

BASIS SCOTTSDALE GAZETTE

Psyched for Psychology

By: Riya Bangalore

Most students walk into AP Psychology expecting monotonous lectures on the anatomy of neurons or dense chapters on the trivial types of intelligence. What they don't expect is Dr. Remus – a teacher who transforms abstract psychological concepts into living, breathing stories that follow you long after the exam. These aren't just entertaining digressions; they're real-world connections. To Dr. Remus, psychology isn't something that only happens in research labs – it's everywhere. And somehow, through her anecdotes, the ephemeral life cycle of a vocab word is transformed into an indelible memory. I recently sat down with Dr. Remus to talk about her teaching philosophy, and ironically, the psychology behind it.



Dr. Remus: Stories connect us. The stories I tell bring life to the vocab, because the vocab can be rather boring and monotonous, but then you have a story. This morning, when I put up the picture of the rose, I was actually thinking of just smelling a flower and where I was the last time I smelled flowers and what I was thinking and for a moment, I was brought back to that place. So in a way, the stories, I don't know, allow people to think, how does this apply to me? And then we know that the self-reference effect, if you can relate something to yourself, then you can recall it better. Because if you can build a bridge to information you already have in your mind, then it's easier to connect it.

SAVE THE DATE

Winter Formal: 12/13

Winter Break: 12/22-1/2

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And I'm trying to be real with people, and sometimes I'll give a trigger warning, because some things are not fun to talk about. Sometimes, I get emotional because I've said stuff and cried before, but I think it's just like showing people I'm human because these are things that you're gonna cry about. Grief, I don't know how much grief is in the course right now, but grief used to be in the course more, and so I had to talk about death and that would be very traumatizing. So when I'm talking about, "I cried in front of people," it's discussions about grief. But I don't think it's a huge part of the course anymore. They removed some things. They removed the love part, they removed morality, actually.

Riya: Which part of the course were you the most upset about losing?

Dr. Remus: I don't know, I kind of like the love stuff. Actually, Maslow's hierarchy. Okay. So Maslow's hierarchy, I don't know if you've ever heard of this, but it's the idea that there's a pyramid – a hierarchy of needs. I still believe in this. But basically, it's that humans all have needs. And you have to fulfill the needs at the bottom of the pyramid before you can succeed at feeling like love and belongingness. For example, you have to feel safe. Physiological needs, you need food, you need water. And then you have to feel safe. And safe doesn't just mean no one's going to harm you.



Source: Education Library

Do you feel safe in your house? Do you feel safe financially? Do you know where your next meal is coming from? And so we can't learn, in a classroom, if we don't have our safety and our psychological needs met first. And this is the whole idea of like, you can't build self-esteem, you can't build love and belongingness if you don't cover the bottom of the pyramid first. So kids that are going hungry, well, they are certainly not going to succeed in school and build self-esteem and confidence because they don't know where they're next meal is coming from. Or if they don't have a safe place to sleep at night. Or if they're not getting sleep. But I really believe in that. And so I'm kind of upset that this was removed. And I don't know exactly why it was removed. There were rumors that Maslow stole this and it wasn't his own work. I don't know if that's true, so don't quote me on that.

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It was better that we didn't have to learn 65 plus psychologists, though. But it's still really important to know a bunch of the key experiments. So, I still feel like sometimes I have to put the experiments back in because there's still work you have to talk about. And if you only talk about the vocab and don't talk about the experiment, you won't get the full effect. Kind of with the stories. I like to give the students something tangible. And the great thing about psych is there are tangible things. We are connected through stories and we see each other as human through our stories. And our shared virtues and beliefs and values.

Riya: What drew you to teaching AP psychology?

Dr. Remus: So, the funny thing is I used to have a bias, I didn't like psychology because psychology didn't explain anything. And I was really against it. I did take psych in high school. I was a high school senior. And I took that class, and I never took another psych class. But the thing about AP Psych, this whole unit of cognition it makes sense, and it changes our behavior. Cognition is all about how we think and how we process and how the brain takes all the sensory information. So even though I'm not really into psychology, if you actually look at the syllabus for our AP class, I did take cognitive neuroscience, a couple classes, at the grad level. My dissertation is in neurochemistry and behavior. So I've covered Unit 1, Unit 2, and development. So, three units of our psych curriculum were in my thesis.

I think how I came to want to teach psych was I was teaching chemistry at BASIS Peoria, and I taught there for eight years before I came here. And another chemistry teacher of mine, Mrs. Dooley, she came in and they let her teach psychology. And I saw what the curriculum was. And I thought, wait a minute, this is not what I thought psychology was. And it seemed to be getting more scientific and data-driven. And I feel like I have the background for that because I've written papers and I've had to summarize articles and present articles. So I had a lot of training that's really relevant to this, and I saw another teacher doing this, and I'm like, why don't I do this? And then it happened to be very fortuitous that at the same time that they were opening up the BASIS preschool, and my daughter was of age to enter the preschool, she was like, done with Montessori. There was an opening here for a chemistry position, but it wasn't a full time chemistry position, but at the time, there was a dean teaching psychology. And I just happened to say, what about psychology? And they said, "oh, we have that, we can make that work." And so I just came over here. So I guess I learned about the curriculum because my friend was teaching it. I tried to teach it, I think, a time or two before she was teaching it just because I was like, why don't I try this? This is fun.

Thank you, Dr. Remus. Your class is invaluable to everyone who takes it.

Penny No More

By: Aydin Daniel

A death has occurred. On November 12, the penny's minting ceased. No more pennies will be added to circulation because it costs too much to make a penny. It costs 4 cents to make each one, meaning that with each penny minted, 3 cents are lost, which adds up when so many are minted.

This doesn't mean the end of the penny, however. The government will still mint them on a small scale for collectors and historical purposes, and it will still accept pennies as legal tender.

