4 lines and placed these notes, called the "Neumes", between these 4 lines, creating the musical notes we come across today and use it for learning the tune of any song.

The weird note made here is the role of Pythagoras (c.500-c.570); yes the one who created the Pythagoras theorem, which we learn today. He noticed these regular intervals and numerically presented these creating different octaves and pitches. The fact that mathematics played an important role in the creation of such an artistic concept leads to the thinking that everything in this world is correlated to each other and inventions like these take years of refining to conclude or maybe not.

Through the Renaissance and Baroque eras, these seven notes developed, and in some parts of the world, we consider 12 notes (including the major and the minor notes).

Music is way similar to art than we think it is. Imagine a palette of only 7 base colors and a blank canvas. Creating a masterpiece from just 7 colors would be applause considering the complexity of something like art. But music is similar as these 7 notes are the only ones, which are twisted and turned to create combinations, which make your favorite songs sound way different than each other although the base is the same.

Different emotions are associated with the way these 7-12 notes are assembled in the song. These emotions are based on the Nine Sentiments- Erotic, Humorous, Pathetic, Anger, Heroic, Fearful, Disgustful, Amazement, Peaceful. The importance of music was never lost and has continued to be passed down through generations as a part of culture and tradition. Taking a widely known example of Indian ragas, every raga has a specific time associated with it and although it is not that important in such a modern world we live in, it was one of the main factors of singing these ragas. A hard and fast rule was set that these ragas cannot be sung out of their time because if so, the emotions that should be awoken while hearing these ragas won't even be touched upon. Such as raga Todi created by the ever known Mian Tansen has to be sung in the break of dawn to awake the emotions of a refresh and the feeling of a new day.

These timings have been fixed based on the overall aura as well as the tonal structure of the notes used. These also were a key factor in the season changes. Some ragas were considered to be a monsoon song, as they were believed to have the power to make the clouds align and rain, especially popular amongst farmers as in the past they relied on this music for rains so that their crops were watered. And as absurd it may sound, some of these ragas were believed to cure blood pressure, diabetes as well as depression and anxiety.

Music is also widely associated with the celebrations from the historic times of Durban music echoing in the palace of Mughals to the EDM bass ripping through your ears in birthday parties and so on, music is an invention which can and will never be forgotten as it has been engraved into our development and believe it or not, the chords and beats you hear every day makes a difference in you as a person.



NEON GENESIS EVANGELION: A NEW TAKE ON TECHNIQUE

By Devansh Vajpayee, IBDP-1

“How do you know when to cut?”

Perhaps the question most frequently asked to editors when talking about their process. The answer is simple: you don’t.

Editors don’t cut based on knowledge, but instinct. They move through the clip with emotion and thought, cutting at just the right time. But how exactly does the editor think and feel?

Here’s what you need to know. Editing is all about the eyes. More than any other feature, the character’s eyes display the emotion of the scene. To become a great actor, learning to emote through the eyes is far more important than learning to relay it



through a dialogue. A change in the eyes can signify a pivotal decision, a game-changer. Shots in which the camera zooms into eyes dripping with emotion are only as powerful as they are because they can work so well in tandem with other shots. For instance, when an editor cuts from the eyes to the object, it tells us, without any words at all, what the character is thinking.



Although it seems simple; emotions take time. When we watch people on a screen, we feel an innate connection to them, and that’s because we have time to watch their faces before they speak...

And time to watch them afterwards. Editors have the important power to decide, “How much time do I give this emotion?” These choices are difficult, with no correct answers.



Rhythm is also an important part of editing. Sometimes the rhythm is obvious like when the character is doing something physical.



However, other times it is more subtle, like when characters are simply walking back and forth.



These are closer to what we feel in everyday life and they're often harder to edit, but if you watch anything with enough attention, you can feel the moment when the shot itself is asking you to cut. Classical Hollywood editing is usual cut with the rhythm of the scene. This is regularly brought up as an example for editing being invisible. The edit is so natural that the audience doesn't even notice it. However, it doesn't always have to be invisible; some emotions play better if cut in a jarring way, such as anger and discomfort.



Now let us apply these techniques to one of the most interpretive shows ever made. There's no shortage of theories, speculations and, most importantly, misinterpretations. Something I find very underdiscussed for Neon Genesis Evangelion, and animation as a whole, is its editing. Usually in animations, editing is done in the pre-production, along with the timing and storyboarding. Unfortunately, this doesn't allow the editor to choose the cuts since it's already been decided. Evangelion instead opts for the traditional method used in live action movies and shows. The show often has its backgrounds drawn longer than what can actually fit in the frame to simulate camera movement.

Evangelion has a very striking use of text, utilizing bold impact font and its Japanese equivalent, to break up its flow and even transitioning into new scenes and locations without losing momentum.



The show also uses the common technique of introducing villains from the right and heroes from the left. This is because a majority of the world's population reads from left to right. This philosophy is also why Mario always enters from the left and fights enemies on the right. The show uses trees, people and many other objects as screen wipes to transition more smoothly into the next shot.

Evangelion uses eyes efficiently, and makes the viewer aware of their importance. Many shots end with characters shifting their gaze to something off screen, clueing us in that the next shot is going to be what they are looking at. There are also many close ups of eyes to show real emotion. Eyes are seen as the windows into the soul and hence show the characters' true emotions.



Evangelion uses many of these editing techniques to stand apart from many other shows and is one of the reasons why it is still relevant 2 decades after its release.



FRANKENSTEIN

By Anusha Dharnidharka, IBDP-2

Frankenstein was a book by Mary Shelly which captured the essence of human ingenuity, and the power it held. It emphasized on the disasters lackadaisical usage of this power could bring about. Parallels, unfortunately, can be drawn to our scary reality.

Man saw the immenseness of the world: the distinct and discrete beauty in its abundance of colours, fragrances and harmonies. Man decided that to extract the fullest spirit of mankind, every being must work together, as a whole. So, he strung together fragments of inconceivable codes to design a phenomenal system which pinched closer the north and the south; the east and the west. Idealistic.

Soon after, man returned to inspect his creation. What was supposed facilitate unity had punctured its very basis. His monster had grown to become a scary world of its own. A mesocosm, enriched with hate; abuse and vitriol fertile with the systems convenience. This virtual universe had scrutinized the cracks within mankind, pulling at them to widen the discrepancies. Words cut, and hashtags gashed. A binary bloodbath.

Man saw the need for sustenance. Something that would propel indispensable progress in an overwhelmingly dynamic world. After years of research and countless failures, he forged a way to blitz up insurmountable energy from the splitting of miniscule matter. Man saw this as an absolute victory, as an opportunity to facilitate uninhibited progress.

