



VOLUME III ISSUE II

Somerset Gazette

"This above all: to thine own self be true"

FIND YOUR SCHOOL
CLUB, FIND YOUR
PEOPLE AND PASSION

LOOKSMAXXING:
HOW FAR IS TOO
FAR?

FATIMA AL FIHRI
THE FORGOTTEN MOTHER
OF ACADEMIA

INTERVIEW WITH MISS
AMEERA



Dearest Readers,

At the setting forth of this issue, it is needful that a few words be spoken touching its making, and those who have bestowed their labour thereupon.

Much hath passed ere these pages were brought unto their final form. For in the crafting of such a work there is revision upon revision, wherein words are altered and oft-times set aside, until that which remaineth may stand in clearer light and due order.

The words of Shakespeare do attend this issue: *“This above all: to thine own self be true.”* A sentence brief in utterance, yet heavy in import. ‘Tis oft proved more difficult in living than in speaking, for it calleth ever for constancy of thought and honesty of judgement.

Great acknowledgement is due unto **Miss Ameera Fakir, Editor-in-Chief**, whose governance hath given steadiness unto this endeavour. By her guidance, confusion is brought to order and the many parts of this publication are held in rightful course, even whilst they be in motion.

In like manner, we do render due recognition unto **Yusairah Syed, Layout Director**, whose hand hath given shape unto that which was scattered. Through her ordering, the pages are made to speak one with another, and the issue doth come forth in unity and form.

We must, of course, give high honour to my ingenious scribes and cunning architects of *Somerset Gazette*:

- *Rumaisa Vabed*
 - *Jurwayria Darwood*
 - *Hasnaa Fadel*
 - *Amera Zaghloul*
 - *Nadirab Haffajee*
 - *Taba MD Zahir*
 - *Wafeeqa Mabomed*
 - *Nadia Dissaa*
 - *Mariam Waleed*
 - *Abblaam Joona*
 - *Asma Lambat*
- *Hayia Jamal*
 - *Aqfiya Sunesara*
 - *Nabila Nowsin*
 - *Ramin Zulfiqar*
 - *Rumaysa Akbalwaya*
 - *Faatima Zabraa Watson*
 - *Zaara Jakda*
 - *Hareem Zaidi*
 - *Sumayya Raawoot*
 - *Hafsa Gül*

It is through the diligence of the above-mentioned persons that this issue hath been furnished with substance and endeavour.

And now, being brought unto completion, this work is set forth unto thee, the reader, that thou mayst peruse it at thy leisure.

Sincerely,
Ilhaam Hajat
Managing Director

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Miss Ameera Fakir

Some people are remembered for the positions they held. Others are remembered for the people they were.

Miss Ameera Fakir will be remembered for both.

At the end of this term, *Nizamiye Mayfair* will say goodbye to *Miss Ameera* as she steps down from her role as deputy principal. In Term 3, she will only continue as a part-time teacher, preparing her matric Life Sciences learners for their final examinations.

For many, *Miss Ameera* is known through the plethora of roles she has held over the course of her time at *Nizamiye*: learner, student teacher, Grades 10-12 Life Sciences teacher, Grades 8-9 Technology teacher, deputy principal, member of Eskom Expo, House Activities and Disciplinary committees, editor-in-chief of the *Somerset Gazette*, mentor, and guide.

When she first arrived at the school, she found the experience overwhelming. New experiences can make even familiar hallways feel uneasy. Yet among the unfamiliar faces were people who helped her find her footing.

What followed was a journey she never entirely planned. Becoming deputy principal had never been a specific ambition. Instead, her focus remained on the well-being and development of the learners around her. When the opportunity arose, she viewed it as a blessing from Allah and a path that had been illuminated before her.

For *Miss Ameera*, leadership was never about authority. The most rewarding aspect of her role was being able to make decisions behind the scenes that would ultimately benefit learners. Whether implementing new initiatives or responding to student needs, she found fulfilment in contributing to an environment where students could thrive.

When discussing what sustained her passion for education, *Miss Ameera* repeatedly returned to the same source of inspiration: the learners themselves. From students seeking extra assistance after school to those expressing appreciation through small acts of kindness, she was encouraged by the relationships built through teaching. These moments, she explains, reminded her daily of the purpose behind her work.

This perfectly captures what students have meant to her. Throughout her years at *Nizamiye*, they have not only been those she taught, but also those from whom she learned. She believes students taught her the importance of empathy and mutual respect. Leadership, she explains, does not diminish the value of listening. On the contrary, it makes it even more necessary.

Amongst her proudest achievements is the *Somerset Gazette*. What began with uncertainty gradually developed into a flourishing platform for student voices. Through the publication, students were given the opportunity to express themselves and tell stories that reflected the life of the school community.

She is also incredibly proud of moments where learning extended beyond the classroom. As a Life Sciences teacher, few things were more rewarding than seeing students engage with the subject independently and develop a genuine curiosity for the world around and within them.



As her departure approaches, she acknowledges that the reality of it has not yet fully settled. *"I have a soft spot for the school,"* she says. *"Every loss feels personal to me, and for every win I'm at the front lines."*

When asked what she will miss most, her answer paints a picture that many of us may recognise immediately: learners sitting together beneath the afternoon sun, lingering in conversation before reluctantly making their way to class, and playfully nagging their teachers. *"It's like home,"* she remarks.

What will she take with her from her time at *Nizamiye*? She couldn't quite answer that question. And that is admittedly fitting. After all, it is difficult to reduce years of assemblies, Life Sciences jokes, runway-ready outfits, permission slips, and a myriad more into a mere answer.

There is a line from *The Little Prince* that feels especially fitting for her farewell:

"It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important."

For nearly four years, *Miss Ameera* gave her time and her heart to this school. She often speaks about how much the learners have given her, yet it would be impossible to write this without acknowledging how much she has given in return. Through her leadership and unwavering dedication to students, she has helped shape this school into the place so many of us are proud to call home.

For many of us, it is difficult to imagine *Nizamiye* without *Miss Ameera* because she has contributed far more than the duties listed beside her name. She leaves behind a Newspaper Club that found its footing under her expert guidance. She leaves behind learners who discovered curiosity in their learning and comfort in knowing there was always someone willing to listen.

One of the beliefs she shared during our interview was that good has a way of expanding into the community. Looking around the school today, it is difficult to disagree. The impact of a teacher is rarely confined to a classroom, and the impact of a leader is rarely confined to an office. It continues through the people they inspire and the example they leave behind. In that sense, *Miss Ameera's* contribution to our school will remain long after her departure. And we know that a small part of *Nizamiye* goes with her, just as a small part of her will remain here.

As she begins this next chapter, we do so with mixed emotions. We are saddened, but immensely proud of all that she has accomplished and all that lies ahead of her.

From all of us at *Nizamiye Mayfair*, thank you.

May Allah place barakah in every step that lies ahead of you, and reward you abundantly for the difference you have made in the lives of others.

Nizamiye Mayfair will always be better for having had you here.

FAREWELL, MISS AMEERA.

O Captain! My Captain!

You will be missed.



*Written by: Mhaam Hajat
Designed by: Yusairah Syed*

Juniors

Aminata Saccoh, Aafiya Sunesara, Hayia Jamal and Laiba Hassan conducted an Enrichment Period (EP) for our grade 8's and 9's on the topic of substance abuse and mental health.

Laiba and Hayia spoke about drug abuse and how common it has become for teenagers to fall into these habits. They focused on vaping, as it is a growing issue among young people today, and explained its harmful effects and how addictive it can become. Laiba also mentioned how these actions are discouraged in Islam and roused learners to make better choices. The discussion then moved onto mental health, where Aminata spoke about different mental illnesses, their effects, and how to recognise when someone may be struggling. She also explained ways in which we can support and help people going through difficult times. This linked well to Aafiya's section, where she spoke about how mental health can affect physical health too. She explained how many teenagers choose to suffer in silence because they are afraid of being judged or misunderstood, which can often make their struggles worse. She also encouraged learners to check up on one another, speak up when they need help, and understand that asking for support is never something to be ashamed of.

We hope that our grade 8s and 9s were able to learn something valuable from this session and gain a better understanding of the importance of both mental and physical wellbeing.

Written by: Aafiya Sunesara



Enrichment period

Seniors

"I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story. From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was Constantin and Socrates and Attila and a pack of other lovers with queer names and offbeat professions, and another fig was an Olympic lady crew champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out. I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet".

-The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath

This is a feeling captured in what is called the fig tree dilemma, a metaphor from the popular novel by Sylvia Plath. Being a young teenager is often perceived to be one of the most exciting times of our lives, yet it can also be one of the most confusing. Society places enormous pressure on today's youth to decide who they want to be and what path they want to follow, and that very pressure creates the fear of making the "wrong decision". During one of our most anticipated enrichment periods, our grade 11 prefects (Ilhaam Hajat, Zahra Vally Omar, Rumaissa Vahed, Yusairah Syed) addressed this topic.