This does have some economic ramifications. For one, it will become difficult to give change. While some states will round, others require exact change, meaning pennies will remain necessary. One commercial result of this will be the phasing out of prices ending in 99, like \$14.99. Thankfully, now consumers won't be tricked into thinking prices are lower when just looking at the first two digits, meaning people will be more conscious shoppers. On the other hand, one problem that does arise from this is sales tax. Often, sales tax results in pennies being required when paying, especially since sales taxes aren't usually whole numbers. Take Arizona, for example, which has a sales tax of 5.6%. As a result, many will switch to credit cards to make payments easier. Essentially, halting penny production will accelerate the transition to a digital currency system.

This also affects collectors. Will the penny become valuable? No. There are 300 billion of them in circulation. The penny is unlikely ever to become rare. However, pennies minted in 2025 will be highly sought after for being the last year's issue. The last five minted pennies, marked with an omega symbol (Ω), are predicted to have a huge value between two and five million dollars per penny. Nevertheless, the soul of the penny lives on.



Source: Stacksbowers.com

SNAP Snatched

By: Nora Dalal

During the grim early hours of November 1, the USDA announced that it would not issue November SNAP payments, with 40% of those recipients being children, totaling nearly 20 million children who receive benefits in a typical month. Two-thirds of all SNAP benefits are allocated to families with children, with younger children accounting for a significant portion of recipients. To those who are unaware, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), according to Britannica, provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income persons to help them maintain adequate nutrition and health.

These benefits were taken away due to the combination of many elements, such as the government shutdown and judicial compulsion. First, the government shutdown occurred due to the failure of Congress to pass a funding bill by the September 30, 2025, deadline, which left USDA without its standard congressional appropriation to fund SNAP for November for millions of Americans. Second, federal courts, such as the District Court of Rhode Island, intervened and ordered the USDA to use its emergency contingency funds left to pay recipients. However, because these emergency funds were insufficient to cover the whole country, the USDA was legally forced to issue partial payments of roughly 65%.



Source: Patch

The restoration of SNAP benefits was triggered by the end of the federal government shutdown on November 12, 2025, which finally authorized the USDA to release full funding. Following a November 13 directive, state agencies immediately began issuing supplemental "make-whole" payments to bridge the financial gap for millions of households that had received only partial allotments (roughly 65%) earlier in the month. These secondary deposits were processed primarily between November 14 and November 20, ensuring that recipients received the remaining 35% of their monthly entitlement and confirming that the program would return to its standard, single-payment schedule in December.

This two-week crisis was a powerful warning of how quickly services supporting nearly 20 million children can be threatened by government failure.

Making Christmas Bright

By: Aditi Dillibabu

There is something surprisingly simple about the way light affects people. You switch on a warm lamp or walk past a street lined with yellow bulbs and you actually feel different, a fuzzy warmth in you. Studies show that balanced or bright light can bring change to brain chemistry, increasing serotonin and improving mood. Just being around soft, glowing lights can calm stress and encourage feelings of comfort. It is one of the reasons people hang string lights in their rooms or decorate their homes with warm colors. Light makes us feel safe and secure.

Once December arrives, that feeling becomes even stronger. Neighborhoods begin to glow throughout the night. Stores fill their windows with decorations. People drive through streets just to look at lights because it gives them this simple sense of happiness that feels almost innocent and pure. Christmas has always carried that effect for many. The season feels softer when you are surrounded by brightness. Even when life is stressful, the holidays make people pause and breathe for a second. It becomes a time when many families gather and enjoy food and warmth and small traditions that mark the end of the year.



Source: King of Christmas

But not everyone gets to experience that kind of holiday. The same streets that look cheerful to some can feel distant and unreachable to others. Food insecurity is a serious issue in Arizona. According to St Mary's Food Bank, more than one million people in Arizona face hunger each year, and this includes many children and seniors. Families struggle with rising grocery costs and some are not sure how they will prepare meals during the holidays at all. St Mary's works every day to support them. They have been serving the community since 1967 and they distribute millions of pounds of food to people who need help. Every dollar donated can turn into multiple meals through their programs and partnerships. Their work is steady and constant because the need continues to grow.

Another organization that carries a huge responsibility is Desert Mission Food Bank, which is connected to HonorHealth. They provide free food to anyone who needs it and they also run programs that support families long term. The food bank is located at the John C Lincoln Medical Center and it has become a lifeline for many people. In the past year they served more than one hundred thousand individuals and the demand rose even higher during the holiday months. Volunteers from HonorHealth show up constantly to help organize shelves, carry boxes, and serve clients at the front door. They often see families coming in who never expected to need assistance but suddenly can't afford groceries. The food bank gives them some stability and a reason to feel hopeful again.

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These organizations remind us that Christmas is not always an easy season for everyone. Some children are hoping for even one present. Some parents are hoping to put dinner on the table. This is why community support matters. People can choose to help in ways that lift others during a time that can be very difficult.

Simple projects make a difference, too. Angel Tree programs allow people to choose a tag with a child's wish and fulfill it. The Be an Elf program helps answer letters to Santa from kids who are going through tough circumstances. Many local stores, libraries, and community centers set up their own giving trees or donation boxes so families in need can receive gift cards or basic necessities.

The holidays feel brighter when people choose to support each other. Light may change our mood on a scientific level, but human kindness changes our experience on a deeper one. When we understand that many families are carrying stress that becomes heavier during December, we can respond with compassion.

When you donate even a small amount or volunteer or participate in a local drive, you help another family feel the comfort that many people associate with the season. You help create the kind of Christmas that everyone deserves. If you are able, stop by a local food drive or pick up an Angel Tree tag this season. Even small acts from those who have a little extra can bring real comfort to families who need it most.

Links:

<https://www.desertmission.com/donate/>
<https://www.salvationarmyphoenix.org/christmas-angel>
<https://beanelf.org/give/>

OPINIONS

Christmas and Hanukkah

By: Poorvi Kushwaha

Fortunately for all of us, winter break is not that far, and I can imagine people must be very excited for Christmas and/or Hanukkah and the extra two weeks of break we get with it.

