

BGS BUZZ

SUMMER

— EDITION





It is with great pride that the Y12s and I present the Summer edition of the BGS Buzz magazine. I'm always so impressed by the ability and dedication of our students to produce engaging and informative articles about the world around us. This term, especially, sees a lot of extra work for the Y12 cohort so their commitment is particularly impressive.

This term's magazine sees contributions from a wide range of year groups, including students from Y7, Y8, Y9 and Y11 and I hope this continues into next year!

With thanks to the Maths department, the Geography department, the Music department, Heads of Houses and all the contributors to this magazine. My apologies if I have missed anyone!

Have a fantastic summer, all.

Mrs Dawson

It's with great pleasure that I introduce you to this term's version of the BGS Buzz magazine. I'm incredibly indebted to all of our student journalists and am proud to see the range of young people involved in the publication. Most of all, I owe great thanks to Mrs Dawson for her tireless work and oversight of the magazine, all on top of being an incredibly hard-working English teacher.

I hope that you enjoy the magazine. I particularly enjoyed reading about 'The Hunchback', which was a terrifically absorbing, dramatic production to watch. Being a former Politics teacher I was also taken by the article on Populism, and the conclusion that increasing numbers of people across Europe and the Americas are becoming disillusioned with mainstream politics. A stark reminder for us all to engage with the democratic process. Finally, I join Jesse in his sentiment to stop scrolling and actively enjoy your summer holidays, which are well-deserved.

Mr Gilmore



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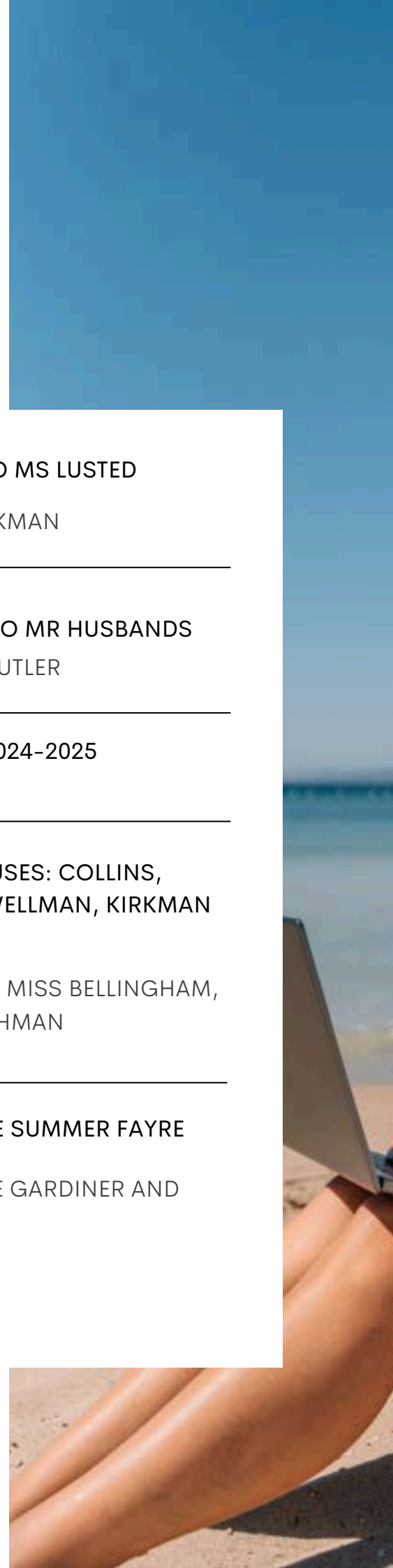


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FAREWELL TO...

MS LUSTED, SCIENCE →



By Louis Luckman

Being a part of Ms Lusted's form has been a pleasure for the last 5 years, and I can say on behalf of so many students, whether in 11REL or any of Ms Lusted's classes or supercurricular science (the list could go on) that we will miss Ms Lusted so much! From teaching sign language in Year 7 form times, to imparting her knowledge both in Physics and beyond, Ms Lusted has been an amazing part of the Bexley Grammar School community. To say goodbye we have asked her some questions about her time here and her future:

Q

What is your favourite memory of teaching at BGS?

It is hard to pick a specific favourite memory, but I just have overwhelmingly positive memories of many many lessons where students showed their enthusiasm and engagement. Whenever I had a year seven class I would always like setting a fun holiday homework to watch a science video and I really enjoyed it when they came back in after the holidays and would tell everyone else all of the cool things they had found out.

Q

What was your favourite part of being a form tutor?

I've absolutely loved being a form tutor, most of the time... But seriously it was great to see the eager Year 7s turn into kind and thoughtful Year 11s. I've had three forms in my time here, but most recently I saw my form right through from Year 7 to Year 11. It has been a real privilege to be a consistent component of their experiences at BGS and I will always treasure that.

Q

When did you start teaching at BGS?

I started teaching at BGS in September 2016. But I did actually come to BGS for a four week placement while doing my teacher training in 2014, and on my first day, it was the house music performances. I remember going to the hall to watch them and being blown away by the effort and talent of the students.

FAREWELL TO...

MS LUSTED, SCIENCE



By Louis Luckman

Q What was your favourite part as STEM coordinator?

Being a STEM coordinator has been a really rewarding part of my teaching at BGS which I have been doing for 8 years. It allowed me to work with students outside of just the classroom in lots of different ways such as building giant games in STEM club, or preparing for applications and interviews for the Arkwright Scholarships, or taking students on trips. One of my most proud moments was when Mrs Boulden and I took some of the current Year 9s to London Stadium where teams had to deliver pitches to a panel of adults about their own designs for a football stadium. They all did an amazing job overcoming the nerves and pressure of such an experience to do us proud.

Q What are you going on to do in the future?

I am currently in the middle of a law conversion course and hope to qualify as a solicitor in about 18 months time. I am not sure which area of law I want to specialise in yet, but I am finding all of it very interesting. I have really enjoyed being a student again in the evening classes and it definitely made me think about my teaching!

Q Any final words of wisdom and advice for students?

My final words of advice for students of BGS is to embrace the amazing opportunities on offer at school. Plenty of young people go through all of secondary school without a single trip, drama performance, music performance, house competition, or summer fair stall. BGS is truly an amazing school to be a part of, where the teachers trust and respect the students and the students rise to meet that challenge every day. Enjoy every minute of it and take that enthusiasm out into the world!

FAREWELL TO...

MR HUSBANDS, ENGLISH →

Q What is your favourite memory of teaching at BGS?

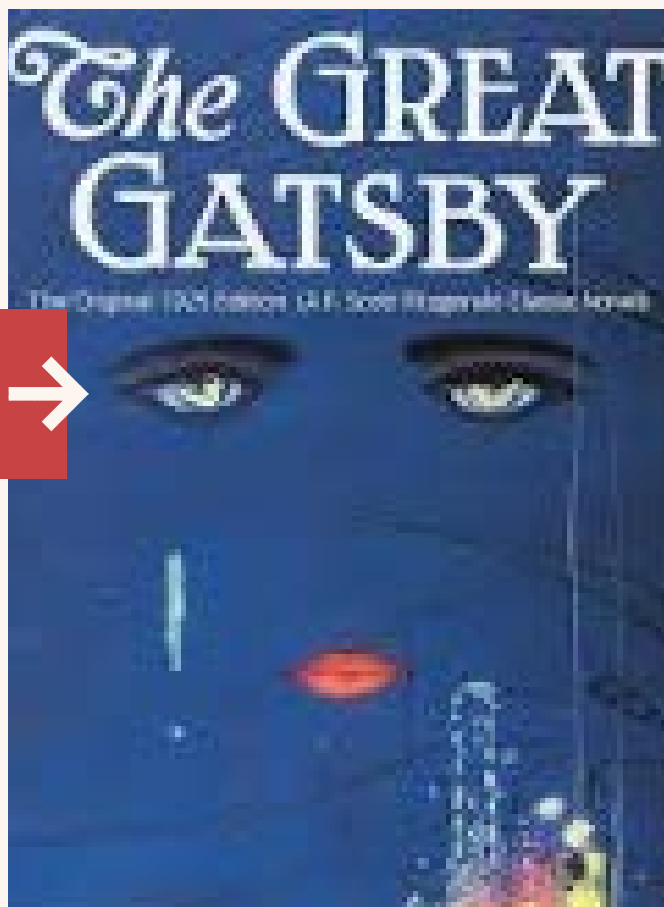
A Year 9 Languages Trip to Saint-Malo in France with Mr Martin, Mr Skinner, Miss Bellingham, Miss Ashman and Miss Roberts. The Year 9 students we took were so amazing that we didn't address their behaviour once. Everyone on that trip was exemplary of what BGS is.

Q When did you start teaching at BGS?

I started teaching at BGS in January 2013. I left the Sixth Form in 2002, so it was almost exactly 10 academic years later. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Q What are you going on to do next?

Daddy Day Care. I haven't even begun looking for a job, but I have two marvelous boys who I am very much looking forward to spending the summer with.



By Charlie Butler

Q Any final words of advice or wisdom for the students?

“In a world where you can be anything, be kind”. I think this pretty much sums up BGS.

THE HOUSE COMPETITION RESULTS

BY MRS SNELLING

This has been another year full of competitions - Sport, Music, Drama, Cookery, Chess to mention just a few. The House captains from Sept 24-April 25 were a fantastic group of year 13s leading, inspiring and cajoling students from all years to take part in the variety of competitions available. At Easter the new year 12 House Captains were in post and organised students for Sports Day as their first main job in the role.

Miss Gabriel (head of Mabbs) left us temporarily to go on maternity leave at the start of 2025 and we welcomed Mrs Papp into the post. Mrs Papp will be taking on a new role in September and so we welcome Mrs Westergaard to lead Mabbs until Miss Gabriel returns. A big 'thank you' to Mrs Papp for her work with Mabbs this year.

Thank you to all the Heads of House for their continuing work within the House system as well as the House Captains, without whom the competitions would not run as smoothly as they do.

Here are the results of the House Year ending April 2025:

Total		373	351	399	372	345	417
OVERALL RANK		Third Collins	Fifth Johnson	Second Kirkman	Fourth Mabbs	Sixth Prothero	First Wellman

NEWS FROM THE HOUSES: COLLINS

by Mrs Ellis

Collins House has enjoyed a fantastic year, marked by numerous individual achievements and collective triumphs. From academic accolades to creative accomplishments, our students have consistently demonstrated talent, resilience, and a strong sense of community. Alongside these high points, we have also faced our share of challenges, but true to the spirit of Collins, we have met them head-on with determination and teamwork, growing stronger as a result.

A particular highlight of the year has been our dedication to sporting events. Whether on the track, field, or court, Collins students have shown commitment, sportsmanship, and house pride. Our participation levels have been consistently high, and the energy, enthusiasm, and encouragement displayed by everyone involved has been truly inspiring. These moments have not only brought us closer as a House but have also showcased the incredible talent and spirit within our team.