To many, that choice just seems unfair and agitating. But what if we didn't live in one chosen identity, what if we chose all the figs on the fig tree - we can be doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and still keep our passion of artistry alive. Our identity doesn't have to be one path we choose, it's all the different things that make us who we are: our dreams, hobbies and careers, we can weave them all together and live life to the fullest.

And after the bell rang and everyone rushed back to class, one question lingered in the air: How can we weave our passions into the lifelong careers we choose to follow?

Written by: Amara Zaghloul
Designed by: Zaara Jakda

Teacher Dress-up Day

You asked and they delivered! The **teacher dress-up** day was a day filled with excitement and perfectly emulated outfits. On Friday, 17th April, learners dressed up as their favorite teacher, each with distinct outfits. From top to bottom it became difficult to tell the teacher and learner apart as the learners put their best into dressing the part. From *Ms Shamsbad's* stylish abayas and unmissable handbags, to *Mr. Amin's* classic Friday outfit - the learners matching game was on point.

Mr. Engin's fans were remarkably dressed, with a matching wrist bandage. Smiles and joy was shared as the teachers recognized their look-alikes in seconds. The students had perfectly curated their outfits with their favorite teacher wearing the same! Matching scarfs and matching vibes, the **teacher dress-up day** was an all time success. Faces shining with happiness and fashion in place, it was an unforgettable dress up day that will be remembered for a long time.

Written by: Rumaysa Akhalwaya

Designed by: Ecrin Morris



Mismatch Civiies

A pink shirt. Neon green pants.
And hold on a second, is that -- one heel?

This year we decided to switch things up, bringing out our inner chaos junkies and unleashing some truly un-fashionable masterpieces.

And where was the proof of this? It was found in the sea of mismatched sneakers, and socks of every colour and patterns; in the big bright wigs and lethal pairing of skirts and blouses all put together with a bit of madness.

This is all to say that Mismatch Day was a complete success and perhaps may be the new favourite for us at Nizamiye.

Written by: Zahra Khan
Designed by: Ecrin Morris



Spur Shadow Shift

16 of our grade 10 and 11 learners were given the opportunity to wait tables and help behind the scenes at **Texakhana Spurin Rosebank**. This shadow shifting event was organised by our fellow fundraising committee, where 10% of the earnings would go to our school, particularly towards the matric dinner. The event was held on *Thursday, 7th May*, from 16:00 all the way to 21:30. Our female learners started off the shift with dish-washing duty as well as meal preparation, whilst the boys assisted with noting food orders and clearing tables; the roles switched halfway through the shift. Despite a few glass-breaking mishaps, it was a chance for our learners to learn from their mistakes, and to stand together as a team. Some highlights of the night were when nearly everyone got up to sing happy birthday in that iconic Spur tune for our beloved Miss Kaneez, alongside getting cash tips from numerous teachers! Overall, there was a great turnout of learners, parents and teachers, who sat together in a warm setting with cozy lighting and the smell of steak, laughing together. We look forward to the next event.

Written by: Hasnaa Fadel

Mother's day hike

Mothers do so much for us every single day, often without expecting anything in return. They support us, encourage us, care for us and always try their best to make life easier for us. Mothers hold their children's hand for a short while, but hold their hearts forever. Mother's Day should not only be one day of the year but every day – we should remind our mums how special they are every day, as sometimes the little things we do have the biggest impact.

To show appreciation to all the mums out there, the school organized a Mother's Day hike at *The Wilds Nature Reserve* on 9th May. This event gave mothers the opportunity to relax, enjoy nature and spend time with one another in a pleasant outdoor environment.

The hike was filled with meaningful conversations, plenty of laughter and spectacular scenery as all the mums walked together. The hike was not about the exercise or even really about being outdoors, but appreciating the role a mother plays.

The Mother's Day hike was a beautiful celebration of love, appreciation and togetherness – a small way of saying thank you to the women who do for us every single day. **"Paradise lies beneath the feet of your mother."** – this reminds us of the respect and honour that mothers deserve every day.

Written by: Faatima Zahraa Watson

AMS SPEECH CONTEST

On the 14th of May 2026, *Rosknee Islamic School* hosted the *Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) Annual Speech Contest*, which 3 of our high school learners participated in. As follows:

- Division 5: *Aabidab Carlie* in grade 8
- Division 6: *Raghad Irbuma* in grade 9
- Division 7: *Hasnaa Fadel* in grade 11

These learners were selected after our in-school House Activity speech contest. It was a fun experience for them to meet participants from other schools and learn more about public speaking. We are so proud of them!

Written by: Hasnaa Fadel

Designed by:
Yusairah Syed

SANBS BLOOD DRIVE

Written by: Nabila Nowsin

The *South African National Blood Services (SANBS)* Blood Drive took place on 20 May at *Nizamiye Mayfair*, giving students and staff the opportunity to help save lives through blood donation. Throughout the day, donors visited the donation area and contributed to an important cause that helps people in need across *South Africa*.

The event was well supported, with both students and teachers taking part. A few nervous faces could be spotted before donations began, but a determination to help others got donors through it anyway.

Although the donation process only takes a short amount of time, the blood collected can help save lives and support patients who require transfusions. By taking part in the blood drive, donors contributed to an effort that helps people in hospitals and emergency situations.

The blood drive continued throughout the day before wrapping up in the afternoon. Thank you to *SANBS* and everyone who participated in making the event possible.



Designed by: Asma Lambat

School clubs make school life more fun

School is not always about doing homework and taking tests. It is also about making friends and exploring what you like to do. One of the ways to do this is by joining the school clubs and sports teams. Our school has different clubs that allow learners to have fun outside the classroom, and express themselves in a creative manner.

Newspaper



Brief: Learners have the opportunity to write articles and design the layout of the articles, sharing school news as they express their creativity. Learners can improve their writing and designing, and learn how to work in a team.

Contact: *Ms Ameera*, whose passion and support helped bring the club to life. Her encouragement has inspired learners to become more involved and assertive in sharing their ideas and opinions.

Media



Brief: The Media Club provides learners with a creative space to develop skills in journalism, photography, videography, and digital content creation. Members actively document school events, conduct interviews, and create engaging content that keeps the school community informed. The club continues to play an important role in highlighting school achievements and activities.

Contact: Through *Ms Abeer's* guidance, students gain valuable experience in communication, teamwork, and storytelling while building confidence in their skills.



Crochet

Brief: For students who like quieter activities, this club is a place to relax whilst you learn something new. Learners in this club make things like scarves and hats - giving them a true sense of independence. Crochet is a great way to unwind after a long day at school, and to pass time both constructively and creatively.

Contact: *Ms Tugba* leads this club with ingenuity, as she shares techniques with each design for learners to follow. She truly leads with warmth and compassion as she teaches this skill.

Debate

Brief: Ideal for learners who enjoy sharing their opinions and discussing controversial topics. Learners take part in debates where they learn how to speak confidently and support their arguments with facts. Debate helps improve public speaking skills and teaches learners to listen respectfully to different opinions.

Contact: Debate club has grown under the support of *Mrs Shamsbaad*, who motivates learners to speak with poise and think critically about various issues.

Model UN

Brief: In this club learners act as ambassadors of countries, discussing challenges like climate change, water shortage or poverty whilst navigating political waters. This club encourages learners to be aware of current affairs, read and research extensively on these topics to offer a solution which will benefit their country and others. This club has received positive feedback of being quite fun whilst learning occurs through critical thinking.

Contact: This club was initiated by *Ilbaam Hajat* and *Yusairah Syed*, who saw an opportunity to make learners more cognisant of world affairs and politics.

The school also offers different sports for learners, as an opportunity to learn teamwork, discipline, and improve their physical health.

Table tennis



Table tennis is a fast and skillful sport that challenges players' reflexes and precision. It helps improve hand-eye coordination, mental focus and reaction speed. As a low-impact sport suitable for all ages, table tennis is an excellent way to stay active and sharpen both physical and mental skills. Join wit to perfect your skills!

Basketball



Basketball is a dynamic team sport that involves dribbling, passing, shooting, and defending. It develops fitness, coordination and decision-making skills while improving both speed and endurance. Work with *Coach Hooper* to improve your discipline and confidence in this sport.

Netball

Netball is a fast-paced team sport that focuses on passing, movement, and strategic play. It helps develop teamwork and communication while improving overall fitness. Netball is an excellent sport for building confidence and forming strong social connections - sign up with *Coach Tumi* to join!

Volleyball

Volleyball is an exciting team sport that requires players to work together to keep the ball in play and score points. It develops agility and strong reflexes while providing a great cardiovascular workout. Join with *Coach Rejoice* to join this fun and inclusive sport that encourages cooperation and perseverance.

