



It's time to write
a new chapter...

EDUCATION
Tute



Shelf Care
English Society



2024-2025

Shelf Care English Society

Creative Writing, Creative Thinking

Yesterday

I was inspired

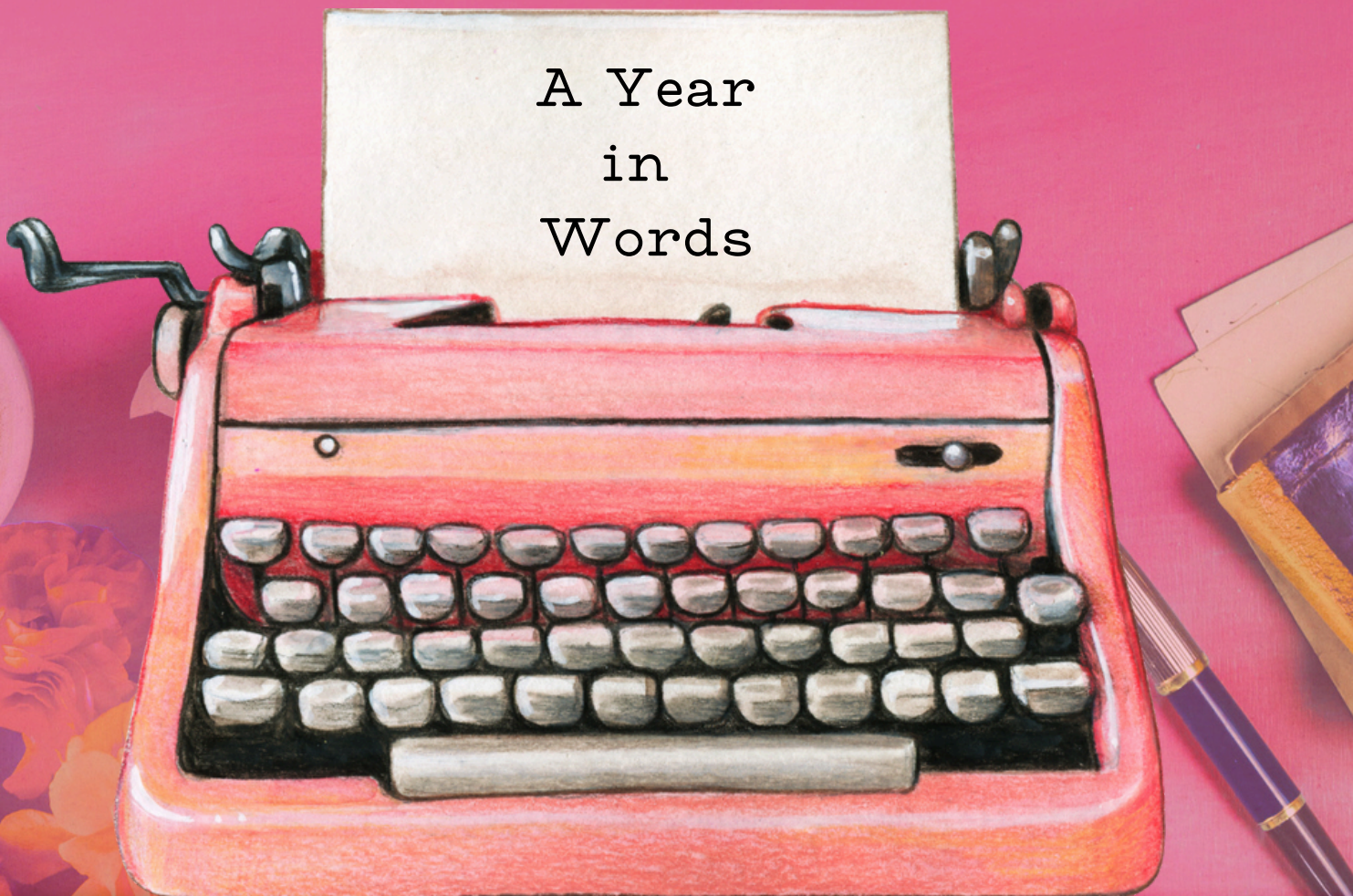
Today

I am encouraged

Tomorrow

I will be successful

A Year
in
Words

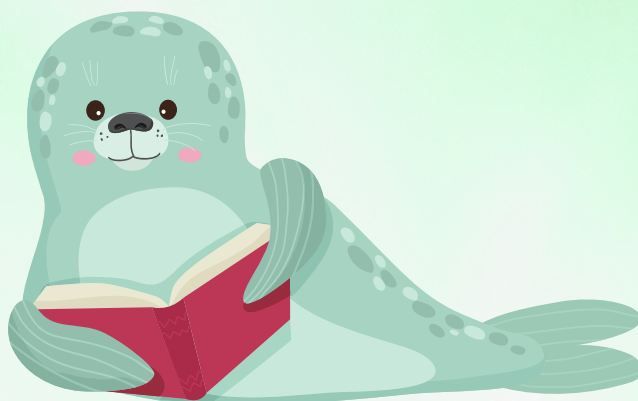




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Hey there!

Welcome to a very special edition of the Shelf Care newsletter! It's great to have you here. Some of us have been here before, haven't we? This is our second year of Shelf Care now!

Similarly to last year, we wanted to collate a bumper edition of Shelf Care. This includes all of the fantastic work that you have submitted across the academic year; recognition of your creativity, motivation, enthusiasm, and passion... a celebration, if you will, of your amazing successes! Let's show off that this year has been BIGGER and very exciting - we have almost doubled our submissions from the previous year! That's a lot of writing and a lot of reading, but we all love it.

Shelf Care began from a student suggestion and a class discussion back in December 2023. It was a thought and a dream, and in a short amount of time, it blossomed into an incredible space for our young writers. In our first year, we had 50 student submissions. This academic year is breathtaking:

- Six newsletters with an engaging range of themes (including World Book Day content!)
- 145 pieces of student work
- 95 pages of your original content
- New segments including: Student Snippets, Awareness Check, Collaboration Corner, Poetry Nook, and Analytical Writing.

... and we are so proud of you!

But that's not all!

- We are blessed with reading all your submissions
- We have talked and talked to you in class about how proud we are
- We have promoted and celebrated all your efforts
- We've even got to know each other better

None of it could happen without YOU. So please, give a round of applause for the incredible young writers from this year. Cheer from the rooftops. Celebrate their epic achievements. Raise the metaphorical Shelfie Trophy and be proud. Continue to nurture your inner reader or writer, celebrate your voice, and achieve your full potential. Thank you!

Miss Steffi and The English Crew



Half Term One

HARRY D. KS4 - TUTE'S BIG ISSUES REPORTER

What are the exclusion rates for SEN students and what is the impact on their mental health?

Many SEN students have been excluded from mainstream schools, but their mental health has not been taken into consideration. The result of this is that many end up having even worse behaviour and could end up being excluded from specialist schools. This could mean that they end up in schools that only do essential GCSEs, which ruins their futures. One school said 'Children in this situation often find themselves isolated from the normal social dynamics of a classroom setting, impacting their ability to form relationships and engage with their peers, and potentially worsening any emotional or behavioural challenges they may already be facing,'.

Exclusion + Suspension Rates (2022/2023 spring term)

In the time frame given, a total of 3,039 students were permanently excluded from their schools, with 1,549 of these having special educational needs, being 51% of the students excluded in this time. Along with this, 263,904 students ended up with a suspension, with 111,625 of these having special educational needs, being 42.3% of the suspensions given.

Impacts on their mental health

As we already know, many students with permanent exclusions have special educational needs, but many of these don't significantly differ in emotional difficulties from neurodivergent students. But, the SEN students did have higher scores for difficulties with peers and attentional difficulties and lower scores for positive wellbeing. In relation to emotional difficulties, students who were permanently excluded from schools reported higher levels of stress, lower levels of empathy and helping others, and poorer problem solving, goal setting and emotion management.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that many students are excluded from schools, majority of these being SEN students. Many students excluded from their schools end up having extremely poor mental health due to isolation from their peers. BUT, if SEN departments had the funding needed in mainstream schools, we could more than likely see that these rates for SEN exclusion would decrease massively.

Sources for info:

Catch 22 Gov.uk Headstart Community Fund

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ANNALEISE, KS5

The leaves fell like our soldiers, the wind was silent like the crowd, we were all stunned by the sight of the fresh blood pouring on the stone cold stairs. The only thing I could focus on at this moment was the red bloody leaves staining the walkway I take to school. I couldn't move. I was stuck in this moment like everybody else, like we knew what was going to happen next, we knew that there is no room for hope. Only fear.

Everything will be different now, everything will be dark and dull. The light of life was taken out of me today just by one dead body, and I had a feeling that there was going to be more where that came from. Like that was going to be the new normal: seeing dead bodies on the way to school, seeing blood and lifeless people panicking and struggling to survive.

All of this in just one cold autumn month, proving it can change everything. All I could think about now was how the red autumn leaves will always remind me that autumn brings death and blood throughout whole month will bring the purge to hope...

MIYA B, KS4

The aromas of the smoke lingered in the room like a freshly lit candle. There were ferociously loud bangs that echoed through the house making the dog howl like a wolf on a full moon. You could see the children cowering under the bed almost as if they were hiding for their life!

The writer describes the overall atmosphere as gloomy and spooky, I know this because it says "ferociously loud bangs which echoed through the house" This suggests that it's quite gloomy and spooky as people associate echoing with horror films. I also think this as ferociously loud bangs is quite an unpleasant phrase so it helps to create a gloomy and powerful atmosphere.





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

LAYLA, KS3

At around 10pm, I had gone for a late night walk and came across this dark road; I saw the leafless trees, which the moon hid behind, the sound of the dirt under my feet, the taste and smell of the cold air. The hairs on the back of my neck were standing up, my senses were heightened and my muscles were tense like a spring trap about to go off at any second.

My breath quickened as I heard a howl, I was more tense trying to find a way out. A thousand thoughts ran through my head, scaring me more. I felt on the verge of tears as I heard another howl and a growl along with twigs snapping.

The sound became louder. It was like a trot. I saw dark eyes looming in the shadows, staring into my soul as if searching for my every thought. It let out a deep growl causing me to whimper.

It was a huge mysterious beast who lingered in the shadows watching my every move not taking its eyes off of me as if it were a beast stalking its prey. I was the prey.

The fog crowded the road and the beast let out a low growl bearing its teeth as if it's posing a threat. I take a step back and trip over a rock. The beast came out of the shadows: its silver fur glowing in the moonlight.


A sharp pain hit my back as I fell; the feeling stung rushing through my spine. I let out a groan, wincing at the throbbing in my back.

The beast was a wolf but not just any wolf, it was a big wolf. Its paws were bigger than my hands, it had a wet dog smell, and it was majestic. Its eyes were a bright yellowish brown, its silver fur reflected the moonlight, and the sound of its breathing was soft, just like its warm breath on my face brushing past my cheeks. I reached my hand out hesitantly but willingly. The feeling of its fur in between my fingers was soft and delicate, surprising me.

It was calming.

The wolf looked so real but at the same time, it didn't. It looked like a wolf but it was something else entirely.





Half Term Two

LILY C, KS4

How can you be more generous and giving this Christmas?

Christmas has always been seen as one of the most expensive holidays of the year. It's usually seen as very stressful, as kids of today always ask for very overpriced gifts such as consoles and phones. The pressure of Christmas can be extremely overwhelming to some people who are short on money. Social media is even more overwhelming during Christmas, as many people feel covetous for not being able to keep up with "rich" families.

How can you help people in poverty or low of money and how is it beneficial?

Giving old toys, clothes, shoes or money to charity shops can be really helpful for people struggling. Giving food to places like local food banks can help those who can't afford a full Christmas dinner. By doing the things listed above, you are supporting many communities and helping out thousands of families struggling with affording gifts. It is helping families to make Christmas feel less stressful and more joyful. Any action you take to donate money or items will be appreciated by so many charities.

How giving at Christmas affects you and the people you've helped?

Christmas can be about spending quality time as a family by having a meal together, watching Christmas movies, playing games and more. It's usually a time when children are happy after opening their gifts from Santa Claus. When you give at Christmas, many families can experience this, and it makes you feel more helpful as you've impacted someone's life positively. Not only that, but it's a great way to spread the festive cheer and make sure it's a merry holiday for everyone - by giving that old toy, or your old clothes and helping thousands who don't have the same quality of life as you do.

Merry Christmas to all!

Popular charities: British Heart Foundation, Salvation Army, Age UK.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ELLIENA, KS4 - PAGE 1 OF 4

The bus rumbled down the winding road, its tires humming steadily against the asphalt. Everyone inside was lost in their own thoughts, the soft murmur of conversations blending with the occasional jolt of the road beneath.

But then, without any warning, the driver's hand jerked the wheel, and the bus lurched forward, throwing passengers off balance. The tires screeched in protest as the vehicle came to an abrupt stop, the air thick with the sound of the brakes.

A hush fell over the group.

Through the front window, nothing seemed amiss—just the last stretch of road ahead, swallowed by the crystalized snow. The driver sat motionless, eyes narrowed. There was something there, just beyond the light's reach—a subtle obstruction. Something was blocking the way, but it wasn't immediately clear what it was. A strange chill filled the air, and a nervous murmur rippled through the passengers. No one spoke, but everyone felt it—something was hiding in the shadows.

The driver's grip on the wheel tightened, his knuckles pale against the leather. He didn't say a word, didn't turn to the murmuring passengers behind him. Instead, he eased his foot off the brake and let the bus crawl forward, the headlights slicing through the snowflakes tumbling lazily from the snow-caped sky.

The pace was unnervingly slow, each creak of the vehicle amplified in the hushed silence. Outside, the world was a pristine winter wonderland, the snow blanketing the trees and fields in soft white. The road ahead looked untouched, almost inviting, as though the entire forest had been waiting just for us.

But the driver's tense posture told a different story. He scanned the road with sharp, darting glances, as though expecting something to appear—a shadow, a figure, something we couldn't see.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ELLIENA, KS4 - PAGE 2 OF 4

No one dared to ask what.

Eventually, the bus rolled to a stop at the edge of a snowy clearing. The forest beyond looked like something out of a fairytale: tall, frost-covered pines stretched toward the Ethereal sky, their branches sagging under the weight of fresh snow. Everything glistened in the resplendent sunlight, sweet zephyrs stirred the trees with its breath.

The driver exhaled sharply and stood, his voice clipped. "This is where you start," he said, pulling the lever to open the door. The hiss of the hydraulics echoed through the wonderland.

We grabbed our bags and stepped into the cold. It bit at our faces, but the scenery was mesmerizing—serene, magical even. The plan was simple: an overnight hike through the snow, following the trail until dawn.

Once the last of us was out, the driver climbed back into his seat. He hesitated for a moment, then looked at us for the first time all night. His expression was unreadable, but his eyes seemed distant, almost regretful.

"Stick together," he said, the words hanging in the frosty air.

Then, with a final hiss of the doors, he shut himself inside. The engine rumbled to life, and the bus's headlights swept over the forest one last time as he turned back the way we had come and our designated leader, Alex, took the first step into the snow-covered trail, his boots crunching softly against the untouched surface. He didn't say much—just adjusted his pack and nodded for the rest of us to follow. The path wound its way through the forest, narrow and faintly marked, the trees on either side rising like silent sentinels.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ELLIENA, KS4 - PAGE 3 OF 4

We fell in line behind him, our breaths puffing out in ghostly clouds. The forest was mesmerizing, the kind of beauty that felt almost too perfect. Alex moved steadily ahead, his flashlight casting long shadows across the glittering snow. It was as though he knew exactly where he was going, even if the rest of us weren't so sure. We approached a glittering icefield, a restful cabin coruscating in the frosty wind.

It was perfect, the kind of place I'd dreamed about escaping to. Warm light spilled from its windows, pooling on the snow like liquid gold. A thin plume of smoke curled from the chimney, drifting lazily into the pale winter sky. Everything about it whispered *home*. My chest tightened with longing, and I stopped in my tracks.

"Clara, you good?" Jonas called, his voice snapping me back to reality.

"Yeah," I said, my eyes fixed on the cabin. "I'll catch up in a minute."

Jonas hesitated, frowning, but eventually turned and followed the group. I waited until they disappeared into the woods before stepping off the trail and onto the lake. The ice was a glassy white, dappled with frost and laced with faint cracks, but it felt solid enough beneath my boots.

The silence out here was profound, broken only by the soft crunch of my steps and the occasional creak of the ice. As I walked, the cabin seemed to glow brighter, beckoning me closer. My breath came in soft puffs as I imagined what it must feel like inside—warm, safe, serene. Although the more I stared the more I was drawn to the cabin, the way it looked so exemplary, as if it were a model of perfection yet the way it looked so exemplary, as if it were a model of perfection, yet there was a subtle feeling of wrongness that lingered just beneath the surface.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ELLIENA, KS4 - PAGE 4 OF 4

The closer I drew, the illusion began to unravel. The golden light that had seemed so inviting from afar grew dim, flickering as if it struggled to stay alive. The cabin's walls, which had looked sturdy and polished, were now warped and cracked, dark streaks marring the wood. I slowed, my steps faltering.

When I finally reached the porch, my stomach twisted. The windows, which I had imagined glowing with life, were crooked and smeared with grime. Frost clung to the glass in jagged patterns, like claw marks. What I'd thought was smoke curling from the chimney now looked thicker, darker, seeping down the stone like tar. A faint, sour smell hung in the air.

I turned and glanced back across the ice. The trail was gone, swallowed by the trees. My group was long out of sight. For the first time since I stepped onto the lake, I felt a stab of unease.

The cabin loomed in front of me, quiet and expectant. Something inside me whispered to leave, but my feet wouldn't move, as if the cabin had reached across the threshold to claim me. And in the doorway, just beyond the edge of the light, something shifted.

It was watching.

LUCY, KS4

The night was drawing in, darkness descended upon the city. The only light illuminating the faces of weary people was the lights of the buildings. Shoulders brushed each other as the crowd flowed from street to street, all trying to reach the train station. Everyone made their way through the metal doors, the sound of tickets scanning and small talk filled the room. You could almost feel the room tense as the sound of the train got closer, people ready to launch into the nearest door and make their way back home.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

LILY, KS4

Bang! Gorgeous, illuminous, bright lights burst into the darkness, scattering across the sky. A burning orange flame was situated in the centre, silhouettes hovered over. Toys dancing in the atmosphere - flashing red, green and blue. You could see the stalls surrounding the crowd, and the enormous queues for sweets.