This year, we also said a fond farewell to our 2024/25 House Captains: Edward, Ella, Riley, Ananya, Simon, Emelia, Matthew, Tim, Bariyah, Sanika and Akash, who did an outstanding job leading, coordinating, and encouraging participation across a range of events. Their efforts set a high standard and laid a solid foundation for future success. At the same time, we were delighted to welcome our new House Captains: John, Rachel, Jana, Chuckwuyem, Leo, Leila, Francis, Alisha, Davina, Jaiden, and Rory.

Our new senior team has already shown great promise, stepping into their roles with enthusiasm and leadership, and we are excited to see the impact of their continued efforts.

With the 24/25 House year behind us, we now turn our attention to the upcoming Autumn events. Spirits are high, motivation is strong, and our eyes are firmly set on victory. With the passion, drive, and unity that define Collins House, we are confident that even greater achievements lie ahead.

NEWS FROM THE HOUSES: JOHNSON

by Mr Asker

This time last year, Johnson students were licking their wounds having started the new House competition at the very bottom, following a disappointing Sports Day. This year has started differently. Although our Juniors are yet to establish themselves in the athletics events, our Intermediate students came an unprecedented second, scoring as many competition points as Johnson managed across all the age groups last year. This included another stellar performance by our Y10 girls in the 4x100m relay, where they equalled their record time from 2024.

We have had a year that reflects these same highs and lows in different events. What we're seeking is consistency, and hopefully the sort of consistency that sees us secure a position a little higher in the table than in recent times (sixth in 2024, fifth in 2025; at least the direction is right!). Although Johnson remains the most successful House of the past ten years, many of our students have yet to experience the heady heights of the House podium, and it would be good if they could have at least a taste of that sort of success before they leave.



This isn't to say that Johnson students are discouraged. House spirit is strong, and the emotions that are on display on the sports field, in the library (House quiz) and on the stage are testament to how much students care about what they're doing for Johnson. It is this spirit that will ultimately lead us back into the skies where, with clear vision and nothing holding us back, we will show what it means for Johnson students to "Be more eagle!"

NEWS FROM THE HOUSES: MABBS

by Mrs Papp

If there's one word to sum up Mabbs House this year, it's unstoppable.

Since stepping in for Ms Gabriel during her maternity leave, I've had the absolute pleasure of watching Mabbs continue to thrive. We started the year in 6th place, but through determination and teamwork, we climbed our way up to 4th—just one point away from finishing 3rd! That kind of progress doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of students who show heart, unity, and a fierce competitive spirit in everything they do.

Throughout the year, our students have continued to excel across the board. We proudly took first place in the House Quiz, Senior Photography, and House STEM. In the House Drama competition, we brought creativity and passion to the stage, earning a well-deserved second place. But what truly makes Mabbs shine isn't just our wins—it's how we win. Whether it's in science, sport, or the arts, our students lift each other up, celebrate every success, and learn from every challenge. That mix of talent, teamwork, and house pride is what sets us apart.



Since the new house year began in April, we've continued to prove ourselves—especially on Sports

Day. Even with scorching temperatures averaging 30 degrees, nothing could stop us.

One of the highlights was Karthik Sarvana's incredible javelin throw, which shattered a school record that had stood since 2009. And let's not forget our junior girls' relay team, who sprinted their

way into history with a record-breaking performance. But Sports Day wasn't just about points, it was

about teamwork, resilience, and courage. In that intense heat, our students pushed themselves beyond their limits and cheered each other on every step of the way.

NEWS FROM THE HOUSES:WELLMAN

by Miss Bellingham

What a year for Wellman House!

I take zero credit for the successes of Wellman this year as all of the credit belongs to House Captains: Isaam, Joshua, Shishir, Sapho, Nexus, Beth, Malven and Isobel are our two Senior House Captains: Henry and Israel. The Wellman House Captains went above and beyond all expectations and worked tirelessly throughout the year to drum up support and encourage all of the Wellies to get involved.

There were countless hours of rehearsals for House Drama and House Music, numerous after schools refereeing sporting matches and endless enthusiasm for all of the events. I could not be any prouder of all of the Wellman students who would not let one event pass where we didn't have a participant and showed support for others.

Although winning isn't everything, achieving the House Cup at the end of the year was well deserved from all of the effort put in by house captains and participants. I am excited to see where this next House Year takes us and I have high hopes for the amazing new House Captains who have seamlessly stepped into their role.



NEWS FROM THE HOUSES: KIRKMAN

by Miss Fisher

KIRKMAN FINISHED THE HOUSE YEAR BACK IN MARCH IN A GLORIOUS SECOND PLACE, ONLY A FEW POINTS BEHIND WELLMAN. WE HAD SOME GREAT SUCCESSES THIS YEAR, INCLUDING VICTORY IN HOUSE MUSIC. ALL OUR PIECES WERE ARRANGED BY JONAH KANALAS WHO DID AN AMAZING JOB AND WHOSE EXPERTISE WE WILL SORELY MISS. THIS PERFORMANCE WAS REPEATED AT THE SHOWCASE AND PROVED DESERVEDLY POPULAR.

THE YEAR WAS MARKED BY PARTICIPATION AND HELPING EACH OTHER OUT, STARTING AT SPORTS DAY WHERE MANY STUDENTS OFFERED TO STEP IN OR SWAP WHEN NEEDED. ANY SPORTSMANSHIP POINT RECEIVED IS A MATTER OF GREAT PRIDE; KEEP GOING FOR THESE KIRKMAN!

WE ALSO HAD VICTORIES IN, AMONGST OTHERS, JUNIOR PHOTOGRAPHY, THE BOTTLE TOP COLLECTING (THANKS 8TMRI), THE SHORT STORY COMPETITION AND Y8 GIRLS BADMINTON AND TABLE TENNIS.

MY CAPTAINS THIS YEAR WERE TRULY OUTSTANDING. ALL WERE DEDICATED TO THE CAUSE AND WORKED TOGETHER - I REALLY LOVED WORKING WITH YOU ALL: ROB, FREDDIE, IFY (OUR JACK PETCHY WINNER), ETHAN, JONAH, VIV, GRACIE, NEVE, LUKE, MATEJA AND LUCY.

NEXT YEAR'S TEAM HAVE A LOT TO LIVE UP TO BUT HAVE MADE A GREAT START: ALEKS, ZAC, IVAN, ISAAC, ISABELLE, ALEXIS, GRACE, MUSAVVIR AND WIKTORIA. HERE'S TO A GREAT YEAR AHEAD!



NEWS FROM THE HOUSES: PROTHERO

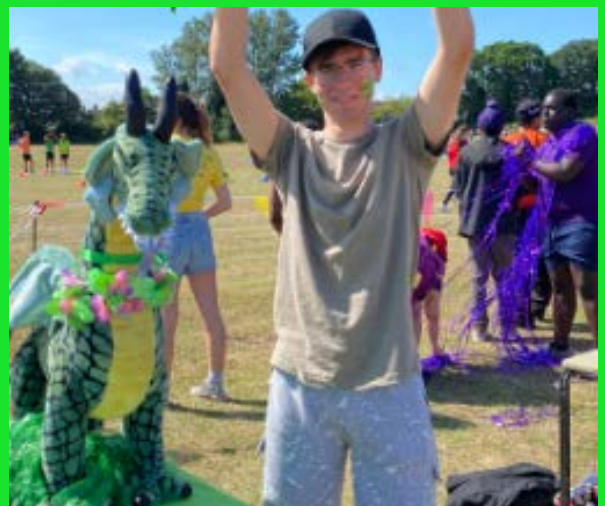
by Ms Ashman

As the new school year gets into full swing, we took a moment to say a fond farewell to our outgoing Prothero House Captains, who served with great energy and commitment. In their place, we've warmly welcomed our new House Captains, who have already made a brilliant start. Each form greeted them with enthusiasm, and it's been fantastic to see the captains quickly build strong connections with their forms. Our House Captains for 2025-2026 are: Lou Annarumma, Kimberly Baker-Compass, Edwin Blankson, Josh Boulton-Smale, Millie Brimble, Deya Dimitrova, Sam Grady, Malaika Sessanga-Hoehne, Thomas Summerfield, Alex Trillow, Leanne Wai Yan Lee, Tobi Fashola and Ibrahim Miah.

One of the early highlights of the year was House Sports Day, where Prothero showed fantastic team spirit, determination, and a whole lot of fun! The new captains stepped up to lead by example, and it was great to see everyone getting involved - check out some of the action-packed moments in the photos!

But the excitement doesn't stop there. We're now looking ahead to even more House sport competitions, including cricket, tennis, and rounders. These events are a great opportunity for Prothero to shine once again, and we're excited to see the continued enthusiasm and teamwork across all year groups.

I am incredibly proud of what Prothero continues to achieve, not just in competitions, but in the way we support one another and grow as a community. With such a positive start, I'm confident we can build on this momentum and aim even higher. Here's to a fantastic year ahead; let's see if we can climb the rankings and improve on our 6th place finish at the end of last year!



SPORTS DAY AND THE SUMMER FAYRE

To report on the Summer Fayre and Sports Day 2025, we had a crack team of Y7 and Y8 who reported on the events and stalls. Thank you to Krista Thapa, Sadie Gardiner and Safaa Abdul Aziz for their contributions!

Sports Day at Bexley Grammar, like any another competitive event, consists of both winners and losers. With so many sporting events as well as trying to make

lots of money from the variety of stalls set up, ultimately, there will be a house that will be standing at first and a house standing at last place- or 6th if it makes you feel any better.

To cut to the the chase, Wellman won.

However, regardless of who won and whatnot, great sportsmanship was portrayed as well throughout the whole day.

Different year groups cheering on younger years of their house and people going round trying new stalls to help them earn a bit more. Not only this but lots and lots of parents were also there cheering people they may not even know- only just to give competitors that extra push of support.



This sports day was one to remember. After a cancelation the day was much hotter than expected; with many events taking place in the extreme heat, everything was made much more difficult. But we persevered and Wellman came out victorious. With many events to look forward to and house points on the line sports day 2025 was very successful.

I personally took part in the javelin event and very early on I saw the amazing sportsmanship I have come to expect from this school. With a student swapping sports in order to allow another to do a sport they were much better at. This kind of behavior occurred multiple times through out the day and is just one example of the excellent sportsmanship I witnessed.



Relay races for different year groups had the most stand out example of support since many peers, friends and family were ready to sit on the grass and cheer their house and friends on.

Aside from the relay, there were many other great demonstrations of this support, such as in long jump; many other participants of other sporting events who had finished early went to go cheer on their friends at long jump no matter where they had placed. Clearly, and quite evidently, the students of Bexley Grammar School vastly display the fun and supportive side of a day like sports day- showing that winning or losing doesn't always have to matter.

Krista Thapa 8ML

After my event I joined crowds of cheering students supporting their classmates as they ran race after race. The atmosphere was extremely joyful and supportive which carried across the whole field. The stalls were buzzing with customers and lots of money was made. There was many successful stalls with passionate students running them and amused customers.

Overall the sports day 2025 was a collaboration of work and determination that ended in a very close competition between the houses. It was extremely successful and showed us the extent of our talent and sportsmanship that brought us a winner.