Overall, school clubs make school life more exciting and enjoyable - they give learners the opportunity to discover new talents, gain confidence, and make lasting friendships. Whether someone enjoys sports, technology, writing, debating, or creative activities, there is truly something for everyone at our school. We are also incredibly grateful to *Mr Babaçan* for making these amazing opportunities possible for learners. Through his support and dedication to the school, learners are able to take part in a wide range of clubs that make school life more enjoyable, memorable, and meaningful.

Written by: Juwayria Dawood
Designed by: Yusairah Syed



WrestleMania 42

Designed by: Ahlaam Jooma

Written by: Nadia Dissaa

For one weekend in April, Las Vegas became the center of the wrestling world.

The famous Strip was filled with fans wearing championship belts, *World Wrestling Entertainment* (WWE) shirts, and enough excitement to power the city itself. Everywhere you looked, people were talking about **WrestleMania 42**. In hotel lobbies, restaurants, casinos, and airports, the conversations were the same: *Who would steal the show? Would there be any surprise returns? And who would leave Las Vegas with championship gold?*

WrestleMania has always been *WWE's* biggest event, but *WrestleMania 42* felt particularly special. There was a sense that fans were about to witness something memorable. The stage was enormous, the entrances were spectacular, and the atmosphere inside the *Allegiant Stadium* was unlike anything else in sports entertainment. Across two nights, *WWE* delivered exactly what fans have come to expect from its biggest show of the year: drama, excitement, controversy, and moments that immediately became part of wrestling history.

The road to *WrestleMania* had been dominated by some of *WWE's* biggest names, and the event itself showcased why they remain at the top of the industry. **Roman Reigns** once again proved why he is considered one of the defining stars of this generation - every move, every stare, and every near fall had the crowd hanging on the edge of their seats. Whether fans were cheering him or hoping to see him lose, nobody could take their eyes off him.



Cody Rhodes also continued to demonstrate why he has become one of the most popular figures in *WWE*. His journey has resonated with fans for years, and the support he received throughout the weekend showed just how deeply invested the *WWE* universe remains in his story.

Of course, no *WrestleMania* would be complete without surprises. The event featured shocking moments, unexpected appearances, and the kind of twists that sent social media into overdrive. Within minutes, clips and reactions were spreading across the internet as fans debated every decision and every outcome.

Yet what truly made *WrestleMania 42* stand out was not just the matches or the surprises. It was the atmosphere. There is something unique about *WrestleMania* that cannot be replicated anywhere else. It is part sporting event, part concert, part theatrical production, and part family reunion for wrestling fans from around the world. People travel thousands of kilometres to attend, many saving for years just to experience it once in person.

That passion was evident throughout the weekend. Every entrance received a huge reaction. Every championship match felt important. Every victory and defeat carried emotional weight because fans had followed these stories for months, and in some cases, for years.

Outside the stadium, the celebration continued. Fan events attracted enormous crowds, legends met supporters, and Las Vegas embraced the spectacle that only *WWE* can create. As the final fireworks lit up the night sky, there was a feeling among many fans that they had witnessed something special. Not because every result was perfect or every match was flawless, but because *WrestleMania* once again delivered what it has always promised: **unforgettable moments**.

In an era where entertainment options are endless and attention spans are short, *WrestleMania* continues to bring people together through storytelling, larger-than-life personalities, and pure spectacle. *WrestleMania 42* was a reminder that, despite all the changes in professional wrestling over the years, *WWE's* grandest stage remains exactly that—the place where careers are defined, memories are created, and the wrestling world comes together for one extraordinary weekend.

When Las Vegas finally returned to normal, wrestling fans left with tired voices, full camera rolls, and stories they will be telling for years. And in the end, that may be the true legacy of *WrestleMania 42*.



Good News



Between all the chaos of exam stress and the constant rush of high school, a little throwback to rainbows and animated dreams is surely a good way to mark the start of a cozy winter holiday.

“Centuries” ago cartoons weren’t something you just watched. They were part of the structure of your day. You’d come home, drop your bag, and turn on the TV before even thinking about changing out of a sweat-coated uniform. Depending on specific interest, that probably meant shows like *Ben 10*, *Teen Titans*, *The Powerpuff Girls* and even *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.

You didn’t call them “classic.” They were just what was playing then— and now they’re back!

Not all at once, not in a single big announcement. It’s more scattered than that. A reboot here.

A continuation there. A quiet revival that suddenly becomes hard to ignore.

Some of them return as updated versions like *Ben 10* getting reimagined again for newer audiences. Others come back in a more respectful way, keeping the original feel intact, as the continued appreciation and expansions around *Teen Titans Go!* or renewed interest in deeper storytelling shows like *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Even franchises like *Scooby-Doo* never really left; they just keep resurfacing in different forms.

What makes it hit differently now isn’t just that they’re back and changed. It’s that you are.

The same shows you used to watch are now something you stumble across between homework, messages, deadlines of your Religion Studies

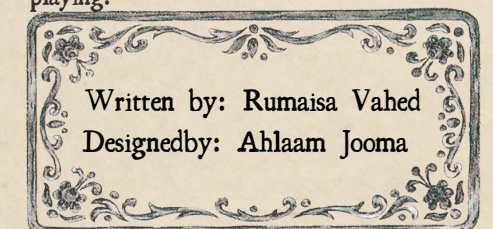
assignment or whatever life mainly consists of now. The context changed completely. Strangely enough, the opening notes of a theme song still land in the same place in your head – that has never changed.

These shows weren’t just entertainment back then and that’s what makes their return pretty special. *Avatar: The Last Airbender* wasn’t just action, it was patience and loss wrapped in animation. *Teen Titans* balanced humour with moments that felt heavier than they needed to be. Even something like *Ben 10* built a whole world around the idea of suddenly having more responsibility than you asked for. You didn’t think about it that way at the time. You just watched. Now it feels like those shows were quietly shaping how you understood things before you even had words for it.

So when they return, slightly changed, it doesn’t really feel like new content. It feels like something re-opening and that’s why it works.

In a space where everything new disappears so quickly, these shows don’t really need to compete. They already have history. They already lived in our routines before algorithms decided what we would see next.

They don’t feel like trends coming back. They feel like something you accidentally left open, and then found again years later still playing.



MOONBOUND

As *Artemis II* carried four astronauts around the Moon earlier this year, much of the world remained occupied with crises far closer to home.

Wars continued to rage. Climate disasters displaced thousands. Governments struggled with rising costs of living and growing economic uncertainty. Yet hundreds of thousands of kilometres above Earth, humanity celebrated its return to deep space for the first time in over half a century.

The mission, which successfully carried four astronauts around the moon and back, has been praised as a watershed moment in the fields of science and technology. The *National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA)* views *Artemis II* as a building block towards establishing a long-term presence on the Moon and eventually sending humans to Mars. *"We are not going back to the Moon to leave flags and footprints and then not go back for another 50 years,"* said *NASA* Administrator *Bill Nelson*, signalling that this mission is only the beginning.

To awestruck supporters, *Artemis II* represents the best of humanity - that is, curiosity and innovation. The crew itself portrayed an evolving era of space travel, including the first woman, the first Black astronaut, as well as the first Canadian selected for a lunar mission. In a world that is often divided by politics and conflict, the image of a spacecraft crossing the boundary between Earth and the moon gave us a rare representation of a unified achievement.

However, not everyone saw this as a revolutionary milestone. Critics have questioned whether the billions of American dollars spent on lunar exploration reveal a startling disconnection between humanity's ambitions and its responsibilities. At a time when nations are struggling to address climate change and humanitarian crises, some argue that reaching for another world has become easier than fixing the one we already inhabit.

The mission has also attracted controversy due to the backgrounds of the crew members. Commander *Reid Wiseman* and Pilot *Victor Glover* previously served as military aviators during *Operation Iraqi Freedom* before joining *NASA*. While supporters see their military experience as evidence of discipline and expertise, others argue that it blurs the line between scientific exploration and the projection of national power.

This criticism points to a much larger reality -- the modern space race is no longer merely about discovery. As countries such as the United States and China compete for influence beyond Earth, the moon is increasingly seen as an unclaimed frontier. Beneath the façade of exploration lies a competition for prestige and future resources.

That is what makes the *Artemis II* mission so fascinating. It is neither a simple story of scientific progress nor a straightforward example of displaced priorities. Instead, it demonstrates a contradiction at the heart of the twenty-first century. Humanity possesses the technology to send people around the Moon, yet continues to struggle with problems on our home planet.



More than half a century ago, *Gil Scott-Heron* challenged the *Apollo* programme with the refrain, *"Whitey's on the Moon."* While the circumstances surrounding *Artemis II* are very different, the question at the heart of that criticism remains surprisingly relevant:

As humanity reaches further into space, who benefits from the journey, and who is left waiting for solutions on Earth?

