

E-ZINE



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SEMPER IUVENIS

HEAD TEACHER'S WELCOME

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This edition of the e-zine brings into sharp focus some of the issues which our students consider of vital importance. I am continually impressed with the level of thought, debate and intellect demonstrated in these literary pearls of wisdom and the format of this wonderful publication continually delivers at the highest level. In many ways, this issue gets to the heart of some era-defining themes which are of interest to young people: toxic masculinity, corporate global dominance and the cost-of-living crisis are amongst the hot topics in this edition.

If we delve deeper into some of these issues, there is an undeniable desire for our students to understand and process the world around them. Our school values of kindness and integrity are often at odds with the greed, violence, intolerance and selfishness that we often see portrayed on other online platforms and social media. The e-zine is a suitable tonic for these challenges and underlines the importance of free speech and intellectual exchange as a vehicle for social change. If we are to engage young people in politics, charitable activity and benevolent work, we need to be able to understand the difficulties of society in order to confront them adequately. I am continually impressed with the determination of our young people to do this and I praise the Aston spirit which is expressed in the words and images of the e-zine.

As ever, I would like to record my thanks to Mr McBrien and the editorial team for putting things together and I really hope you enjoy reading/scrolling/sharing what you are about to witness.

With my very best wishes,

Mr Brady



MUSIC, SOUND, DECORATE.

"IF ART IS HOW WE DECORATE SPACE,
MUSIC IS HOW WE DECORATE TIME."

GUITAR- MY JOURNEY

After two years of playing the ukulele in primary school I transferred to the guitar in Year 5. I found the guitar to be much different to play because of its size and wider variety of songs that I can play on it. Like a lot of things, taking on something new was a real challenge to begin with and so I can't say that I enjoyed it immediately. However, after I was shown a video of a great guitarist called Amin Toufanni playing a piece he had composed himself which was named Gratitude, I was mesmerised and had created a target for myself, a target to persevere with the guitar and to become as good as him. Since then, I have grown up to become passionate for the guitar as it has opened up a whole new world for me.

This motivation is what fuelled me, and when the annual talent show for my school came around when I was in Year 6, I took the opportunity and played "Believer" by Imagine Dragons on guitar, in which I won!

As I had won, I was invited to judge the performances for the next year's talent show. And, I still remember that winning feeling when I won... And it seems as though history is repeating itself as I have been picked to be a finalist in the house festival of music this year, and my aim is to win.

Whilst there are many things I like about the guitar (becoming one with the music and having many different rhythms I can play) there are also some challenges that come with the guitar. First of all, I find it quite difficult to stretch my fingers to the correct fret and string and I also find it quite difficult to pluck the strings with my right hand whilst also changing the fret on the neck of the guitar with my left hand. However, I believe I am overcoming these difficulties and are learning new ways to master these challenges every day.

This year I have been part of the rock band is King Edward's Aston, where I have been the lead guitarist. The opportunities I am receiving here are very rewarding. In my last performance, we performed Smells Like Teen Spirit and Back in Black, I was very grateful to have a solo in it, as it had really allowed my talents to show. We are also still working together in order for the concert next term where we will be performing Smoke On the Water and other big hits, I hope you can be there to watch us.

Danial Rayhan - Year 8



CHOPIN- PIANO



Over the past few months, I have taken up the colossal task of learning the Ballade No.1 Op.23 In G minor, by Frederic Chopin. The Ballade is notoriously difficult, not just in a technical sense but in a musical sense. With awkward transitions between sections and at 10 minutes in length, it is difficult to play the piece with the sense of it being whole.

The piece can be split into 3 themes that comprise its several sections. Theme A is a dark, sorrowful theme that as it nears the end becomes increasingly animated, leading to a constant build-up of tension until resolving into a powerful series of arpeggios that release all the tension, introducing Theme B.

CHOPIN- CONTINUED

Chopin yet again hikes up the tension as this section concludes and we cascade down the piano into the introduction of the brand-new Theme C. Theme C is energetic and light and rather hectic, a stark contrast to anything we have heard before this point. As per usual, another build-up of tension and at this point everything starts getting very frantic until we resolve into Theme B again. This time theme B feels a bit more like home. It's very reminiscent of the first version of Theme B, except this time it carries the some of the energy we built up during Theme C. We haven't entirely resolved but it feels like we are anticipating something.

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That something being the transition back to Theme A, and back home in a sense. The character of Theme A is like the first time we hear it; dark, brooding, and mysterious. This time we have absolutely no idea where it will go. Will there be a theme D? Will we return to theme B yet again?

Chopin decides after 8 minutes on his emotional rollercoaster that all good things must come to an end. The coda marks the end of the piece, and a dramatic ending it is. It is undoubtedly the hardest part of the piece and hard to interpret as well. You can easily get lost in its technical difficulties that you forget how intricate it actually is.

Now try piece all those themes together convincingly in a single performance. It's so contrasting and honestly, Chopin doesn't do us any favours with some of the transition between themes. There is undoubtedly something in this piece that you will enjoy, no matter how much you dislike classical music. After all, if its survived 190 years, it has to be somewhat enjoyable.

Performing classical music is not dull or boring or an exercise in following rules. There is a grey area between adhering to the composer's instructions and doing whatever you want, and it is here where you can display your own creativity and tastes in a way that ultimately serves the music. There are countless phenomenal works of classical music, and I would like to list a few, in the hope you may listen to them.

Zakiriya Sikander Year 12



SPORT. MENTAL & PHYSICAL.

**"A TROPHY CARRIES DUST.
MEMORIES LAST FOREVER"**

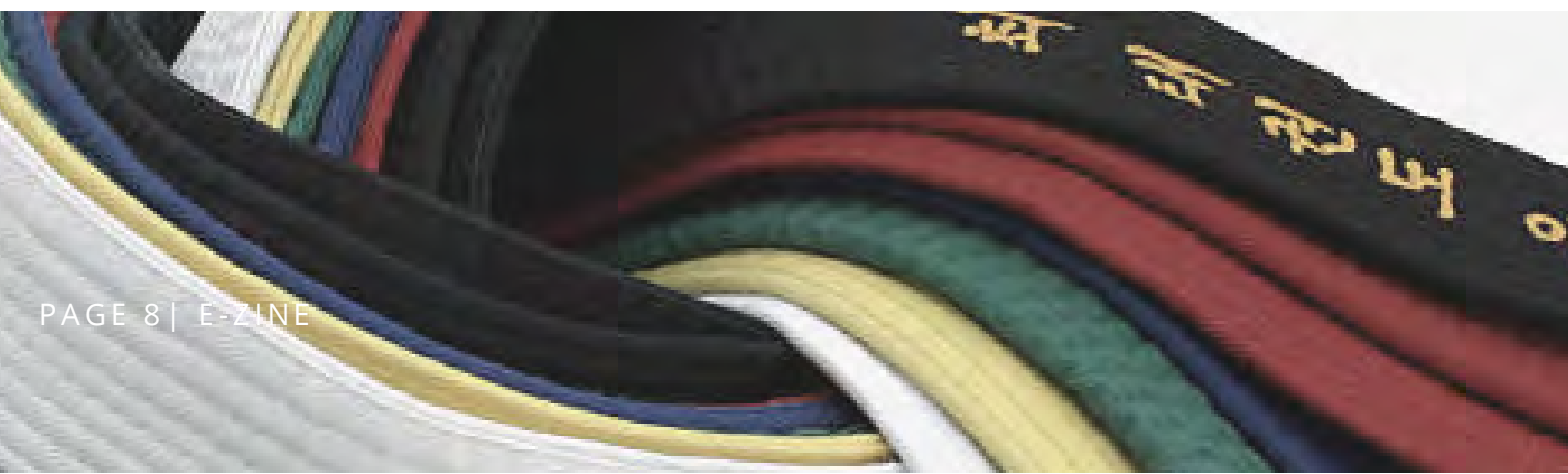
TAE-KWON-DO

Tae-Kwon-Do was founded in 1973 by Choi Hong-hi who was a South Korean Army General. While Tae-Kwon-Do originated in Korea it is now a popular sport all around the world. The words Tae-Kwon-Do mean "The way of the foot and fist" and it is made up of a wide range of kicks and blocks designed primarily for self- defense. Many people practice the sport just for fun and to keep fit, some of the moves look amazing. For Tae-Kwon-Do, you need to have powerful kicks and blocks but also you must be agile and smart with movement.