Sadie Gardiner 8ML

SPORTS DAY AND THE SUMMER FAYRE

On Sports Day, I was reporting on the various stalls dotted around the field. From throwing sponges at the Head of Year 7 to mobile bubble tea, the Summer Fayre had it all!

Ziping from stall to stall with a few friends to advertise our LeBake Sale, we saw a variety of stalls, evenspotting an unfortunate Ms Orchard getting soaked by a wet sponge! Some of the stalls I remember: 9LGD's Spin the Wheel – though I wasn't too keen when Mr Diebel gleefully informed us that the Wheel also had a few 'punishments', so we steered clear. 10IAB had a world map that you had to stick a flag onto in a specific location to win a prize, while 7MAS attempted to rival us with The Big Bake Sale beside us (it wasn't even LeBron themed!)

While sipping a delightful – but RIP-OFF, at £4 – bubble tea from 8LC, my classmates made sure I supported the LeBake Sale by selling me various baked goods for the fifth time that morning.

What others thought of the Summer Fayre...

"It was buzzing with energy and lovely to see the teacher nice and relaxed. It was great to see initiative from the students and I would love to go next year." - Year 7 parent

"LeBake Sale was definitely the best stall and I can't wait for the next Summer Fayre. Sports Day was also the best House event!" - Student (no prizes for guessing which stall their form ran!)

"It was great to socialise with other people and not have the burden of double history." - Year 10 student

By the end of the day, 7KVC LeBake Sale had made an impressive £253.70, and there was a mad scramble for free unsold baked goods.

All in all, Sports Day + Summer Fayre 2025 was an excellent experience and I would definitely recommend attending next year!

Safaa Abdul Aziz

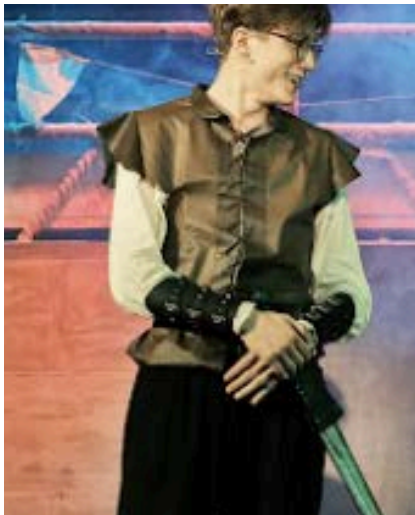




THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

BY ROWAN THREADER

Every year, students from Year 7 to Year 13 get involved in our huge BGS production, coordinated by the Music Department. It is always an epic feat, combining an incredibly talented cast of eager actors with our amazing and professional band. This year, we set out to put on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, with auditions beginning in December of last year, and each and every person involved working their hardest to make the show the best it could possibly be up to show week in July.



While BGS shows are always impressive, this year's was like no other before it. A huge cathedral set constructed on the stage provided a formidable backdrop to the play's rather somber journey, which asked the audience the question: 'What makes a monster and what makes a man?'



The cast met every Friday for rehearsal, learning a variety of different Gypsy dances or working hard to perfect their harmonies for the many challenging songs in this year's production. Meanwhile, band members were waking up early to come to school to rehearse the lengthy amount of music which would bring the world of *Notre Dame* to life. There were a few bumps along the way, but by show week everyone was feeling excited and ready for the 4 amazing performances ahead.



This year's show week had a unique challenge for us to overcome: the extreme heat! Our first evening, on the 1st July, maintained a staggering temperature of 31°C throughout the show, making for a very warm experience both under the stage lights and in the School Hall.

Despite this, each and every performance was a resounding success, receiving great feedback from both parents and students alike. A particularly special event was held halfway through the week, with our Wednesday Gala Night receiving a very special guest: the Mayor of Bexley.



I think it is always important to highlight those the audience don't normally get to see: those working hard to ensure the stage was lit and our cast could be heard from the tech desk, those working backstage to support the cast, and those in the band playing their (often multiple!) instruments with incredible skill. The teachers who supported and crafted our rendition of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* also deserve recognition for their hard work to make sure everything looked, sounded, and felt truly spectacular: thank you to Mrs Casling, Mrs Eacott, Mr Otley, Mrs Snelling, Miss Fisher, Mr Diebel, Mr Asker, Mr Ross and Mrs Goddard for their combined efforts!



If you managed to come along to this year's production, I hope you had a wonderful time witnessing the epitome of what makes Bexley Grammar special, but if you couldn't make it then make sure to come along to both the Winter and Summer performances next year!

Psychology Sleep Study

by Wiktoria Bzdyra

In March, the Psychology Prefect team sent out a survey inquiring about students' sleep quality and their perceived academic success. This was done using two scales: the Sleep Quality Scale (SQS) and the Academic Self-Concept Scale (ASCS). Both scales were used to measure if there is a correlation between self-reported sleep quality and academic success and use a scale of 0-3, which go as follows:

- 0 = Rarely: None or 1-3 times a month
- 1 = Sometimes: 1-2 times a week
- 2 = Often: 3-5 times a week
- 3 = Almost always: 6-7 times a week

We sent out the survey to all of Year 12 and 13, along with Year 11 students who were 16, this was done in order to abide by the British Psychological Society's (BPS) ethical guidelines.

It should be noted that both scales used are self-report methods, which can lead to inaccuracies due to possible demand characteristics and social desirability bias (in which participants may answer differently than the truth in order to be seen more favourably). In order to mitigate this, we could have asked participants for how many hours they sleep, and for the points score on their most recent reports.

During the study, it was found that, while most participants believed for their sleep quality to be serviceable, as many mentioned they did not find it difficult to fall asleep (71% chose the answer 'never' or 'rarely' to the question), around half of the participants mentioned that they did not feel refreshed after sleeping and that they are likely to sleep more later in the day through naps, even after having slept through the night. It was also seen that 58% of participants wished to sleep more after waking up, and a similar percentage believed that the hours they sleep aren't enough.

This high abundance of students not sleeping enough has also led to a lot of effects which can cause an impact on schoolwork: a loss of interest in subjects (57%); an increase in forgetfulness (85%) and a loss of concentration (56%).

On the contrary, many participants answered that their perception of their success in school is reasonably level with what they expect out of themselves, while also wanting to improve their grades at the same time. This main desire for improvement comes from wanting to manage their time better in order to study more effectively and efficiently (66% of participants scoring themselves as having poor study habits).

Overall, while there may be a correlation between poor sleep and poor study habits, there seems to only be a weak correlation between self-perceived poor sleep and grades.

Thank you to those who participated and thank you to you for reading!



A YEAR IN THE MATHS DEPARTMENT

Thank you to Mr Male, Mr Whittaker and Mr Oyadeji

Throughout the year, BGS students have again been achieving wonderful goals in all things mathematical. Here is a round-up for you:



Sixth Form Maths News

MEI Ritangle Competition - Autumn Term 2024

Ten teams of BGS Year 12 and Year 13 students took on a series of challenges over ten weeks in a bid to be crowned Ritangle 2024 champions, facing competition from over 1700 other teams. At the end of November 2024 there were 592 teams who managed to unlock the final question and the race was on to be the first team to submit the answer. The team captained by Andy Yu finished runners up, less than 24 hours behind the winning team. Congratulations to Andy Yu, Theodore Graham, Frederick Morgan, Leo Dhunnookchand and Michael Shoniwa.

Congratulations to everyone who took part. In particular, there were six students who qualified for the follow-on competition called the Senior Kangaroo. Andy Yu absolutely smashed the Senior Maths Challenge, scoring full marks!

Senior Maths Challenge - October 2024

Group	Entered	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Year 12	34	2	8	16
Year 13	14	6	5	1

How did you prepare for the senior maths challenge?

In order to prepare for the maths challenge, I completed some past papers. To prepare better next time, I would practice under timed conditions and maybe complete more questions.

Jack Cotton

How has it helped you with problem solving skills?

It has greatly improved my problem solving abilities. It has given me a fresh outlook on maths as a whole taking my understanding of maths to a new level, it has helped me find new techniques to speed up my mathematical process.

Isaac Summerfield

How has it helped you with applications for universities?

You can add it to your personal statement! It shows your university that you can use cognitive thinking of and have the ability to think outside the box.

Sajan Ganagenthiran

What advice would you give to someone participating?

If you get stuck, skip the question, come back at the end if you have time. Don't panic if you get stuck, the questions are designed to challenge you. Only put the answer down when you're 100% happy! And make sure you colour in the circle neatly for each answer.

Hari Rehal (Kangaroo)

Why did you want to participate?

Overall, I participated mainly to gauge the difficulty of the challenge and to take a different approach. This also benefited me on my CAS portfolio.

Matias Daniele

MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD FOR GIRLS (MOG) - SEPTEMBER 2024

The UKMT also runs a competition only for female maths students. Thea Jagodic South was one of three Year 12s who took part in the UKMT Mathematical Olympiad for Girls in September 2024. Here is her account:

Can you answer this question from the 2022 paper from The Mathematical Olympiad for Girls? Test yourself and see the answers at the end!

1. The points A, B and C lie, in that order, on a straight line. Line CD is perpendicular to AC , and $CD = AB$. The point E lies on the line AD , between A and D , so that $EB = EC = AB$.

(a) Draw a diagram to show this information. Your diagram need not be accurate or to scale, but you should clearly indicate which lengths are equal. (2 marks)

(b) Calculate the size of the angle BAE . (8 marks)

Take Part!

The Mathematical Olympiad for Girls (MOG) is aimed at girls and young women across the UK, in Year 13 or below. It is an Olympiad exam consisting of five challenging problems over 2.5 hours. Calculators are not allowed. The questions require out of the box thinking and perseverance with its arduous questions which I can attest to as I participated this year.

Three of our year 12s (including me) took part in the competition this year, the first time we've taken part in the Mathematical Olympiad for Girls at BGS in the past 5 years!

My experience

Despite being relatively good in maths, I still found it very challenging, the questions are not as straightforward as it seems. Often, you will find yourself getting absolutely stumped on how to start questions or simply how to lay out your answers to them. However, it is extremely rewarding as it can expand the way you actively think about maths problems instead of just passively doing them!

Format of the paper/marking

The first two questions require numerical answers only, but the final three require full written explanations. This could be calculations, equations, tables, diagrams, etc. As such, these questions entice you to engage with your maths and build better understanding and depths to your knowledge of mathematics as a whole.

Marking is done externally. Video answers of the paper are released a week later with your mark given to you around a month after the initial sitting of the paper. It may seem like a long time, but that is because if you didn't get the right answer but your explanations hold some weight and the examiners can see your thought process, then you can earn extra marks other than none.

