

PLATANOS COLLEGE

PLATANOS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM SPECIAL

Crime & Conspiracy

Community Corner

Inspiration Station

Office of Opinion

Learning Lounge

Cacophony of Colours

Written *by* pupils, *for* pupils


KS4 NEWSLETTER

"Attitude Determines Altitude"





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EDITOR'S WELCOME

WRITTEN BY CRYSTAL JOY AZZOPARDI

Welcome to the 14th Edition of the KS4 Platanos College Newsletter. We thank you for taking the time to read the collection of articles that our team this year have compiled, all of which we believe will be of great interest to you.

This term's Special Edition celebrates the exciting opening of Platanos College's Sixth Form. Our team have interviewed students who currently attend the Sixth Form, as well as staff, to gain some insight into what you could expect if you decide to apply to be a student here.

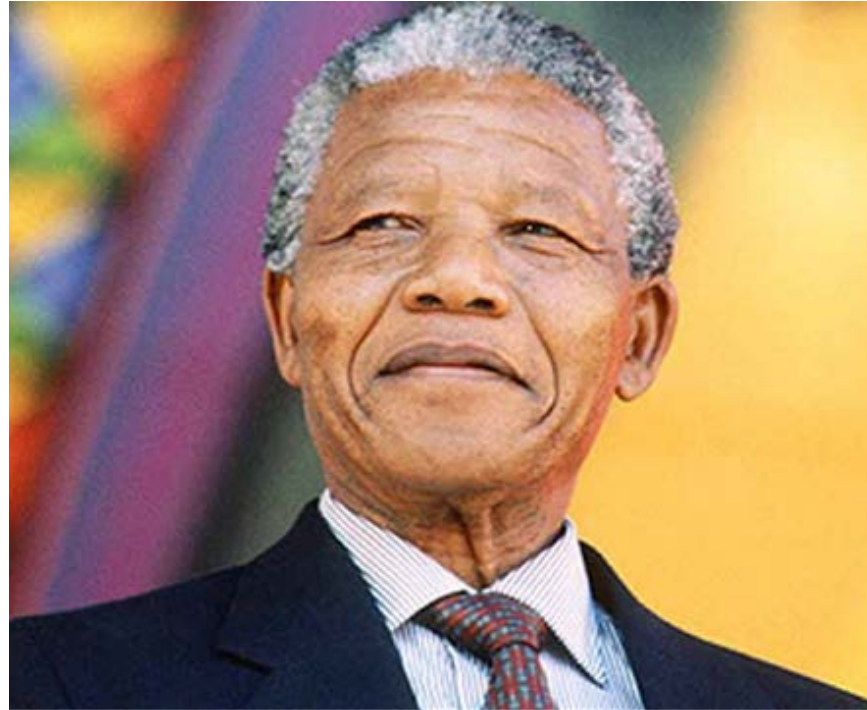
As usual, we also discuss a range of different topics, such as movies, political issues and scandals that you may not have heard about before.

We hope that you can find something that piques your interest between these pages.

On behalf of the KS4 Newsletter Team, we wish you an enjoyable Christmas Holiday and we promise be back next term with another exciting edition. In the meantime, here are some inspirational quotes to help Kick start your New Year!

Crystal Joy Azzopardi [Editor-in-Chief]

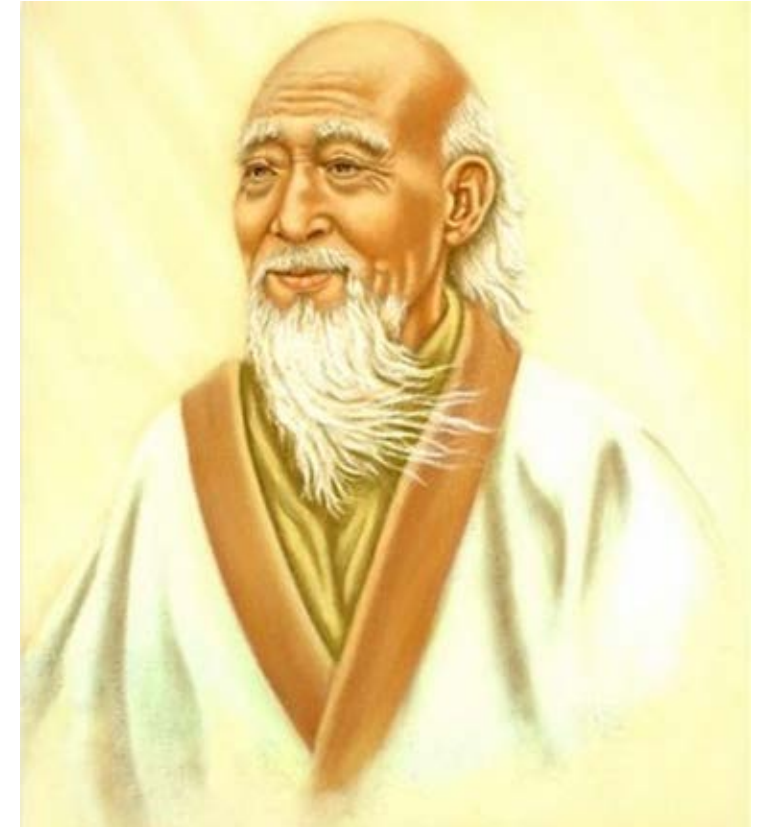
Credits for the quotes to Zahra Quereshi



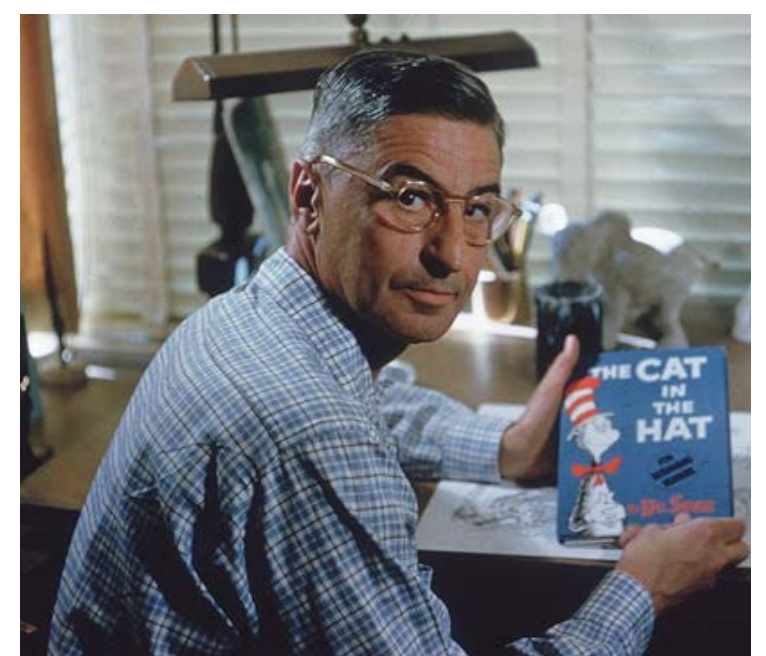
"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
– Nelson Mandela



"Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the best."
– John D. Rockefeller



The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."
– Lao Tzu



"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose."
– Dr. Seuss





learning lounge

LOOKING AFTER OUR MENTAL HEALTH

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QUERESHI



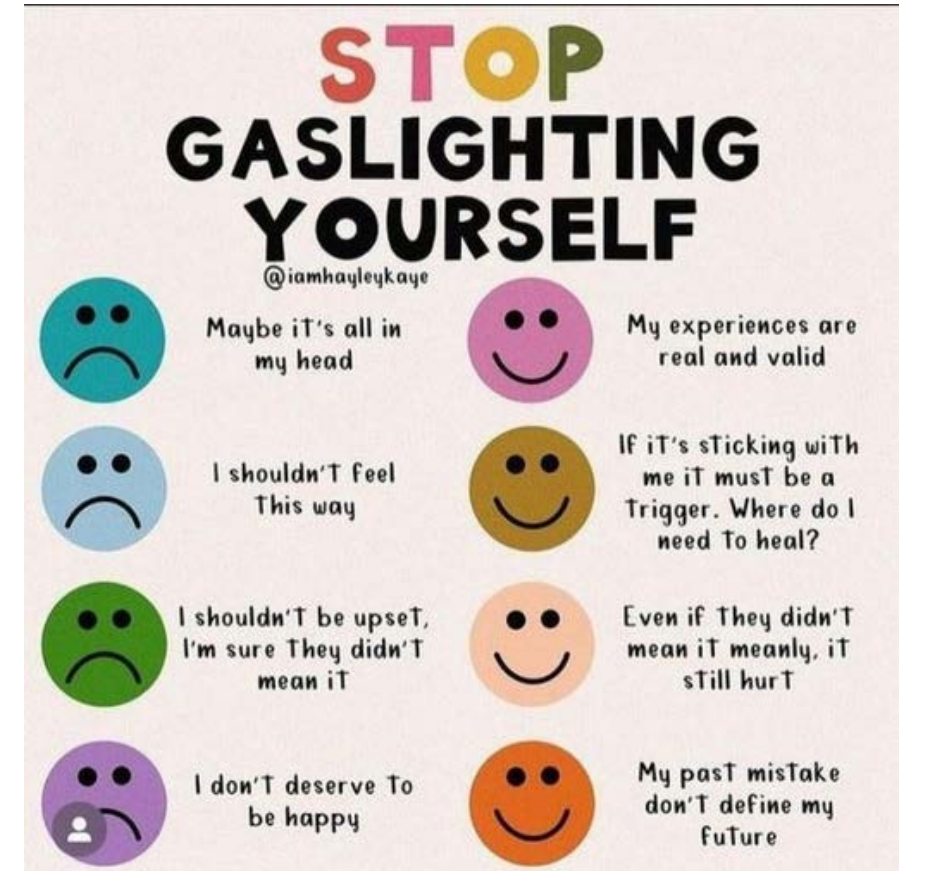
Mental health: we all have it. And it is our job to look after it, because by looking after our mental health, we are looking after ourselves.

So, what exactly *is* mental health? Mental health is the psychological and mental wellbeing of people. Sometimes, we can find ourselves in a position where our mental health is suffering. And it's really critical that we can recognise the signs of this in ourselves, so that we can get help when we need it.

Did you know that 1 in 5 adolescents struggles with mental health problems? Just think about what that means: in an average class of 30 pupils, 6 of them may be struggling with some form of mental health issue. These could include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder)
- Self-harm/suicidal thoughts

At times, it can be really difficult being a young person, trying to navigate your way from childhood into adulthood. As well as school and exam pressures, we may have family issues, health problems or social anxiety. As well as that, in the current political climate, many young people struggle to make sense of the news and can feel overwhelmingly pessimistic about the state of global affairs. And let's not forget about social media - a relatively new phenomenon that our parents did not grow up with. Yes, social media is great for keeping in touch with



friends and family and seeing what other people are up to, but it can also be an ominous place where cyberbullying and trolling takes place, not to mention the negative effects of comparing other people's 'best bits' to our own 'worst bits.'

One thing we all have in common is school. And whilst many people consider their school years to be the best of their lives, school can definitely be a struggle for those who have social anxiety. For example, meeting new people can be daunting - you might worry about what they think of you, how they act, their opinions, yet you feel pushed into the crowd to talk and make friends. For people who have anxiety, it can also be tough to deal with the stress of studying and trying to achieve good grades. Many





want to be a perfectionist or make their parents proud, but when work gets more challenging or you find it hard to understand new ideas, it can make you not want to learn, either because you don't understand, or you are too stressed to concentrate.

Don't forget, it is completely natural for us all to have good days and bad days. We can all feel low and struggle with the every day commitments we have in life. However, depression and mental health issues can be difficult to spot – so it's important to look out for warning signs and seek help if you are worried about these. Signs include:

- Stress
- Anxiety, fear and panic
- Low mood, sadness and depression
- Feeling lonely
- Grief after bereavement or loss
- Anger
- Loneliness in older people
- Signs of an anxiety disorder
- Hallucinations and hearing voices

Young people who exhibit signs of being depressed can struggle to be motivated to do routine daily things, such as attend to personal hygiene or eat well. Because of this, waking up early, going to school, concentrating in lessons and doing homework can be more of a struggle than it is for others.

But here are some things you can do to lessen the struggles:

- Take a deep breath and take some time for yourself.
- Do things you like that calm you!
- Talk about your feelings and struggles with someone you trust.

We decided to ask Year 10 pupils what they see mental health as, the struggles they might face and how they try to cope with these. Here's what we found...

- Almost all participants said that they believe mental health is the wellbeing of your mind and the way you think.
- 85% thought mental health problems can arise at any age, whilst 15% believed that issues would more likely occur later in life
- 75% of respondents stated that they do struggle with their mental health at times, whether it be due to stress, anxiety or depression.
- The key reasons for stress were school tests or not understanding classwork/homework
- People judging you and having problems with friends and financial struggles.
- Only a quarter of respondents were aware of organisations that could potentially help, like The Samaritans.

Most respondents stated that a range of things helped to alleviate stress, such as music, watching anime, drawing, going out for a walk, deep breathing and distracting yourself.

Here are a few other tips that can help:

- Reduce screen time and how many hours you spend on social media.
- Go outside and be active.
- Talk to people one to one (don't forget, at Platanos College there are many adults you can speak with, such as your Pastoral Manager or tutor).
- If you're struggling to study, set time limits and goals

Other resources are:

0800 689 0800 - suicide helpline

Young minds - @youngminds.org

Childline-0800 11 11

Samaritans-Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

MIND-0208 215 2243

CALM (campaign against living miserable)

SLP CAMHS Crisis line -020 3228 5980

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

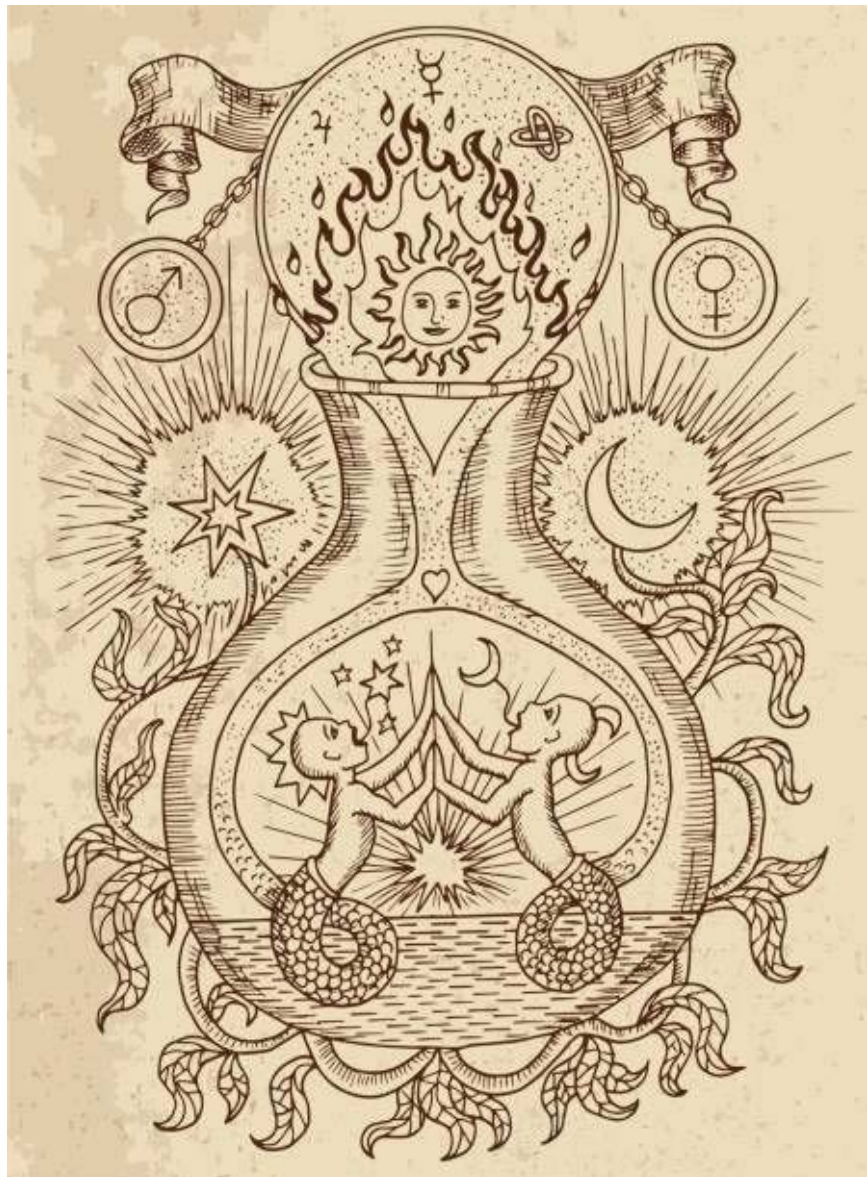
gentle reminder:

YOU ARE WORTHY.