To me, Christmas is a very wholesome holiday since it's mainly celebrated with family and friends and all of our close ones gathered around a tree, opening gifts and singing songs in our pajamas. It's like the closing of the door to last year and the opening of a new door which doesn't reveal what will be on the other side.

Christmas is really connected to New Year's because they are so close to each other. But I think they're complete opposites. I feel like Christmas is the "unofficial" end of the year because of how it's celebrated with the people closest to us, and that seems like a nice way to close off the year. Then it's not that far till New Year's, where we get to officially reflect on the year and promise to do better the next year.

Hanukkah also seems like a holiday with similar intentions, in terms of how we want to end the year. For those who don't know, Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday known as Judaism's Festival of Lights and it commemorates the recovery of Jerusalem. It is celebrated for eight days because of the small amount of oil that was burned to light the menorah, the candle with eight branches, one lit every night. Hanukkah is celebrated based on the dates of the Jewish calendar, since it's a lunar holiday and the dates for this year are December 14th to December 22nd.

To me, Hanukkah seems like a holiday that is similar to Christmas in the sense that it is a holiday that can signify the unofficial ending of the year. It's a way for people to celebrate the end of a certain year and to reflect on it while starting the beginning of a new year. For this year, though, people thought there were going to be 2 Hanukkahs because the last one (the one in 2024) ended in January of 2025. This is because it started in late December 2024.

Christmas and Hanukkah are holidays are special and signify the end of the year, so we should take this time to be grateful, be with our families, and hope or pray for a better year.



Source: Honest Reporting

What Your Favorite Holiday Movie Says About You

By: Claire Hong

It's that time of year where we all stare out into the desert landscape wishing we lived somewhere with snow but instead we're stuck with Santa hats on cacti. But that doesn't mean we can't enjoy this holiday season so turn the AC low, cuddle up in a blanket, and pour some hot chocolate (with marshmallows even if they don't add any flavor) because there's no better way to hate Arizona more than to watch Christmas movies. Since there are so many holiday movies out there and your movie of choice can say a lot about you, let's go through some Christmas classics and see what your favorite holiday movie tells us.

Elf

Admittedly, this is a good movie and I respect you for this choice. This is Will Ferrell at his peak, and I will forever love the talking narwhal. However if *Elf* is your favorite holiday movie, you probably think you're the class clown but everyone else just thinks you're annoying. You think people are laughing with you – but no, they're laughing at you. You will fall over giggling over your own joke and won't even notice as people side eye you. I would admire you for not caring what others think, but it's more likely that you're just oblivious.



Source: Rotten Tomatoes

Home Alone

You probably tried to recreate this movie as a kid and then got yelled at for breaking your mom's vase. You feel overlooked by your family like Kevin but secretly wished that your parents would forget you at home during vacation. You have probably tried either parkour or some niche skateboard trick you saw on youtube only to have ended up in the emergency room and in a cast which you thought made you look really cool. When you inevitably end up doing something reckless and possibly life-threatening again, you claim that you're just reclaiming your "inner child," but let's be honest, you just never grew up.

The Nightmare Before Christmas

This is not only your favorite Holiday movie, but just your favorite movie period. During October, you'll argue that it's actually a Halloween movie but then in December you'll claim that it's a Christmas movie just so you have an excuse to watch it again. And when your friend asks you why you're watching it in March, you'll say that it is a cultural masterpiece that should be appreciated all year long. You draw fanart of being married to Jack Skellington and say that it's completely normal because he was technically a human before.

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Source: Future of the Force

Die Hard

Genuine question. Are you okay? You can argue all you want that this is a Christmas movie but you know it's not. You either hate Christmas or have never seen a Christmas movie. Your family probably didn't get into the holiday spirit too much so you never really understood the big deal around the holidays so when someone asks you what your favorite holiday movie is, you just shrug and say *Die Hard* because it's the closest thing you've seen. This or you're Jake Peralta. (Some of you won't understand that reference and I feel bad for you. You're missing out.)

The Grinch

If you like the Animation one, you've probably never seen the live action version and might have nightmares if you do. If you like the live action one, you are correct. It's the better version. No one can beat Jim Carrey in a big green fursuit making facial expressions that you didn't know were possible for a human to do. You probably scare small children for fun and then laugh like a Disney villain when you watch them run and scream. You play questionable pranks on people, then say they're being over dramatic when they get mad. You barely flinch when a human dies in a movie but will cry for days when an animal does.

Any Netflix original christmas romance movie/*Love Actually*/*The Holiday* etc.

You are as bad as the Hallmark movie lovers. You romanticize toxic tropes and red flags look like hearts to you. You say that you're just a hopeless romantic when people say that you're unrealistic. You were definitely a Disney princess kid growing up and probably dressed as one for Halloween multiple times. You dream about meeting the love of your life in a book store but you're too afraid to even talk to the cashier.

It's A Wonderful Life

You're an old soul and your best friends are your grandparents. You wished you lived in mid-1900s America (without the war, racism, sexism, and homophobia of course). You have a big family that all get together around the holidays and you guys have traditions that date back 2 centuries. You love all things vintage and you're likely to be found in your local antique shop most weekends.

The Polar Express

This is worse than *Die Hard* and the Hallmark movies combined. You are a little cuckoo if this is your favorite holiday movie. You love horror movies and not for the plot, but for the jumpscares or you just love Tom Hanks a little too much. I wish you no harm but I hope we never meet. This movie should not exist.

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Honorable mentions: *Klaus* (art kid who likes niche movies), *The Muppets Christmas Carol* (You have a really good kermit impression), *Batman Returns* (you spend too much time online arguing why Batman is better than Superman), *Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer* (you relate to Rudolph and have a dozen stuff animals on your bed), *While You Were Sleeping* (a personal favorite).

Remember this is all fun and games, so don't get offended if your movie choice reflects badly on you. The more offended you are, the more likely my description was right and I prove my right to judge you based on your movie taste. But no matter what holiday movie you choose, I hope you have a very holly jolly Christmas or whatever holiday you choose to celebrate (unless you chose *The Polar Express*). See you next year!