As Tae-Kwon-Do began to gain popularity, it was adopted by the Korean military and was used as a means of physical training and keeping the soldiers fit for war.

To earn a grade in Tae-Kwon-do you must know your patterns, these are combinations of moves used to practice technique. The patterns improve strength, balance and concentration and they change for every belt and increase in difficulty. You also need to learn specific Korean words which translate to something related to Tae-Kwon-Do. Furthermore, you need to revise the origin of your pattern. It would be better if you memorise it and perfect it because you can obtain a grading award. If you get to black belt, you must do similar patterns, however, you do not get a better belt, you get a golden stripe called a "Dan".

Olivier Wieremiewicz – Year 8



THE CHESS INSIDER

Chess is said to have originated in India in the 7th century. It was played on a 64-square board and had the same number of pieces as the modern game (32 pieces). At that time, the pieces were based on the four different divisions of the military: infantry, cavalry, elephantry, and chariotry. Each piece was handmade and exquisitely carved to closely resemble what it was representing. The pieces developed over the centuries into the pieces we use in modern-day chess: the pawn, knight, bishop, rook, queen, and king. A brief summary of how each of the modern-day pieces can move on the board is as follows:

- Pawn: moves straight
- Knight: moves in L shape by two vertically or horizontally
- Bishop: moves diagonally
- Rook: moves vertically or horizontally
- Queen: can move either like a bishop or a rook
- King - moves by one in any direction

The objective is to checkmate the opponent. The idea of checkmate is that whatever move the opponent makes, their king will be taken on the next. When the game first began in India, checkmate didn't exist. Later, when the game was introduced to Persia, the idea of checkmate was created, said as "shah mat" (literally "the king is helpless"). Prior to this, it had been possible for one player to take their opponent's king off the board. There are also additional variants of chess, like atomic, antichess, king of the hill, racing kings, and many more which have slightly different objectives.

Chess competitions happen all the time. They can be either online, or over the board. The recent additions of online chess websites such as Chess.com or Lichess.org have made the access to playing chess much easier. This has helped to fuel an enormous increase in popularity of chess, which might be contrary to people's expectations in modern times. In particular, during the COVID pandemic lockdown, chess websites received a massive increase of activity on their servers. In addition, chess has been appearing in newspapers much more frequently, and even popular chess-related dramas (such as The Queen's Gambit) are credited with enthusing new players to take up the sport. Furthermore, being able to watch competitions like the World Chess Championship with top players like Magnus Carlsen (the world's current best chess player), has also made more people interested in the game.

CONTD...

Computer chess engines have had a major impact on the game of chess. The first time a computer beat a human in an official game was in 1996 when DeepBlue defeated Garry Kasparov. Since then, the competition between human and computer has continued, with engines such as Alphazero and Stockfish leading the way. Stockfish is currently the strongest engine, with an Elo rating of 4023, far exceeding the highest human rating of 2882 held by Magnus Carlsen. Accessible online, Stockfish and other engines have influenced playing style and introduced new tactics into the game. However, the availability of engines has also led to cheating in games, with anti-cheat systems now commonplace on chess websites.

Chess has been one of my favourite pastimes for as long as I can remember. I first learned to play the game with my parents, and it's still one of our favourite activities to do together. Over time, I've become more invested in the game and have found myself exploring new resources online. Now, I can easily find similarly rated players and enjoy challenging games with different openings, middlegames, and endgames.



People often ask me if playing chess ever gets boring, but I always respond with a resounding "no." There are endless possibilities for each move, and the number of potential variations is mind-boggling. It's hard to believe that a 64-square board with just 16 pieces each can contain more potential variations than there are atoms in the universe! And if that's not enough to keep things interesting, there are different time controls and game variants like bullet and atomic chess.

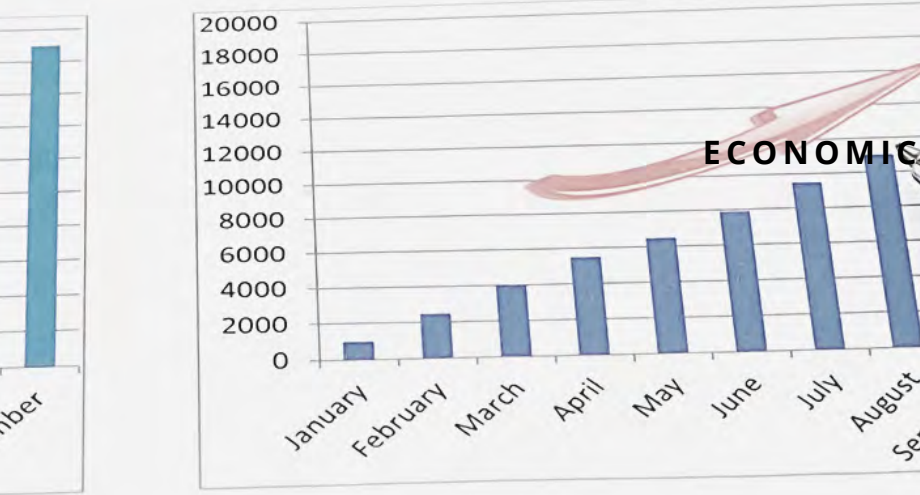
Chess is a game that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and skill levels, making it a great hobby to pursue. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced player, there are always opportunities to learn and improve. By taking advantage of the many resources available online and at school, you can develop your chess skills and even compete against others in a friendly and supportive environment. So if you're looking for a challenging and rewarding activity to engage in, give chess a try and meet me in W2 every Wednesday lunchtime.

Darius Rahmati - Year 9

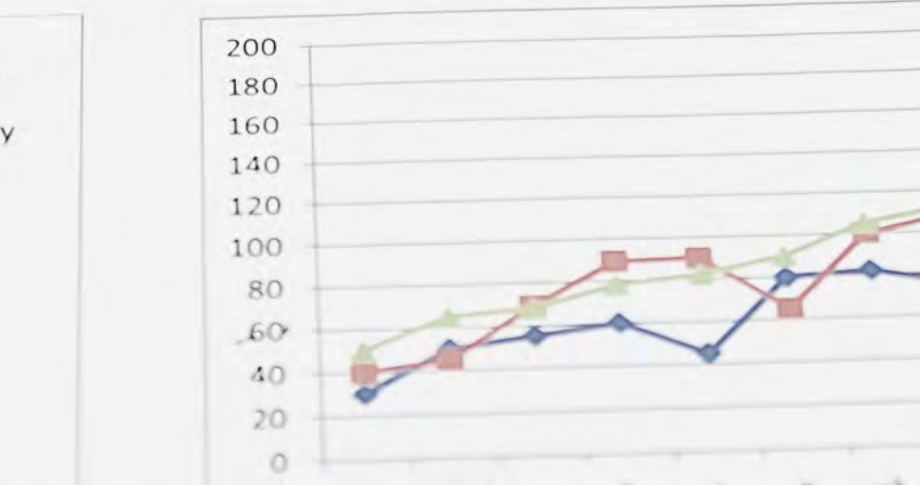



2012	2011	2010	2009
\$ 2,126	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,894	\$ 2,000
4,144	4,000	2,470	2,100
184	111	2,100	1,000
9,479	9,700	24,300	11,000
4,447	1,000	6,398	1,000
14	60	128	60
\$ 20,988	\$ 17,971	\$ 34,897	\$ 20,100
\$ 2,839	\$ 1,114	\$ 4,181	\$ 1,000
1,990	(111)	2,093	1,000
(458)	(50)	(973)	1,100
4,152	4,081	7,839	2,500
528	66	877	1,050
(1,074)	(954)	(2,242)	(1,951)
\$ 7,994	\$ 8,165	\$ 15,197	\$ 15,281

MONEY, BANKING, BUSINESS.