THE MYSTICAL PURSUIT OF ALCHEMY: UNRAVELLING THE SECRETS OF TRANSFORMATION

WRITTEN BY JASON TRAN



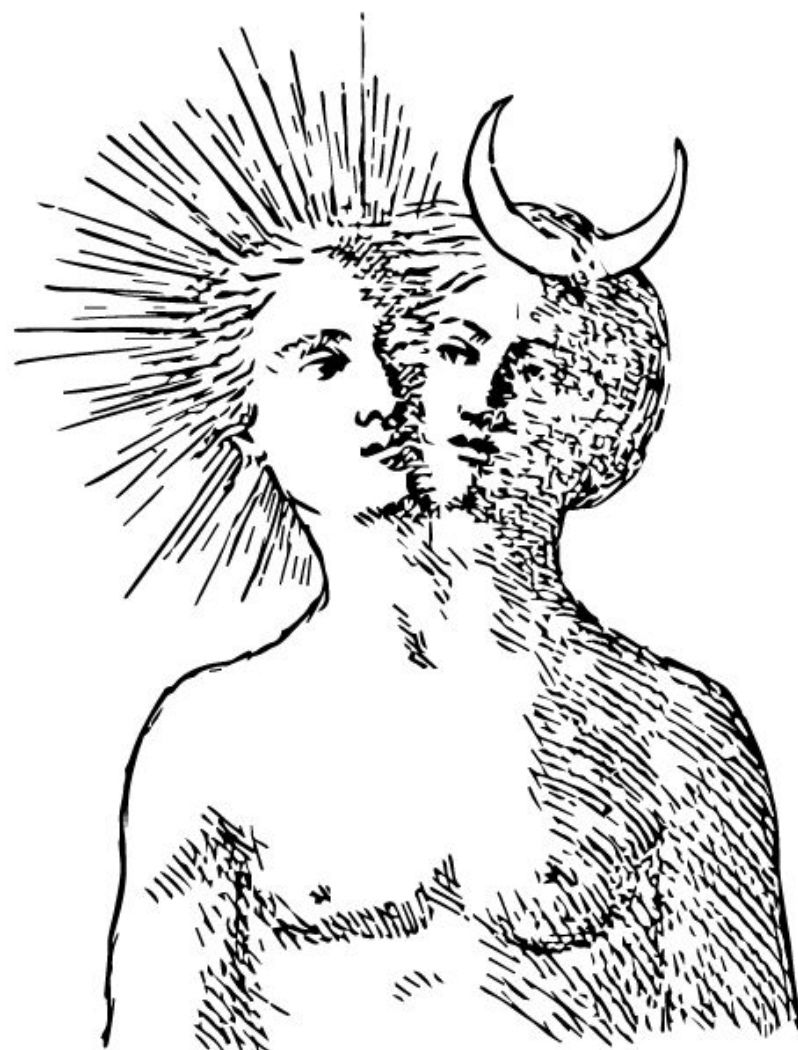
Throughout history, there has been a mysterious and enigmatic art practised by those who wish to release the so-called 'latent potential' of matter and the human spirit. This ancient discipline, known by various names, has captured the imagination of scholars, scientists and philosophers alike. Alchemy is shrouded in symbolism and mystery and involves a multifaceted journey of change.

But what exactly is alchemy? The alchemical journey is essentially about transformation. Alchemists (those who practise alchemy) first embarked on this mystical path in the belief that they could transform base metals into noble metals and release the elixir of life

and grant immortality. However, beneath these physical aspirations lies a deep desire for spiritual enlightenment.

At the heart of alchemy is the concept of transmutation – in other words, the process by which base metals such as lead are transformed into precious metals such as gold. This was seen to reflect the transformation of the human soul from its impure and deficient state to a higher, pure state. Alchemists believed that by developing the art of transmutation, they could gain a better understanding of the world.

Another central concept of alchemy is the search for the elixir of life - the legendary substance that gives immortality and eternal youth.



This elixir symbolises the alchemist's desire to transcend the limits of mortality and achieve spiritual enlightenment, ultimately reaching a state of eternal existence and wisdom.

So, what physical processes are involved in alchemy? Alchemists developed complex processes and rituals to achieve their goals of purification and self-purification, including distillation, sublimation and calcination. It was believed that the famous Philosopher's Stone was the key to these changes, capable of transforming any substance and imparting eternal wisdom.

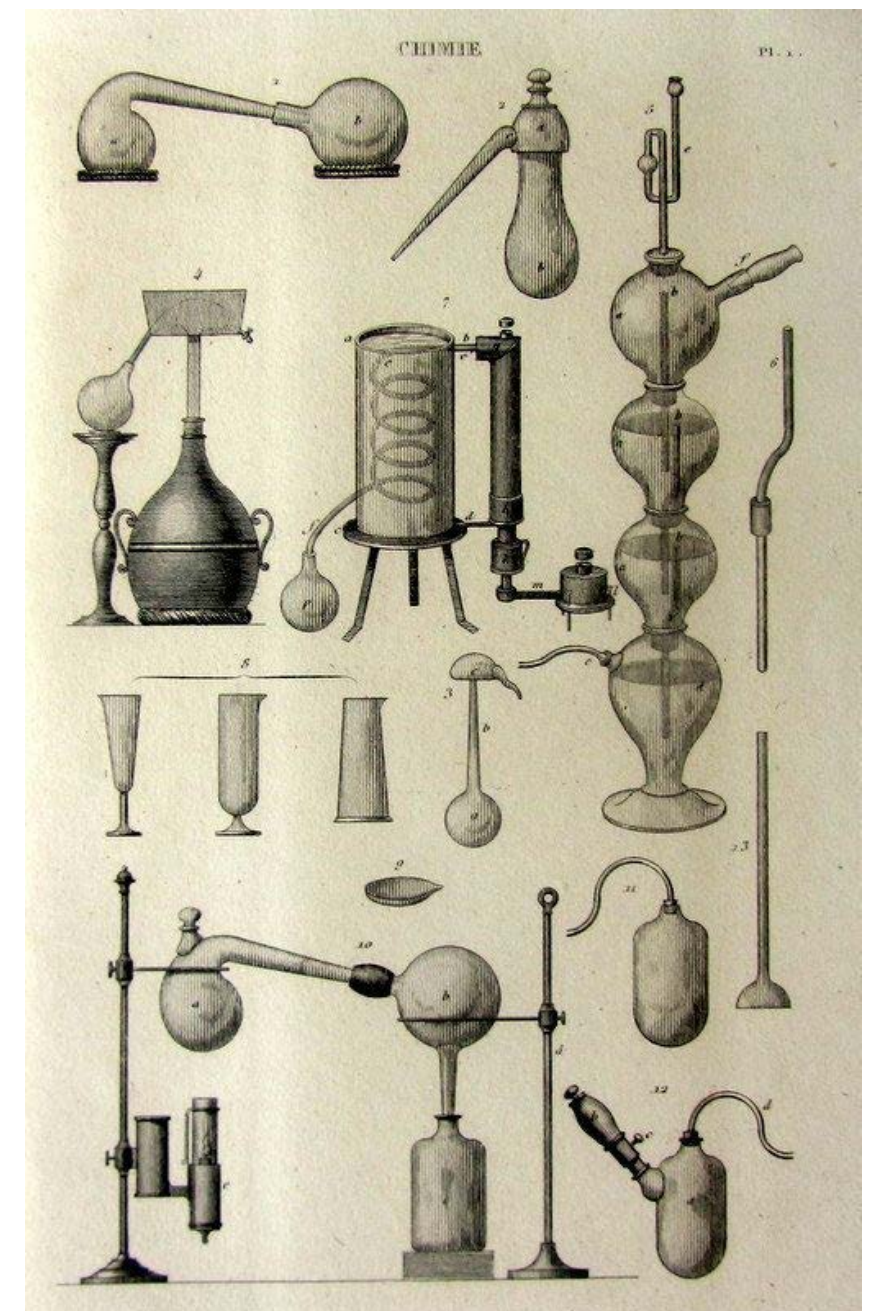
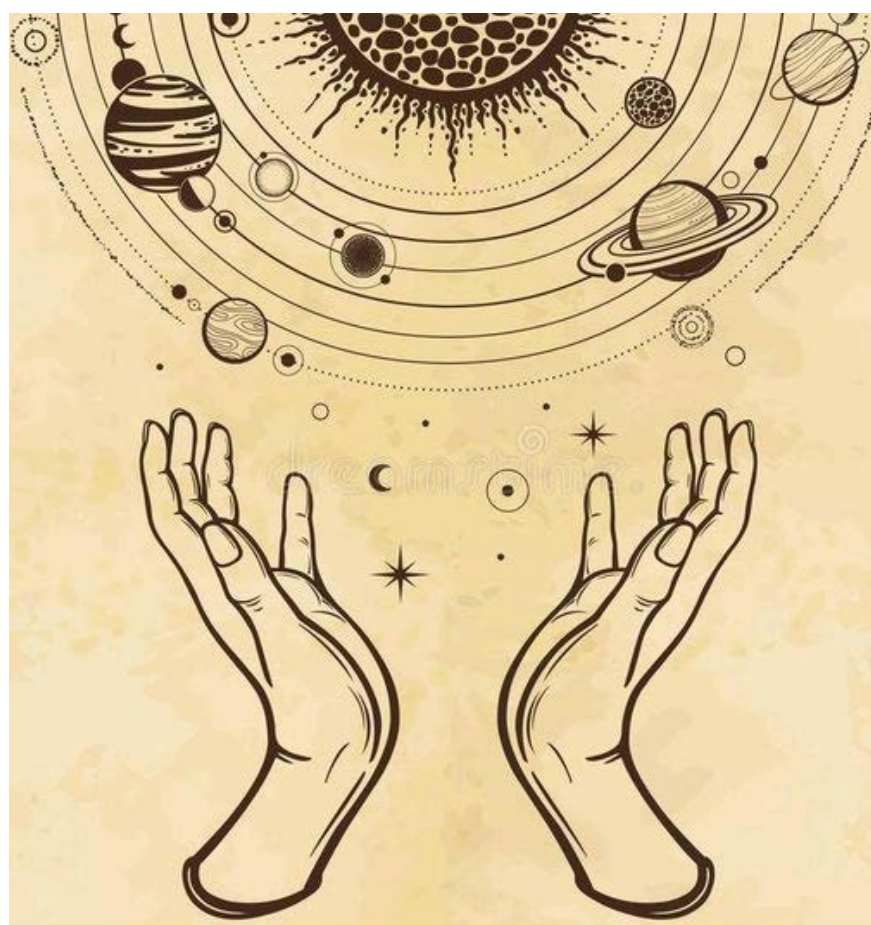
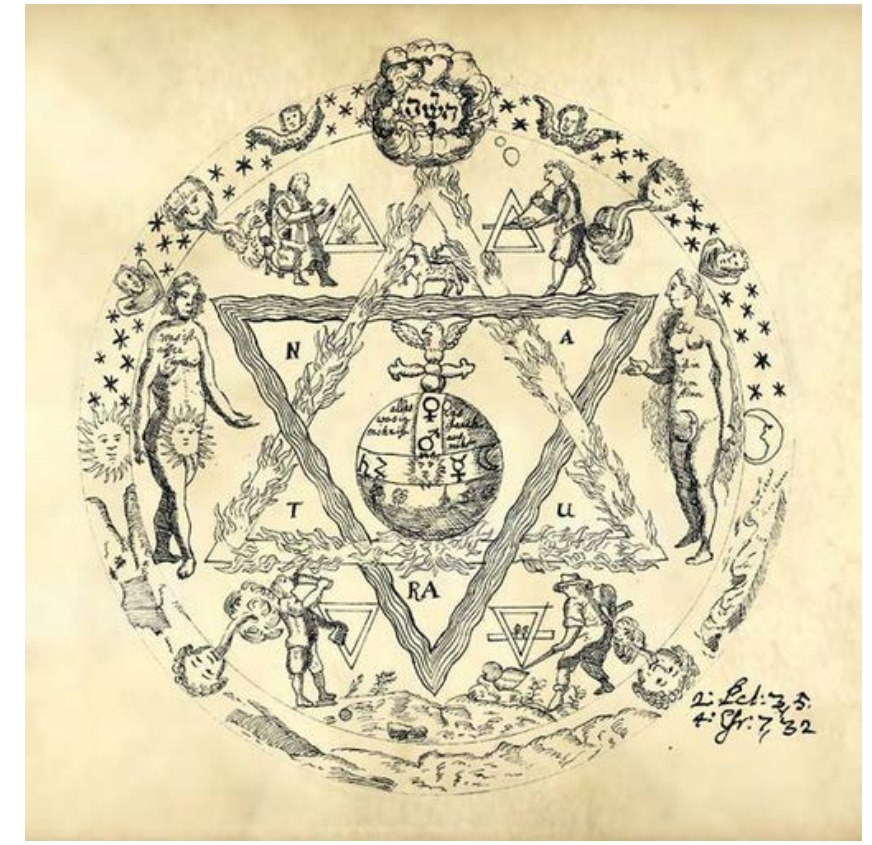
Although alchemy is often associated with the material world, it is equally concerned



with spiritual and philosophical transformation. The Great Work was a lifelong process of self-discovery and enlightenment. Alchemists were encouraged to explore and understand their inner nature, trying to achieve a balance between the opposing forces of the universe - the masculine (represented by the Sun) and the feminine (represented by the Moon).

Although alchemy was rejected as a legitimate scientific endeavour by the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century, its influence remained. Many alchemical symbols and concepts found their way into the fields of Chemistry and Psychology. The legendary search for the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life also left a lasting mark on literature and popular culture.

In conclusion, alchemy is a mixture of both Science and Mysticism and remains a fascinating chapter in the annals of human history. It reflects timeless change and transcendence, whether through material transformation or spiritual enlightenment. Although it may no longer be mainstream, the legacy of alchemy lives on and inspires those who seek the hidden secrets of the universe and themselves.





THE FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY IN WARFARE

WRITTEN BY UHUNOMA OBAYANGBONA

In an ideal world, war would be an incomprehensible occurrence, but it would be naive not to say that war has been inextricably bound to human conflict. Tragically this year, we have seen further conflicts escalate in the Middle East, as well as the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, not to mention countless other less publicised battles that are fought every day globally. With further advancements and developments in weapons and technology, what is the future of warfare?

One of the perhaps more worrying advancements that we must consider is the advancement of weapons of mass destruction. The repeated use of chemical weapons, as well as toxic agents in Syria for example, may perhaps raise the prospect of these types of weapon being normalised. Furthermore, it is almost certain that nuclear states will



continue modernising nuclear weapons to use as a deterrent to potential adversaries.

Let's take Russia as an example: Russia has developed a large advanced intercontinental ballistic missile, one that reportedly has the capacity to carry up to 15 nuclear warheads. With all these advancements in weapons of mass destruction, it may not be a matter of *if* a nuclear war will happen but *when*, and so the question is, how imminent are we to a potential nuclear war?

Another advancement in technology that may change the shape of warfare, is the advancement of Artificial Intelligence. AI is already currently being used in warfare to augment the performance of a number of existing weapon systems, such as target recognition in warheads. By 2024, military decision-making that comes from AI will most likely be able to incorporate available

space-based data in concurrent support to operations.

However, AI still faces technological shortcomings as unintended consequences could arise if it is faced with unexpected input. Autonomous systems are also likely to play an integral role in warfare because of their extensive applicability. It is possible that by 2040, wholly autonomous weapons could dominate the battlefield and be capable of making their own targeting decisions. By doing this, some countries would not have to consider the implications of having human beings in the loop of their firing decisions. But can we trust technology to make life and death decisions in war?

It is clear that imminent technological advancements could change the dynamics of





warfare and potentially exacerbate the damage caused. However, given that we are still at the genesis of modern technological warfare, it would be impossible to paint a full portrait of the future of warfare; indeed, only time will unravel how far technology will contribute to warfare in the future.

Less than a century ago, in 1945, the United Nations was formed in response to two devastating world wars and with the mission to prevent future war and global conflicts. Unfortunately, as we all know too well from recent history and current events, war and conflict are still at the heart of so much of our world today. With the rapid advances in technology, the threat of further and more deadly weaponry and warfare is always possible.

Did you know that the development of the atomic bomb was contributed to by J. Robert Oppenheimer and Albert Einstein, who both sorely regretted their involvement? Both men went on to campaign for disarmament. After a successful nuclear test in 1945, Oppenheimer quoted Hindu scripture, stating *"Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds"*, an apt statement to reflect the unintended consequences of his work and the sheer devastation that would follow.





NUCLEAR WARFARE

WRITTEN BY HENRI JEANSON

Nuclear warfare is a topic that has both shocked and terrified people for decades. But what are the ethical and political arguments when it comes to this devastating form of conflict?