Written by: Rumaisa Vahed

There is something deeply unsettling about watching diamonds sparkle while entire cities burn; something inhuman about seeing silk and gold paraded across red carpets while children are being pulled lifeless from beneath concrete, their faces covered in ash and blood. Every year, the Met Gala arrives disguised as a celebration of culture and creativity but behind the flashing cameras and designer gowns lies a far darker reflection of the world we live in; a world where suffering has become background noise to luxury; a world where billionaires spend millions on appearances while millions of people struggle. Struggle to survive.

The **Met Gala** is no longer just a fashion event. It has become a **monument to capitalism**, a performance of wealth so extreme that it borders on grotesque. Every carefully stitched gown, every jewel hanging from a celebrity's neck, every staircase drenched in extravagance, becomes symbolic of a system that rewards excess while people starve. The cruelty is not only in the money being spent, but in the indifference that surrounds it. At the same moment celebrities are celebrated for wearing "art," there are families in the Middle East searching through rubble for body parts of loved ones. There are children dying from hunger, people displaced by war, entire bloodlines erased overnight, yet the world's elite continue to dance beneath chandeliers as though humanity itself is not collapsing outside the museum walls.

Art has historically been born from pain. Some of the greatest works created have come from grief, oppression, war and resistance. Art was meant to expose truth, challenge power, and force society to confront what it tries to ignore, but the Met Gala transforms art into spectacle. It strips art of its humanity and turns it into luxury consumption, something worn for photographs, praised online, and discarded once the attention fades. The theme of art becomes painfully ironic, because the real art of our generation is not hanging in museums or sewn into gowns. The real art is the terrifying way society has learned to *aestheticize suffering* while remaining emotionally detached from it.

Perhaps the most horrifying "art" being displayed is the art of death itself. The world has become so desensitized to violence that images of war now exist side by side with celebrity fashion trends on the same phone screen. A starving child in *Gaza* appears between makeup tutorials and **Met Gala** interviews. Bombings become headlines people scroll past while discussing who was best dressed. *Death has become visual content*, consumed quickly and forgotten even quicker. This is what capitalism does: it conditions people to consume everything, even tragedy. Human pain becomes secondary to entertainment because profit, image, and status matter more than empathy.

The silence of celebrities and billionaires during global suffering exposes another brutal truth: morality within elite spaces is often conditional. Many public figures speak loudly about justice when it is fashionable and safe, but remain silent when speaking out threatens wealth, sponsorships, or political relationships. Their silence is not neutrality; it is privilege. It is the privilege of being untouched by the consequences of war, poverty, and occupation. While ordinary people protest, mourn, and fight for survival, the elite continue celebrating themselves within institutions built on wealth accumulated through exploitation, colonial histories, and inequality.



The **Met Gala** therefore becomes more than an event - it becomes a mirror reflecting the moral failure of modern society. It reveals a world where billionaires thrive during humanitarian crises, where luxury is admired more than compassion, and where the deaths of the poor are overshadowed by the outfits of the rich. Beneath the glamour lies an unbearable truth:

"HUMANITY IS SLOWLY LEARNING TO COEXIST WITH MASS SUFFERING WITHOUT EVER STOPPING THE MUSIC BEAENEATH THE CHANDELIER'S OF DRIPPING BLOOD."

Designed by: Yusairah Syed

Iran, Lebanon and USA: A WORLD ON EDGE

Global markets and political leaders remain on high alert as tensions between the *United States of America* (USA) and Iran continue to intensify, with the conflict now spilling further into *Lebanon* and threatening wider instability across the Middle East.

The increasingly aggressive tone of U.S. foreign policy is contributing to uncertainty worldwide, affecting everything from oil supply routes to the value of currencies in emerging economies like South Africa.

In recent days, renewed military activity near the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important oil shipping routes, has reignited fears over global energy disruptions. Beirut has once again come under pressure as regional fighting linked to Iran-backed groups escalates.



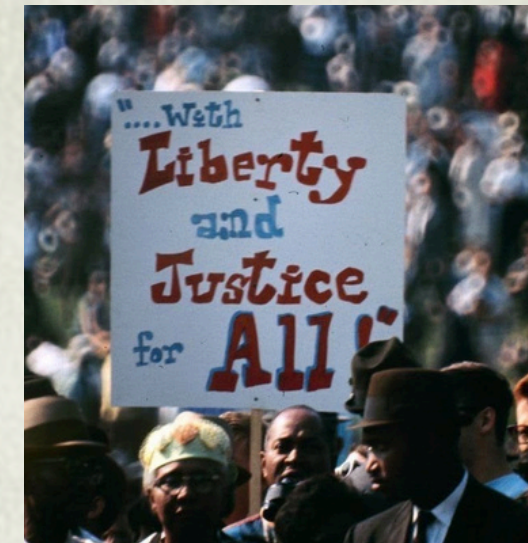
The economic impact is already being felt internationally. *South Africa*, heavily dependent on imported fuel, is seeing the consequences through **rising fuel and transport costs**. The Rand (ZAR) has fluctuated against the U.S. Dollar amid global uncertainty. Economists warn that continued instability in the Middle East could weaken the Rand further, if oil prices continue to rise. Oil prices have already climbed sharply in response to fears surrounding the *Strait of Hormuz*, leading to fuel hikes in several countries. Meanwhile, *Lebanon* remains one of the

clearest examples of how prolonged geopolitical conflict can devastate everyday life. Inflation, electricity shortages, and political paralysis continue to affect millions of Lebanese citizens. Humanitarian groups warn that any expansion of regional warfare could worsen displacement and deepen food insecurity across the region. From *Beirut* to *Johannesburg*, ordinary citizens are increasingly feeling the effects of geopolitical conflict not only through headlines, but through rising living costs, weakened currencies and concern about what comes next.

Written by:
Rumaisa Vahed

Designed by:
Yusairah Syed

"POWER TO THE PEOPLE"



Freedom Day in South Africa arrives each year like a memory that refuses to sit still. It is not only a date on a calendar, nor a ceremonial pause in the national rhythm. It is a threshold, between what was endured and what was promised.

On **27 April 1994**, South Africa stepped into its democratic dawn. For millions, the act of voting was a hand lifted from silence into presence. That day became **Freedom Day**, a national marker of entry into a new political landscape. Yet freedom, as South Africans have learned, is not a single arrival. It is a long negotiation with reality. Today, more than three decades later, the country stands in a complicated light. The ballot exists, and so does the constitution.

For many citizens, freedom is not primarily remembered as a celebration but felt as a question. *What does it mean to be free in a place where unemployment presses heavily against possibility? Where inequality still maps itself onto geography, inheritance, and opportunity? Where safety, for too many, is not guaranteed, but negotiated daily?*

Even within these tensions Freedom Day does not lose its meaning. Freedom was never only about the end of apartheid.

27 APRIL

It was also about the beginning of responsibility. In communities across the country, the day is marked differently. Some gather in formal ceremonies with flags and speeches; others mark it quietly. And many, especially younger South Africans, hold it at arm's length. Not out of rejection, but out of questioning. *What does freedom mean when inherited systems still shape so much of daily life?* This tension between promise and reality is not a failure of freedom itself - it is its complexity.

Perhaps that is why the words of Shakespeare echo strangely "*This above all: to thine own self be true.*" At first glance, it feels distant from South Africa's political history. A line from a different time, a different struggle but placed here, it becomes unexpectedly intimate.

National freedom, in its deepest sense, depends on personal truthfulness. The courage to look at the country without denial. The discipline to refuse both blind despair and empty celebration and for citizens, the quieter challenge - to remain honest about what is felt, what is lived, and what is still demanded of the future.

To "**be true**" is not individualism in isolation. It is integrity within belonging. Freedom Day then becomes less about arrival and more about alignment. A question posed to a nation and to each person within it: *are we living in a way that matches the promise we once made to ourselves?*

South Africa today is not a finished story. It is a manuscript still being written in overlapping hands. Government, communities, protests, hope and frustration. It is a country where contradiction is not an exception but a condition; where progress and pain often share the same street. Yet, even in contradiction, there is movement.

Children born after 1994, the so-called "**born free**" generation now shape the cultural and political imagination of the country.

We did not witness the first vote, but we inherit its consequences and its possibilities. Our freedom is not memory; it is expectation, and expectation - in its own way - is a form of faith. Freedom Day holds two truths at once. It remembers a door opening in 1994.

It acknowledges the ongoing task of walking through that door, again and again, into a society still learning how to hold all its people with equal weight. Perhaps that is what freedom ultimately is.

A discipline of honesty.
A refusal to forget.
A commitment to becoming. So, the day returns each year not as a conclusion but as a reminder.

