

SPARSH NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2019

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

This year Sparsh has made it its mission to help every Manthanite seek out their inner writer. We may be poets, video game reviewers, politicians beseeching voters or authors of fantastical adventures - in all these instances, as inane or unimportant as they may seem, the words we write break the barriers of age, gender, race, religion, nationality and speak to each other as people, which is why at Sparsh we have worked hard this year to make writing as easy and as accessible as possible for every student. We aim to aid in their quest to find that part of themselves that will transcend the walls around narrow minds and the bridges that our forefathers burned, and be able to connect with people purely and intimately.

In that spirit, this year we have introduced an anonymous section for high school named 'Masked Words,' where we issue simple writing prompts and few other restrictions so that students may be able to freely

express themselves without free of judgement and the freedom to write more or less whatever their heart desires.

Another new section we have introduced is the 'Alumni Reports,' where the students who have bid farewell to Manthan return to Sparsh to share their wisdom or reminisce about their time here or help students understand what college is like or all of the above. The first article in this section is by Marcus Fernandez, currently Engineering student in Australia.

Even with the new additions, we have not forgotten our trade mark sections for narrative writing and poetry writing. As with every edition, the 'Poetic Minds' and 'Young Authors' overflow with works from all grades and are an expert insight into the creative, cacophony that is the mind of a young Manthanite. The 'Speak your Mind' section is dedicated to students with avid interest in world around them, and a penchant to understand its complexities.

With all this and more, we invite you to forget your own problems and barriers and take a deep dive into the wondrous psyche of the Manthan Student.

Enjoy reading!

Chief Editors

Purvi (10A), Shreya (10A) and Mahathi (11A)

FEATURED ARTICLE

12TH GRADE

Marcus Fernandez

Before our 12th grade journey had even begun we had been sufficiently warned of the magnitude of this year. In many ways 12th grade is the epic finale, it's the conclusion of more than a decade at school and needless to expectations are high.

In fact 12th grade is often two journeys. One, get cracking with the syllabus and two, figure out your college. Was it hectic? Sure, but not as insane as many describe. There are horror stories associated with 12th grade life, stories of the immense grind and effort required to merely stay afloat in an incredibly competitive environment. I was afraid school would take a turn and I would be forced into this rigorous, stressful, merciless marathon where I would suffer. Fortunately for me this was not the case.

Don't get me wrong 12th grade was rigorous and you had to be working hard, performing at peak functionality all the time. However, it was far from a miserable experience. So now to break it down, you had two choices in 12th grade. You either take the science group or the economics and business group. I opted for the science group with my eyes set on an engineering degree for college. So that meant, the subjects I had to study were Math, Physics and Chemistry along with English as well as Economics which I did for a year. Doesn't seem like a lot, just three subjects. No big deal. Right?

I'm not going to lie I was more than rattled by the syllabus. In fact after the first few days of 12th grade I was convinced there were only miserable days ahead of me. Math I could handle, even the more difficult concepts I would work out eventually but the sciences loomed over me like a haunting dream. Organic chemistry was still as foreign to me as Greek and some chapters in Physics felt like electroshock therapy. Now this would have been enough to grapple with except I had to simultaneously figure out options for college. At the time it was still a hazy picture, I wasn't locked on to a course, I had a faint idea of what I wanted to do but I had no clue where I would find that fit. There was research to be done and that research had to be squeezed in while I memorised the reactions of Benzene or the Laws of ideal gases or the differentiation of trigonometric expressions. Suddenly just three subjects seemed like a not just a big deal but a huge one.

So how on Earth can I justify my prior statement that 12th grade was not a miserable time? First it was our incredible teachers who really helped us grapple with what seemed impossible at one point. For most of my subjects we raced through the syllabus, often at breakneck pace. We'd finish chapters in Physics in a single day and move on to the next one immediately. In the case of English we were done with our syllabus in 11th grade and 12th grade was purely practice. And that's really the key here, practice. Our efficiency in sprinting through portions allowed us time (precious

time) to practice. Whether it was past papers, revision sheets or weekly tests we were prepared to always be prepared. We sprung of the block hard and fast so we'd have a bit of a breather later on. In other words the 12th grade journey got easier as soon as we'd got our syllabus down. We could revise and practice panic free. It got me more relaxed and gave me an opportunity to really figure out my weaknesses and strengths in all of my subjects and improve constantly.

Secondly, I found the best way to deal with everything was to follow Caesar's advice: "Divide and Conquer". It all became easier once I broke it down into parts. I would deal with a little bit of Math then a bit of Physics then a bit of Chemistry. Once the subjects were divided up into manageable parts it didn't seem so intimidating anymore. It was a similar strategy with working out my college plans. I set aside time weekly to focus on that research and gradually things fell into place nicely. I had a plan forming and as the months went by it became more and more solid. College research actually got quite fun, and as long as you're doing research you can get crazy. I checked out colleges all across the world from Barcelona to Latvia and once you get a list down it's purely a process of elimination. Soon enough I had a tight list of colleges I had narrowed in on some in India and some abroad. I got the opportunity to visit some of the colleges in India (a great experience that immensely helps with the process) and I also attended as many education fairs as humanly possible with the time I had. Not only did that help me gather more information but it also gave me an opportunity to interact with some of the faculty of several foreign universities.

Furthermore, I condensed all my research from fairs, visits and online recon into spreadsheets and docs that helped me organise everything for easy reference. I know that sounds "nerd alert" but it honestly helped. The next step of the process was to actually get things moving, to start applying. About mid year I'd decided to study in Australia and I had a list of about 10 universities I would look at. In my case I sent my applications through an education agent (directly associated with the universities) which allowed me to eliminate a lot of paperwork in the process.

The process itself was easy enough, apart from some basic documents (10th grade scores, 11th grade scores, predicted grades, etc), I submitted the applications and from then on it was a waiting game. Over the course of a month I heard back from the universities and received conditional offers and admission which become confirmed offers once the final 12th grade exam results come out in May.

So that was my 12th grade experience. Intimidating at first but quickly becoming exciting. It's not a cake walk but nobody said it would be, nor is it the torturous grind that many believe 12th grade is. At least not at Manthan. So good luck to anyone heading into the uncharted lands of grade 12, it's not the hurricane so many are lead to believe but it does involve hard work and commitment and at the end of the day I had nothing but a great time.

FEATURED ARTICLE

A MEMORABLE EVENING!

Suhaas Godavarthy 11A

"Today, I walked through those gates the last time as a student" said Valli, a student who was graduating from 12th grade in Manthan. Those words were true for many Manthanites sitting there at the convocation ceremony from Valli's classmates to many 10th graders who were deciding to move on from Manthan.

The school stood majestically against the evening sky and next to it, the beautifully transformed Tamarind Point. Tables and chairs were arranged in front of the brightly lit stage and colorful lights shone on the barks of the surrounding Tamarind trees. Pictures, holding cherished memories, were strung between tree trunks- each a journey down the memory lane. Slowly, the guests started filling in all sodden with mixed feelings.

Some sported dapper suits and blazers while others adorned themselves in dresses or draped themselves in saris for the occasion. Appropriately dressed and eager for the event to start, the invitees took their seats and the convocation ceremony began.



The graduating students and their teachers, wearing quintessential graduating robes, marched to the dais. Each of the leaving 12th graders presented an emotional speech, pouring their thoughts out in the form of sweet memorable recounts and how these moments left a huge impression on them. Many speeches revolved around how Manthan made them as comfortable as possible, in school and in their own skin, from whatever

environment they came from. They spoke about how Manthan was welcoming from the start. About their first day in Manthan and how this day was their last.



The end of the graduation ceremony marked the beginning of the farewell party dedicated to the parting tenth graders. A variety of performances: comic skits, musical performances, dances with fusion, hip-hop, and Bollywood dancing, were put up by grades 9th and 11th. It was a fantastic show with moves and beats that made heads turn in awe.

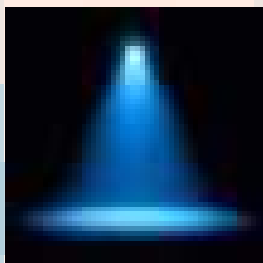
The excitement settled when Ms. Purvi Reddy of 10A and Ms. Saloni of 10B delivered their valedictorian speeches. Soon after this, many loving and caring teachers shared their touching journey with their students. They thanked them for all the lovely teaching and learning experiences and wished them success in their endeavours.

After some final class photos and dancing wildly with friends, everyone headed for the delicacies of the dinner buffet. With bittersweet smiles and heavy yet hopeful hearts, hugs went all around: to the teachers, to the seniors and juniors, and to the friends that are meant to be treasured in all the beautiful moments once had. With tearful smiles, photos were clicked and selfies were taken, but in the end, it was time to bid adieu.

With a heavy heart Manthan bid farewell to its darlings, but its precincts will forever look forward to the visits of its dearies.

Fare thee well!

Afterword: I've watched many of my close friends leave, but everyone will move on at some point. Manthan has let me make so many wonderful moments with friends and I'm thankful to be able to continue here. I also want to thank the 9th and 11th graders for all their hard work and enabling us to part ways on such an outstandingly planned and glorious evening. I can't thank them enough.



SPOTLIGHT

RAMYA MODUKURI College & Career Counsellor

Amaan: Good morning ma'am. Thanks for talking to us.

Ramya ma'am: You know I am always open to talk to you guys.

Amaan: Everyone has dreams about the job or the profession he or she would choose to be in. What was your dream job as a child?

Ramya Ma'am: Humm... During school, I felt strongly about becoming a doctor. Once I joined high school, however, I had a reality check (courtesy of my parents) and realized that the medical field was not really for me.



Suhas: Thank god! Otherwise, we wouldn't have had such lovely person amongst us to guide us at every step. Tell us about your journey to Manthan.

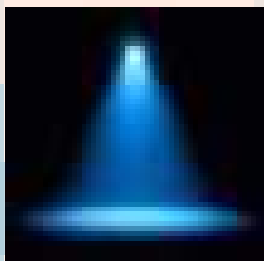
Ramya ma'am: I studied engineering at NIT, following which I worked at Siemens and Morgan Stanley. As I worked in those companies, I became interested in the management and finance, so I decided to apply for an MBA. I got my MBA degree from NYU Stern School of Business and then went on to work for Citigroup.

While I was doing my MBA, I was actively involved in advising and aiding MBA applicants along their application process. It was something I really enjoyed. So when the opportunity presented itself to work at Manthan as a career counselor, I took it up.

Amaan: Counseling students is walking a tightrope. How do you do it with such ease and what plans do you have in terms of career counselling for high school?

Ramya ma'am: Of course, it is not. But all stress vanishes at the sight of hardworking students. Honestly, I made a time-table for the senior grades (9-12) last year but wasn't able to implement it completely. So this year I have decided to adapt to changes in the students' timetable and work it out accordingly. Also, I am looking to bring more universities from the UK, US, and India to the school to give all the students better insight about different colleges.

Suhas: That is really thoughtful of you. What questions should students ask themselves when beginning to think of college or their future professions?



SPOTLIGHT

RAMYA MODUKURI

Ramya ma'am: The main questions would be the following:

What are you interested in?

What are you good at?

With answers to these, you can narrow down the professions available to you.

In the case of colleges, I would say it depends on what the student is looking for.

These are more generalized questions (which would be followed by more specific questions as per the student), but are a good place to start.

Amaan: Great, this will certainly help our readership. Tell us about an incident or experience which has had a profound impact on you as a person today.

Ramya ma'am: When I was going from middle school to high school, we happened to move cities. There was a drastic change in schooling for me as I moved from a more conventional school to an international school, like Manthan. The process of adaptation from a traditional learning style to a more dynamic one, from less focus on extracurricular activities to more, and of my mindset on the whole really allowed me to grow.

Suhas: Yes, you would have come across such diverse people and learning atmosphere. Tell us about a hidden talent of yours.

Ramya ma'am: Baking and cake decorating is something I enjoy so that would be my hidden talent.

Amaan: Now for a few lighthearted, fun questions. If you were stuck on an island and were only allowed to take three things with you, what three things would you choose?

Ramya ma'am: I would take a good book (a light read through). 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' is a book I love, so I would take that. I would also take my phone and, since I care quite a lot about dental hygiene, a dental hygiene kit.

Suhas: Not many people think of that, but rotting teeth is not a good thing to have on a deserted island. Smart move. So onto our last question. This is probably the most important question of them all. Who is your favourite student?

Ramya ma'am: Definitely the both of you, mainly because you are sitting in front of me, [Navaneeth walks into the room] and Navaneeth!

Suhas: Thank you so much for your time ma'am. We (Amaan and I) are sure the interview will be quite insightful for our readers.

Ramya ma'am: Pleasure is all mine.

Interviewers: Amaan and Suhas

HINDI

मेरा अनोखा सपना

श्रीयान साई रेड्डी, ३ बी

मैंने एक सपना देखा जिसमें मैं एक हवाई चालक था। हवाई जहाज़ उड़ाने के सिर्फ पाँच मिनट बाद, इंजन में खराबी आ गयी। सभी यात्री डर गए। मैंने सबको समझाया, “डरो मत”, मैं कुछ करता हूँ। मेरे पास एक अनोखी शक्ति थी, जिससे मैंने हवाई जहाज़ ठीक कर दिया और सभी यात्रियों को सुरक्षित पहुँचा दिया। सभी ने मुझे धन्यवाद कहा और मेरे लिए तालियाँ बजायीं। मैं टी. वी. में भी आया और बहुत प्रसिद्ध हो गया। तालियों की आवाज़ से मेरी नींद खुल गयी।

घमंडी पेड़

अखिल थिरुवल्लारू, ३ सी

बहुत समय पहले एक बड़ा और शक्तिशाली पेड़ था। उसे अपनी शक्ति पर बहुत घमंड था। उसके आस पास छोटे छोटे पौधे थे। घमंडी पेड़ रोज़ उन छोटे पौधों को परेशान करता था। वो उनसे कहता था कि, “अगर तेज़ हवा आई तो तुम सब टूट जाओगे।” छोटे पौधे उससे कुछ नहीं कह पाते थे। एक दिन तूफान आया और घमंडी पेड़ हिलने लगा। थोड़ी ही देर में टूट के नीचे गिर गया। सभी छोटे पौधे सुरक्षित सीधे खड़े थे।

शिक्षा - कभी अपनी शक्ति पर घमंड नहीं करना चाहिए।

मेरा प्रिय खेल

दक्ष 3A

मेरा प्रिय खेल फुटबॉल है। मुझे फुटबॉल खेलना बहुत अच्छा लगता है। मेरे फुटबॉल क्लास में मेरे बहुत सारे मित्र हैं। मेरे फुटबॉल सर का नाम विक्की हैं हमारे सर हमें फुटबॉल खेलना सिखाते हैं। फुटबॉल बहुत हिन् मज़ेदार खेल है। एक बार मेरा मित्र गोल मारने ही वाला था की उसकी नाक खम्बे से टकरा गई। उसे बहुत चोट आई।

मेरा अनोखा सपना

निखिल नरसिम्हा पोलिमेरा, ३ सी

एक दिन मैंने सपने में एक अनोखा घर देखा, उसका नाम था- कार्टून घर। जब मैं उस घर के अंदर गया, तो वहाँ के कार्टून देव ने मुझे भी कार्टून बना दिया। मैं बहुत डर गया और रोने लगा, मुझे घर वापस जाना था। एक दिन मेरा भाई टी.वी में कार्टून देख रहा था। मौका पाते ही मैं टी. वी के बाहर कूद गया, मुझे चोट भी लगी। पर मैं खुश था क्योंकि मैं अपने प्यारे घर वापस पहुँच गया था।

मेरा अनोखा सपना

रिया अम्बेकर, ३ ए

मेरा अनोखा सपना था कि मैं मिठाई की दुनिया में आ गयी थी। फूल बने थे रसगुल्ले के, और लड्डू पेड़ पर लटक रहे थे। घर बने थे बर्फी के, नदी बनी थी खीर की, उस पर इधर - उधर तैर रहे थे छोटे गुलाब जामुन की मछलियाँ। गाड़ियाँ बनी थी मैसूर पाक की पौधे बने थे कलाकन्त के बहुत अच्छी थी ये दुनिया पर यह तो मेरा सपना था।



WATER POLLUTION

Anwita Gundavarapu, 8A

Even though most people are aware of the dangers of water pollution, they still continue to pollute the water bodies. As evident, all the toxins and wastes people throw near this lake has polluted the water in turn leading to tragic end of animals in and around the lake. For example small fish and ducks that live in that lake choke on plastic or any other trash and die. The same water is also contaminated by chemicals released into the water by nearby factories. This water evaporates and forms acid rain, which can affect not only humans, but it can affect the fertility of soil, and damage monuments.

The second picture shows a dried up lake, where there is nothing but construction waste and litter. Both of these pictures show the extremes of water pollution. The second image shows a lifeless and damaged lake which looks more like a wasteland than a lake.

In both the pictures, there aren't much trees or plants nearby due to construction. These lakes should be conserved and the nearby land should be turned into a nature reserve park. This way the environment stays protected and the society is not harmed.



HINDI

मेरा प्यारा विद्यालय मंथन

मधुमिता 8B

शांत स्वभाव से सारे सहपाठी कक्षा से बाहर निकलकर विद्यालय का अवलोकन करने लगे। सूरज सिर पर था, अपनी रौशनी फैला रहा था। फूलों की महक ने दिल को छू लिया।

पत्तों की हरियाली और इमली का चटकदार खट्टा स्वाद ने दिल को बदमस्त करता है। अहा ! स्वच्छ हवा मेरे विद्यालय के प्रांगण से होती हुई फूलों की खुशबु को बिखेरती हुई हम छात्रों को छूती हुए गुज़र रही थी।

माली जब पेड़ों को पानी दाल रहा था तो मिट्टी की सौंधी महक मन को पुलकित कर रही थी।

क्या बताऊँ! शब्द ही नहीं मिल रहे हैं जो मेरे अनुभव पर सटीक बैठ सकें। शहर का शोर एक तरफ और मेरे विद्यालय की मनमोहक प्रकृति एक तरफ़। कोई जादू से कम नहीं लग रहा है यह नज़ारा।

बेटी बचाओ ! बेटी को पढ़ाओ !