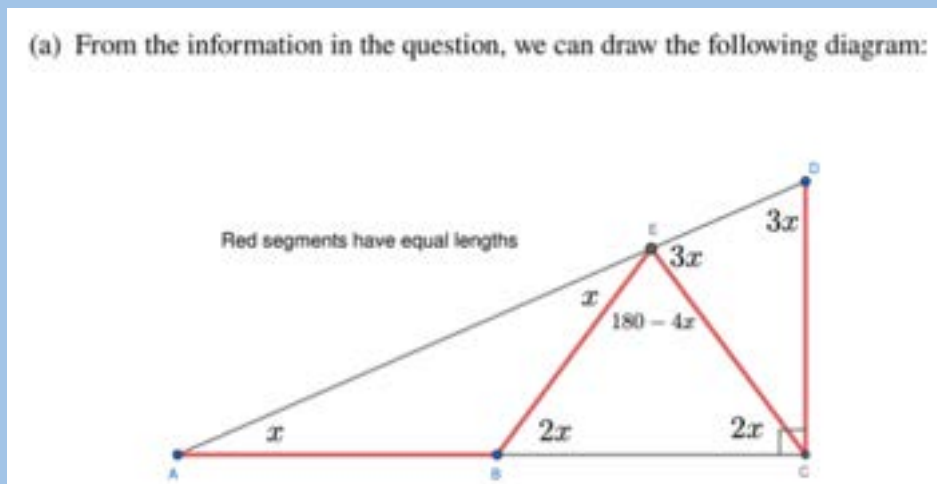
MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD FOR GIRLS (MOG) - SEPTEMBER 2024

Advice!

If you are thinking of taking part, here are some tips:

- Actively read the question -> Not just reading, annotating it with any information relating to the topic of the questions e.g. formulas, graphs or different skills that might help you.
- Sketching a graph/diagrams -> if it helps, especially with wordy questions, sketching it out is very useful to organise your thoughts.
- Timing -> Be very conscious of time even though it may feel like a long time, it is not.
- Complete every question -> Even if you are absolutely clueless, as aforementioned, you can still get bonus points for your methods and explanations, so it is best to attempt every question.
- Start at the end -> If you are really stuck on how to start a question, look at the layout of the answer boxes. They can hint on how the answers must look and therefore the method you could use.
- Practice -> The only way of getting better at maths is to practise! So on the website linked, there are a lot of past papers to complete in preparation (just scroll down).

(a) From the information in the question, we can draw the following diagram:



(b) Let $\angle BAE = x$. Then:

- Triangle ABE is isosceles, so $\angle AEB = x$ and $\angle ABE = 180 - 2x$.
- ABC is a straight line, so $\angle EBC = 2x$.
- Triangle EBC is isosceles, so $\angle ECB = 2x$ and $\angle BEC = 180 - 4x$.
- AED is a straight line, so $\angle DEC = 180 - x - (180 - 4x) = 3x$.
- Triangle DEC is isosceles, so $ED = EC = 3x$ and $\angle ECD = 180 - 6x$.
- We are given that ACD is a right angle, so

$$2x + (180 - 6x) = 90.$$

Solving this equation, we find that $\angle BAE = 22.5^\circ$.

KEY STAGE 4 MATHS NEWS

Intermediate Maths Challenge success!

Once again, our intrepid BGS Mathematicians have stormed the UK's most famous school maths contest. This time it was the turn of Years 9 to 11 to step up to the plate and test their mettle against the fiendish intellect of the UK Maths Trust (UKMT), the inner circle of question-posing boffins whose mathematical interrogations can turn even the most able young minds into a panicky jelly of incoherent innumeracy.

The results speak for themselves:

Group	Entered	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Year 9	24	3	10	7
Year 10	15	5	4	4
Year 11	21	10	5	4

To give some context: by design, the UKMT gives Gold certificates to the top 8.33% of students nationwide; whereas the BGS Gold rate was 30%.

Here are our highest-performing students - all invited through to the next rounds of the competition:



There are two types of second round competitions: the Kangaroos, taking its name from the historic ties between UKMT and their Australian counterparts; and the Olympiads, for the ultra-elite competitors.

Needless to say, the BGS entrants acquitted themselves with aplomb. The highlight results were:

- Matilda Sargent 9FIM - Silver in the Grey Kangaroo, best in school
- Lev Griffin 11CPB - Bronze in the Pink Kangaroo, best in school
- Max Perez 10STA - Merit in the Hamilton Olympiad
- Diep Anh Nguyen 11PLV - Merit in the Maclaurin Olympiad

KEY STAGE 4 MATHS NEWS

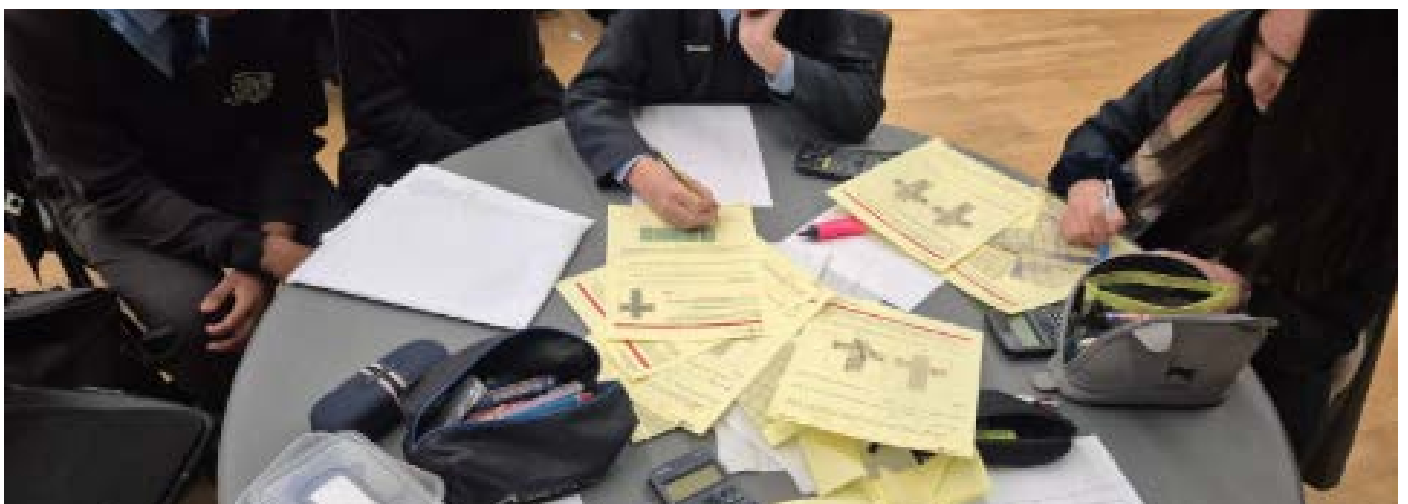
AMSP Maths Feast success!

For the second year running, we entered a crack squad of our Year 10s in the AMSP's unusually-named Maths Feast, an annual team-based competition held at Thomas Tallis School comprising multiple challenging rounds. BGS successfully retained the title, due to some excellent teamwork and problem-solving under pressure.



Here is what Daniel Lambin thought about the competition:

Participating in the Maths Feast challenge was an unforgettable experience! As part of a team of four, I was both nervous and excited as we tackled a series of tough mathematical problems. From the moment the competition began, we had to work closely together, relying on each other's strengths to solve everything from tricky algebra to complex puzzles. It was challenging, but the thrill of cracking each question and moving forward kept us all motivated. When we were announced as the winners, it felt incredibly rewarding, and I couldn't have asked for a better team to share the victory with. It was a moment that made all the hard work and preparation truly worth it!



KEY STAGE 3 MATHS NEWS

UKMT Junior Maths Challenge

As usual the younger students in the school acquitted themselves extremely well in the UKMT Junior Maths Challenge. Here are the results:

Group	Entered	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Year 7	63	17	31	6
Year 8	24	6	13	2

Sixteen students went on to the next round, the "Kangaroo" (the name deriving from historic ties between the UKMT and Australian mathematicians). Here are some of our victorious young competitors:



Your paragraph text
Your paragraph text



So, amazing work from all of our mathematicians, from Year 7 up to Year 13. Congratulations to everyone who has participated in BGS mathematics and helped contribute to our excellent results!

GEOGRAPHY FIELD WORK: STRATFORD

by Erin Furnage, Yu Xuan Ong and Adebola Olateru



For our Geography fieldwork, Group B visited two locations: Stratford on Wednesday 11th June and Epping Forest on Friday 13th June.

In Stratford, we began the day by meeting at Woolwich Arsenal station before travelling by DLR. Although the morning was grey and windy, it brightened up later. One of our tasks was to conduct surveys by approaching members of the public and asking their opinions about the area. It felt a bit uncomfortable at first, but it gave us useful insight into how people view Stratford's regeneration. We also explored the Olympic Park, where we had lunch and observed landmarks like the Olympic rings.

Erin Furnage

East Village, located in Stratford, is a key part of the London 2012 Olympic Games legacy and a major regeneration project. The aim of our outing to Stratford was to assess how sustainable the redevelopment there has been.

Originally built as the Athletes' Village, East Village was transformed into a permanent residential area after the Olympics. Before 2012, Stratford faced high unemployment levels and poor quality housing. However since the regeneration, there have been major improvements in housing, transport and services.

To investigate the sustainability of the area, we used fieldwork methods like a land use map, environmental quality survey, service tally and a sustainability questionnaire with the local residents.

As well as that, we also observed green spaces, transport links and public areas. Our findings show that the East Village is a largely successful example of sustainable redevelopment. When compared to our model, the Egan Wheel, it has shown strong social and environmental improvements with regards to sustainability, though there was little evidence of economic improvement.

Overall, the development of East Village, Stratford has been largely successful at being sustainable.

To complete our day in Stratford, we were asked to evaluate the entirety of its sustainability, from East Village to Queen Elizabeth's Olympic Park.

I believe the regeneration of the area proved successful and further developed the overall sustainability of Stratford, socially and environmentally. Before the London 2012 Olympics, Stratford was characterised as a location of derelict factories and brownfield sites due to industrial decline.

Following the games, Stratford began its journey to transform into a thriving hub of sustainable living by investing in infrastructure and transport. Completing our service tally maps, Stratford was full of services ranging from electric transport options, restaurants and many residential areas with a clean environment and many green spaces. In the Olympic park, the thriving biodiversity of flora and litter-free pathways allowed me to draw my conclusion that Stratford in its prior form has been successfully regenerated while keeping sustainability in mind.