Source: IMDb

Christmas Traditions

By: Sesha Kuttalingam

To get in the Christmas spirit, I asked people for their holiday traditions. If you want to get in a festive mood, here's a list of activities you can try!

1. Watch the original Grinch on Christmas Eve
2. Add a new ornament to the tree each year
3. Christmas at the Princess (smores)
4. Go to church (and bring guests over)
5. Full/matching Christmas PJs on both Christmas Eve and Christmas
6. Secret Santa
7. Make Christmas gifts over summer break
8. Bake a different holiday treat every day (or week) until Christmas
9. Get a tree from a Christmas Tree Farm
10. Decorate a gingerbread house (competition)
11. Drive up to Flagstaff (the Polar Express and Snowbowl Skiing)
12. Elf on the Shelf
13. Open stockings on Christmas Eve
14. Cook lemon pancakes for breakfast
15. Christmas movie marathon
16. Advent Calendar (24 days until Christmas, a story and gift each day)
17. Listen to Christmas music/Christmas karaoke
18. Go light seeing (drive around decorated neighborhoods)

Hallmark, Lose the Plot

Let me guess the plot of your favorite Hallmark Christmas movie. It starts off with a woman working at some fancy corporate office, sipping her 3 espresso shot caramel macchiato, disgusted by some Christmas tree in the office. A coworker comes up to her, asks what she's doing for Christmas. She says she doesn't like Christmas. The next day she gets a call from her mom who she hasn't seen in 20 years. The main character finds out her mom's sick and only has a couple months left to live. Now on she goes back to her small town of Nowhere, Arkansas. Her mom berates her for not coming, she says she's busy being a CEO/corporate mogul. Out of nowhere, on a random run to the grocery store, she sees her ex-boyfriend from when she was in high school who seems to be the exact opposite of her: a cheerful, Christmas-loving, small-town guy. You learn that the main character hated this small town, while her boyfriend wanted to stay. As the movie goes on, the woman falls in love with the town again and she and her boyfriend get married and live happily ever after.

If it's not this plot, then substitute the woman for a poor girl who met a prince and just have the same storyline, but with the prince not wanting to become a king, but does anyway because the poor girl becomes his queen.

Hallmark Christmas movies seem to have no originality. They tell the same stories over and over again, with a little variety and new names for characters. Yet, people still gobble it up when those movies come out. Why is it? It could be for the vibes, or it could be the fact that Hallmark doesn't have a movie about anything else, so people are forced to go through 2 hours of torture. These plots get boring and repetitive. If we wanted something boring and repetitive we'd be working at some mega corporation entering individual data points in an Excel sheet.

By: Akansha Gupta

Dear Hallmark, these are some original plots for you:

1. A christmas heist:

A group of thieves try to steal the most expensive christmas tree in the world that is displayed somewhere in Europe. However, one of them feels guilty for stealing something so expensive, he/she goes into a crisis where he/she tries to figure out why they stole something that brings so much joy into the lives of people.

2. Two zookeepers tracking down a reindeer that escaped:

A reindeer escapes a zoo randomly 3 days before Christmas. Two zookeepers go into the woods to find the reindeer, only to discover he's Blitzen, one of the reindeer that helps pull Santa's sleigh. The two zookeepers then go on a quest to help Blitzen get back to the North Pole in time for christmas

3. A christmas murder:

An elf goes rogue and kills a human on the naughty list. The elf police department of the North Pole goes down to a city to track down the rogue elf and put him to justice, while reminding him of the true spirit of Christmas.

4. Someone who likes christmas too much

How about we go the complete opposite. Let's have a person who loves Christmas way too much, and needs to learn that Christmas may not be the holiday for everyone.

The Hallmark formula once worked, but after fifty years, they will need something new to keep the holiday spirit alive. Do us all a favor, Hallmark, and lose the plot.

HUMOR

A BASIS Student's Totally Normal Weekend

By: Tyler Lin

We BASIS students like to enjoy our holidays and spend our free time taking care of ourselves and our mental health. To us, academics mean nothing, and we will always prioritize our mental health and sleep schedule before what letter grade we receive on our grade report.

We hold no regard for what college we end up going to and will never put our extracurriculars before our friends and family. We genuinely love our community and only volunteer for the love of the game, never for the hours we get signed off on an hour sheet.

We believe all colleges are equal and will never create our own hierarchy of colleges we believe inferior or “better” than another. No matter what college we get into, we will be happy with ourselves and all the obstacles we overcame along the way.

After all, we are a big, loving family, and over the weekends, we make sure to enjoy our time together, and cherish the moments we have away from academic stress and Bell Work Quizzes. We sleep until the clock strikes twelve, and noon arrives, and we'll sleep as late as our hearts desire.

Schedules mean nothing to us, but if you insist, here's a Totally-Normal-Day-In-The-Life-Of-A-Totally-Average-BASIS-Student.

12:00 PM – I wake up with a healthy 14 hours of sleep coursing through my veins, peace and love resonating within my body. The sun is shining, the birds are singing, and the sunflowers are sunflower-ing. I left stress and anxiety behind me the moment I embraced the BASIS lifestyle. After all, the BASIS lifestyle is all about embracing your inner peace and finding your Zen, and whoever tells you academics matter, they're lying. Don't fall for the Desert Mountain High School propaganda. We all know how those kids turned out...

1:00 PM – I sit down with my family, and we enjoy our lunch, dining out at Blackrock, enjoying the peace and tranquility the totally niche and unknown restaurant brings us. I converse peacefully with my family and friends, after all, BASIS IS TOTALLY NOT ALL ABOUT ACADEMICS. We never argue during meals, and we make sure to cherish our time as a family. To us, there is no number of distant-Harvard cousins that we could be compared to that could make us feel bad about how far we've come.