ई.टी.याशिका 8B

यह कहानी पुराने ज़माने की है, जब नारी को केवल घर का काम करने वाली समझा जाता था। ऐसी कमतर सोच वालों में से एक था पंकज। पंकज का विवाह हुआ और उसके यहाँ बेटी ने जन्म लिया। उसका नाम प्रिया था। कुछ वर्ष के बाद ही उसकी पत्नी चल बसी। तबसे बेटी को बहुत प्यार करता था। लाड-प्यार में कोई कमी नहीं करता था। पाठशाला में सब प्रिया को जानते थे क्योंकि वह पढ़ाई में हमेशा प्रथम आती थी। इस तरह पाँचवीं कक्षा के होते ही एक दिन पंकज ने प्रिया को आगे की पढ़ाई करने से मना कर दिया। प्रिया के पूछने पर बताता है कि, दस वर्ष के होते ही लड़की को बाहर नहीं जाने देते हैं, यह इस गाँव का नियम है। प्रिया इसकी बात से सहमत नहीं थी। उसने अपना खाना-पानी बंद कर दिया और विद्यालय जाने की इच्छा प्रकट की। पंकज भी बेटी के बराबर भूखा था दो-तीन दिन तक। जब बेटी की तबियत खराब होने लगी तो फिर से समझाने की कोशिश की पर कोई असर नहीं हुआ प्रिया पर। बेटी की ये हालत उससे देखी नहीं गई और वो मान गया। पर इसका परिणाम बुरा निकला। उसको गाँव वालों का तिरस्कार सहना पड़ा। सब कुछ सह लिया और बेटी को पाठशाला जाने दिया। पंद्रह वर्ष बाद प्रिया एक वैज्ञानिक बनकर गाँव में कदम रखी। सब उसको हीन दृष्टि से देख रहे थे। घर पहुँचते-पहुँचते उसने देखा कि लोग परेशान हैं, खेती की ज़मीन बंजर बन गई है। लोग भूखों मर रहे हैं। घर पहुँचकर खान-पान के बाद सोने की कोशिश की और अपने पिता से पूछा कि क्या हो गया है अपने गाँव को? क्यों सब परेशान हैं?

पिता ने बताया कि, - “बेटी ! गाँव में बाढ़ आने के कारण मिट्टी का सार सब बहा ले गया। अब यहाँ कोई फसल नहीं होती और सब भूखे मर रहे हैं। “

प्रिया को उस रात भर नींद नहीं आई। उसको एक उपाय सूझा और मिट्टी एक बसते में लेकर अपने बक्से से कुछ सामान निकाला और जांच करने लगी। फिर उसने अपने पिता को बताया कुछ दवाइयाँ और खाद लाकर अपने बंजर खेत में डालें और उसी खेत में जवार दालकर पानी दें। पंकज ने ऐसा ही किया। एक सप्ताह तक इंतज़ार के बाद जवार के अंकुर आने लगे। सारे गाँव में ढिंढोरा पीटा गया कि पंकज की खेती फिर से हरी-भरी हो गई और पंकज को पंचायत ने बैठक में बुलाया है। पंकज ने पंचायत में सारी बात बताई तो लोगों के होश उड़ गए और प्रिया को सभी ने शाबाशी दी। उस दिन के बाद उस गाँव के क्या सभी गाँव की लड़कियाँ पाठशाला जाने लगीं।

मेरा बचपन

रोमिर माहेश्वरी , ३ सी

हैं हम नन्हे बच्चे ,
करते हैं हम बहुत शैतानी।
खेलना कूदना काम हमारा,
फिर करते हैं हम अपनी मनमानी।

कभी नहीं करते आराम
हर दिन नई-नई चीज़ों की मनमानी।
करते हैं हम मस्ती हर दिन।
हर दिन गाते रहते हैं हम
हम बच्चे हैं , हम बच्चे हैं।



AIR POLLUTION

Lakshmi Priya (8B)

Huge industries releasing toxic gases that can, one day, ruin our earth completely. Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into the natural environment which can cause adverse change. Over the past few years, a major type of pollution - Air Pollution - has become a very serious problem.



CAUSES

- Combustion of fossil fuels: Combustion of fuels such as coal for electricity and the burning of petrol and diesel for road transport contribute to pollution.
- Emissions from factories and industries: Industries and factories often release very harmful chemicals into the air, such as sulphides and nitrogen oxides.
- Agricultural activities: The use of pesticides, insecticides and fertilizers emit harmful chemicals.
- Mining operations: Huge amounts of dust and chemicals are released into the air, causing massive air pollution.

EFFECTS

- These activities cause global warming and acid rain, which are harmful for the environment.
- Depletion of the ozone layer: This allows ultraviolet radiation to reach the earth's surface, which can cause problems such as cancer.



AIR POLLUTION

Lakshmi Priya (8B)

- Devastating effects on wildlife: They cause animals and plants to have to move to new places and change their habitats, or may cause their death. Also, the accumulation of these pollutants on the surfaces of water bodies affect aquatic life.

- Effects on human health: Air pollution can cause allergies, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, lung damage or even death.

SOLUTIONS AND PREVENTION METHODS

- Renewable fuel and clean energy production: Moving away from fossil fuels and switching to renewable resources such as solar power, wind and water energy and geothermal energy.

- Energy conservation and efficiency: Clean energy production is crucial, but it is equally important to reduce our consumption of energy by adopting responsible habits and using efficient devices. For example, switching off fans and lights when they are not needed. Huge amounts of fossil fuels are burnt for electricity. Reducing the amount of electricity we use in turn reduces the number of fossil fuels burnt.

- Eco friendly transportation: Switching to electric vehicles and hydrogen powered vehicles and promoting shared mobility.[carpooling and public transport]

- Reduce, reuse and recycle: Helping to cut down on the amount of waste we throw away. This conserves natural resources, landfill space and energy.

AIR POLLUTION IS A GRAVE ISSUE WHICH CONCERNS THE ENTIRE WORLD.

HOPEFULLY, YOU WILL BEGIN TO AIM TOWARDS STOPPING AND PREVENTING IT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

GO GREEN!!!

War of Words

ITALY AND THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Indu Dubagunta

Europe has been struggling for almost a decade with its financial crisis. The financial crisis which has been in Europe since 2008, is the state where there were collapses of financial institutions and high public debt (government borrowings) in many of the bigger European countries. This all started when Iceland's banking system collapsed in 2008 and this spread along to other major countries like Greece, Italy, and Portugal. Until now, this has not been of major concern to Italy but now it is turning into more of a problem.

This crisis led to a fall in the value of the euro and Brexit where Britain wanted to leave the European Union. Italy's market became unstable after this move and along with the poor decisions of the government, the country's situation worsened. Italy now is in very large government debt which they have said will have a maturity of 8 years.

Now in 2018, Italy is heading for its first ever all populist government which doesn't have the perfect plan to improve the state of the economy. They were proposing a flagship policy which promised the poor a universal income that would cost the government almost 17 billion euros per year. The leader of the party stated that "the recipe for a lower public debt is by investments and expansionary policies".

They are also imposing a flat tax of 15% for all firms and individuals which will cut their tax revenue by 80 billion euros per year. They also plan on not moving forward with the proposed pension reform, which would cost them 15 billion euros per year. This will prove to cause a budget deficit and will make their situation worse, dragging them deeper into the financial crisis.

Economists all over the world, especially in the European Union, think that these policies will only make the country's state much worse than it is at the moment. They think if the financial crisis lasts, it will be as bad as the Great Depression of the 1930s. Whatever policies that Italy's government or the European Union takes, the recovery of the economies of Europe is one which is very far from the present.



THE 'STREET FOOD' INDUSTRY: A CURSE FOR HYDERABAD'S ROADS

NAVYA KAPPURGUNTULA, 8 A

The 'Street Food' Industry in Hyderabad has been winning the hearts of its people in recent times. The mouthwatering idlis, the delicious fast food and the spicy dosas delight people even at midnight. The popularity and demand of street food stalls are increasing. However, this is resulting in vendors taking control of roads to expand their street food empire for cheap.

This picture depicts a few such food stalls adjacent to the Lingampally Flyover. These food stalls took over the whole road and blocked the path of cars taking the flyover. This is causing a huge traffic jam almost every day on the flyover. Besides this, these food stalls litter the roads with cups, plates and food waste, which makes the road dirty and produces an unbearable stench.

Lingampally flyover is a very busy area. Thousands of people travel on these roads a day. The pollution and commotion caused by cars and other vehicles makes this area very dusty and dirty. All this dust and dirt accumulates on the food, making it unhygienic and unfit to eat. After eating this prepared food, people are falling sick. I urge the government to take action on this case because it takes almost one hour to travel across the flyover due to all the commotion caused.

As an alternative, the government shift these food stalls from the road to open areas. This way, Hyderabad's street food industry can thrive as well as people can have a clear and clean road to go home safe and happy.





TRASH ON THE SIDE OF THE ROADS WHY?

ISHANI KUCHERLA, 8A

Nallagandla park filled with garbage

Nowadays, even though many people are educated, no one pays attention to the trash on the side of the road. Most people seem to think that it is okay because it is just a can or one cup, but what they do not understand is that looking at the trash, more people will begin throwing trash wherever they want to.

In addition to this, even after heaps of trash, the GHMC doesn't come to pick it up. If the government itself doesn't do its job, why would the citizens under them practice their fundamental duties? As apparent in the first picture taken in Nallagandla park, an appalling amount of garbage is just left there to breed diseases. This is just one instance out of multiple such sights in and around Hyderabad.

Although there are workers who pick trash, but even they can't pick up all the trash in one day and clean up the parks for people to start visiting again. As citizens of India we have to take initiative and stop throwing the trash on the sides of roads first. Many people feel proud that they can throw garbage anywhere and get away with it. Is this a matter to be proud of?

How to reduce or stop this land pollution?

The second picture showcases a new and innovative way to store this garbage. It is a type of seating chair which stores garbage; it's made of clear plastic glass. The new chair can be in places in public areas such as parks and bus stops. A new type of chair; a place to dispose garbage

So, let us unite in creating a clean and green city.





THE THREE SISTERS

Kabir, 1A

Once upon a time there were three sisters - Tina, Mina and Sina. One day they decided to go to the fair. They were very excited. They paid the money and quickly ran inside. They were so excited that they forgot to call their mom. They started fighting for the swings. Eventually they went their own ways. But Tina was only four years old and when she saw a ghost, she got scared and started shouting for help. She ran and saw a roller coaster, but she realized she couldn't ride it because she was only four years old.

Now Tina started crying and started searching for her sisters. Finally, she found them playing on the merry-go-round. When the merry-go-round stopped, a stranger came and took the sisters to a cave near their house. But just then, their grandfather saw and went to the police station. Now, the sisters were happy, and they promised their mother they would never go anywhere alone again.





DEFORESTATION

Marcela J F, Grade 8 C

This picture, taken near Tamil Nadu, shows an area of land that has been cleared for industrial purposes. This land was, most likely, a part of a forest previously.

Deforestation is a critical issue in today's times. With increasing rate of global warming and unusual climate change, deforestation is something we cannot turn a blind eye to. There are many long – term methods to reduce global warming and pollution, but the immediate action we can take to battle this is to maintain or increase the forest cover (or number of trees) in our location.

It is not solely the responsibility of the government to protect the forests; rather, it takes the personal initiative of every citizen to actually make a significant change. It is in our best interest to prevent or, at the very least, reduce deforestation in our society. A minimal level of land clearing would be acceptable if the society or government was proactive about regrowing the lost plant cover.

Trees and forests provide for the country in indispensable ways. It is our obligation to preserve these precious resources.

Aside from the impact that deforestation has on global warming and pollution, it also affects the environment in terms of habitat loss. The clearing of forests directly impacts the animal ecosystem negatively. The simple act of cutting one tree causes serious repercussions in the environment – consequences that our established society ultimately is going to face.

Development is a positive step but should not be pursued unnecessarily at the cost of our much needed environment.





WHAT ABOUT ANIMAL RIGHTS?

Tanvi Reddy, Grade 8C

This picture was taken near Ooty, Tamil Nadu. The elephant's movement is restricted by shackles on alternate feet.

Our newspapers are filled with human rights, women's rights, etc. but what about animal rights?

This picture was taken in a wildlife reserve that covers over 200 sq. km. When entering the reserve there was a sign board that read:

NO ANIMALS' TERRITORY IS RESTRICTED. PERSONAL CAUTION IS ADVISED AGAINST FREE ROAMING WILD ANIMALS.

There is a shocking disparity between the image and the message on the sign board. I strongly believe that animal rights are equally important and valid as human rights. The animals that were "protected" in this reserve now face encloement and are used to help clear fallen trees and large shrubs. Tourists are commonly known to invade the personal space of the animals and disturb their natural environment, however, in this case, the reserve workers are the ones doing so. Is this how the government plans on keeping the animals from becoming extinct? Many initiatives have been launched by the government regarding animal endangerment, for which they should be applauded, however, the government has failed to implement them effectively.

Humans and animals have to coexist; hence, it is necessary to protect animal rights. Tamil Nadu is known for its scenic views and extravagant wildlife, and witnessing such scenarios (such as in the above picture) goes against everything the government has promised.

I strongly believe that if society sheds its selfish motives and comes together to protect animals, then the rate of animal extinction can be decreased, and, in time, removed.

It is our awareness and initiative that can lead the government to take necessary action because at the end of the day: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BIG PICTURE.





A NEW LANGUAGE

Aravind JT, 10B

In recent years, new languages have been created within the blink of an eye, even if they are adaptations of each other. These languages, that are now so popular, are the languages of code. One of them that has recently come into the limelight is Python.

“Python is one of the easiest coding languages there is” says Eben Upton, the creator of the Raspberry Pi, the most popular platform on which Python is created. To code in this language, one requires various tools, such as a few applications like Spyder or Anaconda. One of the most obvious necessities is, of course, a computer. Python is a computer language that is easy to write, understand, and comprehend. The subject is useful, as one of the major fast-growing sectors of industry is the IT sector, where knowledge of these languages is almost mandatory.

The major appeal of Python is its power to create. Indie game developers prefer to use this due to its flexibility and malleability. For example, a majority of the interface for the game civilization 4, uses Python. Another appeal is that it is quite useful as a paragraph on your resume or job application. It could just tip the scales even further in your favour.

Hey, but in terms of skills, you do not need much at all. You just need to have a good memory. If you do not have that, a piece of paper, a word document, or the documentation software of Python itself. You need this and a computer, which you can use the Raspberry Pi for, as mentioned.

That is all you got to do to learn Python. Ladies and gentlemen, you can really go a long way with one of the most powerful languages in the world. The language of computers.





SHOOTING HOOPS

Sricharan Reddy Vempalli, 10B

The rhythmic beat of a ball bouncing on the hard tarmac. The continuous shuffling and squeaking of shoes as they change directions. The whoosh of the ball as it speeds through air, accompanied by the sound of leather scratching rope, all happening in an instant.

This is basketball!

Basketball is a team sport prevalent in the United States of America and gaining traction all over the world. It is a sport in which two teams of five players compete with one another to get the most number of points in a period of 48 minutes. These points are earned by shooting the ball into hoops that are on opposite sides of the court. Teams must do this while simultaneously try to prevent the opposing team from shooting in their own.

The appeal of basketball comes from the type of game it is. It's a fast-paced, action-packed experience whether it is played the first time or the thousandth. Even when watching professionals like Kyrie Irving, Stephen Curry or Michael Jordan compete in the NBA during their prime, there is an overwhelming amount of nervousness as no one know what will happen next. Games can be won or lost as easily as a flick of the fingers.

Basketball also improves certain aspects of a person not just physically, but also socially. I can easily say that basketball has improved my on-the-fly decision making as I've played the sport more frequently over time. It has also allowed me to build trust with people as I play with them even if I have just met them. This is because of one of the core fundamentals of basketball, teamwork. Basketball has also been known to improve the accuracy and power behind each and every shot or pass made in every game.

To conclude, the sport of basketball is one that rewards those who not only trust their teammates and coaches, but also themselves.



War of Words

TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Srikari, Class 10B

This house will dissolve the treaty on the non proliferation of nuclear weapons in its current form. The NPT is an international treaty which runs with the objective of promoting peace with nuclear energy, by annihilating nuclear weapons and demotivating the rise of nuclear weapon technology. This treaty, in brief comprises of three pillars which are non proliferation, disarmament and denuclearization and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Through my argument I will be proving to you three major points.

- 1) How the treaty has put countries on unfair tracks, thus proving the five nuclear superpowers superior to the countries which have signed the treaty and abide by the conditions and also the countries which are non signatories.
- 2) How this discriminatory policy has acted as a restriction and again placed an unfair barrier for countries from entering the nuclear suppliers group and progressing in the field of nuclear development.
- 3) How the security of other countries is threatened and is at risk and also the motives of the nuclear superpowers which may defame the purpose of the treaty itself.

Moving on to my constructive, considering my first point. The NPT has succeeded in the creation of an unfair game or monopoly among the five nuclear superpowers namely USA, UK, Russia, France, and China where they stand superior to other countries in terms of the potential and scope for nuclear energy and weapon development. I argue that, a random time frame as in this case, the year 1970, where these were the five countries which were the ones to have possessed and tested nuclear weapons cannot be used as the grounds, thus giving them the power to exercise arbitrary and discriminatory powers over other countries. On what fairgrounds are the other countries refraining from acquiring nuclear capabilities. It is absolutely unfair to declare these five superpowers as the permanent signatories due to the baseless time frame and to give these countries the power to demand every other country to denuclearize and disarm themselves for the sake of maintaining peace in this field. Naturally, it puts them on a discriminatory battlefield where countries with arms fight with the countries that don't have the right to keep arms but denuclearize themselves. Putting them on the same track, is like giving them no scope to prove nuclear superiority even though the potential exists, for the

War of Words

TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

treaty is in high favour of the monopoly.