Years later, man reflected. He saw the particles in the obstinate fumes of his invention continually corrode the insides of innocent, juvenile lungs. Lives and livelihoods had impoverished into the ground, leaving it arid beneath the haunting rubble. Fukushima, Chernobyl, Three Mile Island; the list of its prey ran long. Sure, progress had been made, and the services of the monster in this progress were undeniable. But at what cost?

The best part about the book, perhaps, was that it was fiction.

PASSION: THAT'S ALL IT TAKES

By Taskeen Shaikh, IBDP-1

When I was a kid, around 5-6 years old, I used to tell my parents that I want to be a doctor but like a normal kid my attention flitted from one place to another until I found something that I was utterly fixated upon. I was surrounded by talented artists, directors and actors including my father, who worked in the industry and then went on to become a very successful businessman. He is someone who I have always looked up to and I couldn't have asked for a better father. As I grew older, I began to fall in love with the idea of filmmaking. It's not an easy task to create a film, which only made me want to explore the field to increase my knowledge, so that I can become one of the best directors the world has ever seen. So I took the first step in my journey of greatness.

I directed my very first short film 'The Last Dream' in 2018 when I was 14 years old. I believed that the earlier I start, the more experienced I will be. I always want to be one step ahead of my other fellow peers.

Suicide is one of the main social issues in our world. While there are multiple methods used, a gun is the most frequent means of suicide. It is also likely that suicide by drug overdose is more common than we realise. Many children across the world experience suicidal thoughts because of family problems, stress, relationship issues, insecurities, etc. and I found my calling in requiring to make a film of this caliber, even though I cannot prevent every single child from this act, I can at least utilise my capabilities and talents to create something that can facilitate change.

This film follows the story of a boy who administers sleeping pills to himself. An overdose leads to a bizarrely intimate conversation with Death wherein I bring light on his reasons for attempted suicide and the bittersweet truth of life. Veer finds himself stuck in limbo of neither being dead nor being completely alive, to top it off Death takes him through time in an uneventful yet heartbreaking adventure. This film aims to empower the audience to see the meaning of life and what a gift it truly is.

My friend Miraya Borah is a young writer and after discussing our thoughts together, we came up with this beautiful story. I was so happy to have her on board. My mother, Atiya Shaikh, supported me in every way and produced this film with her own production house '16 Pictures'. My mentor, Prabhuraj, who is a famous director, guided me in every step of the way. This film would be incomplete without the cast : Mitansh Lulla, Divyaa Sharma and Swapnil Ralkar. I had an amazing experience working with the Director Of Photography, Anuradha Pathak, and all the other departmental heads. It was a huge challenge for me to take part in the pre-production and post-production because of my obligations as a student. However, I found the passion to complete the project with my heart and soul.

I was privileged enough to have my very own film screening where we had directors and actors from every walk of life come and watch my film including all my supportive friends. I was so overwhelmed with the responses that my team and I had received. I want to thank my family because it wouldn't have been possible without my supportive parents.

Till now I have won 4 awards from Agra (Best Debut Director), Mumbai (Young Director), Bhutan (Best Young Filmmaker) and Ayodhya (Young Filmmaker Award). I am yet to see if the film will be graced with more awards as we apply to more film festivals all around the world. I thank Allah for this incredibly beautiful adventure.

THE MUSICAL RHAPSODY OF LIFE

By Amyshka Shenoy, Grade 9

Music plays such an important role in our lives,
It makes one smile whenever it arrives,
Mere words can unravel a story never told,
It makes you feel warm inside, even if it's cold.
Music helps people get through the toughest of days,
With its unknown but yet beautiful ways.
I sit here listening to the time tick by,
Waiting for the joy that only music can supply.
Life has its up and downs, so we all know,
If today was tough, just know there is always tomorrow,
Rhythms and beats in our daily lives are vital,
From the beating of our heart to our daily recital.
Never give up and keep chasing your dream,
Don't let anything anything bring down your self esteem,
You have a unique melody hidden within,
Waiting for your new adventure to begin.
Just go with flow as they all say,
Because something new will await you everyday.

HEALTH



INTERMITTENT FASTING

By Saanchi Shah IBDP-1

Over the past few years, Intermittent Fasting has surfaced across several social media platforms and is deemed to be one of the most effective and creative techniques to reach the pinnacle of one's health and lose excess fat. For the uninitiated, intermittent fasting is a pattern that revolves around specific periods of fasting and eating. Its central premise specifies not what to eat, rather when to eat it. Experts define this type of fasting as a lifestyle as opposed to rigid diet, they deem this to be more natural than our conventional three or more meals per day. There are various versions of intermittent fasting, the most common being the 16/8 method, which involves restricting one's eating period to 8 hours and then fasting for 16 hours.

The fasting allows for increased levels of Human Growth Hormone to be produced, researchers claim that it could increase by up to 5-fold after a fasting period of 2 days. This is a natural method to help with fat loss and muscle gain, with virtually no side effects. Furthermore, this hormone aids in the maintenance of lean mass, both muscle and bone. Secondly, fasting is proven to have lasting effects regarding insulin and blood sugar levels. It has been found that blood sugar while fasting can drop by 6%, thus, offering protection against Type 2 Diabetes. It has also been seen through a research in rats that fasting protects against kidney damage, one of the most severe complications in diabetes. However, studies have also shown a deterioration in women's blood sugar control after an intermittent fasting period of 22 days, but no such effect was seen in men. Additionally, insulin levels in blood experience a decline, facilitating fat burn in a natural manner.

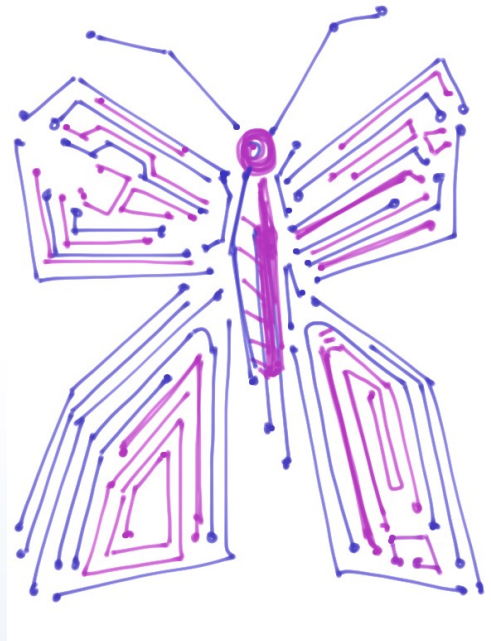
Research has also found that intermittent fasting alters the function of cells and genes. The body induces several essential growth and repair processes, such as autophagy, the removal of waste products from cells, while it is fasting. This primarily involves breaking down dysfunctional proteins that build up in our cells over time, this is shown to lend protection against cancer and Alzheimer's disease. Studies have also shown that fasting can reduce the side-effects caused by chemotherapy. Furthermore, the changes in gene expression are said to offer protection against diseases and lead to longevity and better quality of life in one's later years. To simply put it, when we live our conventional lifestyle with an average of 3 meals, our body is far too occupied with digesting all the food to focus on the growth and repair of cells. By fasting, we train our body to accept food for a stipulated period of time, allowing the body to focus on growth during other times of the day.