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3:00 PM – I get home with the soft drink my parents let me buy before we left, and the extra portion of Saffron Rice Pudding my parents let me take home. I sit down, fine dining in my bedroom, my parents downstairs co-existing peacefully, not an argument in sight. I open up the CJ I definitely use daily and realize I HAVE NO HOMEWORK. I then look forward to the upcoming week and see that I have no tests or quizzes whatsoever, after all, BASIS IS NOT AN ACADEMICALLY COMPETITIVE SCHOOL AND WE ALL HAVE BREATHING TIME IN BETWEEN OUR DAILY LIVES AND OUR SCHOOL LIVES.

4:00 PM – I hit the gym. Maintaining good physical health is necessary for success in life. Without hitting the gym, my life is incomplete. I hit the bench for 670 kilograms, for a quick warm up, because I don't know what a pound is. I then jump on the treadmill, for a quick 2 full marathons. Today I didn't do so well—it took me 18 minutes instead of the normal 15 it takes on a good day.

6:00 PM – I drive myself home from the gym, because I already have my driver's license. How dare you even think I procrastinate getting my license. As a BASIS student, procrastinating is unacceptable. I always obey deadlines. What is late work? Never heard of it.

7:00 PM – I meditate. I find my Zen and become one with the clouds. The earthly troubles of school and relationships never meant a thing to me. I realize how much time I've wasted on worrying about small quizzes that might mean almost nothing to me in the far future, and I understand how one homework grade won't decide whether or not I get into college, get a good job, or find a loving partner.

8:00 PM – I shower and brush my teeth and get ready for bed. I make sure my room is spotless and I finish all my homework. Just kidding, I go to BASIS, I don't have homework. Who do you think I am? Some academically motivated freak-show? Could never be me.

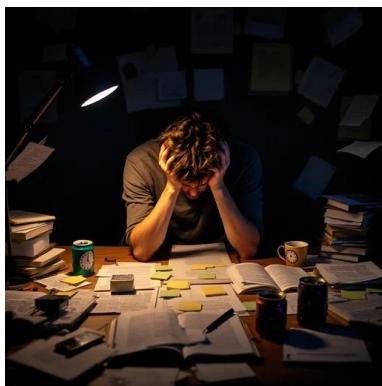
9:00 PM – Just before I go to sleep, I look out the window. It's raining and the stars are shining. This weather just makes me want to stay at home, curled up with a good book. And so that's exactly what I do. I never stay up late studying, I never miss sleep because of school, I'm never too stressed out because of school to the point I'm forced to inject two gallons of melatonin into my blood to make me fall asleep. I open up my favorite book, *Ugly Love*, a Colleen Hoover classic. I take my time reading, as I never succumb to the pressure of how my peers may be doing, and how I might be falling behind, and I never think of anything as a race, and I recite my beliefs that the true takeaway in life is the friends we made along the way.

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10:00 PM – I go to sleep on the dot. I am never tempted to scroll on my phone for hours on end before bed. After all, I’m a BASIS student, self-control is all I know, and “Discipline” is my middle name.

3:00 AM – I wake up sweating and in tears.

I had a nightmare. I dreamed about how somewhere in this world there are young children, teenagers, and adolescents who believe their entire worth as a person is based solely on the grades they get and what college they get into. I dreamed about how there were people who went to a depressing, gloomy, building made of sharp edges and right angles and steel and concrete almost every day for all of their childhood, forced to base their entire personality on the basis of how much better or worse they were than their cellmates. I dreamed of how normal and socially acceptable it was to spend more time with your homework and schoolwork than your family, and how exchanging the words “I love you” with your parents felt like a luxury.



Source: Dreamstime.com

I dreamed of how kids couldn’t look their parents in the eyes after getting a B on a quiz, and how parents would shame their children for the way they dressed, how much food they ate, and who they loved. I dreamed of how kids were forced to eat their lunches behind the doors of bathroom stalls that wouldn’t lock properly, and how they feared to eat their packed lunches because of the smell, and how it was more common to shame someone for where they came from than to admire and appreciate the cultures around them. I dreamed of how children, who didn’t yet understand how emotions worked, would lock themselves in their bedrooms or hide in their closets, crying their eyes out because it was safer for them to wipe their tears with the back of their hands than talk to their parents, because they didn’t know if they would get beat or lectured on how not to be a “failure”.

I dreamed of dystopia, a world no child should be forced to live in, and a world no child should be left behind in.

But I’m a BASIS student, controlling my emotions is all I know, and “Disappointment” is my middle name.

REVIEWS

Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier

It was my mother who recommended this book to me and compelled me to find it in Barnes and Noble and read it. At the time, I was bombarded with school work, so I left it in my backpack in case I did find time to read it in class or during lunch. Eventually though, I ended up leaving it on the shelf for two months.

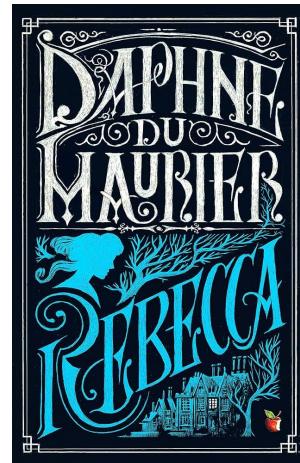
That was—until fall break came. My family and I were going to Mexico, and what better time to read something than on a flight? I was so desperate to read this book that the moment we found our gate, I snatched it from my own bag and opened the first page.

“Last night I dreamed I went to Manderly again.”

Those were the first words that greeted me on the page. The first words that spun questions in my head such as, “What is Manderly?” and “Who is this protagonist?”

As I continued reading I would come to find out that Manderly was the setting, a mansion on the Cornish coast of England, and this protagonist is a woman whose name is not revealed, but she is mainly known as Mrs. DeWinter.