Here, my fellow opponent might raise a point by saying that putting these five powers at a higher level is beneficial as opposed to giving this nuclear power to an irresponsible and harmful state like North Korea or for that matter any other country that might misuse nuclear power. In other words, if the opposition argues by saying that the NPT will prevent nations from misusing nuclear weapons and weapon technology on the rest of the world, I wish to clarify this argument with two additional supportive arguments. 1) There is no guarantee that the nation will in the first place sign the treaty, because there is no fear of a sanction, as sanctions have been proved ineffective in the past and 2) we must note, as the treaty states that, these countries only have the power to order countries to disarm and denuclearize themselves, but there is no one to check on the nuclear stockpile that countries produce. So either ways, there is no way the nuclear arms can be eradicated entirely in the nuclear world and promote peace with nuclear energy.

The second dimension, to clarify the argument is that there is no guarantee that all the countries that don't sign the NPT necessarily have ill intentions and might misuse power. Also, in the same way that they suspect even the major nuclear powers have misused their power in the past where US bombed Hiroshima and, France and UK had colonized Asian and African countries, therefore, either ways the NPT in its current form hasn't put the power in the hands of the right people, for anyone could misuse it.

Moving onto my second main argument, the prominent conditions specified in the NPT, state that before a country can enter the nuclear suppliers group which is a platform for nuclear energy development, manufacturing, research, technology etc, it first has to sign the NPT. The Nuclear suppliers group adheres to the motive of preventing proliferation which runs on similar lines as the treaty itself as this is once again the monopoly's doing. This acts as an unfair barrier and restriction for a country like India which possesses a great potential in terms of their nuclear resources, production, supply, exports and imports. This prevents them from building contacts and relations which are necessary for establishing themselves in the nuclear world. These countries even though have scope to progress in terms of nuclear societal advancement cannot progress or step up due to the restrictions put up by NPT. This is a huge disadvantage and halt in the progress of an economy where the

War of Words

TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

advancement and progression in nuclear energy could have been a contributing factor. These uneven conditions deprive many countries of their own rights, such as taking forward their strength and proving their superiority in that particular field, as in this case, their nuclear capabilities.

Considering my third point, containing two substrands

1. The monopoly uses the countries as their resources, manufacturers and producers of nuclear energy for they are the members of the NPT and the NSG. These countries who have signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty are only promised very minimal and obvious benefits such as worldwide acceptance, the right to safeguard the states interests and being active members of the NSG. The treaty clearly states nowhere that the countries which have signed up will acquire protection from external nuclear weapon sources or any other threats. In fact, there is major threat to those countries who have signed up because they themselves have their lives at stake, for they are disarmed and denuclearized and have no way to protect themselves from the five nuclear powers or the monopoly itself in the future, incase it is driven by strong intentions to utilize nuclear weapons in the future for destruction. As stated earlier, there is nobody in this whole treaty which supervises the nuclear arsenal or stockpile. This applies for the monopoly as well because there is again no guarantee that they will not misuse their powers in the future. Since their efforts are high in the field of nuclear development and it has also gained all the powers, the monopoly can deny and approve of anything that is on their side and favours them, such as the conditions and objectives which China recently, rejected and decided to not abide by.

If such a step is taken in the future, this will defame the purpose of the treaty itself and prove to be defective as the current form itself has many drawbacks .

Concluding, here are my three primary arguments.

1. How the creation of the monopoly has aided in the exercise of arbitrary power
2. How the NPT prevents countries from signing into to the nuclear suppliers group
3. How the NPT in its current form proves to be defective by granting the monopoly more privileges and leaving the majority countries unprotected, where the states are at stake.

Thus, the NPT in its current form proves to be a defective and destructive policy which might worsen conditions in the future by giving rise to an arbitrary rule exercised by an autocracy in nuclear arms and weapons. Hence, I believe it should be dissolved. Proud to propose!



GO GREEN- KEEP THE WORLD CLEAN

Pranav H, 7C

The world is in a stage of cultural development and sparkling inventions. The Earth is an extraordinary planet that has given us everything. From tiny rice grain in your food to the most massive boulder, all resources we can imagine are present on the Earth. But, as humans are developing, a change that is much worse than any calamity, is also occurring. The Earth and its resources are deteriorating.

You might wonder how?

Or

Why did this happen?

And

How can this affect us?

All living organisms respire taking in oxygen. Oxygen is an essential thing for any biotic component. We humans too need this magical element. Ironically, even though we are superior to every creature on the Earth, we are not capable of producing oxygen. Of all of mother nature's creations, plants alone can produce oxygen.

These humble organisms are not gifted with motion, yet they provide us with most of the things. The trees and plants are producers of paper, furniture, and our primary sources of food. They are the base ingredient for survival and the basic necessity for thriving.

Although plants may seem abundant, they are not. During our ancestors' time, there were plants on almost all of the land. Due to this abundance, we started misusing them. As industrialisation brought development, we not only used plants, we also cleared forests to build cities. During that time too, there was not much to worry about. Trees were still abundant, but now the world faces a critical shortage of trees wherein almost 50% of all the trees ever present are cut down, to build factories and grow crops. When you cut down trees, the soil is exposed leading to desertification. It is the process in which due to flooding the nutrients in the soil get washed away and the area becomes a desert.

The crisis at the moment is not about cutting trees down. It is about planting others in their place. When we cut a tree down and use it, we must also substitute it to maintain balance in the food chain. When the producers' population goes down, the primary consumers (herbivores) do not have enough food; hence their population decreases, those apex predators at the top of the food chain (such as ourselves) rely on herbivores for food. When herbivores die, even we are not able to obtain nutrition, and so we may have to even resort to cannibalism, therefore ending life on Earth.

The Earth is filled with wonders, some natural and other human-made, but the most wondrous things given to us

are plants. They provide almost all the resources we require, yet we do not treat them with respect it deserves.

For every tree, you cut down plant another and remain green forever! Stop the grey

coloured epidemic spreading through continents plaguing all the organisms and replace it with the colour that has forever

created a distinct identity for earth: Green. We will plant more trees and make sure humans are here to stay, and not one obstacle may deter their way. Go Green, keep the world clean!





THE MAKING OF AJANTA CAVES

Rahul Sri Bhadra, the principle of Nalanda university was taking a nap when the door slammed open and Pema and Siddharth woke him.

“Sir!! You have to get out of the room quickly, the library is on fire! There has been another attack!” shouted Pema.

They ran out of the room into the garden. This was the third and the most destructive attack on the Nalanda University, amongst the other two. Bhaktiyar Khilji was on the rampage again. There was a roaring, raging fire in the library which was spreading faster than a cheetah. There was blood everywhere. Many monks were lying on the ground, few were running with bags and scripts in hand. They were trying to salvage whatever manuscripts they could get hold of.

Guru Rahul led the monks and others to a secret tunnel while Pema and Siddharth tried to stop the soldiers from coming by distracting them and leading them in another direction.

There was pin - drop silence in the tunnel. After hours of crawling, they emerged into daylight. They gathered around Guru Rahul who addressed them, “What has been destroyed and lost cannot be undone. It is now our sacred duty to spread Buddhism in all directions.” Few monks went north towards Bhutan, China and Nepal. Few went west.

Pema, Siddharth and Guru Rahul started their journey westwards. They went from village to village, through dark dangerous forests and past vast lakes. The arduous journey effected Guru Rahul’s health which started to decline, so they had to halt at Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb, the city we now call as Aurangabad, consisted of clusters of huts and sheds at the edge of a mountain range known locally as Sahyadri hills, a part of Western Ghats. They reached a spot where the river flowed in a curve and the hill was U- shaped. They decided to make caves at this site and dwell there till guru Rahul’s health improved. They borrowed tools from the villagers and with their help, carved out a few caves.

The rest of the caves were made during the Vakataka period. They consisted of stupas, long halls, resting chambers and meditation chambers. Cave No. 19 and 26 – the meditation halls, had huge stupas. Many caves had exquisite paintings depicting the life of Buddha, on the walls and roofs as also many huge magnificent Buddha sculptures. Some were double-storeyed.

In the great prayer hall, Pema, Siddharth and the other monks gathered before the Great Stupa, before the grand feast. Guru Rahul stood before the stupa. “Despite the great devastation of our beloved Nalanda University, we could still save and spread the tenets of Buddhism. Now my soul can rest in peace.” So saying, Guru Rahul chanted mantras and the congregation repeated after him.

The Ajanta caves were totally covered in greenery and hidden from human sight for man many years until they were discovered by John Smith who came to the valley for hunting. These caves are now preserved as a UNESCO world heritage site.

War of Words

THE WAVE

Auric Mitra, Grade 10A

Over the last 30 years, India has grown to become an economic superpower. India's most recent economic expansion has brought a record number of people out of poverty. A growing middle class has fuelled impressive consumer growth. It is today the world's third largest market for smartphones and the sixth largest for cars. India's software industry employs more than 14 million people. Some credits do have to go to some of India's private sector too, which has helped build the power, India's economy has today. Not only that, but these acquisitions have helped change the culture of corporate India, embedding international best practices in some of India's top companies. For example: Tata Motors bought the Jaguar Land Rover car business from Ford Motors for \$2.3 Billion.

In the 1970's, India had a huge slump in the employment sector. Mainly, this was because, most of the services were owned by PSU's. Then, there was the problem of the 'License Raj'. The Licence Raj was an elaborate system of licences and regulation, for anything really. From buying groceries, to getting LPG, or even setting businesses.

Then came 1980. Indira Gandhi was elected for the second time. This time she really wanted to make some change to our economy. So first, to increase our employment from the slump, she put India on the world map, by hosting the Asian Games (or Asiad). While this happened, the colour TV was announced in India, and everyone had their eyes glued on to their TV sets. Private sector companies saw this as an opportunity to start advertising. So, the first colour advertisement in India was made, by a washing detergent known as 'Nirma'. After that, in pursuit, other companies started to do the same and now it had become a trend. Following Nirma, 'Bajaj' and 'Maruti' also released colour advertisement, for their scooties and cars. With these advertisements, consumers started having 'choices', which increased the demand for these products. To meet up with the increasing demand, companies had to start employing more, which got India out of its employment slump.

In 1990, a new government, Manmohan Singh as India's new Prime Minister. The first thing he did, was remove the unorganised Licence Raj. After this, things became much easier, simpler, and faster. Later, he connected a lot of PSU's into Private Sector companies like BSNL and many more. This privatisation created much more employment, from what it was earlier. Afterwards, a new law was passed which allowed FDIs (Foreign Direct Investment). This is what really made India the superpower it is today. What this did is that it allowed dollars and other foreign currency to pour into our RBI, and this increased our economic strength.

War of Words

THE WAVE

The Informal Sector, is the part of the economy that is not taxed or monitored by any forms of government, i.e. they are unbanked or 'Cash Economy'. The Formal Sector, is where wages and transactions happen through the bank. The informal sector in 1980-1990 used to be 80% of our economy. The advent of FDI's, improved a lot of the private sector, and the informal sector reduced. According to a report "The higher the education level, the higher the chance to obtain formal employment". Previously, Agriculture was in the informal sector, and had the highest level of employment. But over the years, employment in Agriculture has reduced and the employment in services has increased.

Indira Gandhi, was the first woman Indian Prime Minister. She became like a face or an inspiration for women to stand up and fight. She empowered a lot of women across the country. One example could be: Kiran Bedi, India's first woman who joined Indian Police Service in 1972 as a highest ranking officer and is famous for her tough and innovative police strategies. Like Kiran Bedi, women were seeking jobs in the private sector too, like PepsiCo CEO, Indra Nooyi. In Urban India, women participate in the workforce in impressive numbers. For example, in the software industry, 30% of the workforce is female.

Post-Independence, in order to build the country, MahaRatnas were created, like Steel (SAIL), Gas (GAIL), Aerospace (Air India) and much more. Post-Liberalisation, the Indian private sector was faced with increasing domestic and foreign competition, including the threat of the cheaper Chinese imports. It has since handled the change, by squeezing costs, revamping management, and relying on cheap labour and new technology. However, this has also reduced employment generation, and even among smaller manufacturers who previously, relied on labour intensive processes. Therefore, PSUs play a key role in steering the national economy in the right direction.

In conclusion, we can see that India has grown quite significantly over the last 30 years and that there is a substantial amount of development that is going on. Programs like 'Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao' will help increase the percentage of women employment. As this development slowly increases with programs like 'Make in India', employment will also increase subsequently. Apps like 'Paytm' and Internet Banking become more prevalent, the informal sector will reduce, and the formal sector will increase. Finally, although PSUs play a key role in steering the national economy in the right direction, Private Sector organizations are the way for the future.



THE MAGIC OF STRATEGY: CHESS

Somansh 9A

A king stands in his castle, stoic. A legion of soldiers rages forward on the battlefield, ready to defend their kingdom with their lives. Warriors on horses and elephants charge ahead, adamant.

All of this takes place on a chess board. A simple wooden board, consisting of sixty-four black and white squares for an onlooker is nothing less than a war ground for the two players on either side of the board. It is a game of Rooks, Bishops and knights, headed by a king and queen, tussling for supremacy in a model war.

Though my affiliation with chess has never been the same as that of a professional chess player, I have always enjoyed it deeply as a hobby. The exercise of the mind, developing strategies and trying to find any possible way to breach enemy defences has always been a thrilling experience. Hardly anything can trump the satisfaction of uttering the confident, final word in chess, "Checkmate".

Quite obviously, such a sport requires great skill and strategy. Chess is simple to the eye, but is very challenging to master. And in this challenge lies the appeal of the game. A chess player deeply engrossed in his game is transported into another dimension, where he is the commander of his own army, moving each soldier after much planning and deliberation.

Chess isn't only a fun and challenging game but since it demands much skill and strategizing, it is evidently a very helpful game in life. Playing chess sharpens the brain; a seasoned chess player is almost able to visualize everyday moments the way they visualize chess. Playing chess improves one's standard of life altogether.

Chess: a game, a war. Day by day someone new plays chess and someone new becomes the commander of their own army, a tactician. Obviously, not everyone becomes someone like Bobby Fischer on their first try, or like Viswanathan Anand, a former world champion who inspired millions of people in India to start playing chess. However, practice makes perfect and readily playing the game with determination can unearth anyone's inner grandmaster.





CUBA- FROM PLANNED ECONOMY TO MIXED

Shreya Challa, 11A

A command economy is another term for a planned economy, an economy in which production, investment, prices, incomes, etc. are decided by a central body, the government. Examples of planned economies include Cuba, the former Soviet Union and North Korea, though most economies are not completely planned.

Before the socialist revolution of 1959, Cuba was a large importer of cars and telephones, and President Batista oversaw most of the sugarcane economy; Cuba was a one-crop economy growing sugarcane. A third of the population lived in poverty and most were unhappy with the political climate. After the 1959 revolution, led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, Cuba's economy became relatively stable under the communist government. The Cuban people depend on the government for goods and services.

There are, as always, disadvantages and advantages to being a command economy. In a command economy, there is less inequality as the government controls production and distribution of goods and services, as well as employment. There are typically low unemployment levels and the common good is a priority over making a profit, unlike in market economies, where the distribution of goods and services is controlled by forces of demand and supply. As in most command economies, healthcare is free. However, Cubans are almost entirely dependent on the government for goods and services. Innovation may be inhibited (as there is no profit motive). Poverty is still widespread.

Cuba's new president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, has promised to modernize the economy and make the government more responsive to the people. One of his first tasks was to unify the country's byzantine dual-currency system, but this could cause inflation. The small number of jobs not under the government's control has increased. In short, the economy is slowly moving towards a more market-oriented system.

Many 'transition economies', as they are called, such as Russia, Poland, and Hungary, however, face rising unemployment, lack of infrastructure and entrepreneurial skills, as well as rampant corruption and inequality. Cuba, like most transition economies, faces these problems as well.

Inflation

Inflation may occur as the government does not have much control over spending anymore. Fiscal and monetary policy to control this may also be less efficient compared to if they were used in a fully planned economy.



CUBA- FROM PLANNED ECONOMY TO MIXED

Shreya Challa,11A

Unemployment

Unemployment may also increase as the government's main aim is public welfare but the private sector's main aim is profit. As the government's market share drops, people may be unemployed as the private sector will not employ people if they are not needed or are inefficient, preferring to use capital, such as machinery, instead.

Civil unrest

In the private sector, people may be forbidden from joining trade unions, so industrial unrest may be low. On the other hand, there may be higher civil unrest (and crime) because of higher rates of unemployment.

International relations

Initially, the private sector may also have issues with international relations including exports and imports, as the government was the main body dealing with trade beforehand. Over time, however, international relation will depend more the production efficiency of Cuban firms.

Lower welfare benefits

In a transitional economy, the government would have lower taxes (due to tax evasion, for example) and revenue. As a result, welfare benefits, and spending on public and merit goods, which are necessary for public welfare and economic development, may decrease, reducing standards of living. Less people will be employed by the government as well.

Lower output

Because of lower revenue, the government may not be able to subsidise startups and new firms, which will be common. As a result, output may be low, and unemployment may increase further.

Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure may improve in some aspects because of more private firms and spending on construction, for example. However since they government's market share has fallen, non-physical infrastructure (such as planning for the future) may not improve.

While Cuba's transition from a command economy to a mixed economy will have some complications, such as lower output, lack of infrastructure and unemployment, these problems may be temporary, and the shift to a mixed economy may benefit the economy and the country in the long run, leading to increased consumer choice, higher wages and a more efficient use of resources.



THE FASTEST RACKET SPORT!!

Rishabh Jain, 10B

Imagine an object traveling at 493 kilometres per hour, striking your body and you not getting intimidated by it. It is by far the fastest racket sport existing. Over an hour of an enthralling match with you on your feet every moment, swinging your racket, smashing the ball at high speed, playing each stroke beautifully and earning each point. My hobby is playing badminton for at least 3 hours a day.

