THE BASIS SCOTTSDALE

GAZETTE

SEPTEMBER 2026

So You Saw What the Admin Did

By Chloe Han

Evolution has been described by our very own Mr. Carey as "making random changes to see what makes a functioning being," and this depiction is most evident in the slew of changes made for this new school year. Some appear to transform the school into a more efficient environment, while others have been implemented solely in order to irritate the student body. While only a reporter on the ground, observing and experiencing the effects of administrative changes made for the year, I must provide a ranking detailing my humble opinions on the new policies, for better or for worse.

8. Juniors in downstairs lockers

A quick gander at the current population of the upper MPR reveals a dearth of the typical juniors that once ruled its lockers, and in their place, throngs of sophomores. The juniors, displaced from their traditional stomping grounds, have been shunted downstairs into the former seventh-grade locker hallway.

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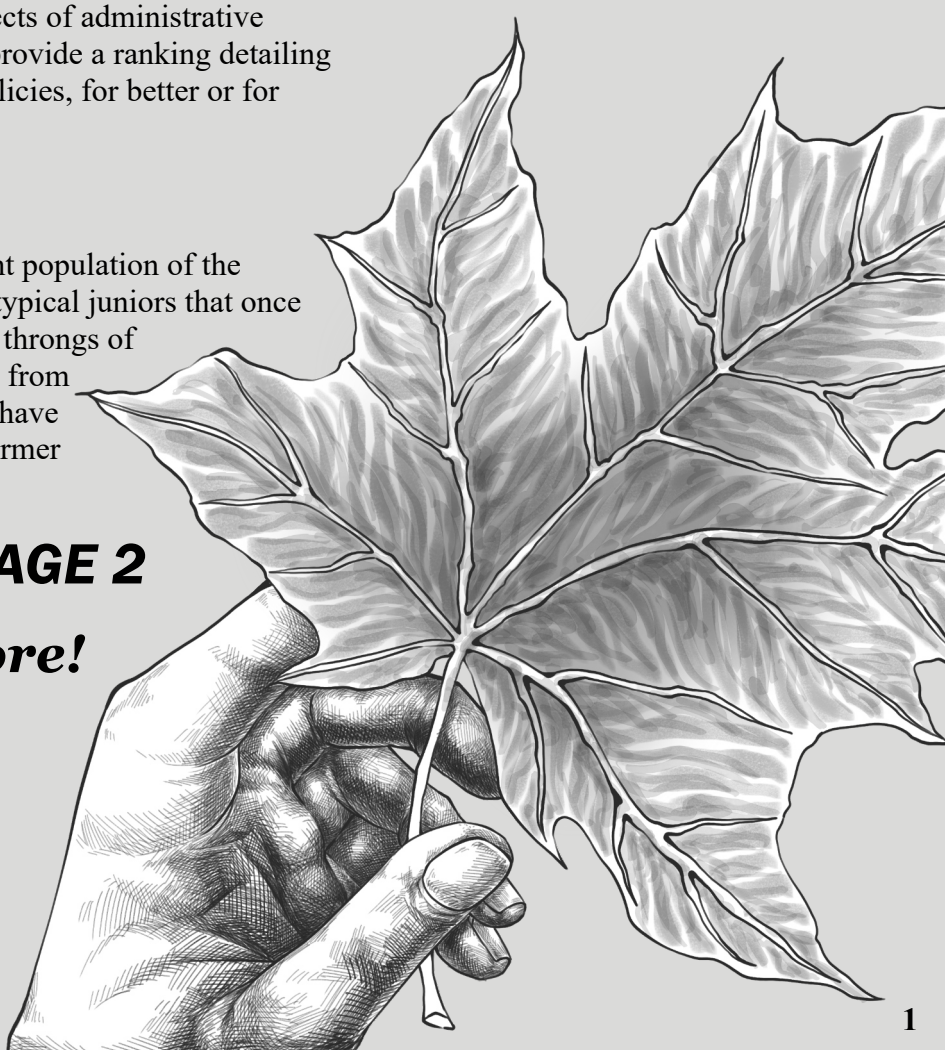

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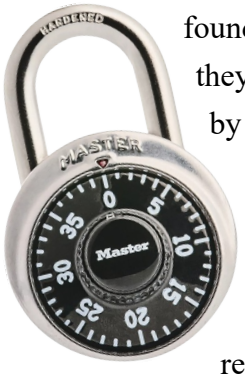
In an interview, Mr. Haber stated that the move was spurred by an unexpectedly large number of juniors and seniors who optionally signed up for lockers. Considering the MPR had far fewer lockers than the upperclassmen's demand, the choice was made to move them downstairs. On paper, it functions, but in practice, it failed within the first week. High schoolers are not to breach containment from the upstairs realm, but due to this newfangled distribution, this year's fifth graders were met with the uncomfortable realization of the possible forms of their future selves should they continue enrolling at this school. Along with increasing traffic along the smallest downstairs locker hallway and creating an enormous hassle for the juniors retrieving their books between classes, the logistical wrench this decision threw into the school ecosystem has landed it squarely in last place.

7. Embedded locks everywhere

When my own sister entered the school and found her way to her locker, I was eager to demonstrate how the combination locks were to be opened and best used, only to be greeted with an enormous metallic abomination fused directly to her locker. It then proceeded to be half-jammed for the entirety of the school year, requiring a herculean amount of fifth-grade force to even crack open. Surely, I thought then, the fused locks were only for the lower schoolers because the high schoolers were more responsible and could certainly handle having detached locks. Apparently not. Perhaps the only advantage of the new fused locks now found everywhere in the school is that they are marginally easier to break into by listening for the clicks of the lock against the metal panel. Otherwise, they jam more easily and are overall less comfortable to open than a regular combination lock, requiring that you push up to open the locker within five seconds or else locking shut and forcing you through the whole procedure again. Not to mention being much less cathartic to open: pushing down on a padlock is objectively superior to pushing up on a tiny plastic nubbin. Easy second-to-last. At least it didn't cause massive traffic jams.



6. No more snack shack

Generally, the admin hallway feels a bit soulless. However, for the past year, a shining beacon hidden in the depths of Office 9 has valiantly warded off such apathy from conquering the entire hallway. The snack shack, an open secret among hyperactive fifth-grade sugar fiends and exhausted sophomores alike, was a treasure trove of everything the vending machine would refuse to provide, at prices its computer program would reject as an error yet still eat your coins while doing so. However, since the turn of the new school year, incoming students were met with an Office 9 empty of its sugary charm. While not necessarily hurting the school ecosystem, the snack shack's absence is sorely felt, and I am not mistaken in stating that many students wish for its return; hence, its disappearance warrants a sixth-place finish.



5. Quarter/semester schedule

Whispers of a switch to a quarter system had been swirling since the tail end of last year, yet suspicions were not confirmed until we had all slid into our seats on the first day.

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According to Mr. Haber, the change had been in development with BASISEd higher-ups for quite a while now, but it wasn't until new schools in Texas had successfully beta-tested the program that it was given the green light by admin and rolled out across all BASIS schools. In my opinion, the new system has only one major draw-back: seniors now have substantially less time to complete their senior project than before. Otherwise, the quarter system is more understandable than the earlier grading periods: it's consistent across the entire school, – flashback to when high school had trimesters and lower school grading periods – logical rather than ending at some random date while trailing across two semesters, and relatively easy to explain. I, for one, would like to forget the time I tried to explain trimesters to a non-Basis student and they responded with "like a pregnancy?". It's not a horrible change, but I do believe it will take some getting used to, resulting in a fifth-place finish.

4. Economics for high schoolers

The era of those who remember the 75-minute economics class is to dwindle further with the removal of economics from the eighth-grade curriculum – Mr. Johnson's coffee-perfumed, perpetually too-warm classroom right after lunch was a prime nap spot for me during that time. Instead, the required economics credit is to come from taking economics in 11th grade as a mandatory class, replacing the slot of an AP language course. While the daily 50-minute lunch is certainly a win, losing an opportunity for an AP may weigh heavily, particularly on high schoolers. It is a reduction of AP coursework on an already grueling junior year curriculum; however, allowing it to climb its way to just outside the podium into fourth place.



3. New sciences for middle schoolers

From this year onwards, lower schoolers will no longer bear the weight of three sciences all at once and must only face the wrath of two, albeit every day of the week, allowing for a more standardized schedule. The decision to change the curriculum was made to better allow for a balance between the life sciences and physical sciences, allowing students to better sample the varieties of science available to them and perhaps make them better informed when the time inevitably came to choose their high school science track. While I'm all for not squishing the lower schoolers like a bug under BASIS coursework, the reasoning for the change feels shaky, as the old curriculum effectively exposed students to the foundations of the three primary sciences. But nevertheless, it reduces coursework, which makes me marginally happier, landing it in a solid third place.

2. New ID policies

"Where's your ID?"

"In my pocket."

"It should be around your neck, on the outermost layer of clothing, on a lanyard…"

We've all heard this conversation a thousand times. That's why the decision to get rid of this requirement has catapulted itself into second place. No more suspicions and potential consequences for "not having an ID" when the ID was quite literally on your person.

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No more wearing a lanyard despite the fact that teachers and staff have the ability to wear them elsewhere. Regardless of the fact that petitioning admin for permission to wear your ID anywhere other than a lanyard is no longer required, this rollback allows for a whole trove of choices that aren't just a plastic case with a favorite character on it. Thank you, admin, for making a policy that actually improved upon an earlier one that, while not necessarily problematic, could have been better.

1. New comp schedules

Do we remember when comps and pre-comps seemed to be the largest source of doom looming up ahead, and complaining about studying all through winter break to prepare for six hours of testing two weeks after the start of the new year? Well, worry no longer, for the latter is no longer the case! With the new quarter and semester system, comps and pre-comps have been moved to an earlier date, with pre-comps now being administered before winter break, allowing for a true fresh start in the new year. And imagine the last week of school with empty hallways, lower school all testing or on field trips, and being able to truly savor the passing periods, or at the very least, not have to bulldoze people to get into the main stairwell.