That freedom is not what was given alone, but what is still being built. And in that unfinished space, the country continues to ask itself, "*Who are we, if we are to be true to what we began?*"



Public Holiday Facts

Term 2 was filled with public holidays, which was generally enjoyable for us learners! Read down below to understand more about public holidays in South Africa, and know the political and cultural significance the next time that one passes.

New Year's Day - 1 January

People celebrate the future, but this tradition goes back thousands of years. It comes from ancient Roman times, when the calendar was reformed under Julius Caesar (Julian calendar), and later adjusted into the Gregorian calendar we still use today. Even then, people marked the start of a new year with hope just like we do.

Human Rights Day - 21 March

Freedom didn't come easily. This day remembers the Sharpeville Massacre, where peaceful protesters were killed while opposing apartheid pass laws. After the end of apartheid, South Africa chose this date to honour human dignity and the fight for equality. It reminds us to be grateful for the rights we have now, which were once denied.

Freedom Day - 27 April

Freedom in South Africa is closely tied to the 1994 South African General Election. This was the first time South Africans of all races were allowed to vote. The holiday was officially created in 1995 to celebrate democracy and the end of apartheid rule. A single vote became a symbol of freedom for millions.

Youth Day - 16 June

This day remembers the Soweto Uprising. Thousands of students protested against Afrikaans being enforced as a school language. The government response was violent and many young lives were lost. It became a national holiday to honour the courage of young people who stood up for justice.

Good Friday - varies

Good Friday comes from Christian tradition, remembering the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is part of Easter weekend and has been observed for over 1500 years in Christian communities worldwide. It is called "Good" because for Christians, it leads to overall good - salvation and forgiveness.

Workers' Day - 1 May

Workers' Day comes from the international labour movement of the late 1800's. It is linked to global protests for the 8-hour workday, especially the 1886 Haymarket protests in the United States. South Africa adopted it after 1994 to recognise workers' rights, dignity and fair treatment.

National Women's Day - 9 August

In 1956, about 20 000 women marched to the Union Buildings in protest against pass laws. They stood in complete silence for 30 minutes—yet their message was powerful enough to echo across history. The holiday was created in 1994 to honour women's strength and resistance.

Day of Reconciliation - 16 December

This day was created in 1995 after the end of apartheid. It brought together two important historical memories: Afrikaner commemoration of the Battle of Blood River (1838) and Liberation movements' struggle against apartheid. The goal was to turn a divided past into a shared future, and to foster national unit and social cohesion.

Day of Goodwill - 26 December

Formerly known as Boxing Day in many countries, it began as a day when wealthy families gave "boxes" of gifts or money to workers and the poor. In South Africa, it was renamed in 1994 to focus more on generosity and community spirit.

Heritage Day - 24 September

Heritage Day was officially introduced after 1994 to celebrate South Africa's cultural diversity. There was debate about its original name ("Shaka Day" in KwaZulu-Natal), but it was renamed to include all cultures. Today it celebrates languages, traditions, food and identity across all communities prevalent in South Africa.

Christmas Day - 25 December

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ in Christian tradition. The date was chosen centuries after his birth and overlaps with ancient winter festivals in Europe that celebrated light and renewal. Today, it is both a religious and cultural holiday worldwide.

Not everyone experiences these days the same way. For some, they are joyful; for others, they are reflective or even heavy. But every public holiday carries something deeper - a story, a struggle, a memory and a reminder that the life we live today was shaped by people who came before us. Consider this the next time you're enjoying a day off from school.

Written by: Wafeeqa Mahomed
Designed by: Hafsa Gul

AL-QARAWIYYIN

جامعة القرويين

Written by: Amara Zaghloul

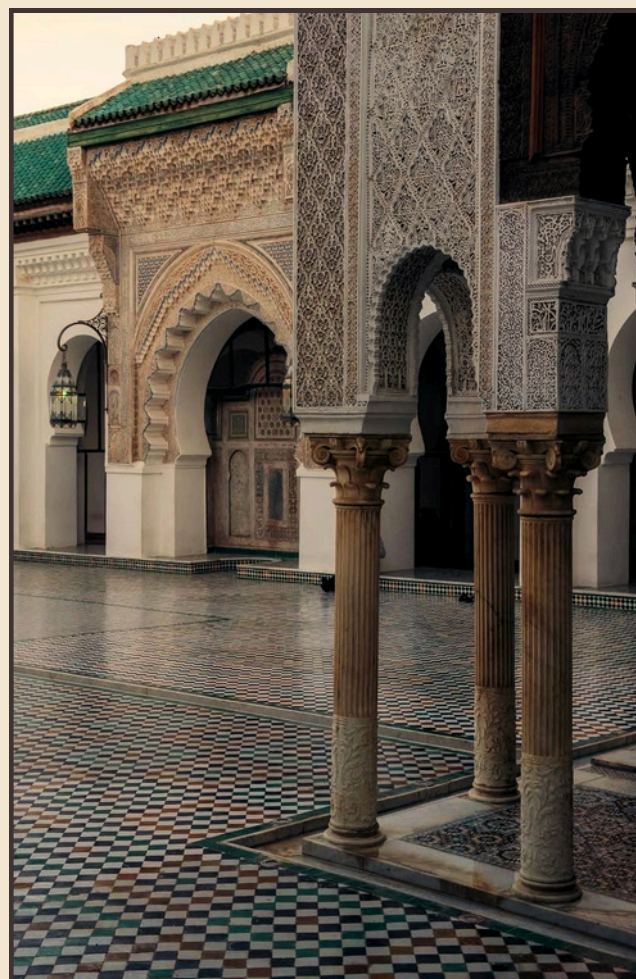
Designed by: Rumaisa Vahed

In the heart of *Morocco*, hidden within the winding blue alleys and fragrant spice markets of *Fez*, lies a place that has quietly shaped the world for more than a thousand years. While many people imagine ancient universities as grand European stone buildings, the world's oldest continuously operating university was actually founded in the *Middle East* long before *Oxford University* even existed. This remarkable institution is the **University of al-Qarawiyyin**, a symbol of culture, religion and intellectual brilliance that still stands tall today.

The **University of al-Qarawiyyin** جامعة القرويين was founded in 859 AD by apious and extraordinary woman *Fatima al-Fibri*. Before establishing the learning centre Fatima had inherited a fortune from her late father, and wished to devote it to a charitable act; she therefore purchased the property situated amid the city of *Fez*. What started as a mosque gradually expanded into a bustling center of learning Fatima oversaw its construction herself, fasting throughout the process and dedicating her work to the service of community through knowldge. Over time, scholars from across *North Africa, the Middle East*, and even *Europe* flocked to *Fez* to study there

For centuries, **al-Qarawiyyin** became known for its teachings in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, grammar, philosophy, Islamic studies, and more. Its library — one of the oldest in the world — houses priceless manuscripts, including works on science, theology, and law that offer a window into centuries of human thought, and also acts as a preservation of the progress of human knowledge.

Despite surviving wars, dynasties and centuries of change, **al-Qarawiyyin** continues to function as a place of learning, proving that education can outlive empires. Walking through the university today feels like living out the pages of a history book: intricate mosaics shimmer against ancient walls, and carved wooden doors open into peaceful courtyards. The building itself is a significant complex of historical and Islamic architecture that features elements from many different periods of Moroccan history.



Yet perhaps the most inspiring part of **al-Qarawiyyin's** story is its founder. In a time when women were rarely recognized for leadership in education, *Fatima al-Fibri* created a legacy that changed history forever. Her story challenges the idea that great achievements belong only to kings, conquerors or powerful men. Instead, it reminds us that knowledge itself is one of humanity's greatest treasures.11

Today, *Fez* remains a city where the past and present exist side by side. Tourists wander through crowded markets while students continue attending lessons at the ancient university. In a rapidly changing world, University of **al-Qarawiyyin** stands as a timeless reminder that, indeed, the pursuit of knowledge never grows old.



Written by: Yusairah Sayed
Designed by: Ramin Zulfiqar

Mary Shelley (1797-1851)
A woman who changed literature forever
Mary Shelley is the woman behind the infamous 18th-Century Gothic novel *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus*, a book that is considered the first literary work of science fiction in history. *Shelley* was a visionary, born into an intellectually privileged environment. However, her work was influenced through abandonment by her mother who had died after giving birth to her, her father who refused to speak with her after eloping, and the death of her beloved children. Her first and most famous book *Frankenstein* was written during a ghost story competition held by *Lord Byron*, and was later published anonymously. After revealing that she wrote it, critics downplayed her work, considering it a romance, an 'acceptable' genre for a female writer. During her lifetime and into the mid-twentieth century, *Shelley's* accomplishments were frequently attributed to her husband's or parents' influence, and she was portrayed as little more than a wife and daughter. Today, we acknowledge her work, brilliant and still relevant to society and culture.