Everyone may not agree with my opinion, but the reason why I believe this, is because of the pace at which the sport is played at. Usually a match is of 3 games of 21 points each. There is no time limit for a match as rallies can be really long. The longest rally ever played has been over the whopping 200 shot mark in doubles and in singles the record is set at 108 shots! To play this sport one needs a lot of stamina to last out all throughout the match.

If you want to play this sport, all you need is a racket and a birdie(also known as shuttlecock.) Moreover, if you start playing badminton, it is going to be very addicting as it is a fun game to play. However, the reason why I chose to play badminton was different. I always used to only watch and not play. In this process, I had my personal favourite-Lee Chong Wei! Watching him play was an absolute delight. Despite being the oldest player on the circuit he is the fittest. Since then, badminton is my life.

Badminton gives you many real life skills such as patience and the never say die attitude. For any sport, skills like speed, strength, accuracy, stamina and agility are required and badminton is just the right sport which provides you these key skills. Today's leading young players include Viktor Axelsen, Kento Momota, Chou Tien Chen, Tia Tzu Ying, Akane Yamaguchi, Ratchanok Intanon, Nozomi Okuhara, PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal.

While badminton is my passion,I continue to hone my skills in the sport.Lin Dan, the two time Olympic gold medalist and five time world champion always believes in his saying:'I am clean, I support sportsmanship, I love badminton.'

This is about my hobby what's yours?



War of Words

ICELAND: ITS STAGGERING EMPLOYMENT RATE AND HOW THEY DID IT

Purvi Reddy

To understand this Nordic nation's current economy, it is important to first comprehend its history. Iceland was amongst the poorest nations in the world during the late 19th century. Agriculture was the primary and most popular sector until industrialization struck. The mechanization of its fishing ships, demand for fish rising due to wartime, and Iceland being an island added up to the creation of a large fish driven economy. By the late 20th century, around 83% of Iceland had shifted to working, directly or indirectly, in the fishing industry.

Then, in the 1990's, ex-Icelandic Prime Minister David Oddsson prioritized the liberalization and diversification of Iceland's fish-focused economy and ended up privatizing its entire banking sector. Considered a revolutionary decision then, and even now, it caused Iceland to move towards an economy heavily based on foreign investment banking and financial services. By 2007, the bank's assets were valued at almost 750% of the country's GDP, and the Icelandic unemployment rates were an impressive 1.75%.

Then, in 2008, three of the nation's leading banks – Kaupthing, Glitnir and Landsbankinn – went bankrupt. There were numerous reasons for this, including the credit market drying up and investments turning toxic as banks proved unable to cover their debt. Given the banks unprecedented and astronomical growth, Iceland was unable to cover their debts either. Pension funds reduced by 25% and unemployment rates more than tripled. 14% of the workforce faced a reduction in pay and around 7% had their workload forcibly reduced.

So, midst their biggest financial crisis since 1961, Iceland reformed its entire banking sector, again. It took a few big IMF loans, but Iceland made sure it did not slash their welfare programmes and government wages and banned foreign currency loans. Another proper diversification of sectors occurred and Iceland expanded to the technology and tourism sectors.

Women and female-employment

The ratio of women in full-time work relative to that of men increased from 4.7% in 1992 to 56% in 2010. Iceland has always had a relatively positive environment for

War of Words

ICELAND: ITS STAGGERING EMPLOYMENT RATE AND HOW THEY DID IT

working women through ages where it was not as accepted in many other parts of the world. In 2016, women accounted for 48% of the elected representative in the Icelandic parliament – the closest a country has ever come to equal political representation. In recent years, Iceland has achieved the smallest gender pay gap in the world and has held that position of over 9 years. Moreover, in 2018, Iceland enacted the world's first equal pay law.

In Iceland, men enjoy a 3-month paternity leave, and about 90% of them take it, making it easier for women to continue their careers – something that is almost impossible in most other nations even today.

Post-crisis and the rise

By 2015, Iceland's total public expenditure was back to their pre-crisis 20 year average of 43% of GDP. Several factors now aid it function as one of the world's most successful economies including a relatively young population, a historically low unemployment rate, a fully funded private pension funds and a relatively small population.

During the crisis, employment in the public sector declined by 39% due to the privatization of the banking sector. Post-crisis however, employment has shifted towards public tourism organization, increasing public sector employment from 15% in 2007 to 48% in 2016. The ratio of tourism-generated foreign exchange revenues to total export revenues averaged at 31% in 2015, and the turnover in business related to the tourist sector was nearly 49 %.

Education System

All of the above combined form a world-class, progressive education system that advocates equal opportunity for all regardless of their background. Most people in Iceland choose to go for the public education route, which is inexpensive and extremely effective.

It is no surprise that all these factors have led to Iceland having the lowest unemployment rate in the world, being just under 3%. It is an impressive nation that pioneers the future, both in its progressive policy, resilient administration and responsible citizens. For all its past turmoil, it stands proud for a host of achievements, and one can only expect more from them in the future.



Mini sagas

THE SEVENTH CLOUD

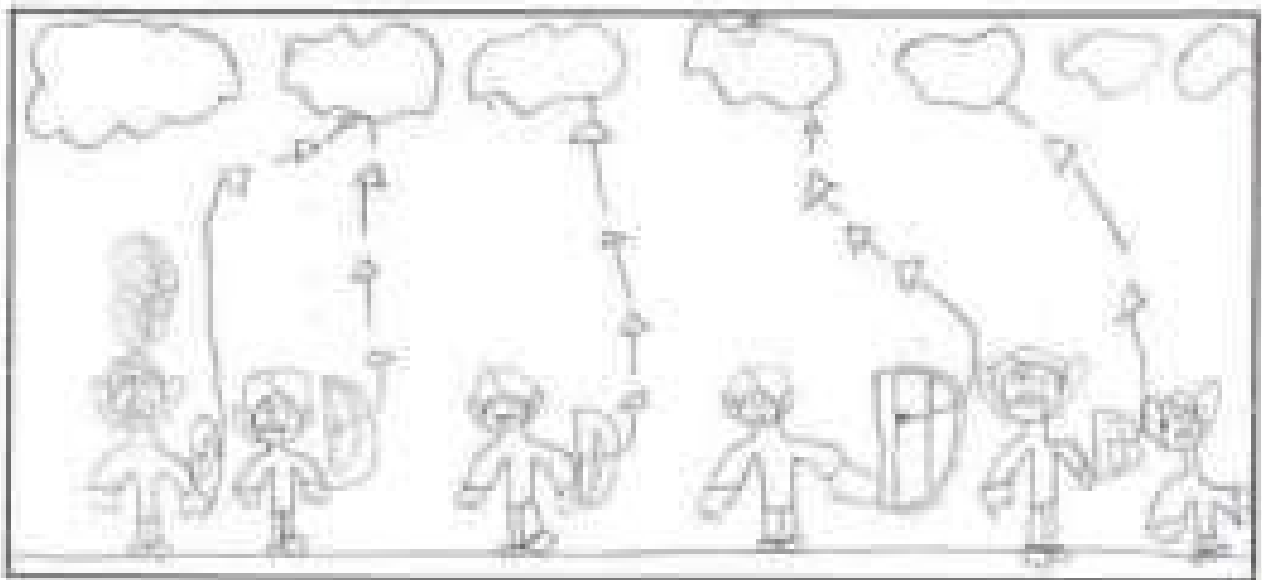
Samhita, 1D

Long, long ago there were seven clouds in the sky. Their rays made the earth so cold that human beings could not bear it. The humans killed only six of them. The seventh cloud hid behind a hill. All the animals suffered because there was no rain, so they decided to call out to the clouds.

The lion called first, then the cow mooed. Again, this time a little boldly: moooo! The cloud came a little higher. The cow mooed so loud: moooooooooooooo!

The cloud came all the way up.

The animals asked the human beings not to kill the cloud and they agreed.





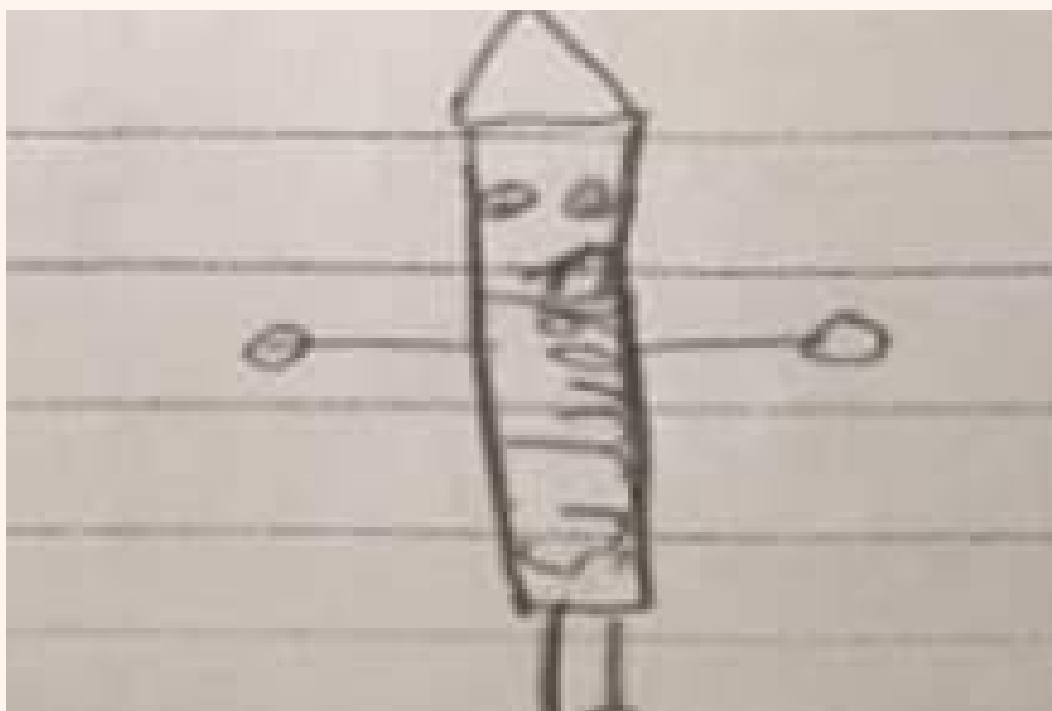
THE SAD CRAYON

Sanjana, 1A

Once, there lived a Silver crayon. He was very tall. He used to always be sad. Nobody knew what was wrong. One day, the silver crayon met the pink crayon. The pink crayon, who was short asked, why are you always sad? The Silver crayon replied in a sad voice, "I don't colour anything". The pink crayon said with a smile "You colour lots of things like stones, bags, and steel!"

When silver crayon heard this he jumped with excitement. He danced with all the crayons and now everyone was happy. Now, they all came to know that the silver crayon was very special. But silver crayon knew that pink crayon colours very pretty things. The silver crayon was jealous of it.

One day the pink crayon wanted the big ball but was too short to get it. So, the silver crayon took the ball and gave it to the pink crayon. The pink crayon took it and gave a surprise gift to the silver crayon. It was glitter. Now the silver crayon had become very sparkly and it remained happy always.





PLAYS



A BREADY SAVE

Advay Vivek (Agni, 4B)

Characters:

Ant- Advay

Old scientist - Hrishikesh

King - Prajapati

Robber - Akshaj

Robber 2 - Prajapati

Old Scientist's daughter - Geethika

Commander - Akshaj

Narrator - Advay

Act 1 Scene 1

[In the King's Palace]

(The King is sitting on his throne)

NARRATOR: Once upon a time, there was a great king who had a great reign for a long time, and his capital was in Varanasi. His kingdom was wealthy, and his subjects donated a lot of money to him making him very lazy and greedy. Soon, he had twenty chests full of treasure.

One time, all of his treasure chests were stolen by a large gang of robbers who had been planning the attack on the lazy king for a long time. The King was very sad.

KING: (Wailing) Oh nooooo! All is lost. My treasure is all gone. How will I retrieve it? Maybe my commander will know.

(Shouting) COMMANDER!!

COMMANDER: Yes, your majesty?

KING: (Angrily) All of my chests have been stolen from right under your nose. Do something about it.

COMMANDER: Gather all the soldiers and look for the chests. The robbers cannot have gone far.

Narrator: The soldiers search and search, but they cannot find even a trace of the chests. Dejected and scared of the king's wrath, they report back to the Commander.

Act 1 Scene 2

[In the Commander's chambers]

(Commander pacing back and forth, talking to his soldiers)

COMMANDER: (Worried) Call for the old Scientist, I have heard he is very clever. He is our last hope!

(A few minutes later)

NARRATOR: An old man wearing a stethoscope and a white lab coat walks in. He looks lost and is wondering why he was asked to rush to the palace from his lab.

OLD SCIENTIST: (To the commander) What am I doing here?

COMMANDER: (Explaining) The king has lost all his chests and there is no sign of the robbers anywhere in the city. He said that if I don't find the chests, my head will roll. Please help me find them!

OLD SCIENTIST: I will do my best.

Act 1 Scene 3

[In the Old Scientist's lab]

(The Old scientist is thinking hard about what he can do)

OLD SCIENTIST: (Thinking aloud) Hmmm, I think two brains are better than one to solve this mystery. So I shall first make my pet ant, human-sized, so that we can think together.



PLAYS



(The old scientist tinkers with some nuts and bolts on a crazy looking box of metal. Then, he takes his pet ant off his shoulder, puts him in the box, and turns a few switches on. In a blinding flash of light, a human-sized ant is standing where the metal box once was!)

OLD SCIENTIST: (Happy) Hah! My machines are always perfect. This one is an example of my brilliance! Now my dear ant friend, tell me, what should I do about the mystery of the missing chests?

ANT: (In a high-pitched ant voice) You can make a time-machine and go back in time to prevent the robbery.

OLD SCIENTIST: (mimicking the ant's voice) How should I do this?

ANT: Simple, Google it!

OLD SCIENTIST: (hitting his head with his hand) Arrey, nothing good will come from Google. This is too complicated for that!

ANT: Okay hold on, I will come up with the instructions for the time machine and give it to you

NARRATOR: The ant takes out his ant phone and quickly types for a few seconds. He then plugs in a small USB drive into his phone, copies it and gives it to the scientist. The scientist puts it in his computer to look at the file.

OLD SCIENTIST: (Perplexed) What is this blippety bloppity bleepe boo? I don't understand a thing!

ANT: Oops, I forgot to translate it to english! Give it back to me.

(Few minutes later, Ant fixes something and hands the USB drive back)

OLD SCIENTIST: 'SEARCH GOOGLE'. Seriously, ant? All this time to repeat what you said? What a waste of time!

ANT: (Hits his head) Just click on that. It is hyperlinked. It will take you to the page with instructions.

NARRATOR: The Scientist clicks on it and pages filled with instructions fall out of the printer

OLD SCIENTIST: Smart Ant, looks like I trained you well. Who needs all these pages anyway? All of the good stuff is on the first and last page so let's get rid of the rest. (Throws most of the pages into the trash)

NARRATOR: The Old Scientist starts the huge project of making a time machine in his watch. A few days later...

Act 2 Scene 1

[In the King's Palace]

(The scientist and the ant walk in with the Commander)

COMMANDER: Your Majesty, these two great beings, the Scientist and his human-sized ant, (The King laughs when he see the ant) have an idea to get your treasure back.

OLD SCIENTIST: We have made a complex time machine built into my watch, using which we will go back in time and prevent the robbery, getting your treasure back.

ANT: We will make it like it never even happened (smiles)

KING: Go at once and do it. But remember, if you do not get my treasure back, your heads will be lost just like my treasure.

Act 2 Scene 2

[In the lab]

NARRATOR: The Scientist and the Ant are just about to press the switch on the time machine when the scientist's daughter walks in. Looking at the human sized ant, she stumbles onto the scientist and they all get zapped back in time.

Act 2 Scene 3

[One week ago, inside the palace]

OLD SCIENTIST: (Whispering) We are exactly where the robbery is about to take place. The robbers will be here any minute.

(The robbers arrive)

ROBBER: Hurry, no one is around. Let's get the chests. (Seeing the three newcomers) Aah! Who are you? Where did you come from?

ANT: From a week in the future. Now, hands up! (Pointing a gun) To jail, walk.



PLAYS



DAUGHTER: (Doing the Floss and singing in tune) We got this, we got this, we got this!!

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, the other robber quietly sneaks one chest out and throws it out the out window where his friends are waiting. The scientist and his friends do not notice and zap back to current time with the robbers. The land right in front of the king, very pleased with themselves.

KING: (Counting his chests) Thank you very much, Old Scientist. (Suddenly realizes one chest missing) But wait, what happened to one chest? (Furious) You idiots! You got all of these and forgot the most important chest? Go find it right away, or else your head WILL ROLL!

SCIENTIST AND ANT: Uh-oh!

Act 3 Scene 1

[Back in the lab]

ANT: We cannot use the time machine again because it works well only for one pair of travels. What do we do?

DAUGHTER: Let's go to the robber's cave. I am sure that's where they must have hidden the chest.

OLD SCIENTIST: It will be quite dangerous. Are you sure we should do it? Anyhow, daughter, you stay here and be safe. We both will go.

DAUGHTER: No I am coming because this was my idea.

(All three of them start on a journey to the robbers' cave)

Act 3 Scene 2

[At the robbers' cave a few hours before the Scientist and friends arrive]

ROBBER 1: We managed to save only one chest. Let's hope it has something good.

ROBBER 2: (Opens the chest) Whaaaaaat? Only a loaf of bread? That too stale? Are you kidding me?

ROBBER 3: Let me see - maybe there are hidden gems or diamonds! (Frantically tearing the bread to pieces) Nooooo, nothing. Just bread.

ALL THREE: AAARRRGHHHHH (Running away bemoaning their bad luck, leaving the chest behind)

Act 3 Scene 3

(Few hours later: The scientist and friends stroll in casually to find the chest lying in front of their eyes)

DAUGHTER: Aha! Found it. See, I told you. Let's take the chest back.