Cotton candy flavours filled my mouth, and the sweet smell filled my nose. I could feel the fluff rub against my tongue as I sucked the mouth-watering flavours out of the coloured clouds. Rain sprinkled gently over my arms. Smoke touched my naked hands. I strolled through the overwhelming swarm of people, feeling the coats and bags brush against my skin. I felt the breeze on my face, and the wind in my ears. People talking and whispering, laughing and screaming, but never as loud as the gunshot like sounds. The barbeque sizzled as the beef burgers were tossed on, coins rattling in the pockets of the customers, kids chewing their candy. Children's toys buzzed as they waved them through the pitch-black sky. With every step, leaves crunched beneath me, and twigs snapped. I could hear the traffic from the road down the street: cars honking, trains departing, bikes skidding. Every breath that people took sounded just as grating as the music that was playing. A sharp pain run through my ears and into my brain; a pulsing and piercing noise jumping around inside my head. Soft sponge rubbed against my face as I slipped my headphones over my ears.

Silence.

CHARLIE, KS3

intoxicating smells wafted gently down the street and into my nose, walking up to the stall I ordered the most delicious looking apple pie. it had all the most fabulous of spices, Cinnamon, nutmeg and even a bit of black pepper, don't ask me why but apparently it is good with it. I took a humongous bite, and I must say their confectionery is excellent, the pastry was buttery the apple was soft but still had some bite to it. I waved to Jerry as he bumped down the street. it was the world's best apple pie.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

REGAN - MY GINGERBREAD MEMORIES

Every year me and my grandparents go to M&S to buy a gingerbread house. When we get back home, I start to build it, but I find it very tricky, so my grandad comes in and helps.

Once it is built, we put it in the fridge for 3 hours. Once it is solid we start to decorate it. Then the next day we take it home to my parent's house and it sits there for a few weeks.

Then the best part: we start to eat it!

CALLUM, KS3

Good Morning from Botney Bay! The sun is shining and there isn't a cloud in the sky. Sydney - what a lovely place. I proved that there was no great 'Southern Continent', for example, I also collected lots of samples of flora and fauna from new places. I've also recorded customs and interactions with native people.

I've had a great few weeks under my belt. I'm very tired but it's been very worthwhile, seeing the world like this. Everybody doubted me but I knew I could do it. This will be a historical story for years. It will be my birthday on 7th of January soon. I hope to have had more sleep on the lead up to that. The mutton I had for dinner last night has given me a bit of a sore sea belly today but the weather here has really perked me up a great deal. We're having salted beef tonight for dinner and that's one of mine and Joseph Banks' favourites. We look after Endeavour (the Boat) together. Be in touch again soon, must tend to my chores.

CC (Captain Cook)



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

LAYLA, KS3 (PAGE 1 OF 2)

In 2036 Russia had won World War Three, killing the Government leaving the remaining population to fend for themselves. But as time passed, the UK got worse, buildings started to crumble, pipes rust and burst, you couldn't use cars because of no petrol and it wasn't a safe environment. As global warming got the better of the world, the glaciers had melted causing most countries and towns to flood drastically.

Even though the war had won over the world, the UK had to suffer the most being put through lifelong torture of darkness, starvation, hunger and danger. The population of the UK started to split creating different teams and cults - one more dangerous than the next.

The UK was evolving, creating the army's training plan to get revenge on Russia. Over 50 years they were unstoppable. Although Russia had the weapons, the UK had more people, strength and strategy.

A lot of people used vehicles as homes and bases, hunting animals left astray. The sky was dark and smoky and the UK hadn't had sun in years. The wood of the boat docks started to rot leaving it weak. Power cables started to hang lowly and sharks populated the flooded land. Electricity had cut off completely leaving the UK in pitch black darkness. People used the ruins and bunkers as places to hide from danger.

Big Ben was starting to wither and weaken yet still stood tall watching over London and wore the flag of the new UK - a graffitied hand upon a white background. The time never ticked but still went on, it was one of the many rotting buildings and it was considered very important. It stood high and mighty, setting it apart from its surroundings. It also had a crack on its face resembling its past battles.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

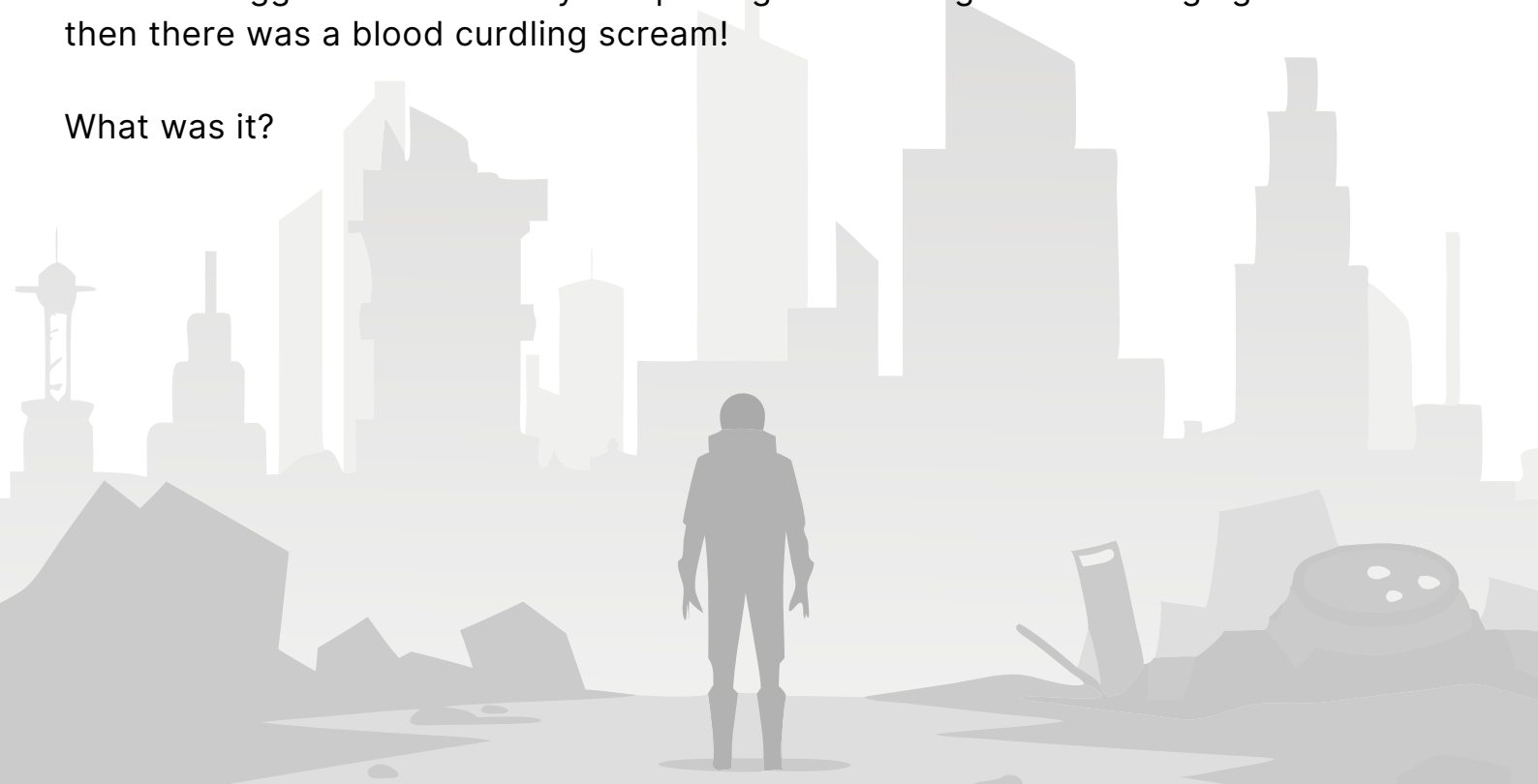
LAYLA, KS3 (PAGE 2 OF 2)

In the middle of the street, was a hollowed out, red double decker bus. The bus was beaten and bruised leaving it in a state, when inside you could hear the creaks and pained groans. It wore the same symbol of the evolving new UK, it stood with barriers on top, trapping it like a caged animal.

It started to rust within the shelter and fill with water, people used the top of the bus as a way to keep out of the flooding as they panicked. Soldiers with guns protected the civilians; they wore somber black, warm clothing, as dark as the night sky, guarding them for what was to come.

Smoke and mysterious light appeared from the top of the building leaving minds filled with curiosity. People questioned it but no-one had dared to talk about what it was. The smoke was thick and dark and stunk of burning flesh, and had a green tint which was unusual... very unusual. The crackles of the fire were obnoxiously loud and aggressive and very off-putting and the light had a ringing sound and then there was a blood curdling scream!

What was it?





Half Term Three

ROXY, KS3 (PAGE 1 OF 2)

Edge of the Infinite

Chapter One:

She sat on the edge of the cliff, her legs dangling over the side, feeling the cool breeze kiss her skin. The moon hung low in the sky, casting its silver light over the world below. The ocean below stretched endlessly, waves crashing against the rocks with a power that made her feel small, yet strangely alive.

Lena had always come to this spot when the weight of everything became too much—when the thoughts in her head spun out of control, too fast and too loud. The sky was dark, the stars scattered across the vastness, each one a distant promise of something bigger, something more than the suffocating confines of her life.

Her mind was racing. She had so many questions, so many doubts. What was she supposed to do? Where was she meant to go? She was just sixteen, yet it felt like she was already supposed to have all the answers. The pressure to figure everything out, to be someone, to be enough—it was overwhelming.

She had been overthinking for hours, her thoughts spiraling into a chaotic blur. It wasn't the first time, and it wouldn't be the last. She couldn't help herself; her brain wouldn't quiet.

Am I doing enough?

Am I good enough?

Will I ever figure it out?





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ROXY, KS3 (PAGE 2 OF 2)

Edge of the Infinite

Chapter One (Continued):

Her hands gripped the edges of the rock beneath her, and she closed her eyes, letting the sound of the ocean soothe her for a moment. It wasn't much, but it was something. It was real.

The moonlight bathed her in a soft glow, and for a second, everything felt still. But the peace was fleeting. The questions came rushing back, louder than before. Her chest tightened as she thought of all the paths she could take. The future loomed in front of her, an endless road, and she had no idea where to begin.

"Why is it so hard?" she whispered to the wind. Her voice barely carried over the crashing waves, but it was enough. She felt a little less alone in that moment. The universe didn't answer. It never did.

But there was something about the vastness of the sky, the ocean beneath her, that made her feel like she was part of something bigger. Maybe she didn't need all the answers right now. Maybe it was okay not to know. Maybe all she had to do was keep moving, keep thinking, keep searching for what felt right.

Lena let out a long breath, the tension in her shoulders easing just slightly. She wasn't going to figure it all out tonight, or even tomorrow. But maybe, just maybe, she didn't have to. She had time. And sometimes, that was all anyone could ask for.

The waves continued to crash, the stars kept shining, and the moon watched over her like a silent guardian. For the first time in hours, Lena felt a small flicker of peace. And with that peace, she allowed herself to stay just a little longer, on the edge of the world, beneath the endless sky.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

While on my way, through the foggy forest, smiling to myself, I was thinking 'it's going to be exciting' as I stand in front of the massive buildings standing there. But as I look up at the windows, I see something. A girl. Staring at me. With her big wide eyes,, tears streaming down her face but her not moving a muscle. Then, suddenly, she pulls her head back inside and slams the window shut. and as I think about turning back I hear a twig snap behind me and then running steps towards me...

ROXY, KS3

The moon hung like a cold eye above the treetops, its pale light swallowed by the thick fog that twisted between the ancient oaks. Each gnarled branch reached out like a skeletal hand, clawing at the dense mist. The air was heavy with the scent of damp earth and decaying leaves, and the only sound was the soft crunch of twigs underfoot, muffled and distant. Shadows danced at the edges of vision, their shapes uncertain and shifting, as if the forest itself were alive, watching, waiting. In the suffocating silence, the night held its breath, harbouring secrets too dark to speak.

As the traveler pressed deeper into the fog-laden woods, an eerie stillness settled over the trees. The night air was thick with the scent of damp earth and pine, but something else lingered—something metallic, sharp, and unsettling. A twig snapped behind them. The traveller froze, heart hammering against their ribs. The sound was too deliberate to be the wind, too heavy to be a mere animal. Slowly, they turned, but the fog clung to the air, concealing whatever—or whoever—lurked just beyond sight

ZACHARY, KS3

It was a cold day he could see his breath like smoke from an old pipe like his grand father puffed on. In the living world his heart was racing no sound to be heard not a car or a lonely bird...



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

CHARLIE, KS3

As we emerged from the twisted forest we discovered a flat piece of land. The morning air crisp and thin fanned my sunburnt face. As we ventured further up the treacherous mountain we found traces of what seemed to be crispy, milky, white snow. When we got to the top my boots were caped in fluffy white snow!

WILLOW, KS3

It was 8:00am at school, with the Occult Club members walking into their clubroom on the first floor, next to the Drama Club. They all entered the clubroom and sat down at their seats and began reading a selected book from the witch-like bookshelf. . the weather was gloomy and blustery, with no other students left in sight as the occult club began their ritual. the rain hammered against the rooftop of the school like workmen rebuilding it. The club members were preparing for their daily ritual to try n summon a demon, the club leader, oka ruto, set up the candles on each corner of the pentagram symbol on the floor, then took the ritual knife on the desk and placed it into the skull. the club members then sat around the pentagram, and started their ritual.

RUBY, KS4

My best friend, Lilly, is a passionate pianist - listening to her play is simply magical. As you step foot into her house the nifty notes come whizzing into your ears and dart from wall to wall inside of your head. It's almost enough to knock you off your feet!

She was terrifically talented - at everything, it seemed. If you were to hand her a pencil and paper, she could draw anything you heart desired, and it had been that way for a long time. If you were to give her any instrument, she could play it. Any song you wanted, she could sing it. It was truly magnificent. However though, all this attention Lilly attracted made her little sister jealous...

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

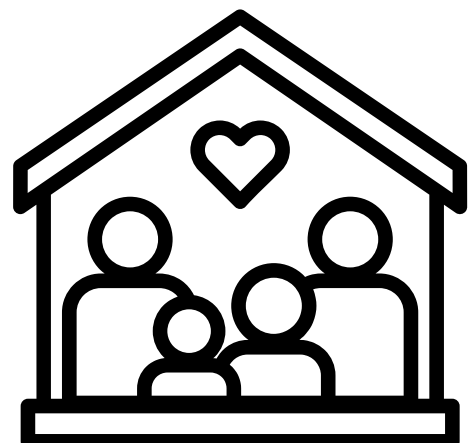
PHOEBE, KS3

The sun is beaming, the clouds are gathering and the blue sky has appeared. The cast stream is staying quiet whilst some birds are singing from above. A majority of the birds are flying far and wide, whilst others are tiredly hovering over the body of water. The smell of earth is one I had never thought to be overpowering, yet it is. I am sitting down for a moment to take in this exquisite sight, the grass feels healthy and smooth. I cannot believe this grand, gorgeous and graceful land. It all looks like a professional art piece that should be hung in the finest of museums.

JASON, KS3

My home. I love it! The walls, the TV, spider webs my Mum hasn't dusted yet are all something to look at with gratitude. Everything around me is a reason to enjoy my home. The beautiful, colourful walls and the nephew crying all night making everyone lack sleep, my room where I hide on the weekend because I have full permission to play games. Neighbour's kids screaming with joy, the scent of my room, feeling of the walls, waking up to see my family, family reunions and all that stuff. Now I'm talking about my home only because I don't know a cool landmark to choose from since I don't usually go to those kinds of places. I am sure there are many other landmarks more beautiful than my home but I choose my home because... it's my home! No cool story like Batman's entire life story but still... Thanks for reading!

THIS IS
MY HAPPY
PLACE





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

CRAIG, KS3 (PAGE 1 OF 3)

July 17th, 1999

In the deep dark woods under the full moon was an abandoned castle, next to it was a graveyard overgrown with weeds and plants, and the gate squeaked when you opened it. It was a particularly foggy night and I only could just make out a castle on the hill. There was a crack behind me but when I turned round there was nothing there. I kept walking towards the castle. I heard it again. I began to run. Next thing I knew I was in a prison-like room filled with cobwebs and spiders. It was then when I heard talking.

"Have you got it?" said the first voice.

"No but I will keep looking," said another.

"Get on with it then! Hurry now, we don't have all day."

"Yes, master."

The door opened.

It was a man dressed in black with white skin and a scar across his eye. This was who I had seen in the newspapers the day before at home. Could it be...? Just then he collapsed and goo leaked out from his mouth and nose. It was a blue colour but was hard to see in the dark light. It was moving towards me. I panicked and tried to escape but it was no use. Before I had time to escape, it reached me and was soaking into my skin. Everything went black.

On a hot summer's day, July 17th 1999, just 3 days after a boy went missing, the people of the local town went searching for the boy once again. They knew it was no use because of what lies beneath the trees in the woods but wanted to find the body. After five days of searching they gave up looking for the boy and barricaded the woods off and forbade people from entering.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

CRAIG, KS3 (PAGE 2 OF 3)

July 17th, 2019

"Mom, where did you put my school uniform?"

"It's on the bed in the 3rd bedroom."

"Thanks."

I went to school. Another boring day at the prison I told myself. I was a smart boy but didn't have any friends. I just kept to myself day after day after day. That was all about to change.

"Hey, what's up?"

It was the new kid.

"Hi," I said

"My name's Mason – yours?"

"Craig," I said.

"What's with the fence around the forest?"

"I don't know."

"My parents say it's off limits," said Mason. "They say it's because a boy went missing in there 20 years ago."

"That's just some old story an old woman made up," I said. "Either way they just don't want us to go in maybe, just so we don't hurt ourselves."



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

CRAIG, KS3 (PAGE 3 OF 3)

The bell rang.

At lunch, I saw Mason sitting by himself, all alone watching the other boys play football. I sat next to him.

"Do you want to go into the woods after school and see what really is in there?"

"I don't know it's off limits and you could get arrested if you went in there."

"You scared?"

"No!"

"Then meet me by the lake next to the fence," said Mason "That's if you're not scared."

After school, I met Mason at the lake.

"So you decided to come then," he said. "I didn't think you would."

We jumped over the fence and went in.

BELLA, KS3

In this warzone, there is a lot that could harm you, from wire to bombs the possibilities are endless. A nuclear bomb has hit! The many men who are fighting for their country need to get away! They get in the white truck and drive away as fast as they can, they have to leave someone behind, there isn't enough room in the truck...