There can be no denying that Nuclear warfare poses a significant moral dilemma. The United Nations states that nuclear weapons are the most dangerous type of warfare ever. It declares that it has *"given highest priority to reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons, destroying chemical weapons, and strengthening the prohibition of biological weapons - all of which pose the direst threats to humankind."*

Imagine a world where cities are reduced to rubble, innocent lives are lost and the environment is contaminated for generations. It's essential to consider the moral



responsibility of using such destructive weapons. Are we willing to accept the consequences of causing so much suffering? This ethical question has been at the forefront of discussions since the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

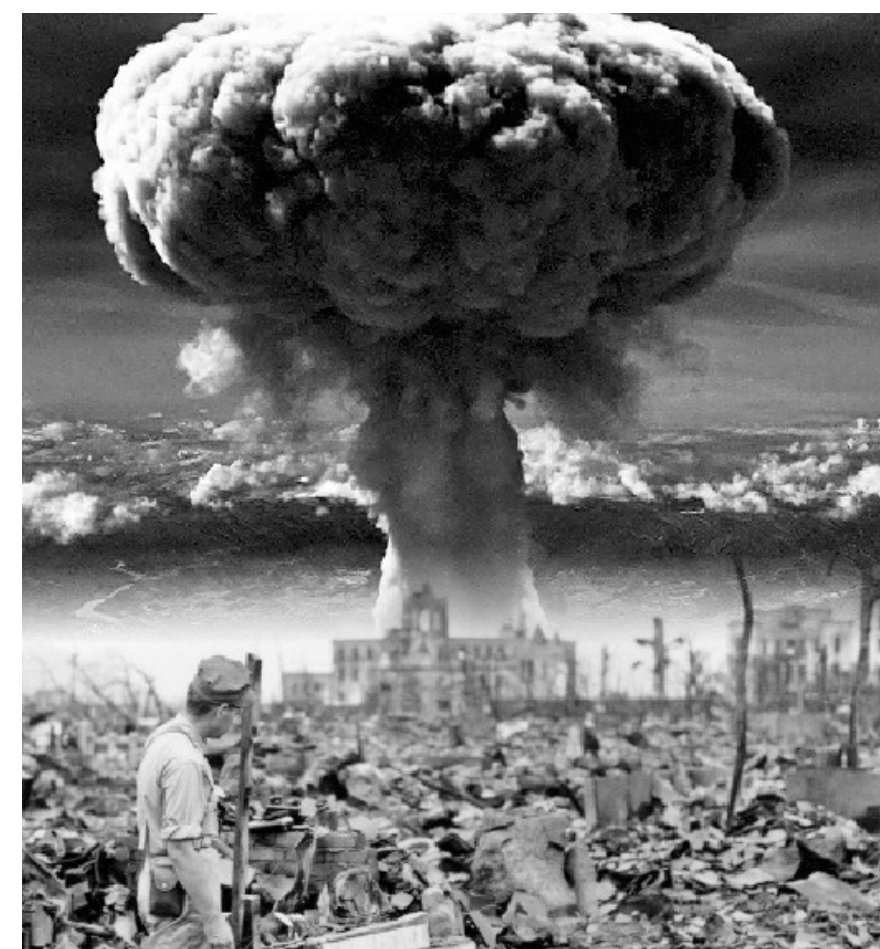
Indeed, the history of nuclear warfare is a sobering one. During World War II, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, resulting in catastrophic loss of life and immense suffering. This marked the first use of nuclear weapons in warfare. The devastation was so profound that it prompted global efforts to control and limit the use of these weapons.

A significant issue when it comes to nuclear warfare, is that of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). But what exactly is this? Well, MAD is the idea that if two nuclear-armed nations engage in a

conflict, both sides possess enough nuclear weapons to cause such extensive damage to each other. So in effect, it would be suicidal to initiate a nuclear attack. This concept has, in some ways, prevented large-scale nuclear wars; however, it has also created a precarious balance of power.

The devastation that nuclear conflict can cause to civilians and the planet, is too horrific to truly comprehend. The memories of the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are a stark reminder of the psychological and physical scars left by nuclear warfare. Apart from burning approximately 70% of all buildings, the attack caused 140,000 deaths by the end of 1945. Furthermore, it left the survivors with increased rates of cancer and chronic disease.

According to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, a single nuclear bomb that is detonated over a





large city, could kill millions of people. Furthermore, if tens or hundreds of bombs are used, they could cause mass areas of famine by disrupting the climate.

The initial impact from a nuclear blast would kill those closest to the source, as well as causing lung injuries and internal damage to those further away. So deadly is the radiation, that just about everything close to ground zero would be vapourised! Those who might have sought shelter underground would face a likely death from carbon monoxide poisoning.

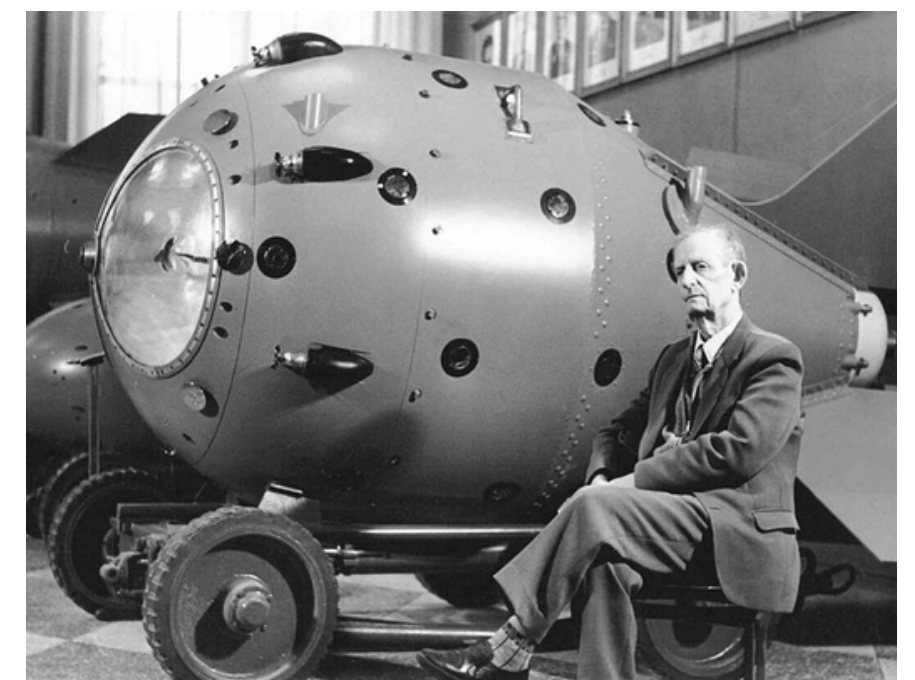
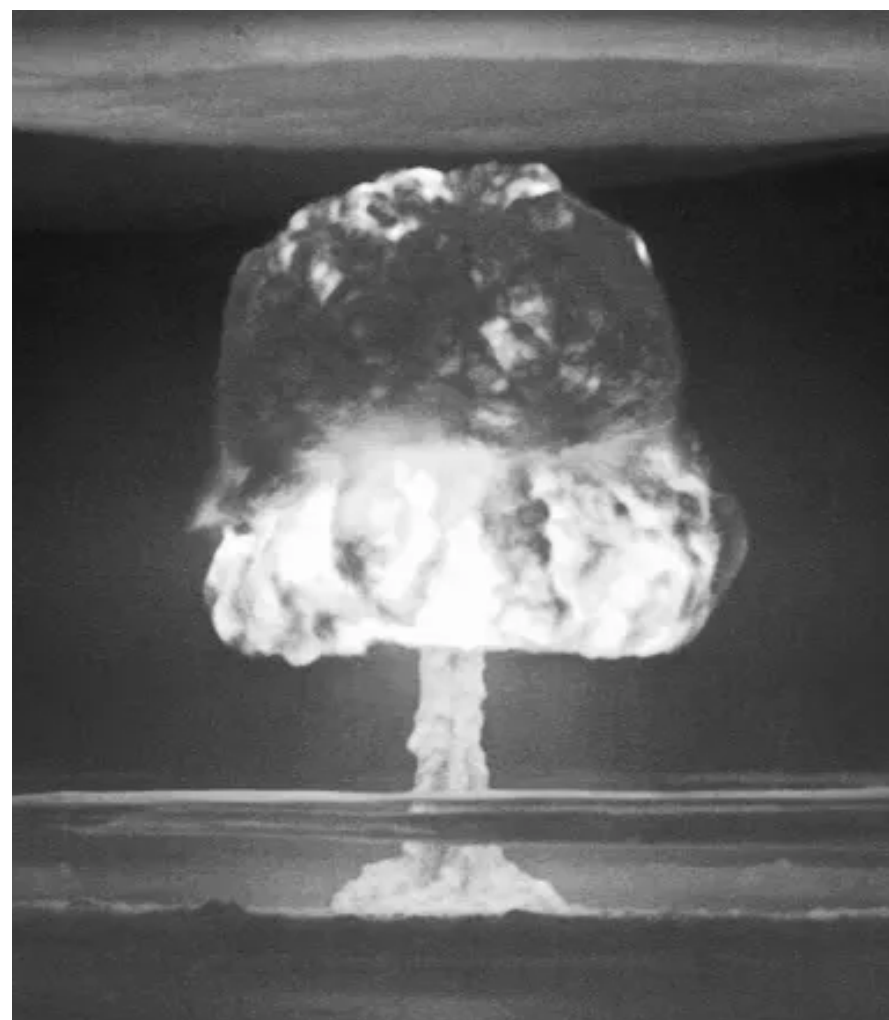
Displaced populations from a nuclear war will produce a refugee crisis that is orders of magnitude larger than any we have ever experienced.

And that's just the initial impact. In the long-term, survivors are likely to get ill from their exposure to radiation, suffering from cancer and genetic changes that would impact future generations.

But we're not just talking

hypothetically here: in fact, it is estimated that 2.4 million people worldwide will eventually die from cancers caused as a result of atmospheric nuclear tests that were carried out between 1945 and 1980.

We are currently sadly living in volatile times politically and globally; the threat and reality of war continues to burden our world. And always, the sinister presence of nuclear weapons looms. We must work together to promote peace and avoid the devastation that nuclear warfare can bring. Our world deserves a brighter and safer future, free from the ominous shadow of nuclear conflict.





AMAZING AFRICA

WRITTEN BY RUWEDA NOR AND EMNET KETEMA

If we consider the world today, in comparison to its more wealthy neighbours, the continent of Africa is one that seemingly lacks resources. And yet, Africa has everything imaginable! Throughout history, Africa has shaped the world we live in today through its invigorating and extraordinary achievements, its hidden wonders and lasting legacies.

The Africa we know today, flourished from magnificent ancient civilizations such as the Mali Empire, The Kingdom of Kush and The Great Zimbabwe. Whilst it is a continent rich in natural resources and diverse cultures, it has often been misunderstood and misrepresented. Countless stereotypes have overshadowed the true essence and potential of this truly incredible place.

Did you know that Africa is home to over 200 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own unique traditions, languages and cultures? The depth of diversity found is



truly amazing, from the enchanting rhythms of Afrobeat to the vibrant colours of traditional dress.

And what about the modern inventions that stem from Africa? Starting in Kenya, the innovation of mobile money has transformed the way people conduct financial transactions, especially in regions with limited access to traditional banking services. This effective system has empowered millions of Africans by providing them with secure and convenient ways of carrying out many key financial affairs.

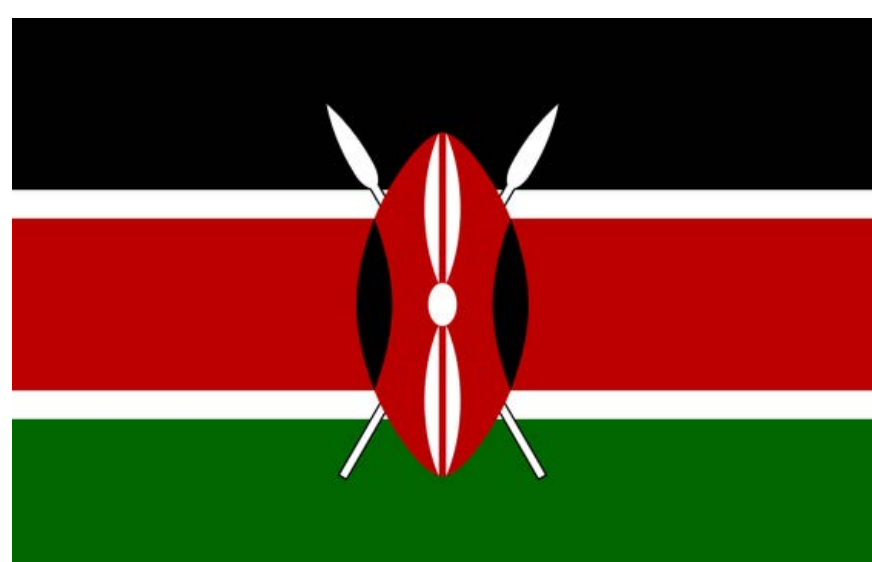
Furthermore, Ghana, another African nation, is gaining attention for its groundbreaking electronic payment system. Mobile money services like M-Pesa are revolutionising the way people access financial services, particularly in rural areas with limited banking infrastructure. This innovation is enabling the transformation of lives across Africa.

Another invention that

originated on African soil is coffee. While its origins are debated, Ethiopia proudly claims coffee as its own. The story goes that a local herder noticed his goats were unusually energetic after eating certain berries. This led him to experiment with these berries himself, which in turn resulted in the discovery of coffee's stimulating properties. This accidental invention has since become a global phenomenon, transforming the way people start their day.

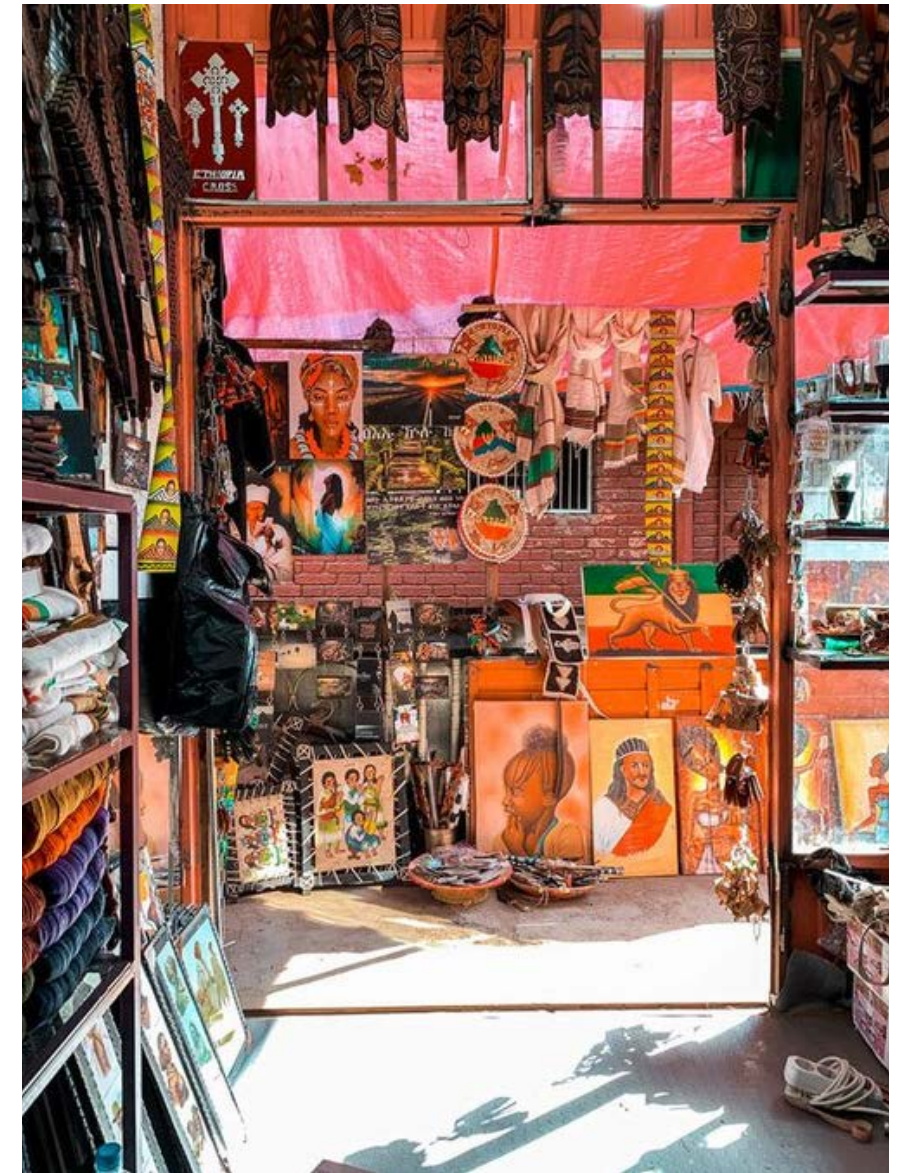
African countries, including Ethiopia, have also made significant advancements in modern technology. For instance, Rwanda has become a pioneer in drone technology, using these aerial devices for medical supply delivery and the monitoring of the environment.