ECONOMICS - AN INTRODUCTION





IS AMAZON
HEADING FOR
A "GLOBAL
TAKE OVER"
OF THE ENTIRE
RETAIL
SECTOR?

AMAZON'S GLOBAL TAKEOVER - ARMAAN CURRIM - YEAR 8

AMAZON-TAKEOVER



The greatest e-commerce giant was born when Jeff Bezos founded Amazon in 1994, starting an online book shop that barely got any attention during the early internet days. In the last 2.9 decades, Amazon has evolved into what is becoming the operating platform of the digital economy. Jeff Bezos has been disciplined and single-minded in his vision of investing in the most enduring consumer wants: price, convenience, and selection. Today, the question is not whether Amazon can survive as a business but whether we the consumer can survive without Amazon?

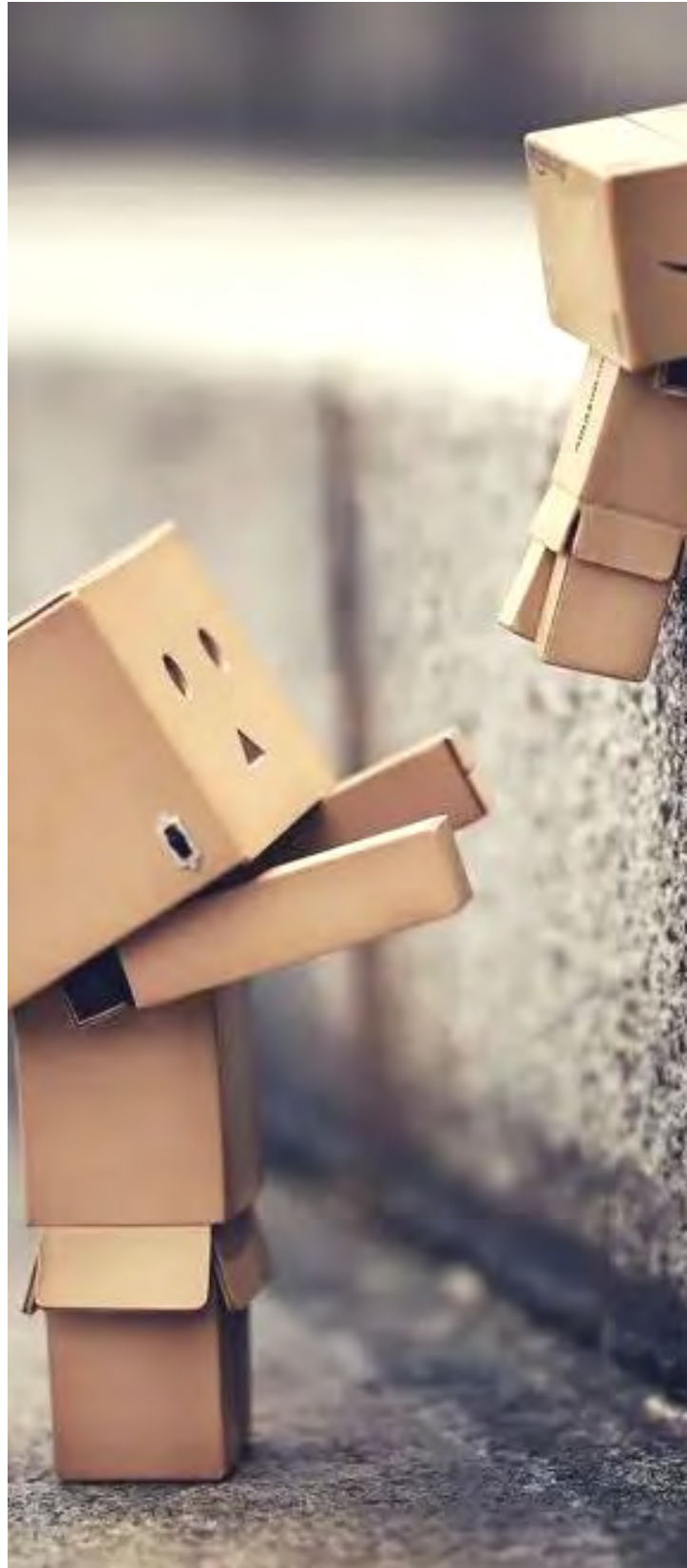
Amazon is now the most well-positioned marketplace the Western World has ever seen. Last year, they did \$127.1 billion in revenue and every year that figure continues to grow. As time goes on, Amazon seems to be expanding their reach and market share. To date, the e-commerce giant has over 10 marketplaces across the globe, from the obvious: Europe and North America- to places like: Japan, China, India and now Australia.

AMAZON

The company's cash flow is constantly pumped into developing new avenues. They launched the Echo smart speaker a few years ago and have now launched Amazon Alexa. When the Amazon Echo entered the market in 2015, it kicked off a new wave of demand for voice-activated smart speakers. At the time, it was unclear whether a large segment of the population would use a smart speaker, but consecutive years of rising sales are putting those worries to rest. Amazon is also aggressively buying out companies who are selling large volumes of products through this platform - which will make them the manufacturer, supplier and retailer.

In 2017, Amazon bought `Whole Foods` - for about \$13.7 billion. The acquisition allowed Amazon to step into the existing demand and largely decreased supply risk while offering up consumable products to online customers. It also managed to cause concerns across the grocery retail sector - even the major superstore chains, such as Walmart, have reason to worry.

“Is Amazon out to rule the world?” Bloomberg television wondered as Amazon was announcing its entry into streaming with its Fire TV streaming technology. One of the commentators for the segment, Shahid Khan of Media morph, asserted that Amazon's objective was indeed “world domination” Khan cautioned, “you cannot dominate the world if you don't control the living room.” And that's exactly what Amazon did.



AMAZON-TAKEOVER

Amazon started producing original television shows that attained Bezos's goal of winning an Oscar. Amazon Studios focuses largely on shows and films released through its Amazon Prime Video service, and its original content is one of the reasons for the rapid growth in Amazon Prime memberships in recent years. The company has made its biggest mark on the Hollywood awards circuit with the show `Transparent`, which has fared well at both the Golden Globes and the Emmys. It also resulted in Amazon and Bezos' first shout-out on stage after the show's Golden Globe win in 2015.

Other than winning awards for films and television, Amazon also started up a number of in-house clothing brands and are opening up brick and mortar bookstores in several major cities. It has made no secret of wanting to become a major fashion retailer in the coming years, investing heavily in promoting itself as a destination for clothing shoppers, and the push seems to be paying off. According to a recent report by the financial firm `Cowen and Company`, Amazon is on course to become the largest clothing retailer in the US- surpassing Macy's. As its sales continues to grow, fashion will be among the categories leading the way.