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

TESS, KS4 (PAGE 1 OF 2)

The snow melted into its surroundings. It was a cool day in January, and I was staring out of my bedroom window.

Today was the day I'd become a new person. The things that marked me out would melt just like the snow below to reveal cold, hard, consistent concrete. Orderly perfection. Just like everybody else.

Sleepy, I pulled my plain grey school bag over my shoulder and slipped into my plain grey shoes. It was a glaring departure from my usual bright coloured attire, but it was necessary. No matter how miserable it made me; I had to blend in.

The walk to school was devoid of its usual vibrancy. My surroundings seemed to have adopted a monochromatic tinge: even the sun above had turned a yellowish shade of grey, like an old black and white photo found crumpled in the corner of an attic.

Chameleons: this was the focus of my science lesson, the first lesson of the day. I loved chameleons- or used to. Usually, I would have put my hand up and excitedly shared what I knew. But that had to change now.

Like me, they strived to blend in with their surroundings, completely camouflaged. But they were at least able to express themselves. They could adopt any colour they desired.

I had to suppress mine.

Slowly, the day dragged on, and the remaining colour in the world drained with it. With each lesson I found myself feeling more and more suffocated. In Art, I suppressed my go-to bright pop art style in favour of quick sketches, devoid of any sense of self expression. In Drama, I asked for a new role; my current one was too bold. And in English, I wrote very little: I was used to stylised writing, but that would mark me out. I needed to fit in.

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

TESS, KS4 (PAGE 2 OF 2)

Didn't I?

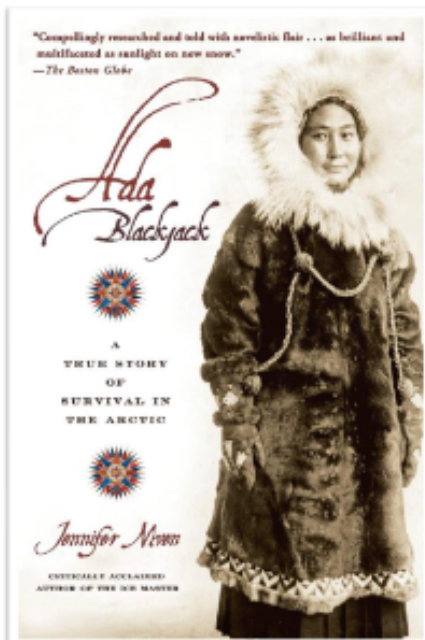
The snow melted into its surroundings. It was a cool day in January, and I was staring out of my bedroom window.

Today, like the chameleon I'd learned about the day before, I'd adopt my bright colours again - but unlike the chameleon, not to camouflage. Not to camouflage, but to stand out.

CHARLIE

It was probably August anywhere between the 4th and 21st. I was heading back to camp last night or day the traps had worked and we might actually be able to eat. whilst trudging through the thick almost solid snow a blizzard had begun, I knew the signs, it had dried up, the clouds were rolling in thick, and all the animals that I had not seen prior started squealing and howling... then, I heard possibly the most knuckle-whitening sound possible the snarl of a polar bear and the sound of heavily padded paws in fresh falling snow... The snow got heavier and heavier and I was nearing camp but I could still hear the "flump... flump...flump" of paws behind me...

I wouldn't look back as I'd rather die clueless than in panic, but I stayed calm and made it back. The paws were quieter now and I went to sleep shivering not from cold but from fear.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

ELLA

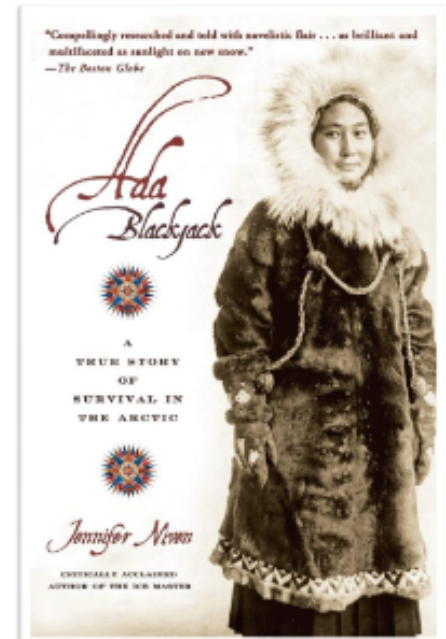
The icy wind whipped around me, biting at my exposed skin. I pulled my fur-lined hood tighter, trying to shield myself from the relentless chill. The sun, a pale ghost in the sky, offered a little warmth. It was a cruel mockery of the warmth I craved, the warmth of a fire, the warmth of a home. I was so tired. My legs ached, my muscles screamed in protest with every step. I was so hungry, my stomach was empty. But I had to keep going. Knight needed me. He was so weak, so pale, so fragile. I was his only hope.

ZACHARY

Day 48: I woke up cold as always, I had to go straight to hunting as I walk miles and miles of the same landscape nothing changing i reminisced on the days of when I lived with hundreds of other people, simple things like saying hello... I had forgotten, every day my resolve grows weaker. Will I make it out alive?

AMY

As the sun slowly appeared on the horizon, I managed to carefully check the traps one by one. My body was trembling in fear of the thought of a polar bear sighting. Every day I ventured outside for food just to keep us alive for the night. I gripped my snow knife as I once again crept into the darkness of the night.





Half Term Four

What have you been doing?

MIA, KS3

The Fall Of The Blakes

In the middle of Hollywood, the Blake family are clutching for the life they have become accustomed to, but not all goes according to plan... With a financial struggle and a new way of life, the Blake family have to adjust to a small village called Pine Ridge. With no money and no income, how and will they survive...?

YUNA, KS4

Laughter and grinning faces light up the dark room, the gleeful expressions of fascinated children relaxing in every corner. A boy's face -partially obscured by a virtual reality headset- sits bright with childlike joy, absorbed in a fantastical world.

Fluorescent screens adorn the walls, painting the inky-black walls with a rainbow assortment of colours. Captivating games litter every visible surface, giving the darkened room an ethereal atmosphere.

A cacophony of colours lies across the screens, ranging from relaxing blues to neon hues of every shade. The monitors are framed with bright, lime greens, giving the children like windows to another world.

In contrast, the room itself is dim and pitch-black, illuminated solely by the glowing screens and lights that brighten the walls. A wonderful array of games dances across every surface, exhibiting a lively field of alluring colours. Most prominent, however, is the joyous way the place secretes childish innocence, delight and laughter.

HIDDEN VOICE, KS4

I can hear a lot of chattering because they are enjoying their time together. If they have been playing all day, they must be sweaty, and the children must be having a lot of fun. The feeling of the BR headset must be heavy because he is just a young boy. He is well-focused on the game that he is playing, and he must be really pleased with himself because he must have won a lot of game.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

JOSEPH, KS4

The need to win engulfs me, this game is comparable to an out-of-body experience. I am mesmerized by the vibrant and valiant colours, and the echoing snuffles of my classmates around me aggravate me, but I decide to pay it no attention.

In the snap of a finger, I lose consciousness and wake in a complete contrast of reality. "Wait a second, am I inside what I was just playing?" I query curiously to myself. The birds swoop in synchrony around me, and I feel the silky golden sand retreat from my feet as I work my way to a tree and cut it down like a lumberjack.

TESS, KS4

A cold green glow rippled through the room. The darkened room of the arcade had become submerged in a new reality: the stench of sweat began to radiate, squeals and howls punctuated each minute, and machines whirred, hot and bothered, worn down by the unrelenting clack of keys.

To its inhabitants, this was not an arcade room - instead, they were cornered by rolling mountains and deep forests, and icy castles and stubborn mazes. What they'd known as headsets moments before had now become heavy helmets, warm under the heat of the sun.

JAMES, KS4

A cold green glow rippled through the room. The darkened room of the arcade had become submerged in a new reality: the stench of sweat began to radiate, squeals and howls punctuated each minute, and machines whirred, hot and bothered, worn down by the unrelenting clack of keys.

To its inhabitants, this was not an arcade room - instead, they were cornered by rolling mountains and deep forests, and icy castles and stubborn mazes. What they'd known as headsets moments before had now become heavy helmets, warm under the heat of the sun.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MIA, KS4

The fairly big computer screens, colourful and eye-catching, shimmer at its users, dragging them into their long gameplay, all stacked up next to each other, giving a wall of moving light, illuminating eyes. The smell of the wiring after being overheated all day, comes off of the monitors, though the mostly children that play, don't pay attention as they are sucked into the pixelated worlds made, not darting an eye on the other half dozen distracting rectangular screens.

MAX, KS4

All around, the smell of excitement and anticipation entered my nose, sharp and electric, mingling with the faint scent of fresh popcorn.

I could see children, a whole row of them, engrossed by the screens ahead. All eyes facing forward, they didn't even notice that their bodies were tense with focus, leaning in towards the glowing rectangles, completely lost in their digital worlds.

I heard the faint click of buttons, the occasional cheer, and the muttered words of excitement, but the overwhelming silence of concentration enveloped them.

It sounded like the hum of machines and the tap-tap-tap of fingers against controllers, a rhythm that almost seemed to blend with the flickering lights.

Then I noticed the boy with the VR headset on. He seemed utterly disconnected from the world around him, his every movement guided by the game. To me, it looked like he was battling something only he could see, dodging, ducking, and weaving with intense concentration.

His headset felt like a second skin, wrapped tightly around his head, weightless yet firmly holding him in his immersive reality. It was the same colour as midnight blue, sleek and futuristic.

Then I saw the colourful screens and all of the flashing, neon-like graphics on them. They illuminated the faces like strange, glowing masks, casting an eerie glow on their expressions—both tense and ecstatic at the same time.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HARRY, KS4

The First Shriek: Flash Fiction

In a remote village of Ireland, a mother and her child live in peace. They pass the time by combing each other's hair.

Then, the child suddenly disappears. The mother shrieks, turns around, and sees a man fall to the ground, dead. Then, she hears the shout, 'Killer.'

She looks out, and everyone is outside, preparing to chase, or kill, her. She runs for her life, out of the village, out of sight. She now lives on a lone hill, shrieking out into the empty surroundings.

The last thing they see is her combing her hair, before they see black ...

CHLOE, KS4

The sea was crashing and thrashing against the rocks in an angry manner, creating a spray of water that climbed the side of them. The waves reflecting the light in the most magical way, creating moments of pearly white but always coming back to the familiar blue. The sea's deep blue colour was mysterious, leaving you wondering what was occurring underneath it.

The greenery hung over the edge of the sea, dipping in and out when the breeze got strong. They swayed in the wind, dancing with each other. Creating a sense of peace against the rough crashing and thrashing of the waves. The cliffs were enormous, towering over the water, making even the largest trees look minuscule. They were rough and jagged after years of erosion, making them look worthy of being so magnificent.

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

JESS, KS4

The scar was haunting: torturing her of a chaotic past that no longer can stay hidden. Her face revealed secrets, secrets her mouth couldn't expose, concealed like a whisper in the wind.

LIBBY, KS4

I stand almost frozen, my eyes looking in the direction of the large screen in front of me but unfocused. Some guy is lurking next to me, asking me whether I prefer Xbox, PC, or PlayStation, but all I can focus on is the coffee he drank this morning hitting my nose. The parent next to me is trying to listen to her son enthusiastically explain the game in front of us and how all his friends at school love it, all whilst tending to a screaming toddler. I feel like the world around me is spinning as I feel my throat tighten, my hands becoming damp with sweat, and my hair sticking to the back of my neck. I let out a dry cough, my tongue feeling dry as I realise I haven't drunk anything in hours, only adding to my dissociation. Get me out of here.

ISLA, KS4

Gazing over the chilling water rippling as if it's cheering for the show, you can hear the whistling tune and roaring crowds of the circus. Illuminating the abyssal sky stands a radiant, towering tent with beams of lights slicing through the dense, inky sky. You smell the rich aroma of sweet and savoury food swirling in the air, enough to lure anyone in. As you move closer, the warm air wraps around you as if it's inviting you in to come see the show.





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

CHLOE, KS4

The luminescent lights moved around in swirling patterns occasionally reflecting off the tall peaks of the circus tent. The way they were lined up along the entrance gave it the most welcoming and enticing effect making you wonder what was behind those colossal doors. The London eye was rhythmically spinning in the background, gleaming when the light hit it, but it was nothing compared to the magnificence of the tent. Its soaring white and red peaks gave it a classic and old fashioned look that automatically fills everyone with a sense of anticipation and joy. The clear night sky was shining with specs for white flashing through it making everything more magical.

You could hear the melody of children laughing and chatting in the background as they waited to enter the tent. It was an intense and rowdy environment with children running around and the circus music booming out of the tent. Yet it was a beautiful noise to be surrounded by. Although it may be overwhelming this is what made the circus irresistible.

All around you there was an overriding smell of the city and its pollution. The river was producing unpleasant smells of sewer and rubbish mixed together and the cars were giving off the most awful petrol smell yet as you walked closer to the tent it all changed. There was suddenly the sweet smell of popcorn and delicious smell of freshly made cotton candy. They created an overwhelming feeling of calm, leading to you becoming totally overwhelmed by the smells of the circus.

Walking into the tent all you can feel is the humid air around you. Its hot and stuffy environment leaves you feeling sticky and uncomfortable but is worth it to see the magic of the circus. Picking up a cold drink was the most reliving feeling as the numbing temperature of the can was a shock to your hands. The coldness of the drink was welcomed as the feeling of icy cold can in your hands would leave you feeling refreshed.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

JAMIE, KS4

As I stared off into the dark distance, I saw the great circus. Standing in all its glory, the balloons waving at me to come towards as it towered next to Big Ben. The smells of fresh popcorn seemed to grab me and take me towards this empire. As I stood there staring, the sounds of children's laughter drowned out any other noises that could've been heard. The circus looked like it was shot with multiple vibrant colours. Just looking at the circus was enough to make you want to beg the person with you to go to this wonderland and have fun. The sky was dark, and clouds loomed over most of London, however, that was hardly noticeable when you are standing in front of something that came out of children's dreams.

However, the circus lights started to flicker almost as if they were running out of power in this mammoth-sized building. The sounds of screaming scratched at my ears, forcing me to cover them with my hands. There were huge groups of people all storming out of the tent and running in various directions, blinding my sight. I jumped to the floor to try and compose myself and think of a way to escape this rampage of people. It started to pour down with rain. The rain slightly drowned out the noise of the screaming, therefore, allowing me to take my hands off my ears; however, the only thing I could taste was the cold and dirty rainwater.

People trampled over others to get away from the circus, almost as if they were being chased. Perplexed, I walked closer to the circus to see what all this commotion was about.

Then I saw it.

I turned and sprinted in the direction of everyone else, trying to find the nearest train station so I could leave this horrible place. I don't even remember most of what happened after, as my adrenaline consumed me, and it all just feels like a dream - but this was real... I know it was. I saw it with my own eyes: people stamping on people to get away, climbing up London bridge, hoping that it didn't get them. The circus was never seen again in London, almost as if it had moved to another area to capture more victims.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

RUBY, KS3 (PAGE 1 OF 4)

Once upon a time, a few hundred years ago, there lived a teenage girl called Rosey in a cottage by the sea. Her parents were at home, but she loved to explore. You see, she was a girl who loved to be wild; she loved to sing loudly and dance along too, she loved to make art, you see, that was her speciality.

"She's remarkable" her friend said to a bully at school, who made fun of her art and said it was as much as a toddler could do. But a boy called Michael, he said to Sheila "Well if you don't like it and Rosey's friend (called Evie) likes her art well then let's make a vote and I will be in it too! And just to make it fair"

He shouted to Jack, his best friend, "HEY Jack come over here we're doing a vote and to make it fair, we need you to vote too!"

Jack shouted back and said, "I'll be there in a second mate!"

As Jack sidled over, Rosey blushed behind Evie as this whole voting thing was totally unnecessary. When Jack finally reached them, Michael said, "Okay Jack, you need to stand next to either person you agree with, which are: Rosey, who says her art is good, or Sheila, who says Rosey's art is bad, which person do you agree with?"

As soon as Michael finished saying the word 'bad', he went over and stood by Rosey. Jack then did his vote and also stood by Rosey and, of course, you know which side Evie chose.

Michael then said "Looks like you're outvoted, Sheila!" Sheila looked angrily at all of them and she stomped off.

Rosey finally said, "You... you didn't need to do that you know..."

Michael just gave her a cheeky grin and said "Well, I did, I can't wait until the summer holidays, I heard Sheila has to go to summer camp. Imagine that! A whole summer without a single nasty word coming out of her mouth for once!" They all laughed.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

RUBY, KS3 (PAGE 2 OF 4)

Evie said, "Bet I can beat you at a swimming race at the weekend though."

"Haha, I'd like to see you try! To me, you're practically known as Mrs Sloth!" said Jack, laughing again.

At the weekend, Rosey was sitting outside her house sketching the beach as Jack, Michael, and Evie came up the hill.

"Heya there," said Jack, they all had towels with them as they reached her.

Evie said, "Hey instead of drawing the beach, why don't we go down to the beach and swim in it? My aunty gave me a whole 10 pounds we can have ice cream!"

"Ok," said Rosey; she jumped up and picked up her towel, grabbed her money, ran in the kitchen and told her mother she was going to the beach. She gave her a hug and then ran down the hill with her friends.

After they had set up on the beach, they ran up to the shore and tried to swim up to the rocks that were further out but, when Rosey tried to climb up, she slipped and cut her leg. She cried out in pain as the rock cut her and tears brimmed her eyes.

Michael heard her and swam round the rock to her ,and asked her what was wrong. She said tearfully, "I hurt my self against the rock" and turned to show him the badly bleeding cut. As she moved her leg slightly, she winced because it hurt.

Michael said to her, "Are you going to be ok to swim back? That cut looks nasty!"

"Yes, I can swim back..." Rosey replied.

"Wait," said Michael, "Let me go get the floaty from shore, then you can lay on that and I will push you back - that way when we get back to shore, I can take one of the buckets and run to the tap by the supermarket, on the board walk, and then we can make sure it's clean."



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

RUBY, KS3 (PAGE 3 OF 4)

"That seems quite a lot of fuss though," she said.

"It's fine, wait there a second!"

Once he went back to shore, Rosey started to climb down the rock to the sea. Suddenly, a big wave splashed up the rock and she lost her grip and she fell off the rock. As she splashed down into the sea, she kept her eyes open under the water and she saw the coral reef just a few millimetres away and many fish as well as... legs? And a plastic float? They were hovering above. 'Well this could only be Michael,' she thought, as she swam back up to the rock. She clambered out onto the floaty breathlessly.