Did you know that the second most practised religion in Africa is Islam? Combining technological skill and religious devotion, West Africa has distinguished itself as a frontrunner when it

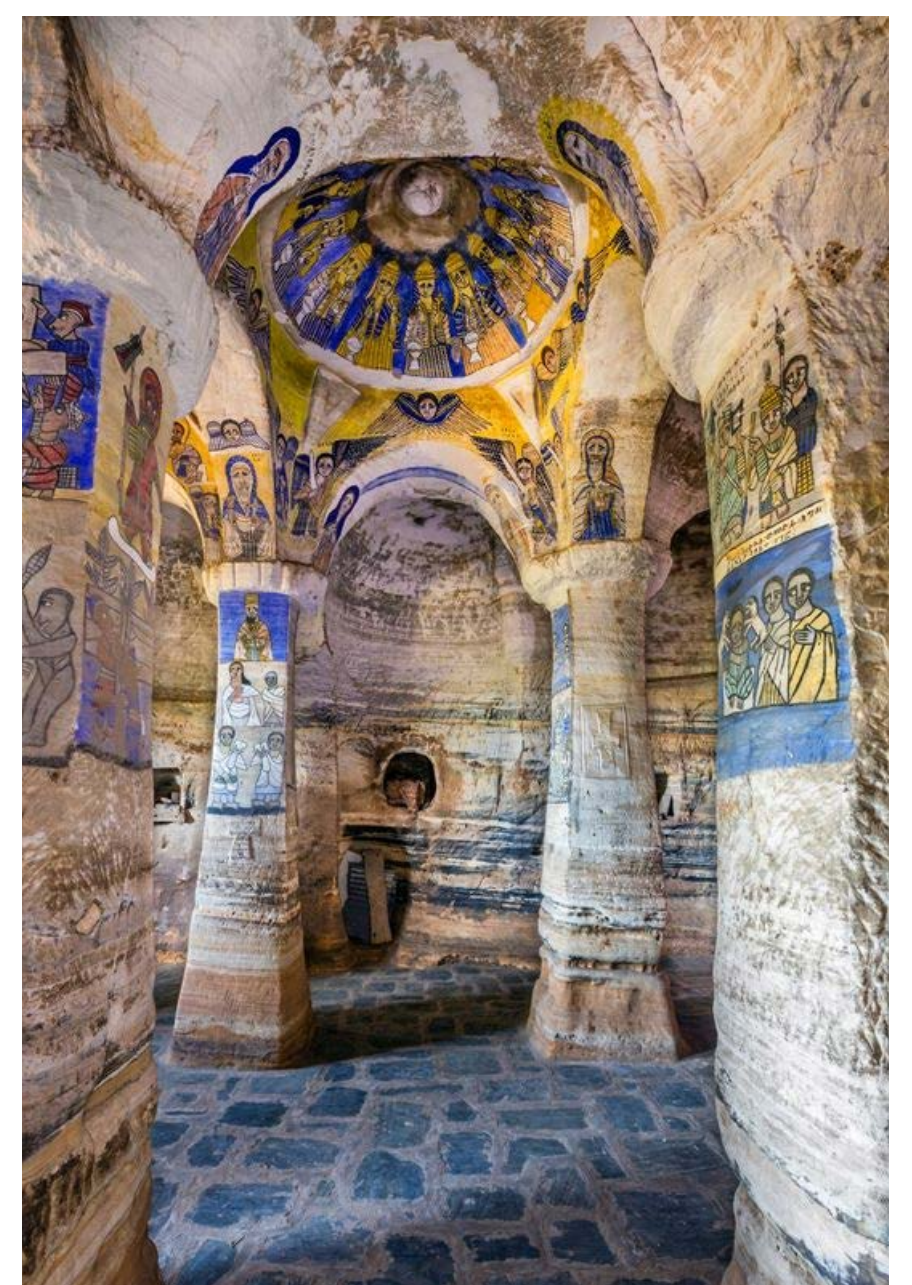
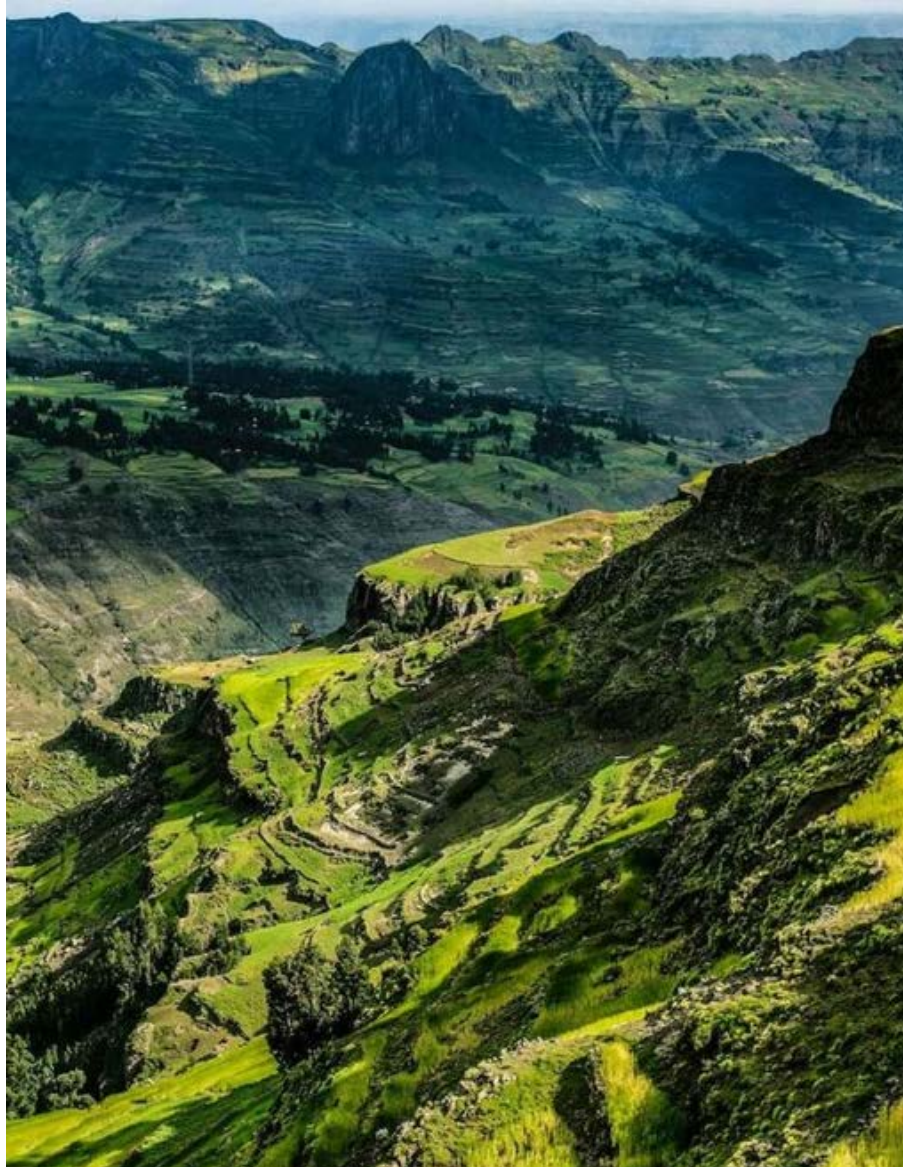
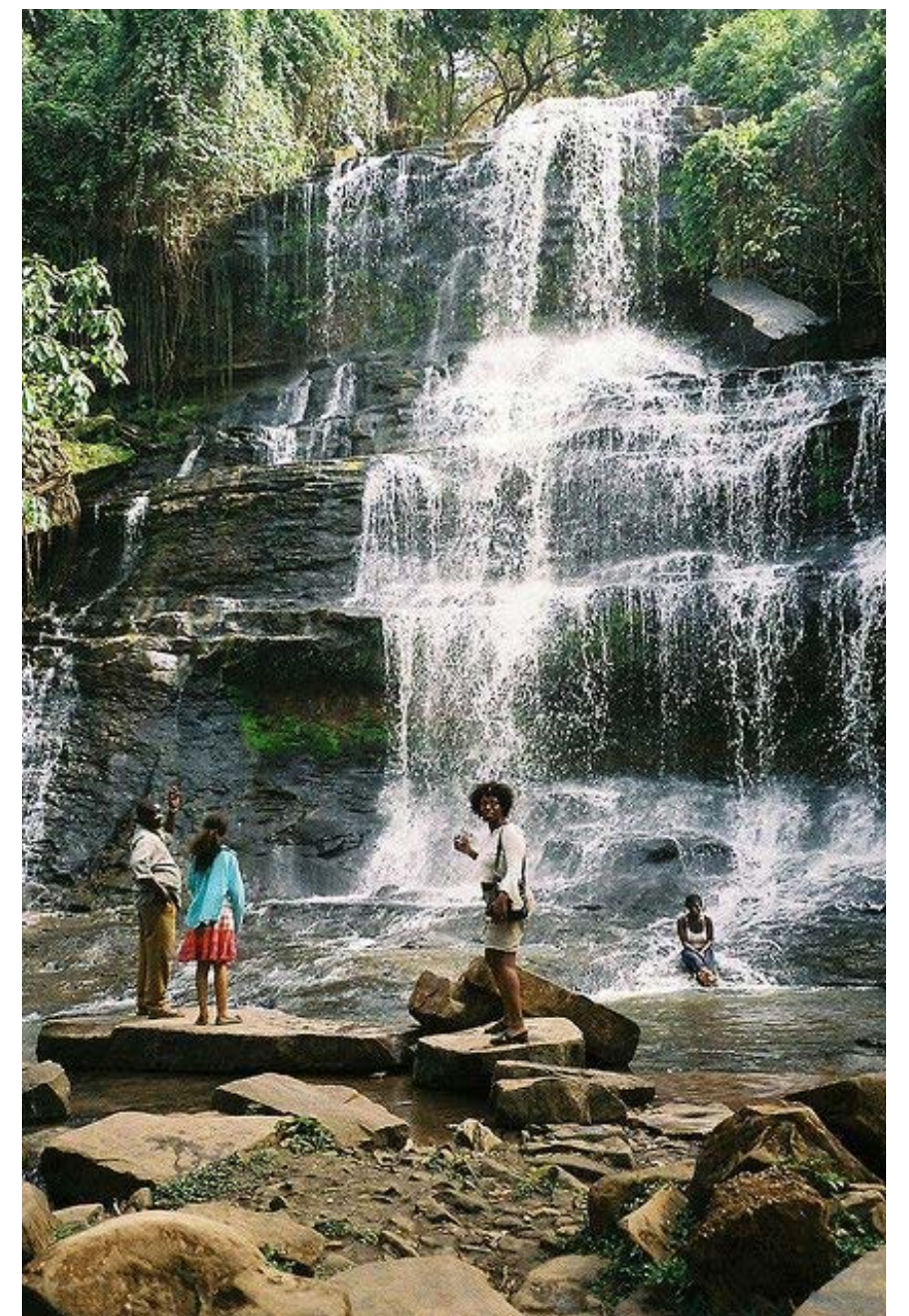




comes to accurately orienting prayers towards Mecca. You may know that Muslims are required to face the Kaaba during their daily prayers. While this sounds easy, geography and different time zones can make it a challenge for those who live far from the sacred site. However, thanks to innovative solutions, West Africans are now able to accomplish this with great accuracy.



Behind the stereotypes and misconceptions, African countries are at the heart of innovation and development. So, let's celebrate the ingenuity that springs from this diverse and vibrant continent.





THE CURSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL PERSAUD



Climate Change: we all know it's not a good thing. And yet, this global concern still blights our planet. So, what exactly is Climate Change and how does it affect us today?

Climate Change is the long-term shifts in temperatures and weather variations. Whilst these shifts are natural, human behaviour is contributing to and worsening Climate Change drastically.

It was during the late 18th century and early 19th century that Climate Change was first recorded and noticed globally; this coincided with the Industrial Revolution, which saw the transitioning from making goods by hand to using machines in Great Britain, as



well as the burning of coal and machine manufacturing. And of course, since the Industrial Revolution, technology has only developed further and become more advanced. Consequently, the resultant pollution is having a devastating effect on our planet.

So far this year, things have gotten substantially worse. Only 2 years ago, China burned so much coal that it produced over 11 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide, resulting in a 5% increase in the gas! In fact, China is the leading polluting country, with studies showing that it has emitted more carbon dioxide in the past 8 years than the UK has since the Industrial Revolution. Between 1750 to the present day, the UK emitted 82 billion tons of carbon dioxide, whilst China has emitted 94 billion tons of carbon dioxide in the last decade. But the UK doesn't get off guilt-free: we remain in the top 10 polluting nations in the world, pumping out an eye-watering 655,430,000 tons of CO2 equivalent a year!

Climate Change affects everybody and every living creature on planet Earth in numerous ways. So let's start off with environment: rising sea levels; flooding;



desertification; destruction of ecosystems. And in affecting the planet, human beings are of course consequently affected. Countries like China, Japan, Bangladesh, India and the Philippines are at high risk of rising sea levels. Rising sea levels can cause major physical impacts such as erosion of beaches, as well as flooding which eradicates infrastructure causing an economic crisis and displacement of populations.

Furthermore, flooding can create water-based habitats for vectors such as mosquitos, consequently causing the spreading of disease such as malaria. And of course, let's not forget the melting of the ice caps, which in turn lead to rising sea level and loss of habitat for animals like polar bears and penguins.





We also know that Climate Change causes droughts and heat waves. Countries like Somalia are worst hit; in fact, the region has suffered the most severe drought in 40 years, leaving the land bone dry, livestock threatened and 3.7 million people struggling to access the basic food they need. In Chad, Climate Change has led to unpredictable rain patterns, flooding and droughts, which in turn exacerbate economic and social problems.

Often, it is the poorer, least polluting countries that suffer the most. In fact, did you know that a 2021 report found that the 33 countries for whom Climate Change poses the biggest risk to children, contributed only 9% of global CO2 emissions? In contrast, a whopping 70% of emissions were attributed to just 10 countries.

Did you know that Climate Change can also directly affect our health? This includes respiratory and

cardiovascular disease, injuries and premature deaths related to erratic weather events and the quality of the water we drink, as warmer waters create a more hospitable environment for some harmful algae and other microbes to grow.

Climate Change also has an alarming effect on air quality, leading to illness and even premature death. In fact, back in 2013, tragic 9-year old London school girl Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, was the first person to ever have air pollution cited as the cause of death on her death certificate.

At the end of the day, Climate Change is a very real threat to all of our lives and health, and unless we do something drastic, it is here to stay.

Together, we can make a difference: here are our top 3 tips things that we can all try to do to help reduce our negative impact on the environment:

- Cycle walk or jog to school.
- Waste less food
- Remember the 4 R's: reduce, reuse, repair and recycle.





WONDROUS VIETNAM

WRITTEN BY HIEU HOANG



Looking for somewhere to go next summer? Maybe somewhere hot and humid? Or a place that has never-ending history and activities? If you're looking for a country to visit that has all of these, then fly over to Vietnam, a South East Asian paradise filled with culture, food and ceaseless adventures.

The first place we recommend you to go is Ho Chi Minh City, the most populated city in the country, also known as Saigon. Situated in the south of Vietnam, it has a population of 9.3 million people.

In the city you can find the City's Post office; this might not sound particularly exciting, but it's one of the most iconic and famous attractions in Ho Chi Minh. Inside, you can find souvenir shops, postcards and a great



portrait of the Ho Chi Minh President.

Did you know, you can even take a motorbike tour around the city, possibly finding yourself in the Ben Thanh Market, a place that is filled with locals doing their daily shopping?

Another city we recommend you go to is Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam, located in the Northern part of Vietnam.

Hanoi has a population of 8.3 million. You can start in Train Street, a residential area with a train track cutting through the middle. Many residents have converted their homes into little cafes, which provide a safe space to relax and watch the trains rushing past.

If you fancy something a bit more calming, then why not head to Hoan Kiem Lake? Known as the Sword lake, it's a quiet and tranquil place to stroll and admire the scenery.

Another interesting place to visit is Ha Long, where you can find the beautiful Ha Long Bay and take a boat trip to view otherworldly mountains and forested islands. If you fancy a bit of an adrenalin-kick, you can even try out quad biking in the Mui Ne sand dunes. Yes, that's right - sand dunes in Vietnam!

The fun-filled Sun World at Da Nang is an adventure park suitable for families, but if you're looking for a more serene and calm environment, you can head further down to Hoi An where you'll be greeted with an array of stunning lanterns.

So if you're looking for a holiday destination, maybe try visiting Vietnam. You're bound to be enchanted by the culture, land and people!





STAYING SAVVY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

WRITTEN BY AAISHA BASHIR



Do you use social media? If so, you probably do so for the range of benefits it offers: communication and making connections; sharing ideas and information; keeping up with what our favourite celebrities are up to.

However, with every form of technology, there is both a good and bad side, and social media is no different. Indeed, it is a place where false information and posts can easily be spread around, creating a domino effect where inaccurate information spreads like wildfire. In fact, did you know that misinformation spreads a whopping 6 times faster on social media sites than reliable information does? And it is we young people who are often the victims of this, as those who spread fake news use us to do their work for them!