Adebola Olateru

Jack Petchey Foundation

Inspiring • Motivating • Achieving



A Generous Gift for Geography Lovers

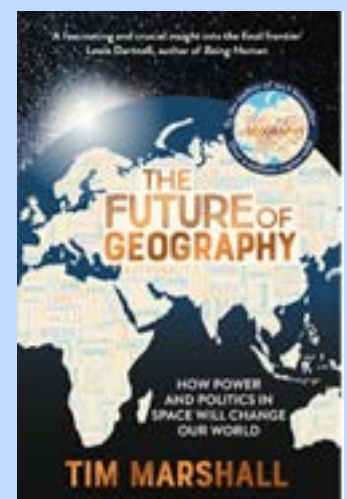
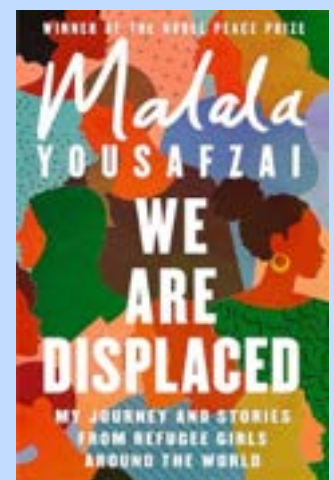
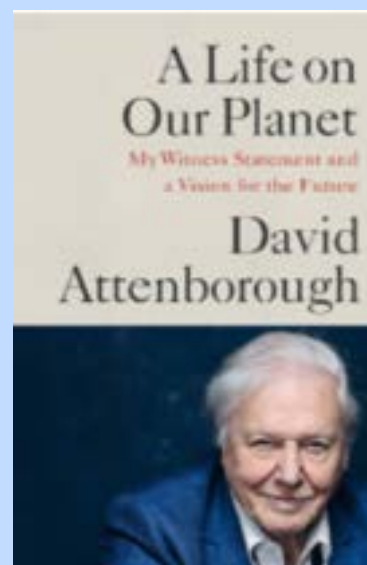
vol. 1

Congratulations to Lily Pigott-Denyer (8LC), the proud winner of the KS3 Jack Petchey Award! In a wonderful act of generosity, Lily chose to donate her £300 prize to the Geography department, helping to fund an exciting new Geography library.

Housed in M19, this new resource features a jazzy rotating book shelf on wheels and a growing collection of engaging, up-to-date reads. Some standout titles include:

- *A Life On Our Planet* by Sir David Attenborough – A moving and powerful reflection on the environmental changes Sir David has witnessed over his lifetime, and a hopeful blueprint for a more sustainable future.
- *The Future of Geography* by Tim Marshall – A fascinating look at how space, satellite technology, and geography will shape the geopolitical world of tomorrow.
- *We Are Displaced* by Malala Yousafzai – A deeply personal collection of stories from refugee girls around the world, highlighting both their struggles and strength.

The hope is that this library will inspire the next generation of geographers and spark a lifelong curiosity for the planet and its people. Students are warmly encouraged to check out the collection in M19 and speak to a Geography teacher to borrow a book over the summer.



ENGLISH ACTIVITY:

BLACKOUT POETRY

During Enrichment Week, Y9 worked on making Blackout poetry. This was such an enjoyable and mindful activity that we thought we would share this with you in case you would also like to have a go over the Summer holiday!

STEP 1:

Start by finding some pages with words on them. These can come from magazines, newspapers, or very old falling-apart books that you are ready to let go.

Perhaps a trip to the charity shop would help!

Make sure you check with an adult before you start drawing all over book pages!



STEP 2:

Skim your page of words. Don't read carefully, as the point is just to grab an idea from the words, not take them in. Find a word, phrase, or general theme that you like.

STEP 3:

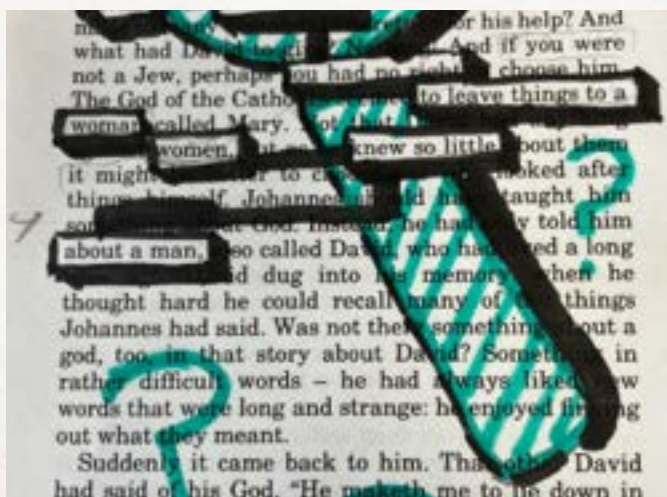
Go through and lightly circle the words or phrases you might want to use. Grab a blank piece of paper and write them down in order, then read through them. Cross out the words you don't want. If you need a few connecting words (like "a", "the", "it", etc.) then dive back in and see if you can find them between the words you want to connect. You often can.

STEP 5:

Read through your final poem. Sketch in a few images or symbols on your page that relate to the theme of your poem. Now it's time to start blackening. Using a sharpie, pen, or pencil, black out everything that is NOT a word in your poem or one of your own sketches.

STEP 4:

Go back through your poem and boldly box the words you are keeping with pen, sharpie, dark pencil, etc. Erase any circles around words you don't want.



THE DEBATE COMPETITION

On Thursday 10th July, six intrepid debating teams, representing all years of the school, made their way to South Hampstead school in North London to take part in the UK's largest state school debating competition, Debate Hub. Over 68 schools were represented, and our teams put on a really good show, many of them winning two or more of the four debates they took part in. Topics ranged from the anti-tourism movement to whether cheerleading can be considered a positive force for the feminist cause. Teams were given only 15 minutes preparation time, with no phones, before a 30 minute formal debate chaired by a range of debating experts. After a hot and intellectually challenging day of debates, all the students enjoyed a 'soft drink social' in the school's sunny rooftop garden. A big thank you to Ms Custer for arranging the day, and Mr Griffin and Mrs Burger for accompanying her.

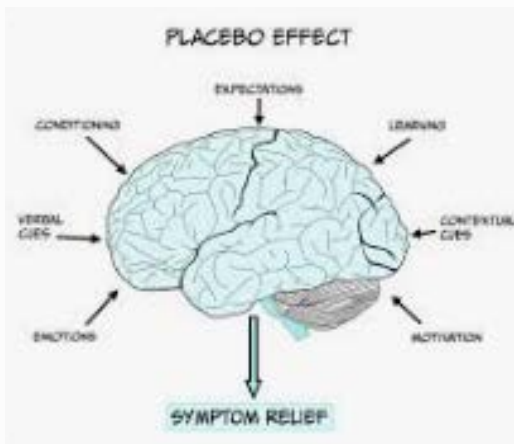


FAKE PILLS, REAL RESULTS:

The Science Behind the "Placebo Effect" Phenomenon

By Deya Dimitrova

The "placebo effect" is a psychological phenomenon that is used daily by our doctors, in which individuals experience real improvements in their condition after receiving a "placebo" - a treatment that has no therapeutic effect.



The placebo effect can be administered in a wide range of settings, some of which are most likely unbeknown to you. The most prominently displayed use of placebos are within a clinical setting. In a clinical setting, there would be two (or more) independent groups, with an unknown "control group". This "control group" needs to experience the experiment without the drug that is being tested. But in order for this to be a well-regulated, fair test, the participants in the control group are given a drug with no therapeutic effect.

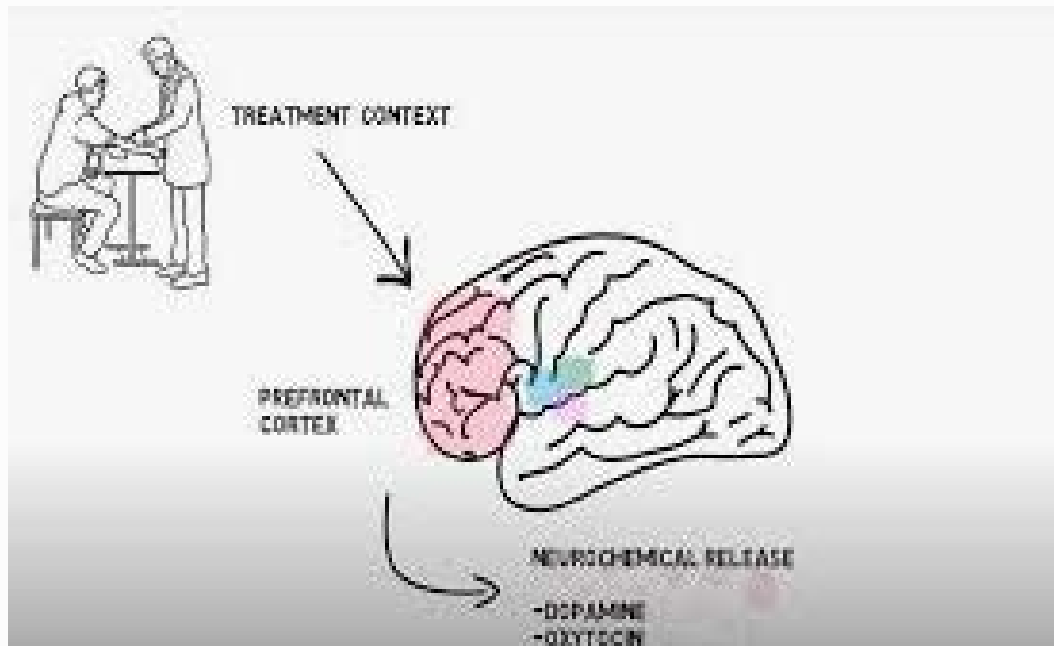
However, when the results are collected, it seems as though this placebo does have an effect on the participants, even though it doesn't actually hold any medicinal value. This is the well-known placebo effect.

But this effect is not simply a mental process; this occurs as a complex interaction between the mind and the body, causing physiological changes using the endocrine system to secrete hormones such as dopamine and serotonin. These are both monoamine neurotransmitters, and play many major roles in regulating the processes in the body. Dopamine plays multiple roles, but it is most well-known for its "feel-good" response. Dopamine is part of our body's reward system, and makes us feel alert and happy when we do things we enjoy. However, from an evolutionary standpoint, this reward system was made to give us motivation to continue doing things our body needs, such as eating, drinking and socialising.



By Deya Dimitrova

On the other hand, serotonin plays an important role in mood regulation. Serotonin (also known as 5-HT) is made from tryptophan, which is an essential amino acid. Essential amino acids can only be obtained from the foods we eat, and so our serotonin levels partly depend on our diet. Due to this, scientists approximate that around 90% of our serotonin is found in cells in our gastrointestinal tract (our guts). Serotonin is needed in order to make melanin (which is a hormone responsible for regulating your sleep cycle), and together with dopamine, they play a large role in determining the quality of sleep we get. It is evident that, in the body, the endocrine system produces many hormones which all play multiple vital roles and are part of a highly interconnected and interdependent system.



The placebo effect utilises the evolutionary adaptation in the belief that responding to a perceived threat straight away is necessary. One proposed theory is that the brain does not stop to check whether the placebo is valid, but starts to straightaway work on the formation of a correct response, which includes decreasing the spinal pathways which are triggering responses to the threat.

But this effect is not simply a mental process; this occurs as a complex interaction between the mind and the body, causing physiological changes using the endocrine system to secrete hormones such as dopamine and serotonin. These are both monoamine neurotransmitters, and play many major roles in regulating the processes in the body. Dopamine plays multiple roles, but it is most well-known for its “feel-good” response. Dopamine is part of our body’s reward system, and makes us feel alert and happy when we do things we enjoy.

It is significant to note that, from an evolutionary standpoint, this reward system was made to give us motivation to continue doing things our body needs, such as eating, drinking and socialising.