A school, like anything in the world, can always be changed. But whether or not that change will become valuable or simply wither away as a shot in the dark – recall the PikMyKid fiasco of 2021 – is up to the people affected by it and those who maintain it. Yet, the rankings may stand for now.

Additions from the Admin ★

Dear BASIS Scottsdale Students,

It has been a privilege serving this community in different capacities and it is an honor to now serve as the Head of School. I began with BASIS Scottsdale in 2016 as the Dean of Students for the Upper School. Soon Afterwards, I transitioned to the Director of Student Affairs position for the Lower School. My most recent title was the Director of Academic Programs. Serving as the DAP was one of my favorite scopes in which I had the opportunity to support you as a student. Whether that was explaining graduation requirements or assisting students with scholarships and summer internships. Hopefully most of you understand by now that it is my goal to be approachable and as supportive as possible. Taking on this responsibility, to me, means that I am a servant to this community and want to foster the hard work and dedication you all put into your education. This means being available to listen to your thoughts, ideas, possible concerns, and hopefully to get to know you a little more.

I look forward to a fantastic year and please do not hesitate to stop by my office if you need anything.

p.s. This message was not generated by AI.

- Mr. Carey

After the Finish Line

What do you do when you have no goal to reach?

By Ruthu Madugonde

After the first day in five weeks without a final or AP exam, I finally pulled my cloud-pink comforter snug around my face as my mattress adjusted to the newfound lightness of my body. No more traumatic alarm noises to wake up to and lengthy Euro notes to fall asleep to. After a strenuous month of focused studying and nonstop testing, I could finally open my computer to the divine sound of a Netflix homepage instead of the 101 tabs of chemistry battles with ChatGPT. But somewhere between the daydreams of "freedom" that had pulled me through the past couple weeks, I forgot about the utter, comp-lete loneliness that follows focused momentum.

Despite the 10-month marathon I had finished, after three weeks of waking up at 1:00 p.m. and reveling in newfound nothingness, I felt like I had run the 100-yard dash to the end zone, only for the touchdown to happen in an empty stadium. Don't get me wrong: when summer began, my sighs of relief practically halved my body weight, and happiness practically bubbled out of me. But then the bubble popped, and I suddenly landed flat back into my bed, anxiously thinking, "What now?"

As BASIS students, we constantly obsess over controlling our lives, whether it's through achieving perfect grades or choosing the best extracurriculars. For me, this need to command every aspect of my life manifested as anxiety as I felt the discomfort of "space" in the stretched-out out seconds of summertime; I'd become so used to holding my routine, my work, and essentially my entire life in my hands during the school year that I'd become confused about what to do afterwards. Especially now, after being catapulted into the strenuous routine of junior year, there's a pressure to be productive, to be efficient, and use time "wisely." It's like stacking a Jenga tower, only rather than facing a loss against aggravating cousins, the consequences seem to be to be the unalterable failure of wasting the years of hard work I've put into getting into university. Absolutely ridiculous, isn't it? We take on the responsibility of tweaking our entire lives to hit the mark of "success," while naively overlooking the immutable fact that the root of our efforts cannot and will not control every tendril of the universe's outcomes.



> ***The unalterable failure of wasting the years of hard work***

Dr. Remus says that the increased arrangements in a system is called entropy. Well, I'm not exactly sure what the laws of nature permit, but I think entropy intervenes in our lives more than we may realize.

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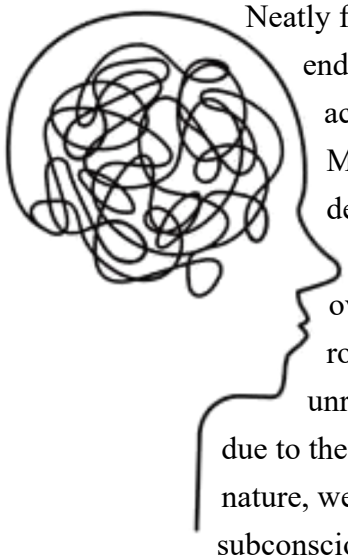


Neatly folded clothes always end up splayed disastrously across the room. Meticulously made desserts become bitter when they're overbaked. Comforting routines eventually unravel over time. And yet, due to the stubbornness of human nature, we still persist in subconsciously assuming that we have complete control. Holding onto the tightrope of perfection through hard work, we never prepare for the snap. Isn't that why so many of us are stressed? Because we believe that the perfect, happiest version of ourselves is possible if we just push a little farther, hold on a little longer, and become a little stronger. But the glass case filled with the pearly spheres of our put-together lives always cracks eventually, and the beautiful, fragile marbles of "order" end up slipping through our sensitive, clumsy fingers.

So, what can we do?

Well, one thing that helped me is recognizing what my actual goal is. Not the fact that I want to pursue medicine and become a doctor 20 years from now, but rather, what I want right now. And right now, I want to go to Paris Baguette and buy those heavenly chocolate mousse cake slices. No, I'm not joking. We focus so much on finding some grand, momentous sense of purpose for the rest of our lives that we naively forget to value the present. Because what's going to propel us into the future isn't burning ourselves out in high school. It's enjoying life the best we can right now, and being as confident, happy, and ready as we can be to become capable enough to face whatever the future holds.

The 10 minutes before bed I spend picking out a nice outfit. The 15 minutes I spend after school yapping with a friend. The 20 minutes I get to snooze during lunch on Fridays. These everyday, forgettable spaces of freedom that we overlook are crucial. They give us the oxygen we need to keep running the marathon of school and allow our brains to realize that we aren't cogs in a machine that must continuously keep moving, but rather people who can take a step back, wait for a pause, take a deep breath—and maybe pick up some Paris Baguette on the way home.

✨ *Little Leisures*

1) Have a bubble bath

2) Take a nature walk

3) Bake some cookies

4) Listen to music (make a new playlist, try out a new genre, listen to a new artist)

5) Try out a new craft

Procrastination: a Quick Guide

By Milana Mordoukhovskaia

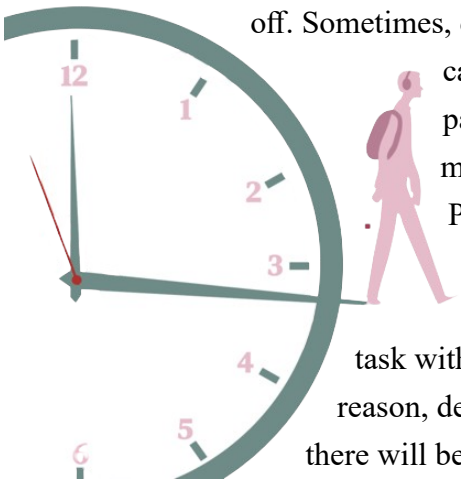
This is an article about procrastination and time management. Ironically, I am writing it at six in the morning on the day it is due. To the editor reading this: I did turn it on time, though. Didn't I?

You might be wondering: "Now, why the heck would I listen to her about this if she can't even manage her own time?" That's precisely why you should. In fact, it's what makes me understand your situation better.

It's the night before school, and you're hit with the realization that the deadline for your assignment is tomorrow. So, you open your computer and… then you open your phone. Scrolling? Games? But actually, you think you should make yourself a snack. Or no, you should take out the garbage. Was there something else you needed to do? You start to think that this might just be too stressful and too late, so you'll try again in the morning.

This is the cycle that we all know too well. The cycle of procrastination. If we all know it's bad, why do we keep doing it?

Procrastination isn't just putting something off. Sometimes, delaying a task can be a reasonable part of time management. Procrastination occurs when we avoid doing a task without a good reason, despite knowing there will be negative consequences for doing so.



Believe it or not, this behavior is your body trying to protect you, by avoiding a task it perceives as a threat. The amygdala, a set of neurons deep within the temporal lobes of the brain, plays an important role in processing threats and triggering the body's fight-or-flight response. But why does the brain find an assignment threatening?

There could be many reasons: dread, insecurity, or simply feeling incapable of completing the task. The more you put off the task, the more difficult it may seem. As the task grows in your mind, so does the perceived threat.

Procrastination is also tied to negative emotions, meaning people who have trouble regulating their emotions are more susceptible to procrastinating, regardless of their time management skills. It is important to remember that not all procrastinators are lazy. Being lazy is characterized by low energy and inaction—not distracting yourself with every task except the one you actually need to complete.

In reality, people procrastinate because they care. This could present itself as a fear of failure or a fear of not being able to perform the task up to your own or someone else's standards.

Nevertheless, we continue to procrastinate because it protects us in the moment, even if it hurts us in the long run. So, how do we break this cycle? First, you have to realize that being hard on yourself can add to procrastination and augment the perceived threat. To address this threat, we need to reduce these negative emotions.

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There are plenty of strategies to use when you find yourself beginning to procrastinate. One is breaking the task down into smaller parts. When you break down your task, you break down the threat along with it, making it easier to start. And once you start, it becomes a whole lot easier to follow through and finish.

Sometimes, you might even want to sit down and write about the negative emotions you feel associated with your procrastination. This can help you address deep inner fears that might be affecting your ability to complete tasks. A simpler strategy, which I'm sure you've heard of, is removing distractions to make it easier to focus.

Wait! There's one more thing—a rather important thing—I need to mention: self-compassion. It is extremely important that you show yourself forgiveness. It's not entirely your fault that you procrastinate, and it's not like you consciously choose to procrastinate. It's a response from your brain, alongside negative emotions that can start this cycle. It's not your fault if you feel lost when it comes to regulating those things.
Forgive yourself, and make a plan to do better next time.

And if you feel like next time won't be better, maybe you should ask yourself why. Is it because it's a cycle and you feel like it'll never stop? Well, I'm sorry to say this, but that mindset is only feeding the cycle. Assume that next time you will do better. But don't just assume it—act on it.