In addition, nowadays, technology has become so advanced that posts can be

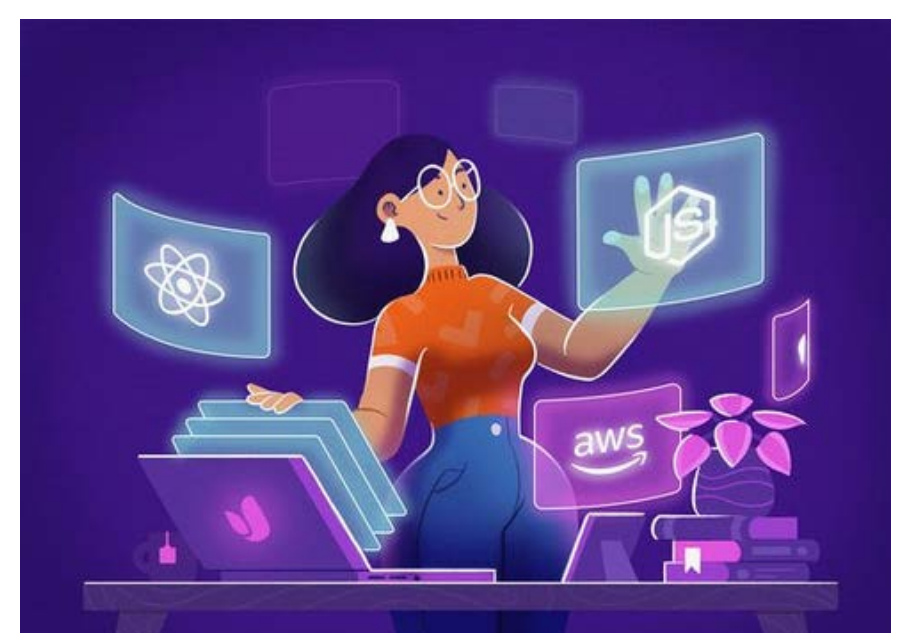
altered and fabricated. In fact, AI can create images that are so realistic, that they can adopt the image of and imitate the voice of just about anyone. When we consider how easy it would be for AI to be used to manipulate the image and voice of a world leader for example, it is terrifying to consider the devastating consequences that could arise as a result.

So, it really is down to all of us to try to be alert when it comes to social media and the 'news' it provides us. But, could you tell if a social media post is genuine or not?

Here are some tips for staying savvy on social media.

- What is the source of the post? Is it genuine and reliable as a source of information?
- Check who made the post and when
- Do your own wider research around a topic. Don't just rely on one source.
- Check the comments and people who have interacted with the video to alert yourself to any fake news warnings.
- Ask yourself if the URL look suspicious.
- Use Google Reverse Image to find out if an image is authentic.

- Be alert to stories that appeal to emotions instead of stating facts
- Find out what you can about the author: how credible are they? How long has their account been active for? How many followers do they have?
- There are also some recognised fact-checking sites that you can use. These include: PolitiFact (checks politicians' claims), Fact Check (checks the accuracy of political claims), Snopes (independent fact checkers state all their sources at the end of their check), BBC Reality Check (checks for facts in stories for the BBC).





“THERE’S NOTHING WE CAN DO.” – NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

WRITTEN BY BEE YAN’KYAA



You may be aware that a new Napoleon movie starring Oscar winner Joaquin Phoenix was released back in November. But who exactly was Napoleon Bonaparte?

Napoleon was born in 1769 and is famous for being a French military leader and Emperor, who rose to power during the French Revolution. He conquered much of Europe in the early 19th century. Famous for having re-shaped Europe’s geopolitical landscape, Napoleon also reduced the Papal’s influence over Europe and introduced new laws and institutions during his reign.

Indeed, Napoleon is considered to have been a highly skilled military tactician and a very influential statesman. In fact, he enjoyed a meteoric rise to power

following a number of successful battles in both Italy and Egypt. Seizing power of France in 1799, he became even more influential and powerful.

Even though he decided to crown himself Emperor in 1804, he was later exiled to Elba after a failed Russian invasion in 1812.

On 26th February 1815, after less than a year in exile, Napoleon somehow managed to escape Elba and return to the French mainland along with over 1000 supporters. Less than month later, he returned to Paris, where crowds filled the streets to cheer him on. The King, Louis XVIII had fled, leaving Napoleon free to start his Hundred Days campaign.

However, Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia all got together to fight Napoleon, whom they saw as a threat. Napoleon formed a new army



to defeat the allied forces separately before their could organise a united attack.

On 16th June, Napoleon’s army invaded Belgium and defeated the Prussians at the Battle of Ligny. However, just a couple of days later on 18th June, Napoleon’s army was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo.

Following this catastrophic defeat, Napoleon was exiled once again, this time to the Island Of St.Helena, where he eventually died on 5th May 1821 at the age of 51. His tomb resides in The Chapel of the Invalides in France.

Did you know that earlier this year, in anticipation of the film, a Napoleon meme was doing the rounds on social

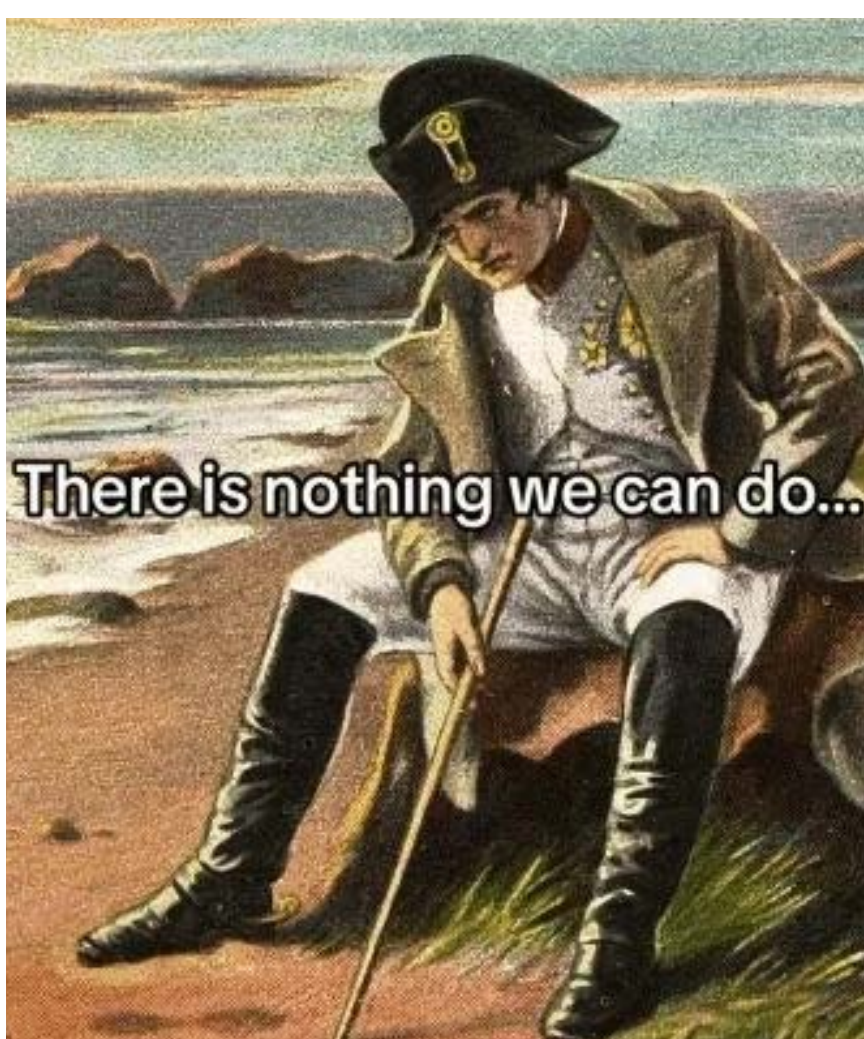


media platforms? The meme revolves around the leader and some of his men, who ask, "Napoleon, what will we do?" with the former replying, "There's nothing we can do." The meme is based on Napoleon's exile to the Island Of St.Helena after his defeat at the Battle Of Waterloo in 1815 and is often accompanied by a series of paintings depicting the French Emperor's time on the island where he spent his final days. The meme has since branched to many different topics where a person experiences a sense of futility or lack of hope, such as upcoming Maths exams!

Famous quotes by Napoleon Bonaparte:

- *"The only way to lead people is to show them a future: a leader is a dealer in hope."*
- *"Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake."*
- *"Envy is a declaration of inferiority."*

- *"The reason most people fail instead of succeed is they trade what they want most for what they want at the moment."*
- *"If you wish to be a success in the world, promise everything, deliver nothing."*





ARE GIRLS FALLING OUT OF LOVE WITH SPORTS?

WRITTEN BY SAMIRA ABDU



So, be honest...do you enjoy PE? There's no doubt that loads of young people love Sports and we are so lucky to have amazing facilities at Platanos College. However, the Youth Sport Trust conducted a study that suggests that there is a widening disparity between the proportion of girls who like PE, compared with their male peers. In fact, this year, 59% of girls said they enjoy Secondary school PE lessons compared to 83% of boys. Compare this to 2016, when 74% of girls said they enjoyed PE.

Furthermore, the level of girls' enjoyment of PE has dropped steadily over the past six years, whereas the enjoyment level of boys has remained "broadly consistent." But why is this?

Well, the two main reasons for more girls being reluctant to partake in PE lessons are periods and having low

confidence.

Concerned about the declining interest in and enjoyment of sports, the England Women's National Football team wrote to the government, urging them to provide more school-based sports opportunities for girls. Consequently, over £600 million has been earmarked for schools across two years.

However, the Chief Executive of Youth Sport Trust, Ali Oliver stated, *"There is so much more still to do...At a time of unprecedented low levels of social and emotional wellbeing, we know getting things right for girls in PE can be life-changing."*

Holly Bradshaw, who is an Olympic pole-vault bronze-medallist, was unsurprised by the survey results, stating *"I can really empathise with their*



worries about being watched and judged by others...I too have struggled with body-confidence issues, whilst competing for Team GB, particularly after facing online abuse in relation to my body shape."

So, how are the findings of the Youth Sport Trust reflected at Platanos College? There are a number of issues to be considered: feeling self-conscious when being watched by others; lacking body confidence; being on your period. Here's what some of our Key Stage 4 pupils had to say...

"I personally feel like PE is an exciting subject and is important since most subjects in school involve sitting and writing, whereas PE is physical and there is both interaction and movement, which makes it an enjoyable subject."

Samira Abdu



"I personally feel that we should be able to choose what we do for PE because not only would it make us feel comfortable but it would also be more entertaining."

Rafaela Albuquerque Relvas

"I feel like girls take a long time in front of the mirror because we want to see what we look like and a lot of girls complain about how uncomfortable it can be doing PE whilst on your period."

Sara Mota Da Guia

So, what does PE teacher Miss Bartley have to say on the matter?

"I totally understand, because as a female you have to go through the ups and downs and they can be so different from month to month and from person to person, which can also have an impact on how they feel with their bodies as well. However, I do

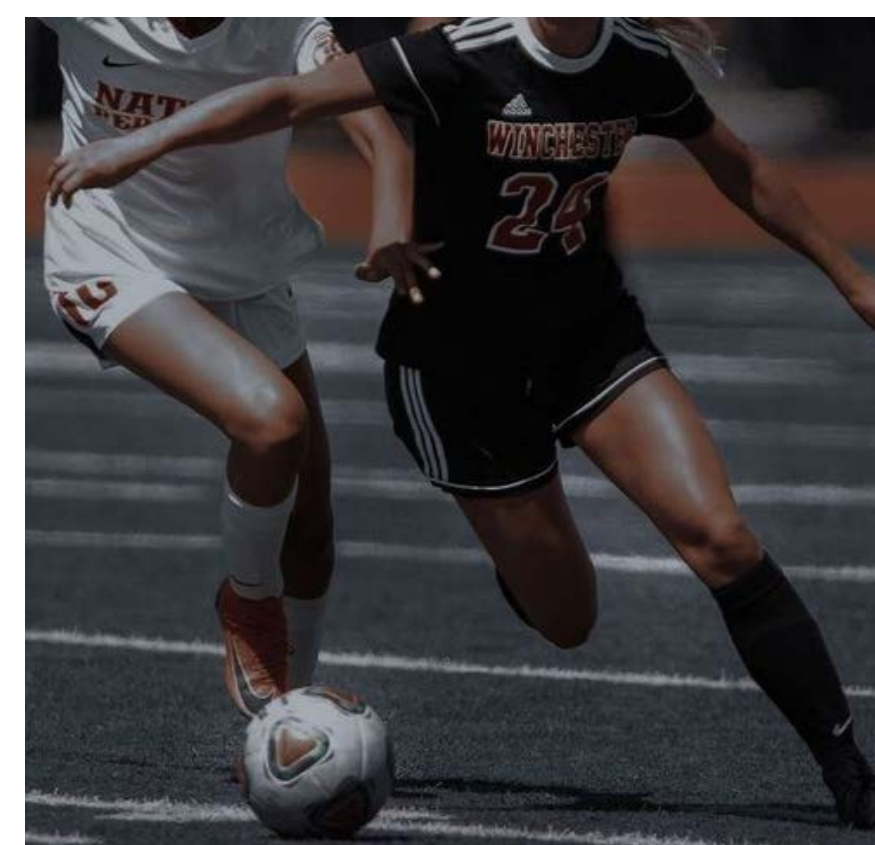
feel that the impact of body image is heightened on social media and I believe that young people should perhaps reduce the amount of interactions they have with things online and appreciate that everybody has a different body type and also understand that different sporting environments can be adapted for different body types. Perhaps as a country we could start introducing non-traditional sporting activities so that young females can enjoy being physical whenever and however. There also needs to be a variety of sizes and fits of clothing that can be suited for different body types and make it adaptable for all sporting activities. But my main point is that young people should have more appreciation for themselves as unique and wonderful individuals. They should try not to focus on others as what they see may not always be reality.'

For the purpose of this article, we asked a number of Year 10 girls what sports they enjoy the most and feel comfortable doing in PE. The top 3 are Dodgeball, Football and Benchball.

So, what could schools do to ensure that more girls engage with sports? There is no doubt that recent national success at the Euros and World Cup mean that women's sports are being

given a wider platform. But perhaps schools need to listen to pupils' feedback and opinions about what makes them feel comfortable, so that they can not only benefit from PE, but enjoy it at the same time. Girls should be able to express their opinions and thoughts and know that they can speak with staff about what makes them feel comfortable and less self-consciousness, as both these factors affect both our physical and mental well-being. Moreover, girls are more likely to engage in PE lessons if there was greater choice when it comes to uniform, given comfort is such a critical factor when it comes to enjoyment, especially when on your period.

Could small changes like these make a significant difference to girls' sports in schools?





INTERVIEW WITH MS MCRAE

WRITTEN BY FAITH JABBAR



This term we celebrated History Month at Platanos College. So, we decided to interview Ms. McRae about her journey to becoming a History teacher and what History Month and Black History Month mean to her.

Can you tell us a little about your background and childhood?

I'm from North West London. My mother is Jewish and my father is Christian.

Growing up, I struggled in school as a child. I did not like reading but loved to learn new things. I also had a passion for wanting to help others learn new things. Because I didn't find school learning easy, I think that experience helped me want to be a teacher for the other children who, like me,

struggled.

Who inspires you?

My mother - she works in Healthcare and has always made sure to provide for our family - something which is not easy. She is also someone who always tries to push the boundaries with what people think is possible for women and that's really inspiring to me.

Tell us about your role as a History teacher.

As a teacher I want people to feel passionate about what they learn. I want pupils to love to learn and understand History. I want my pupils to strive to learn, understand how to learn and last but not least, I want to help them to be able to do their best for their own future.

Is there anyone you look up to as a teacher?

My own teachers: I feel lucky to have had good teachers



during my childhood. Being even half as good as they were would be a great accomplishment.

What does History Month mean to you?

It is a celebration of everyone's history, not just what one group of people have been through, but a celebration of diversity and everyone's background.

What comes to your mind when you think of Black History Month?

Celebration, Hardship, Power, Diversity and the future.

Why do we celebrate Black History Month?

It's important to understand that history is not just about Empire, Imperialism or white people. Rather, it's individuals from across the world that come together to make the society we live in today.



Do you think there's enough being done in the UK to recognise Black voices?

Although I think it's a lot better than it used to be but it should be better. The tension between people and politicians shows we have a long way to go.

How can we celebrate Black History Month?

I think starting a conversation, asking questions and interacting with each other by asking about our different cultures and where we come from is important.

Platanos College is such a diverse community, which certainly helps in achieving such a goal.

Are there any famous figures who you look up to?

So many strong women - who to choose...?

Malala Yousafzai is an amazing role model, not only for women but for education. She

was a female education activist and the 2014 Nobel Prize Laureate at the age of 17. She has done so much for the education of women.

What time period in History would you like to travel to and why?