However, it is also important to be aware of the possibility of a “nocebo effect”, in which the opposite occurs, as this phenomenon triggers a more negative response due to a patient's weak expectations. The phenomenon of the “placebo effect” is greatly utilised in modern life and is prevalent in medicine today, therefore I believe the science behind it can educate us deeply about our brain and its physiological responses.

BEYOND THE MAJORITY: SEEKING BELONGING WHERE YOU DON'T QUITE FIT IN

by Oluwademilade Samuel Onette

Growing up in a predominantly white neighbourhood, I always struggled to belong: from straight hair, fair complexions to delicate features, I have always been different. With my curly type 4 hair, dark complexion and large Afrocentric features, I felt like an outsider.

I remember times in primary school where people made fun of my features or touched my hair like it was a toy and I thought that was okay, the norm but it's not. At times, I felt ashamed of my complexion, embarrassed of my hair and mortified by my features.

From a class of 30 students, I was one of 3 Black kids. From a year group of 120 students, I was one of around 15 Black kids. Still, I wasn't me, I was Rachel or I was Jahnia, I wasn't Demilade.

Having no one understand your experiences at a young age was difficult. When my mum brushed my tight coils, no one understood. When my mum relaxed my hair, no one understood.

When my mum washed my hair every 6 weeks, no one understood. There were so many experiences where people didn't understand. Did I blame them? No because I was the minority, I was the odd one out, I was the imposter.

Whilst I aged through school, my feeling of being an imposter grew stronger and stronger. Everyone is so in touch with their identity, their culture and there's just me - a young Black girl with no one to look to, no one to share the struggle, no one to understand. When I stepped into BGS for the first time, I thought things were going to be different because my mum loved the fact that this school was diverse.

From a year group of 224 students, I was one of around 10 Black girls. Guess not much had changed. Navigating my identity in secondary school was so difficult - the colourism, it went unchecked, unchallenged - it was the norm. There were times I felt ashamed of my dark complexion, I admit that I wanted to be lighter so I could fit in so I could be "normal". Normal. Having a lighter complexion, having smaller features, having straight, "easy" hair.

Normal.

However, as I got older, I was able to accept myself. My understanding of myself changed - it took time to come to terms with who I am, it took time for me to be proud of myself, it took time for me to love my dark complexion, my curly type 4 hair and my large Afrocentric features.

How did I do it? I confronted my tough feelings of self-hatred. I learnt lessons about my culture and myself and began to embrace it all. But most of all, I found my people - the people who accepted every part of me, the people who encouraged me to embrace my blackness in its entirety, the people who taught me that black is beautiful in all its forms.

In a school where you are the minority, it will always be hard to find your majority but they are there, in the places you expect it the least.

The Rise of Populism in the 21st Century

BY JOSHUA CHESTERTON

Populism can be defined as a political approach that strives to appeal to ordinary people, who often feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups but what does this mean in practice?



Populist parties range across the political spectrum but focus primarily on what is seen as the division between the ‘people’ and the ‘elite’ and base their policies on what they view as appealing to ordinary people. Whilst populism was previously considered to be on the fringe of most western democracies, towards the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century it has become increasingly prevalent across the west. Support for populism has increased radically in the last 10 years with populist parties surging in the polls and in some cases taking office, but why is this the case?

One major factor for the rise in populism in the west is globalisation, which has had significant impacts on politics in the last 100 years. Globalisation has seen industry in the west shift towards the east, which has altered the makeup of the economy with the industrial sectors declining in Europe in particular. Whilst this shift in industry does have its benefits, it has led to individuals primarily in poorer areas being left without work and led to major decline in towns and cities.

Populism argues the political elite have focused more on the international stage rather than their own population and that populists would bring a return to isolationism and a strong nation state. This has been seen during both of Trump’s periods in office, with Trump renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in favour of US interests and during his second term has threatened tariffs on both Mexico and Canada in an attempt to prioritise US industry.

“Populism argues the political elite have focused more on the international stage rather than their own population and that populists would bring a return to isolationism and a strong nation state.”



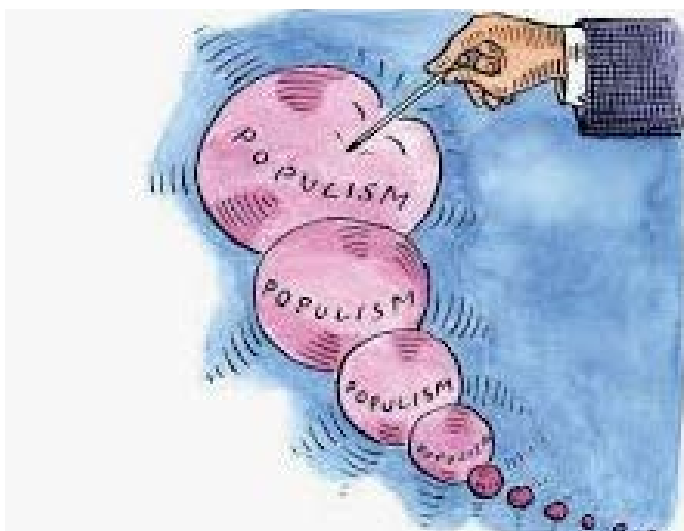
Additionally, a focus of populist policy (primarily on the right) is immigration and the recent rise in migration in the 21st century. Both illegal and legal migration has been on the rise and many feel concerned about the levels on immigration with a YouGov survey finding 71% deemed immigration too high compared to 16% deeming levels just right. The public also feel that the government has done little to deal with the issue of immigration with nearly 70% being dissatisfied with the current policies on immigration. Populist parties such as Reform UK offer a seemingly tough stance on immigration, promising a freeze on non-essential immigration and deportation of migrants arriving via boat if they take office.

Whilst populist parties such as Reform offer populist policies, in order to appeal to the working people, in practice populism often has detrimental economic and social effects. On average GDP growth in populist countries is 10% less than non populist ones and can often erode the democracy of a state, with Hungary no longer being considered a full democracy after changes made by populist leader Victor Orban.

“

Whilst populism was previously considered to be on the fringe of most western democracies, towards the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century it has become increasingly prevalent across the west.

One thing is clear: the rise of populism in the 21st century reflects growing public frustration with traditional politics, and while it offers a voice to the discontented, it also challenges the stability and complexity of democratic systems around the world.



IS NIHILISM ABSURDISM OR LIBERATION?

BY AQUA TRUMCI

The term 'Nihilism' has existed as a form of idealism, as both a poetic and philosophical form since the early 19th century, and refers to the belief that there is no objective meaning in life. This ideology often comes with a rejection of religious and moral principles and in essence is the belief that life is simply meaningless: that there is no hidden code or key on how to live life.

Nihilism occurs in many forms in our modern society, most notably in Hollywood films that often contain a 'moody' teenager who is constantly complaining about nothing in life having a meaning. This is manifested as a crude form of materialism and is heavily viewed to be associated with the Western left-wing ideology, as something progressive and universalist. Yet despite many people believing that this is the new forward way of thinking, many are still reluctant to accept this ideology, due to the imposed beliefs inaugurated into our society, therefore making it very difficult for individuals to completely do a 180 on their beliefs and values.



One way that nihilism is displayed as liberation in society is by some people acknowledging the construct of gender, and through a healthy dose, determine that there is no objective concept of gender as it's a human and social notion created by sexologists to label people into defining groups. This illustrates how transgender and non-binary individuals should feel free to identify themselves as however they please, as some may identify that seeing gender as a meaningless concept equates to freedom in society. This in itself is a looser version of the philosophy, but still accurately highlights the ideology in a modern day context. Some individuals may also seek comfort in the fact that nothing truly matters, after all, many of us have surely heard the saying "we're all just living on a floating rock in space" and while in essence this is true, it allows us as a society to remember to not take everything so seriously, while yes exams are important to excel in, if you don't do well in one circumstance it's not the be all and end all. This ideology can be a form of reassurance to those that everything will be okay, which in our day and age needs to be heard by a lot of people. To have in the back of one's mind that "nothing really matters" or "nothing's that serious" can be comforting to many.

On the other hand, nihilism can be viewed by many as a notion that goes against religion. Many claim that the core aspect to nihilism counters religious beliefs as in summary, it's highlighting how our existence as a species is meaningless and is somewhat an atheist viewpoint that dismisses the idea of a creator, yet in many religious contexts, an omniscient being created us for a purpose (whatever purpose that may be).



For example, in Christianity our purpose in humanity is to look after the world our God created, and in Islam our purpose is to worship God. Many individuals assume that nihilists have an overall negative perception on life and creation in a way that is 'anti human' yet in reality is quite the opposite - we should enjoy our endeavours in humanity without taking ourselves too seriously, and simply do things that we enjoy, due to us not having an objective goal that we need to see to in order to live.

To finalise, I believe that for most, nihilism can be a form of self-expression, a means to convey how one is able to take things from life, and have an overall positive outlook of experience, instead of believing that something will ruin their life, A healthy dose of nihilism stops one to taking their life, the privilege they have to be able to say "You know what? Nothing truly matters", for granted. So next time you experience something that really makes you want to give up or not try again, think, and acknowledge that you are able to do what you want with your life, and there is no real 'way' to live as after all, nothing truly matters.

HOW HAVE SOCIETAL ATTITUDES CHANGED IN THE US OVER TIME?

By Annabelle Oliverofori-Kingful



Racism has been a persistent issue in the United States since its founding. The history of racial discrimination dates back to the era of slavery, where African Americans were subjected to brutal treatment and denied basic human rights. The abolition of slavery in 1865 marked a significant turning point, but it did not put an end to racial inequality. Instead, it gave rise to a new system of racial segregation known as Jim Crow, which enforced discriminatory practices and kept African Americans in a state of social and economic disadvantage.

The fight against racism has been a long and arduous journey, marked by significant milestones and setbacks. Over the years, societal attitudes towards racism have evolved, influenced by various factors such as civil rights movements, landmark legislations, and the tireless efforts of activists and leaders. This essay will explore these changes by examining the impact of key figures and events, such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., the election of Barack Obama, and the George Floyd protests.



The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s was a pivotal period in the fight against racial discrimination. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus in 1955 sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a major event that brought national attention to the issue of segregation. Parks' act of defiance and the subsequent boycott highlighted the systemic racism faced by African Americans and galvanised the movement for civil rights.

The boycott lasted for over a year, demonstrating the strength and resilience of the African American community. It also brought to the forefront leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., who advocated for nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience. King's leadership and eloquence played a crucial role in mobilising support for the movement. His famous "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered during the 1963 March on Washington, articulated a vision of racial equality and justice that resonated with millions of Americans.

By Annabelle Oliverofori-Kingful

King's speech emphasised the importance of judging individuals by the content of their character rather than the colour of their skin. This powerful message became a rallying cry for the movement and inspired generations to come. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were landmark legislations that aimed to dismantle institutional racism and ensure equal rights for all citizens. These laws prohibited discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin and aimed to eliminate barriers to voting for African Americans.