Amazon's huge choice beats any department store. Its catalogue of fashion items dwarfs most competitors, as more and more brands ignore the stigma and sell directly through Amazon. Analysts do not expect the most elite luxury brands to start selling on Amazon- such as: Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Rolex and others- but it is already becoming common for more middle-of-the-pack brands. More than 20 brands listed Amazon as a major customer in their disclosures last year, including Hanes, Fossil, and Perry Ellis.

Amazon's ability to offer its consumers millions of goods and then put them in their hands within a day or two - sometimes the same day - without having retail locations is nothing short of a technical marvel. Going forward, Amazon's strong leadership and their vision of the future have put the company in an incredible position. It's a mark of how seriously the corporate world now takes Amazon: when Amazon acts, the world reacts. And as we enter 2023, it is becoming clear that either you're against Amazon, or eventually you might just become part of Amazon. Would this be fair on the other players in the market? How would this affect overall growth of the sector for others- and would this mean most if not all would eventually go out of business? Have governments considered the level of job loss associated with such kind of monopoly?

So is Amazon heading for a global takeover? Ask Alexa.

Armaan Currim - Year 8

INFLATION

Inflation is a rise in prices, which can be translated as the decline of purchasing power over time. The rate at which purchasing power drops can be reflected in the average price increase of a basket of selected goods and services over some period of time. The rise in prices, which is often expressed as a percentage, means that a unit of currency effectively buys less than it did in prior periods. Inflation can be contrasted with deflation, which occurs when prices decline and purchasing power increases.

The cost for many everyday items has been rising lately in the UK and across the world.

In the UK, the price of consumer goods and services rose at the fastest rate in four decades in the year to October 2022. The annual inflation rate rose from 8.8% to 9.2% between January and February 2023. This is lower than the recent peak of 9.6% but remains at highs previously seen around 30 years ago.

The costs of food and non-alcoholic drinks increased at the fastest rate in over 45 years in the year running to February 2023. The biggest supporter of the ascent in food inflation was vegetables, which rose by 18.0% in the year to February 2023 contrasted with 15.5% in January.

There have been media reports of deficiencies of salad produce and different vegetables, supposedly on account of the awful climate in southern Europe and Africa, and the effect of higher power costs on produce grown out of season in nurseries in the UK and northern Europe. Additionally, costs are ascending at record pace in restaurants and cafes, where the annual inflation rate was 11.4% in the year to February 2023, up from 9.4% in January 2023. This came from cost hikes for liquor served in eateries, bistros, and bars.

As well as inflation making it more challenging for human resources (HR) and enrolment offices to draw in the workers they need for jobs, it's likewise making it significantly harder for them to clutch the representatives they as of now have. Subsequently, HR divisions are tracking down that there's presently genuine tension on them to track down ways of persuading current workers to remain with the association and not to leave for another situation with a more significant pay and better circumstances.

To reduce inflation, the government can increase taxes (such as income tax and VAT) and cut spending. This improves the government's budget situation and helps to reduce demand in the economy. But of course, no one wants that, so the government have their hands tied. It's a very sticky situation.

Lawson Akhator-Eneka - Year 9

ECONOMICS...

When most people hear the word “Economics”, these are the first words that spring to mind. While these are undoubtedly important aspects of the subject, they represent only a fraction of what Economics entails. It is a fascinating and complex field that encompasses everything from Game Theory to Econometrics.

Unfortunately, many people have a limited understanding of this subject, and miss out on its real-world relevance and impact. As someone who took this subject at A-level for the first time last September, I hope to help you gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of this field, and go deeper into a branch of Economics which fascinates me.

According to a study by the WWF, more than a third of Earth’s natural resources have been consumed by humans in the past 30 years. This illustrates the fundamental concept that Economics is built around:

The world that we live in only has a limited supply of natural resources, yet human needs and desires are comparatively infinite. Therefore, we must make choices on how best to allocate these resources in order for humanity to obtain the maximum benefit from them. Economics is a study of these choices; through Economics, we can gain insights into how resources can be most efficiently and effectively distributed to create the greatest good for the greatest number of people.





CONTINUED..

Here we see that Economics has a strong link with Psychology. It is deeply intertwined with human behaviour and decision-making processes. This branch of Economics is known as 'Behavioural Economics' which explores how psychological factors influence our economic choices. By examining how people actually behave in real-world situations, rather than relying solely on theoretical models, behavioural economics provides a more nuanced and realistic view of economic decision-making.

Personally, I have taken an interest in this field as it is a more practical way of thinking compared to traditional economic assumptions. I have started reading the book "Thinking, Fast and Slow" by Nobel-prize winning Economist Daniel Kahneman. In the book, he explores the two modes of thinking that shape our judgement and thoughts.

Our brains have a "System 1" which is a fast, intuitive, and automatic mode of thinking, that operates outside of our conscious awareness. It is responsible for many of our quick and effortless judgements. In the book, he gives the example of recognising a familiar face, or finishing a common phrase.

In contrast, "System 2" is a slower, more deliberate, and analytical mode of thinking that requires conscious effort and attention. This system is responsible for more complex and challenging mental tasks, such as solving a maths problem or evaluating a logical argument.

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The theories and concepts we learn in lesson can also be applied to the real world, and we see many of the things that we learn about happening in the news right now. For example, we are currently living through the cost-of-living crisis in the UK for which there have been many causes. The root cause of this crisis however is arguably the rising rate of inflation.

This is when a huge sum of excess money is printed, causing the total amount of money in circulation to significantly increase. As a result, as there is more of it, the value of money decreases which in turn leads to products such as food or services to increase in price. We have seen for ourselves how gas prices, electricity and gas bills, house prices and food have increased in price. Therefore, many of us already have a reasonable understanding of economics without even knowing it, just by living and experiencing economic concepts take place in real time.

If we try our best to solve the fundamental economic problem, if we can allocate the limited amount of resources we have in the most efficient way possible, it is possible solve many world problems that face us. By applying economic principles to issues such as climate change, income inequality and access to healthcare, we can develop more effective policies and strategies towards building a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

Nabeel Hamid 12A



LAND, OF THE, FREE?

FASCISM, WHAT IS IT?

Fascism what is it? Is it what Adolf Hitler stood for? Or is it what the current United States of America stands for? It is stated repeatedly how America is a country of freedom only for those in power to turn their backs on this statement as well as turning their back on the people who helped build their country. In this article, I will expose the truth of the American political system and not only show how the right, but also the left has gone against their vows to make America the land of the free.

Fascism: a way of organizing a society in which a government ruled by a dictator controls the lives of the people and in which people are not allowed to disagree with the government.

HISTORY OF FASCISM IN THE STATES:

'Make America Great Again' was Donald Trump's campaign slogan in the 2016 general election, but what does 'great' mean in this context? Is Donald Trump including the slave trade in this statement? Is he referring to the era of former president Richard Nixon who was impeached for obstruction of justice, abuse of power and contempt of congress?

Fascism has always existed, and like a parasite that you might try to get rid of, once it gets a hold, it only grows bigger and bigger. Fascism is a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation and often race or sex above the individual and stands for a centralised autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader. It results in severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition.