OLD SCIENTIST: Something is fishy. Why is the chest open? (Taking a look inside and gasping) What is this? Only bread? We are soooo dead.

ANT: Yes definitely dead. But let's not die hungry. Let's eat the bread.

NARRATOR: All three grab a few crumbs of bread. Little do they know that this bread is the King's most prized possession because whoever eats it immediately becomes immortal and can never be killed.

Act 3 Scene 4

[Back in the King's Palace]

(Scientist and company come back empty handed)

KING: You losers, you did not find my chest? Hand me my sword.

NARRATOR: The King rushes toward the three of them and slices their heads off in one swoop. A second later, lo and behold! All three heads are back! The King does it again, and they come back again. And again, and again...





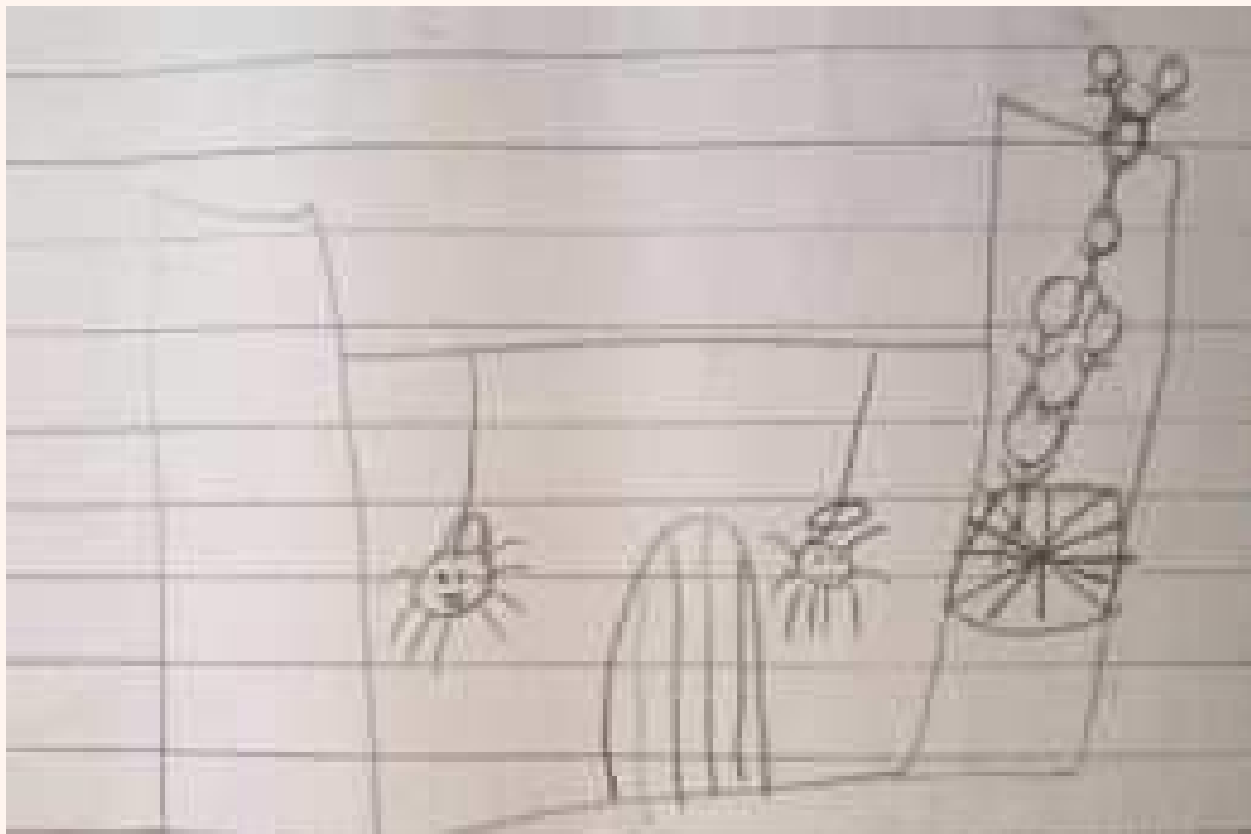
THE HAUNTED HOUSE

Avika, 1A

Once upon a time, there was a crazy couple who had five cranky children. They had to shift to another place in Indonesia. They searched and searched around and they found a spooky, abandoned house. They thought that it would be cozy in there.

They walked in and got caught in a spider's web. All the seven of them were stuck. In the web, there lived an angel spider and a devil spider.

The angel spider knew that the family was trapped because of her brother, the devil spider. She scolded the devil spider and set the family free. They thanked the angel spider and never came back to that house.





THE FIVE CROWS AND THE FOX

Snigdha B, 1C

Once there were five crows living in a tree.

One day there came a fox. He was trying to climb the tree but he was not able to do so. So he asked the crows, "Can you please sing a song for me"? One of the crows did not know that it was a trick so the crow came down and sang a song for the fox.

The fox said "Stop". So the crow stopped. The fox asked the crow to dance. While he was dancing, the crow came near the fox and the fox opened his mouth and gobbled the crow up.

There were only four crows now.





HOW ELEPHANTS LOST THEIR WINGS

Ryka Krishna, 1D

Once upon a time, elephants had wings. They looked like banana leaves and peacock tails. Sometimes the Gods flew on their backs. But the elephants were very noisy.

They smashed banana trees, fell inside houses and broke them. Something had to be done, the Gods decided. They had an idea. They invited the elephants to a feast. After they ate, they fell asleep.

When they woke up, the Gods and the elephants had a meeting. "Why did you break the houses and trees?" asked the Gods. "Okay, you can take away our wings then," said the elephants.

"Fine, we will take away your wings" said the Gods. The elephants never got their wings back. The gods were happy and everyone else was happy.





Mini sagas

THE MAGIC FINGER

Ehan Goel, 2A

Once upon a time, there was a girl who had a magic finger. If someone made her angry or did something wrong, she would point the magic finger at that person and something bad would happen to him. One day, her neighbor went to the forest and killed a duck. The girl got angry and used the magic finger on the neighbor; something bad happened to them.

The next morning, the girl saw that her neighbors had grown wings and were behaving like ducks and the ducks had grown hands and legs and they were behaving like people. The ducks started to live in the neighborhood. The neighbors felt very bad and they built a nest on a tall tree.

The neighbors promised to never kill animals again. Soon, they started living in their house and never killed animals. The neighbors and the girl lived happily ever after.





PLAYS



FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY AND BEHAVIOR

Narrator: Hello friends and teachers. Today team Prithvi from grade 5E is going to perform a sit on the good and bad aspects of freedom, responsibility and behavior.

Scene I – Bad Behavior

Narrator: In the classroom at Manthan School, a naughty boy called Adhish is throwing balls and rockets at Iksha... when the teacher enters the classroom.

Adhish and Iksha: Good morning ma'am!

Iksha: Ma'am Adhish was throwing paper balls and rockets at me.

Teacher: ADISH! This is not the way you should behave!!

Adhish: S... s... sorry ma'am.

Teacher: My eyes are fixed on you. This time you are excused, but next time you will go to the Teacher Leader's room!

Scene II – Good Behavior

Narrator: Two children in a classroom sit silently and obey their teacher's instructions.

Teacher: Do page sixteen, seventeen and eighteen in the new workbook.

Children: Yes ma'am.

Narrator: The children stay silent for the whole period, so after the first period ...

Teacher: You children have been so silent for the first period. I will give a golden sticker for good behavior.

Children: Yay! Yay! Than you ma'am!

Scene III – Being Irresponsible

Narrator: A girl called Priyasha used to lose all her things. She was irresponsible. Her mother always reminded her that if she lost her things, she would have to find them too. One day Priyasha loses her glitter pens.

Priyasha: Mother! Mother! I cannot find my glitter pens!

Mother: You have to find them yourself.

Priyasha: But I cannot find them! Please help me!

Mother: Where did you last see them?

Priyasha: In a box. A cardboard box. Like this one.

Mother: Was it a pink one?

Priyasha: Yes!

Mother: I gave it to the donation company. I thought it was just a box of old toys.

Priyasha: I used to hide it below the toys so that my sister does not destroy them.

Mother: But I even asked you if you needed anything from this box and you said no.

Priyasha: Yeah, You are right...

Mother: Anyway, you cannot change the past now.



PLAYS



Scene IV – Being Responsible

Narrator: A mother tells her daughter to clean her room properly, since that is her responsibility.

Mother: You go clean your room, meanwhile I will clean the kitchen.

Daughter: Okay Mom!

Narrator: The daughter cleans her room within an hour.

Daughter: Mother! I am done!

Mother: Your room is shining! Here you go. A chocolate for being a responsible girl.

Daughter: Than you Mom!

Mother: You're welcome.

Scene V – Having too much freedom

Narrator: A very lenient mother gave her son a lot of free time.

Son: Mom I do not have any homework!

Narrator: The son is lying; he thinks he can complete the homework in school tomorrow. The mother does not make an effort to check her son's diary.

Mother: Fine, you can play video games.

Son: Yay! Thank you for giving me so much time to play video games.

Narrator: The next day the son writes an assessment and does not remember anything. After submitting his paper the teacher corrects it and he gets a 'C.'

Son: What! I got a C.

Teacher: Yes.

Narrator: The son remembers that he just wasted his time on playing video games yesterday and realizes his mistake.

Scene VI – Having the right amount of freedom

Narrator: Three friends, named Iksha, Priyasha and Sanjitha, go for a picnic on a Sunday. The friends are only allowed to picnic for two hours. One of the friends, Iksha, wants to go boating half an hour after the picnic.

Iksha: Hey guys, after this picnic, let's go boating for half an hour.

Priyasha: No, we are only allowed to stay here for two hours.

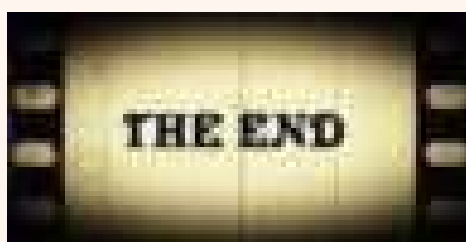
Sanjitha: If you spend too much time staying here, you will not have any time to study.

Priyasha: And besides that we have a Unit Check tomorrow! You should always make plans accordingly for when to study and when to have fun.

Iksha: Now I understand guys.

Narrator: I hope you have learnt the advantages and the disadvantages of freedom, responsibility and behavior!

Everybody: Thank you!





THE SPOOKY GHOST

Hridyansh 1A

One day a boy was passing by his house. He saw shops and skyscrapers. Suddenly, he saw a ghost. He started screaming.

“Ahh! Help me!” He started running as fast as he could. But the ghost caught hold on him.

The boy had a pair of scissors. He started cutting the ghost! The ghost died. But a monster was standing behind him. The monster fired his arrows. But it didn't work at all. Then the monster shot his flames. The boy was hurt, and from then on he behaved like a good boy.



Mini sagas

THE MONKEY AND THE WEDGE

Hanvish, 1C

There was a monkey in the Forest. He came out of the Forest. He saw a wedge but it was stuck to the metal. Every day the monkey would come to remove it. One day, he removed it to make his new home. He could not make it alone. So, the Fox and the Lion also came to help him. Together they finally finished making the house.

You would wonder if are they happy or not?

Yes! They are happy and living in that home together.





PLAYS



THE SKIT

Souri, Archith, Srihan, Sakash and Sambhav, Grade 5

[Everybody is going home from school but Sambhav forgets his Hindi book. Sambhav comes home anyways]

SAMBHAV: Hi dad. I am very hungry; can I eat something?

SOURI: First tell me what homework you have.

SAMBHAV: Um, I have math and Hindi—oh wait, I did math at school, so I only have Hindi.

SOURI: Okay then, do your Hindi homework.

[Sambhav looks in his bag and can't find his Hindi book]

SAMBHAV: Oh, I forgot it at school!

SOURI: What? You don't have any responsibility, Sambhav, and you have a very bad behavior!

SAMBHAV: Dad, what are behavior and responsibility?

SOURI: Alright, son, we will watch a movie about those two things.

[Father and son sit down, and the movie begins]

MOVIE

GOOD BEHAVIOR

[It is Sakash's birthday, and Shrihan and his dad arrive]

SAKASH: Yay! Shrihan finally came!

DAD: Let's sing the birthday song.

EVERYONE: Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear Sakash, happy birthday to you!

SAKASH: Let's cut the cake!

[Sakash slowly cuts the cake, but all of a sudden, Shrihan begins destroying it and Sakash starts crying]

DAD: Stop this, Shrihan! This is very bad behavior. You should help him!

BAD BEHAVIOR

SAKASH: Yay! Shrihan finally came!

DADI: Let's sing the birthday song.

EVERYONE: Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear Sakash, happy birthday to you!



PLAYS



SAKASH: Let's cut the cake!

SHRIHAN: Oh wait, let me help you!

DAD: Good job, Shrihan, that is very good behavior.

IRRESPONSIBILITY

[Sakash is flying a drone outdoors and Shrihan arrives]

SHRIHAN: Hey Sakash, let's play something else.

[They begin fighting with water guns and later, go home]

SOURI: Sakash, did you bring back your drone?

SAKASH: Ah I forgot it.

SOURI: What? You don't have any responsibility! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

RESPONSIBILITY

[Sakash is flying a drone outdoors and Shrihan arrives]

SHRIHAN: Hey Sakash, let's play something else.

[They begin fighting with water guns and later, go home]

SOURI: Sakash, did you bring back your drone?

SAKASH: Yes SOURI!

SOURI: Good job! You are responsible!

[MOVIE ENDS]

SAMBHAV: Now I know what responsibility and behavior are.

SOURI: Good, my son.

[It is the next day and Sambhav packs his bag properly. He is all ready to go home]

SOURI: Do you have any homework?

SAMBHAV: No, I did it all in school and I am also ready for the Hindi unit check.

SOURI: Good job. You have learnt the lesson of responsibility and good behavior, and now you have the freedom to play.



Mini sagas

BAMBI

Swasti, 2B

Once upon a time, the corner of the forest was very crowded. The great prince of the forest, named Bambi, had come.

A friendly rabbit spoke up to Bambi and said "Hello! My name is Thumper." Bambi couldn't wait to explore the forest with Thumper. Birds flew past them. Thumper pointed to one and said, "This is a bird!" Bambi repeated it. "Bir-duh," he said. Then Bambi saw a butterfly fly over them and said, "That is a butterfly!"

One day, his mother took him to a new place, the meadow. There were no trees in the meadow. Since it was winter, there was no food to eat and so they went to the meadow to eat.

After a while, his mother sniffed the air and smelt fire. She asked Bambi to run, and not look back.

Then there came a loud "BANG!" Bambi's mother kept running.

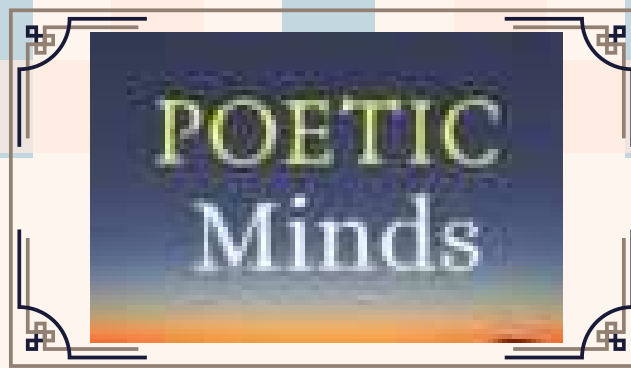
Once Bambi reached the forest he screamed "Mother mother!" But there was no reply. His father came beside him. "Your mother can't live with you any more, the fire has come to the jungle," he said. "Let's go to the lake, follow me!"

On their way, they saw a waterfall, so they jumped in it, and went to a safe island. Once the fire was gone, they went back to the forest.

After a few days Bambi and his childhood friend Faline

had a family. All the animals came to see the two new fawns. And standing nearby was their proud father Bambi, the prince of the forest.





THINGS THAT ARE BLUE

Aadhyatha 2E

I spy with my little
eyes the rain is blue,
Now I will see how
tough it is for you,
I spy with my little
eyes my shoes are
blue,
And I have to find my
bottle of glue.



I spy with my little eyes
my bag is blue,
And I can spin a hoola
hoop,
I spy with my little eyes
blue berry is blue
And I like to learn
things that are new.

YOUNG WRITERS

THE MOTHER PROGRAM

Shreya Challa, Grade 11 A

"Exploring." Judy thought to herself with a scoff, "Why does everybody expect me to be alright with everything? Why does everybody think that I want to discover everything, because I don't want to discover this-" Judy cut her train of thoughts off with a shudder, not wanting to think about death- her mother's death, to be precise. She had no intention of discovering what death felt like. Tapping the little bottle against her knee, she reminded herself that she was just being paranoid. Of course, her mother wouldn't die. Of course, she wouldn't. Judy would save her. she would.

Judy wrinkled her nose as she peered through the musty window. The bus was hurtling past tall, brown, dirty buildings, only reminding her of why she had left this place, reminding her that the reason she was here at all, the only person she would even contemplate coming back to this sewer could be gone any minute.

Judy huddled behind the dumpster, not daring to chew the burnt bread she had stolen, thankful that her underfed, six-year-old body could fit in this tiny space, for she was sure that somebody had seen her. She cursed herself for being obvious-why on earth had she been so stupid? As if going through the baker's leftovers hadn't been risky enough, she could have sworn that a lady had seen her. She'd run as fast as she could, but the lady followed her.

Judy chewed the bread. Maybe she'd go to jail now, maybe she would never see her mother again, not that her mother seemed to care-

Light pierced her eyes. Someone with inhuman strength undoubtedly had pushed the dumpster aside. She blinked in the sudden light; it was the lady who had followed her, except now she looked like an angel. She had wrinkly skin and small eyes, but to Judy, the light around her shone like a halo. Best of all, she was holding a chocolate bar in her hand.

Judy stared at it, her mouth watering. Chocolate was rare nowadays; it had all been depleted. She'd only ever tasted it once, but here- here, this lady was offering it to her. Without a second thought, Judy snatched the bar and ripped the package open.