By: Poorvi Kushwaha



Source: Bookshelf Discovery

Our unnamed protagonist is a companion of the snobbish woman, Mrs. Van Hopper, vacationing in Monte Carlo. During this visit in Monte Carlo, the unnamed heroine meets the rich and charismatic Maxim DeWinter, who is recently widowed. As they meet and talk for just a day in Monte Carlo, Maxim decides to propose to her, and our heroine can hardly believe her good luck. It is only once that they go to Manderly, Maxim's home, that she realizes that his late wife, Rebecca, is a shadow that is cast over their marriage and what it seems like—cast over their whole lives, threatening to destroy them from beyond the grave. This book has also been made into two films, one released in 1940 and directed by Alfred Hitchcock, and the other released in 2020 starring Lily Allen and Armie Hammer.

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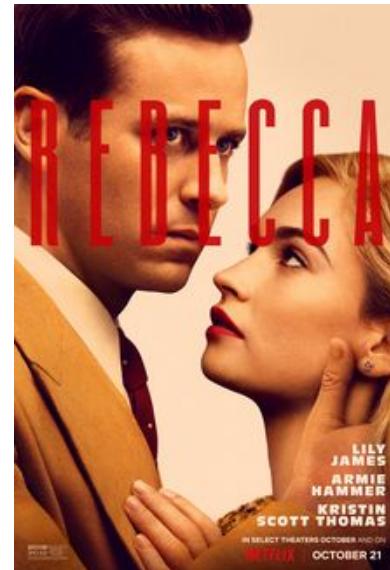
If there is one thing that this book does not have—it's disappointment.

The characters in this book are Mrs. DeWinter (the unnamed protagonist), Maxim DeWinter, Mrs. Danvers, Beatrice Lacy, Jack Favell, Frank Crawley and many more. These characters are very complex and each have distinctive personalities between them that makes them essential to the story. There are people in this story like Mrs. Danvers and Jack Favell who believe that Rebecca is someone irreplaceable and that the new Mrs. DeWinter, the unnamed protagonist, is a threat that is trying to take over Rebecca's true spot. In general though, this book explores themes of identity and jealousy and power over someone.

It is a comparison between two women who represent two opposing personalities in a patriarchal society that they live in. Mrs. DeWinter is often seen as someone who wants to try to live up to a traditional sense of a woman and a wife because she tries to change herself to become more like Rebecca who, according to other people, was seen as a perfect wife and an angel to everyone. However, as more is revealed about Rebecca, it can be seen that her "perfections" that people knew her for and that Mrs. DeWinter is obsessed with—might have hidden her true self.

This book has a very suspenseful, oppressive mood, as Mrs. DeWinter feels pressured to change herself to be as perfect as Rebecca. The suspense mainly comes from the progression of finding out who Rebecca truly was beyond the perfections she showed to society. Towards the end of the book, it is just plot twist after plot twist and it is just the most exciting, shocking, jaw-dropping, mesmerizing novel I have laid eyes upon in a while.

I would definitely recommend this book for everyone to read because it's not that difficult to read and it is very exciting and will sweep you off your feet. This book definitely deserves 5 stars for its suspense and will definitely bring your jaw to floor at the end.



Source: Wikipedia

Stranger Things: The Final Journey

Four entire seasons of a multi-year series has led up to this point: the final season of *Stranger Things*. Thousands of people across the globe have gathered to witness the final episodes released in November, where the cliff hanger left at season 4 is resumed. We have all wondered over the past two years—what happened to Vecna? Where will Eleven go? Is Dr. Brenner finally dead? Finally those questions have been answered—only to lead to more cliffhangers.

What's so great about the series, anyways? What made millions of people across the globe sit down and watch this seemingly guessable series? It's been obvious that the quality of film has gone down this century. Movies like *Anora* and *Conclave* simply lack the magical quality that is so famous in *The Godfather* or *Casablanca*. However, *Stranger Things* completely breaks this pattern with its plot twists, character depth, and hilarious dialogue. It's no wonder that the series has attracted viewers of wildly distinct age gaps.

The trait that makes this series so unique is that it takes place in the eighties. The entire series is a theory of government-authorized human experiments to battle the communists in the Cold War. Characters like Yuri and Enzo add a hilarious Russian flair that is portrayed so differently from other movies, possessing character developments and jokes that are unrivaled. Season 3 adds more foundation to the entire eighties theme, taking place 90% of the time in a mall. All the perms, commies, and mall fights contribute to the remarkable aura of *Stranger Things*.

By: Mishal Rizwan

Of course, *Stranger Things* would not be *Stranger Things* without the character development and relationships. The very beginning of the series takes place with Will, Mike, Dustin, and Luke playing Dungeons and Dragons, a friend group that is repeatedly tested and victorious in every season. Recruits such as Max, Robin, and Murray all join the heroes over the seasons, providing additional support to the small yet mighty group battling interdimensional beings, corrupt government officials, and slightly psychotic scientists. However, the unmatched champion of character arc is Steve 'The Hair' Harrington. This classic character evolves from being the jerk boyfriend to a critical and heroic character, a change that should inspire all of us to be better people. No matter the amount of demogorgons, moves to California, or love triangles (cough cough Will), the friendships in *Stranger Things* are undeniably unmatched.



Source: Deadline

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

While all these points are valid and highly crucial to the success of *Stranger Things*, it's the actual plot that draws its staggering numbers. Every season in the series houses individual stories that merge into the final fight, showing the complex storytelling of the Duffer Brothers, the geniuses behind such a revolutionary TV show. But the main attraction that makes the audience willingly wait for years is the absolutely unexpected plot twists. No one expected the Henry, Holly, or Will reveals, no matter what some may brag. While *The Sixth Sense* does dominate in this sense, *Stranger Things* makes a pretty good fight for top plot twists.

The unbreakable friendships, plot twists, and classic setting all make *Stranger Things* the unique and classic show that it is. That is what truly great writing and film has the ability to do—keep an audience for nine whole years. Admit it—it was all worth it to see The Hair on the screen again.