Experts claim that intermittent fasting may be beneficial for heart health, which is currently the world's biggest killer, estimated to cause 17.9 million deaths every year. As aforementioned, intermittent fasting can improve numerous risk factors that are known to cause cardiovascular diseases, such as cholesterol levels and triglycerides, thereby, reducing chances of getting heart diseases. However, many of these studies have been conducted on animals, therefore, not much can be said about the effectiveness of fasting on humans and whether or not any recurring negative impacts are seen.

Some noteworthy effects of fasting are those that are seen on the brain. The new cells and disease-fighting capabilities that are developed allow a person to think with greater clarity, allowing for further focus and extended attention span. A study even went to show that a 'sensible' fitness regime goes a long way in reducing depression and anxiety levels, also increasing serotonin levels in the body, enabling the person to feel happier than usual. However, an important aspect to note in this, is the use of 'sensible' in the study by Yocheved Golani, a Health Information Management professional. In this case, it is evident that it refers to a eating plan that caters specifically to an individual's body as opposed to a generic 'One-size fits all' type of meal plan. So, from this, we can deduce that in order to avail these literally 'mind-altering' benefits of fasting, it needs to be done carefully with guidance from an expert.

Given all the aforementioned arguments, it seems that intermittent fasting is a method to guarantee weight loss and several other benefits while minimising the negative effects caused by common prescription drugs. However, fasting is, in essence, abstaining from food; so, given the lasting effects of abstinence from food, there must be some negative side effects of fasting on our body. It could result in increased cortisol levels as fasting can be perceived as stress on the body due to food deprivation for long periods of time. This leads to an increase in the fat stores. Furthermore, studies have also shown that intermittent fasting can hinder one's fitness goals by reducing energy levels or causing one to run out of glycogen stores.

To wrap up, it is evident that Intermittent Fasting has numerous benefits, detached from the aspects of vanity, it also offers protection against diabetes and several fatal diseases. Having said that, the effectiveness of this regime depends on various factors and this lifestyle is definitely tricky for beginners. In my opinion, with any fitness or dietary regime, the main aim is to make it a sustainable lifestyle in order to maintain the health benefits and dodge the adverse effects that are presented by the rigorous fitness practices.



FINDING YOURSELF

By Khushi Rao, IBDP-2

Have you ever sat down with a pile of your portfolios, report cards and achievements from you when you were young, most probably from the first or second grade, and thought that ok “let's stop here” but still kept digging further and further, as if you were trying to find or better rediscover yourself within a pile of your old stuff, within a pile of the old you. Maybe because you were feeling lost, maybe because you don't know who you are anymore, maybe cause your life is so messed up all you want to do is remember and reminisce about those times, those days. To when you had nothing else to worry about. To when the hardest decision you ever had to make was “which toy should I play with”. To when your school used to be filled with happy faces rather than reeking of stress and anxiety. To when friends didn't break your heart or leave you isolated when you were stressed. To when heart breaks and patch ups weren't a part of your daily routine. To when fights with your parents didn't exist. I don't know about all of you, but I would definitely like to go back to when this was the case. To when we didn't worry about the tiniest issues in our lives. To when we didn't obsess over things that were beyond our control. To when we felt like waking up and facing a new day and new people every day. To when we weren't accustomed to fake friendships or toxic relationships.

When we look back and reminisce those days, we realize how toxic and artificial our lives have actually become. The constant fighting, be it with our friends, families or significant others. These days all we think about is how do we excel in our lives or how do we maintain our relationships with others. In this mess we have forgotten to care about ourselves, started to experience stress and anxiety and even gone into depression. The list is endless. These are the reasons we constantly keep going back, we keep digging, we keep revisiting the town of nostalgia again and again, in the hope of rediscovering ourselves in the pile of our old achievements, within a pile of who we used to be, within a pile of the best versions of ourselves. But sometimes this trip fails, it fails to meet our expectation, it makes us think about how we have changed, it makes us realize that we are not the same immature individuals anymore, it shows us that we have evolved, we have evolved into the best possible version of ourselves that there could be, the version that makes us feel confident, the version that we are for ourselves and not for or because of someone else, but most of all it shows how far we have come, it shows us our journey!

MASKED FATALITY

By Amyshka Shenoy, Grade 9

In a world like ours, we are told to stay strong,
to keep our problems to ourselves and to show the world that we belong.

But sometimes our woes get too strong to hide,
with the tide of emotions we just sat and cried,

but we mustn't, oh we mustn't.

Since crying is for the weak,
and our feelings aren't important to the world that we seek.

So we put on those facades, those smiles that bear so much pain

Since anguish will bring one no gain
and go on with our day hoping no one sees tears brimming in ones eyes.

Because the world keeps moving, so we keep saying these fatal lies.

We wear a mask of joy everyday,
but hope that secretly your eyes don't betray.
So the masks stay on, and the world goes by,
hoping the ticking bomb of tears will comply.

ANXIETY MY OLD FRIEND

By Yesha Shah, IBDP-1

The walls are closing in and I cannot breathe

This is not exaggeration, I promise, but reality.

The madness in my head, I cannot get it out, I fail to speak and I fail to be loud.

They call it anxiety, but I call it society

Society put me here, and I have no say

I take a step forward, only to pay a price

Sometimes I wonder, if I wasn't wise?

Nights are the hardest, hence I await the sunrise

But down I fall and lose myself in this spiral and in this mess.

My heart skips a beat, I lose control with my vision being blurry I am simply a dead soul.

Heavy breathing, I cry as I indulge into the darkness, waiting for a voice to say

“Hey, it's going to be okay.”

Loneliness is my best friend, the only one who wouldn't leave

I decided to fight back and now it is your turn!

Take this as a challenge, do not quit, I promise this is not the end, days will get better,

‘Anxiety my old friend’ your time is now over.

LIFE OF MIRTH

By Amyshka Shenoy, Grade 9

I'll never be successful is what they say,
But I won't give them the time of my day.