"Big wave...knocked me off my feet...I need air..." she panted. As she lay there, the waves were buffeting the sides a little; the sound of other children laughing rang through her ears and, as she sat up and looked across the sea into the dark abyss, nothing but the vast ocean met her eyes.

She felt the bump as the floaty hit the shore and she clambered up. Michael helped her get to where they had set up. The sand was hot, and the towels were warm, they had brought extra towels, just in case someone got wet cold. Phew! Michael picked up two of them and put them around the cut on Rosey's leg. Bits of grain from the sand was dotted around it, dried bits of salt stuck to her leg too as Micheal poured the cold water on it and washed it with the wipes he had bought, then he dried it and then grabbed a few notes of money from the beach bag and headed off in the direction of the pharmacy.

Rosey watched him go wandering what he was getting. He soon came back with a box of plasters and a bag of gumballs; she laughed as he approached.

"Really?" she laughed, "Gumballs?"

"What? They're tasty!" said Michael as she laughed again. He called over the water to Evie and Jack.

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

RUBY, KS3 (PAGE 4 OF 4)

" GUYS I GOT GUMBALLS, COME GET 'EM BEFORE THEY'RE ALL IN MY TUMMY!" he shouted, grinning at Rosey. 'What was this?' she thought, it felt like she had butterflies in her tummy and it definitely was not the gumballs.

She looked at Michael again - there was that feeling again - she decided to forget about it, for now, as she took the box of plasters from beside the picnic basket and opened them. She got one out and put it on her cut, then she stood up and grabbed her purse, feeling much better.

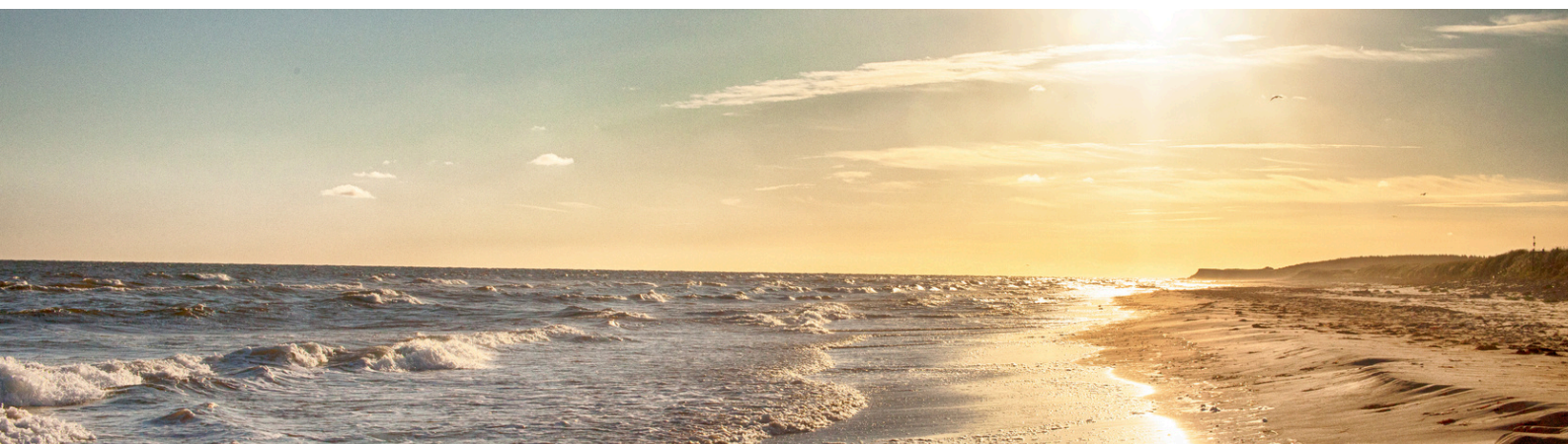
She said to Evie, who had just got back to where they had set up, "I'm going to get some Coca Cola cans from the gas station, we forgot to bring drinks!"

I'll come too," said Michael.

As they walked across the beach, they climbed the stairs up to the boardwalk. As she was crossing the road, a car came hurtling round the corner and the distant sound of police sirens sounded. Michael grabbed her hand and dragged her back just as the car sped past the place she was just standing. Rosey, breathing fast, stood there shocked.

"Lets go?" said Michael.

"Yeah..." Rosey agreed.





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

BROOKE, KS4 (PAGE 1 OF 2)

Red Pandemonium?

Picture this: the end of an era for not just red pandas but for all the animal kingdom. Corpses spread around a desolate field of mud, dread, and sorrow. How do you think your children would feel knowing there's no life outside of their window in the morning? This will become the reality. This is now the time to act. Now or never.

We have ruined a species. Humans have used red pandas to their advantage. We have reduced their species by 50,000 since 1904 to present time (there are only 10,000 left in the wild) the reason why their population has gone down so drastically is due to: traditional Chinese remedies and herbs; their distinctive red fur; and hotter climates leading to unhealthy living spaces for the red pandas to thrive. You can help make this big change in our society by calling +44 07339054552.

Red pandas are so popular, they are known for their cute and cuddly appearance, and losing their whole species would become a tragedy. 40% of red pandas are poached for human dress attire, isn't that just despicable? Due to us humans using greenhouse gases, we have made their environment uninhabitable; these adorable creatures are struggling to find food sources because of our actions. Recently, I have had the opportunity to visit Gretta Morgan, she has a lot to say about the red panda catastrophe. She said, "By 2042, if us humans don't stop the poaching and destruction of wildlife for the red pandas, they will succumb to their demise."

How would you feel if you were struggling to find food due to it being completely contaminated by greenhouse gases? How would you feel if your family were dying when this could've all been completely avoided? How would you feel if your home used to be a luscious land of greenery and now is crumbling into ashes everywhere you go? I'll say it again, us humans have ruined life on earth, especially nature's cutest and most cuddly creature. This is our wrongdoing, now we must face the consequence.

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

BROOKE KS4 (PAGE 2 OF 2)

I have encountered many endangered species in my lifetime, but never have I seen one as precious and lively as the red panda. Seeing them struggle now makes my heart ache; their own mothers can't care for them due to them being too weak to climb up high trees to become safe from predators down below the canopy. I've seen it with my own eyes, and it is truly something I wouldn't ever want to experience again. You can help the Red Panda Organisation by donating just £1 to our funding towards housing red pandas at our facility.

Some people may say that red pandas aren't as important as other endangered species and do not need the extra charity and support. However, from my understanding, red pandas contribute to helping the ecosystem by building homes that other creatures could live in, therefore making red pandas just as important as any other species.

Picture this: When you wake up in the morning, you'll hear the soothing sound of birds humming their morning chorus. When you wake up, you'll see succulent, fleshy leaves swaying in the wind. When you wake up, you'll know that the animal kingdom, including our precious red pandas, has been restored by your actions. How does that sound? Now's your time to make that happen, contact us! We are waiting for your call.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

NATALIE, KS4 (PAGE 1 OF 2)

Inside the exam hall, Jane's pen stays still in her quivering hand. The other students don't notice her trembling – or perhaps they just do not care – as their pens rapidly scratch against their exam papers as they frantically write; Jane can see the anxiety in their dark eyes flickering like candlelight. From its lofty place on the grey wall, the clock produces an irritable tick-tock noise – an imminent reminder that time is steadily running out. Jane should be writing. She stares down (vision misty with tears) at the exam paper laid before her; the black words on the white page twist and shift until they melt into an incomprehensible blur that maliciously mocks her stupidity. Pressure hangs over Jane like an executioner's sword; she can't disappoint her parents. They want her to succeed and aim for the stars, eventually becoming one of them, blazing radiance streaking weightlessly across the ebony sky. However, Jane feels heavy. An unbearable weight – her family's unrealistic expectations and the stress that has siphoned all her energy – drags her down, down, down into the earth's embrace where an early grave patiently waits.

Jane's story is just one of many; a singular drop of water in an ocean of misery. All over the world children find themselves crushed under exam stress. In a survey done by Childline, 96% of respondents said that they felt anxious about exams. This statistic is completely unacceptable; the young minds (overflowing with untapped brilliance) of this generation shouldn't be smothered by stress and pressure. Instead of on weeping students' desk, exams belong to one place and one place only; a hellscape of eternal torture, agony and suffering – personally tailored for its unlucky visitors – that goes by the name of Room 101.





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

NATALIE, KS4 (PAGE 2 OF 2)

Let me share a series of worrying statistics: 59% of children claimed that pressure from their parents impacted their results, 82% of teachers believe that exams negatively impact their students and 62% of students don't receive any support for their rapidly declining mental health. Even I have struggled to cope with the stress of taking exams. I find myself increasingly irritated and overwhelmingly sad. Often, I can't sleep at night, lying awake until midnight, mind squirming with worries – just like Jane. As I stated previously, these stories and statistics are outrageous. How can we, year after year after year, subject our children to the horrors of exams with a clear conscience?

Only one solution will fix this; banishing exams to Room 101. Abolishing exams will ensure the happiness of our children; one day, without the weight of exams hanging over their them, they can become vibrant stars – flying across the black sky – and inspire the future generations to shine just as bright. Myself, Jane and millions of students scattered across the wide world will finally be able to rest at night knowing that exams are locked safely and securely in the screaming nightmare that is Room 101.

TESS, KS4

It's calm by the riverside. Trees dance, encouraged by the breeze, and the ripples along the river cradle the reflections. Plastic debris floats along- wait, how did that get there?

Animals deserve an environment where they can live in peace. Where they can rest uninterrupted and lap at lakes without our waste creeping towards them. It is our responsibility to provide them with this - but instead, we're only making the situation worse.

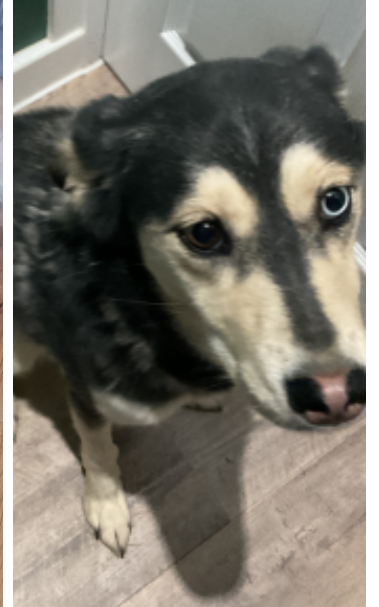
It is imperative that this changes.

It is estimated that around 35% of people regularly litter. That means around 35% of YOU reading this article are part of the problem.

Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

WORLD BOOK DAY!



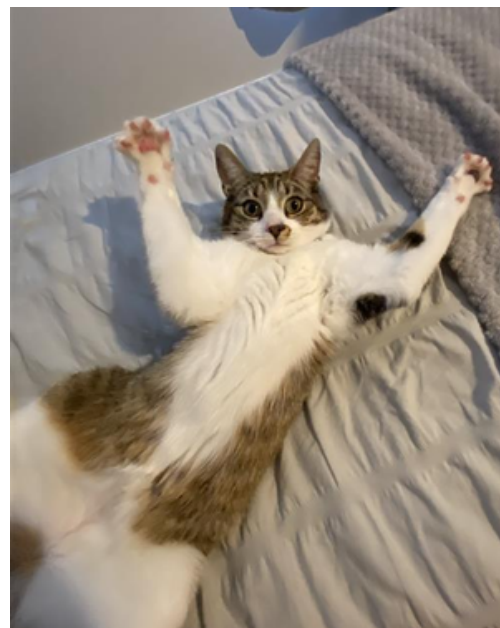
This was an EPIC World Book Day this year.
Our prompt was: If Your Pets Could Read, What Books Would They Choose?

Here are just a few of your pets who enjoyed World Book Day!
Thank you for sending them in!

Student Spotlight


What have you been doing?

WORLD BOOK DAY!



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Half Term Five

ARGO, KS3

The Ethics Councillors. EC-1 through EC-9.

Steel's jaw dropped. "Ohhhh no. These guys don't even blink." Sparks looked up. "Who are they?" "Ethics Council," Psi replied, voice tight. "They run what's left of unaugmented humanity. Europe, the orbital vaults, deep-sea sanctums... they speak in consensus only. No emotion. No margin for error." EC-1 stepped forward, hands folded behind their back. "Arkiah'n is a forbidden construct. You tampered with relic code and woke a class-nine extinction event."

EC-5 continued without pause. "This falls outside of regional governance. We are assuming control of the battlefield. All augmented beings are hereby classified as potential assets or threats." "Nice," Sparks muttered. "They called us 'assets.' That's not terrifying at all." Harbinger narrowed his eyes. "They're not here to help." EC-3 looked directly at him. "Correct. We are here to contain."

Then they moved. The drones swept downward in perfect sync, their pulse rifles zeroing in on Arkiah'n and, without hesitation, opening fire. A wave of surgical blue light cut through the sky. Arkiah'n didn't dodge. He absorbed the entire volley, wings folding around him like a cloak. When the energy dispersed, he stood there, completely unharmed. Then he raised a hand. One of the drones melted. "No," EC-9 whispered. For the first time in years, the voice modulator cracked. "Fall back," EC-2 ordered. "All Councillors, retreat to Protocol Aegis. This battlefield is compromised."

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

I felt suspicious of the way it was fully intact, even though neighbours reported feeling a shockwave from 3 miles away. As I approached it, I felt a field around it, like I was on top of a mountain, it started making a low, dull beep.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

JASON, KS3

...Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a tall silhouette of a slim 13-footed creature that looked like it was almost melting. The creature slowly walked into the fading fog from a distance with its eerie footsteps following along. Without any hesitation whatsoever, I followed it into the abyss, following all the footsteps. But when I reached the fog, it was gone. Footsteps, trailing everywhere, green substances slowly melting away, flooding the floor, and nothing but a sight of fog. An intimidating, deafening call, like that of a sperm whale, echoed across the area, surrounded by long, thin trees and fog. But in spite of the fear, I continued along the journey, following nothing but my trust worthy guts. Then all of a sudden, BOOM. A loud pop goes off, the sound goes away, and behind me, stands the tall creature menacingly staring down at me. Shockwaves vibrating down my spine, my nerves filled to the top with fear, i slowly turn around and look up and see a...

ARJELO, KS3

Stolen Shell! Terrible Tortoise Theft Shocks Town

Who could be so heartless as to steal a helpless pet? In an unbelievable and bizarre burglary, a beloved family tortoise named Leaves was snatched from a peaceful garden in the early hours of Monday morning. The dangerous and daring thieves didn't stop there—they also made off with a deadly fast, high-powered BMW worth over £10,000. The tortoise's devastated owner, Tim, says, "It's not just a pet. Leaves are part of our family. I'm completely heartbroken." Police are currently investigating the crime and believe the thieves may have used the car to escape quickly. Locals are being urged to check gardens and sheds, and to report any sightings of a "large, slow-moving reptile with a green and gold shell." Could this cruel crime be part of a larger pet-stealing plot? Residents are now on high alert as the shocking shell theft continues to make headlines.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

Once upon a time, humans ruled Earth. Until one day, an anomalous comet landed on Earth. Following the comet, multiple towns of people went missing. This was but the beginning. The creature behind this was located. It was a bio-mechanical machine about the size of a Tyrannosaurus rex. It also resembled one, except for the fact that it had spikes and gas emitters along its back and arms as long as its legs. It had a scorpion stinger at the end of its tail and a mask that consisted mainly of an LED screen. This creature was captured, killed, and dissected. This sealed humanity's fate. They discovered it had amounts of human DNA. The mask sent out a distress signal upon the death of the creature. Humans named these BRUTES. A year later, a gigantic spaceship warped into Mars' orbit. It released drop pods onto Earth with surgical precision. One hundred BRUTES and a thousand other more humanoid creatures that were covered in crab-like armor and had a smaller mask to fit their faces. They carried weapons to spread their twisted 'CURE'. They also had human DNA. Bullets did nothing to their armor. Luckily, new advances in laser technology could pierce their armor. But more ships arrived. Humans learnt resistance was futile. They were a universal organization named 'MOTH'. They kept coming. Humanity sealed itself in bunkers. Others joined the MOTH. Three centuries later, recent disturbances forced the remaining pockets of humanity out of their bunkers. They emerged into a completely new world.

ARJELO, KS3

Niamh's breath hitched as her eyes widened, darting frantically across the dimly lit room. Her pupils shrank, her face drained of colour, and a tremor flickered across her lips as she tried to speak but failed. The muscles in her jaw tightened, holding back a gasp, while her brows knitted together in desperate alarm. A bead of sweat traced a slow path down her temple, unnoticed amid the rigid stillness of her frame except for the subtle quiver in her chin. Every instinct screamed for her to move, but she was frozen, her terror locked in the raw emotion of her unblinking stare.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

Dangerous drivers. Every country has them... they go around without a care for anyone's safety. Have you ever seen just how incompetent these people really are? There was a time when I was in my dad's car. We were waiting at a set of lights next to another car when the lights went green. Just as we set off, the other car accelerated and turned into our lane, not even indicating, and barely missed us, so my dad had to slam the brakes on, even though both lanes went to the same place and merged later on. If it wasn't for my dad's sudden reaction and quick thinking, we could have had an accident. It made me feel annoyed. It made me feel shocked. How hard can it be to use your turning signals and observe your surroundings?

AARON, KS3

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where a reckless driver nearly caused an accident? This is a reality many of us face daily on the roads. The need for everyone to drive more safely is not just a personal concern; it's a collective responsibility that affects us all. Every time we get behind the wheel, we hold the power to make choices that can either protect or endanger lives.

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

The black panther is found across many regions of the world, like South America and Africa. Despite their iconic name, they are not a distinct species; the term "black panther" is used to describe any black-coated big cat, including leopards and jaguars. Panthers have an amazing swimming ability and prefer marshes or wetlands to drier habitats and will use this ability to catch prey such as fish or small water mammals.

HIDDEN VOICE, KS4

i think progress is a bit like a rainbow, because like it's always around but I think I can be difficult to see and you only really notice it when it comes when you realise how far you've come, especially in a tough spot, like how rain make the rainbows come out, you know?



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

JAMES KI, KS4

The year 2064: I was led to my bed, and my personal robot woke me up and delivered a coffee. I stepped out of bed feeling rejuvenated and ready for the day ahead. I looked up at the dome where we were living was protecting us from the wider atmosphere, and saw spaceships flying around with commuters. My spaceship had just arrived, I got onto the spaceship and got dropped off on the roof of my workplace.