"What's your name?" the nice lady asked. Judy, gnawing on the bar, told her name.

"Come with me," the lady beckoned. "I'll take care of you."

Judy only hesitated for one second before taking her hand. Since then, she had never looked back. Since then, the lady was her real mother, the one who loved her and took care of her.

Her mother took her to an orphanage and sent her to school. Her mother helped her with her homework and cooked her food. While Judy hated Math, her mother was a Math whiz; Calculus and trigonometry were nothing for her, and she was a natural at French. Sometimes, Judy wondered why her mother had chosen to be an orphanage caretaker when she could have been a rocket scientist or a programmer.

At age eighteen, Judy had gotten a scholarship to a university on the other side of the country, and left, never to come back to the filthy city that was her hometown. She became an archaeologist and travelled everywhere she could, her thirst for discovery and exploration unquenched. Sometimes, she talked to her mother, always ending the calls with, "I love you, mother." Her mother never said anything back, but that was alright. Judy knew she loved her; she didn't need to say a word.

YOUNG WRITERS

THE MOTHER PROGRAM

That had all crashed down when Judy got a call from her mother's doctor. "She has a virus, and she will not survive." The words knocked away Judy's breath. She had asked about the virus cure, known to work on every viral disease. "After an awkward pause, the doctor said, "It won't work." Judy had hung up.

Now, as the bus drove through the city, Judy looked at the bottle in her hand. After the call, she had pulled strings and managed to procure the cure from a friend. If the hospital wouldn't try it on her mother, she was determined to. With a screech and a jerk, the bus came to a stop in front of a clean white hospital. "General Hospital," a robotic voice announced.

Judy exited the bus and rushed up the stairs, hoping it was not too late. After stopping at the robot receptionist, she ran to her mother's room. Two men in suits were standing in front of the door, murmuring about the cancellation of the Mother Program, but Judy didn't care. She shoved past them, into the stark white room.

Time stopped. There was her mother on the bed, but she didn't look alive. She was wasted, face thin and pale, arms like sticks, very nearly a skeleton.

Judy's throat went dry. She stumbled to her mother's bedside, croaking, "Mother?" Her mother only stared at her. In a flash, Judy pulled out the bottle, tipping its contents into her mother's mouth.

Nothing happened.

Judy couldn't breathe. "Mother? Mother, I love you. Please, please don't do—" Her vision went blurry.

Her mother finally spoke weakly grabbing onto Judy's hand. "They said I could never love anyone, but if I could ... it would be you." She gave a final, small smile, and her eyes went blank.

All Judy could do was cry, hoping that this was only a bad dream, until suddenly she knew.

She knew why the medicine didn't work, she knew why her mother knew everything, why her mother worked at the orphanage, why she never said "I love you," why she was so thin but strong.

As everything came crashing down, Judy crumbled, sobbing by her mother's body, the limp body of a robot, the one person she loved so much, loved with all her heart, but who could never love her back.

The story won 3rd Place in Literati 'Story Writing' event held at school.

The End

POETIC Minds

SPRING FLOWERS

Tanishka Gupta, 3B

Spring is a beautiful season
with the sun,
People love the gardens and to
have fun;
All I have to do is to stare at
the flowers,
And the gardens in England
beside the towers;
The flowers always smile cold
or hot,
Drinking a cup of tea from a
pot;
Oh, I just love the mornings at
spring,
The birds chirping as I wear my
ring;
I hate the day when spring has
to fade,
I love my friend when she
wants to trade;
Blooming flowers how
beautiful they are,
Beauty of the countryside near
and far;
Spring is the season to sing a
song,
As the huge bell rings ding
dong!
All my friends love to talk,
And a calm nature walk;
All the colorful things I find,
Spring is so pleasant and kind;
Look at the sky above,
Let this season spread its love!



YOUNG WRITERS

THE DREAM

Rishika Pasupulati, Grade 10 B

I was walking down in one of the busiest markets in the town- the Chain market. The smell of cardamom and pepper infused in the air. The sky hazy and the sun right above me. It was hot. The skin under my leather jacket frying and my hair sticky from moisture. The gun in the back pockets of my jeans remained cold and sleek. The smooth metal brushed against my calloused skin.

I walked up to an old man. His saggy skin dominated his grey tired eyes. I gave him one of my best smiles, and the next second I was in another world. The room cold and the jute carpets under my feet rigid. The straw poked me. I could feel the pain as I was making my way to the other end of the room.

Dim lights flickered spasmodically. There were clay pots and statues around the room. It was an old and traditional room. I kept walking and reached a narrow passageway, which led me into another room. In this, the bright lights shone on the contrasting black walls. This room was even more cold. The metal on the ground sent chills to my body. I could hear a faint ringing from somewhere. I could see myself in the large stretch of mirrors. Wavy hair flowing back, blue eyes like crystal and my tall and fit physique. The ringing became louder.

My head ached from the noise. Tears rolled down from my cheeks followed by fear and anger. I reached for the gun in my jeans, and pointed it. I could see myself with the weapon in my hand, ridiculously aiming it at my temple. Click!

I could feel life leaving me. My weightless body hit the ground. A black curtain covered my eyes.

I woke up startled. Sweat drenching me and mixed emotions took me over. I was crying of happiness and fear, not knowing what to do. I was the only creature in a tiny, black room. Everything was similar

YOUNG WRITERS

THE DREAM

except that there were no mirrors and a gun. I got down the bed, weak. My legs screaming as I got out. I screamed at the top of my lungs. I screamed until my lungs were tired. Pushing the hopeless thought aside, I tried figuring out my way.

After a couple of rants, I gave up. My energy levels were down. My confidence and self-esteem were low. I felt useless. I returned and fell on the fluffy mattress, weeping. My life was ruined. Nothing made sense. Sadness filled my body and gave me different thoughts. This time it's my life.

I could clearly visualize my body walking across the street. My bag on my shoulders and files in my arm. It was a vibrant day. The sun lazy but active enough to shine. I was walking down in one of the busiest streets, researching on some spices. Cardamom and pepper lingered in the air and I could feel a cold object in my jeans brushing against my bruised skin- my phone.

I pinched myself to check whether I'm dreaming and I jumped from the attempt. I made my way across to the same old man who I had spotted before. His face saggy but young. This time I didn't jump into another room. I remained still on my legs. I didn't have to face myself, instead I remained calm. I didn't have to die. I could remember every single detail of it. I could remember the emotions that I went through. I didn't know how, but I did it. I was out of my dream which I will never go back to.

The story won 3rd Place in Literati 'Story Writing' event held at school.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

ONCE UPON A TIME

Avani, 5F

Sally and Jack were two friends who studied in the same school. They were very good at history and wanted to know more about the Earth's past. They studied many books but none of them seemed to provide accurate enough information. Therefore, they decided to discover more themselves.

Sally's father was a scientist and had recently invented a time machine. Sally told Jack that they could travel back in time with the help of the time machine. Jack thought it was a brilliant idea. They agreed to meet sharp at midnight.

The clock struck midnight. Sally and Jack crept into Sally's father's invention lab and spotted the time machine.

It was very dark, gloomy and spooky. They silently turned on the light and started the time machine. Suddenly... a whizzing sound resonated from the machine and the machine started to spin.

The spinning finally stopped, and the kids got on. It started spinning again, and this time it wouldn't stop. Sally and Jack shut their eyes tightly. Moments later, when they felt firm ground under their feet, they opened their eyes. Both of them gasped in surprise. They couldn't believe where they were.

The time machine had disappeared, but Sally and Jack found themselves standing in a place where bright, pretty flowers were blooming, birds were happily chirping and bees were busily buzzing around. They were very happy and felt more peaceful as they started to enjoy the place more.

But suddenly, they heard a loud thud from about half a mile away, and when they went to see what it was, they spotted a crowd of people fighting fighting, screaming and hitting each other.

Sally and Jack wanted to do something about it because the people were harming each other. Women were hitting each other with tree branches and fists flew everywhere between the men. Boys were wrestling each other to the ground while the girls were out of everyone's way, silently watching the fight unfold. Unable to hold it any longer, they kids started screaming for everyone to stop and tried to break everyone apart.

After forcing the mob of people to stop, Sally and Jack told them that harming the environment and each other like that is like harming themselves. To make sure fights like this never broke out again, the children decided to live there temporarily and fix the rules the people put out in their village.

They wanted to keep the world peaceful and beautiful before they got back to the present, and promised to make everything right for the villagers.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

THE DINOSAUR TIME

Shivani, 5F

"You could check in the attic then," Celia Muffin's mom said. "I'm sure there are some musical tapes up there." Celia, Josh Walnut and Dick Choco ran up the stairs to the attic. They started their search immediately.

"Hey... what is this?" Dick enquired excitedly. Celia and Josh ran to his side. "Hm... I wonder..." Josh murmured as he pressed the red button. Suddenly, the world wouldn't stop spinning.

The children landed on soft soil beneath a huge tree. "Where are we?" Celia wondered out loud. "I don't know, but this place looks really cool," Josh commented.

Suddenly, a huge head poked out of the trees and looked down at them. The realization slowly kicked in. "Run! It's a dinosaur!" Dick screamed. The kids ran and ran until they were sure they had lost the huge creature.

They tried to follow their footsteps and find their way back to the huge tree, but it was no use - they were completely lost. Celia's thoughts wandered back to when her brother told her, "Stay safe, little sis. Have amazing adventures," before he left for the navy. Celia wanted to sob in remembrance of her brother.

A loud roar cut through the silence of the forest. "It's a T-Rex! Run!" Josh screamed at the top of his lungs in fear. They ran without stopping, not caring about which way they were heading. "There's a time machine over there!" Celia, Josh and Dick hollered at the same time. The T-Rex was catching up to them. They ran faster and reached the time machine. Celia quickly pressed a blue button. The world started to spin once again.

"Woah!" Dick said with his eyes wide open.

"That..." Celia started.

"Was..." Josh continued.

"Amazing!" the three shouted together. They all clamoured together and excitedly chatted at the same time. They could not wait for another adventure. Unfortunately, they had to wait. The children ran downstairs.

"Did you find the tapes you were looking for?" Mrs. Muffin asked. The three shook their heads. They had found something bigger, better and even more beautiful.

The End



THE BEAUTY OF WINTER

Chaviv, 3C

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
I see winter robins, winter brooks,
Hanging on trees like crooks.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
I see people shivering,
Because winter is the king.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
I see piles of snow
Which tingle my toe.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
I feel goosebumps occur,
I hear the cat's chilly purr.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
I see children wearing a sweater
Which makes me feel better.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
The people pray for soup
Which makes them droop.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
The floor looks like glass
The children happily pass.

I stroll across the countryside
I open my eyes wide
I see the trees swaying in the breeze
I see winter fading with ease.

YOUNG WRITERS

THE LADIES' PROTEST

Sneha, 4B

Thud! "Where is that annoying cat?" said Yamuna. Namuni dropped the pot of dates he was holding. "Sorry, Mom," Namuni said with her mouth full of dates.

Namuni was a girl with emerald green eyes who lived in Egypt in 3000 BC. She had long golden hair, and was white as white chocolate.

Yamuna said, shocked, "Namuni, I told you, no sneaking around! Now look what you've done." Namuni said she was sorry for breaking the pot of dates.

"Someone's at the door!", screamed Yamuri, Namuni's father, and opened the door. Avani, her friend was at the door. "Come everyone, Queen Cleopatra is announcing a new law," Avani explained.

Everyone in the village was outside the Queen's palace. Cleopatra announced, "I have made a new rule: no girl can go outside their house without a man with by her side."

"What?! No way!", murmured Namuni to Avani. After going home, she screamed, "I hate Cleopatra and her arrogant rules!"

"I think we need to change this rule," Avani said.

"But how?" said Namuni, puzzled.

"You think about it. I have to go, it's very late. Bye!" Avani said and escaped.

The next day, Avani and Namuni made a group of all the people who disliked the new rule. They were mostly women. "Everyone, I have an idea. Let's break the rule first." Namuni whispered. They began their work immediately.

Queen Cleopatra heard some loud shouting outside her palace, so she went out. "What happened?" she asked.

"Quit the new rule!" a woman from the group shouted. All the people began protesting against the rule and convinced Cleopatra.

"I thought the rule was good, but it's not. I'm sorry," she said, crying.

All the Egyptians chanted, "ALL HAIL QUEEN CLEOPATRA."

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

THE BEASTS AND THE ANIMALS

Purvi Reddy, 11A

Pregnant clouds lumbered threateningly through the greying skies, even as a cacophony of animal calls rung out- beseeching their mates to come back home before the storm and her winds begin their assault. Judy, unconcerned by the gentle drizzle that pattered around her, studied the tree before her with fierce intensity, trying to match the steely gaze of the scientist next to her. It was a large fig tree whose branches splayed out far after those of his kind had stunted. It was not unique in any other sense, except for the labyrinthian network of vines that coiled and wove themselves tightly around the bark, to the point where no brown showed through anymore.

What was more thrilling was the thin shine of liquid that clocked and oozed from the vines. An ordinary eye might chalk it up to the rain or morning dew, but a touch of that liquid would sear your skin clear off. It has extraordinary vines that would typically act as a parasite helped a tree flourish, but also did so while producing their own venom. A giggle bubbled up her throat at the sheer wonder of nature and its genius. She loved travelling for this very reason, to experience the deadly nature of this world around her yet to celebrate its beauty too-its murderous charm.

Her eyes, tired of searching for clues only this scientist could apparently see, now searched the skies. Blinking out the water that dribbled on her face and mesmerized by the swirling clouds, she let her mind wander. She always wondered if the animals that so often surround her also lust after the sky as so many humans do, enchanted by its vastness and ever changing moods. She has never seen animals stare into the skies- but they must, right? How could one live with no ceilings and never think of looking up?

Still looking up, daydreaming about all the beautiful conversations she would hold with wild animals, she took a step back, and then emitted a painful shriek. Her eyes danced with black stars as her mind slowly caught up to her body. Painfully recognising how she tripped, fell and judged by the sickening twist of her foot- had probably dislodged her ankle. The thought produced another scream but the scientist she works with was now by her side, murmuring soothing words as she frantically tried to call for back up.

"Judy." She has not responded to stimuli. I will not attempt to reset the bone. I am not a medical professional. No, I do not-"With those words, she slowly lost consciousness, her eyes heavy and mind afloat.

She knew time had passed, the way one's body does, when she blinked open her eyes, adjusting to the harsh white lights of what must be a hospital. Before she could even clearly snap out of sleep, a savage scream pierced the air as a howling man was carried on to the cot next to hers. Blood from angry purple gashes rushed down his face- even as nurses struggled to hold in form, which flicked from reflex. His clothes were in tatters, barely covering his form, and his hair curled around his jaw soaked in sweat and blood. He growled! He growled at the doctor

YOUNG WRITERS

THE BEASTS AND THE ANIMALS

as he administered the morphine, the doctor unperturbed by the searing look of malice, no doubt, the wounded man flashed him. She could only gaze as his hands finally loosened from their hold around the nurse's arms, which were now bruised a similar shade of purple.

She was becoming consistently nauseous, at the ravaged state of the man's appearance, at the utter pain of his gaze, at how indifferently the staff reacted to such horror, how none of the other patients stared at the sedated form of their new peer- no hint of curiosity or empathy between them. She turned to gaze at these people now- each in their own world. One man sat in such perfect stillness she was convinced that he was dead, but for the successive twist of his eyes as he read a book. Another woman with long black hair that rested on the floor, bandaged on the entirety of her left side, but still pressed up against the hospital tiles. Yet another man who carefully whipped his head at anyone entering within five feet of him. There was a man furiously glaring at his shoes- as if they offended him.

Judy was completely disoriented. The people that surrounded her looked like her. Most of them were white and probably worked for the same institute she did. However, the social code she was raised with was not followed here. No one met her eyes or showed an interest in her existence, except the old nurse who checked her bandaged feet.

There was an eerie cloak of restless calm that stifled the room. Was she the only one who felt how laden the air was with the unspoken words one would normally expect? How everyone seemed to be dazed, eyes sharp but not seeing, as if they were uninterested in the ongoings of the world around them! Cautious but uninterested. As if they were waiting for something, as if ... did not seem to pinpoint what this reminded her of. However, she felt uncomfortable at the state of the hospitalised, at how much their manner disturbed her.

When the doctor let her go three days later on a wheelchair, she stared at her feet too. And though she felt the sun's heat warming her back- she did not look up.

The story won 2nd Place in Literati 'Story Writing' event held at school.

The End

POETIC Minds

THE MAN AND THE PAN

Saureesh 2B

There was a very wide man
Who liked to cook in a pan
When he was making the food,
His friend was rude
So the friend got cooked in the pan!

THE WIND

Shivansh, 1C

The wind is a cheetah,
It runs very fast as it can.
It oars and blows.
It hunts and takes,
People into whirlpool.

THE SEA

Pihoo, 1E

The sea is just like a snake,
Bigger than lake,
And lkes twists and Turns.
The sea is like fish,
It swims all the time,
And never stops moving.

SUMMER

Yukta, 3E

Summer is the queen of showmen,
Turning tree stumps into sandmen.
Swimming nicely in the seas,
Water is not able to freeze.
Cooling off when summer is here
The sea is cool, no need to fear.
The water went splash, splash,
splash, splash
I don't want to crash, crash, crash,
crash!
I'll go riding in a speedboat
Or else I will have to float, float!

THE MOUSE AND THE MYTH

Dhruva 2B

There was a mouse named Fyth
He always used to write myths,
But they would never fit,
So he would always sit,
And then, he wrote a smaller myth.

THE YOUNG CAT AND THE MAGICAL TEA

Aaruni 2B

There was a young cat from Hungary
Who drank some magical tea
She got some wings,
That could sing,
And so she went to Germany!

THE DANCING WATERFALL

Stuti, 1A

The waterfall is a dancer,
Dancing on the mountain tops and
hills.
She dances so much
She cannot be still.
The waterfall is a tumbler,
She tumbles around.
She tumbles so much,
That it makes a lot of sound.