My capabilities are in my hands,
It's time for me to listen to my own commands.

I'll go through it all one day at a time,
The ladder to success is the one I will climb,

Life moves on and so will I,
I will spread my wings and I will fly,
Failure is an integral part of who I am,
But I won't be defined by a single exam.

Repercussions are a part of life as it is,
I can't be let down by a silly quiz,
I'll keep my friends close in my heart,
Even when we are miles apart.

I might face hurdles along the way,
But I'll face it head on everyday.

That's how life is, so you see,
It shapes you up to who you want to be.
The world might spin, quickly and fasten its pace,
But that doesn't mean I'll back down from this race.

BULLET JOURNALING

By Parnika Saxena, IBDP-1



Every time I mention to someone that I am fond of “bullet journals”, they ask me “what’s a bullet journal”, and every time I have to answer back with an obnoxious answer “it is like a miniature planner, where you can throw in your creativity”. This may not sound as obnoxious to the reader, as it sounds to me. Although, I think I have finally managed to come up with a proper definition.

Let me rephrase what bullet journaling actually means to me. Bullet journaling according to me, is a way to express yourself, fill your life with colours that was once black and white, and to manage your life in the way you wish to.

It not only keeps track of your to do list, but also reflects on your personal growth and development. If you are an artistic person or enjoy doodling, maybe bullet journaling can be starter for your career in design and arts!

Ryder Carroll, a college student who was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, came up with the method of bullet journaling to cope up with the learning disabilities, in the 1990s. He then shared this technique with the rest of the world in 2013, through social media. Within few years, this method was being used worldwide to cope with work stress, and mental health issues as well. The hype for bullet journals increased in December, 2018, with over 3 million Instagram posts of bullet journals created by individuals.

The craze started in 2018 for me as well. When I saw bullet journalists on Pinterest creating new designs for their bullet journals, it inspired me immensely. I started off with a black and white template since I was not very keen on using different colours. A white blank journal, and a black pen. That’s it. Pinterest was the only app I used to gain inspiration to create my own designs. As I got used to the daily or weekly planning, I started to witness more free gaps in my schedule, allowing me to give time to do activities I was not able to do before. I would create the template for the upcoming week, track all the work I had to get done, extra activities I had to complete, and almost every day stick to the schedule I had planned for myself. I started to spend my free time on decorating my bullet journal, filling it with colours and creativity, that soothed me very much.

With this, I also noticed better grades. The growth was slow initially, but with the help of a bullet journal, I learned time management skills, a key element to survive IB. Furthermore, if you are going through depression or experience high levels of anxiety, starting a bullet journal could be a way to revitalise your mental health. Art can be soothing, and with bullet journal being a part planner and part diary, they can often be used to stay organised and motivated to work towards a single long-term goal. For instance, every time I felt anxious or nervous in a class, I would remove my bullet journal from my bag and doodle or note few things down while listening to others. It allowed me to feel less overwhelmed. Not only that, bullet journals can also be saved and kept as a memoir of your teenage or childhood years, and the vibrant creativity that you possess.

If you are not the person who would like to create a physical journal, you can always find bullet journal apps that can allow you to create a virtual one and keep track of every little idea or plan you have in mind. This is the beauty of a bullet journal. You can create a bullet journal that portrays and illustrates you, and have the freedom to let your thoughts and ideas flow from your mind to a blank piece of paper! Implement your ideas to actual life with the help of a bullet journal. Happy bullet journaling!



A SEED IN BETWEEN 13 PLANTS

By Suhaani Shah, Grade 8

When I was born on the 1st of August 2007 and took a glimpse of this colourful world through my miniature, green eyes, I was met with a heart-melting sight, I saw faces of several earthlings (who turned out to be my family) light up in happiness. My mother was as joyful as a poor man with a bag of gold. Her ‘what a beautiful daughter!’ tears spoke out to me clearly, after having a connection with these enthusiastic and prodigious people for nine months I could understand their contentment. After spending 12 cheerful months with my family of 13 citizens, on my 1st birthday, I finally spoke out my first word-‘mamma’. Like a typical Gujarati family, with a typical mindset of showing off my grandpa phoned all of his pals and proudly announced, ‘my lovely daughter just said out her first word-mamma, my baby is growing so big so quickly.’ That was the day I learnt ‘just remember you’re never too big to be on your own so, no matter what happens these magnificent men and wondrous women are never going to leave your side’

And they didn’t! During these times of crisis when the demon of COVID-19 has swallowed the world each one of my loving family members has held each one of my fingers. Every morning as my eyelids open, a thought of: ‘today I am going to try something new’ pops up in my mind. However, that’s when I remind myself that we are currently suffering through a lockdown, which leads to a dull face and a blue mood. Well, when I shared these thoughts of mine with my grandfather, he replied,” suffering? You think we are the ones suffering, well, we are the ones safe, secure and away from the suffering, away from the dangerous disease of COVID-19.” He continued saying,” a piece of advice? When you and your fellow members are giving up something for your family’s safety and benefit there is nothing to regret or crib about because family comes before luxury, money and job. If you have to give up 400 workers for the well-being of your family we shall not hesitate. Also, isn’t that exactly what dad did?” These precious words, told to me at the beginning of the curfew are still etched in my mind and help to motivate me to be positive and pragmatic about this adverse situation that not only me but all families in India are going through. This little event tells me, rather asks me ‘do you think everyone in this world has the advantage or opportunity to have such an experienced member amongst them with such awe-inspiring and splendid thoughts?’

To conclude, I shall remind myself to thank god to give me this opportunity of living with 13 awesome people for it has certainly helped me to consider different perspectives, understand other men’s feelings and emotions and finally, to understand the key to a successful and happy relationship-‘to let it go.’

TEEN TROUBLES TODAY

By Khushi Rajani, IBDP-1

As teenagers, we are stuck in a very puzzling stage in our lives. Most people don't know whether to treat us as children or adults. In my experience as a teenager, I honestly don't know either: I don't want to bear too much responsibility; I like being carefree and not bothered by the consequences of my actions. However, at the same time, I wouldn't like to be berated by my parents as if I were a child. I feel that academic pressure and peer pressure are the two most excruciatingly exhausting things we, as teenagers in the 21st century, face. Let's talk about each of these individually.