Good luck this school year. I hope you spend a little less time avoiding your assignments and a little more time believing you can actually finish them.

In Other Words . . .

It's that long-term procrastination has made them feel like a spectator, at times, in their own lives. The frustration is not that they couldn't achieve their dreams; it's that they weren't even able to start chasing them.

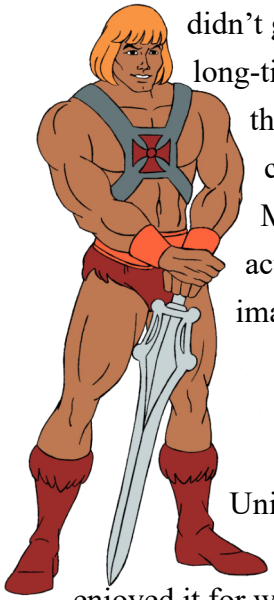
- Tim Urban



It's He-Man, It's Him, Man!

By Dana Nam | Movie Analyst

Let's rewind the clock to 1982. Mattel had just released its first He-Man toy line, and as a way to promote it, they commissioned the production of a cartoon TV show to go along with the toys. It was a good investment, since it became one of the most popular franchises of the '80s. You yourself might not recognize He-Man's significance now, since I'm assuming most of you reading this didn't grow up in the '80s. But for long-time fans, it's easy to imagine that He-Man remains a core childhood memory. So when Mattel decided to make a live-action version for the film, one can imagine the amount of excitement that came out of that announcement.



I watched Masters of the Universe (2026) this summer in theatres, and I can say that I enjoyed it for what it was. But when it comes to a critical review of this film, it's harder to ignore the fact that people who watched the original He-Man series are going to have a much different experience than I did. However, for an audience that doesn't have any sentimental or nostalgic attachment to the franchise, it makes it a lot easier to appreciate the movie more objectively.

Still, the movie didn't exactly do too hot at the box office. With a budget of around $100 million, the movie only made about $69 million in its opening week. But I understand why this movie could be unpopular with a lot of audiences. People who don't know what He-Man is aren't necessarily going to enjoy it, and there's a good chance plenty of OG fans are going to find something wrong with this new adaptation, too. On top of that, when watching the film itself, you're likely to notice that this movie points to a more adult direction with its comedy: adult jokes, innuendos, etc. However, Mattel being Mattel (and being one of the largest toy companies in the United States) led to them releasing merch accordingly (AKA, a bunch of toys). This further perpetuates the question: "Who is this movie for, anyway?"

But , moving away from just the negatives, let's talk about the positive parts of Masters of the Universe!

Objectively, the movie looks great. Most of the effects relied on CGI technology and very heavy special effects to create the scenes of He-Man's home-world, Eternia. It has that generic live-action adaptation movie CGI in the sense that it's a very hyperrealistic take on a cartoon, so it tends to look a little strange or uncanny. That being said, it's very impressive what the VFX team pulled off with all the action that takes place and the fact that they had to somehow place real actors in such a complex environment.



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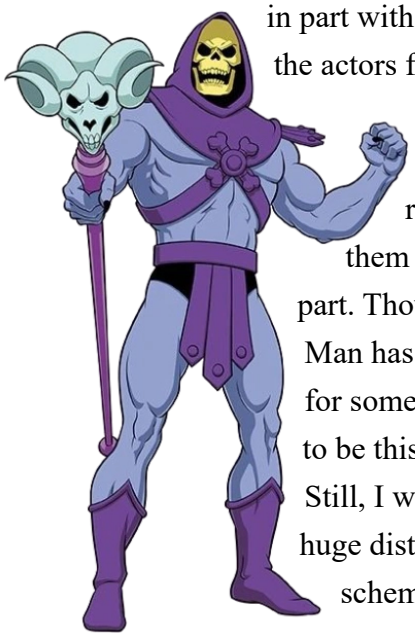
Based on some research, I found that most of the content of the movie is true to the original cartoon in terms of naming, though some changes were made for narrative purposes.

All the main characters are very cool in a very ‘80s way, and watching them in action and all their superpowers emphasizes the fact that they were built to appeal to a young child’s mind. It also becomes a really great source of humor in the movie. The action is very well done, too. The movie makes use of a lot of slow motion to dramatize the combat scenes. It further adds to the whole “cool in an ‘80s way” aesthetic that the movie has and makes for a very unique viewing experience.

The character designs are also pretty cool. A lot of the characters look like 1:1 counterparts with their cartoon versions, minus the realistic graphics. He-Man and the main villain Skeletor look really great in particular, with He-Man looking quite modern in some ways despite what would probably be considered an outdated design. Skeletor also has quite the foreboding look, and despite having a skull for a face, he still is quite expressive. That might be in part with the acting too. All the actors for the film looked like they had a great time playing their roles, and they all fit them well for the most part. Though I will say, He-Man has quite the baby face for someone who is supposed to be this big, hulking guy. Still, I wouldn’t say it’s a huge distraction in the grand scheme of things.



> ***"I have the power"***
> *- He-Man*

Masters of the Universe also makes a lot of meta-commentary on its IP. Some of my favorite bits were when Adam (He-Man), after returning home, calls out some of Eternia’s heroes by the names he called them as a kid. The heroes he remembers (or more realistically, soldiers) are modeled after the cast of the original He-Man car-toon, with Mekaneck, Fisto, and Man-at-Arms being the big ones who worked with He-Man. Obviously, the names don’t exactly fit with the more realistic setting the live-action movie went with, so they turn it into comedy by making fun of Adam for calling all the heroes by their childish titles, which were their names in the cartoon.

Along with that, the movie references arguably the most famous meme that came out of He-Man. During the sequence where Adam is being chased by one of Skeletor’s henchmen after getting the Sword of Power, the movie played the song “What’s Up?” by 4 Non Blondes in reference to the YouTube video “HEYYEYAAEYAAAEYAEYAA!” The video was a popular meme that edited footage from the He-Man cartoon to the song by 4 Non Blondes.

Meta-commentary, or trying to be meta, can get very tiring in films or media where it’s not really meant to be a main focus or when it’s not explicitly satire. However, I think Masters of the Universe was subtle enough with it to come off as funny. It’s important to masculinity, which ties a lot into the theme of Masters of the Universe and makes for an interesting narrative element.

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The comedy of Masters of the Universe in general was great, in my opinion. For a personal anecdote, the whole theatre I was watching the movie with was absolutely cracking up at each joke, so clearly there are at least a few people out there who thought this movie was funny.

As mentioned previously, the humor in this movie definitely leans more toward the adult side, but in the sense that if you were too young, you probably wouldn't get the joke (for example, a subtle innuendo). I think it mainly had to do with He-Man being such an old franchise that the filmmakers felt safe appealing to an adult audience more, since one could assume that people who grew up with He-Man are adults by now.

I commend Masters of the Universe for being so creative in terms of its story and themes, and the action is top-notch when you watch it. But it suffers the issue of feeling incomplete and inconclusive as to what it's trying to say (in my opinion, of course). And yet, I still had fun watching this movie. It does a great job at being entertainment over anything else, and the comedy fits well. It's a "fun" movie, so if you wanted something introspective to watch over the summer, you probably would have been better off watching The Odyssey.

Most people would argue that *Masters of the Universe* is a solid 6.5/10, but I give it a 7.5/10.

Now, with all that said, does that mean you should watch it? I'd say if you are interested in He-Man—or maybe if you already like He-Man—you'll have a good time. Though, for those of you who liked the original He-Man, you might be a little disappointed with the story.

If you need places to watch the movie, the only streaming service offering it is Prime Video with a subscription. But, if you're desperate enough, the internet has every resource you could possibly need to go watch it, so do with that information what you will.

Movie In Numbers

Release Date: June 5, 2026

Running Time: 2h 20m

Budget: $170 - 200 million

Box Office: $114 million

4 nominations at Critics Choice Super Awards



Letterboxd



3/5



Rotten Tomatoes



68%



IMDb



8.1/10



REVIEW

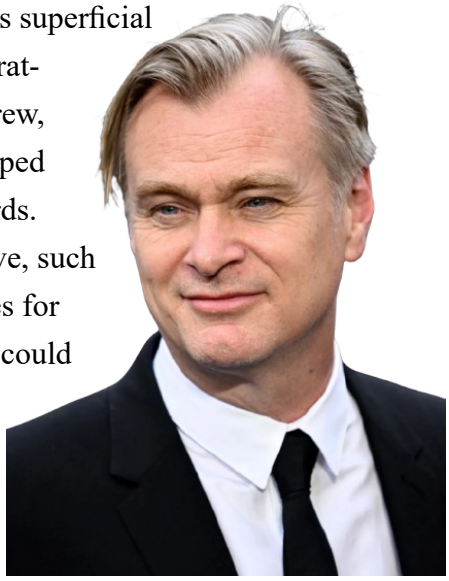
From Dusty Scroll to Silver Screen: How Hollywood Fixed Odysseus' Garbage Navigation Skills

By Mishal Rizwan

Every millennial likes to complain about the questionable intelligence of recent generations—true, we may not be able to tell time from analog clocks, name any mayors in Arizona, or tell the difference between an orange and a tennis ball, but I say, forget the kids—what about the movies? Why is Disney making so many live-action films? Why would anyone watch *The Minecraft Movie* after seeing the first trailer? And why am I seeing Melania Trump on Prime Video? In a world full of confusion and, let's face it, stupidity, it is nice—nay, relieving, to find a film with any hint of intelligence. So, to whoever is reading this, pause everything you're doing, stand up, and give Christopher Nolan a round of applause for proving that not everyone in the film industry uses their big, beautiful, husband's Kennedy Center as a red carpet location for their "must-watch" film.