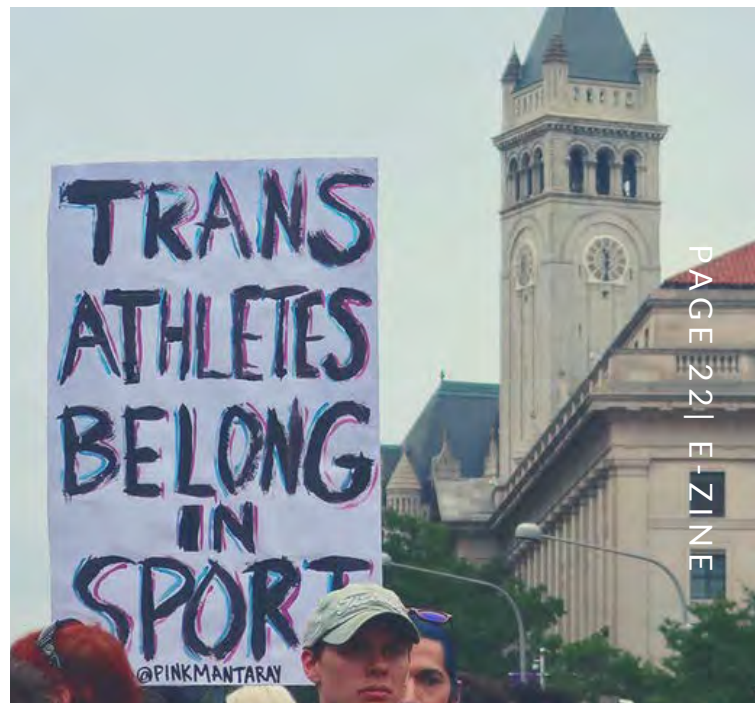


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I know the USA is not currently a dictatorship, but we can see from history that certain key events can impact how subsequent events unfold in the future. An example of this would be the signing of the treaty of Versailles at the end of WW1 which led to the leadership of Adolf Hitler, or the 1939 Nazi rally at Maddison Square Garden. This event was billed as pro American and more than 20,000 people took part. These are the seeds of fascism.

According to the Guardian, the USA is now in an early stage of legal fascism. They believe this because 45 states have considered 230 bills criminalising protest, with the threat of violent leftist and black rebellion being used to justify these bills. How free can a country be where the people are not able to have a voice? That this is happening while multiple electoral bills enabling a Republican state legislature majority to overturn their state's election have been enacted suggests that the true aim of bills criminalising protest is to have a response in place to expected protests against the stealing of a future election (as a reminder of fascism's historical connection to big business, some of these laws criminalise protest near gas and oil lines).

The USA have also supported legislations against the LGBTQ community as well as banning abortion for women. For instance, the governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis (a potential future president), signed a law banning transgender girls from participating on girls' sports teams in middle school through to college.



CONTINUED...

It was just one of 13 anti-trans bills conservative lawmakers in the US passed this year, and one of more than 110 bills that were proposed – by far the largest number in US history. Trans athletes are a minority, and as such they are an easy first target. Sports bills limiting the access of trans girls to teams have been passed this year in Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, and West Virginia.

Bills that more broadly ban trans kids from playing on the teams that match their gender were signed into law in Alabama, Montana, and Tennessee.

In South Dakota, the sports bills failed, but the governor instead signed two executive orders banning trans girls from girls' sports teams in K-12, and in college. There are several states where the legislative sessions are ongoing and these types of bans are still under consideration, including Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. In total more than 60 sports ban laws were proposed this year across 36 states.

It is predominantly male politicians who are pushing to take away the rights of women to have an abortion and they do so on moral grounds, but could there be more to it?

Let us hope that the USA is not going towards a period where people are ruled by complete dictatorships. If that happens then the USA will be the sole thing they swore not to become.

Nihal Sumal – Year 8



NORMANS

While the Normans that invaded England in 1066 came from Normandy in Northern France they were originally descendants of Vikings from Scandinavia. From the eighth century Vikings terrorized European coastlines with raids and plundering. A group of Viking warriors settled in a part of France's coast, Normandy. Over time, they adopted French culture and religion. They then took over Great Britain and southern parts of Europe and left a lasting mark on Europe's society and culture.

At the beginning of the tenth century, the French King, Charles the Simple, had given some land in the North of France to a Viking chief named Rollo. He hoped that by giving the Vikings their own land in France they would stop attacking French territory. From there they would become farmers, join the French economy and be a source of manpower for the king in times of conflict. The land the Normans called home became known as Northmannia, the land of the Northmen. It was later shortened to Normandy.

During Edward the Confessor's (king of England) reign the young duke of the Normans, William, had fought to secure friends and allies, and was looking to extend his power beyond Normandy.

The death of Edward and a lack of a clear line of succession meant William invaded England in 1066. The Battle of Hastings began at 9am on 14 October 1066.

Harold's army was lined up at the top of Senlac Hill, forming a shield wall facing down against William's army.

At the start of the battle, William's archers fired their arrows up towards Harold's army but were struggling to break through the shield wall. William's cavalry then tried to charge up the hill, but they also could not break past the defensive line and were beaten back by Harold's men. Harold's position was looking strong, but William ordered his soldiers to advance part way up the hill and then pretend to retreat. This was hugely effective. Harold's army lost their discipline and started charging down the hill, losing their strong defensive position. William's cavalry were able to get amongst the English army and cause huge damage, as Harold's army had lost the protection of the shield wall and their defensive position at the top of the hill. There is some uncertainty as to how Harold Godwinson died. The Bayeux Tapestry has the words 'Harold is killed' next to a man with an arrow in his eye, but it is impossible to know which soldier is Harold because all of the English soldiers are dressed identically. Harold's remaining soldiers lost motivation when news of his death spread across the battlefield. Some fled, and the ones who stayed to fight were left with little hope.

CONTD...

After the taking of England and its neighbours, different groups began to trickle south, fighting for those who would employ them. They were soldiers of fortune, men from the middling or lower ranks of the aristocracy who had been trained as warriors. These became known as mercenaries, soldiers who would be paid to fight in an army. These soldiers became spreading their influence in Arab countries, Greek states and Italy's islands.

When William vanquished the Anglo-Saxons, he confiscated their estates and introduced a new tenurial system under which he owned all the land. He kept some of it for himself, gave some to the Church and granted the rest to his barons but they had to swear an oath of loyalty to him and supplied him with men for his armies. The barons, in turn, granted part of the land they held to a select group of knights, who also pledged their loyalty. The knights then granted little strips of ground to large numbers of peasants, who worked their lord's fields and gave him a share of their produce. In addition to redistributing England's landed wealth, William altered the basis on which that wealth cascaded down the generations.

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In addition to this, When William reached England, he made his base at Hastings, where he immediately built a wooden keep on a large mound of earth, inside a courtyard enclosed by a palisade and protective ditch. This was the first form of castles built in England and many more would be constructed in stone after that. The Normans erected castles to subdue the native populace and demonstrate their power.

Despite being experts in trade and spreading their culture, the Normans always considered their lands in Normandy as their true home, but by the late-12th century, they had become too widespread and had begun to lose a sense of identity. By the time of the French campaigns in Normandy in 1202, the kingdoms of England and France had become completely different countries.

Antoni Mazur - Year 8



IDOLS, INFLEUNCE, TEENAGERS.

"INSPIRATION, IDOLS, SOCIAL MEDIA.
AGE OF STIMULATION."

ANDREW TATE

Innocent or guilty?

On December 29, 2022, Romanian police performed a night raid on Andrew Tate's property and arrested both him and his brother Tristan Tate on suspicion of human trafficking, rape and running an organized crime group. He has been in custody for about 3 months at the time of writing.

Andrew Tate was a kickboxer from 2005-2015 after which he became an influencer on various platforms including Instagram, twitter and indirectly TikTok. He then launched his own online 'university' called Hustlers University where his followers could pay £50 a month for an online education on how to become rich. This venture has made a lot of money for Tate but he has used the platform to promote some questionable views. Some of his views are more questionable than others, for example, he said "breathe air" when advising people to quit vaping (a noble endeavour) but he also claimed "women are men's property" (not so good). Tate's views have resulted in him being banned from Twitter and Facebook but he has so far proved to be unsilenceable on TikTok.