In today's highly competitive world, we face tremendous academic pressure. Our college admissions depend on the grades we get at the end of high school and our jobs depend on which college we graduate from. To put it simply, our future depends on how well we study from a young age. This thought adds heaps of stress to our already demanding lives. Moreover, we are expected to develop various skills over the course of our schooling time. For instance, we have to improve our communication and social skills, as well as indulge and excel in various extra-curricular activities. This creates an immense pressure, a pressure which results in problems like depression, anxiety, and stress disorders. This creates a loop, a downfall in our academic performance is likely to result into us feeling more depressed or even worthless.

While we know how harmful too much academic pressure can be, it can also be viewed positively. Academic pressure pushes us to do our best, it prepares us for the real world. Therefore, we have to learn how to deal with academic pressure so that it is not too overwhelming for us. The best way to do this, I've found, is to be organized. Budget your time and plan your study hours well. This way we will be able to enjoy our lives while excelling in our academics at the same time.

We humans follow certain rules that society sets for us. We behave in certain manners and learn certain etiquettes, just to fit in with the people around us. Likewise, our peers in high school also have many expectations from us. No one wants to be the kid who sits alone at lunch and has no one to talk to, we want to fit in. This is precisely why we easily get influenced by our friends; they knowingly or unknowingly pressurize us to change our attitudes, values and behaviors to conform to the socially acceptable conventions in high school. It can range from smallest of things, like skipping lectures to something much worse, like underage drinking. We usually give in to peer pressure because we don't want to be picked on by our friends, or simply because everyone else is doing it. What we don't realize is that we are losing ourselves while trying to fit in with others. We end up doing things that we normally wouldn't even think about doing- like taking drugs. Giving into peer pressure usually means self-destruction. However, there are a few positives. Peer pressure can also be about our friends pushing us out of our comfort zones because they want us to get the complete high school experience. At times, we could be pressurized into doing the right things like being more goal oriented, working on our physical fitness or learning a new technology or an art form.

The easiest way to deal with peer pressure is to leave the friends that don't accept us the way we are and force us to change. We have to be ourselves, remember our values and find friends who like us for who we are.

All in all, we teenagers, are confused human beings, who have struggles that may not seem minute but in reality, they are. We need to learn to stand up for what we believe in and learn to man-up and deal with our troubles. While we may not be adults, we aren't children anymore, which means we know what's good for us. This is the time when we have to start acting responsibly and not succumb to any kind of pressure.

We may not be able to control the situation and its consequence, but we definitely can control our attitude and how we deal with it.

Courtesy: Dhruvi Wala



REFLECTIONS ON THE LOCKDOWN

By Darinn Carvalho, Grade 9

“When asked if my cup is half full or half empty, my only response is - I am thankful I have a cup”.

As I ponder on these lines, I look at the situation around me; never had we imagined that we would be at a standstill today, in this century, by a virus. My knowledge of science had convinced me that illnesses are something of the past, nothing to be feared about anymore, vaccines and treatments are available for every known ailment and then it hit me....what about the unknown?

As 2020 rolled in, with so much happiness and fun- the start of the new decade as we called it, the start of all things good and new, new resolutions, new hobbies, etc. The past few weeks have turned it into a horror story, a nightmare unfolding before our eyes daily- the Coronavirus, a disease with no cure.

My parents are not the type to sit at home with a simple cough or cold, let alone a mild fever and honestly, I grew up with the same attitude. But soon their confident and relaxed attitudes started changing as they heard the news daily. Their fears turned to paranoia when the lockdown got initiated in India. I personally thought it was too much fuss over a common cold just because it is caused by a virus which has no cure right? We have immune systems for that. But no one seemed to pay attention to what I said. I was ignored and overlooked. A simple sneeze in class during the final days of school term got me such a weird reaction from my friends, that they bolted to the other end of the class like I was an untouchable. A mad dog with rabies. Luckily, just as the lockdown was initiated, my spring break begun.

Thankfully it was not the Christmas season because then I would have been really upset. So now it honestly didn't bother me too much, as I am more of a homebody, a loner and introvert, happy in my own company... well most of the time. So nothing pleased me more to just be at home, chill out in front of the television, with the air conditioning on full blast and Dad's delicious recipes rolling out daily. In fact I had it all planned out, 10 episodes of anime daily along with two manga comics from my unlimited library. It was pure bliss... at the start.

After a week, things started to change. I started getting restless with Mom and Dad at home too, daily, from morning to night. It began to get to me in a weird way. The constant updates on the news of our area getting quarantined, the fear of going out to buy essentials, going fully masked and gloved like getting suited up as an action hero ready to take on the enemy, the constant need to wash or sanitise your hands. It started to worry me more than I would admit. I tried to ignore the conversations between my parents as they heard the news daily- sometimes even twice or thrice a day initially, especially when they spoke about friends and colleagues they knew who were infected. Deep down I felt the fear creeping into me too. When would the situation get better? What if it got worse?

Mom and Dad tried their best to keep things around me as normal as possible. They tried to hide their concern from me but I sensed it. They made me take up new hobbies like drawing and sketching my favourite anime characters along with reading. I pursued it with a fevered passion, keeping a target of three days per book, just not to let my mind wander and of course the plus point of being immersed in a totally different and happy world. And just when all was going well, the onset of the new term of school beginning brought on the emergence of an additional cause for anxiety. Don't get me wrong, it's not that I don't like school or anything, it was getting accustomed to something new- virtual online classes. I had the experience of a few online classes during the spring break from workshops and music sessions, but school? I wasn't prepared for that. The first couple of days, like most teens with raging hormones, I was filled with irritation. It was nothing like my past experiences of online classes. One could constantly hear me yelling, "Ma.. the internet has conked... now look what you've done... can you please disconnect other gadgets from the wifi?.. I missed assembly yet again... Ma'am's going to be pissed at me... Dad can I use your laptop? Mine seems to have frozen...All can hear ma'am ... why can't I? Should I use headphones?"

Mom and Dad are usually the calm types who never shout back, but now they too seemed to be under the stress of the lockdown. They both screamed back at me, "Its high time you check your gear before class starts. You are big enough to handle your own things," etc. etc. as they had their own issues- the ghar ka khana has to be done, dusting karna hai... will only sweeping suffice today? Does the swabbing need to be done too? etc. etc. Things were more difficult as now not only the house maid but also the cook was absent and under lockdown. No way any virtual online cleaning or cooking session could help them. But we've all learned to cope in our own ways as the days passed. We learnt to adapt to the situation. In no time we landed up finding fun things to do, like watching movies together- a common passion we all share as a family and trust me there is no greater joy than watching horror movies in the dark, cheating at monopoly or cards, playing old board games of Life, ludo and snakes and ladders- my childhood favourite, rebuilding old lego sets, following in Dad's footsteps by trying out new recipes, doing yoga together etc.