The achievements of the Civil Rights Movement were significant, but the journey towards racial equality was far from over. The movement laid the foundation for future progress and set the stage for continued activism and advocacy.

The election of Barack Obama as the first African American president in 2008 was a significant milestone in the history of the United States. Obama's victory was seen by many as a symbol of progress and a testament to the changing attitudes towards race in the country. His presidency brought hope and inspiration to millions of people, particularly within the African American community.



Obama's campaign was built on the principles of hope and change, and his election was hailed as a historic moment. For many, it represented the culmination of decades of struggle and the realisation of the dreams articulated by civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. Obama's presidency was a source of pride for African Americans and a sign that the nation was moving towards greater inclusivity and acceptance.

However, Obama's election also revealed the deep-seated racial tensions that still existed in the United States. While his presidency was a step forward, it also exposed the persistent challenges and inequalities faced by people of colour. The backlash and resistance to his policies highlighted the ongoing struggle for racial justice and equality.

Despite these challenges, Obama's presidency had a lasting impact on the nation's racial attitudes. It inspired a new generation of activists and leaders who continued to push for change. The election of Obama demonstrated that progress was possible, but it also underscored the need for continued efforts to address systemic racism and discrimination.



The murder of George Floyd by a police officer in May 2020 was a watershed moment in the fight against racial injustice. The incident, captured on video and widely shared on social media, showed Floyd pleading for his life as the officer knelt on his neck for over nine minutes. This brutal act of violence sparked outrage and grief across the United States and around the world.

The Black Lives Matter movement, which had been founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer, gained renewed momentum as people took to the streets to demand justice for George Floyd and an end to police brutality and systemic racism. The protests were unprecedented in their scale and diversity, with millions of people from all walks of life participating in demonstrations, marches, and rallies.

By Annabelle Oliverofori-Kingful

The George Floyd protests marked a significant shift in societal attitudes towards racism. The widespread outrage and solidarity demonstrated by people of all races and backgrounds indicated a growing awareness and rejection of racial injustice. The protests also led to calls for police reform and greater accountability, as well as a broader conversation about the impact of systemic racism on various aspects of society, including education, healthcare, and employment.

In response to the protests, several cities and states implemented changes to their policing policies, such as banning chokeholds, requiring body cameras, and increasing transparency and accountability measures. The protests also prompted corporations, institutions, and individuals to reflect on their own roles in perpetuating systemic racism and to take steps towards promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Societal attitudes towards racism in the United States have evolved significantly over time, influenced by key figures and events such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., the election of Barack Obama, and the George Floyd protests. While progress has been made, the fight against racism is far from over. The ongoing efforts to address racial inequalities and promote justice and equality for all are a testament to the enduring legacy of those who have fought for civil rights throughout history.

The journey towards racial equality is a continuous one, requiring vigilance, commitment, and collective action.

As we reflect on the progress made and the challenges that remain, it is important to honour the contributions of those who have paved the way for a more just and equitable society. Their courage, resilience, and determination serve as an inspiration for future generations to continue the fight for racial justice and equality.





COMMON PLANTS IN LONDON, ENGLAND

XIYUAN HE

As an incredibly hot summer approaches the infamously wet and cold country of England, her citizens are seizing the opportunity to enjoy the sun to its fullest. We spend the majority of the year fearing the cold, damp or rain; so it is not unreasonable to think that the majority of the English, particularly Londoners, do not know many plants common to their areas. Not just grass or trees, but to put a name to the plants around us.

Why bother doing this?

Well, it can help ground us more fully in the present and the great outdoors, allowing us to appreciate this short respite from the greyer months. This grounding can help us remember these moments in the summer better, as the flurry of things to do, whether in school or at work, consumes our lives, our months or years can blur together. Studies by the Mental Health Foundation have shown improvements to mental health if you slow down to be fully in the present more, especially as many of our lives revolve around our worries about the past or future. And noticing the nature around is very helpful in that regard: naming the plants you can see even more so.

This article hopes to help you learn the names of some of the common plants around you.

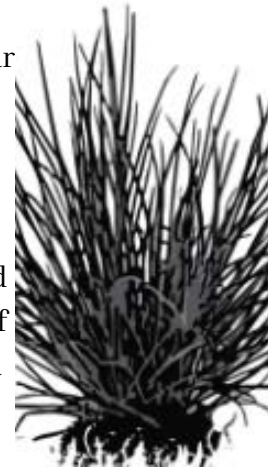
To get you started, we can begin with the most recognisable family of plants:

Poaceae whether in your gardens or local area. Mown or mowed, they are everywhere.

Perennial Ryegrass is a common lawn choice across the UK because it grows very quickly, even in cold climates. It's also very tough, suited to everyday lawns getting a lot of foot traffic. Hence its commonality.

There are a few different types of Perennial Ryegrass – one of the most common ones is Dwarf Ryegrass, which is particularly fast-growing.

Fescue is the second most popular type of grass you're likely to find on a British lawn, after Ryegrass. This grass species has extremely fine blades, and doesn't grow extremely fast. You can often find these types of grasses on fine turf, such as golf courses. There are a number of grass types that fall into the fescue family of grasses – some of the most common ones are Red Fescue and Chewings Fescue.



Sometimes considered as a weed, Annual Meadowgrass often produces flowers, even at a low height, which can look unsightly on formal lawns.

These types of grasses are commonly found throughout the UK, especially on unkempt grass areas, such as meadows, as the name suggests. It can also spring up on existing lawns, as it's a very common type of grass.

This is another type of extra-fine grass, common on golf greens as well as in back gardens.

Creeping Bent is one of the toughest types of grass around. It grows well on basically any type of soil, and is very disease resistant. This is partially because its root system grows horizontally through the soil, using what's known as "stolons", giving it a stronger base in all soil types. Another reason this type of grass is popular on the golf and bowling green is how it withstands short mowing.

The next most commonly observed plant life form by busy Londoners would be trees. Many were planted into efforts to combat air pollution after the great smog of 1952 where London saw 52 people die from the smog produced from the mixture of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds that made the air toxic and barely see through. People had to use torches to navigate.

Cherry

Oval, green and toothed with pointed tips, measuring 6–15cm with two red glands on the stalk at the leaf base.

Maple

Bark in fine, brown and vertically fissured. Mature twigs are corky, with opposite egg-shaped buds.

Oak

Dark brown bark is deeply fissured. Leaves range from pale to dark green, with rounded lobes on each side and very short petioles.

English Plane

Multi-coloured bark which has a camouflage-style pattern. Sycamore-like leaves are leathery and thick, with five triangular lobes.



Lime

The bark is brown, rough and ridged. With alternate red buds bearing shiny, heart shaped leaves with serrated edges.

Ash

Brown and fissured bark. Opposite black velvet buds grow on winter twigs, pale green pinnate leaflets ending in a single leaflet.

Birch

Peeling sliver-white bark covers the main trunk and larger branches. Leaves are small and triangular, turning golden yellow in the autumn.

Sycamore

Pink-brown and plate-like bark. Opposite green buds grow along stout twigs, leaves are palmate and leathery with a serrated margin.

1. Hawthorn

2. The bark is grey-brown. When mature the bark becomes knotted and fissured. Shiny green leaves on spiny twigs.

Hornbeam

The trunk of these trees are short, fluted and twisted with grey bark. Alternate leaves that are small, oval-shaped and crinkly, with serrated margin.





A STUDY ON VALIDATION

BY SIENA URLICH

In a world where everyone is hoping to win, validation can be found in the spaces where we don't and the people who still believed we could. Validation permeates every desire, every interaction in our life. We function on being told we are supposed to be in the higher sets of maths, that our artwork is beautiful, that people are proud of us. Sometimes the validation can be set off by societal markers; a high score, a trophy, a kiss on the head before we go to sleep. Sometimes it's the words that matter... it's always something. As we've learnt in psychology lately, not having meaningful membership to positive social groups (aka. not having a place you belong and feeling uplifted - say, a friendship group) makes you more susceptible to developing mood disorders, such as depression. Minimal validation or assurance of your place in the world, or simply in your church group, leads to unfulfillment and disillusionment; safe to say, it's not fun to lack external affirmation. Even so, what if the search for validation muddies the destination?

What if extrinsic validation becomes the sole reason you believe in yourself?

Now I'm sure you've been reading this, nodding along, with your own definition of validation in your mind. What is validation for you? The Oxford dictionary says 'recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worthwhile'. In year 9, Person A defined it as 'seeking approval and support from others'. In year twelve, she defines it as 'The want to be told or shown in some way that what you are doing is right or to be respected'.



It's an amazing growth we can see in Person A, a self awareness brought on by age and deeper understanding of the world and her place in it. Through this participant, who answered a series of the same questions both in year 9 and then again when she reached year twelve (along with five others), we can determine what it means to grow up in a society that craves validation, and what it means to grow and detach yourself from that purpose-seeking binary.

Initially, my questionnaire was designed for an Independent Learners Project we completed in year 9. On rereading that essay, I read my own thoughts and desperations through the lines - in titling the project 'the difficulties of validation and why we rely on people to make us happy', I hear my 14 year old self struggling to understand why she couldn't just be happy by herself; I hear my social skills slowly developing and turning an examining eye on my peers. Mostly, I made validation my topic because I was insatiably curious and I didn't think I could read my friends minds but observation alone (though how much easier that would make petty fights, I can't imagine)



The questionnaire had 11 questions, but 3 struck out to me. In this article, I shall explore how my 6 participants responded to these questions, and the change we can see in their self assurance. I also attempted to answer these questions - though just in year 12 - so some of my perspectives may trickle through as well.

1) Do you have people that validate you and how?

For this question, most participants said yes both in year 9 and year 12. They described family members, friends, and even teachers. However, some participants answered much more abrasively in year 9 than they did in year 12. For example, participant C had a curt 'No, I don't need approval' in year 9 compared to the much more heartwarming 'Teachers, when I get questions right (they validate me) and my family/ parents with compliments or congratulations'. Though it's a small insight, this participant has developed a more objective view of the validation they receive - accepting it as a passive way of things that occurs in natural settings and relationships in comparison to a defensive need to assert her individual assurance.

A theme in participant D and E (the two male participants) was an evolution of validators around them in year 12. Both responded 'No' to the question in the initial form, whereas in year 12 they happily discussed having people they love around them, who lift them up. This new confidence in relationships and what they provide is a trend in almost all the participants at various points in their answers, though to varying degrees. In answering this question myself, I found I had a many avenues of affirmation around me, in the same friends and teachers, yet I commented on how most of my validation can from myself, so when I would fall into a low confidence mood, I'd not feel as strongly supported as I wouldn't rely on the support systems around me.



2) Do you feel better about yourself when people give you compliments?

For all participants this was a quick yes without much thought. I expected this - we're conditioned to expect compliments and they signify positive things about us. This question struck out to me more because of the caveat I added when including it in the questionnaire; alongside the question, I wrote '(meant in the least selfish way possible)'. I believe, as it's human nature to enjoy a compliment, it's just as natural to be drawn to humility. In year 9, I had an acute sense of this, though I phrased it poorly. Still, it outlines something important in our conditioning from childhood - we all inherit a need to downplay our successes, and defend the idea that we don't think we're the best, we just think we're good and we know nobody else needs to think that with us.