Tate also ran a lucrative webcam business that employed up to 75 women whilst claiming to be trying to save the world from the degeneracy of the west and restore traditionalism. He had multiple girlfriends, a clear sign of hypocrisy, and hence with an outlook from at the time he was at his peak of popularity his argument was extremely deplorable.

For many young men who are struggling with finances or mental health issues Andrew Tate can be seen beacon of enlightenment. He deliberately posts images and videos of his extravagant lifestyle while he offers help with financial literacy, something that is much needed in a global financial recession.

Now that you have the background information it is time to delve into the case and nit-pick at his case. Andrew Tate could face 15 years in prison for the accusations he is being faced with.

The nature of the crimes he is being charged with means that its ridiculously hard for police to gain tangible evidence. However, he has been in jail for three times the amount of time he was meant to be in federal custody which many of his supporters are speaking out against, calling it injustice, and saying the 'matrix' or 'elites' want him terminated.

Sadly, human trafficking and more specifically sex trafficking is extremely hard to prove without multiple reliable witnesses. Due to the nature of this deplorable business, most organized crime syndicates have a code of honour which means even on the pain of strenuous torture those involved won't speak (i.e. open your mouth and you are a Deadman).

Overall, evidence would suggest that Andrew Tate is innocent of the crimes he is being charged with. But having listened to both sides of the same story you can make up your mind to the question of Andrew Tate's criminality.

Adil Tameez, Suffyan Khan & Faizan Javed – Year 9

IF KIDS RULED

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if kids and adults swapped rights? Imagine a world where kids get to vote, drive, work, and make their own decisions, while adults have to go to school, do homework, obey their kids, and follow the rules. Sounds fair, right? After all, kids are smarter, more creative, and more adaptable than adults. They have fresh ideas and perspectives that can solve the world's problems. Adults, on the other hand, are boring, stubborn, and stuck in their ways. They have outdated views and habits that cause more harm than good. Here are some reasons why kids and adults should swap rights.

First of all, kids should get to vote because they care more about the future than adults. Fact is, kids have more future than adults. Kids have to live with the consequences of the decisions made by politicians for longer than adults. They also have a better sense of justice and equality than adults, who are often biased and corrupted by money and power. Kids would vote for candidates who care about the environment, education, health care, and human rights.

They would not vote for candidates who lie, cheat, or start wars. Kids would make the world a better place with their votes.

Kids should be allowed to drive because they learn faster and have better reflexes than adults. They also have more fun and excitement when they drive, what could go wrong? Adults are often distracted, impatient and reckless when they drive, and their reactions as sooooo slow... because they are old. They cause accidents and pollution with their cars. Kids would drive more safely and efficiently than adults.

If kids ruled the world it would soon become clear that school is a waste of time and energy. It is a place where kids are forced to learn things that they will never use in their lives, such as maths. Maths is a subject that has been plaguing students for centuries. It is boring, difficult, and irrelevant to most real-life situations, I mean, what use are equations and memorized pointless formulas on TikTok? Maths is like a torture device that makes students suffer for no good reason.

Homework is a dangerous and widespread practice in many schools. It can interfere with students' personal life, reducing their time for hobbies, sports, creativity, chilling and socialising. This can limit kids' development of other skills and interests, as well as their happiness and satisfaction. There is no benefit to homework at all.

KIDS WILL RULE

School cafeterias are notorious. Kids must endure long lines, crowded tables, and noisy environments to get their daily dose of nutrition. That is why we propose that students should be allowed to order takeout from their favourite restaurants and have it delivered to their classrooms, for free. Students would save time and energy by not having to walk to the cafeteria, wait in line and find a seat. They could simply use their phones or laptops to place their orders online and have them delivered to their classrooms in minutes. They could then enjoy their food in the comfort of their desks, chairs, or couches. Couches, now that is an idea! Every kid should have a comfortable couch in school with a handy remote control to turn off a boring teacher.

But then, there is no need for couches, because if kids ruled the world there would be no schools to put the couches in. Everything can be learned from the internet. The internet is a vast source of information and entertainment that can cater to any interest and curiosity. Students can watch videos, play games, and chat with people from all over the world.

So, there you have it, I'm sure the vast majority of you agree that life would be so much better if kids ruled the world.

Hasim Mooraj, Gowtheesh Piratheesan & Rayan Arshad - year 9



VIDEO GAMES: VIOLENCE

I love gaming. Although I do not play violent computer games often, my parents still give me lectures on why video games cause violence in society. I wanted to write this article to prove them wrong. However, while researching this topic, I found that a lot of people have biased opinions which were not supported by any evidence whatsoever: some people think that video games are the root of all evil, whilst gamers, like me, think it is just entertainment. I believe that we should be able to develop a justified opinion based on critical thinking instead of giving spurious judgements. Therefore, I would like to present a balanced view on the subject and back it up with researched information.

Before I begin my arguments, I need to explain the problem at hand. Gaming is now the #1 source of entertainment on this planet, making more money than the music industry and the movie industry combined. However, the most popular genre of video game is the first-person shooter, where people must blow other character's head off in an all-violent virtual platform.

The media, especially American news in the 90s, have been quick to pin the blame on games such as Call of Duty or Doom for real life violent incidents like shootings in schools and churches. In this article, I will debate the almighty question of whether video games do cause violence or not, and take a look at what psychologists says about video games affecting people.

Recently, the US Department of Justice funded research to find whether video games affect young people negatively. Psychologists studied how video games influence a person by considering 3 main aspects: their personality, their situation, and their motivation. Since gun violence in society is most common in the United States of America, the information collected for the article is mostly America.

Firstly, let us study how video games affect individual personality. According to Drs Patrick and Charlotte Markey, most people are not affected by violent video games. Nonetheless, some people became aggressive after playing a violent video game. The psychologists then studied the affected group's personality traits to see any common factors that played a role in their increased aggressiveness. They found that these people had 3 personality deficiencies already in them: they had anger issues, they were anti-social, and they were prone to act without thinking whether their action is right or wrong. Personally, I think that most of us don't have these personality traits in us. The media, especially American news in the 90s, have been quick to pin the blame on games such as Call of Duty or Doom for real-life violent incidents like shootings in schools and churches.



CONTINUED...

Secondly, we will study how personal situations of young people can lead to them being exposed to more mature rated games. Dr Cheryl Olsen led a study on 1254 students, aged 12-14, to see if they played violent video games rated 18+. She found that children who shared a console with older siblings or children who played by themselves in their bedroom tend to play 18+ games. In my view, this situation can be solved very easily. For example, all consoles come with a parental lock, which can limit younger children from accessing 18+ games and I think parents should enforce this. Furthermore, parents could move the console to open areas of the house like the living room to allow children to play safely where they can be seen by grown-ups. In addition, this could allow the parents to join in with their children and enjoy quality entertainment time together.

Thirdly, we will see what motivates young people to choose to play violent video games. Dr Mizuko Ito led a study that found that gaming across youths has become so widespread that it has changed how teenagers generally think and behave. Parents think that video games have made their children anti-social, who prefer sitting at home in front of a screen instead of going outdoors with their friends. However, young people have said that gaming is fun, exciting and something that can easily contradict boredom because it can be done with friends online. In fact, people don't play violent video games because they themselves are violent, but because it contains edge-of-your-seat, nail-biting action that can relieve stress.



CONTINUED

People also see violent video games as a form of competition to fight your way to the top and win. I believe that Dr Ito's findings are true to me because I do see gaming as a form of competition and a stress-relief. However, I do feel that a part of my social life has disappeared due to gaming because when I was in primary school, I used to go out with my friends very often accompanied by our parents; but now, we no longer do that anymore. Now, I sit at a computer and play games with my friends online instead. My social life has practically become virtual, outside of school.