Christopher Nolan flaunts quite the resume, boasting massive hits like *Dunkirk, Interstellar, Inception*, and *The Prestige*. The thing with hot-shot directors like Chris Master here is that they tend to have a certain pattern within all their works. For Tim Burton, it's gothic fantasy with stop-motion animation (for our *Coraline* and *The Corpse Bride* fans here). For Alfred Hitchcock, it was three-by-threes, hidden character arcs with other characters, and Jimmy Stewart (make way for *Vertigo, Psycho,* and *Rear Window*, please). For our boy Christopher, it's deejaying timelines and gorgeous wide shots (hello, *Interstellar, Memento,* and *Inception*). I believe it's safe to say that *The Odyssey* is the epitome of Nolan's trademark mashed narratives.

The audience is initially met with the House of Odysseus on the island of Ithaca, fallen from grace with the loss of their master and ridden with the scum that society has to offer, which quickly transitions to Odysseus' masked prison, guarded by the mystical goddess Calypso. In the movie, Odysseus is depicted as cunning, leading the film to mainly focus on his intellect, or mentis, as the ancient Greeks like to say, instead of the mindless gore we can expect from movies like The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard. *The Odyssey*, however, is more liberal in how this intelligence translates to the real world. For example, when Odysseus (aka the inexorable Matt Damon) decides to follow the advice of the gods and leave Apollo's herd untouched, in comparison to his superficial and short-term gratification of his crew, he ultimately reaped the greater rewards. Though subjective, such mindless searches for short-term gains could represent the superficiality of the modern generation.



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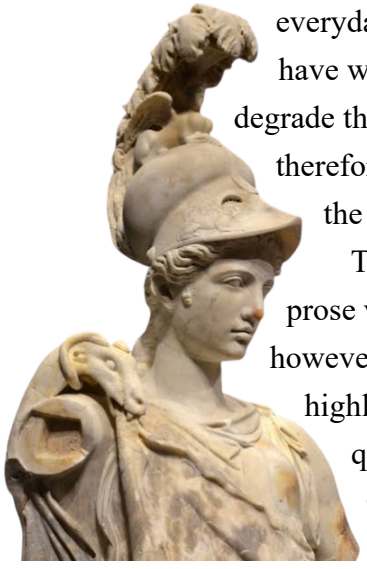
Another major diversion from the original prose is the breakdown of characters–spanning from Odysseus to the gods themselves. In Christopher Nolan's portrayal, the original sin that Odysseus commits is breaking the rules of decency between humans (with major references to Genesis and Adam and Eve's original sin). He then faces his guilt and psychological trauma from Troy through the goddess Athena, who serves as mostly a symbolic figure rather than a participating character in the story. For all my peeps out there who aren't as caught up with Greek literature as yours truly, Athena is the goddess of wisdom, reflecting Odysseus' own smarts and how he chose to utilize his god-given gifts for destructive purposes. The absolutely disgusting scene of Circe molding Odysseus' crew into literal pigs serves as a gross yet crucial physical representation of how humanity's base drives, such greed, lust, and, in this case, gluttony, can degrade humans into wild animals. The point that Nolan stresses so painstakingly is that when we discard the everyday respectability we have with each other, we degrade the gods themselves and therefore reduce ourselves to the equivalent of pigs.



The widely-known prose written by Homer, however, doesn't exactly highlight these themes quite as much as Christopher Nolan. The OG *Odyssey* is much more straightforward in its morals. Instead of using the gods and Odysseus' cleverness symbolically, Homer decided to use the gods as consequences for violating the basic rules of humanity, while Odysseus' intelligence is used as a superior complement to the hypocrisy and sins of the 'common man'. Instead of using Nolan's hallmark technique of graphic scenes to display an idea, Homer describes the fall from grace of characters either metaphorically or physically (most likely due to differences in media). For example, Antinous, the head of the deadbeat bums (or more well-known as Robert Pattison), received his divine punishment through Odysseus shooting an arrow through his neck while lifting a cup to drink the wine of the exploited House of Odysseus. Taylor Swift said it best: "karma is my boyfriend."

> ***Dismissing everything that isn't vintage ignores the beauty of the generation to come.***

While it may seem that intelligence is as scarce as a Life-Size Mint Green Labubu Prototype, I like to think that it's improving—just in a way we'll only understand in forty years. Maybe all that scrolling will increase our reflexes for World War III or something. But dismissing everything that isn't vintage ignores the beauty of the generation to come. But you have to admit, that *Melania* movie did kind of suck.

If you watched the movie, What did you think?

send us your thoughts at thebasisscottsdalegazette.godaddysites.com

Fight Human Nature, Embrace Your Annotations

By Elena Prophet

Everyone at BASIS eventually takes the infamous Honors Literature class. In said class, students complete a variety of assignments, ranging from annotating books to writing thesis statements. Oftentimes, we end up reading or sharing our work aloud. Earlier last week, while we were discussing Frankenstein, the majority of my ninth-grade class had no idea what the word "benevolence" meant. While this caught me off guard, honestly, it wasn't that shocking. If that doesn't surprise you, allow me to share something that might. About 54% of U.S. adults (roughly 130 million people) read below the equivalent of a sixth-grade level. Whether you like it or not, the literacy crisis is real, and it's time to start caring.

We are fortunate (or unfortunate, depending on how much you like your English class) enough to constantly be around lots of literature and new vocabulary, which certainly helps with reading comprehension. However, let's analyze the real root of the problem. There are various reasons why, between 2017 and 2023, the average literacy score for U.S. adults dropped by 13 points. Nonetheless, the simple answer, I'm sure, many of you were already thinking of is our devices. To link it all together, our smartphones and social media encourage a more fragmented way of reading that replaces deep focus with constant distraction. Alongside shorter attention spans, uninterrupted reading has also seen a sharp decline, especially long-form reading. Lastly, as I'm sure we all know, reading is not meant to be done while surrounded by distractions because it requires critical thinking. As the amount of AI tools used for reading increases, we risk losing the ability to engage with texts on our own.

There's no question as to why today's children (especially younger children) are drawn more to the bright glare than the book fair. In both cases, your brain releases dopamine, but the release varies. While looking at a screen, the release is rapid and frequent, whereas when reading a book, it is slow, steady, and sustained, which ties into deep focus. If you haven't experienced it yourself, you have probably at least seen the irresistible draw that technology has over other people. While I am partial to TikTok, I have definitely witnessed the latter as well. I frequently babysit a five year old girl who's just starting to learn how to read (which is the average age that most students learn to read) and while she's learning how to sound out cat versus hat, her brothers watch YouTube reaction videos in the room next door. Of course, as soon as she hears the recognizable sound of "like, comment, and subscribe," she immediately abandons her work and is drawn to the TV. At this point, it's not fair to blame the children. As I stated earlier, it's human nature to be drawn to the sole device that can provide as much chemical satisfaction in your brain as you want.

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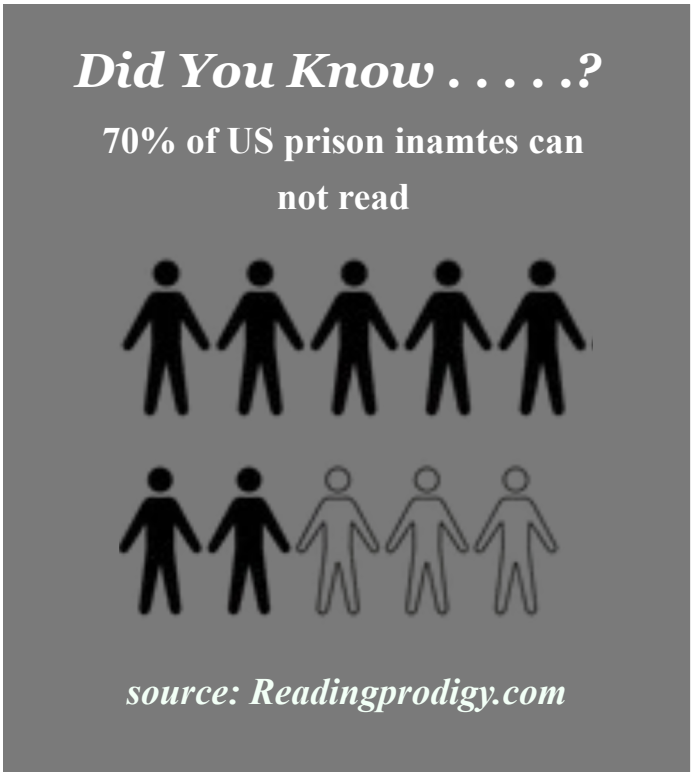
Therefore, the main way to solve the literacy crisis isn't to study the roots of words and the essays of Alexander Hamilton; it is to put the phone down and start reading books that actually interest you!

On a real note, there are children all over the country and the world that don't have access to the same literature and materials that are at our fingertips due to circumstances that are beyond their control. We complain about our mountain of annotations or the six-page packet that we procrastinated on until the night before, because it's frustrating to have to balance everything. However, the children and students who attend school in low-income neighborhoods are already at a disadvantage because of the reading supplies at their disposal, which are disproportionate relative to higher income communities. Therefore, the solution to the literacy crisis comes in different forms due to the fact that the core issue varies in each scenario. When our screens are the problem, the solution truly is to just put the phone down. However, in some cases, the overwhelming wealth gap especially in the United States creates a system of giving higher income communities better materials, whether that is better books or better classrooms. This perpetuates a cycle of abuse where children who grow up in low-income communities have less opportunities to overcome the literacy crisis, which potentially leads to less future success than a child who grew up with more privilege. Consequently, the solution requires a focus on the inequalities at hand. Using this information, we must recognize that opportunities to overcome the literacy crisis are evident in every book that is forced upon us.

In conclusion, the reason why 28% of U.S. adults function at the lowest level of literacy (roughly a third-grade reading level), in actuality, is a combination of reasons. The first is our screens. The chemicals in our brain are wired so that the dopamine that is released while looking at a screen is unmatched and this snowballs into difficulty focusing on reading after acclimating to our screens. The second reason is more deeply-rooted and has been systemically placed in our social system. Students in lower income communities are in extenuating circumstances that dictate whether or not they get to have the same opportunities as students with more privilege. If you're wondering what role you play in solving the problems I just described, the answer is to find one singular book you are interested in, which will hopefully trigger you to seek out books, instead of just tolerating reading by doing the bare minimum in your English classes. By fighting the literacy crisis, we are actively fighting human nature and beating the statistics one book at a time.