Source: Netflix



Source: Vulture

Gazette Members: Christmas Wishlist

With the upcoming Secret Santa gift parties and singing of Christmas Carols, we are reminded of the jolly season surrounding us. As I was caught off guard by the freezing air when walking into the school building, I was thinking of a couple of things I would want this festive season, but also what other people wanted this year. To figure out what the BASIS Gazette members desire during the Christmas season, I gathered their top gift requests, gift rejects, and favorite role models.

Q: If you could only get one gift that you have to have, what is it?

Starting with actual gifts, Aditi and Krysten explained their top choices of a weighted blanket and Uggs respectively, both being valid picks. I added the idea of having a weighted blanket to my list, as well, as I enjoy rotting on my couch watching trash Hallmark movies. From the veteran editors, Mintra and Aarush themselves, all they want for Christmas is to get accepted to their dream college. Boring. But all jokes aside, I'm sure the Christmas season will give them a bit of helpful luck.



Source: Etsy

By: Ethan Kim

Q: What is the worst gift to give or get?

As I asked my fellow members what gifts are officially out of season for them, most had a similar consensus: impersonal and low-effort gifts need to go out of season. As the wise words of fellow writers from Grace and Akansha, they would jump away from any gift cards. I agree them because gift cards are just money in a more inconvenient form. Continuing with the theme of bad gifts, some other writers like Nora and Aydin hate clearly re-gifted and impersonal gifts. Nothing says being jolly like regifting your 5-year-old Ugly Christmas sweater with the tag on that your aunt gave you. If we ever see any of those gifts, we hope you take refunds.

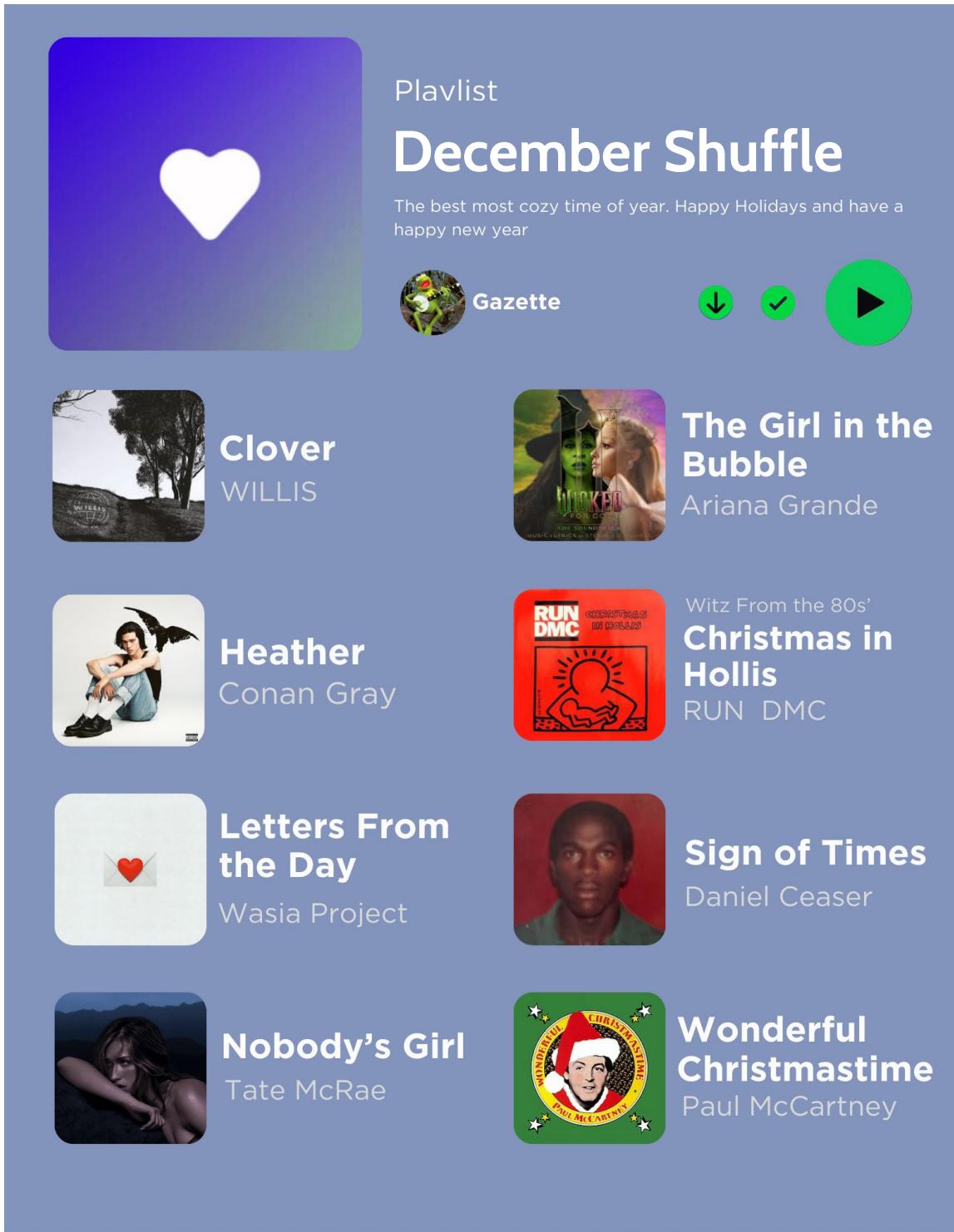
Q: If you could pick one person, dead or alive, as a personal mentor, who would it be?

Picking a personal advisor for your life is a difficult decision with no doubt. Yet, the BASIS Gazette writers never fail to impress you with their personal picks. Being a new addition to BASIS Gazette, Aditi's personal choice of the Pillsbury Doughboy was a pleasant surprise. Who wouldn't want a big, squishy friend that you can always talk with and bake with? As a shout-out to one of our own teachers, Claire picked Mrs. Lau as her personal mentor, one of the chilliest teachers that we have.

Even though reminding ourselves of all the gifts we want for Christmas feels exciting for once, the best part of the upcoming holiday is taking a break from our time-consuming classes. Who needs a clingy partner when you have a school that takes up all your time on the weekends, too? But still, I'm sure most of us are excited for the winter season to rest, recharge, and relax.