All in all, this lockdown has shown me how to take care of my mind, how flexing the muscles of the mind daily help in controlling one's fears and anxieties, how to take care of my body with good hygiene and exercise and most of all, how to take care of my soul. It made me realise that most of us take little things for granted. Spending time with my family made me realise that I should always be thankful for life's simple pleasures, being surrounded by the family I love, safe in the confines of my cosy home, with food on my table, good health and the sound of laughter...

Because at the end of the day it's not the happy people who are thankful but the thankful people who are happy.



THANK YOU PODAR!

By Shritanjoy Bhatia, Alumni 2018

I joined Podar in the sixth Grade. It has been a pleasure to be a part of such a school throughout secondary and high school. I would say there are a lot of experiences at Podar that have helped me in my career, journey at university, and setting a foundation.

It is rare to find a school that has such a personalized and unique path for each student. This personal touch has made a lifelong connection with each teacher who has taught me from grade six to twelve.

The application process to university became so smooth after being in a school where each teacher, and coordinator personally knew me. My applications would not have been as strong, without the stunning reference and recommendation letters that I received.

I got into ten out of the eleven universities that I had applied to. I decided to go to UBC, with an eighty-thousand-dollar scholarship.

At UBC, I founded the first ever cricket club. I garnered more than four thousand dollars worth of sponsorship, and had more than hundred paid members within the first four months of commencement.

A lot of this was inspired by my experience as the senior sports captain at Podar. Studying Canadian Literature, Mathematics, and Economics was a lot easier after receiving top quality education from such qualified teachers at Podar.



One.

The Gods.

It's their concern.

From Hindu's Lord Varuna
to the divine blue boy Krishna,
From Poseidon, Greek God of sea
to the Goddess Mazu, as in Chinese,
All shed tears when beautiful coastlines
are encroached by ugly, acrid pipelines
The distraught heavens and angels cry
unable to watch their Earth go dry
They created this planet after all
they should fix this pitfall.
It's their concern.

Three.

The Common.

It's their concern.

Indulging in every strife,
They threaten our marine life
To the ocean, they've bid adieu,
Each time, filling it with toxic brew
Living their lives in a self-serving slur,
They've never cared about their future
Heedless, opportunistic, and unmindful
Each fish they see, each reel they pull
Hiding chemicals in their vile inns,
They have to pay for their sins
It's their concern.

Two.

The Royals.

It's their concern.

They're superbly wealthy
So, cost is their responsibility
They pay for all, it's called equity,
it's what's only fair for you and me
In debt and poverty, we need finance,
fundings from the elite is our chance
To protect pearly corals in our seas,
let's impose giant austere duties
They must repair all the loss,
they can buy this chaos.
It's their concern.

Four.

The Peasants.

When we transgress,

They always clear our mess
No, no. We're not being 'blunt'
In our society, they are the servants
Some drown in circulating ocean gyres
Few get marine infections, breathe hellfire
They bear the consequence, it's a bummer,
But it's fair, because they hold no power
The ocean water is their sole livelihood
They keep it clean, as they should
It's their concern.

Five.

The Animals.

It's their concern.
Protecting one's abode
How can that be our load?
Our purpose is to be economical
What humans do stays indispensable
If birds and turtles get stuck in plastic,
How do we become abusive and toxic?
It's survival of the fittest, a game of dice
Humans pollute within need; not choice
Animals should strive, survive, thrive
Protect themselves and stay alive
It's their concern

Six.

The Chain of Being.

Tiptop, tiptop, tiptop, tiptop, tiptop.
Each blue droplet is a sorrowful teardrop

Every single time you blame others, you hide behind
Turning your back on the ocean, acting foolish and blind

Is it because you never seem to care or never seem to dare?
Criticizing others, disregarding all the signs that say 'BEWARE!'

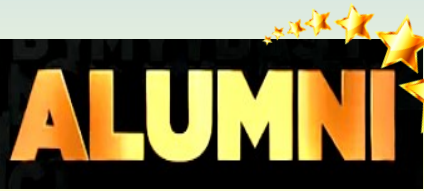
No, no, it's not me, it's them, it's those on the Great Chain of Being!
But you ignore that you're a part too, it's a change we ALL must bring!

Untreated sewage, poisonous pesticides and all the sickening garbage...
It's our fault, our responsibility, our obligation to resolve this wreckage

Life, oxygen, climate, remedy, recreation: the oceans are magnanimous
Then, why being its prime beneficiaries, we create such a huge ruckus?

Oh dear, the old phrase has a literal meaning now, let me quote:
Remember little ones, "We're all sailing in the same boat"

Ocean is our saviour, our unifier, it's our mother
It's always our pride, majesty and honour!
Let's all be droplets of our ocean
It's our concern.



THE MASSACRE OF ORADOUR SUR GLANE

By Vanshika Sood, Alumni 2020

The massacre of Oradour sur glane was the war of greed
Where innocent lives were taken even when they pleaded to be freed

The conditions never got better, they worsened for the worse
It felt like drowning in water; fully submerged

I saw homes being banished and people beaten to bleed
I saw children screaming for their mothers who were snatched from them mercilessly

I couldn't help but wonder what ever happened to our peaceful little town?
What deed did we commit that turned our world upside down?

Was it the old lady that lived by the river?
Did she commit the horrifying deed to feed the stomach of those in need
Or
Was it every other citizen of this little town who put others before their own selves, and stood united from ground?

But of course the truth doesn't matter, it never did
What good would my testimony do if no one believed in it?

Who would ever believe that my town was as pure as gold
And it wasn't my peoples neck but the Waffen SS soldiers neck to behold

"I fear no evil for you are with me"
started the mortician with a voice so lowly
Then began my wife with her eulogy
Tear stained cheeks and a figure now so bony, I hardly recognised the woman she once used to be

"Oh dear husband your soul lays buried deeply
For it was not of you, none of us could be flying so freely

In your eyes laid courage and in your heart kindness that one won't be able to reap

But like the Phoenix rose from the ashes, and Jesus from the dead you shall too dear husband
Although until then, goodbye is all that is said"

While she laid down the body and lowered the casket
It's in that moment when I realised that I was actually dead

Was my sacrifice a gain or was it all for vain?
An answered I'd never know
But what I did know was that I was a fighter and a proud resident of Oradour sur glane

By Aman Mehta, Alumni 2020



Imagine a creature over your head watching all your activities and gaining all insights about what you do on your phone. This creature thrives on creeping into your privacy and gaining information about your life. It's not a time to imagine anymore, it has, sadly, become our reality. In some way, the social media platforms have become an eerie but ubiquitous presence in all our lives.