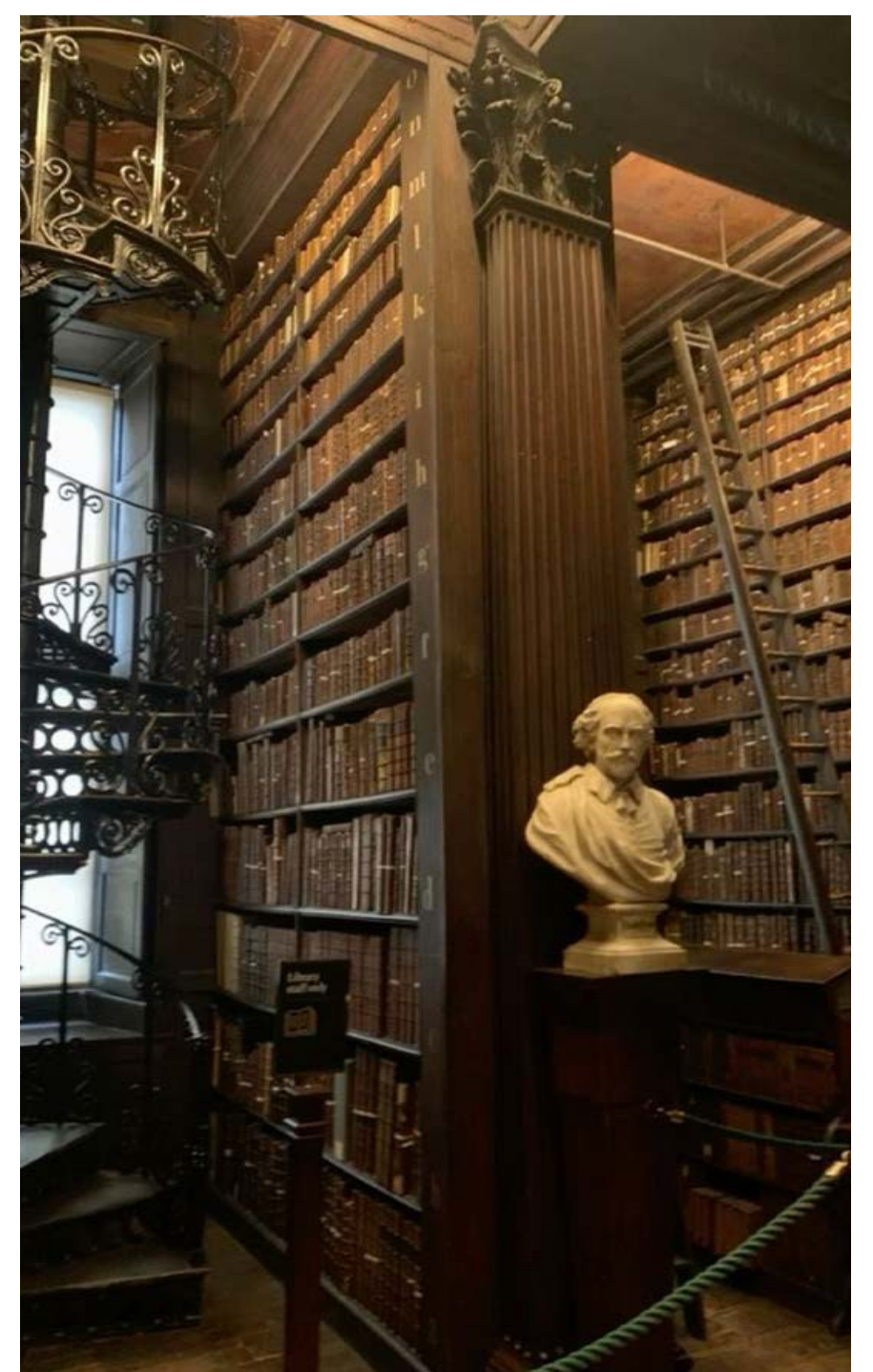
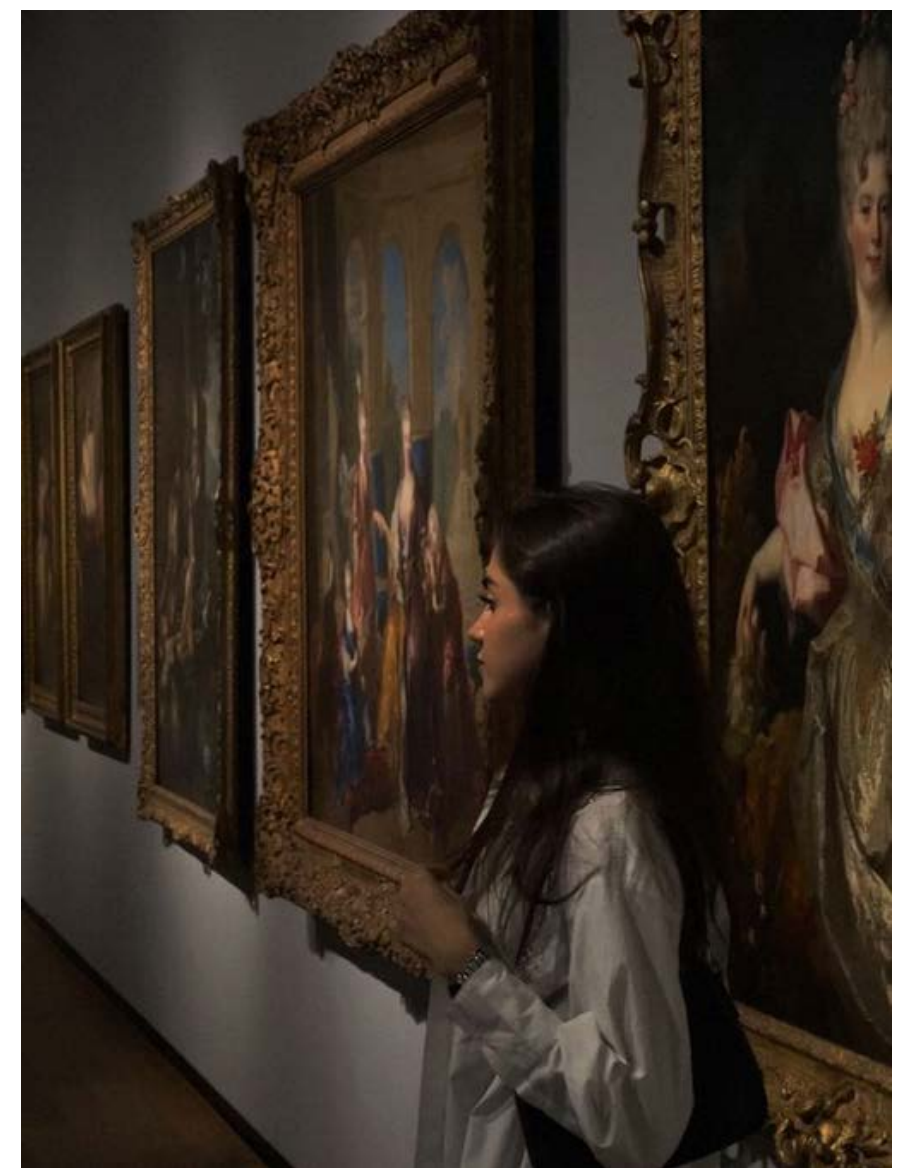
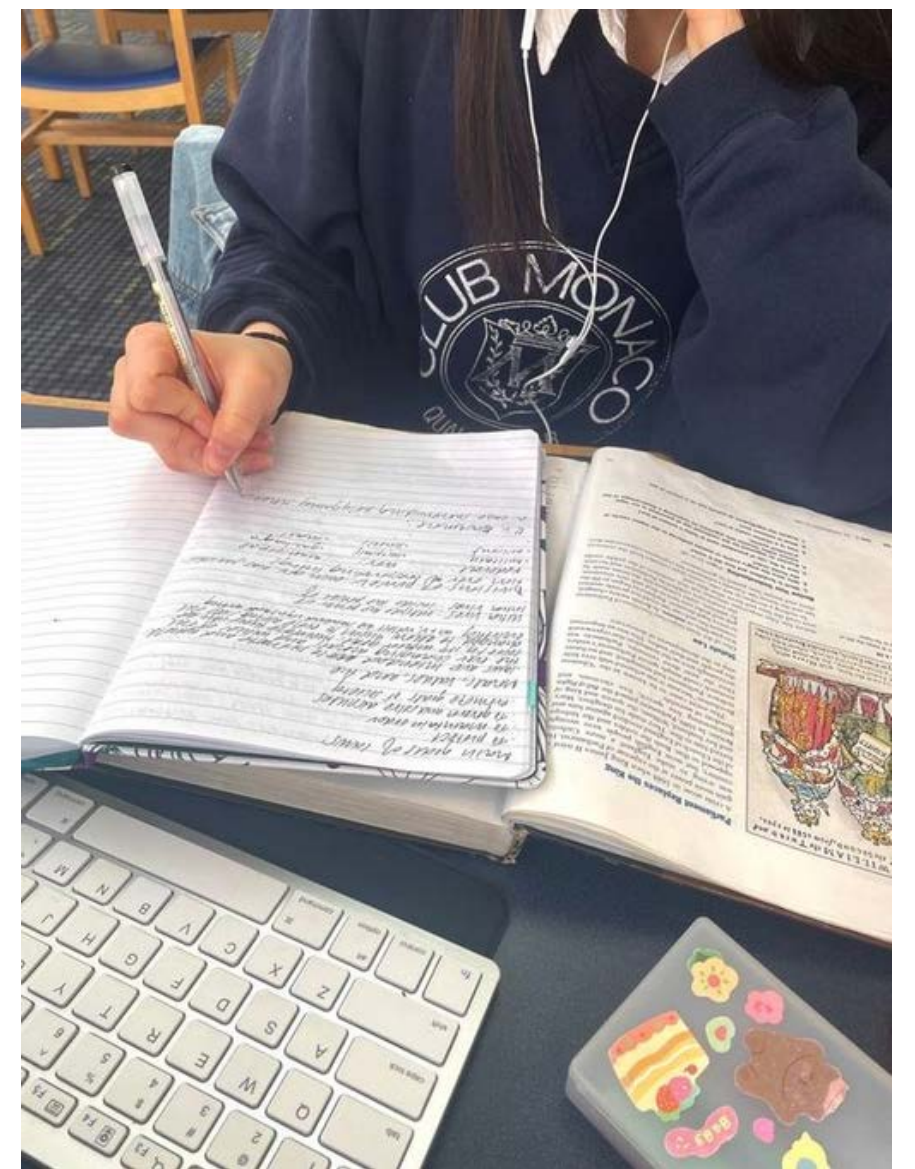
The Elizabethan era as the fashion was awesome and they lived a very different life compared to today.

If there was something you could change about today's society, what would it be?

I would like people to have more kindness and accept diversity with open arms and clear eyes.

What book do you think young people should read today and why?

A book written by Jenni Murray- "*History of the World in 21 Women*". It tells us about world history through 21 important women. It's really great at showing that women have always been an important part of history.





INTERVIEW WITH A FORMER PLATANOS COLLEGE PUPIL

WRITTEN BY UHUNOMA OBAYANGBONA

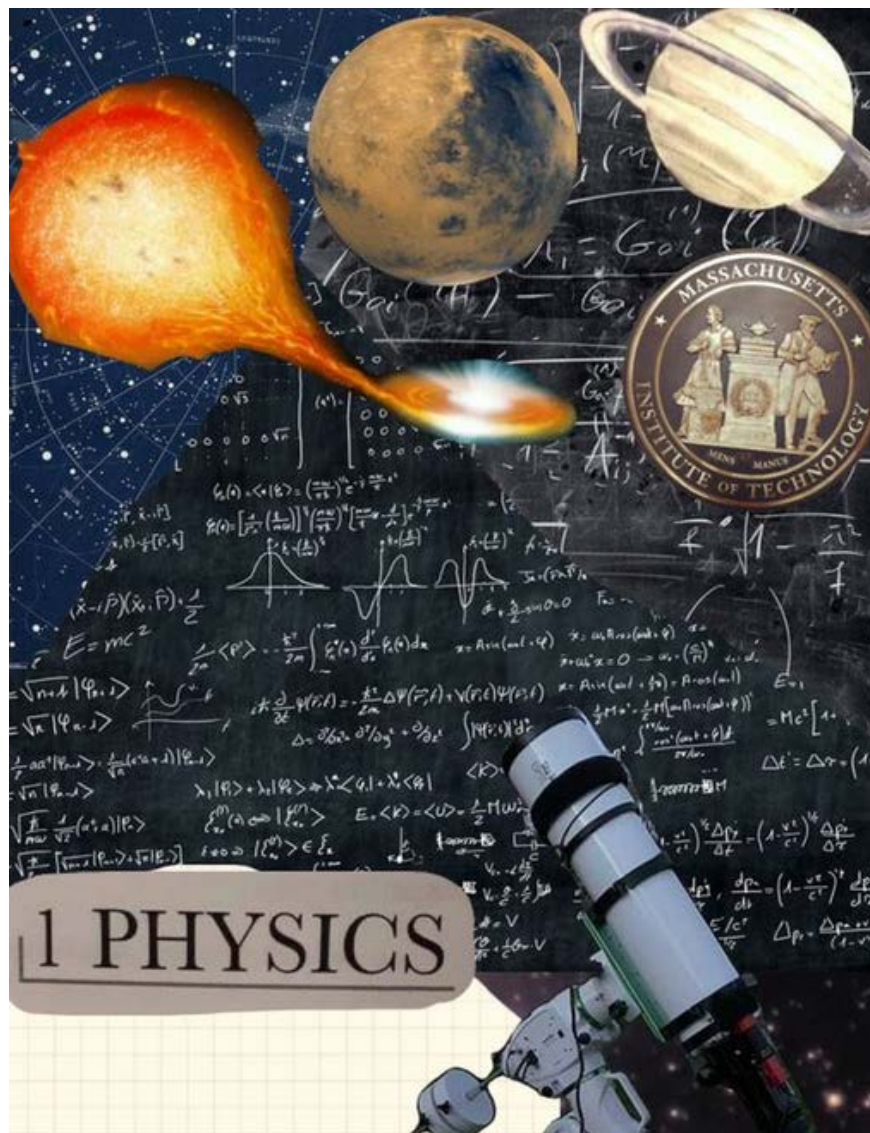
We interviewed former Platanos College pupil Osarodion Obayangbona, who graduated from Platanos College last year and formerly wrote for the KS4 Newsletter.

So Osaridion, how have your been since leaving Platanos College?

I've been alright; it's a bit strange adapting to life after being at a place you've spent 5 years at, but it feels good to move on and tackle bigger things in the future.

How are you finding your new school and what A levels are you doing?

My school (Emanuel School) has made quite a smooth transition due to the integration events they hold and the personal meetings with the Head of Sixth Form; there is a real sense of community and belonging. The A levels I do are Maths,



Further Maths, Physics and Economics.

What influenced your post-Platanos College choices?

Well I'd say that I already had a pretty good idea of the career path I was interested in as I had already done a bit of research. But, Platanos College's Career workshops and events helped to enhance my clarity on what occupations I was potentially interested in and what I definitely did not want to do.

Is there anything you're currently working towards?

I want to achieve good A Levels, but also I'm also participating in a Physics Olympiad club to prepare for the Physics Olympiad and also I'm thinking about doing a Crest project (think of it as an EPQ but for Physics).