My workplace was mainly comprised of a large team of intelligent robots; however, there were a few humans dotted around monitoring the robots via live video feed. The employees were all provided with augmented reality goggles; therefore, they could see the stats of each robot with a brief glance.

ARJELO, KS3

The Na'vi are the native people of Pandora, living in deep harmony with their lush and dangerous world. They believe that all life is connected through a powerful force called Eywa, which they worship and protect. From the moment they are born, the Na'vi are taught to respect the creatures, plants, and spirits around them. One of the most special things they can do is tsaheylu, a sacred bond formed by connecting their neural tendrils to animals and even to the planet itself. This bond allows them to ride mighty creatures like the banshee and the direhorse, not by force, but through trust and connection. The Na'vi live together in strong family clans, guided by wisdom, tradition, and love for their home. They do not take more than they need and are deeply saddened and angered when outsiders, like the humans, come to mine their land and destroy sacred places for resources like unobtanium. For the Na'vi, life is not about power or wealth; it is about balance, spirit, and belonging.

LILLY, KS4

The Navi are a Fictional humanoid species, they have blue skin and large eyes, their culture is connected to nature and the spiritual world, they communicate through a really confusing language.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

LEON, KS3

You wake up to the sound of blaring sirens with a skull-splitting headache. You stiffly get up off the floor and take in your surroundings. Of course, you're in the worst possible place you could be in right now. Haizen Labs. All of a sudden, you hear static, then a voice. Thankfully, your earpiece is still working. "All units in Haizen Labs, evacuate now." You try to respond, but the only noise that comes out of your mouth is laboured breathing. You've been hit pretty badly by whatever the hell hit you, so you find a nearby seat and try to clear your head so you can remember, ignoring the earpiece. You look around once more, and in the corner, there is a Haizen 49 Sub-Sonic Lagei. You stumble over to the rifle, grateful to have some form of protection. The last thing you need to run into is an E.L.S. Then it hits you. You remember.

WILLOW, KS3

Niamh screeched as the shadowy creature came running towards her at full speed. She tried to run, but her short legs managed only an average speed for a 9-year-old. She shrieked and shrieked as she struggled to get away from what was about to kill her, only in a matter of time.

JEMIMA, KS3

Hello and welcome. I'm aware that this zoo is trying to decide what animal to buy first. And I have some ideas.. Pandas! Do you want an animal that's stress-free and adorable? Then a panda's the way to go! First of all, Pandas are very cute, very low maintenance, and need very little attention. Give them lots of bamboo and a nice enclosure, and they can keep themselves occupied all day and night. Pandas are very independent creatures, so you'll be free of stress as you start up your zoo. Secondly, pandas will bring lots of customers and give you a great start to your zoo business. People love cute and fluffy animals, and pandas are just that. They will bring flocks of people to your establishment. Finally, I think pandas will make your business skyrocket and bring in lots of money. Thank you for listening.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HIDDEN VOICE, KS5 (PAGE 1 OF 2)

The sun shone brightly as she walked down the pathway, the gravel crunching beneath her feet. She breathed in the country air, her nostrils filling with the smell of freshly cut grass. As she walked, she looked to the gardens on either side of her, which were filled with vibrant flowers, lavender bushes, and hedges trimmed so neatly it was as if they weren't real. The whole estate looked like a scene from an old painting. She glanced up towards the grand manor house towering over her, overwhelmed by the size of it. An extravagant, brick staircase led towards a huge navy-blue door, which had to have been at least a hundred years old. She looked up to find an old-fashioned, gold door knocker and took a deep breath before knocking it loudly three times.

Ellie's heart pounded heavily in her chest. It felt like an eternity before the huge door finally opened. Before her stood a very slim woman with short, neat chestnut brown hair that was streaked with grey. Her face looked dull, and she was starting to develop wrinkles, particularly around her deep blue eyes, which had large grey bags underneath them that she had tried to cover with foundation. She was wearing a white linen blouse and had a string of pearls around her neck with a bracelet to match. Her brown trousers hung limply around her waist, only held up by a black leather belt with a shiny gold buckle. She looked nothing like the pictures that Ellie's social worker had given her as a child; in fact, she was almost unrecognisable. Her facial expression was cold; she looked bored and uninterested, almost as if this was a waste of her time.

Ellie froze; she couldn't speak, she couldn't even move. All the things that she had planned to say, the things that she had rehearsed for years, were gone. She had been waiting for this moment for her whole life; she had longed for it.

Now here she was, standing outside her birth mother's door, and all those dreams she had were crushed, her heart broken slowly into a million pieces.

How could she have been so stupid?



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HIDDEN VOICE, KS5 (PAGE 2 OF 2)

Ellie remembered that day so vividly. She was five years old, and she had settled in well with her adoptive parents. They loved her endlessly and gave her everything she could have ever wanted, and she loved them too. Her social worker still visited regularly, and this Tuesday afternoon was no different. They were sitting at the round, oak table in the dining room doing colouring with the same crayons they always used when her social worker mentioned she had something to show Ellie. She pulled out a photo – a younger, happier version of the woman standing before her now. The same slim woman with the chestnut brown hair and deep blue eyes, like the colour of the deepest part of the sea. Ellie was put into foster care at only 5 months old and had never shown much interest in her birth parents until her social worker showed her that photo of her mother. Ever since that day, Ellie had always dreamed of the day she met her mother, the woman whom she admired more than anyone else.

She was brought back to the present by the harsh sound of the woman's posh voice. The woman repeated herself, "I don't know why you are here; I have nothing to say to you." Ellie stood there, unable to speak, a million questions racing through her mind. How did she even recognise who Ellie was? Isn't it obvious why she's here? How could she be so heartless?

And with that, Ellie made a decision she never thought she would make. She didn't need this woman. The woman who gave her up when she was a tiny baby, putting her through the many hellish years of being in foster care. The woman who had shown no interest in her throughout her entire life and didn't even say anything after Ellie travelled hours to come and finally meet her. She had plenty of people who cared about her in her life.

She turned back around and started to walk back down the gravel pathway, without even saying anything to her mother. She had lived a happy life without that woman, and she wasn't going to let her ruin it. She had more respect for herself than that. She looked up at the sun beaming down on her and smiled. She was ready to move on.

Student Spotlight

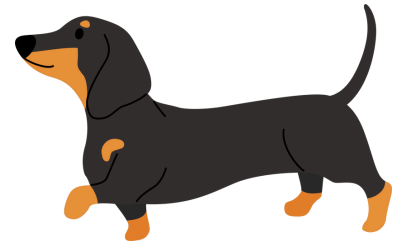
What have you been doing?

MATTHEW, KS3

Why dogs may behave badly and some consequences of this.

A bad dog means it has a bad/abusive owner, previous or current. Why would a dog be mean? It's like a bully; they have most likely had a bad past and need to take it out on someone or something, which then makes people think they are bad and ban them. Like an X-L bully: they killed a small number of people in a year, but greyhounds are way more dangerous. And I have heard a lot of dogs getting shot by police, because they growled when the cop pointed a gun at the owner.

I used to have a Dobermann. And then I got a rottweiler: they're the best. I also like golden retrievers and dachshunds.



FREDDIE, KS3

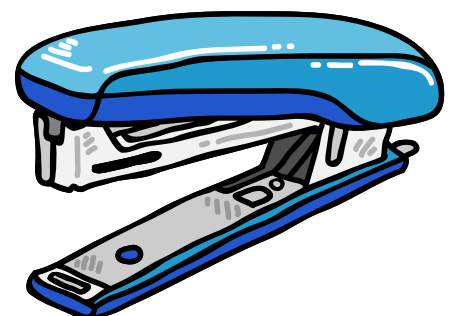
Freddie's Favourite Films:

I like anything to do with aliens. I do not believe in aliens; if they were real, I'd be too scared to watch movies with them killing people!

Xenomorphs: They look like staplers. Xenomorph heads: They're aliens to begin with. They basically look like really bony people with large, long heads, and they have tails with skewers on the end.

If you tried to kill a xenomorph with a shotgun, you'd probably be dead yourself. They bleed acid.

I can justify a lot of villains!





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MYLA, KS4. (PAGE 1 OF 4)

The steel and concrete wall loomed tall, casting my shadow across the city like a giant gravestone. It hummed with machinery and flickered with a thousand ads — glowing, blinking, begging.

Beyond that wall was the city of Ljuset Dal — the Valley of Lights.

So bright the sun looked dim in comparison.

So loud I can hear the adverts through my four-foot-thick insulation.

So desperate that even the billboards are screaming:

"BUY ME NOW!"

"LIMITED TIME OFFER!"

The streets are nearly empty now. No footsteps. No conversation. Just the hum of drones and the whir of driverless cars. This used to be a city full of people carving out lives, working, laughing, surviving. Now it's a hollow shell of synthetic life and forgotten traditions. A corpse animated by AI and corporations too greedy to let anything die in peace.

I live just beyond that wall, in the forest.

Off-grid.

With my wife. My kids. My longboat.

I am Myla — the final hope.

Or maybe just the last fool screaming into the wind.

It's a heavy title, "final hope."





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MYLA, KS4. (PAGE 2 OF 4)

Some would say "prophet" is a stretch too. But what else do you call someone who refuses to kneel before tech when the whole world already has?

I've searched. I've travelled. I've listened.

And in over thirty years, I haven't met another soul who sees what I see.

The year is 2053. The old world ended a long time ago. Most hard labour will vanish by 2025 — replaced by machines, apps, and automation. Hunting? Outlawed. Woodcutting? Unnecessary. Farming? Controlled by labs. People don't work anymore. They watch, scroll, and consume. They wear VR like skin. They've forgotten how to live.

But me? I remember.

I teach my children the old ways — how to light a fire without a lighter, how to track animals in the snow, how to chop wood and build a home with their own hands. I raise them to be part of the Earth, not just passengers on it.

Am I scared? Hell yes. I'm terrified.

But I will not go quietly.

Let's go back.

The year is 2025. I'm 18. And the cracks are starting to show.

Trump's back, terrifying the world. Putin's starting wars. Society's addicted to screens. Traditions that survived centuries are being swallowed whole by content, apps, and convenience.

People no longer chop wood after a long day.

2025



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MYLA, KS4. (PAGE 3 OF 4)

They no longer come home to a house they built on land they own with kids they raised and a partner they love.

I wanted that. Still do.

The more I lived in that world, the dimmer its light became.

Greedy corporations threw worthless products in our faces.

Every update promised ease, but delivered emptiness.

Now I'm 46.

I live in the forest outside Ljusets Dal, in a cabin I built with my own hands. I have a longboat. A wife. Kids. Real ones, not avatars. We hunt what little game remains, grow what we can, and yes, sometimes we have to buy food from the city to survive. It's not perfect. But it's real.

I still vlog on YouTube, ironically — showing people how to live off-grid, how to craft tools, and sing Viking chants. Sometimes I wonder if anyone's even watching. And that wall? That massive concrete slab? Well, it's filled with convenience shops so big robots get your food for you, tech stores filled with new robots to do simple tasks.

I pray people start seeing the reality, the mess we're in, and help rebuild what was a culture-filled earth filled with love, warmth, kindness, and personality.

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Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MYLA, KS4. (PAGE 4 OF 4)

Chop, swing, bang. Chop, swing, bang. Tirelessly and endlessly, I chop wood ready for when my kids get back from school, warming the house, cooking food, and baking. As the axe swung one last time, a drone flew over my head, scaring me with its buzz.

"Dear Myla, we at the Welfare For Forest and Traditions have seen your channel and like your ideas and everything you do, we would like to hold a meeting for you in the town square next week, just a little gathering to show what the world could be like. It will/may be broadcast to around 4.5 billion people. Hope to see you there! - from the people at WFFAT"

The robot whirred one last time before saying:

"The meeting is on the 12th of the 3rd 2052. Please be there by 12 pm."

Swoosh!

Before I knew it, the drone disappeared back to the coffin it crawled out of...

The distaste of entering such an awful, distrustful "city", joining a "society" for a short while... I shake my head in anger, chopping wood with the force of a truck carrying one thousand lbs of steel. Do I go? Do I stay? What tricks will they have in store this time?





Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

RUBY, KS3

Ashes of the Undead

The world had crumbled, leaving only echoes of a life that once was. Ellie had survived longer than most, learning to navigate the ruins, always searching for others like her. When she found Michael and Sarah, it felt like hope had returned. But hope was fragile in a world crawling with the infected.

They had a plan- reach the abandoned research lab, find the cure hidden deep within its wreckage. But fate was cruel. Sarah, the fearless one, the glue holding them together, was bitten. There was no time for goodbyes. No time to grieve. They barely escaped as her eyes glazed over and her body twisted into something monstrous.

Michael and Ellie pressed on, desperation fuelling their every step. The cure was real; they knew it. But the path was lined with horrors: decayed streets, shadows moving in the distance, the growls of the creatures that once were human.

Then came the moment that tore Ellie's world apart. The last vial of the cure was within reach, but so were the infected. Michael shoved Ellie forward, facing the horde alone. "Go!" he shouted. The last thing she saw was his brave, broken smile before the creatures swarmed him. With shaking hands, Ellie clutched the cure. The last of its kind. It wasn't supposed to be like this. She had lost everyone. And yet... she refused to accept defeat, she returned to Michael, his lifeless form barely recognizable, but he wasn't gone. Not fully. His body twitched. His eyes, cloudy and lost, flickered with something deep inside. Ellie hesitated only for a moment before injecting the cure into his arm, hoping against all hope, breath would return to him, colour to his skin. His eyes (his real eyes) met hers. "Ellie?" he whispered.

Relief crashed over her. She didn't hesitate. She threw her arms around him, and in the ruins of the world, against all odds, they kissed, an anchor in the storm, a promise that even in the ashes of the undead, love endured.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MYLA, KS4. (PAGE 1 OF 2)

The sun rose. The blackened sky hides.

Hiding just like all those men and women in their rich palaces telling us what to do.

Everywhere I look, there's a war

A war not just physical, but mentally

Destroying everything like a wave of destructive terror, a wave a lava.

WHEN WILL IT END!

The future is not going to be pretty, yet I still hold hope for the future. I mean, heck, look at our youth, every day it gets harder with men and women in power not understanding, not willing, changing things for the "better"

There's an argument to be made that we, as youth, don't know everything either, but all we want is a life, peace, care, to be happy!

I personally look back and understand times before now were not "better," but, hell, they sure seemed it. Running across the playground, no worries. Going to your local shops, having a laugh, saying how bad times were then.

It's time to move forward as a group, A team, A unit. It's time we work together to help keep what we have left of our community alive.

I see a few versions of our future, a dystopian modern mess ruled by tech like in blade runner, A war filled destruction ticking time bomb both in human rights or in physical nature but I also see a future full of peace a world calm, at last, the earth finally healing for the first time.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

MYLA, KS4. (PAGE 2 OF 2)

I write this to warn you, not to hurt, to change hearts, and maybe help.

Set aside your differences and help allow the start of world healing.

I write this on 8/05/2025.

Two wars are on the brink of causing a mass war with huge nuclear implications.

The UK is removing rights, destroying an already burned nation.

My hopes for next year are for everything to calm down. My big future plans are to get the treatment I deserve, be myself, and live happily. Have a wife or husband, maybe have kids, who knows? I have a small shack in the woods in Sweden. Use solar and other green sources to help the planet. Teach my kids not only the primal ways to live but how to live in future times, understand their needs, and forever improve.

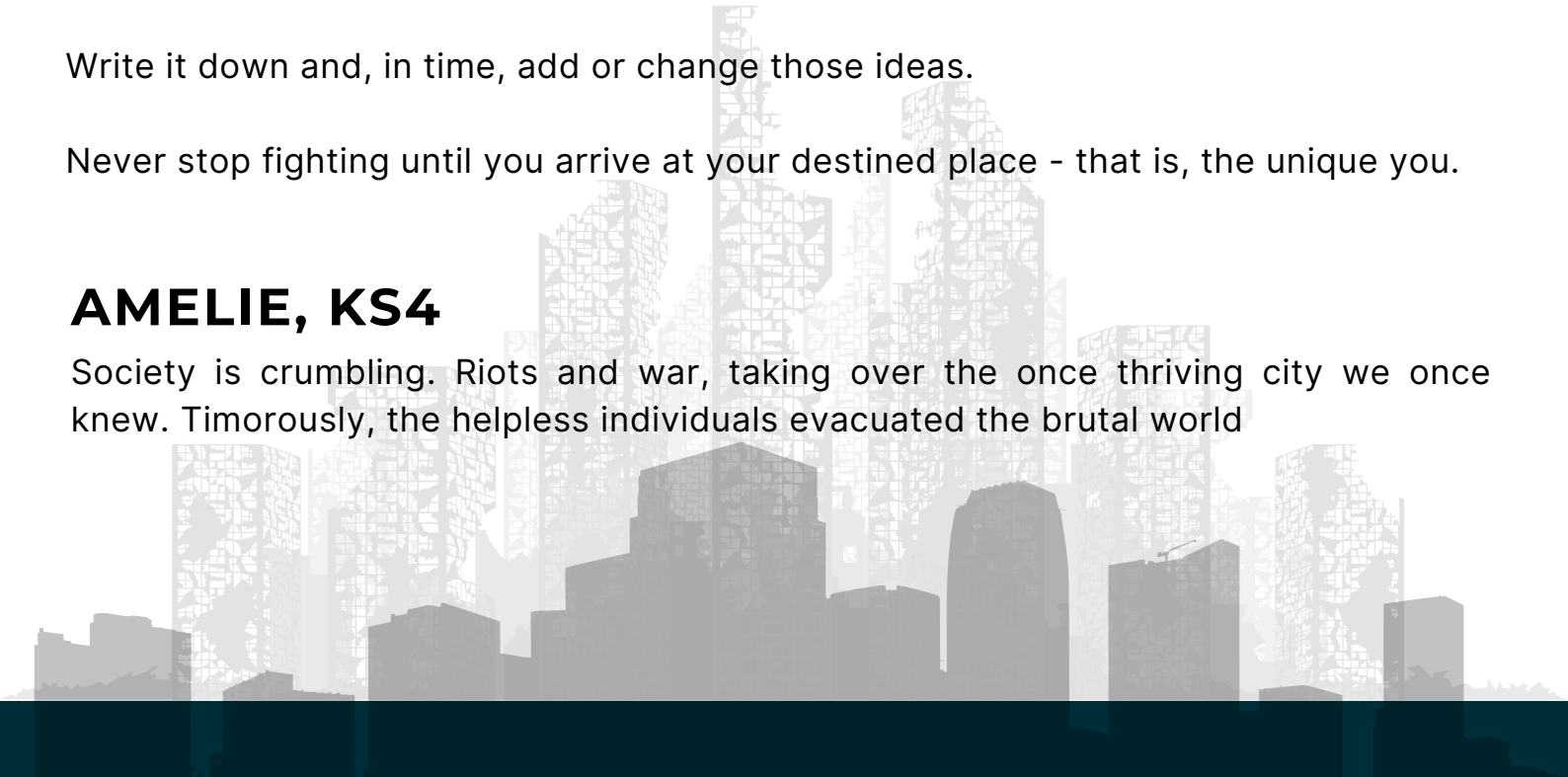
Take a think, what is your future, what right now is your life going to look like?