George Orwell (1903-1950)

A writer who confronted totalitarianism

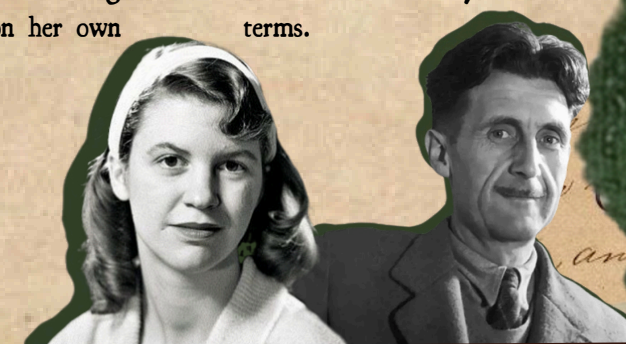
George Orwell rightly ranks amongst the most important writers to have ever lived. George Orwell, was not his name, but a pseudonym. Born *Eric Arthur Blair* in 1903 *British India*, he seized his

pen name while writing his first major work. He was a man of strong opinions who addressed imperialism, fascism and communism in many of his works – he inspired the word "**Orwellian**" describing totalitarianism, control of the masses, and loss of individualism. Two of his most famous novels *Animal farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-four* represent his first-hand experience of the bleak totalitarianism of the interwar period, which he confronts with his strongest weapon: his words. *Orwell's* writing illuminates social ills and chastises those whose best intentions held secret reservations.

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)

A daring poet who died too young

Sylvia Plath was a poet and novelist, whose work starkly expresses a sense of alienation and self-destruction closely tied to her personal experiences and, by extension, the situation of women in mid-20th-century *America*. She found literary ways of conveying her depression, with her brutal honesty and searing language which made her a major figure in confessional poetry. *Plath's* writing gained significant acclaim after her death, particularly *The Bell Jar* and *The Colossus*, resonating deeply within feminist literary circles. The mythos of her life and death has made it difficult to disentangle her art from it. The "real" Sylvia Plath will always remain elusive due to her untimely death, which means she never got the chance to tell her story on her own terms.



What We're Watching, Wearing and Following

Venice Biennale: Art Without Borders

The **Venice Biennale** remains one of the most important global art festivals, where countries present large exhibitions that reflect how people experience and interpret the world around them. Each pavilion acts as its own space, showing how art can take on different meanings depending on its context.



One of the most discussed installations this year was a large-scale immersive piece built around climate and displacement, using sound, light and natural materials to create an environment that visitors had to move through rather than simply observe. It became a major talking point because it placed the audience inside the work itself, rather than in front of it.

The Cannes Film Festival

The **Cannes Film Festival** once again centred global attention on cinema, with *Cristian Mungiu's Fjord* winning the *Palme d'Or*, the festival's top award. The film was one of the most talked about entries of the year and immediately became a major reference point in film discussion after the ceremony.



Alongside the main winner, other awards went to films like *Minotaur* and *Fatherland*, both of which were widely discussed by critics. What stood out this year was how strongly politics and personal storytelling ran through the winning films, showing how cinema continues to reflect real world issues.

What's In Your Wardrobe?

Polka dots have officially taken over. From dresses and skirts to tops and accessories, the print is everywhere this year. What was once associated with vintage fashion now feels current again. Alongside the polka dot revival, oversized sunglasses and silk scarves have become staples both online and off, proving that sometimes the biggest trend is bringing an old one back.

World Cup: The Tournament Already Lives Online

The **FIFA World Cup** has become one of the most visible global events online, even beyond the matches themselves. From the first round of games, social media has been filled with clips and reactions that spread quickly across platforms.

South Africa's opening match was part of that early wave of attention, drawing strong engagement both locally and online, with disappointment from *South Africans* following the 2-0 loss against *Mexico*.

Alongside the football, brand campaigns continue to shape the conversation. Adidas' **"You Got This"** advert featuring multiple football stars has been widely shared and remixed, often appearing next to match footage and fan content. The tournament now exists not only through the games, but through constant online circulation.



Written by: Hayia Jamal

Designed by: Ramin Zulfikar

AJ: The Creator Behind

"One Fact a Day Keeps the Brain Rot Away"

Social media is often filled with trends, challenges, and endless scrolling, but one creator is using *TikTok* in a completely different way. **AJ**, known online as *"inspire.a.journey,"* has built a platform focused on learning, curiosity, and self-improvement. His famous phrase, "One fact a day keeps the brain rot away," has become part of his identity and message online.

The phrase **"brain rot"** is often used online to describe spending too much time consuming repetitive or low-quality content. *AJ* uses humour in his slogan, but his message is serious. He believes that learning new information keeps the mind active and helps people think more critically. Through his videos, he proves that *TikTok* can be used for education as well as fun.

AJ creates short videos that teach people interesting facts about the world. Instead of posting meaningless content, he encourages viewers to use social media to learn something new every day. His videos are designed to be quick and entertaining, yet keeping it educational at the same time. This makes his content stand out on an app where most videos are only meant for entertainment.

One of the reasons *AJ* has become popular is because of the way he presents information. His facts are easy to understand, surprising, and sometimes even shocking. Many people enjoy his content because they can learn something useful in less than a minute. *AJ* encourages curiosity, creativity, and smarter use of technology. In a time when many people worry about how social media affects attention spans, creators like *AJ* are helping make online spaces more meaningful.

One of AJ's most famous and interesting videos:

He explains the history of the "E" symbol, also known as the ampersand. In the video, he explains how the symbol comes from the Latin word *et*, meaning "and," and how it slowly changed shape over time into the symbol we use today. This is a great example of how *AJ* turns simple everyday things into fascinating facts that make people curious about language and history.

@inspire.a.journey



Study Methods and Study Tips

Dear learners of Nizamiye School Mayfair, we have officially reached the half-way point of the year! If you struggle with focus or time management, review our methods and tips below – hopefully they help.

Study Methods

1. Active recall

Find a quiet place to study for 15-25 minutes. Then take a 5 minute break. Do not use your phone, but instead try a productive activity (e.g. wordcross or riddles). After the 5 minute break, come back and test yourself on what you know. Repeat this process until you have successfully memorised.

2. Elaborative explanation

Ask yourself a few questions about the topic you are studying, then explain the answers to those questions as if you were teaching someone else.

3. Chunking

Break down large groups of information into simple, easy-to-understand sentences and write those sentences down. Go over them and then go back to the original source of information. This should make the topic or subject easier to understand.

4. Exam simulation

Go online and see if you can find past papers related to the topic or subject you are studying. Try to simulate an exam room – time yourself and then mark to see your performance.

Study Tips

1. Consistent study time

Try and study at the same time, for the same amount of time, every day.

2. Good sleep schedule

Humans need at least 7-8 hours of sleep a day. Not getting enough sleep could reflect badly on your health and ability to learn so it is very important to wind down and rest.

3. Have a planner

Plan your days out in advance, get a calendar and mark down tasks or milestones that need to be completed by a certain date. Having a clear outline of what is ahead helps you to prepare for it from now.

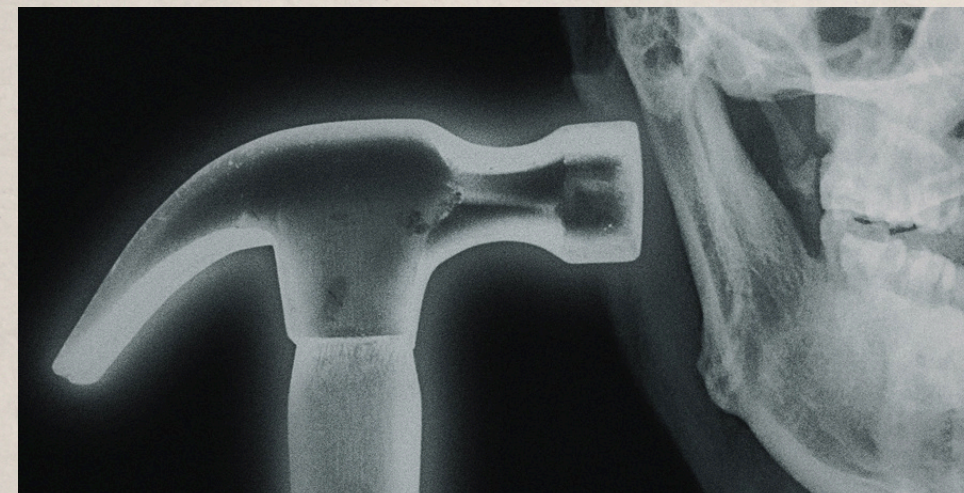
4. Make a checklist

Make a checklist of the topics you need to study. Once you're done with a topic, test yourself and then place a check mark next to the topic. This helps you feel accomplished, and that your efforts are paying off.