YOUNG WRITERS

DO YOU HEAR THAT?

Kasvi Methi, 10 A

The bang of the gunshot was ringing in my ears, blocking out all other sounds. I could hear somebody screaming, the sound faint against the deafening, high-pitched ring. I don't know for how long I just stood there in the hallway, staring at the boy with the pistol, insanity spilling from his eyes like the blood from the wound he put in another's chest.

For a long time, I didn't hear much more. But suddenly, my ears became filled with the wailing of sirens and the buzz of many people talking over each at once. Every sound pricked my ears and hurt my head and I wish it was possible to just turn it all off. My eyes saw an empty schoolyard but all my ears heard was noise.

A small girl played on the swing set, her legs in the air, too short to touch the ground. Ignoring my throbbing ears to the best of my ability, I walked over to her.

"Do you hear that?" I asked her.

She smiled at me and patted the seat next to her. I sat down and repeated my question.

This time, she frowned, got off her swing and began pushing mine. She was very strong for a child. The swing creaked as it moved back and forth with every powerful shove.

"Stop!" I yelled again and again, bile rising in my throat.

She didn't stop- until the swing's chain snapped, throwing me on the hard concrete footpath.

**

"How is Allison?" Mr. Raskin asked, looking at his daughter, who lay on the hospital bed, motionless.

"She's fairly stable, but we don't know when ..." Dr. Dunn trailed off, Mrs. Raskin who was caressing Allison's hand, sighed and wiped away a tear that had fallen on it and whispered, "Come back to me, Ally. I miss you."

**

I didn't feel anything as I stood up, dusted myself and turned around to shout at the little girl. But now, she stood in front of another older girl.

YOUNG WRITERS

DO YOU HEAR THAT?

"Come back to me Ally. I miss you." I heard a very familiar voice say.

"Did you say something?" I asked the unnervingly and unmistakably gorgeous girl. Smirking but without a word, she took my hand in hers and led me to a door that I hadn't noticed before.

On it, there was a label. I pulled away trying to read it. The letters looked familiar, I definitely knew them, but the words were ... undecipherable.

Something somebody said to me came to me in a flash of images and sounds. "In dreams, it isn't possible to feel pain or read."

The girl disappeared. My eyes saw darkness, amplifying the sounds in my ears.

A woman was crying. My sister? A friend? My mother?

"She will be fine, Mrs. Raskin. She's recovering fast."

Beep. Beep. Beep.

"This isn't real. This isn't real. This isn't real." I say to myself.

My nails were digging into my palm, drawing blood but without any sensation.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

"This isn't real. This isn't real. This isn't real."

**

The janitor opened the door of the room belonging to the girl who had been brought in a few months ago after a shootout at her school.

Every day, he would walk into her room and read to her a book on lucid dreaming. But today, her eyelids fluttered. Her eyes were a beautiful blue.

The story won 2nd Place in Literati 'Story Writing' event held at school.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

THE HARE AND THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE TOAD

Sahasra Kamala, 4C

There were once a hare, a grasshopper and a toad. Grasshopper was friendly with both Hare and Toad.

“Why is Grasshopper friendly with Toad?” Hare said to herself. “I will make a potion that will set them apart forever!”

The next day, at the market, Hare finally found Toad and Grasshopper. “Grasshopper, look at these tomatoes! They are so red!” Toad said. “Come to my house and I will make soup.”

“Toad and Grasshopper would you care to come to my house for dinner?” Hare asked. “Why, of course,” said the Grasshopper.

That night, Toad went to get Grasshopper, who was waiting for him. Then they went to Hare’s house.

“Welcome!” Hare said. “Please get a carrot before coming in.”

While they were getting the carrot, Hare poured poison into Toad’s food. Before eating, Grasshopper said, “For us grasshoppers, we must kick the table.” Saying so, he kicked the table, swapping Toad’s plate with Hare’s. Then they ate. All of a sudden, Hare was dead as ice. Toad had been saved!

“Thank you, you saved my life! How can I repay you? I insist you to come to my house for a proper meal. Although my wife is not home, I shall cook,” Toad said gratefully.

“My dear Toad, I shall come,” Grasshopper said.

So they went home and Toad made yummy soup without poison!

Moral: Good friends don’t plot against each other.

The End



POETIC Minds

WINTER IN VIRGINIA

Sriditya, 3D

Winter is so cold,
And the snowmans stand so bold.
Snowflakes fall on the floor,
It's so hard to open the door.
Put heaters on each in hall,
But be careful not to fall.
Eat hot food,
But be in a good mood.
Have fun outside,
But come back inside.
Have a snowball fight,
On the light at night.
Get ready for summer,
It's really going to be a bummer.
Enjoy Christmas,
Because you're really going to miss it.

THE GUITARIST

Aryan, 4D

n a concert,
The singer was expert,
The drummer was in dirt,
The guitarist was in hurt,
"Ow! Ow! Ow!" He cried,
The one who hit him had to hide,
In the ambulance there was a hole,
When he fell in it there was coal,
He touched the coal and magic happened,
He saw the past,
He ran fast,
He came to the concert,
Without a hurt,
Now in the concert he could fit,
So he wrote a poem about it!

WATERFALL

Farit Gupta, 1F

The waterfall is like a singer,
He is singing all around,
He is dancing all around,
He is always moving all around.

The waterfall is like a housefly,
It keeps on making noise,
In a very loud voice,
It keeps on buzzing and it is always humming.

YOUNG WRITERS

THE INDUS VALLEY TUNNEL

Aadhya, 4F

Long ago, there lived a small ten-year old, beautiful girl named Julian. She lived in Harappa. Her father worked in a cotton mill and her mother was a housewife.

One day, she went out to play . After an hour, her friends started to leave for their homes and even she was coming back when she tripped. There was a rope where she fell down. She picked it up and pulled it hard, curious to know what the rope was doing there. There was a rumbling sound and a tunnel opened.

She was about to scream, but when she realized others would come and ask what had happened, and she would have no answer. She whispered to herself "Wow! What a tunnel. I think there's treasure in there" So she went through the tunnel without even thinking once. She went deeper and deeper until she was stuck with water in front of her.

There was a mall boat at the bank .She said "I think I should go from here because this seems like the only way". She sat in it and found spider webs on the edges of the boat.

"I think no one even knows about this tunnel. I'm the first one". She started rowing when she found three passages. Now she was confused. She went a little further when she was blocked by a wall. She said "I think this is the wrong way". When she turned around, there was another wall! She couldn't find any way out. She sat down and cried "How will I ever get out of this tunnel?"

Suddenly someone appeared in front of her. It was like a girl. She said "Oh little girl, are you lost?" Julian was surprised but she answered "Ye-e-ss". "Don't worry! I can help you," said the girl. "Oh really!" said Julian.

"I'm a worker. Myself Shadow. I am going to help you because I like you". She pressed a button, and then a door opened. They went through it. They went through slippery corridors with slimy walls.

Finally, they reached the surface. Julian said "Thank you Shadow" and the girl disappeared. Her parents were very happy to see her and they all lived happily ever after.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

RADEK SAVES SUNIL

Abhidnyan Haveli 6C

"Radek! Sunil!" Mrs Dhawen called them to join the family at the breakfast table for setting up of supper.

"Coming! Just a second," A voice was heard from the hindmost corner of the house, it was Sunil, who had been reading adventures of Tin-Tin for an hour.

Sunil, aged 12, was a chubby, hostile boy with blonde hair and his favourite thing was to insult his house robot, Radek, who used to remind him to wake up for school and kept questioning him about homework. He would even be happy if Radek died in an inferno.

"Radek, can you fix my broom with your gadgets till mother and Sunil set up the breakfast table?" Mr Dhawen yelled out when he entered their room.

"Yes father, I will help as it is my duty," Radek answered dutifully.

"Well, err... Sunil can you please take the plates, cutlery and place them on the table?" Mr Dhawen requested. He sat up staring at him.

"Fine, Dad," he called out sleepily. He walked dejectedly as if he was being forced to do things against his will. He used to think Radek was brave and felt angry on Radek's briskness and his achievements at home. Sunil felt angry tears seep out while these things happened; he felt jealous and mostly slurred while conversing with Radek. He felt like kicking Radek, which would be the nerviest day of his lifetime.

After their supper, they all sat on their anti-gravitational chairs which had been specially ordered from Latvia and were some of the most ubiquitous objects at anyone's house.

"Let's go for a walk, my dear," Mr Dhawen said lying on the chair, in a romantic tone.

"Fine," Mrs Dhawen replied with her face red due to beer. After some time they both stepped on to the spaceship wearing spacesuits.

As they stepped in the spaceship, Sunil yelled, "Here is my chance to visit the lake and the forest!"

"Wait, I am coming too!" Radek shouted with all his might.

Sunil started running with three flit bits and detectors on each of his hands. Radek was agile enough to make his way there. Sunil jumped into the lake, which had chilly and quite deep water.

"Hey, I am coming to rescue you", Radek spat from his mouth.

Radek did not know that Sunil knew swimming; he jumped into the lake and as Sunil kicked through the water, Radek, who was behind him, was severely hammered on his head. It was a fearsome attack, which affected his memory for those five minutes.

They had dashed into the forbidden forest; suddenly they heard the swirling of trees. They looked around. It was the space hunter, who had pointed the bazooka towards Sunil.

"Do or Die!" he started launching missiles at the both of them. All of a sudden, Radek pounced on him and threw the bazooka away. Lightning Radek from above and his memory went away. Later, with tears in his eyes, Sunil picked up Radek and took him home...

The End



MERLIN AND HIS WIN OVER MARGRET

Sahana, 6C

Margret and her slave lived
in the trees,
For a troll, she was quite
obese,
Ragged hair and eerie eyes,
Using magic to spread her
lies.

One day she hatched a
plan,
To marry the king and rule
the land,
She would become the
queen and enslave all,
And order her slaves to
darn her shawls.

She said some words that
sounded mumbles,
At once her appearance
went from junglish,
To Lady Katrina and her
moonlike face,
And of the troll? There
wasn't a trace.

She ran to the palace where
she wed,
The king whose previous wife
was dead.

Then she became heir to the
throne
So she could rule the land as
her own.

But she couldn't escape the
sharp eyes of Merlin.

He knew that the queen
wasn't, as she claimed, from
Berlin.

He noticed what was amiss at
once,

And made up his mind to
catch the dunce.

Merlin used his own
enchantment,
At once Margret lost her
enhancement.

Back to being trollish with her
eerie eyes,
The king had her flogged for
all her lies.

YOUNG WRITERS

REALITY'S AGONY

Arushi Gupta, 9C

When reality cuts you off from the rest of the world, at unpredictable moments, that is when we realise how agonising life can be. I was living a happy life, safe from the brutal reality: living in my own fantasy. Then, out of nowhere, the universe greedily snatched away my only hope: my only faith, my dad. They say he died in a car crash but who knows if they're hiding the dirty, rotten truth inside, waiting until it explodes?

Everyday is torture. There's nothing to wake up to except darkness, which is busy eating away at your innocent yet guilty heart. My mom died when I was born, so I'm living alone, lost among the cold dark sea, trying to light up the last of hope. I got up from my bed and entered actuality. I quickly left the home of broken memories and went onto the grand shopping mall, where I work.

Along the way, traffic popped up. Seems like the universe was on reality's side today. As I waited, I fingered my necklace which was filled with this weird liquid. "Keep it safe..." he said. Those were the last words from my father, before the day I would hear the news of betrayal- his death. After what seemed like forever, I pulled into the parking lot. I went inside and stared at the living beauty. It was enormous with breathtaking structure. It definitely upgraded the word 'fantasy'. As I walked by a shop, I saw a mannequin that looked just like me. I looked with suspicion as my mind began to battle confusion. The eyes seemed to follow me, the rays of innocence staring into my soul. More than fear, it gave me the wicked feeling of panic.

I went to the washroom and tried to run away from this intricate maze of reality. As I closed the door, behind me, stood a figure which looked exactly like me. "AHHHH!" I screamed. "Could you... like... shut up?" she said casually, like she did this everyday. "Okay..." I said, my nerves getting the better of me. "Oh, stop acting like a fool, Sara. I'm your identical twin, Tara. Dad must have told you about me," she said, slightly annoyed.

It was then that my brain decided to tell me this vital piece of information: dad had mentioned something about a long lost twin. Could it be true? My mind, somewhat aroused by curiosity, asked the question that would have been nominated for the most stupid question in eternity: "Why are you here?" "Is your brain mentally damaged? Wherever that serum is, I need it. NOW!" she said in a sassy voice, with a stern look on her face. How could she even be related to me? "What?" I asked again, filled with confusion. "That's it, I'm out of patience." Saying that, she pulled her gun, intensifying the already rising fears. "Our father was a Russian spy. The serum is vital, well, because it can make you the most powerful human being on earth," she said in a monotone voice.

I was taken aback for while. Then with a blank mind, I tried to make sense of the words that seemed like nonsense. "Russian. Spy. WHAT?" I asked quickly. The words finally spilling out of my mouth. "He really didn't tell you huh?" she asked with pity. I shook my head.

"So much for a father," she heaved with a sigh.

I just stood there, not afraid of the gun, but afraid of the fact that my father, who was my only companion, never told me this. "The serum..." she muttered, eyeing my necklace. "No way, kiddo. You ain't getting this," I said with a smile on my face. You would be astonished by the fact that cruelty could go to such an extent.

She shot the gun. Mercy decided to disappear at that moment as the cold, hardened bullet lodged deep into my left arm. I screamed in pain, my soul exploding with agony.

Before she could attack me, an explosion shook the room; fires breaking out everywhere, letting out their forgotten fury. My necklace went flying across the room. "Nooo!" I screamed as the excruciating pain overwhelmed me. My vision got blurred, trying to shade itself from the agony. I lay on the ground, sprawling with pain.

A vague shape, that looked like my dad, came towards me. Is this it? Was I in heaven? "Dad?" I asked, with hope finally cascading through my dying body. "No kiddo. It's your dad's brother. The one and only uncle!" he said with an evil chuckle. After that, the world went pitch black.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

RADEK'S MYSTERIOUS NOTE

Hansini, Grade 6C

It was a regular day at the Dhawen family's house. They lived at the edge of a forest near a lake. The lake was quite shallow at the beginning and got deeper and deeper. Radek, the family's robot was supervising Sunil, making sure that he wouldn't wade in too deep.

"Sunil! That's the boundary. Don't you dare cross it!" yelled Radek, his eyes focused on Sunil.

"It's all right! I'm grown up now! I don't need a stupid robot to control everything I do!" snapped Sunil. He really wished this tiresome robot were never in his life, monitoring everything he did, and fussing over him as if he was still a baby.

"That is it Sunil. You are crossing the line," growled Radek. 'I must call your parents if you behave indecisively and continue to be insolent.'

"Oh really?" scoffed Sunil. "I'll call them first."

He double tapped a minuscule, square device on his shoulder, which had intricate lines etched on it. It glowed, and a hologram of his mom appeared on it.

"Mom! Radek's being annoying!" said Sunil.

"Sweetie, Radek does everything for your best, and, you have to listen to him," his mom said, looking tired as if they had been through this a couple of times.

"Fine! You might have mom and dad fooled but I saw you going into your bedroom hastily, without even finishing dinner! You keep disappearing into your room, you are always on the phone, arguing with someone. You think I don't notice all this? Well, I know you are up to something and I'll see that you are chunked out of this house as soon as possible!" Sunil glared at Radek before he slammed the door shut and went into his house.

"So, he knows. I must be more careful now," said Radek softly, his face grim and looking determined.

'Well, if he thinks I am not going to do anything about this, he is wrong. Let me go into his room', thought Sunil smiling shrewdly.

He quickly went into Radek's room and ordered the door to get closed and bolted. The chip heard it and it automatically closed.

He ruffled through Radek's desk and at the bottom, he saw something totally different from the rest of Radek's possessions: A note.

'Meet me. 11 pm. Today. Usual place.'

Sunil gasped and then smirked slyly. 'He thinks I don't know about this. He'd better start packing his bag because I'll follow him and catch him red-handed today', thought Sunil.

At 10:55 pm, Sunil crept out of his room, dressed in all black. After a minute or so, Radek appeared out of his room, glancing around nervously. Radek quietly opened the door and slid outside.

Sunil followed Radek deeper and deeper into the woods. Now, second thoughts arose in Sunil's head. 'What if I get found? What if I won't be able to find my way out?' Sunil shook these thoughts away and looked at Radek. His hand was twitching, as it always did when he was anxious. Radek turned around a tree and the rustling of dry leaves ceased. Silence swallowed Radek. Sunil stood there, petrified, his heart pounding harder and harder.

"So, ready to disclose the information?" said a hoarse, mean voice.

"No! No! No!" yelled Radek. "They are my family! I just can't!" his voice choked with emotion.

"Then you know the consequences," reprimanded the voice.

Sunil shuffled on his feet. This was too much for him. Realization dawned on him... he couldn't believe that he hated Radek for all these years when Radek was willing to give his life for his family. The man's eyes shone with hatred. He smiled cruelly, looking at Radek with vengeance.

"RUN!" screamed Radek.

Radek and Sunil ran for their lives. "Run f-faster, he won't be able to reach us if we get into radius of 50 meters close to our house. As they ran, Sunil fell over a wild branch and grazed his knee. Radek lifted him up and they sprinted. Sunil looked back and saw the man's hand stretching out. Any moment now, he would have grabbed him a shriek rung in the still night. Sunil looked back and saw the man sprawled on the floor.

"B-But why did this happen," panted Sunil. As they went back into the house Radek looked at him and said, "Not now, later".

After their adventure, Sunil trusted Radek with all his life.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

THE PAINTING

Shalini Nannapaneni 10B

"Yes sir", "I'm nearly there, just give me five minutes", Cee said putting her battered phone back in her pocket. The trees before her gave way to a clearing. There sat a large house, painted ivory white. The entire front yard was filled with rose beds. Smiling at the beauty of the house, Cee parked the car and stepped out into the lawn.