This article isn't advocating "Science and Technology" but one that brings out all that it has done to psychologically injure us; a necessary **warning** for all of us.

I gained inspiration to write this after watching a documentary on Netflix called, 'The Social Dilemma'. This eye-opener highlights the terror social media imposes upon us. It raises issues of privacy, addiction and mental health on its users. Former employees of Facebook and Twitter come along to show us the ways in which Artificial Intelligence can affect our daily lives for the sole reason that these ruthless companies can gain money.

All throughout school, we often learn about the harm computers and technology can do to us. It was always taught in terms of the physical damage prolonged use of technology can cause; the harm done to your neck, back, eyes and wrists. However, we never extensively learnt the psychological injuries prolonged use can cause.

I have often seen many students taking a "social media break" during exam season (I did this too). If we are so aware of its impact on us and our productivity, why haven't we taken bolder steps to get rid of it completely? Even after these small periods of time without it, we usually succumb to it, but I guess it's time for us to control it more than being controlled by it. Do we really want our daily lives to be controlled by a group of programmers who need us to spend as much time as we can on our phones for their commercial benefit.

The dopamine effect. This is the reason why we could spend so much time on social media. Using social media produces and releases dopamine (a hormone that plays a role in how we perceive happiness and is often released upon eating good food or exercising). A small notification on Instagram can be perceived as attention from a social network, leading to the release of dopamine (= gratification and happiness). And, but naturally, the human brain will seek methods to attain more and more gratification. This is the reason why you can mindlessly spend hours and hours on a social media platform without realising or being bored of it. The internet has become an evil and daunting creature that provides us small dopamine treats to lure us into its trap.

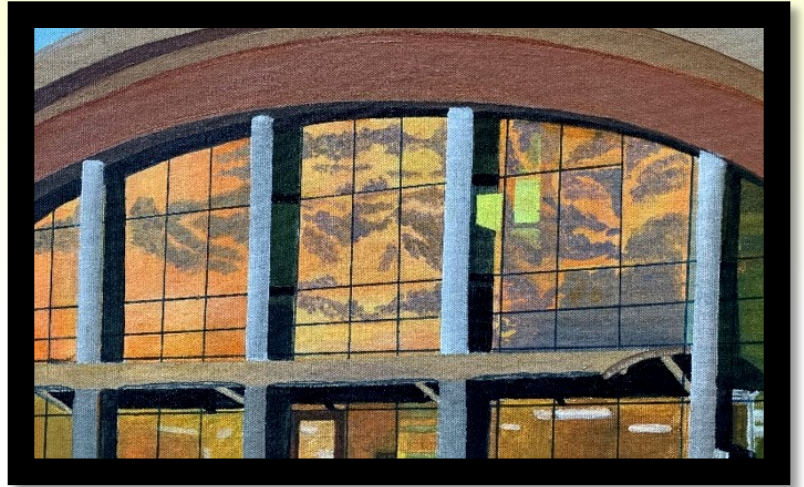
Another reason which makes us stay on the platform for a long time is their clever use of AI. It has learnt our likes and dislikes and it shows us photos and videos in a particular order to maximise our time spent on the platform. Also, many people have the fear of missing out ("FOMO") which makes them addicted to social media because they don't want to be away from a place where most people are present.

There have already been several privacy concerns: bullying, harassment, stalking, hate speech and spread of unsolicited images amongst other issues. In the name of marketing and viewership strategies, these platforms have access to *everything, everything (likes, comments, messages sent, time spent looking at a photo or a video, etc.) you do on social media. Big Brother is always watching.*

Amongst these concerns regarding mental health, privacy, addiction and academic performance, there are a few things that we must do to moderate, rather than completely stop, our use of social media. The first thing you could do is turn off all notifications from the application, this will instantly reduce your time spent on it since you get rid of the urgency to respond to every notification. Second, you should check your time spent on your phone (it really will be an eye opener) and there are many options present to lock the application after a set amount of time. You might just go the distance and take extreme measures to get rid of it all at once.



By Eryn Wali, Alumni 2020



By Dr. Anju Rani Yadav, Psychology Faculty & Therapist

Being in the negative frame of mind is extremely difficult, challenging and stressful. None of us want to be in that frame of mind. The major issue with these negative thoughts is that they occur automatically. You might consciously try to control them but you will notice that your mind constantly leads you to those same thoughts.

Therefore, it's important to bring about a change in these negative thoughts.

The first step towards doing this is to identify your current **Thinking style**.

Are you rating yourself in terms of your success or failure in every situation? Then you are involved in the 'Black and White' thinking distortion.

Similarly, there are various cognitive distortions or faulty thinking patterns such as Overgeneralization, Catastrophizing or jumping to conclusions. If you use any of these unhelpful thinking patterns then you might be distorting the reality and giving some irrational explanations for your behavior.

An awareness about these cognitive distortions makes people simply ignore or just tell themselves to stop thinking negatively. This provides only temporary solution but deep down you are dumping all these negative thoughts in your unconscious mind. So rather than suppressing these thoughts face them and deal with them. One way is by maintaining a **thought diary** where you must record the situation in which your negative thoughts got triggered, what were the thoughts specifically and what emotions you experienced. This will help you to understand the reason behind your irrational thought processes and also help you remove all the negative thoughts on a paper.

The next strategy that you can use is being **mindful**. This can be done by sitting in a quiet place in a relaxed manner. Focus on your breathing and then try to detach yourself from all the negative thoughts.

Another way to deal with this is to be more **assertive**. Your inner critical voice will stop you from doing certain actions and thus you will end up in the same miserable thought pattern. So take the step of being assertive, practice it with your own self at home and then implement it in the real world situations.

Lastly, if you feel that you are struggling with your negative thought patterns and these thoughts are impacting your life decisions then you can seek help from a Cognitive Behaviour Therapist (CBT) who can help you change your negative thought patterns to positive ones and help you take rational decisions.

By Rohit Vaswani, Mathematics Faculty

For a lot of you I might be this nerdy math soul living the so called boring life of a math teacher, though I'd bet on anything to disagree that, only to be fortunate to see this surreal world of mathematics and experience the beauty of it but I'd let that be a discussion for some other time. Today, I would like to talk about something that I am equally passionate about (Yes! There exists one over and above math) and that's TRAVEL.

I think the nomad bug in me brings out the best side of me when I travel and experience different cultures, meet different people, experience the food and just the whole world that it takes you is something I wouldn't be wrong in saying that I truly live for. This year however due to the global pandemic unfortunately all our travel plans went kaput. On my patio, as I sat one day a thought just crossed my mind, where would I rather quarantine had I known something like this were to happen. Came in, a rush of places, architecture, food and all the other things that I had experienced in my previous trips.