If you think that these psychologists' views are gibberish, let us consider looking at the cold hard facts of data instead. According to an article on Medium, video games started their rise in the mid-90s and mid-10s. If you are a person who thinks video games cause violence, then you would think that violent crimes also increased in the mid-90s and mid-10s. You, however, would be wrong. In an article by ABC news, the violent crime rate was dropping massively at that point in time.

In this article so far, we have been looking at US data because that's where most of the gun violence happens in society. However, we now need to look at UK data because that is where we live and is therefore more relevant to us.

I found that, in the UK as well, video games were dominating in the 1990s and 2010s, while the crime rate plummeted during the same time period. Therefore, the data shows that playing video games is not the cause of rising violence.

To summarise, we have looked at studies by psychologists that say that a minority of people with certain social deficiencies are the only group of people affected by violent video games. We also looked at data from multiple sources that also show that when video games became popular, crime was falling. Therefore, it seems to me that video games are not the cause of violence in the way the media portrays them to be. It is like saying an action movie can lead to real-life violence without taking into account that it is a work of fiction and therefore should purely be treated as entertainment. We have seen the data, which is the definitive proof that defends video games. So if video games are not the cause of violence, then what is? After doing some research, I found that the New York Times say that gun purchases in the US have increased in the 90s and 10s. Instead of pointing fingers at entertainment, they should prioritize more checks for weapon sales. In conclusion, people who judge the game by the cover should think again.

Deven Daly – Year 8



WE, ARE, ASTON.

**"HARD WORK BEATS TALENT WHEN
TALENT DOESN'T WORK HARD"**

A NOVEL IDEA

A Novel Idea meets in the library during KS3 lunchtime on the first Monday of the Month.

Some of the students who attend will give you a flavour of what it's about below, so I am going to give you a few facts and figures.

We have been meeting since February 2022 and 46 students have been involved, we have a core membership of 20 readers. We only have 1 rule....NO SPOILERS!!!!!!

We read a wide range of genres, fiction and non-fiction. Skulduggery Pleasant is probably the most popular series (closely followed by Diary of a Wimpy kid) and David Walliams one of the most read authors. On the whole, adventure books dominate the reading preference, although some students enjoy classic novels too. An amazing 137 books have been reviewed.

A Novel idea is not just about having fun and expanding your reading habits as reading novels provides an especially helpful exercise in working memory. Fiction is better for this than non-fiction. Why? Non-fiction books are structured in such a way that the reader can skip around the text in a way that works for them. Fiction on the other hand requires the reader to follow the book in a linear way from beginning to end, while retaining the various characters and plot.

People who read fiction must remember characters who might only appear intermittently. Each time a character reappears, the reader, by means of working memory, must recall the character's past actions, motivations etc. This is a particularly useful skill for exams.

If you fancy broadening your reading horizons, meeting like-minded people or just being a bit nosy about what other people read, then come along and join us, you are always welcome.

Mrs Baizon - Librarian

A Novel idea is a great club and new way to make friends and an opportunity to dive into a world of books whether you read about knights in shining armour or animals on a farm, I guarantee you, you won't have made a mistake by joining.

But why come to A Novel Idea? It is a hub of inspiration, a source of knowledge and an opportunity to listen to the minds of great authors through the minds of your peers. There is a difference between reading a book and using your imagination to make it come to life.

Faris Straker - Year 7

GOGGLEBOX

Ms Baizon - She likes to watch antiques roadshow; mainly because she describes herself as 'nosy' and the fact that it is an opportunity to learn about heritage and history. Another of her favourite shows is Ghosts because she says it is well acted and because of the comedy.

Alex Gjocaj (Year 9)- He has watched All Hail King Julian. He enjoys this because of the character King Julian and how it is to see him in different situations.

Ms Ritson - She recently started to continue watching The Apprentice. She thinks it is good as it is well edited to create reactions from the audience, she enjoys the challenges. Orange is the New Black because it is well written has good character relationship and has a balance between serious matters and humour.

Mr Brady - He enjoys watching The Apprentice with his family, due to his son's interest in business and economics. He likes the TV programme because of the sense of competition. Berg Doktor is a German television programme about a doctor that works in the mountains. The two main reasons he likes it are because it is in German and because the scenery is 'incredible'.

Mr McBrien - He really likes watching cooking programmes as he picks up tips of things to cook. He also enjoys Dragon's Den as you never know what will come out of the lift door and how the Dragons will react.

Faris Straker - Year 7



FILM REVIEWS

Black Panther, Wakanda Forever.

The Director, Ryan Coogler, had already written the script of Black Panther 2 before the tragic death of Chadwick Boseman and therefore had to change the storyline of Black Panther 2. He did well in having the characters react in a relatable way in the fact that they were struggling to come to terms with T'Challa's (Chadwick Boseman's Death). In this movie, the people of Wakanda fought to protect their home and vibranium from intervening world powers and a race of blue-skinned, water-breathing super humans led by main antagonist, Namor. Overall, we enjoyed this movie and I think it lived up to the major anticipation. It was packed with action and suspense, manifested during the countless mini-battles and ultimate battle, the high-speed car chases and when Wakandan agents were held hostage by Namor.

9.5/10

Creed III. Movie 2 is Creed II.

After dominating the boxing world, Adonis Creed has been thriving in both his career and family life. When a childhood friend a former boxing prodigy,

Damian, comes back to society after serving a long prison sentence, he is eager to prove that he deserves his chance in the ring. However, this friendship turns into a rivalry. Our favorite thing about this movie is that it highly reflects on the real world in how things can change so drastically with time. The movie felt very realistic, with the acting, plot and even the camera angles they used. We think this is a great movie that was hard to pick up on near the beginning but captivated me as it went on and for this reason, we would give the score below.

8.5/10

Super Mario Bros.

Film number four must be the new Super Mario Bros movie which is the perfect movie to watch as a family. It has an amazing plot. The release date of the movie is the 5 of April. Many famous movie stars also played a part in the movie such as Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Jay, Charlie Day, Jack Black, Keegan-Michael Key and Seth Rogen. These people really brought the movie to life as you can tell they put everything they had into giving the movie life. These people were all among the stars bringing the video game characters to life.

8.5/10

FILM REVIEWS



Dungeons and Dragons: Honour Among Thieves.

This movie is full of many hilarious moments, it has an interesting plot which revolves around action and adventure. It's release date was on the 31st of March. The relation of the movie to the actual board game is obvious with the many races of people. However having never played D&D before, we are not sure how well this film relates to the actual game, but even people haven't played D&D could still really enjoy this movie.
8/10

John Wick: Chapter 4.

The last film on this list is John Wick. In this \$100M budget movie, John Wick uncovers a path to defeating The High Table. But before he can earn his freedom, he must face off against a new enemy with powerful alliances across the world and forces that turn old friends into new foes. In our opinion, this movie is the epitome of the action/thriller genre. Everything from the levels of action throughout to the explicit emotion being shown by John Wick who is a tough character. This gives great contrast and shows how well written the movie is. I recommend this movie but the only downside is that you have to watch at least 2 of the first 3 movies of the sequel to enjoy it.
7.5/10.

Top 10 Upcoming Movies of 2023:

- 1.Fast and Furious X
- 2.Spiderman: Across the Spider Verse
- 3.The Marvels
- 4.Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom
- 5.Transformers: Rise of the Beasts
- 6.Guardians of the Galaxy, Volume 3
- 7.Wonka
- 8.Dune: Part Two
- 9.Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny
- 10.The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and snakes

Jackson Jacktoo & Samuel Ologbosere – Year 7

LANGUAGES

Language is the ability to communicate through some sort of structured grammar and vocabulary. The evolution of language is fascinating and in many cases the origins of a particular language are unknown. Certain words or phrases may have begun with one single event or may have evolved several times in isolated communities. Communities are central to the development of different languages, and once a language is formed, they are for the most part, isolated from other languages. Geography has a huge part to play in this. The vast majority of people in different parts of the world speak the language from the area and time in which they grew up.