Borrowed Threads

What story do our clothes tell?

By Ariel Manuel

The phone has become a little information capillary connecting us to the rest of the world, carrying lifeblood and dopamine. As such networks are wont to do, products and byproducts are floated around until they have brushed every corner and can leave again, having taken something new. Hot takes, flattering selfies, jokes: every aspect of the self, pumped from person to person until every individual holds the approximate summation of humanity and the ability to zoom in freely on whatever they'd like.

Naturally, this blending of peoples, the smearing of them, transfusion from one to the next, has made its mark on the real world beyond the infinite digital circulatory system. The natural consequence of having bared every aspect of selfhood is that one's culture is part of the self, or one's self is a part of a culture, whichever you prefer. Thus, that is shared too, diluted between millions of people until it can be disregarded. Some argue that culture should be kept private, gated to those who actually share it, not those who have been suddenly delivered access to it with none of the consequences. Others say that to keep it away from the public eye is to form a stopgap, an imposing clot that threatens everyone on the other end with starvation. I am not necessarily here to argue the former or the latter— I know where my opinions lie, and they are not quite relevant. I have not come to scrutinize the purity of the system, only to put a smear sample of it underneath a microscope and scribble down what I can see. The everyday things we put on our bodies, the currents of trends dragging us along— where do they come from?



Jeans Featuring the Japanes Rising sun used during Imperial Japan



When it comes to pants, jeans have been a symbol of American culture practically since its inception, and are at this point so representative of us that one could practically just stitch fifty stars onto a pair of them, string them to a flagpole, and call it a day. And, similarly to America itself, they have become something of a melting-pot on their own. Japanese selvedge denim has been steadily gaining prestige and popularity, a fashionable class symbol. Similarly, people have begun wearing their own traditional clothing over jeans— I even once saw someone wear the traditional Thai ao dai over a pair. This sort of enmeshment to me entirely embodies the sentiment behind the phrase "culture is meant to be shared". Truly, despite my reservations in other areas, mixing and matching with one's identity looks like an elegant collage, and denim is perhaps the best medium for it. nce its inception, has been used to create qipao tops, dresses, and I even saw a haori sewn from it on a memorable occasion.

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It is popular among Japanese gyarus and gyaruos dressed in the ‘amerikaji’ style inspired by American culture and among Swedish girls in the popular ’Stockholm style’. It has become a universal matrix for style, which is surprisingly true for many aspects of American culture; the denim has been so ingrained that it reflects us.

People, according to silly things such as laws and societal expectations, generally wear shirts every day, and as such tend to like when interesting, unfamiliar types of them are introduced to their worldview. After the fact, however, upon learning that the shiny foreign thing is more shiny and more foreign than was anticipated, there is an interesting phenomenon of people disregarding where they came from in the first place. Sometime last year, a trend came out within which women would wear a dress and with it a long, matching piece of fabric in front of their neck with the tails of it hanging behind their back, and calling it a ‘Scandinavian scarf’ rather than its actual name— a dupatta. Similarly, shirts with desi-style embroidery became rebranded as ‘Ibiza tops’.



You may have noticed, as I did, that neither Spain nor Scandinavia are anywhere near India, and, as I did, become very confused about what the correlation between these places could possibly be, and how it could be so strong as to have had such a catastrophic mix-up. It is a very interesting phenomenon of cultural theft, stealing the soul because the body is not accessible. This is a fascinating twine of orientalism and neocolonialism, though I do not like the tapestry it is used to weave. When one’s culture spends centuries sustaining itself upon the backs of others, it must feel very odd to have the scaffolding suddenly removed. However, then came the discovery that if not gold or spices, culture itself can be manufactured, processed, and shipped back to the home country for sale by wealthy merchants who grow wealthier for it. The process has been dissolved, socialized, so that it need not even require a joint-stock company of a handful of dozens of men, but the average citizen, enriching themselves with another’s resources. But then, within it all, I believe something almost Freudian occurs with it, some deep shame that they were unable to create such beauty them-selves despite the inherent superiority that they pride themselves on, that the need comes to hack off its roots to plant it in their own gardens, brushing aside the wilted leaves to more easily display the flowers. Thus, the dupattas must be Scandinavian, and the embroidery must be Spanish, lest the worldview collapse. Of course, this treatment has not been limited to Indian garments. Perhaps not currently, but no less then two months back, taking a step and a half into any Zara would lead to immediate auditory hallucinations of a guzheng string being plucked or a gong being struck.



Zara's "Satin Effect Mini Dress With Slit" featuring a Mandarin Collar

Stealing the soul because the body is not accessible.

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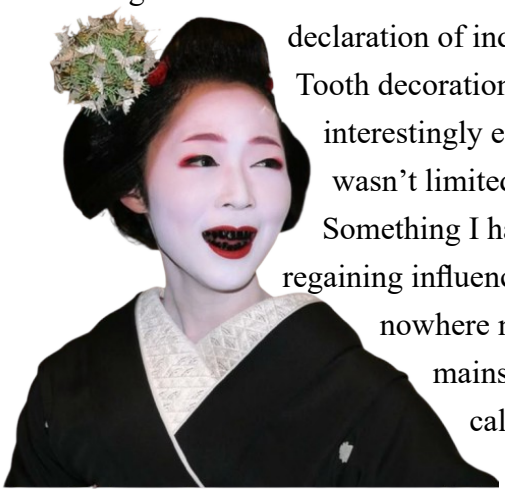
Standing too long beneath those harsh fluorescent lights may actually sear the image of a mandarin collar into your minds. As a Mandarin learner (hello, Mrs. Li!) I appreciate Chinese culture and even enjoy seeing it become more mainstream, but the knowledge that not a single Chinese person is profiting off of this blatant theft— renaming frog buttons to fireman clasps, for instance— rubs me the wrong way. If you're going to wear clothing from another region's culture, then

Recently, I have seen a rise in popularity of tooth accessories and gems. Some don't know that these have a name outside of the more literal descriptors: grillz (yes, spelled that way). Taking a large step away from the modern condition, these have been around for thousands of years, from Egyptians with glittering gems and Mayans jade, embedded into the teeth as permanent accessories. Speaking in the context of America, however, they originated among African immigrants and African Americans as cheap, glittering ways to fill in cavities and eventually became their own fashion statement. Erykah Badu is known for having an extensive collection of grillz matching every occasion, each set more stunning than the last. It is truly so beautifully startling when someone opens their mouth to reveal shimmering treasures that it becomes on its own a declaration of individuality.



Tooth decoration, interestingly enough, wasn't limited to the West. Something I have also seen regaining influence, though nowhere near as mainstream, is called ohaguro— the ancient Japanese practice of blackening one's teeth with dye as a symbol of adulthood and maturity while simultaneously preventing tooth decay. It is, predictably, popular among alternative people, famously having the objective of challenging the norms.



Upon seeing it, momentarily, one feels shock and even horror, until it slowly fades into realization and finally fascination. The total aesthetic subversion of both grillz and ohaguro compliment each other so completely that it feels as though two distinct groups of peoples spoke to one another to intentionally coordinate.

Hair is by far not the most important thing a person may have, but if you don't mind my getting personal, it is certainly the first thing I notice. The very beginning of a person, the millions of strands delineating a start-point, draws at least my own eyes first, and since I do not presume myself to be anything but one out of billions, I must assume that to be true for some percentage of the world. Thus, it is only logical that hairstyles may draw the same level of interest. One of my favored ones— though I'll admit I may be biased, for reasons you can surely tell by glancing at me through the corner of your eye— is braids, of all sorts and assortments. The intricacy of forming our natural sun-shields into something to be beholden reminds me that one of the first manmade products is woven fabric. As much fondness as I hold for them, however, I am not afraid to say that not all types of braids are meant to be shared among every person.

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Do not pretend to misunderstand me— you have all seen your favorite idol smile into a camera with an off putting set of cornrows, and if you have not, you know someone who has. Even making the— frankly, dumb— decision of disregarding the hundreds of years of history these types of braids have among African and Black communities, taking the style for a spin with the wrong hair type will only result in patchy hair loss. Denialists of basic facts will attribute styles like these to the Norse Vikings, bizarrely. Norse braids are beautifully intricate in their own way, but the styles have little similarities other than the fact that they are art shaped from hair. Both have become very mainstream, but they certainly are not interchangeable.On a more positive note, there has been an uptick in creative styles in the last few years. Personally, the artist Doechii is one of my favorite current influences in this sphere— many of her looks cannot be described as anything other than haute couture, and I am excited to see what her and her contemporaries will do next.

Every type of clothing, no matter who wears it, was sewn from fabric of some sort. I find the idea that all of us are connected by something as simple and yet as complex as woven thread to be somewhat poetic. If it's not too much to ask, I'd like you to someday look down at your body and wonder to yourself what point of the globe it came from, whether it be Scottish plaid or Persian paisley. The greatest part of having such rich, flowing access to anything is knowing the marrow it came from.

"Borrowed Words"

Appropriation, however, transcends fashion—perhaps most famously through the widespread use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). AAVE developed within Black communities across the United States, and was largely shaped by a long history of racial oppression, segregation, and economic inequality. For many Black Americans, including those from low-income and working-class families, language became an important way to build community, express identity, and forge a sense of belonging. Expressions such as "no cap," "finna," "period," and "it's giving" have traveled far beyond Black communities where these phrases were originally developed and popularized. AAVE is not simply a collection of slang words, but a legitimate variety of English, with its own grammatical, phonological, and syntactic features. The controversy arises when these features are displaced from their cultural roots, especially when the same linguistic features have been historically stigmatized when spoken by Black people. The irony is that the same dialogue that is dismissed as improper or unintelligent in one mouth can become fashionable or humorous in another.