Written by: Mariam Waleed Basal
Designed by: Ishaam Hajat

LOOKSMAXXING IS NOT SELF-IMPROVEMENT



Black pill content, or more commonly known as videos under the tag ***LooksMaxxing**, are videos – mainly targeted towards adolescent males – with tips on how to be more attractive. *Looksmaxxers* claim their content is posted for the purpose of self-improvement. Although many people are aware of the fake and harmful hacks, *Looksmaxxers* defend themselves by stating it's for the purpose of self-improvement.

Looksmaxxing has been around for a while and isn't something new. *Looksmaxxers* have a metric system for what they declare attractive, such as a defined jawline, hunter eyes and hollow cheeks. If you do not tick the boxes in their criteria, you are labelled as unattractive, or per the term used by them – “chopped”. This forces young men's minds to set an unrealistic beauty standard for themselves and the people they view.

Looksmaxxing originally started around 2022. It started off by promoting hygiene, better eating habits and improving strength and mobility. Compared to today, the concept of *looksmaxxing* has changed radically, escalating to near horrors. Now, abusing medication and smashing bones are some of the methods promoted by these *Looksmaxxers* to appear attractive. But why do they do it?

Written by: Taha M.D Zahir

● Validation and attention from the opposite gender

● An absurd idea claiming that looks will improve the general quality of life

● The goal to be a supermodel or to look as attractive as one

Since the target audience for *looksmaxxing* is teenage boys, they are vulnerable and easy to deceive. The people that create *looksmaxxing* content are either:

A. Generally attractive

B. Became attractive during or after puberty

C. Had cosmetic surgery to appear more attractive

The three categories of content creators pretty much all do the same thing – promote lies and harmful methods that they've never tried, because they never needed to in the first place. All they are trying to do is make an income by feeding lies to desperate young teens. They claim that by using their unique methods, you will look like them and model agencies will fall over to hire you.

Although many people are aware that this movement is fake, why do they still attempt it?

INSECURITIES

Teenagers already feel overwhelmed with confusing emotions and thoughts, as they navigate change. Struggling with insecurity at this age is plenty common and can be overcome with time and effort from a person through small steps that build confidence.

It's not an easy journey, but *looksmaxxing* only adds to the difficulty. One can easily find people **trying eye exercises to change their eye shape** and **hitting their cheekbones to achieve more defined cheekbones**. As absurd as it sounds, it's a sad reality. The fact that young people believe the shape of their eye and the mass of their bone will determine how they get treated in society is truly depressing.

Although harmful beauty standards have existed for a long time, *Black Pill* content and *looksmaxxing* take them to the extreme. Constantly comparing yourself to an attractive actor or model does affect you negatively. The people you compare yourself to are getting surgery and have aestheticians that make them look good for a picture – of course you're not going to look exactly like them. This also promotes **eating disorders**, **body dysmorphia** and eventually leads to **self-hatred**.

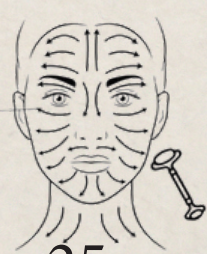
As I mentioned earlier, *looksmaxxing* isn't happening only on the internet; it's happening everywhere, and we can see it as a daily occurrence.

Am I against self-improvement? No. However, I wouldn't put self-improvement and *looksmaxxing* in the same shelf. One focuses on genuinely helping and bettering yourself, whilst the other focuses on the hottest weight-loss medication to take and the riskiest method to twist your anatomy. The word *looksmaxxing* itself directly focuses you into thinking that the only thing that truly matters is looks; not your personality, not your values, neither your achievements nor actions, but your physical appearance. Our fixation with physical attractiveness is making us less human. Today, if you had to review a person's priorities, physical appearance seems to rank higher than who they are as a person and that says a lot.

GUA SHA



RODILLO



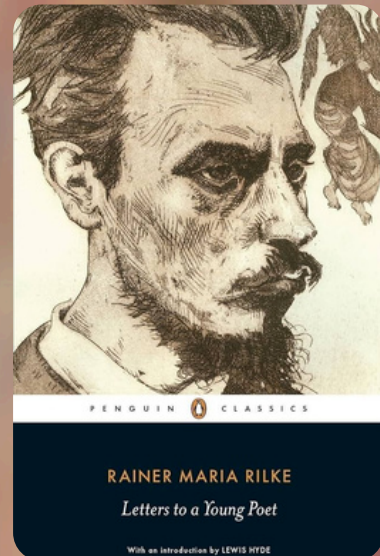
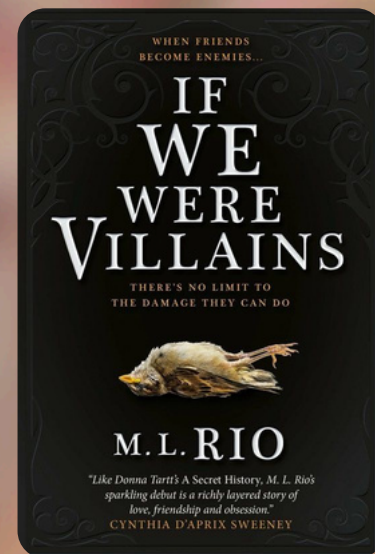
Designed by: Rumaisa Vahed

Book Recommendations

Rio's debut novel **If We Were Villains** is richly packed with themes of love, hate, and obsession. Set in the elite university of Dellecher, *Oliver Marks* noticed that his talented classmates play the same role onstage and off - villain, hero, femme fatale - but he's stuck playing the supporting role. The dynamic quickly takes a turn when a friendly cast change in *Shakespeare's* play *Macbeth* turns ugly and the students' characters come to life, leaving one of them dead. Now they face their biggest acting challenge yet, convincing the police and themselves that they aren't the villains in the story.

IF WE WERE VILLAINS

M. L. RIO



RAINER MARIA RILKE

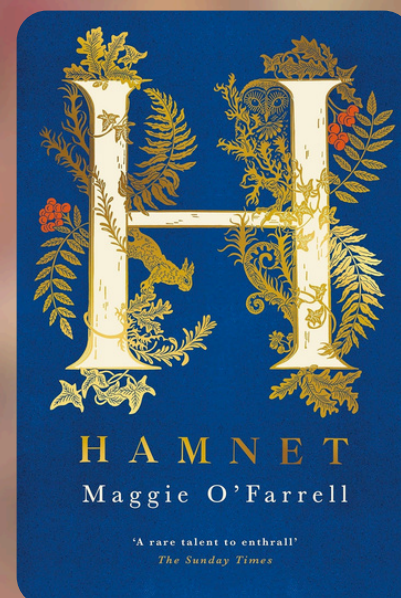
LETTERS TO A YOUNG POET -

Letters to a Young Poet by is a compilation of ten letters from *Rilke* himself to *Franz Xaver Kappus*, a young poet that can't decide between a literary career or a career as an Officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army. *Rilke* advised *Kappus* on how to be a great poet through mastering the art of literature and by embracing the very essence of nature, love and passion. Throughout their correspondence, *Rilke* pushed on the idea that "*Nobody can advise you and help you. Nobody. There is only one way—Go into yourself.*" His advice lives on as a reminder that understanding the inner self is the first step into understanding the world through the eyes of a poet.

HAMNET -

MAGGIE

O'FARRELL



After 424 years, *William Shakespeare's* son, **Hamnet**, is being brought back to life in this novel by *Maggie O'Farrell*. This historic fiction novel set in 1596 focuses on the death of *Hamnet* - *Shakespeare's* and *Agnes Hathaway's* only son - who died at age 11, and the consequent grief his parents felt. This heartstopping story follows *William* and *Agnes* through the circumstances of their marriage, the birth of their son, and the eventual grief and longing they'd have to endure. The tragedy subsequently inspires *Shakespeare* to write his play *Hamlet* four years later. This is not just a novel, it's an ode to all the people in *Shakespeare's* plays who are usually consigned to literary footnotes.

Written by: Nadirah Haffajee

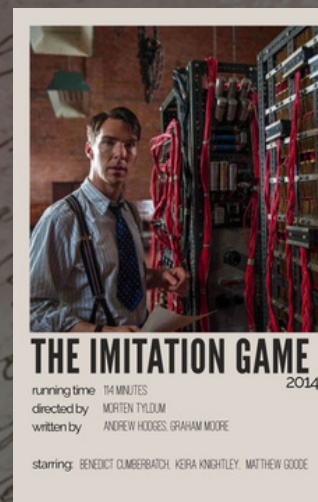
Designed by: Hasnaa Fadel

Movie Recommendations



Us (2019)
Director: Jordan Peele

Described as one of the “greatest horror films of the 21st century” is no exaggeration about this film, directed by one of my favourite working directors today. **Us** is a horror mystery following our main character – *Adelaide* and her family. The family take a trip to their beach house, expecting to unplug and unwind with their friends by the beach. But as night descends, their serenity turns into tension and chaos when some unexpected visitors arrive. With an incredible cast and one of the greatest cinema plot twists, it's safe to say *Jordan Peele* was not afraid to cook in his sophomore film. **Us** is not just a horror film about invasion and scary guests, it carries a deep political message about the world and the working class - *Jordan Peele* uses a horror story as a metaphor to depict the dread and unfairness of the world and it doesn't get better than this film. Recommended to everybody, but specifically horror fans, plot-twist lovers and fanatics of tense stories that keep you on the edge of your seat.