As people travel languages can mix and this can result in pidgins and creoles. Languages can also gain words from each other (called loanwords) and can translate word phrases into their languages (known as calquing). I am now going to list some of my favourite languages:

Yola

Yola was a language spoken in the Forth and Bargy Baronies of Ireland (modern day County Wexford). It is thought to have evolved from Middle English which was brought to Ireland during the Norman Invasion in the 12th Century. Yola means Old in Yola

Cornish

Cornish is a Celtic language native to Cornwall and it is closely related to Welsh. It became extinct as a day-to-day language in the 18th century but has made a recent comeback as a 'revived language' thanks to a small number of people who use it as a second language.

Esperanto

Esperanto is not a normal language. Rather than developing naturally it is a constructed language (conlang) invented by L.L. Zamenhof in an attempt to create a universal method of communication. The language is quite successful now with 1000 people who speak it as a first language! You can't tell me that isn't impressive. You can also find Wikipedia articles in Esperanto and a Duolingo course in Esperanto.

Palawa Kani

Palawa Kani is the language of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community. It is a reconstructed creole of sorts. For context in the 19th century there were Aboriginal Tasmanians. However, the British wiped them out by the end of the century. This last Tasmanian person, Fanny Cochrane Smith recorded a song in her language. It was this song and some other work done in the study of these languages that the descendants of these aboriginal people were able to create this language. I think this is a cool way to bring a language back.

Ainu

The Ainu are an ethnic group from Japan. The Ainu language was once spoken in the Sakhalin and the Kuril islands but now it is only spoken on the Japanese island of Hokkaido. They write in a modified katakana script because they follow a CVC (consonant, vowel consonant) structure instead of a CV structure like Japanese.

I hope this has been an interesting look at languages I hope you have seen how languages are important.

Alex Gjocaj – Year 9

TEACHER'S PET

Why did you choose a dog instead of a cat?

I have always had a dog whilst growing up so when I didn't have one at home, it felt a bit empty. I thought about it for a long time and eventually decided that I could look after the dog well whilst still working full-time and so decided to go ahead and get one.

Did you have a pet when you were young?

I had a lot of dogs growing up. When I was born my Mom and Dad had a Labrador called Ben and a Great Dane called Joshua. Later on, we had another Labrador called Millie and my mom and dad currently have a Cockapoo called Buddy.

Do you use your dog for well-being like it was used for at school or is it just a family pet?

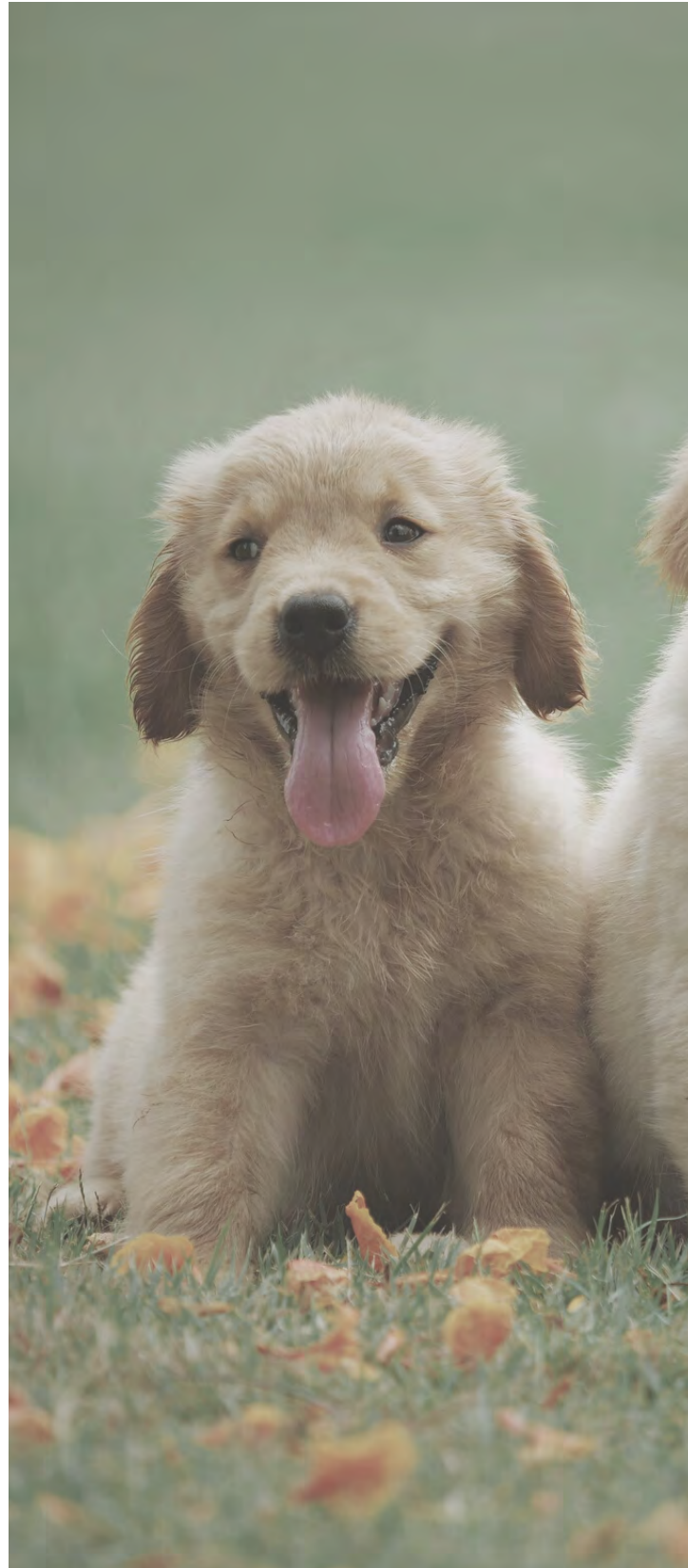
The dog is great for positive mental well-being. When you are feeling down, dogs have an amazing ability to sense this and will come over to comfort you. Taking them out for a walk is also a great way to destress and relax.

What's its name?

My dog is called Albus.

What made you choose this dog out of the others?

I saw a litter of puppies advertised and got in contact with the breeder. I wanted a dog who was mixed with a poodle as they shed much less hair. When we spoke to the breeder she invited us along to meet the puppies and we chose Albus straight away. He seemed to be the quiet one in the group but he has definitely got louder and more confident since!





CONTINUED

**Can you give me some information on the dog?
Like if he is a boy or girl, personality breed etc.**

Albus is a mix of Shih-poo (Shih-Tzu/Poodle) and Cavapoo (cavalier spaniel/poodle). He is very lively like poodles and spaniels but he also loves to sit on the sofa and have a chill in the evening.

Is your dog well-behaved?

For a very young dog, Albus is very well behaved. He can be quite boisterous at times but generally he is very good. I took him to training classes when I first got him and that is where he learnt most of the basic commands. I have worked on other stuff since then.

How old was your dog when you got him?

I got Albus when he was 8 weeks old. He wasn't allowed to go out for a walk until he was 12 weeks old so he was kept in the house until then. He is now just over 1.

How many times has he been to the vet?

Albus has been to the vets a couple of times. He has to go every year to have his booster injections and he has had one check up.

Mr Plackowski interviewed by Yusuf Makhzoum



DILIGENCE,
INTEGRITY,
KINDNESS,
HONESTY.
WE ARE
ASTON.
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