-Riya Bangalore

What Does It Mean to Be Passionate?

By Krysten McMurray

What does it mean to be passionate? LARPer. In other words, a fake. I'd like to preface this by saying that all of you reading this, and even more so those who aren't, are all LARPers. Apparently, from the ripe age of 10 to the old age of 18, we have to find a single thing that we are passionate about. In other words, something where you wake up at 4 A.M., set all your responsibilities aside, and do whatever it is you're passionate about.

Colleges love passions. What are you passionate about? Sleeping? Maybe. Eating? Perhaps. It's now maintaining a 4.0. Ask me 10 years ago, and I would've said science, math, and biology. I sound like a LARPer now. To be boiled down to whether or not I'm faking being intellectual or being curious is not on me, but on you. Ever since the great awakening of "OMG college!", people have been so invested in their lives, hobbies, and passions. Your life is composed of so many elements: your friends, your parents, your grades, things that have happened, that are then summed into an Excel spreadsheet and given to an Ivy League to evaluate if you're good enough. This is where the LARPing begins.

When you look at society in the grand scheme of things, specifically houses, fashion tastes, and even hobbies, we begin to see the rising homogeneity. Sure, there's beauty in monotony, but this type of humdrum is inexorable, which makes it endlessly fearsome. The spread of social media has not only made all of us birdbrained, but it has also gnawed at our individuality, turning us into the same tabi-wearing, matcha addicted people.



This is also where the pressure of perfectionism stems from. It bleeds into our day-to-day lives, nitpicking on the clothes we wear, pictures we take, and clubs we join. Seriously, though, it's turning into a problem. When I step outside, I'm blinded by the 17 trillion different acne studio tees, and everyone with bedazzled faces trying to be "whimsy". You are not cool. You are just part of the other 100,000 people participating in the same trend that will disappear in less than a year. Of course, I'm a victim of this too, so don't come berating me in the hallways because I'm wearing my trendy Isabel Marant wedge sneakers.



This, however, isn't just a silly little rant from a silly little girl in silly little BASIS Scottsdale. This could easily mean an absence of innovation in the upcoming years. Our future could quite literally resemble a particularly terrible rerun of the past: uninspiring technology, increasingly inconvenient problems, and no one imaginative enough to craft a solution. To put it briefly, a failure to innovate would not only preserve the status quo but also let the rest of the world catch fire.

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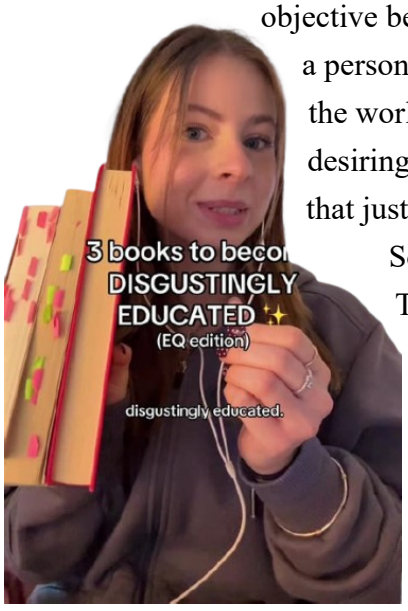
And then, of course, there are college applications, where this uniformity becomes stronger. Apparently, to matriculate into a respectable university, one must not only be a person, but one with a meticulously curated personality. Every club becomes a "passion," every hobby a "lifelong commitment," and every mildly interesting Tuesday afternoon a "transformative experience." People begin joining clubs not because they are particularly invested, but instead they are invested in how the cause will look when an admissions officer opens their application. It is a rather peculiar phenomenon: we are told to be individuals, yet we are all learning the same steps. We matriculate into high school as children with a thousand different interests, and emerge as remarkably similar candidates, each with a nonprofit, a leadership position, and a conveniently inspirational yet heartbreaking story about overcoming adversity. I swear, I'm not claiming everyone is faking it, but I am suggesting that the pressure to appear passionate can make genuine curiosity feel almost embarrassing. Thus, when the objective becomes appearing like a person who would change the world, rather than actually desiring to change it, well, that just seems pitiful.



So, LARPer, scroll on TikTok and find a couple of new quotes to make you seem ' disgustingly educated'. Or you know, pick up a book.

— *From A to Gen Z* —

LARPer: The term began as a descriptor for someone who participates in live-action role-playing (LARP). It has evolved into a playful shorthand for anyone who is a "poser." They feign knowledge in an area they are inexperienced in.

Tabis: Tabis are traditional Japanese footwear with a characteristic split between the big toe and the other toes. Tabis are now associated with trendy, avant-garde fashion, and have, fittingly, split the fashion community.

Whimsy: A quality of being playful, fanciful, or imaginative, or being governed by impulsivity rather than practicality. Whimsy has become a full-blown lifestyle. It describes everything from clothes to furniture to food—the deliberate rejection of seriousness in favor of the odd, charming, and unexpected joys of everyday life.

The Day the Mountains Fell

By Tyler Lin

Wednesday, August 26 – A section of roughly 0.2 square kilometers in area collapses approximately 1.2 kilometers vertically down Mount Langtang Lirung, in Nepal. A catastrophic debris flood follows. The avalanche carries enough power to register as an earthquake of roughly magnitude 5 or above. The debris travels nearly 100 km, devastating populated areas downstream along the Lende Khola and Trishuli Khola rivers.

The resulting surge enters the river systems and raises the water levels downstream, reportedly by as much as 9 meters in less than an hour.
The initial flood gathers a wall of mud traveling at 150 km/h.
E ntire sections of roads, houses, farms, and settlements are wiped away in the blink of an eye, including a major highway connecting Nepal and China.

Ninety-five lives are lost. Around 200 people are severely injured. Hundreds are missing.

Thursday, August 27 – Bridges, roads, and entire villages are overwhelmed as under the mud, ice, and water continue to destroy what remains. Infrastructure that once supported thousands of lives sinks beneath the newly altered riverbed. Rasuwa, Nuwakot, and Dhading are officially considered disaster crisis zones. Countries including India, China, South Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh offer support. Nepal initially declines, announcing that it will conduct the first search-and-rescue operations independently. Another 294 lives are lost. 500 more are injured. Nearly 1,000 people are missing.

Friday, August 28 – Search-and-rescue efforts continue, including intense relief operations expanding across northern Nepal. Army helicopters and emergency personnel airlift as many people as they can.

Authorities issue further warnings after debris blocks sections of the rivers upstream, threatening additional catastrophic outbursts. Rescue operations are slowed. Vital roads and pathways remain damaged, making search and rescue operations increasingly dangerous.

Another 80 lives are lost. More than 1,100 are injured. More than 1,300 people are still missing.

Saturday, August 29 through Sunday, August 30 – The Nepalese government mobilizes an enormous number of rescue personnel. More than 20,000 personnel are on site, and more than 9,400 people are rescued. Neighboring countries, like China, send in thousands of rescue personnel to assist

The United Nations estimates that the disaster produces approximately 2.3 million tons of debris and rubble.

Another 319 lives are lost, bringing the total to 788 in the span of just five days. Thousands more are injured, missing, or displaced from their families.



Balendra Shah
Current Prime Minister of Nepal

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Tuesday, September 1 – The death toll officially passes 1,000. It is not stopping. On the brighter side, more than 1,100 people have been rescued.

Roads in the most heavily impacted regions are being repaired, while countries such as India and China continue to provide aid. Temporary bridges are built and specialized rescue equipment and underground imaging technologies are brought to the scene.

Sunday, September 6 – Sources claim that the death toll has climbed to a devastating 1,369 people, with tens of thousands still missing or injured.

Despite the fact that the initial flood has passed, flooding and accumulated debris continue to make surrounding areas extremely dangerous. Search-and-rescue operations continue. Estimates put the number of people trapped underground and awaiting rescue at more than 500.

Present – The disaster has now been officially declared the deadliest natural disaster to hit Nepal since the earthquakes in 2015, which killed approximately 9,000 people and triggered more than 20,000 landslides across 14 districts.

However, even now, people continue to die from the aftermath and resulting complications of the flash floods. Power outages and a lack of housing for survivors remain serious problems. Families have been separated, and children—many of them orphaned—have been displaced farther and farther from their homes that now lie beneath hundreds of meters of debris from what was once the world's proudest standing mountain range.

What started as a humanitarian crisis has now developed into a political crisis for the Nepalese



government as well. The public has begun questioning the government's response: Why weren't local communities warned earlier? Why wasn't foreign aid accepted sooner? Why the unidentified bodies buried rather than preserved? Why did the tunnel rescue operations take so long? Questions like these, from the enraged, disheartened, and mourning public have fueled backlash against Nepalese prime minister Balendra Shah, who framed the disaster as a severe consequence of global climate change. And even if this appears to be an attempt to dodge accountability, he couldn't be closer to the truth.

In recent years, climate change has emerged as an even greater global threat, an undeniable consequence of collective human actions, or perhaps, more accurately, our failure to act. Even before the floods and unstable mountainsides were observed, rising temperatures and the overall decline in the health of the Himalayas had become prominent concerns. As the situation progressed, unchecked, thousands of innocent families were forced to pay the price of our collective ignorance.

How much longer must we blind ourselves before we are forced awake by the screams of our children? Or, even worse, what if they cannot scream at all? What will we do then when we can no longer breathe without filling our lungs with dirt, grime, and blood?

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What is happening in Nepal is only one example of the consequences of our actions, and of the warning we continue to ignore. France experienced its hottest summer on record this year, with temperatures reaching around 75 degrees Fahrenheit, far exceeding its historical records. Canada experienced an exceptionally severe wildfire season, losing 3 million hectares of land to wildfires by early August. Sea levels are rising, oceans are warming, and glaciers are melting. However, climate change is not simply acting as the root cause of individual disasters, it is shifting the baseline conditions under which they occur. A heat wave can become hotter, a drought can become more severe, and dry vegetation can become more flammable. The floodwaters may recede, the roads may be rebuilt, and the houses may be restored but the scars left behind—and the thousands of homes now standing empty and desolate—will remain.