3) Do you strive for good marks and will be upset if they are not (close to) perfect?

In a grammar school like BGS, we are founded on a need to succeed. Recently, I gave some advice to a group of year 7s struggling with perfectionism - when even 12 year olds feel a pressure to perform to the highest level, we are bound to develop standards by the time we reach year 9, let alone year 12. For this question, however, I didn't expect an evening out of expectations and goals rather than exponential growth of expectations.

Participant A is level headed from year 9. She describes how she 'thinks realistically' so that when she strives for good marks and perhaps doesn't score in the highest percentile she is 'not that disappointed'. This self-awareness only evolves in year 12, where she states 'Yes, but I understand there are limits to (my) performance, so perfection is not the goal, specific grades are', in which she identifies her own goals rather than the generalised, largely unattainable standards and she is confident within that. Participant B and F on the other hand, lean much more to the norm of relying on academic validation, with both answering that yes, they would be upset in both year 9 and 12, with participant F even using the hyperbolic percentage of '1000%' when discussing how big of a part academic validation plays in her life. Participant E had a more humorous approach to the topic which maintained through the years: in year 9 he commented '50% = job well done' and year 12 holds a more nuanced 'Not really, more I strive for decent marks'.

I'm inclined to believe that these discrepancies are on a participant variable basis; though the school instils an "achieve well" mentality, every student has their independent journey.



In being swamped with deadlines, I only had time to brush over the depth of these answers, and ignored many insightful answers. My questionnaire actually had 57 respondents, with the 6 participants being the only ones who answered both in year 9 and year 12, and the 11 questions reveal much more than this article's word limit allows. In September, I aim to explore this at a much more technical level - but for now, I will conclude my statement by saying that we rely on validation when we are younger because we are still developing our self image. As we explore ourselves and our connections at 14, we trepidly start to understand what it means to be "us" and so we look to others, or to grades, to confirm what we'd like to think about ourselves. By 17, we are much more certain. It is funny how we grow up without ever even realising it until we ask ourselves the same questions that so confused us when we were younger, and know the answers.


the struggle is real

by Jesse Oshogwe, Year 12

As we all know, being a teenager is pretty hard in this day and age. With constant pressure from exams and the lack of likes we get on our posts, a lot is bothering us. On a more serious note, young people often have their worries, fears and problems ignored - or even worse - infantilised. Adults often write articles about the problems teenagers go through, which leaves their advice unrelatable. But have no fear - because now you have me to expose these common and severely undermined issues.

Welcome back to “the struggle is real”, and thank you for reading this section once again! This issue’s topic is - “what you did last summer”, a scorching-hot topic to match the weather this summer!






Summer holidays are meant to be the ultimate escape – no more school, late nights, going out everyday – but if we’re being honest: it often ends up being wasted time. Between scrolling through 1000s of reels a day and staying inside doing nothing, Summer’s often packed with no substance.

Feeling paralysed by the endless possibilities Summer holds? I feel you. As a Year 12 student, I fear this Summer will only be an extension of school with the countless IAs I have to work on and the preparation for entrance exams and university. However, this Summer is an opportunity to take a break from the 6+ hour school days, and destress from all the work you’ve been doing.

As summer is right around the corner, I would like to leave behind some quick advice to keep your Summer as fun as possible, whilst still managing any other work you have left over.



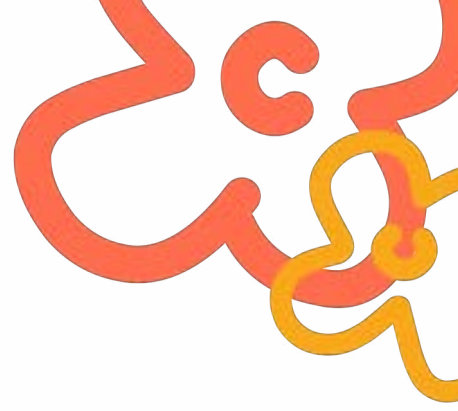
NO.1 DROP THE SCROLL

Endless scrolling will suck every ounce of life out of your summer, and you'll wake up on the 1st of September wondering where all your time went. Scrolling isn't just a waste of time but it also messes with you mentally, making you feel like you're missing out on life. Spending more time offline with real people will make your Summer more real than the thousands of reels you scroll through. A simple method to avoid this trap, isn't just setting time limits on your apps, but planning your days out with fun activities that allow for you to spend time away from the socials and more time in reality. This way, you're not glued to your phone, comparing your day to someone else's staged beach photoshoot.

Plan an outing with your friends; touch grass, go for a picnic, bike around together or try something new, like playing a song together or taking some photos together.

Once you cut the scrolling, you'll realise how much more present you feel, and how beautiful life really can be. You'll also end up with real memories, not just a feed full of other people's highlights, and your summer will feel way more alive.



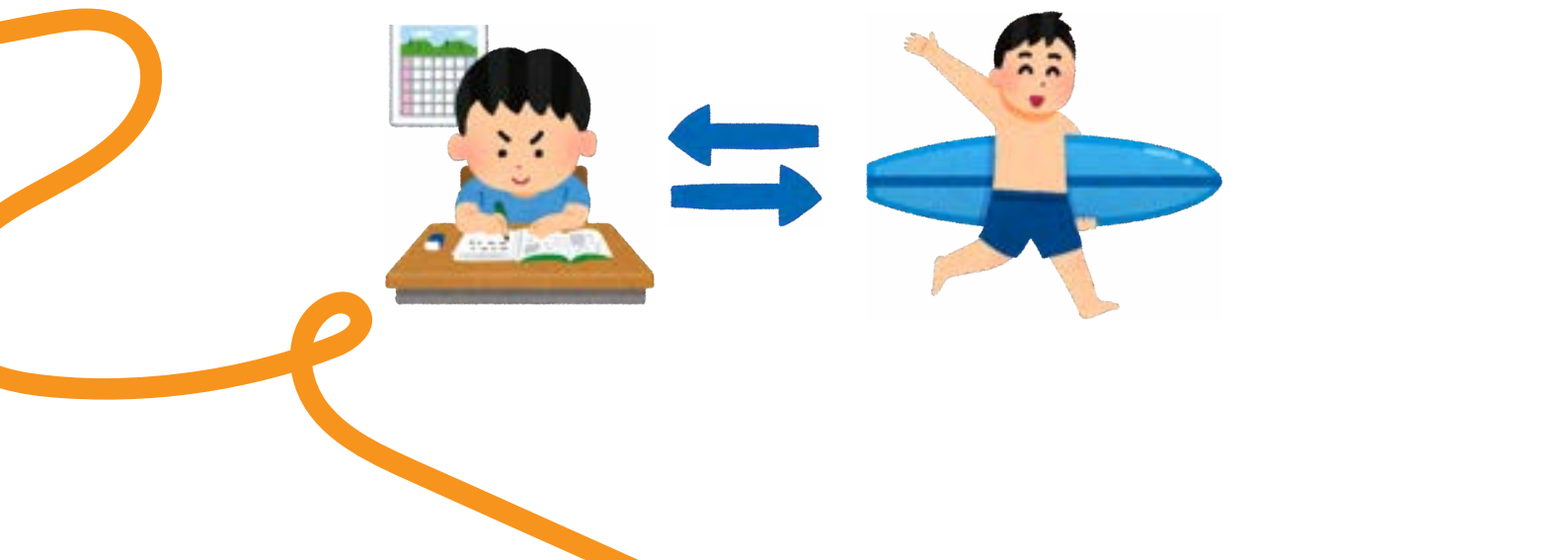
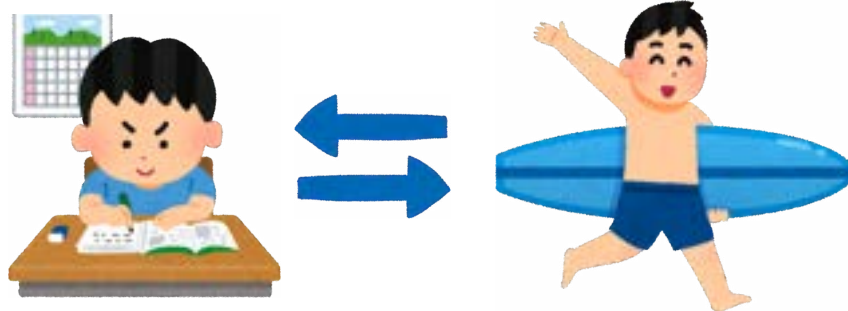


NO.2 PLAY HARD, WORK HARD

As a Year 12 student, summer can feel like school never ended, with IAs, uni entrance exams and UCAS applications lurking. It's tempting to either stress about work 24/7 or ignore it completely, but both paths lead to a miserable break. Instead, set a clear schedule, dedicating some time everyday to knocking out some IA work or revising for exams. Treat it like a job: get it done, then clock out and reward yourself with guilt-free fun. This keeps the workload manageable without letting it take over your entire summer.

With your work boxed off, you can dive into the fun stuff guilt-free. Plan a beach day with friends, binge that anime series everyone's hyping (finally start One Piece?), or just vibe in your room with your favorite playlist. The key is to make time for both: *work* to keep the stress at bay, and *play* to remind yourself you're more than just your academics. By striking this balance, you'll feel productive and still get the de-stressing break you deserve after those 6+ hour school days.

This balance keeps you on track without turning summer into a study hall, so you can actually de-stress and enjoy the break you've earned.






NO.3 www (SMALL Ws)

Summer's endless possibilities can be overwhelming - so how should you tackle everything you want to do? One second you're dreaming of a road trip abroad, the next you're planning a trip to Thorpe Park. All the decisions leave you laying in bed, unsure where to begin with all your ideas because you don't know where to start.

The pressure to make every day "perfect" will only make you feel as if you're wasting your Summer holidays. Instead of chasing some picturesque, perfect summer, focus on small, doable goals. Pick one thing each week - like trying a new bubble tea flavor, going for a sunset walk, or finishing a painting. Despite these wins being small, at the end of Summer you'll be able to look back and see all the incredible things you've done.

The beauty of small wins is they don't require a extravagant plans or mountains of effort and time. Even something as simple as rearranging your room or cooking a new dish counts. These moments continue to help you destress and truly enjoy your Summer. By the end of summer, you'll look back and realize every single small win made your break meaningful, no matter how messy it was.





My last (but not least) piece of advice is to **make it yours**. Summer's *your* chance to hit pause on the chaos of life. Do the things that please your soul - whether it's blasting music and dancing in your room (a personal favourite), exploring a new spot in town with friends, or even sleeping 12 hours a day - and just do it. Own *your* summer, even if it's messy and especially if it's imperfect, because those are **your** moments you'll look back and smile on.

As this academic year draws to a close, remember to enjoy yourself this Summer - you've worked incredibly hard and you deserve this break. Stay safe over the Summer and see you in September!

Thanks for reading. ^.^



the struggle is real
by jesse oshogwe