So I thought, let me share my top 3 spots where I would rather quarantine myself

Pick 1:

The sand dunes of Jaisalmer desert. Sleep under the open sky and trip on the dunes. The idea of isolation has not been a strange one. In my travels, every now and then, I seek the most distant location (as much as I can) away from civilization (very difficult in India) and choose a spot with the best look out. The less the number of people the better it is. Perhaps it's perfect with your best friends and with the few chosen ones (or may I add with the chosen one). But life is imperfect. Only if, I could, foresee the future, I would have escaped to this place my soul fancies. To settle my mind at and perch my lower half at, while I do absolutely nothing. Alright, maybe sip on some 'garam' chai (coz finding less sweet and proper proportioned coffee here can be a task) and stare at the horizon, sky, clouds, moon and sun despite the mercury retrograde

Pick 2:

The pristine, uncorrupted and tranquil land of waterfalls at the Havasupai Indian reservation. The air, water and earth at Havasupai is the most immaculate, uninterrupted and raw, of all I have experienced. Every adjective is an understatement to describe this surreal landscape. Situated at 8 miles away from the nearest road, it needs walking down the canyon and then in between them for 5 – 6 hours to reach this magical land. Here the nature speaks to you with a constant humming, only that she does it without the humming. The camping grounds are situated between two deep/long waterfalls. The sound of water is constant and the ground feels like nature's cradle which soothes you with a lullaby. It's calming and grounding. Without a doubt, the undisputed champion of place to do absolutely nothing but surrender to the energy of the earth.

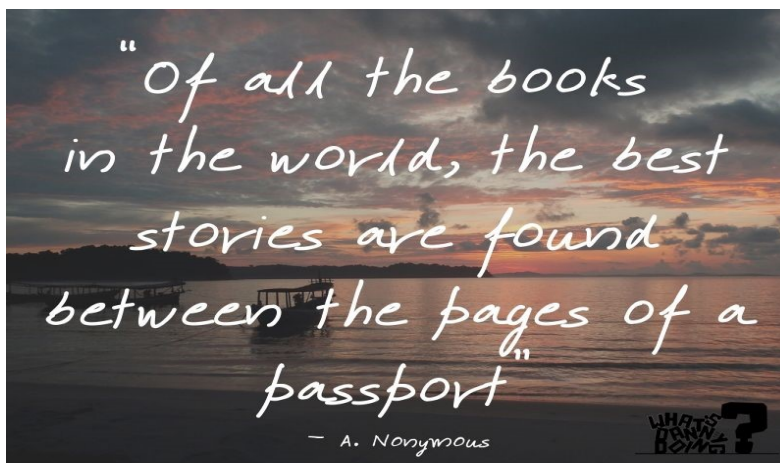
Pick 3

On the dock by the clear lake in Ely, Minnesota. Ely is serene, peaceful, calm and situated deep in the great lakes zone. It is surrounded by lush green landscape and magical clouds. Each day here is like a tranquil vacation. The lakes are blue, clear and refreshing. Hidden behind the birch trees and foliage are exquisite Lake Homes with docks protruding out of each one of them. Any dock here is just great to spend your time. So many memories here in just 5 days. We spent day time jumping in the lake, sometimes just sitting and staring at the water, clouds and distant canoes. Evenings were spent gazing at the colorful sunset followed by the bonfire. Some evenings of course we set out on canoe to say hello to the lake – spirit right in the center of us. Nights were spent gazing at the stars (super theatrical). Late nights were spent listening to the Loon mating calls and the subsequent replies from across the lake. Even if not quarantined, I am sure I can spend weeks and months in Ely without seeking much .Absolutely magical.

Finally, best advice I can give to the young enthusiasts -

Be a traveler and not a tourist. Life is not meant to be lived in one place. Travel as much as you can, as far as you can, as long as you can. So much of who we are is where we have been. Explore and evolve!

On that note, I shall sign out only in the hope to travel very soon.



By Parbati Roy, Physics Faculty

“I have no special talent, I am only passionately curious”. ---- A. Einstein

His philosophy proves helpful and inspirational for online learning in today's world. Space age technology is one of many disciplines which amalgamates his views with STEM Education.

STEM education benefits the learner by fostering creativity, the highest level in Bloom's Taxonomy, aided by experimentation, teamwork, adaptation, problem solving, building resilience and use of technology.

Application of four disciplines of STEM, viz; science, technology, engineering & mathematics to various aspects of study on 'Space' is noteworthy. I wish to draw attention of Podar International School students to the NASA STEM engagement program for grades 9 to 12.

Space has fascinated mankind for generations. One of the most leading organisations in space research is NASA --- National Aeronautics and Space Administration formed in 1958 in Florida, USA.

To mention a few of NASA's STEM research--- the first that comes to my mind is to **simulate a model rocket launch**. This meets many standards like science as inquiry and mathematics as problem solving. **Rocket modeller** is a simulator that is used to design and check the flight of a model rocket. Various design variables can be changed like size, shape, fins, nose cone, materials for each component. The software calculates the weight, drag co-efficient, centre of gravity and pressure of the rocket to determine its stability. The students can then launch the rocket and observe its flight trajectory. Students can record the data and fly rockets on Earth, Moon or Mars.

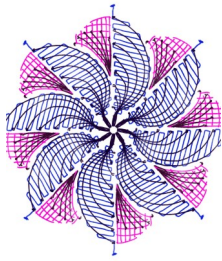
Another STEM worth mentioning is **build your own MARS rover**. The JPL open source rover is a six-wheel rover design to explore the surface of Mars --- which was intended to be a teaching-learning experience for those who want to pursue mechanical engineering, electronics and robotics. This caters to creativity which is the highest level in Bloom's taxonomy.

There are many other activities like building a **multistage rocket**, **how to become an astronaut** and how to **make stomp rockets** --- to name just a few. Students can also take virtual tours of commercial crew facilities, Hubble control centre and explore the solar system.

Writing about space without mentioning ISS --- **International Space Station** would be an incomplete article. **STEM on station for students** is an effort to bring the experience of living in space and know about the space station into the classrooms with videos, web page and infographics. Projects like **EarthKAM** and **ARISS** have made it possible for students to be involved in ISS programme. Projects like Amateur Radio on International Space Station (ARISS) helped students make radio contacts with crew members directly.

Hopefully, with this short and brief article, I have been able to inspire the next generation of Podarites to grow into next generation innovators, thinkers and scientific crusaders, who can surely achieve the pinnacle of success.

TOUCH THE SKY WITH GLORY



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