In recent years, more and more animals we once grew up with have become endangered, with some expected to face extinction within the next decade. The emperor penguin. The Antarctic fur seal. The hooded seal. The bearded seal. The harp seal. The desert rain frog. The Bornean elephant. Polar bears, sea turtles, coral reefs, you name it. Because if you don't, the generations that come after you might not be able to.



We are witnessing history, and not in a good way. If current trends continue, your children, your children's children, and all the generations that follow will only ever know of the life we see today in picture books and documentaries. Documentaries of the times when we were blinded by money, oil, guns, and pelts—when we lived in the moment and failed to consider the future. How many forests must fall, how many species must disappear, and how many warnings must go unanswered before we understand that there is no replacement for a living planet?

At the end of the day, perhaps the greatest tragedy of climate change is not that we are destroying our home, but that we have convinced ourselves we can live without it.

facts at a glance

Facts at a Glance

- **794** people have died
- **< 2,500** people remain unaccounted for as of 8/31
- **8:37 a.m**. local time, the earth started shaking along the Nepal-China border, north of Kathmandu.
- The shaking equivalent to a magnitude **5.2** earthquakwas caused by an exceptionally powerful glacier collapse and debris flow,
- The section of the glacier that fell was approximately **2,000** feet wide

The Ultimate Fall Flavor Guide

By Lina Scarpino

We're about to tran-sition from sum-mer to fall, which means that autumn flavors are popping up everywhere. I don't know about you, but I've been searching everywhere for simple and cozy autumn recipes. After exploring many recipes, I've composed a lineup of the best ones I could find. So, without further ado, here are some of my favorite easy and cozy recipes that are certain to put you in a festive spirit.

We're kicking things off with a fall favorite: pumpkin brownies. These desserts are perfect for parties, post-school snacking, or handing out to your friends during lunch. They're easy to make and are perfectly fudgy, with a pumpkin cheesecake layer that makes them especially fitting for the season. This recipe uses boxed brownie mix to simplify the instructions, but feel free to use homemade batter!

Ingredients:

- ☐ 1 box of brownie mix
- ☐ 1 cup semi sweet chocolate chips
- ☐ 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- ☐ 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- ☐ 1 egg, room temperature
- ☐ 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- ☐ 2/3 cup pumpkin purée (canned pumpkin, not pumpkin pie filling)
- ☐ 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to the indicated temperature on the boxed brownie mix.

2. Lightly spray a 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper, and set aside.



3. Prepare the brownie mix as directed, using the ingredients indicated on the box. Stir in the chocolate chips and set aside.

4. Using a stand mixer or hand-held electric mixer, beat the cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add in the sugar and beat until combined. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract until smooth. Add the pumpkin and pumpkin pie spice, and mix until smooth and combined.

5. Spread half of the brownie batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top with a spatula.

6. Spoon the cheesecake filling over the top of the brownie batter and carefully spread into a thin layer with an offset spatula.

7. Scoop the remaining brownie batter over the top and drag the tip of a knife through the batter and cheesecake to create a swirl pattern.

8. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs.

9. Let the brownies cool completely in the pan. Pull the brownies out and cut into squares.

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 25

Next in the lineup are snickerdoodles, a classic and super easy cinnamon cookie that feels like a warm autumn afternoon. They only need a few ingredients, and their cinnamon-sugar coating gives them a sweet, slightly spicy flavor that makes them perfect for fall. The combination of a soft, chewy center and crispy outside makes snickerdoodles especially comforting, and they're simple enough to make without spending hours in the kitchen. Here's a recipe that makes about 26 soft and tasty cookies.

Ingredients:

Dough:

- ☐ 3 cups (375g) all-purpose flour (spooned & leveled)
- ☐ 2 teaspoons cream of tartar*
- ☐ 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ☐ 1 and 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ☐ 1 cup (16 tbsp) butter, room temperature
- ☐ 1 and 1/3 cup (267g) granulated sugar
- ☐ 1 large egg + 1 large egg yolk, at room temperature
- ☐ 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Cinnamon-Sugar Coating:

- ☐ 1/3 cup (70g) granulated sugar
- ☐ 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

2.Whisk the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt together in a medium bowl.

3. In a large bowl, beat the butter and granulated sugar together on high speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes.



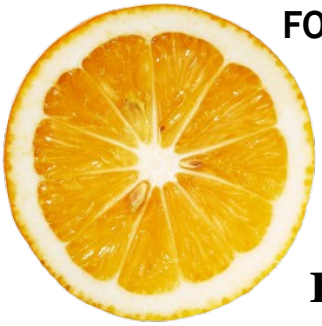
4. Add the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla extract. Beat on medium-high speed until combined. With the mixer running on low speed, slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients in three different parts.

5. Make the coating: Combine the granulated sugar and cinnamon together in a small bowl.

6. Roll the cookie dough into balls, about 1.5 tablespoons (35g) of cookie dough each. I recommend using a cookie scoop. Roll the dough balls in the cinnamon-sugar topping. Arrange each dough ball 3 inches apart on the baking sheets and sprinkle extra cinnamon-sugar on top.

7. Bake the cookies for 10 minutes. The cookies will be very puffy and soft. When they are still very warm, lightly press down on them with the back of a spoon or fork to help flatten them out. Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 10 minutes, and then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.

Whether you're baking for an event, sharing with friends, or looking for a cozy treat, there's something here for everyone. So grab your favorite fall ingredients and get baking—autumn only happens once a year!



FOOD

Lemonade: Summer's Most Refreshing Beverage

By Shrey Jagjivan

Fall might be around the corner, but the summer sun is still frying us the moment we step outside. We get parched, and sometimes all we need is a refreshing drink to beat the heat. I've been feeling the summer fever myself, and have been looking for the perfect drink to help to cool off. I think I might have found it: lemonade.

Lemonade is one of the best drinks to enjoy on a hot summer day, and it comes in various flavors. Berry lovers can add strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, or even a combination of all three to create a refreshing berry blast. Of course, making lemonade isn't as simple as it seems. Getting the perfect balance of water, sugar, and lemon juice can be difficult. That's why I'm hooking everyone up with a guide to making delicious strawberry lemonade. So, don't throw out those extra lemons yet!

Ingredients:

- ½ pound fresh strawberries, stems removed
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 4 ½ - 5 cups water, divided
- 1 ½ cups fresh squeezed lemon juice

Instructions:

1. Use a blender or food processor to puree the strawberries. If desired, strain them through a fine mesh sieve to remove seeds.

2. In a small saucepan over medium heat, stir together sugar and 2 cups of water.

3. Bring the mixture to a boil and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and allow the strawberry puree to cool to room temperature.

4. Strain the lemon juice through a fine-mesh sieve into a 2-quart pitcher. Add simple syrup and the pureed strawberries, then stir to combine. Refrigerate until cold.

5. When ready to serve, add 2 ½ cups of cold water and stir. Taste, and add more water if it's too sweet.

6. Serve over ice and enjoy!

And if berries aren't your thing, that's totally fine! I love drinking some basic, old-fashioned lemonade once in a while. You know what they say: "Nothing can beat the original." So, once again, I'll be hooking up my fellow classic lemonade lovers with a guide to creating the perfect lemonade to beat the heat. You can adjust the recipe however you like to your preferred levels of sweetness or tartness.

Ingredients:

- 1 ¾ cups white sugar
- 1 cup water
- 9 medium lemons, or more as needed
- 7 cups ice-cold water

Ice, as needed

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 27

Instructions

1. Combine sugar and 1 cup water in a small saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil and stir to dissolve the sugar. Set aside to cool.

2. While the mixture cools, roll lemons around on your counter to soften. Cut in half crosswise, and squeeze out 1 ½ cups of fresh juice. Add pulp to the juice, but be careful to discard any seeds.

3. Pour 7 cups of ice-cold water into a pitcher. Stir in the lemon juice and pulp, add simple syrup to taste.

4. Serve over ice and enjoy!

Whether you prefer a sweet, strawberry lemonade or a tart, classic drink, there's no wrong way to enjoy lemonade. With just a few simple ingredients, you can make a cold glass of lemonade

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GAMES

September Sudoku

Source: Sodoku.com

6			1					2
8		1		9				5
	7	5		8	4	1		6
4	3			2		5	6	1
5	1	8	7			4		9
	9	6	4	1		3		
		3		7				
	6			3	1		5	
7		2	5	4		6	1	3