Write it down and, in time, add or change those ideas.

Never stop fighting until you arrive at your destined place - that is, the unique you.

AMELIE, KS4

Society is crumbling. Riots and war, taking over the once thriving city we once knew. Timorously, the helpless individuals evacuated the brutal world





Half Term Six

What have you been doing?

ELLIENA, KS4

I stood at the edge of the lake, just beyond the gasps and laughter of the crowd, watching the circus rise from the darkened water. Its lights were too bright, blinding almost, as if trying to hide something beneath their glow. The colours bled into each other, red and gold, shimmering across the surface of the river like a warning. Music drifted out, sweet at first, but the longer I listened, the more it twisted, notes stretched just too far, laughter echoing with a hollow ring. The air reeked of burning sugar and something bitter underneath, like smoke and old secrets. I pressed my fingers to the cold rail, the iron biting back. People jostled past me, faces lit with wonder, unaware of the chill creeping down their spines. I could taste it in the air something coming. Not just performance, but something older, darker, waiting, calling. The circus called to me, but not like a song—like a whisper through a locked door, a desperate attempt to lure me in.

Something behind the curtains was watching, it knew I was slowly figuring it out.

And I had the sickening sense that once you stepped inside, you didn't come out the same or you didn't come out at all...

MACY, KS3

We took our Belgian Malinois, Rain, for a run on the beach last night and the tide was coming in and there were MILLIONS of little jellyfish on the sand! They were so cute, they looked like little pickled onions. It looked like someone dropped a bunch of pearls, they didn't have tentacles out or anything. Just little slimy pearl-looking things. I touched one thinking it was a pretty rock and it was slimy, so I asked my dad what it was, and he said, "Don't touch it, it's a jellyfish," but I already touched it; it didn't sting me or anything.



Student Spotlight

What have you been doing?

HIDDEN VOICE, KS4

Everyone tells you that love is beautiful and heals you. That it's like what you read in books or see in movies where it's all-consuming, passionate, and changes how you see the world. Some of those things are true. It is all-consuming and it changes how you see the world, but not in the way you think. It starts off healing you, making the dark grey world seem so much lighter but it never lasts. It destroys you, breaks you repeatedly until the pieces are too small to glue back together, shatters all over the cold floor but, of course, people don't see this. It is not like a broken glass where everyone in the house can hear the smash and see the evidence. No, it's slower, quieter, more deadly. It starts with a few cuts no one can see, more every day until your body is covered in them but that's still not the painful bit. The pain comes later, late at night when you can't stop the bleeding, your body soaked in its own blood, tears running down your face as you tell yourself it'll get better. The real pain however comes days later when no one can see it. The numbness spreads across you, making the world seem dull. The pain no one sees, the devastation no one senses, and the chaos you can't control. You fight for control against the memories, the feelings, and your old self. The girl who thought she was healing and saw the world in a different life, who wanted to get up every morning and constantly laugh. She's been replaced by devastatingly beautiful chaos where the word control is unknown and one day, she will be a distant memory, hidden in the orange sunsets and, finally, at peace.

AVA, KS4

Bright beams of light shone into the dark sky, showing off the stripes of rosy red and icy white that were printed on the huge tent. The sounds of people mumbling inside the tent and the shuffling of discomfort from the uncomfortable seats slowly grew louder as we waited longer. All of a sudden, the music boomed through the speakers, and acrobats and animals walked into the circle in the middle. The show was starting. The smell of popcorn popping was so strong, that I could almost taste it even though I hadn't eaten anything.



Poetry Nook

Let the words come alive

LOOK IN THE NOOK



HIDDEN VOICE

Down. Deep. Below the tide,
Schools of fish saved coin-like shells,
As they glided along water, flush with pride.
Conversing over 'what's the best size?'
'Is there a value to our gratuitous gold?'
'Whether to seduce, seal or stronghold?'
Still, they gave and adored - never sold.

Past the river, not far from here.
Leaves drop to the floor and
Panes of sunlight shatter across puzzling deer:
'The oak was ripe yesterday, was it not?'
Unknown to them, hid in shadows of the grove,
A scheming squirrel stands on her treasure trove
A bank of secret acorns, not open to loans.

up high in the sky - not quite yet.
When the golden sun is gone,
An invisible melody will echo its silhouette.
A mother bat seeks to feed her young,
Selfishly stealing lives of lacewings.
But somehow in altruism, she brings
To her baby, an assortment of things.



ELOISE, KS3

The Winter of Snowstorms

A winter of snowstorms
That melt the next day
rime ice like thorns
that glisten once
then turn to slush
winter of puddles and mud
so soft you could dig into it
yellow winter light
in a cotton candy sky



Poetry Nook

Let the words come alive

LOOK IN THE NOOK



TESS, KS4

A cat's fur comes in many forms:

Dappled tortoiseshell; snowy white, inky black,
 long and fluffy, short and silky:

Should the cats change?

An array of shades, textures and patterns-
 become-

All the same?

Skies appear in many ways:

Clear cool blue on sunny days, soft and fluffy
 clouds in many shapes, bright stars lining the
 night's grey:

Should the skies change?

An array of colour, shape, warmth and glow-
 become-

All the same?

Artwork presents many expressions:

Impressionist dapples, textured swirls, abstract
 emotion and saturated colour:

Should the art change?

An array of vibrancy, tone, technique and marks-
 become-

All the same?

All the same?





Poetry Nook

Let the words come alive

LOOK IN THE NOOK



MYLA, KS4

my identity is my wanna-be
 my truth hidden in myself
 let it out to show and tell
 let it show, let it yell
 it doesn't matter who they gonna tell
 for being myself is all of me

being big or being slim
 being tall or being small

being grown from cells
 growing from cells
 so small, so unique
 mixing DNA
 Trying to get by

I'm here to be free,
 not to be told my identity
 for now its time, time to say goodbye
 and hope you be happy and free
 just like me.



Your identity is who you want to be, whether that's part of the LGBTQ, your religion, your traditions, your looks, your taste, your smile, your eyes, your body, or your clothes. They're all your own identity.



Poetry Nook

Let the words come alive

LOOK IN THE NOOK



MILLIE, KS3

My house is everywhere, my home is nowhere,
our children alone, our loved ones lost.

Shelter found, moved away, protesters party, they burn our stuff,
our only hope floated away with the dust.

Then they came, they gave us love,
if only they didn't see danger they saw us.

We are lost, now are found,
thank the ones that heard our sound.



Let the words come alive

In a world of hues from bright to pale, each person's quirks compose their tale.
There's Bob who eats his soup with a fork and Sue who talks to her pet pig, Pork.
There's Tina who loves mismatched socks and Paul who collects pictures of rocks.
Don't forget Jill who whispers to plants or Joe who dances in his sweatpants.
Some folks are loud, some quiet as mice, some like their pizza with extra spice,
Some read books on the treadmill, while others built sculptures from their bills.
No one's the same, that's the fun, imagine a world where we are all just one .
If everyone acted and looked like me , we'd argue all day: how dull would that be?
So celebrate the quirks, the weird and the wild, from a grumpy old man to a giggling
child.
For being unique is life's great art and that's what makes us all so smart.





Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Primary Edition!



THE STORY OF COCO, THE RACCOON GOD

Written by: William, Cooper, Mia, Richard, Chase, Jaxon, and Leonie - Year 3-4!

Melvin the Protector of the God, the one and only RACCOON GOD, called Coco, had special powers to transform into a HUMAN, Raccoon's enemy. Melvin was so concentrated on Coco the Raccoon God, keeping him safe. He had to clear a long line for him to walk through whilst making sure no one saw Coco BUT... SOMEONE SAW Coco...THEN IT WAS CHAOS! Whilst everyone was going crazy, Melvin turned back into a Raccoon and told the other Raccoons to follow him and protect Coco (obviously in raccoon language). This is how the best Raccoons ever escaped. It was amazing! Watching the action above was Coco's best friend, Choco, who was killed by the humans. This is how the WAR BEGAN.



The raccoons went and hopped on the HUGE train! But... Was that a fox? I'm certain that was a fox. It was as big as a Great Dane or German Shepherd! It was as quick as a leopard, and fierce like a lion! The raccoons were afraid to see that the foxes had found them, they ran and ran and RAN! They all almost slipped because the floor was so slippery! Then they found a hiding spot. They were all so pleased and delighted to see that the foxes had lost them. The raccoons had fear in their eyes when they saw a fox come near them. Luckily, the foxes turned around and left, since they never saw anything there because the raccoons were greatly hidden. After the train, there was actually Coco the raccoon God left on the train, but he got out, and the foxes were jumping up and down.



Collaboration Corner



How we work together! - Primary Edition!

THE STORY OF COCO, THE RACCOON GOD

Coco *aka The raccoon* God met up with the other raccoon Gods. They were friendly at first...BUT THEY CHALLENGED HIM TO A FIERCE BATTLE TO THE DEATH! Sadly, The Raccoon God Coco died in the process...but he was SECRETLY ALIVE! HE CHARGED AT THE THUNDER RACCOON GOD, KEKO, WITH NO MERCY INTENDED. Coco hypnotised the Raccoon God...he had mastered the sacred technique of Metavision. The Raccoon God fell straight into a pot of steaming hot chocolate, which was in the arena. Metavision is a technique that allows you to have more social awareness and gives you the ability to see the potential of what someone can do.

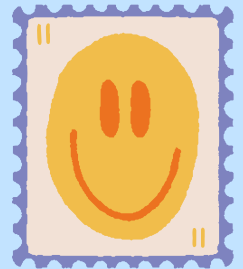
The End, or maybe it wasn't..... we shall never know!



Below is their postcard of success!

Battling isn't always the key, try and sort it out together!
- William

it's good to take turns when we work as a team!
- Richard



I like finding spelling mistakes!
- Richard

We want more creative writing lessons

I just liked the whole story!
- Mia

I liked the writing and ideas that the others had
😊 - Cooper

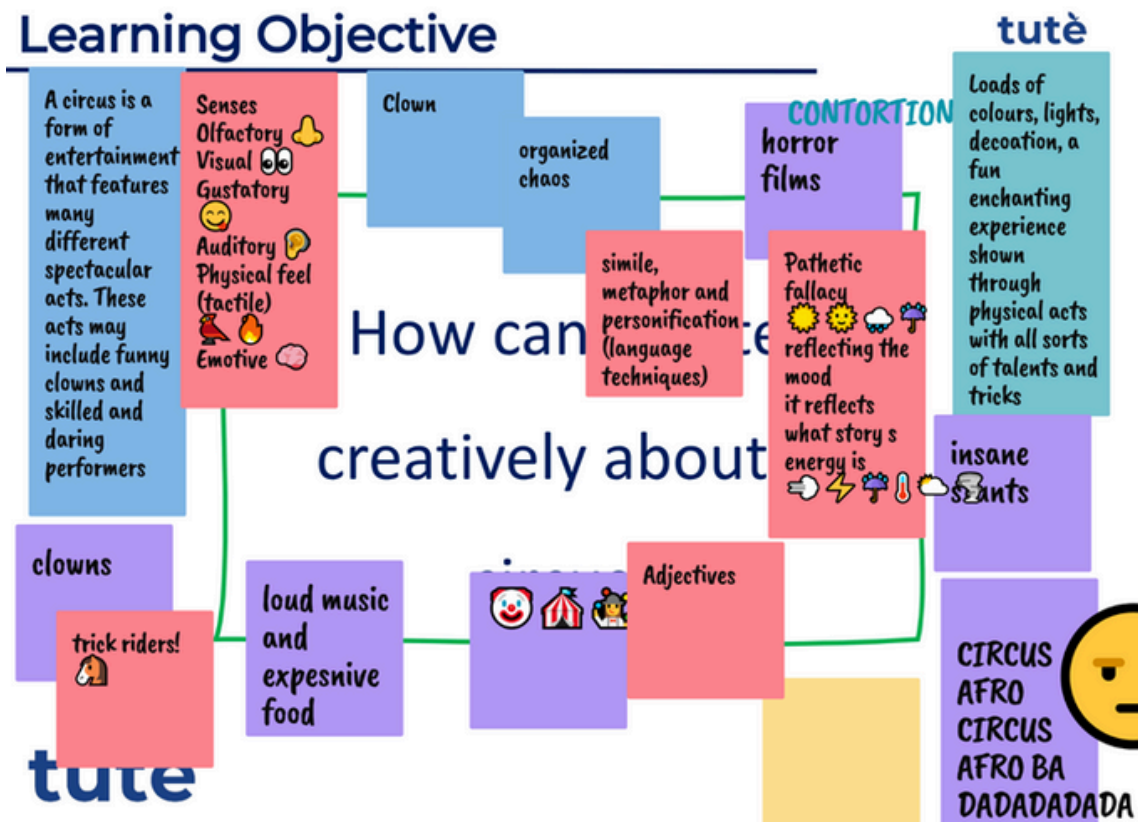
It was fun cause I actually made it. It's the most amazing thing I've ever made! - William



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition!

KS3 CIRCUS WRITING!



AMY, KS3.

A couple of hours ago, I just came home from the circus. I'm telling you now because I can't sleep. I'm scared. As soon as I got there, I could just hear people laughing and screaming awfully loudly. I went there with my friends and we were trembling as I was walking towards it, we finally got there after feeling like it took ages. Halfway through, I fell asleep, which is weird because I don't sleep when there are loud sounds. I woke up, my friends disappeared, and everyone disappeared until I saw a group of scary clowns that were in the corners of the room. I couldn't get out, I was trying so hard, the Clowns then turned around. It felt like my heart had stopped pumping. They all pelted me, and then I woke up. It was all a dream, and then it was over finally. But I saw someone sleeping, everyone left him and the clowns went into the corner of the room and then I heard...



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition!



JOHANNA, KS3.

A circus is an incredible experience. The Lights, the colours, the people, the crowd, it's an experience you can't forget. As you approach, you can see the vibrant, beaming lights shining out into the open sky, and all sorts of music and songs being played. Delicious, sweet food and drinks are being sold in stores along with merchandise like balloons, clothes, and toys, along with amazing decorations along the tents and inside. You can see all sorts of entertainment inside. Trick Riders, Contortionists (Hoops, Aerial Silks, Trapeze artists, etc.), strongmen, jugglers, incredibly flexible and talented people here to amaze and immerse you into this wonderful event, and it's a memory you are sure to remember, and maybe even cherish.

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3.

Steadily, I squelched through the field, squinting at the sun that decided to show, just as we arrived at the tent. Instantly, the freshly popped popcorn slivered up through my nostrils, bringing a tingling warmth throughout my body. Seats were filled - only ours empty.

MARIA, KS3.

Circuses normally pop up every once in a while, you're most likely to go to a circus near night, and the lights look 10x brighter then. Sometimes, on toys in the circus, they may even have Disney or Pixar characters for you to win. The people who work there should be kind and helpful, but also funny and silly. Circuses like to use stripes a lot and for colours normally ones that will stand out/pop, the atmosphere of a circus is generally good, kids are screaming and laughing, and everyone seems to be having a good time, unless you went on a spinny ride and now are all nauseous.

TYLER, KS3.

A circus is a captivating form of entertainment that typically features a variety of performers, including acrobats, clowns, and trained animals, showcasing their skills and stunts within a circular arena, often a "Big Top" tent, surrounded by eager spectators. You can hear the uproar of the crowd cheering the clowns on.



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



WINTER'S EMBRACE



LUCY, KS4

The trees coated in snow glistened under the warmth of the sun. In the distance they stood tall in the icy cold weather. The icicles gripped onto the trees as the crisp, cold wind of winter weather attempted to shake them off.

CHRISTINA, KS4

The trees were stood still, the icicles parading around them. Cold mist in the skies fled the area almost like it was a cheetah with it's speed. Snow fell like luxurious gold forming into snowflakes. An uproar of ice covered the whole area replacing any sign of a sunset like it never existed.

JT, KS4

You can hear the crunchy snow beneath your feet as you stumble through the thick frost. You look at the path your feet made and its like a trench.



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



GATSBY!

We are jigsaw puzzle pieces, fitting our words together to see the bigger picture.



The beautiful lights were glaring at night in the Disney mansion. Lovely diamond blue colours were sparkling beautifully off the Lamborghini and McLaren cars that were shining in the dark.

Kyle R

The gargantuan manor illuminated the night like a firework on bonfire night.

Noah

The luminescent lights beamed brightly as the guests strolled carelessly inside the grand double doors like tourists in the holiday season.

Grace H

The mansion lit up the hill side as it stared down on the village below.

Hidden Voice

In the dark night, the moon smiled as it watched over the flood of people below.

Tiffany



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



SCENIC

We are jigsaw puzzle pieces, fitting our words together to see the bigger picture.



The sky was foggy and dark.
It looked cold and unsettling.

Beneath the murky waters
lived multiple species of slimy
cold mysterious creatures.

Amy

The transparent, sea-
green water was
refreshing yet murky
depths lay ahead.

Summer

Snakes,
crocodiles and
eels became
entangled in the
plants on the
riverbed.

Maria



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



SUPERHEROES!

World Book Day Superhero Fictional Battle!

Special thanks go to its KS3 authors: Freddie, Gwen, Dora, Ellie and Kieran.

It was a blustery March day when Dora reminded her teacher that her World Book Day story should be ready for publishing. "Yes, Dora: here is it! Your group story is better than any Marvel film. Congratulations!"

Freddie whooped with excitement as he announced that his hero would set alight an army of undead soldiers and send them charging at the enemy whilst raining fireballs from above. The power of Freddie's magic was unleashed!

Yoda had been elected to lead the team of feline warriors on their mission! If the heroes could succeed, the Squid Sisters would make a special appearance (on account of Dora being a fan.)

'Pyramid shaped bomb full of paint!' was Freddie's mode of attack. Yoda's side kick, Link, was more than capable to making the enemy suffer with this dastardly plan!

Things came to a terrifying conclusion, one bleak, fog-soaked night, when the Joker was making his way along a narrow path next to a canal. Behind a wall lurked a heroic gang including Yoda and Link. They were biding their time... waiting for their moment to strike...