She took a deep breath taking in the sweet scent of the roses as she made her way to the door and raised her hand to knock. Whoosh! As if on cue, the door swung open before her hand had reached the knocker. The door revealed a tall, wiry man with a long moustache that awkwardly curled at its ends. "Come in", he beckoned stepping aside. Then he turned around. "Everyone come down, she is here, and bring the stretcher for grandma," he yelled in a high pitched tone. "For accuracy", he said responding to Cee's confused expression.

The living room was grand. It had a fireplace with real wood and a large oil painting hung above it. Several other portraits hung on the wall, each a different person. "Who are those people?" Cee asked. "Oh, just victims," the grandma who sat behind her said. Cee raised an eyebrow. "Victims of death in our family's history, dear", the tall man quickly added. "Now why don't we begin," a large lady on the sofa said, beckoning Cee to the easel. "Yes ma'am," Cee said smiling at her.

"Now remember darling, you only have us to tell you what the girl who passed away looked like". "We expect only the most accurate painting, that is why we have chosen someone of your skill," a man with a walking stick said. "Of course," Cee nodded. "As I remember, she had light brown hair as a child," the grandma said. "Yes, but it turned much lighter as she grew up, " a little girl exclaimed. Cee dipped her brush in the brown. "Now she didn't have my striking features, but she did have quite a sharp jawline, the fat lady said. Holding back her laughter, Cee added the detail. The painting began to take form, but night had descended quickly.

"It's getting dark, I'll come back tomorrow," Cee said looking out of the window. "Oh no, you must stay for the night, darling," the man with the cane smiled. "Sicilia here makes the best chicken pie," he said winking at a skinny lady on the sofa across from Cee. "Also, there has been news of wild dog attacks around here at this time." "It would be best for you to stay here for the night and leave tomorrow."

Drawn by the family's kindness Cee agreed to stay, and the food was just as great as it had been said it would be. The bed was a bit hard in the middle, but overpowered from exhaustion, Cee quickly fell asleep. "Hey, wake up," a voice screeched. Cee woke up, to the grandma staring at her. Cee screamed. "Shhh," the grandma hushed, sitting back in her wheelchair. "Come, finish the painting," the old lady said. Cee glanced at the clock. It was two o'clock in the morning. "Now," Cee asked. "It's best we get it over with before the children wake up," she said. Unwillingly, Cee got up and followed the lady downstairs.

Strangely, the entire family except the children was already down, fully dressed. "Hurry up, sweetie," Sicilia said glancing at the clock. Confused and tired, Cee sat down at the easel and began to paint. Detail by detail, Cee eventually finished the painting.

Stretching her arms, she looked at the finished piece. Her eyes rose high on her forehead. "Why, this girl I've painted looks exactly like me," Cee exclaimed, her eyes glued to the canvas. The man with the cane grinned and stood up. He walked up to her and placed his hand on her shoulder. "No dear," he started. He lifted his cane up behind her head and brought it down onto the back of her head with a deafening crash. Cee opened her mouth to scream but it was too late. She slipped off the stool and fell to the floor in a pile of meat and bones. "It is you," the man finished wiping his cane on his pants.

The End

POETIC Minds

THE PROGRESS OF THE WOODS

Ishkrit Singh, 5D

All the woods, all the nature,
Such an interesting feature,
With absolutely nothing man-
made,
Trees giving the only shade.
In the dark, the wind, like a wolf it
howls,
Bringing many nocturnal owls,
Such an amazing thing, the wood,
“Could it be bad?” you ask: it
could.
Full of vicious bugs like spiders,
And it’s fully without ciders,
Because of this, it’s destroyed, we
think,
“Finally eradicated!” See the link?
Because ever since those humans
came,
They always thought that it was
lame,
When it was destroyed, we just
left,
The woods, for us, pay our debt.
The woods didn’t progress, not a
bit,
Because it had, all of it,
Started as the only boss
Then ended it in chaos.
‘Cause humans came and all of it,
Was destroyed, bit by bit.

MISTER DONKEY

Vivan Vijayraman, 3A

Once a donkey called
Mister Donkey
Always played with a big
monkey.
He never found a hive
And said he’s only five.
That silly old Mister
Donkey!
Dream World
Tall, cold and snowy.
Hard and difficult to
climb.
Houses there are small.
Population there is less.
Not many animals live.



YOUNG WRITERS

THE TRAINED BIRD AND THE MASTERS' DILEMMA

Shreyas, 4D

Robodo woke up very late on Friday. His mother was busy with her work. Robodo's father was a trader who owned a house with a courtyard. Robodo's sister, on the other hand, was so quick that she was already dressed up. As Robodo came into his sister's room, he said, surprised, "Oh, sister! You are so quick, you are already done, it seems like I have to be alert!" his sister chuckled.

"Lazy big brother, do you not know when to shower?" Robodo felt a bit ashamed, but he went to take a bath.

Robodo finished bathing but it was just the beginning. His mother was in the kitchen where she had left the bags of wheat, but as she searched more and more, and she came to know that they were not there! Robodo, meanwhile, was playing with a parrot that he had trained. The two of them had a good relationship. He had trained it so well, all by himself, that he could even understand human language!

His mother came out of the kitchen and said to him,

"Robodo can you go to the nearest farm and get me a bag of wheat and in exchange give him these coconuts?" Robodo never refused his mother's orders, so he took a bullock cart and began his journey. His mother did not give him his parrot, but he still went. Robodo approached a farm; took the wheat; gave them the coconuts and went back to his bullock cart. Robodo then felt a little sleepy, so he thought that he should have a short nap and he did.

The wind blew hard; the bell in the cart rang and Robodo's cart moved because of that. The bullocks started moving somewhere with the cart, unnoticed by Robodo. Soon the cart ended up in a forest. Robodo woke up; he called for help, but no one responded, and he was in the forest for more than an hour.

His parrot was smart and soon wondered why her master had not yet returned. It knew everything that Robodo's had said. It went for a search for a long time and found a farm. It saw footprints and followed. It came to a green, luscious forest and there, it heard someone shouting. The parrot went closer and saw her master, Robodo.

Robodo was very happy to see her.

"Yes, I'm safe!" Robodo said. The parrot led the way, and soon, they returned home. That night, Robodo said to himself,

"If I had not ever trained my parrot, or if I had never had a parrot, I would have been stranded in that forest for the rest of my life!" Saying that, he slept early that night in relief.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

QUEEN HATSHEPSUT'S RING

Aranya, 4A

In a land far, far away in Northern Africa in Egypt, there lived a man called Shun Xamen. He was an architect. Today, he and his workers had to work, because Queen Hatshepsut had died, and they had to build a tomb for her. "This is a very mournful day," Xamen said to his workers and crew. "We must build a fine tomb for Her Majesty to live a peaceful afterlife. Now let's make the mummy of the Queen."

They wrapped the Queen's body with fine cotton and took her best clothes and ornaments, which were kept safely in a corner behind them.

Then disaster struck. An ornament, the Queen's best ring, was missing! An afterlife could never be completed without an ornament. Xamen was horrified. If Pharaoh Thutmose III heard of this, he would throw Xamen to drown in the river Nile. "Workers, have you seen anyone run from this area?" Xamen asked. But all he heard was a murmur from the workers.

But suddenly, "There he is!" was the shout he heard from his workers. And, far away, he saw someone dressed up as a worker riding on his horse. Xamen and the workers ran for the stables. Luckily they were close enough. They mounted the horses and rode.

When they caught the robber, they carried him towards the palace, towards the Pharaoh. "You will be rewarded with a larger salary!" said the Pharaoh to Xamen and his workers.

"And as for you, you are a ruthless robber who dared to steal an ornament of the Queen. You will be thrown to drown in the Nile!" thundered the Pharaoh to the robber. Xamen, who couldn't believe his luck, bowed to the Pharaoh, kept the ring safely back and continued to build Queen Hatshepsut's tomb.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

ESCAPE

Aradhya Malladi, Grade 10 B

I open my eyes, my surroundings completely blurry, as if hidden from me. Slowly, my eyes begin to focus on the distinct, dark shapes in the distance until I find myself lying on a field engulfed in grass. I push myself off the ground, a searing pain overcoming my body as I stumble on to my feet cautiously. I mumble to myself.

"This is obviously a dream."

I look around. A deadly silence hangs in the air, no sign of anyone to accompany me.

"It'll be over soon."

I glance at my feet, now covered with bruise like spots.

"Or not."

I gulp as I make my way forward, the grass slinging my feet with every step I take.

"God, I wish I had shoes."

That very instant, a pair of converses drops down, landing in the grass in front of me.

"Well then," I put them on, relieved. "That certainly helps."

As I continue forward, my eyes dart every which way; my heart begins to throb in my chest; and I feel my knees buckle as I approach a dark and seemingly endless forest, strange noises echoing from its depths. I take a step forward, which is immediately followed by a strong gust of wind.

"Escape."

I read aloud, my glance fixated upon a sign uncovered by the wind.

"Okay. I can do this. I am not a coward. It's only a forest. A really creepy one, but that doesn't matter."

I begin to walk inside the forest. Strangely, as I continue to walk forward, the forest begins to brighten, as though by unseen lights in the sky that turn on one at a time.

"This is actually relaxing," I laugh. "Oh, who am I kidding? I am terrified."

I plaster on a fake smile as I walk, deeper and deeper, into the forest.

After an hour of walking, I sit down to rest, leaning onto a hollow tree; its strength absolutely astounds me. I close my eyes, praying for the dream to end. As I am on the verge of drifting off into sleep, a monstrous noise awakens me. My eyes open, only to be blinded by a brilliant light. As the light dims, I see a progressing image: a little girl skipping ecstatically to school, being greeted by her friends. I smile, but not for long, as my head begins to ache uncontrollably. The video continues.

"No. Please stop," the girl stays, now cornered by a group of children, mischievous smiles on their faces. It fades and I see the happy little girl, now sobbing in the corner of her class, alone.

The image disappears, and the pain in my head is gone, vanishing as suddenly as it began.

"Great. I'm in a weird forest and now I'm hallucinating. And what's up with this headache?"

I rub my head and get up, completely disoriented.

I continue to encounter vivid images at almost every nook and cranny of the forest. My feet are bruised and mysteriously swollen; my arms are limp; my head continues to throb, overwhelmed by the sudden flashes of light and the relentless memories I see, of a little girl who grew up too fast.

I see the pain in her eyes as she watches her father leave her family. I see the depth of

YOUNG WRITERS

ESCAPE

emotion that she puts in her music as she watches everybody abandon her. I see her in bed, with excruciating thoughts in her mind as she has mental breakdowns. Who is this girl? As I wonder, it dwells on me.

"Who am I?" I whisper to myself. I realize now that I cannot remember a single thing about me. My name, my age, my likes, my dislikes: not a single ounce of knowledge in my mind.

"Why is this happening to me?" I sob. "I want to leave. I need to leave."

I sit on the forest floor, my sobs going unheard in this peculiar place.

Amidst my pain, I look up. If I want to leave, I need to face this. Whatever kind of a sick experience this is, I have a gut feeling that I have to keep going. I will never reach the end if I don't. I push myself up until I am standing on my feet and I walk. Now I hear a faint voice seemingly coming from some place afar.

"Mama. Come back."

I hold my tears as I urge myself to go ahead. I do not know whose voice I just heard, but every inch of my soul tells me to go forward. So I do just that.

Memories continue to engulf my being. I see this girl growing up, becoming a strong woman that truly overcomes any obstacle that comes her way.

Finally, my rapid footsteps slow down as I see a magnificent white barrier in front of me. An excruciating pain now fills my head and every inch of my body, as thousands of voices are all mixed into each other, flooding my mind, along with images: images that I now see are of laughter; of joy; of pure nirvana. I need to run. I scream, my power stronger than ever, as I run into the barrier.

"She's opening her eyes!" My eyes flutter open, focussing on a figure in front of me: a boy, with the most curious eyes I have ever seen, and a girl standing next to me, her eyes glistening with tears.

"Moma. Thank you for coming back."

My son. My daughter. Everything comes flooding back into my mind: the experience I have just been through, my family, the car accident I have been in.

"Your mom's quite the fighter, ain't she now?"

A man in a white coat walks slowly up to me.

"I've never seen a recovery quite that fast in my entire career!"

The man comes up to me.

"You're a great mom, Anna. I hope you know that. The only thing that could've made you wake up from a coma that fast is your love for your children."

I smile. I escaped.

The story won 1st Place in Literati 'Story Writing' event held at school.

The End

YOUNG WRITERS

THE FATED GIRL

Mahathi Kattamuri ,12A

The wild, frenzied throbbing of the music behind Judy eventually faded into a dull pulse as she pushed past the doors to the nightclub. Humans, she thought with a shake of her head. They lived each day not knowing if it was their last and yet, the fear of death didn't manage to snuff out the fires in their eyes, wrench the smiles from their faces, or steal the ease and grace from their bodies. She allowed herself a small smile--and then immediately schooled her features into a mask of unyielding indifference. Smiles were beneath a creature like her.

A creature born from ash and gloom and the swooping wings of the night. For she was a soul-catcher, collector of the other-worldly remains of living beings. It was her mandate, thrust upon her by Death Incarnate, and she spent her days prowling the Earth to abide by it--even though she craved more.

And yet...yet, she felt a certain kinship with these humans and their ridiculous lives; they lived unaware of when she would come for their souls but burned all the more brightly for it. Dashing off into the unknown, armed with nothing but a finely-honed sense of curiosity was something she held dear too. It was what kept her true to her morbid duties, what caused her to begrudgingly admire the humans as her own.

A sharp blast of the music from inside shook her out of her reverie and she turned to the sound. The doors had opened again, and a young girl stepped out from the splintered, shrieking lights. Judy glanced at her, at her pretty features and her nimble form, at the sweat that glowed with an odd sheen on her skin.

Her most recent quarry. How at ease she looked, this girl. How unfettered and unbothered. After all, she had no way of

YOUNG WRITERS

THE FATED GIRL

knowing that tonight would be her last dance. Her last glimpse of the moon. Her last breath. Tonight would be her last.

Judy forces her gaze away. The pain had not dulled, even after millennia of hunting the ones she was ordered to and, after they passed on, ensnaring their souls. Every time, she felt that pain when she reached for them--and she wasn't supposed to. Creatures like her never felt anything and if Death Incarnate ever found out...No, she would stick to her duties, collect her souls, and explore the unknown that was the human race. So she forced her gaze away from the fated girl, who still had twelve minutes, and looked around.

The potholed roads were punctuated by bent streetlights, which cast a small halo of yellow light. A wind snaked through the street, hissing at the doors of the nightclub and entwining itself around the few passers-by. Judy looked at the skies--the glorious, triumphant skies--and knew that, in the end, at least she would have the skies to keep her company. Creatures like her weren't supposed to feel but she did so much more than that--she lost herself in nightclubs, cried over the damning beauty of sunrises, poured her life out to the stars above. She had discovered many new things on this Earth, each one of them sustaining her like some heavenly elixir, but she craved more. Much more.

"Excuse me," a voice said behind her. Judy continued her vigil of the sky--no mortal could lay eyes on her and she had never once been spoken to in millenia.

"Excuse me, miss," the voice said again, more insistently this time. The fated girl stepped precariously into Judy's line of vision and for a moment the world stopped.

And started. And stopped again.

YOUNG WRITERS

THE FATED GIRL

For the impossible had happened. The fated girl had been speaking to Judy. Judy, who had gone unseen ever since she had been born out of that awful ash and gloom and night. Judy, soul-catcher, liege of Death Incarnate. And this girl...

"Yes?" breathed Judy, staring at her with an intensity she reserved for her next unknown. For she knew, knew what this could only mean.

"Do you know what time it is? My phone just died on me and I booked a taxi, and it's supposed to be here in six minutes, but it's been twelve since I've made it outside," the girl said in one long breath.

Her words echoed in Judy's head. Twelve minutes. She knew. The fated girl had to know.

"Do you--do you know who I am?" Judy whispered, her voice rough. She'd never had to use it until now. The fated girl stared at her like she was insane.

"Look, lady, I only asked--" the girl prattled on, but Judy didn't need to hear any more. This was the moment she had been waiting for her entire existence. This fated girl, this mortal, had released her. She had been scared out of her mind when she had first been spoken to, but now...now, she was free. If the girl had seen her, that meant she was free.

Free to explore the last unknown that was left for Judy to explore. The only unknown she'd been craving for so long. The only unknown left.

Death itself.

The story won 1st Place in Literati 'Story Writing' event held at school.

The End

POETIC Minds

THE CHANGE IN US

Sonal Nagesh, 9D

She was a sweetheart, a caring one
As kind as God, an incarnation
I was her partner, together we won
Our childhood, our past, our future at once.
All we used to do was play and laugh
We did everything together, with fun coursing through us
We were friends, with an unbreakable bond
But time changed everything for us.
As we journeyed through our life
We always fought, we never agreed
This left us alone in the dangerous world
Without support or guidance, left in the dark.
The shadows had taken over our minds
Very delicate, not prepared for life
It made us emotionally unstable
Wondering whether we had the right to live.
We made new friends, leaving each other alone
They lead us through a variety of problems
They made us realise our broken friendship
Our forgotten past and everyone in it.
We went to each other and apologised
Together, we reminisced our lovely past
Shared out feelings, our memories together
Just like we used to, repeating our childhood.
Then we realised that the change in us
Was maturity, a very sensitive change
It played with our emotions and our thoughts
It changed the way we looked at life.
It showed us what the word was like
How we should solve our problems
It showed us the path of success in friendship
By showing us the path of failure first.
It was time who made us realise this
Wonderful change in our lives
It brought back our past and our childhood
It showed us the path of our future.



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**Tellapur Village, Ramachandrapuram Mandal,
Sanga Reddy Dist 502 032
Ph: 08455 297919 / 81793 81535
E-mail: info@manthanschool.org
www.manthanschool.org**