EL WORDO

By Lina Scarpino

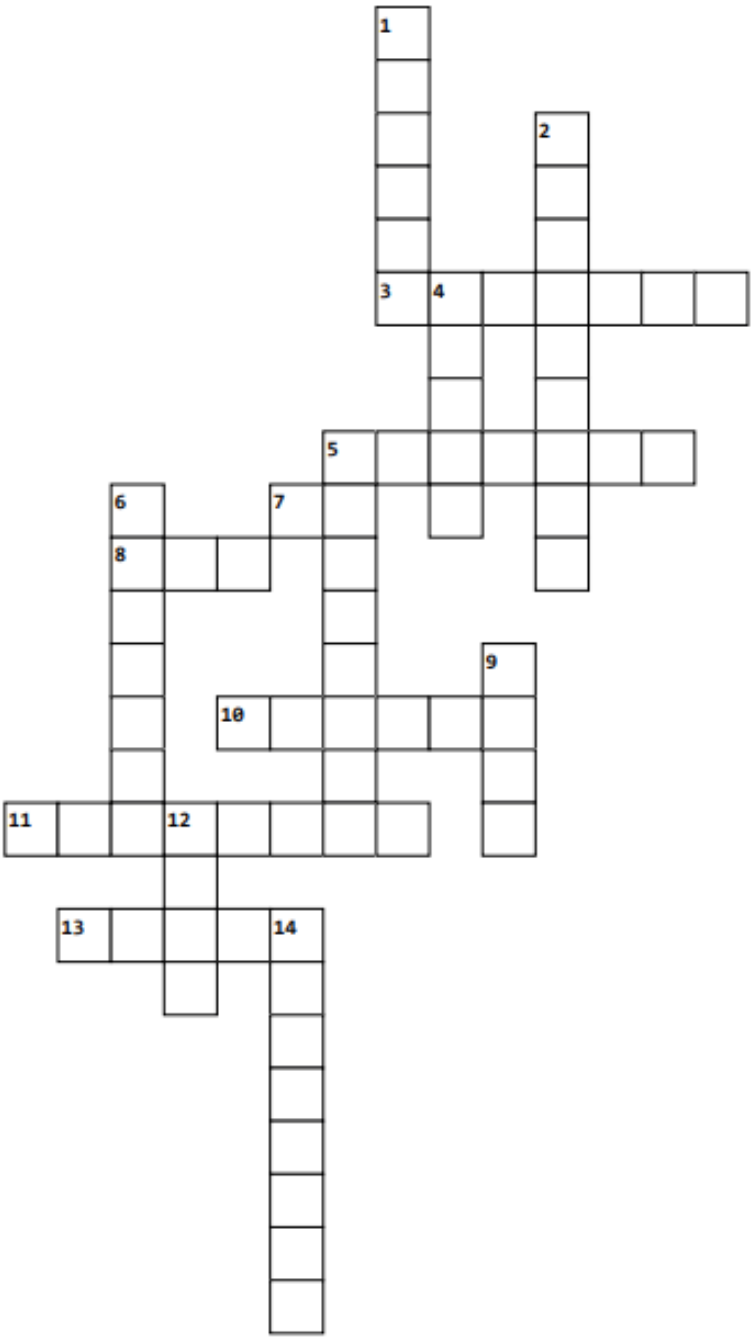


** = correct letter, correct position (green)*
! = correct letter, wrong position (yellow)

ANSWER: ACORN

Teacher Crossword

By Priya Curley



Across clues

1. 5th grade music teacher who also works with Musical Theatre Club

2. Trained in stage sword-fighting

3. The creator of Ninjaman and his foes

4. Teaches 8th grade math and 6th grade English

5. Constantly talks about how he is in love with Putin

6. Math teacher for 8th, 9th, and 10th grade

7. Blasts music before school

Down

1. Math teacher who is native french speaker

2. Physics teacher for 7th and 8th grade

3. Says "Godzilla" instead of "Bless you"

4. Spanish teacher for 8th and 9th grade

5. History teacher who constatntly drinks diet soda

6. Has a fishy classrooom

7. Art teacher who now has a doctorate degree

8. Substitute teacher who is always wearing designer clothes

Answers on the next page!

source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 30

Across answers

1. Burritt
2. Weise
3. Waaler
4. Arora
5. Klugman
6. Suin
7. Covalciuc

Down Answers

1. Martin
2. Monstrom
3. de Blas
4. Bejarano
5. Eavenson
6. Navarro
7. Grau
8. Lau

What To Watch: September 2026

By Aarpitaa Ajith

September is starting strong with so many new movies and shows in many different genres. They have you covered from romance to horror. Which one are you looking forward to watching?

Coming to Theatres

SEPT. 18 — *Resident Evil*

The iconic survival-horror franchise returns to the big screen with a new adaptation of the video-game universe. Will the horrors be ones he can face without breaking himself?

SEPT. 18 — *The Weight*

Prisoners in the 1930s are forced to transport gold through the dangerous Oregon wilderness.
How long can they go until the fear of being caught consumes them?

SEPT. 25 — *Heart of the Beast*

An ex-Special Forces soldier and his retired combat dog fight to survive after becoming stranded in the Alaskan wilderness. How long can they continue this harsh journey without basic necessities?

SEPT. 25 — *Primetime*

A crime drama inspired by the rise of predator-catching television, starring Robert Pattinson.
Will the show get out of hand and if it does will he be able to control it?

Streaming Movies

SEPT. 18 — *Best of the Best*

Two childhood best friends enter the competitive world of UCLA's Bollywood-fusion dance team.

SEPT. 23 — *The Love Hypothesis*

A Ph.D. student enters a fake relationship with an unusual match, an intimidating professor.

SEPT. 25 — *Unabomber*

A biographical drama that explores the early life of Ted Kaczynski.

New & Returning Shows

SEPT. 17 — *Monster: The Lizzie Borden Story*

Part of Netflix's Monster anthology, leading to new discoveries in the infamous Lizzie Borden case and the murders that shocked America in 1892.

SEPT. 23 — *Brothers*

Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson play heightened versions of themselves in a new comedy series.

SEPT. 24 — *A Different World*

A new generation of students navigating college life at Hillman.

Writer of the Month



DANA NAM

For the past year, Dana has been the backbone of the Gazette, consistently delivering her trademark movie reviews and comics. She's the ultimate double whammy: a talented writer and artist with unrivaled productivity. With her sarcasm, creativity, and reliability, she has become an essential part of the Gazette family, and she is indisputably worthy of this accolade.

Q: If you could change anything about the English language, what would you change? (i.e. spelling of a specific word, grammar, or pronunciation)
A: Nothing. To everyone who thinks English is hard, all I have to say is that you have a SKILL ISSUE LOLOLOLOL.

Q: If you were a flavor, what flavor would you be?
A:Wild n' Reckless Sherbet from Baskin-Robbins.

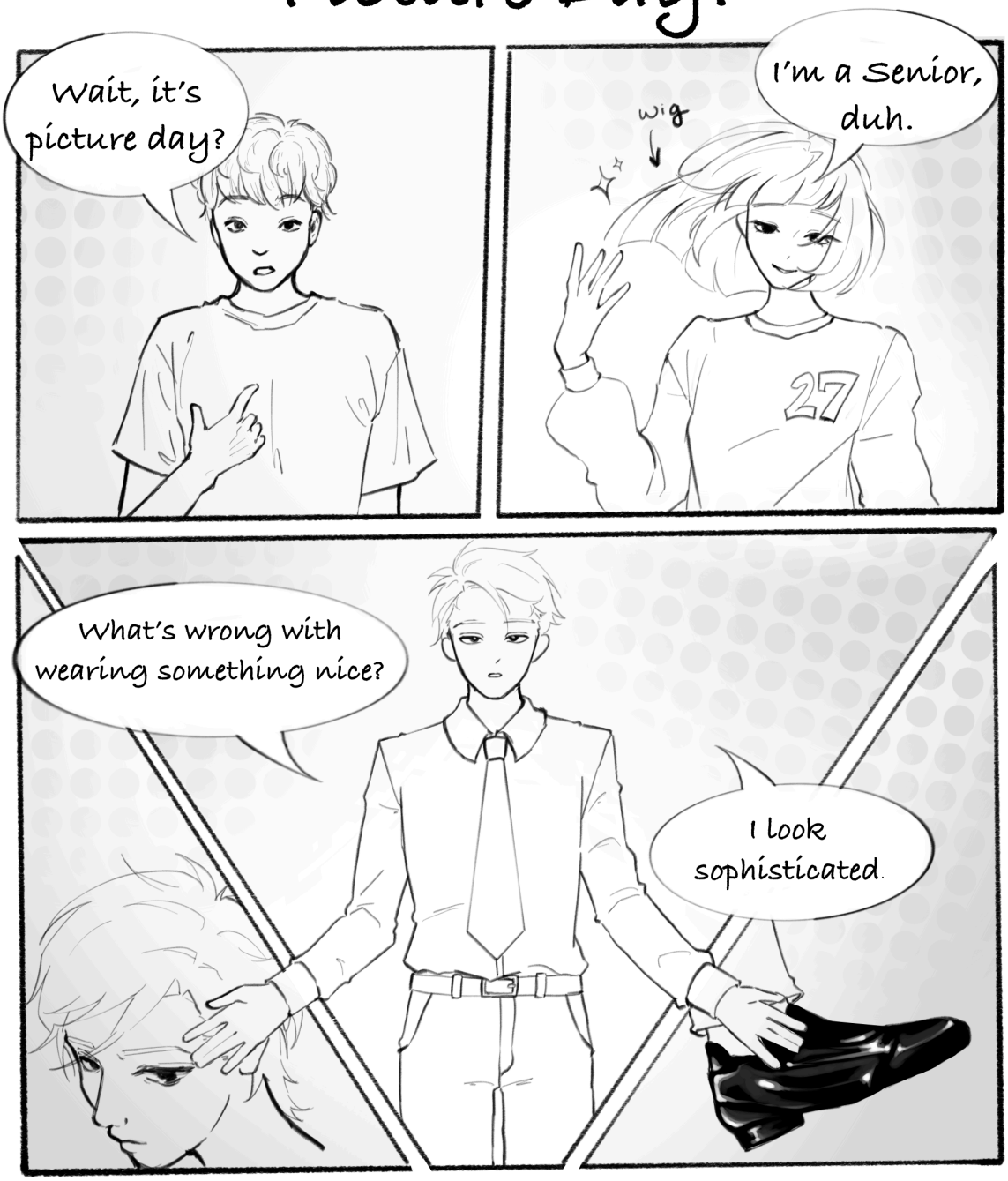
Q: Which three teachers would you choose to have on your team in a zombie apocalypse, and why?
A: Mr Carey: for moral support
Dr. Remus: intimidation
Mr. Waaler: for more moral support (cuz you can never have too much moral support in an Zombie apocalypse)

Q: What is your greatest regret? If given the opportunity, would you undo it?
A: I regret not exploring a more artistic career earlier. So ya, I definitely would undo that.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?
A: Hail Denmark.

source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

What are you wearing on Picture Day?



By Grace Zeng

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PAge 27-28: Bon Appetit

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