The Joker coughed and gave away his exact location. The heroic team pounced, a few of them holding him down as the rest of them just spammed their attacks.





Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



SUPERHEROES!

World Book Day Superhero Fictional Battle!

Special thanks go to its KS3 authors: Freddie, Gwen, Dora, Ellie and Kieran.

Meanwhile, co-writers, Dora and Gwen, despaired at Freddie's violent means of dealing with the enemy. Gwen proposed that they use therapy instead and Dora concurred, suggesting that Hello Kitty might make an excellent counsellor. Gwen also wisely added that they were probably neuro-diverse!

But unfortunately, Freddie had other ideas. 'Just have Link slice him up,' Freddie said.

In Freddie's fantasy, he invited us to imagine: a bunch of balloons and confetti... The Joker floated up into the sky and then he fell back down and got turned into a pile of mushy guts. Alternatively, the villain could get shot with a high-power confetti cannon. Take your pick!

Following a frenzy of violent possibilities, Dora restored calm (momentarily) by suggesting a more respectful fate for our enemy: 'Shouldn't we give cat joker back to the owner?'

Ultimately, our amazing World Book Day writers decided on a grisly end for our Joker's evil antics...

Freddie insisted: "Kill the Joker... No reviving." Freddie pursued the more violent option: "Public execution. Use confetti, just to celebrate his death."

Dora suggested prison.

Ellie ended their disagreement, declaring that they would kill the Joker. And the Squid Sisters sang their triumphant tune (as Dora hoped they would!)

The End!



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



FREE WRITING!

Write whatever you want on the topic. Just. Keep. Writing!

WILLOW, KS3

It is the 26th of June.

Many people worldwide have died of unknown circumstances on this day every year. There is only a handful of people left in your country since most of them have met an unlucky demise.

The News urges everyone to take cover and/or seek refuge somewhere where they won't die like the others.

Frostbite and severe sunburns make the people drop dead all around, tainting the pavement with a sickening stench of decaying carcasses and blood.

The local restaurants, cafes, and shopping centres have all been ostracized, as if they've closed down for good.

Your family has also died on this very day. You didn't pay a visit to their funeral, not like anybody would be there anyway.

The sky is a grueling grey, a stark contrast to the chaos reigning in the town.

Stray animals scurry at unusual noises that only they can hear.

The curses of this day have become an infamously historical event, something truly tragic and devastating.





Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition

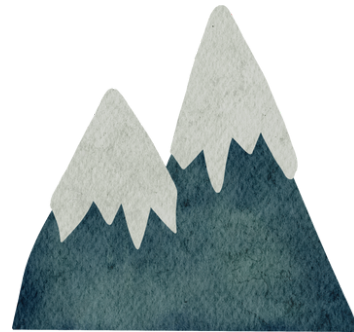


FREE WRITING!

Write whatever you want on the topic. Just. Keep. Writing!

REGGIE, KS3

The cold Mounting air pierces my skin, the trees on either side of me bearing the weight of the cold snow, the basket straps pulling me into further exhaustion. As I approached my home, I could sense that something was off. The scent of blood filled the air, my legs began running, and I opened the door. dead and fear overwhelmed my body, my feet frozen from fear. my family, my brothers, sisters, and mother was dead. blood filling there clothes, i fell back in tears, my sense sharpened. i was not alone...



KENZEE, KS3

I think life on Mars would be nice and fun because it is hot, you can play with aliens, and it's peaceful, but I would have to take food because I'm a fatty lol, but in my opinion, I would like to go to Mars...

I think life in space will be fun because you can go onto the moon and act like you're on a trampoline, and then you can go to Mars to sunbathe, and you can play with aliens, red ones from Mars and green ones from the moon. In my opinion, I think it will be a blast! 😄😄😄😄😄😄😄😄😄

I think aliens on Jupiter would be purple, and another reason I would like to go to space and be friends with the aliens is because they can teach me their language, and I'll have even more friends than on Earth 😄😄





Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



JOB INTERVIEWS

Hello!

I would work together with others and make sure everyone is happy. Also, I would make sure everyone is heard.

When other people could not agree, I have tried to stay calm and I listened to everyone's point of view.

I'd expect an average salary but possibly increasing over time.

I am going to interview Amelie. Ok Amelie, describe how you would work as part of a team.

Ok, describe a challenge you faced at work and how you dealt with it, please.

So, Amelie, what are your salary expectations?

Ok so where do you see yourself in five years?



Collaboration Corner

How we work together - Secondary Edition



JOB INTERVIEWS

As a make-up artist hopefully on a photoshoot or campaign, and I want to work to the best of my abilities.

I think my skills will add to your team and improve my experience.

YAY!

Thank you and one final question: Why do you want to work for us?

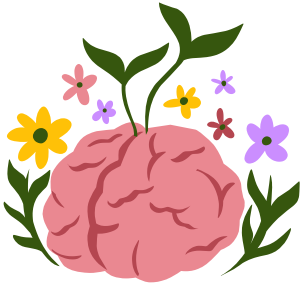
You are hired. An email will be sent shortly with your starting times, salary and more information required.

Nice!

AMELIE K.
KS3



ZACHARY A.
KS3



Awareness Check



World Mental Health Day

WHAT DID WE SHARE?

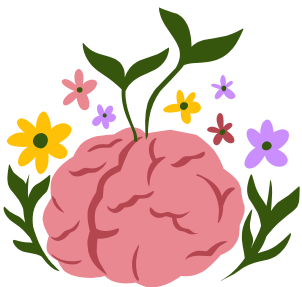
We asked a selection of the teachers in the English Department to have a go at the Thunks that were shared during World Mental Health Day! Check out their responses below:

Glass half full or glass half empty - which is preferable? I tend to go with Terry Pratchett's view - that I have a glass at all is a good thing, there are many people around the world whose glass has been wrenched from them, smashed, broken. Like him, I'm grateful, everyday, that my glass is in one piece.

I wish there was way more happiness than sadness in the world. In reality, I think overall it's probably very balanced. So my outlook is, if it's a 50/50 split, then one simple act of kindness from me, if it makes just one person (even a complete stranger) feel a little happier, then I've done my bit to tip the scales ever so slightly in the favour of happiness. Imagine if we all did that!!!

If I am having a bad day, I talk to my husband and spend time with my dogs!

In the words of Guns n Roses, just remember, when things are tough 'nothing lasts forever...even cold November Rain...'



Awareness Check



World Mental Health Day

WHAT DID WE SHARE?

We asked a selection of the teachers in the English Department to have a go at the Thunks that were shared during World Mental Health Day! Check out their responses below:

If a pill existed that made you feel happy all of the time 24-7, would you take it? No. If you don't have any sadness then how can you really know and appreciate happiness? I think life should be about balance. No emotion is intrinsically 'bad' or 'good' - they just are. The key is to know that emotions are transient and 'this too shall pass' - not just the sadness but the joy too. We can build our resilience and coping mechanisms for if we experience difficult emotions and if we are really struggling help is out there.

I'm so thankful that I have my lovely son, cough, dog and two baby cats. My nutter friends, my weird family, my cousins who never fail to make me ache with laughter, my remarkably funny colleagues, the delivery guy who always texts to say he's popping a parcel in rather than disturbing my pooch by knocking (and then gives him a cuddle anyway), my neighbour who's now a close pal who walks my dog for me. It's funny, isn't it, that sometimes we may have those days when we question humanity but then when you look around you see these little moments of genuine care from people all around you? It's a like a big hug. Having a strong support system like this can really help with your mental health so look out for your family because sometimes you find them in the strangest places. #Findyourtribe

Does being mentally healthy mean you're happy 24/7?

No. I think being mentally healthy is knowing that it is okay to feel a full plethora of emotions and knowing how you can help feel better again. Feeling happy all the time would feel exhausting! The best thing I think you can do to support yourself through your mental health is to get to know you better and work with yourself rather than against yourself - especially if you feel the pressure to be happy all the time.

Recognising the wide range of human emotions is a vital part of being mentally and emotionally healthy. While certain feelings like sadness can bring us discomfort, it is still important that we recognise and accept these feelings as they can be a great indicator to understanding ourselves, our preferences, our hopes and disappointments. Consider emotions like riding a wave - sometimes it might feel like we are surfing and other times we're fighting the current, we can't control the water but we can certainly bring in things to help (maybe a friend that's a strong swimmer?).



Awareness Check

**Transgender Awareness Month and
Disability Awareness Month**



CHARLIE, KS4:

He looked up into the mirror, his once long, layered hair was shaven off, the makeup he wore to disguise himself was smudged, and his full chest was binded. 'Lucia' was no longer fitting to his identity. 'When was it ever fitting?' He asked himself. When was he ever comfortably until now. The truth is, there was never a Lucia, not since he was thirteen. He took a sharp breath which hitched as tears poured from his eyes. What would his father think? Would his grandmother even survive seeing him in his true self? Or his mother, his poor mother. He turned the faucet on and cupped water into his hand before throwing it onto his face in an attempt to stop the tears. He turned the water off and looked at himself again, he'd shed his own skin and become somebody knew. Finally, he turned around and slowly creaked the door open. He took a few steps, his legs wobbly, his arms heavy, but his spirit unmatched. Before facing the inevitable he grabbed some paper and began to jot a name before scribbling it out, then again, and again, and again. Finally, he settled on something. He looked in the mirror and a smile formed onto his face. 'Yeah, I look like a Todd..' He muttered to himself.

CHRISTINA C, KS4:

Kira's name never sat right with her. When somebody said it, an uncomfortable feeling would always go through her brain. She always felt like the odd one out in her group of girl friends at school and felt like something was holding her back. So instead of getting some sleep, she was up after midnight, her mind was a resonance of confusion still. She was up endlessly searching on the internet about gender identity and other peoples experiences with not feeling comfortable in what they've been brought up and Kira found it all quite relatable. It felt like a catharsis for her a brain after knowing other people had the same experience, but they also clarified that it was fine not to be 100% sure on who you are yet. Besides that, she still didn't like her current name and was researching alternatives. It was like an ephipany that went over her as she saw a list of names she found suitable for herself for the time being and specifically saw the name Kiran. She found it a lot more comfortable to identify as and hoped that when she told her friends at school if they could try using that name on her for now on the next day so that she could figure out who she is better that they'd accept it and not use her deadname.



Awareness Check

Transgender Awareness Month and
Disability Awareness Month



PHEOBE, KS3:

Charlie was a boy. He was born a boy, he was called a he, he wore boys clothes, he had a boys body and he enjoyed playing football. However, all of his best friends were girls, he loved dressing up in luscious and long dresses, sequin bags but most of all Charlie loved makeup. Every time his mother went into the makeup he longed for her to buy the newest bronzer or the darkest mascara for him to later experiment in. Charlie didnt like the idea of having to hide who he was and after a long few days of researching and an emotional rollercoaster. Charlie decided he didnt want to be Charlie anymore he wanted to be Evie and he wanted to be a her to match her new stylish name. She loved her new identity, it was like it was meant to be all along. Evie still plays football like a professional, she now bounces and leaps around to Taylor Swift and most exciting of all her mother got her some new glamorous makeup to match the new identity! Evie is happy she transitioned, she loved her new name and her new lifestyle. Evie didn't have to be afraid or hide away from who she truly was inside. Evie is and will always be Evie.

Author Spotlight!

LAURA NOAKES

Laura Noakes is an author of twisty mysteries for children and young adults. When she's not 'researching' crimes or devising increasingly devious obstacles for her fictional characters, she enjoys badly crocheting, playing Nintendo Switch games on the easiest mode and watching copious amounts of reality TV. She is both disabled and chronically ill and her stories usually feature heroines of the same persuasion. She is owned by and obsessed with her two cats, Scout and Sunny. Her debut book, *Cosima Unfortunate Steals a Star*, was published in 2023, followed by a sequel in 2024. Laura has always had an insatiable love of stories, so it was almost fated that one day she would write some of her own. She strives to tell stories where disabled kids are the heroes.



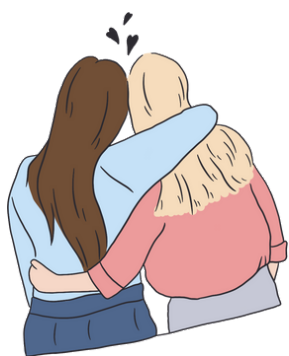


Awareness Check

Transgender Awareness Month and
Anti-Bullying Week



WHAT OUR STUDENTS WROTE:



Why can friendship be so important to transgender people?

The importance of friendship is so significant, in our lifetime we choose our own friends. The journey in life becomes more memorable and interesting, it's the friendships in life that teach us to love, share, care, and importantly fight the odds. Friends are the people who accept you for precisely what and how you are, and we too can easily be ourselves in their company and also just being empathetic towards people understanding their choices and who they would like to be. - **Lois, KS4.**



Friendship, it can be used for many different things, like a bond of two people or more, where they share their interests and hobbies or even just normal conversations or even humour. Friendship is important for keeping that social environment around you. It gives a heartwarming presence like 'You look nice today' and 'So do you' lifting their spirits and making them feel more confident about themselves. It helps them feel supported and encouraged to be themselves and be how they are without hiding themselves. - **Ellie, KS4.**

Author Spotlight!

AIDEN THOMAS

Aiden Thomas is a New York Times Bestselling author with an MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College. Originally from Oakland, California, they now make their home in Portland, Oregon. As a queer, trans-Latinx, Aiden advocates strongly for diverse representation in all media. Aiden's special talents include: quoting The Office, winning Jenga, finishing sentences with "is my FAVORITE", and killing spiders. Aiden is notorious for not being able to guess the endings of books and movies and organizes their bookshelves by color.

Aiden's books are for 12-17-year-olds and include titles like The Sunbearer Trials, Cemetary Boys, and Lost in the Never Woods.





Awareness Check

Black History Month



WHAT OUR STUDENTS WROTE:

Imagine yourself in Morgan's position. Write a diary entry talking about his invention success and the struggles of being overlooked as a black inventor.

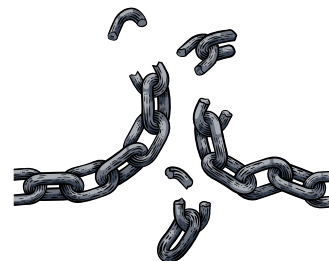


Dear Diary,

My name is Garret Morgan, I was born in 1877 in my hometown of Kentucky. My life was a happy but slightly weary start, I was born into a family of freed slaves, making me a free slave, being black in that time I was cast aside due to my skin colour. Resulting me to be only in education till I was eleven years old, despite that I had accomplished making gas masks, saving millions of lives due to a terrible disease that was being spread around the town.

Plus in 1922, I made a traffic light system, to help cars decrease the risk of crashes and accidents. Despite everything I had accomplished and invented, due to me being a slave and cast aside with my family, my identity was never taken account of due to all the things I made that are useful in today's generation and many many more! - **Ellie, KS4.**

In 1877, i had been born in Kentucky my mother and father were both made slaves and were living in complete disdain. Sorrow echoed in my heart for my parents. In 1912 i was elated to have accomplished my creation of the traffic lights, i was determined and diligent for this creation, to not only just help the roads, but to save lives too! - **Lois, KS4.**



Author Spotlight!

PATRICE LAWRENCE

Patrice Lawrence was born in Brighton and brought up in an Italian and Trinidadian household. Her first book for young adults, *Orangeboy*, won the Bookseller YA Prize and Waterstone's Prize for Older Children's Fiction. *Indigo Donut*, her second book for teenagers, won the Crimefest YA Prize. Both books have been nominated for the Carnegie Medal too. Patrice worked for more than 20 years for charities supporting equality and social justice. These themes (along with a serious amount of music) inform her stories. Patrice still lives in Brighton. She has written many amazing pieces for 9-17 year olds!

Check out an interview with her here: <https://youtu.be/3yFExEPMEv0>

'I want to write books that have hope in them.'





Awareness Check

Individuality and Uniqueness



ALICE, KS5

We are pushed into boxes. Forced to be defined by the things we can't control but we are not what we struggle with. We are our choices, our actions.

We may be different but we are all equally deserving of good. Our individuality comes together like a tapestry full of life and colour.

Everything about us is equally deserving of its space in the world. The good. The bad. What makes us ourselves. And being ourselves is the best thing we can be.

ANALEISE, KS5

Everybody is unique, we all have different things about us: our hair styles, regardless of the length; our varying heights; our loud or quiet voices; our personalities; our interests.

We are all human and have two legs, two eyes, and more. But when we look at a person we don't see ourselves, we see individuality; we all have different identities and that is what makes us who we are.

The world changes like our thoughts and feelings but we should embrace that rather than hide from it: change can improve and make us learn from our mistakes, if we embrace the uniqueness of everyone.

As a whole we are the same. We all breathe, think and talk so why should we look at someone as if they are an outsider or a bad person just because they seem different? We are all human; we make the same mistakes, think the same thoughts and breathe the same air. So next time you look at someone and think they are not an equal, look at yourself because you are no higher than them; we are all the same...we are all equal.



Awareness Check

Individuality and Uniqueness



JAYDEN, KS4

I am different in many ways: I am interested in uncommon subjects. I'm unfiltered. It might seem like a bad trait to have but I think being honest, straight- forward and direct is the best way to live.

Celebrating being unique or different is a key part of being human; doing the same thing as others everyday or acting the same as everyone else takes the beauty out of our diverse life. It's the big or little differences we have that makes us our own person. That shows our colours and our vibrancy and it should be celebrated by everyone. It is such a key factor in life.

YUNA, KS4

There is a little bit of something special in everyone, I think. Some people can move in mesmerising dances, some are born with profound natural talent, some people can even break world records. That isn't to say, however, that you have to be record-breaking to be special: everyone is special in their own way. Some people can make a really good apple pie, or maybe have a talent in making people smile, and that's special too. All you need to be in order to be special, is the wonder that is you.

MEI, KS4

My unique talent is ballet. I go to ballet regularly and on Saturdays I go to musical theatre. Because of this my back can bend a lot. The fact that I endure a serious amount of the pain to look "pretty" to me personally is insane. I love inspiring others whilst onstage, so I do enjoy it because I know what comes at the end. It feels like a reward after years of work for one hour of people's enjoyment.



Awareness Check

Respect Check



HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

A student's views on respecting our differences

Can you think of important boundaries or rules of yours?

Don't invade people's privacy; this might include someone invading your space, touching your stuff, asking too many questions etc.