December Music Shuffle

By: Claire Hong



Playlist
December Shuffle
The best most cozy time of year. Happy Holidays and have a happy new year

Gazette    

 Clover WILLIS	 The Girl in the Bubble Ariana Grande
 Heather Conan Gray	 Witz From the 80s' Christmas in Hollis RUN DMC
 Letters From the Day Wasia Project	 Sign of Times Daniel Ceaser
 Nobody's Girl Tate McRae	 Wonderful Christmastime Paul McCartney

GAMES

By: Nora Dalal

R	A	I	S	E!
C	O	U!	N	T*
B	L	I	N	D!
G	U*	A	R	D!
M	O	V*	E*	D!
T!	U*	L	I	P

* = correct letter, correct position (green)

! = correct letter, wrong position (yellow)

answer: DUVET

It's Quizmas Season!

Halloween is finally over! So put on some red and green and get your festive groove going. Oh, Thanksgiving you ask? Yeah... we don't do that around here. It's time to slip into some fuzzy socks and ugly sweaters and dream about having real snow because Christmas is here! Everyone knows a BASIS student's favorite activity is to show off how many niche, random facts we know, so let's put that fantastic brain of yours to the test! (another hobby of the average BASIS kid) Holiday edition!

1) How many towns in America are named 'Christmas'?

- a) 5
- b) 1
- c) 2
- d) 37

2) How many reindeer does Santa Claus have?

- a) 10
- b) 9
- c) 37
- d) 10

3) In the 12 days of Christmas, how many French hens does one receive from one's true love?

- a) 12
- b) 3
- c) 6
- d) 24

By: Claire Hong and
Riya Bangalore

4) What does mistletoe mean in German?

- a) A missile coming from a toe
- b) Sacred kiss
- c) Golden fruit
- d) Holy berry

5) Who wrote the classic story 'A Christmas Carol'?

- a) Oscar Wilde
- b) Alan Proust
- c) Charles Dickens
- d) William Thackeray

6) In total, how many gifts were given in the '12 Days of Christmas' song?

- a) 282
- b) 364
- c) 659
- d) 182

7) Under which President did Christmas officially become a national holiday?

- a) Ulysses S. Grant
- b) James Buchanan
- c) Teddy Roosevelt
- d) Martin Van Buren

8) What city was Kevin McAllister's family traveling to for the holidays and the hit movie home alone?

- a) Vienna, Austria
- b) London, England
- c) Rome, Italy
- d) Paris, France

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

9) In the movie Elf what condiment does Buddy put on everything?

- a) powdered sugar
- b) Syrup
- c) Mustard
- d) Strawberry jam

10) Who sang the original *recording* of 'Baby It's Cold Outside'?

- a) Esther Williams and Ricardo Montalban
- b) Frank Loesser and Lynn Garland
- c) Dean Martin and Marilyn Maxwell
- d) Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Jordan

11) Electric Christmas lights were invented by which well-known scientist?

- a) Nikola Tesla
- b) Benjamin Franklin
- c) Thomas Edison
- d) Alexander Graham Bell

12) Which Christmas toy idea was derived from a 1903 famous political caricature?

- a) Jack in the box
- b) Toy trains
- c) Legos
- d) Teddy bear

13) Frosty's nose is made of which accessory?

- a) Button
- b) Coal
- c) Carrot
- d) Vacuum Cleaner

14) What was Scrooge's first name in a Christmas Carol story?

- a) Bartholomew
- b) Ezekiel
- c) Fitzgerald
- d) Ebenezer

15) What year was the Nutcracker premiered in?

- a) 1806
- b) 1706
- c) 1892
- d) 1978

16) What Christmas decoration was originally made from strands of silver?

- a) Ornaments
- b) Tinsel
- c) Christmas wreaths
- d) Stockings

We know Christmas isn't the only holiday around this time of year so in celebration of the wonderful cultures and traditions in the world and in our school, here are a couple questions about holidays you may not know very well.

17) What does the name of the holiday—Hanukkah, traditionally spelled Chanukah—mean?

- a) Togetherness
- b) Grateful
- c) Dedication
- d) Commitment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

18) Which type of shirt is traditionally worn during Kwanzaa Celebration?

- a) Dashiki
- b) Kimono
- c) Guayabera
- d) Kaftans

19) what religion is Bodhi day closely associated with?

- a) Hinduism
- b) Buddhism
- c) Islam
- d) Zoroastrianism

And for those who are still upset we didn't include Thanksgiving...

20) How many turkeys are prepared for Thanksgiving in America each year?

- a) 46 million
- b) 52 million
- c) 38 million
- d) 91 trillion

If you got...

1-5 points: You're a hardcore non-believer in Christmas miracles and Santa. You're the Grinch before his heart grew three sizes. It wouldn't be a stretch to call you a real Scrooge. We recommend embracing your holiday spirit a little more this year. Don't be afraid of Christmas cheer- we guarantee it can't hurt you!

6-10 points: Not bad! You've probably made at least one gingerbread house and attended a Christmas party at some point. You're an avid enjoyer of the holiday season. You're a little rusty on your Christmas trivia, but hopefully you learned a thing or two!

11-15 points: This is about average. You've belted 'All I Want for Christmas is You', just like the rest of us (whether you want to admit it or not). Of course you've seen *Elf*, *Home Alone*, or *The Polar Express* at some point. You know your carols and have a pretty good grasp on your winter holiday knowledge. Either that or you've mastered guessing.

16-20 points: Wow! You *really* know your holiday trivia. You definitely were *not* upset when we skipped over Thanksgiving at the beginning of this article, especially considering your house is already decorated for Christmas. And if you're reading this at home, you're probably sporting an ugly Christmas sweater sipping a healthy serving of hot chocolate (with lots of marshmallows) from a custom made Christmas mug you got last year.



Answers: c b b d c b a d b a c d a d c b c a b a



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