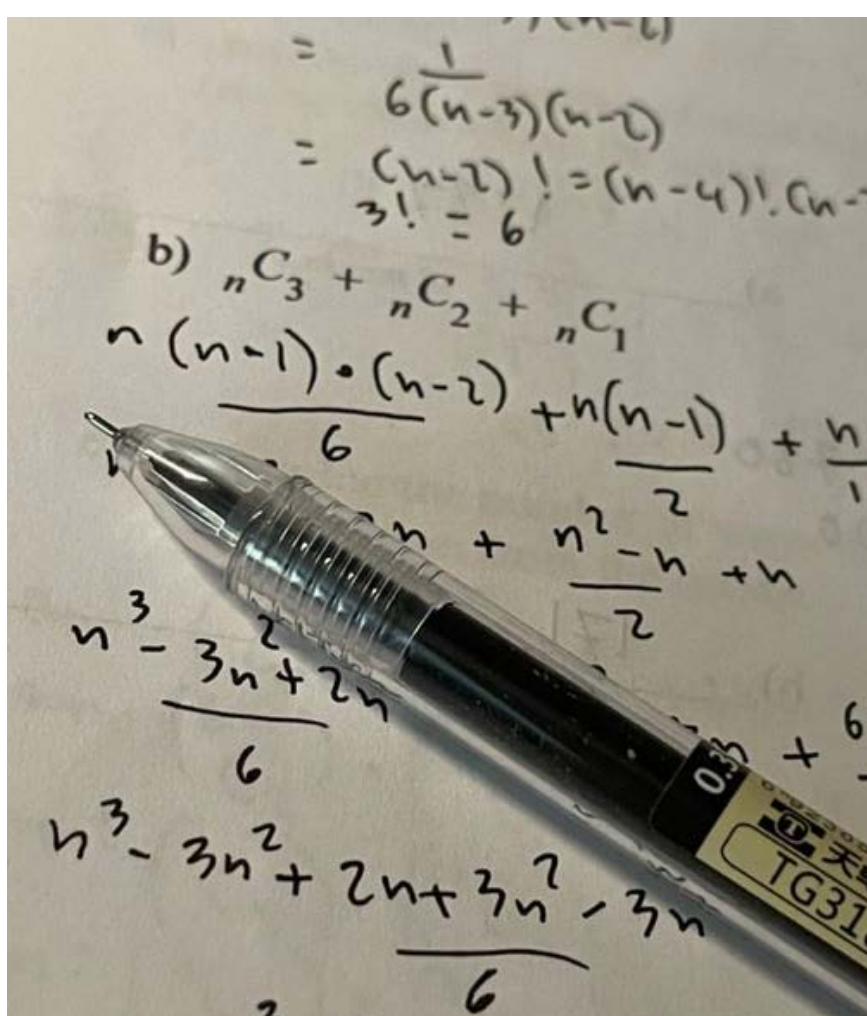
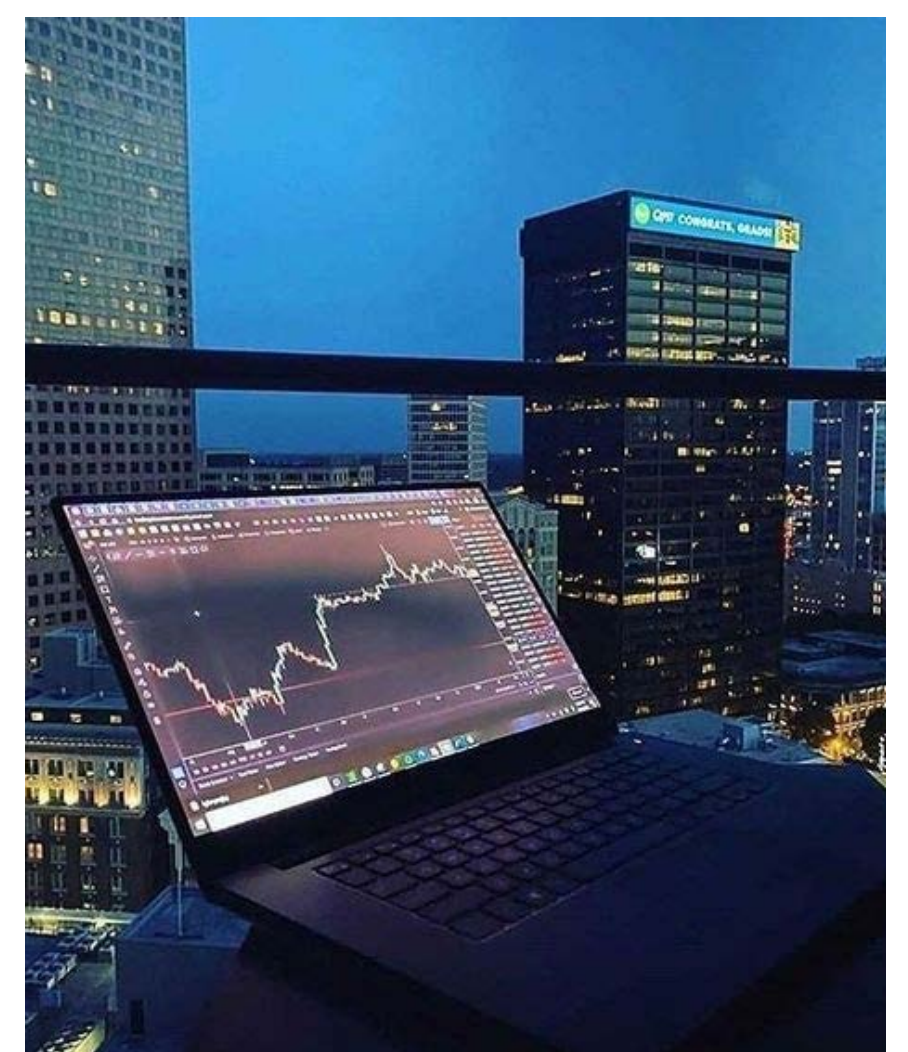
How do you balance your academic work and personal life?

Right now I'm trying to timetable my days so that I am able to balance work and free time, but I think also having a mental switch between work and free time is important (and something I'm still trying to master), so that you get your mind in a place where it knows when it has to work and when it can have a break. This takes time, discipline and is quite hard - and is once again something I'm trying to get better at.

Do you plan to do any other Higher Education in the future?

I'm considering a degree in Mechanical Engineering but I'm open to alternatives.

What did you think about going to an independently





funded school and did it match with your initial expectations?

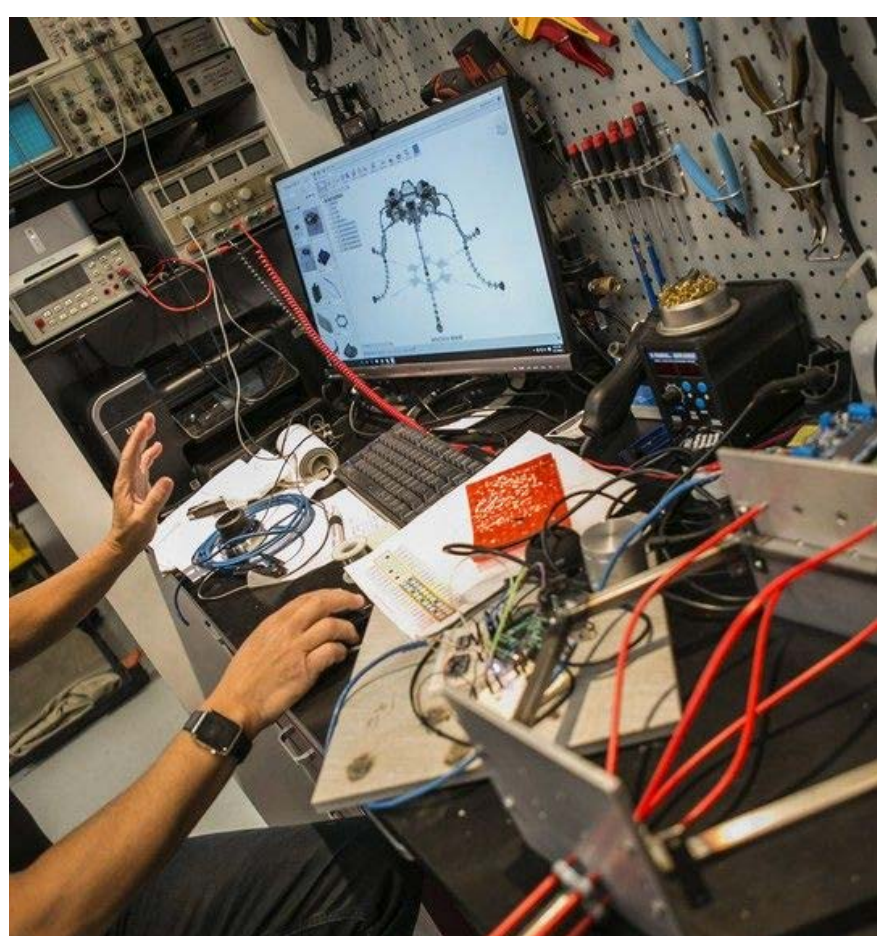
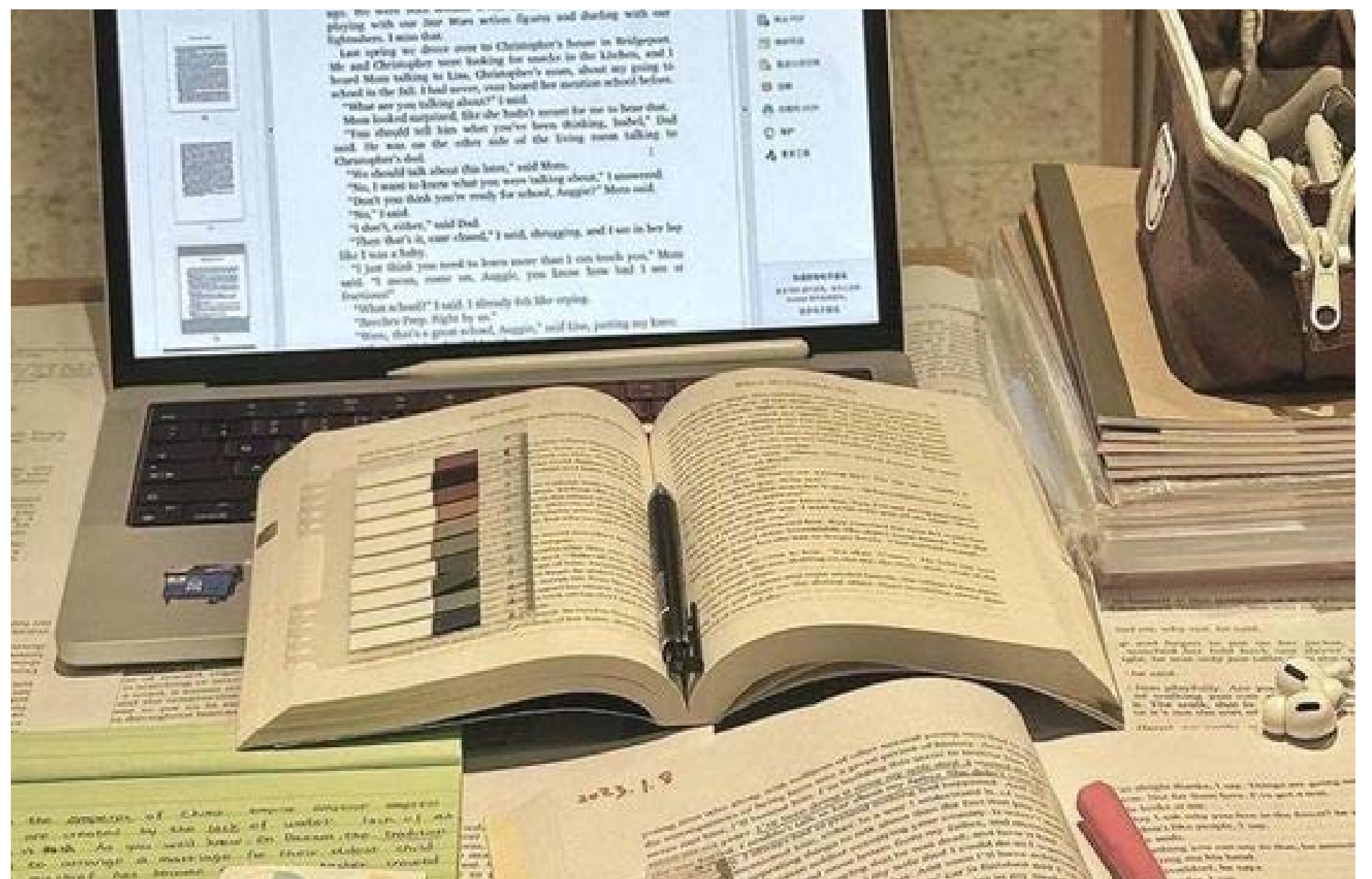
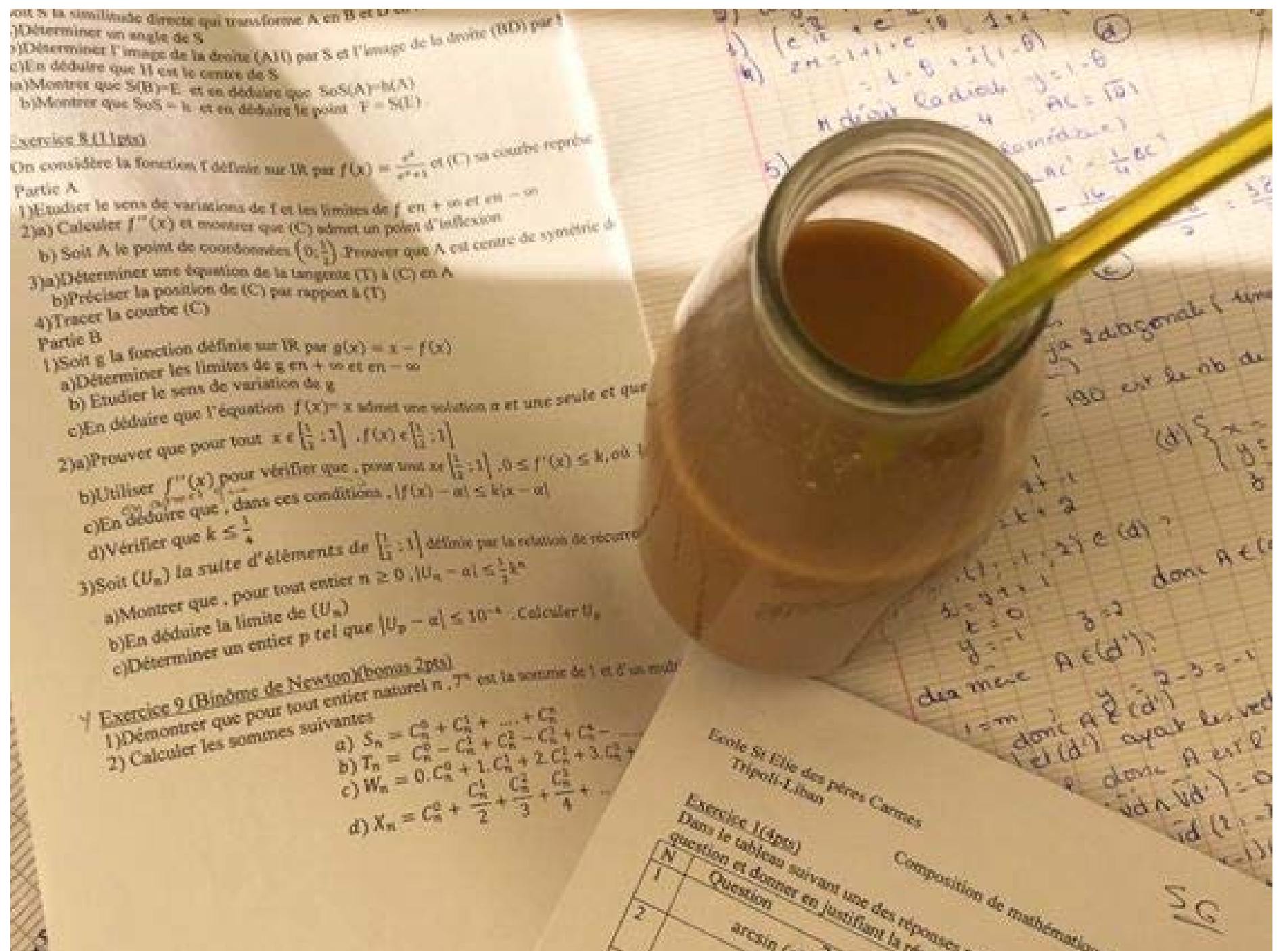
Independent school is a bit different to State school in terms of its environment, but it does share the same values of high academic achievement as any other school would.

Does your school expect you to do anything outside of your lessons?

Yes, in fact I teach Year 1s PE in a primary school that my school has a partnership with; it's a very rewarding experience and rounds out the Sixth Form experience. The school has a reward that covers multiple aspects outside of academics (such as work in the community and working with primary school children to deliver enriching lessons, from gymnastics to orienteering)

Is there any advice you would give our current Key Stage 4 pupils who haven't graduated from Platanos College yet?

Work hard, be ambitious and make sure you maintain a good work-life balance.





INTERVIEW WITH A FORMER PLATANOS COLLEGE PUPIL

WRITTEN BY JASON TRAN

We interviewed former Platanos College pupil and writer for the KS4 Newsletter, Keightley Tran about how she is finding College life.

Where are you studying now and what courses are you doing?

I am at City and Islington College and I study A Level History, Economics and Business.

What motivated you to do these courses?

I really wanted to do something with Enterprise. I also wanted to do something that required me to use language skills as I would like to work in the Civil Service, especially in International Trade. If I do not get into this area, I would like to do Consulting.

How does attending a college differ from attending a Sixth Form?

I initially wanted to go to a Sixth Form, however I valued the quality of my education more than the distance and convenience of my school, therefore I chose College instead. I would say that attending Sixth Form College is very similar to secondary school, in the sense that you have a lot less autonomy than you do at College. Also, my

College provided incentives like travel bursaries and welfare facilities.

How big of a gap is there between GCSEs and A levels?