The Imitation Game (2014)
Director: Morten Tyldum

Designed by: Hasnaa Fadel

Written by: Taha MD Zahir

The **Imitation Game** is a war epic based on the real life events of the cryptanalyst *Alan Turing*. The film portrays the nail-biting race against time by *Turing* and his brilliant team of code-breakers at Britain's top-secret *Government Code and Cyber School* at *Bletchley Park*, during the darkest days of World War II. We follow our protagonist *Alan Turing* as he decodes messages with his team and we also learn the harsh laws that *Alan* had to face in 1940 England. Although the film has some inaccuracy to the original events, it still accomplishes the story, ideas and its themes well. This film was considered an Oscar darling based on how many awards it was nominated for in 2015 including **Best Adapted Screenplay**, and **Best Actor** from *Benedict Cumberbatch's* touching performance. This film is very character-driven and displays immaculate cinematography with a chilling score. If you are into films that explore human nature and war, this is something to choose for your next movie night.

Hidden Figures (2016)

Director: Theodore Melfi



You've probably seen **Hidden Figures** on TikTok as it has turned into a meme/viral audio and it's the kind of movie your teacher would play in class. You would be bored for the first 20 minutes but as soon as the credits roll, you thank your teacher for showing you a film this empowering. This movie is also based on a true, untold story about *Katherine G. Johnson*, *Dorothy Vaughn* and *Mary Jackson* - brilliant African-American women working in *NASA* and serving as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire generations to dream big. This movie delves into the harsh racial injustice that African-Americans faced in the 1960. *Taraji P. Henson's* performance was truly captivating and is one for the history books.

Baklava

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (450g) phyllo dough, thawed.
- 1 cup (225g) unsalted butter, melted.
- 2 cups (250g) finely chopped walnuts or pistachios
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Salt
- For the syrup
- 1 cup (240ml) water
- 1 cup (200g) sugar
- ½ cup (170g) honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1-2 tsp lemon juice



DIRECTIONS

1. Prep - preheat the oven to 175 degrees Celsius and butter a baking dish.
2. The nut filling - mix chopped nuts, cinnamon, and a pinch salt in a bowl.
3. Later the phyllo dough - place 8-10 sheets of phyllo dough in a pan, brushing each with melted butter. Add a thin layer of nuts. Add 2-3 sheets, buttering each sheet. REPEAT
4. Cut before baking into any shape (squares, diamonds)
5. Bake - bake for 45-60 minutes until golden brown.
6. Make syrup - while baking, combine water, honey, and sugar into a saucepan. Bring to a boil for 10 minutes. Remove from heat, add vanilla and lemon juice. Let it cool
7. Pour syrup - when the baklava is ready, IMMEDIATELY pour the syrup evenly over it. The baklava should be hot from the oven, and the syrup should be cool.
8. Rest - let it rest for at least 4 hours, before serving.

Tip: let it rest overnight for the best results.

Written by: Sumayya
Rawoot

Designed by: Hasnaa Fadel

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ

وَأِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَىٰ

“Actions are judged by intentions, and every person shall have only that which they intended.”

The words of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are so familiar that it is easy to overlook how unsettling they are.

Intentions are among the few things that belong entirely to us. They can neither be borrowed nor inherited; they cannot be displayed on a wall beside certificates and awards. Most of what the world asks from us can be seen. However, intentions cannot.

Every year, *Eid al-Adha* arrives with the familiar rhythm of *takbir* echoing through masjids before sunrise. Alongside this, returns a story many of us have heard since childhood. We know what happens and we know how it ends

Few of us will ever face a trial comparable to that of Ibrahim عليه السلام but all of us know what it means to stand between conviction and convenience. We know what it feels like to recognise the right path and hesitate before taking it. The difficult questions are rarely about what is right. More often, they concern what we will do once we recognise it. The question, then, is one of sincerity.

In today's world, sincerity may be rarer than intelligence or even courage. Sincerity requires honesty with oneself. It requires a person to stop looking everywhere else for answers and confront what they already know deep within their hearts. *Eid al-Adha* returns each year as a reminder of that struggle. A struggle between the life we live and the life we know we ought to live. Between the person seen by others and the person known only to Allah.

I believe that is why the story continues to resonate with such conviction. It brings with it a question that every person must answer for themselves.

Who are you when nobody is looking?

Written by: Ilhaam Hajat
Designed by: Hasnaa Fadel

No Light Till Dawn

Sometimes the days feel stubbornly heavy
All of that mental noise won't really leave you alone
Don't wear that mask like you don't know the shadow behind it
You try to run away since you don't want this as your new home

It is alright to feel broken and try to understand,
But never let go—
You shouldn't let this bad stretch take the lead
Let it slip through your fingers and make sure it doesn't feed

Positivity isn't meant to be left unseen
Go forward with determination and show what you really mean -
Who you truly are, not glancing from afar.
You need to step into the light to become the gleaming star,
You have to step out of your zone and show your best
Prove to everyone that you're above the rest

Motivation is not the only thing that can drive,
Discipline is also meant to keep you alive

The darkness that consumes won't seem to go away
Use that negative energy as fuel and don't let it sit your delay
Stop giving power to doubt and seek within yourself so your voice is heard
Don't let those voices get into your mind and make you think you're absurd

Written by: Musa Ahmad
Designed by: Ilhaam Hajat

A Letter To The Person I Am I Becoming

Dear Future Me,

As I write this, I realise something strange. I know almost nothing about you. I do not know where life carried you, what your days look like now, nor the fears that grip your heart. Perhaps you are studying your dream degree. Perhaps you've built a life around passions that right now still exist only as distant hopes.

Right now, I'm sitting somewhere between childhood and adulthood, between knowing exactly who I am and still trying to figure it out. At this point in my life, everything feels urgent. Every examination feels life-changing. Every mistake feels permanent. It feels as though every choice I make now carries more weight than ever.

Maybe growing older teaches you that life is made up of moments far smaller than the ones that seem overwhelming right now. Maybe by the time you read this, the things that feel huge to me now, exams, deadlines, friendships, and expectations have become small memories tucked somewhere in the back of your mind. But I hope you still remember this version of yourself. The one still learning. Still growing.

I hope you remember how hard I tried. Not because I wanted perfection, but because I wanted a future you could be proud of. The choices I make today become the life you wake up to tomorrow. The only person whose life I can truly change right now is yours, for better or for worse.

And while I hope you achieved the goals you once dreamed about, I hope you also learned how to appreciate the quieter moments, the laughter during serious classes, and the stressful mornings that somehow became memories worth missing. Nobody warns you that one day the things you desperately wanted to escape will become the things you miss the most.

Maybe by now you've realised how quickly time moves. Right now, I still see the same faces every morning. I still walk through the same corridors and sit in familiar classrooms. Everything feels so ordinary now, yet I know one day these moments may become the memories you hold onto long after they are gone.

So, wherever you are now, remember where you came from. Remember the younger version of yourself who was trying so hard to become someone meaningful. And if life became difficult, or if dreams arrived in different shapes and shades than expected, then remember:

"إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا"

"Indeed, with hardship comes ease."

I hope you are still kind in a world that sometimes doesn't acknowledge it, and I hope you're still sincere in a world full of performance. Still dreaming. Still striving. And above all, still you.

Sincerely,
Your Younger Self

Written by: Zahida Jishin
Designed by: Ilhaam Hajat

Haecceity (n.)

The unique qualities that make a thing exactly what it is and not something else. Literally "thisness."

Dasein (n.)

A concept from philosophy referring to the human experience of existing in the world.

Ipseity (n.)

The unique essence that makes a person themselves.

Entelechy (n.)

The realisation of potential; becoming what one is meant to become.

Lore (n., informal)

The accumulated stories and background that explain a person or community.

Main Character Syndrome (n., informal)

The tendency to view oneself as the protagonist of every situation.



As a platform for expression and creativity, the *Somerset Gazette* showcases the work of learners across our school. Donations ensure that the spirit of physical media continues and that the club remains afloat, allowing more learners to hold a printed copy. Learners eager to contribute in other ways are welcome to join the writing or layout teams and participate in future editions.