Right now, I blame Trump for worsening misunderstanding; he said he was going to change the LGBTQ to LGB. It's not his decision! It is so unfair; it makes me want to say to Donald Trump: 'Mind your own business, Orange.' (I call him 'Orange,' because he does a stupid tan thing and it makes him look wild!)

Do you think PEOPLE NEED TO EARN RESPECT?

Yes, if you can't show it, then why have it?

Some people say 'Everyone has a right to be treated with respect.' Do you agree?

If they're not a bad person, then yes.

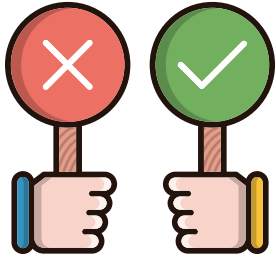
Respect means being truthful and accepting.

Respect and tolerance should involve being nice to someone no matter if they are male, female, nonbinary etc.

Think about it, trans people should be better respected and understood too, because they're still human; they're just not the *right* gender. A lot of trans people go from nonbinary to transgender.

I know many people who are trans having changed their gender, but people don't always understand it. Disrespectful people should mind their business.

No matter what our gender, race, homosexuality, religion etc, no one should be disrespected.



Awareness Check

Discussion Time

HIDDEN VOICE, KS3

A student view on: Homelessness

Article: Why people don't choose to be homeless.



Hidden Voice: People don't really have a choice, as it is just life for you, and many people lose their jobs and become homeless, and their mental health suffers.

Macy: A lot of the time, people do not have a choice about being homeless for many reasons: loss of money; being born into a poor family; bad mental health, which could be caused by drugs, etc, and you could unintentionally end up with no money and on the street.

Any reasons why someone might run away from home?

Hidden Voice: They aren't happy and just want to get away from civilisation. It mostly comes down to idiots on social media causing suicide in kids, so they run away.

Maria: It's obvious that people who say 'homelessness is a choice' have never been homeless or nearly been on the brink of homelessness.

Esme: I knew someone who ran away just because they had really strict parents.

Evie L: Same. Sometimes that can be fair, though.

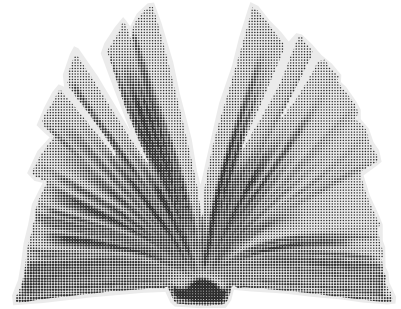




Student Snippets

Few words. Big impact.

KS3



ARCHIE

I walked along a janky, old bridge clinging on for dear life. The sea breeze was knocking me like a tornado, but it was so relaxing: like I was totally at peace walking along that bridge

BECKY

He slid across the room like a startled penguin: eyes blown wide like someone had just told him he was about to perform to the nation.

SKYE

He was on the water, going as fast as a lion on the wave. He could smell the fresh air and touched the crisp, refreshing water. He could see the sunset and it was like a summer evening: not too hot not too cold

MAX

As I walked down the eerie driveway, the only thing I could hear was the crunching of leaves beneath my feet as I approached the old house. It smelt like rotten eggs: vile and repulsive. Inside the spooky house, a nightmarish figure loomed in the window beckoning me inside with a long, withered finger.

HIDDEN VOICE

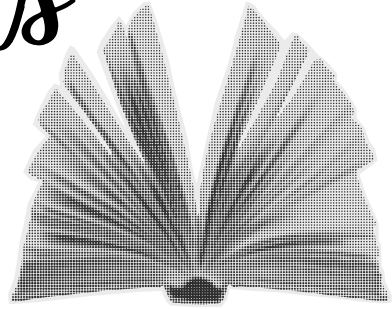
I am a gaming champion! I practise a lot and I win a lot! In football games I score, pass and assist. I am as fast as a lightning bolt. I dribble like a pro! Watch me go! Online play is outstanding every day. Playing with my old friends is fun, fantastic and fabulous. Our team is the best!



Student Snippets

Few words. Big impact.

KS3



MORGAN

It was getting late, thick clouds making the air seem stuffy and hard to catch a breath. Voices holler from out behind the old bark trees, figures appearing in the corner of my dilated eyes. The eerie silence became loud. The deep fog thickened. Where even was I?

HIDDEN VOICE

It was a cold, foggy, night; the trees brushing through the whistling winds. The path was frosted up...

MIA

The eerie woodlands glooms with thick fog, you can't see far. It smells like the fresh cut grass in summer. The texture around me is damp. All I can hear is the rustling of bushes. It tastes and smells green.

JACK

The night was dark and gloomy, nothing but the moon's light glimmering through the massive glass roof. There was a huge T-rex below the glass. Just the thought of how much history lies in this and the whole building: so much life and so much death. With a faint laugh from the shadows, the moonlight faded away and silence filled the room...

INDIE

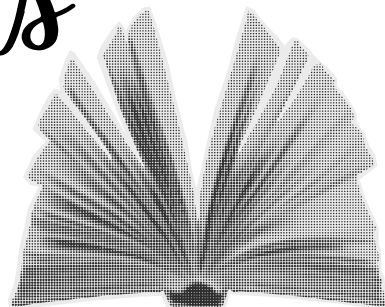
As an engulfing darkness now fully enveloped the once bustling city, I could begin my mission. The mission that if completed successfully would change everything. Determinedly, I followed the dim but comforting glow of a flickering streetlight in the distance, knowing this was my last chance - it was now or never.



Student Snippets

Few words. Big impact.

KS3



IZZY

The fountain of apricot lava gains width. My jaw drops as low as the ground. This is like nothing I have ever seen. Giant chunks of rock are blown off the mountain of fire, like pieces of an equator colliding and smashing against the earth's floor. The volcanic ash 'screws-up' my face. I take a memorable photo and run for my life as fast as a hungry eagle soaring through the air.

JESS

My heart is throbbing. Each beat making me weaken more. Alarm haunts me like demon lurking from within. Flaming lava oozes dauntingly as smoke grasps the air like a shadow to figure. I urge to move but my body stands still ...

NANCY

Obsidian smoke surrounds us like an invisible fence preventing us from escaping. A waft of a stench as pungent as cigarette smoke hits my nose and I have hold back a gag. A river of wine like lava rolls the down the hill. It would be described as magical and mysterious if not for the impending danger it brought...

CHARLIE

It's my first night raid, flying over some dense forest my navigator tells me that he's just seen an enemy fighter. Over the hum of my own engine, I do hear a very faint growl of a far aircraft. I tell him to alert all gunners... A couple minutes pass and I see holes appearing in my wings, BUT I see nor hear any tracer rounds hitting my plane...

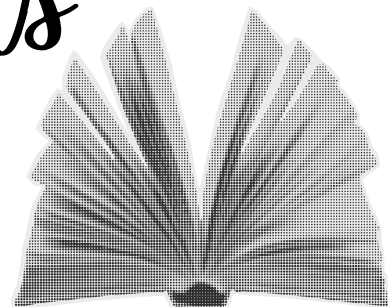
The fog was getting thick, and it all went quiet. I realised my altitude and suddenly
CRASH In the darkness I cluttered around trying to get my seatbelt of as a fire starts in engine two. I shout, no sound... I look around, no one else is here... I climb out and see a startlingly bright figure yet in black and white, the moon burns my eyes, before I black out.



Student Snippets

Few words. Big impact.

KS3



CHLOE

My dog jumped up with his leash in his mouth, dropped it on my lap, wagging his tail. Once his leash was on, we stepped outside into the beautiful sunny day and locked our door. We saw beautiful flowers and bugs and skipped along the beach excitedly.

ARJELO

The cheerful pup trotted along the winding path, tail wagging like a flag of joy. The crisp breeze carried the scent of blooming flowers, while playful barks echoed through the sunny park. Every step felt like an adventure, as both dog and owner basked in the simple delight of their walk together.

NATASHA

So I set off, locked the door, and went. My head was in the clouds and dreaming about the dogs next door.

Whilst being dragged down this narrow pathway, there was Sarah. Sarah is the one nobody talks to, so when she starts, she won't stop. I crossed. However, she crossed! I panicked. My dog stepped out into the road and I shouted, "BENNY!!!"

WILLOW

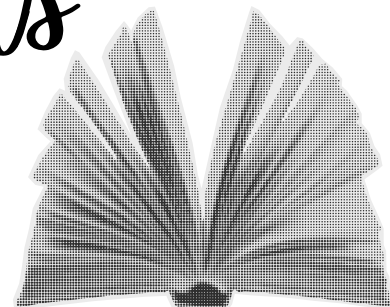
The man walked his dog through the dog park, its yellow lead being an equal contrast to the beautiful landscape of the park. There were dogs catching balls, eating treats, and being silly. The man got some treats out of his pocket, fresh chicken-flavoured doggo bones, and threw one at the dog, and off it chewed the bone in bliss. The young girl quickly prepared her dog supplies and grabbed her pomsy called Pompom, and off she went. She then put Pompom on a lead and let her grab some flowers in her mouth. They then went to the doggy treat shop and bought some toys for it to play with, and they went to a field, where they played together.



Student Snippets

Few words. Big impact.

KS3



MAX

The sky is dominated by dark, swirling storm clouds, their deep shades of grey and black creating a dramatic, ominous atmosphere. The clouds seem to churn and twist, as if preparing for a downpour, with occasional tempered flashes of light breaking through the storm.

MILEY

The clouds slowly sneaked across the sky- fighting the sun for dominance. They spilled out like blood, striking fear for everyone below. They looked the colour of smoke thickening the air with darkness and distress, breaking their way into everyone's happiness, stripping away the light.

CALLUM

The dark cloud slowly passed across the sky, almost fighting for the centre of attention. As the cloud got closer, the sky began to blacken, almost as if we were being caged in! It was trying to corner us like a narcissist.

YUNA

Bright neon lights bloom in the brilliant black night, a tremendous stage framed with a rainbow of colours against the dark sky. I stand tall upon my podium, arms spread wide and chest puffed with pride. High on endorphins, I bask in the glory of my victory. Gleeful as can be, my grin sits high on my face, straining my cheeks with pain that I ignore with ease. 'Nothing can stop me,' I think, feeling as proud as a lion as I stand before a crowd of roaring fans.

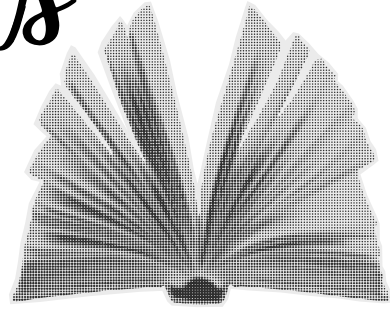




Student Snippets

Few words. Big impact.

WORLD BOOK DAY! LIVE LEARNING



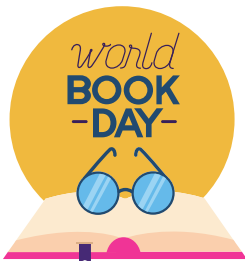
Happy
World
Book Day!



First of all, I'd get the dogs to bite her ankles. Miss Trunchbull will jump up and down. Harry Potter will cast a spell and a dinosaur will appear. The dinosaur will rip out her neck. He'll then transfigure her into a slimy toad. Spiderman will fill the Chokey up with his web. The dog will drag Miss Trunchbull into the Chokey by her legs. Slam the door! Spiderman locks her in by wrapping his web around the cupboard. The Cowardly Lion will find her key and eat it. Dorothy will hold everyone's hands and take them home by clicking her heels. They lived happily ever after. The End.

What would happen if fictional characters came to life and had to defeat a fictional villain?

In the depths of the woods in a castle is Dracula, wreaking havoc among the village is what he does best. However, Spiderman, Robin Hood, Livesly & Hawkins and Gandalf have had enough. The morning struck - 8am and with Dracula asleep they devise a plan. One that shall surely work. Spiderman with his web will be close combat keeping him down for as long as possible, Robin Hood shooting garlic rubbed mountain ash arrows, Livesly to help with any harm that may occur and Jim who will hire more people(pirates) to help out clearing the missing portion ,close combat, keeping it a fight rather than a defence. As for Gandalf - he's the most powerful and he's there in case it starts going wrong as he can summon any magic source, any energy from his wand at the cost of his energy, his knowledge should be the powerful force to defeat Dracula and put him back to sleep once and for all.



Our line up
against Darth
Vader:
Ironman
Mario and
Luigi
Scooby Doo
Link

Set in space
on a planet
similar to
Greenland
(very icy).

Scooby Doo would sit on him. *
Mario uses his
plunger to
take off
Darth Vader's
helmet.
Mario realises
it is his other
brother
(Tony) under
the helmet. **

Tony tries to
make a break
for it to get
his pasta gun
by distracting
Scooby with
Scooby
snacks.

Mario and
Luigi put a
pipe up his
nose.
Iron Man
shoots a beam
into
Tony/Darth
Vader's nose.
Link does a
backflip then
uses his sword
skills to
attack
Tony/Vader
like a sous
chef. Link
turns him into
sashimi

Scooby eats
the scraps
and the mask
(which he
secretly does
at the end of
every Scooby
Doo episode).

*Darth Vader
yells "Yoinks,
Scoob!"

**Tony says,
"I would have
got away with
it if it weren't
for you
meddling
kids!"

How w
defeat

tear
lain?

Tute



Analytical Angle

What are student's writing in their essays and how could it help YOU with your GCSEs?



TESS, KS4 - LANGUAGE PAPER 2, QUESTION 4

'Compare how the two writers convey their perspectives on the harmful effects of gaming.'

There is a clear juxtaposition between the sources. Whilst source A intends to caution people on the risks of gaming, source B draws from the positives. This may be due to the contexts of the texts: source A was written before the Covid pandemic, where gaming wasn't as likely to be used for social interaction, whereas source B was written at the height of the pandemic, when video games provided a safe means of social interaction.

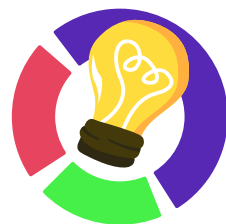
The view that gaming is 'a harmless escape from reality' is addressed immediately in source A. However, connotations of obliviousness in the phrase 'escape from reality' are utilised as this view is contrasted with the introduction of 'gaming disorder.' This is escalated with the use of an anecdote: a public figure describes their experience of gaming addiction as a way to avoid 'confronting the real issue at hand.' The use of an anecdote adds to the pathos in the text through its personal nature, emphasising the real harm gaming can create and building reliability by showing consensus with a well-known figure.

In contrast, source B focuses on the positive impact gaming can have: here, gaming is described as 'calm,' 'relaxing,' and as an 'outlet.' This is furthered by the use of an expert opinion- a figure from Oxford University remarks that gaming builds social connection, handing 'a sense of choice,' over to players. Furthermore, an opposing opinion is addressed- 'we've heard the headlines, playing video games can lead to poor mental health. Just as in source A, this is soon countered- 'according to a new study...there are more benefits to their mental health.' This immediate recognition of a conflicting view, followed by a clear counter-argument, shuts down any doubt or concerns of bias the reader may have. It reinforces the reliability of the text as it indicates the viewpoint of the text is a result of a thorough assessment of a variety of perspectives.





Analytical Angle



See how you're working hard and where it's taking us!

PAPER 2, QUESTION 4 EXEMPLAR - MAX

The writer of Source A feels passionate about art.

They say: "Art is the only true way to capture the essence of human experience."

This suggests the writer believes art transcends ordinary representation because the phrase "only true way" implies that art is unique and irreplaceable as a medium for expressing deep, intrinsic truths about humanity. The use of "capture" also suggests an active, almost urgent need to preserve these truths in a timeless form.

In comparison, the writer of Source B feels more sceptical or critical about art.

They say: "Art is nothing more than an illusion that distorts reality."

This suggests the writer sees art as a deceptive medium because the word "illusion" implies that art is fake or misleading, while "distorts" further emphasizes that art does not reveal truth, but alters it. This view contrasts sharply with the idealistic view in Source A, highlighting a significant difference in the way the two writers perceive art's role in representing reality.

PAPER 1, QUESTION 3 EXEMPLAR - HIDDEN VOICE

At the beginning, the writer focuses on the car being upside down. This interests us as readers because it is a narrative hook, and we wonder if the car has crashed or has been driven off by accident, or if it has been abandoned because the setting looks to be a desert.

In the middle, the writer zooms in on the character's googles, which interests us as we can't see his eyes, which then leaves a spooky and mysterious tone because we don't know what he is seeing. We then see the car crash through his lenses, which is interesting because he is having a flashback to the car driving off the cliff.

At the end, the writer focuses on the man standing there with his thumb up again, which is a cyclical structure because it happened at the start as well. This interests us as the reader because we start to wonder if he is stuck in a loop or if he is controlling the events of the car crash in a supernatural way.



Analytical Angle



See how you're working hard and where it's taking us!

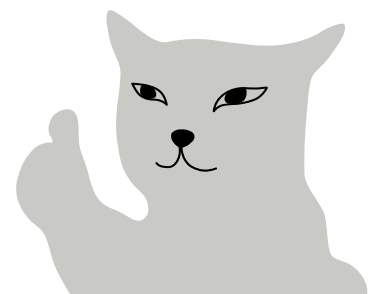
PAPER 1, QUESTION 2 EXEMPLAR - HIDDEN VOICE

The author uses vivid language to create a sense of excitement and intensity as the Elevator takes off.

For example, the text says the Elevator moved "with a fearful whooshing noise" and "shot vertically upward like a rocket." It also describes how "everybody clutched hold of everybody else" and how the machine "grew louder and louder and shriller and shriller."

These descriptions use powerful imagery and repetition to show how fast and dramatic the movement was. Comparing the Elevator to a rocket emphasizes its speed and force, while the repetition of "louder and louder" and "shriller and shriller" builds tension and helps the reader imagine the overwhelming noise. This makes the scene feel thrilling and even a little bit frightening, putting the reader right in the middle of the action.

in the line "with a fearful whooshing noise," the word "whooshing" is a great example of onomatopoeia because it sounds like the noise it's describing. This helps the reader almost hear the elevator rushing upward, making the moment feel much more real and intense. It's not just any sound the word "fearful" adds a sense of danger and panic, suggesting that the speed and force of the movement is overwhelming. Instead of just saying the elevator went up fast, the author uses this sound to pull the reader into the action, almost like they're inside the elevator too. It sets the tone for the whole moment and matches how the characters react grabbing onto each other in fear. So, the onomatopoeia doesn't just describe a sound, it helps create the mood and brings the scene to life





It's time to write
a new chapter...

EDUCATION
Tute



Shelf Care
English Society



Returns September 2025!