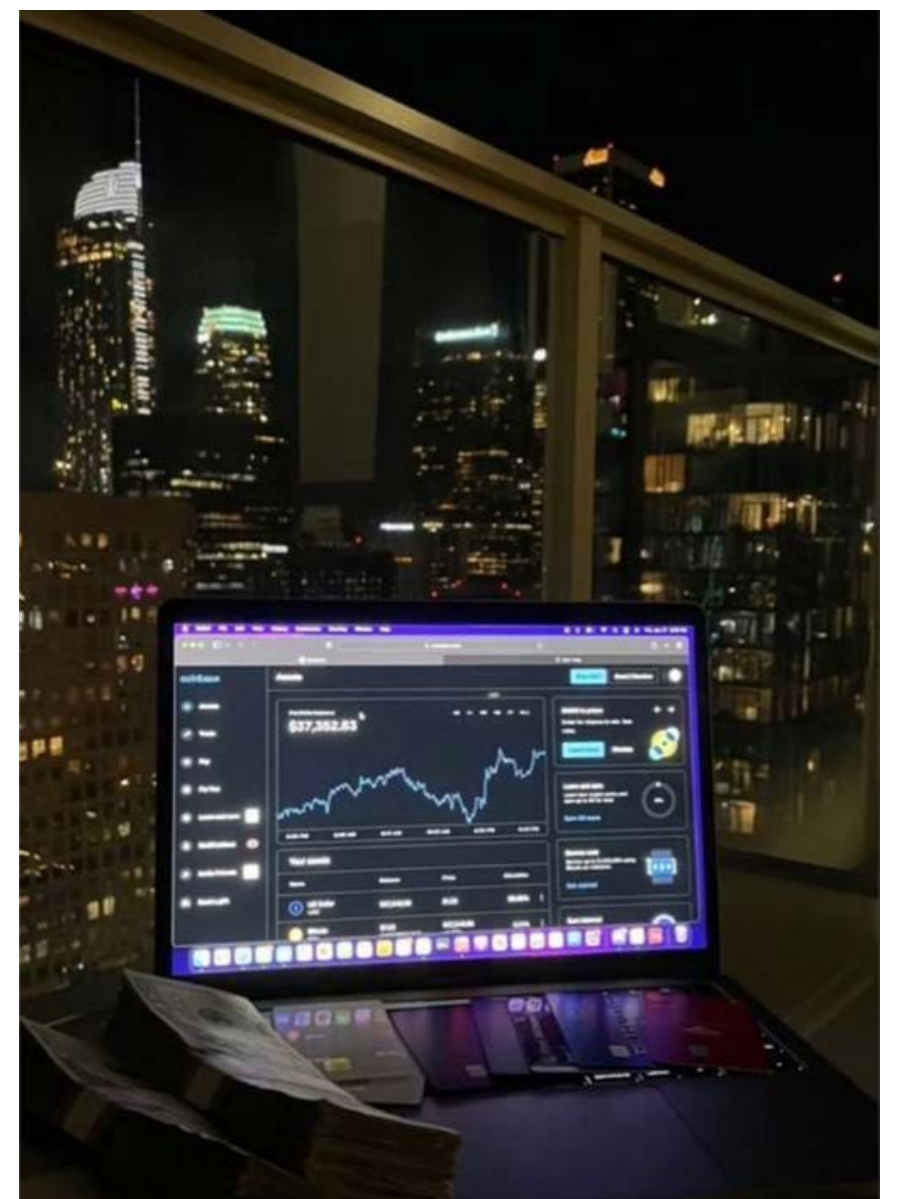
No bridge is long enough to tell you how big of a gap there is between GCSEs and A levels! For example, History at A level is much more in-depth and much more thorough than GCSEs. There are more dates that needs to be learnt and overall the content that you learn is much greater.

How time-consuming is studying for A levels?

I wouldn't say that College/ Sixth Form is time-consuming, but it will definitely keep you busy. For the first two weeks there wasn't really much to do as we were just integrating into school, but the workload gradually increased.

What advice would you give to Year 11 pupils transitioning to Sixth Form/ College?

I'm just starting out so I don't have much experience, but I would say that you should ask about any student help that may be available and also research your subjects beforehand and be decisive.





NATURE VS. NURTURE

WRITTEN BY SAFARA COKE



You may have heard people debate whether something is down to Nature or Nurture. But what do they mean by this? Well, when somebody regularly scores highly on exams, is it because they are naturally intelligent when it comes to academics, or is it because their home environment encourages them to study? If a person commits a violent crime, is this because of behaviour they learnt from their peers growing up, or is this violence an unavoidable consequence of a more sinister aspect of their natural personality? The key question at the heart of both of these, is, in itself, a long-standing argument about psychology: whether a person is the way they are because of their genetics and biological factors (Nature) or due to their environment and external factors (Nurture).

Many studies have been carried out on identical twins or triplets raised in different environments in order to understand the role that genetics plays in a person's life. For example, there is a

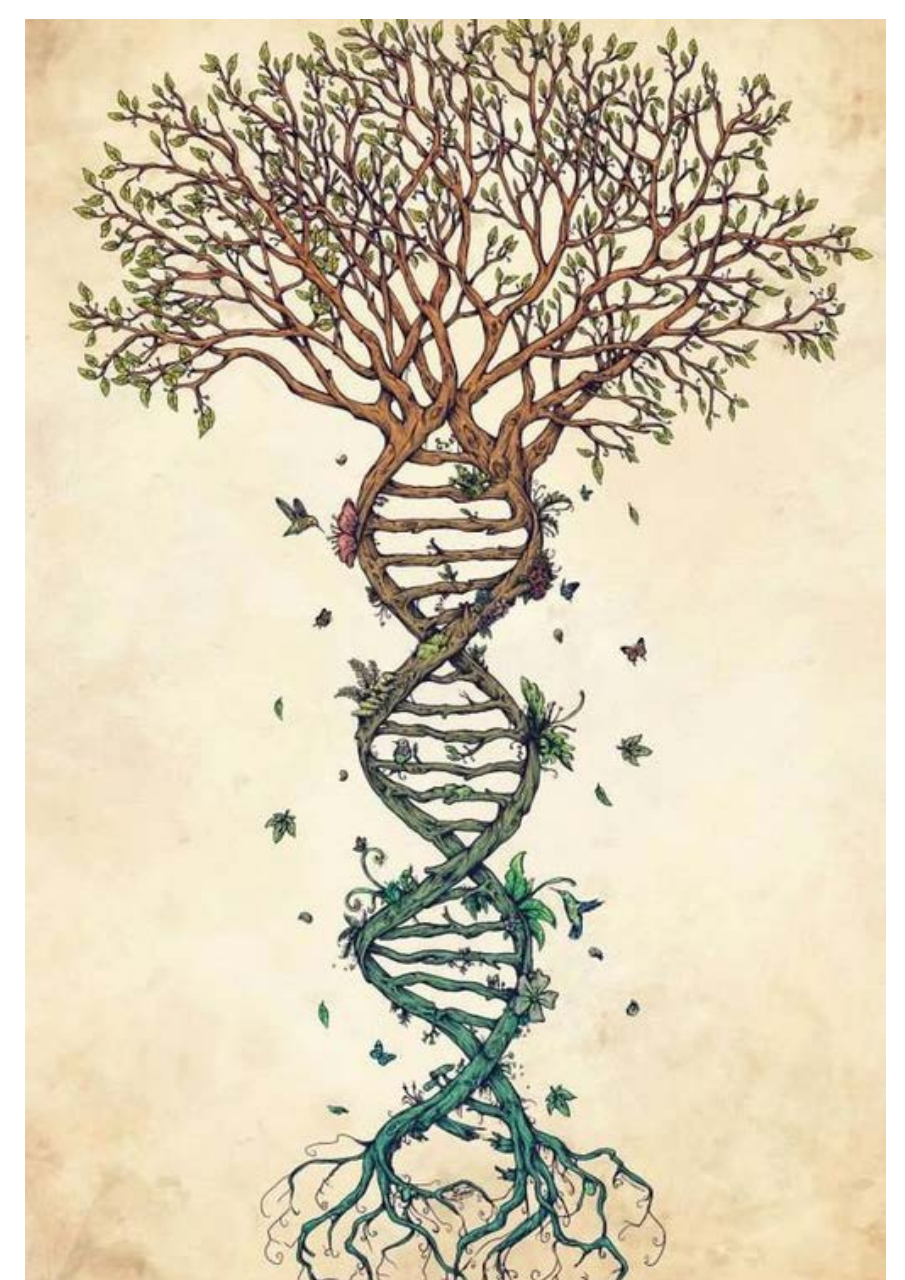
case in America where three triplets were adopted by three different families at birth; each child was not told about the existence of their two identical brothers. Later in life, by chance the three of them met when they were 19 years old. Many similarities were noted between them: they all had similar tastes in food; they had all enjoyed wrestling when they were in high school; they all smoked the same brand of cigarettes. Coincidence? These similarities suggest that genetics do indeed, play an important factor in life, supporting the argument that nature is more influential than nurture.

However, many behaviours are shown to be learned from the environment around us. In the 1960s, a man called Albert Bandura ran a test on aggression called the *Bobo Doll Experiment*. As part of his experiment, a group of children was split into two groups. One group would observe an adult aggressively attacking a toy (called Bobo), whilst the other would observe an adult peacefully playing with it. The children were then left alone with the dolls for a short amount of time. Can you guess what behaviours were witnessed? Yes, you guessed it: those who saw an adult being aggressive towards the doll

would also display similar forms of aggression – showing that learned behaviour is a key factor in creating personalities and habits.

So, which is the stronger influence of the two: Nature or Nurture?

Well, many researchers view the interaction between heredity and environment as being the overarching key factor. In other words, the issue is not so much Nature vs Nurture, but more, the existence of Nature with Nurture. What this means is that whilst a person's genetics will determine their character, intelligence and behaviours in life, ultimately, their biology does not exist in isolation from their environment: in the end, it is the interaction of both Nature and Nurture that shapes us.





community corner

COLOURFUL KENTE

WRITTEN BY PICETRA NYARKO-CROFFIE



Have you ever heard of Kente fabric? Well, Kente originated in the Ashanti region of Ghana and West Africans have been weaving this type of textile for thousands of years.

The use of Kente fabric is now widespread, including in traditional weddings. Nowadays, people use Kente fabrics in all sorts of items of clothing, including ties, dresses, headscarves and shoes.

Kente is made by weaving - also called 'strip weaving.' This is a method that Africans have used for many centuries, with each cloth coming together once a pattern has been created.

The stunning array of colours have different connotations, with the colour blue

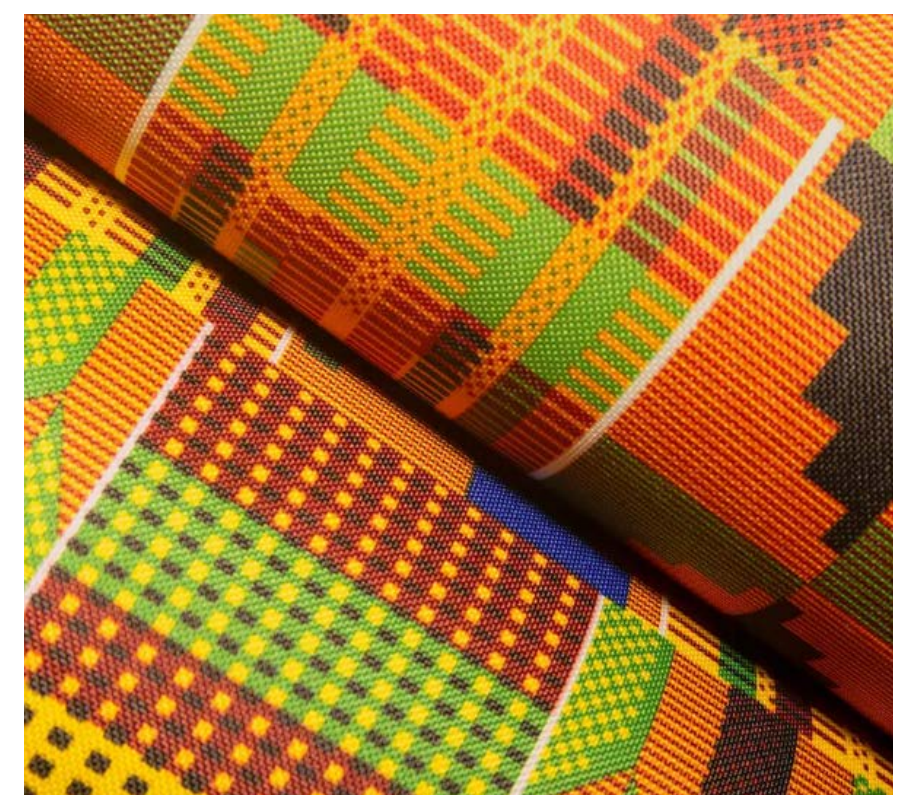
representing love, peace and harmony, while gold represents wealth, royalty and money.

Did you know that some of the Kente fabrics have a part to play in the horrific times of slavery? In fact, many people used the fabrics to form maps to escape from those who held them in captivity.

The patterns on these cloths have symbolic connotations and meanings. These represent the different cultures from different regions, as well as the history of a region and people. Some of the patterns have different names, which are given by weavers that they get from the dreams or the Elders (the tribe leaders or older people respected within the community).

We spoke with Mildred Obeng, who has a Kente fabric business called Nubian Closet. She started this business around 10 years ago and in the last decade she has opened shops in Ghana, expanding her business from Accra to Kumasi. The most astonishing thing about this is that she makes all the items herself using a sewing machine and her bare hands!

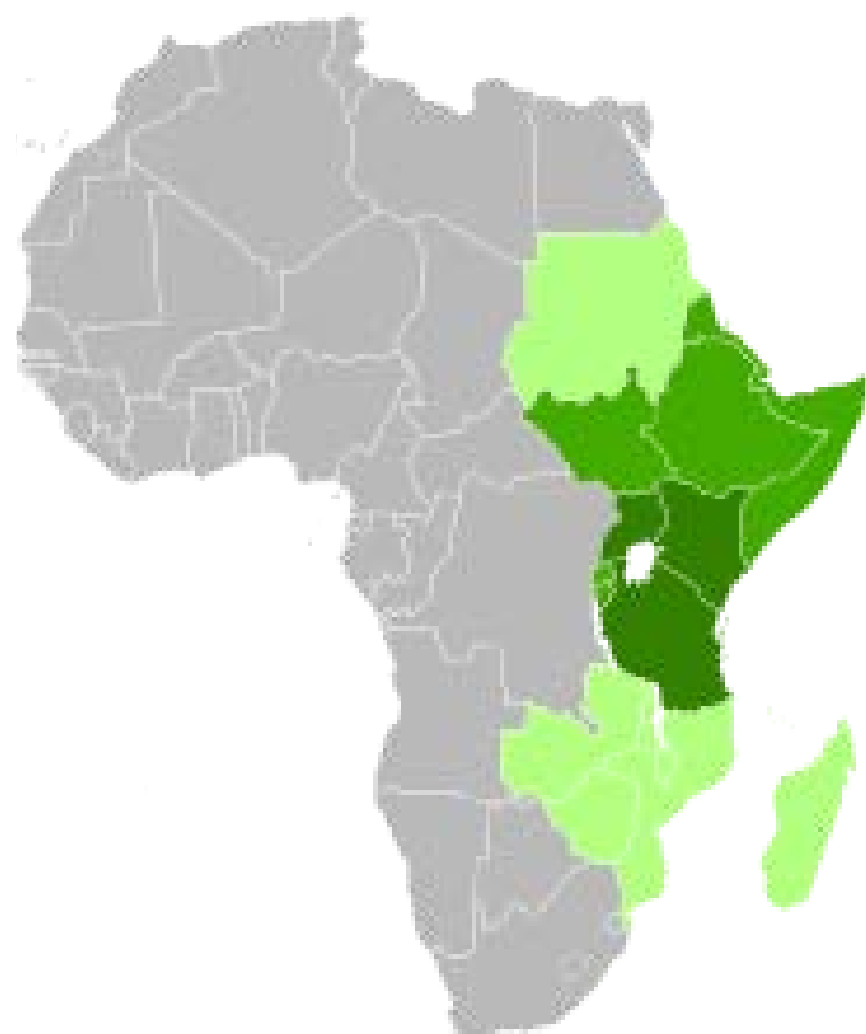
"I've always been a big fan of fashion - it's something that has grown with me over the years. Kente symbolises me and my heritage. My designs and fabrics help bring you within your cultural background."





DELICIOUS DISHES OF EAST AFRICA

WRITTEN BY ABDIMALIK ELM I



Did you know that East Africa is home to many delicious dishes? Here are just a few from the region.



Somalia

A very famous dish in Somalia and many Somali households is Bariis iyo hilib- which is more commonly known as rice and meat and can be adapted for different tastes and palates.



Eritrea & Ethiopia

Both countries have foods in common, including Tsebhi (a thick stew) and Injera, which is a sourdough flatbread.



Kenya

Kenyan Pilau is a traditional, simple dish of the country. Spices and stock are added to the rice, with the option of meat or vegetables too.



Tanzania

One of the most popular of Tanzanian meals is Ugali, which is a dense porridge made out of white maize meal or maize flour.



Uganda

By boiling or mashing green plantain, Ugandans make a delicious and versatile dish called Matooke; it's so flexible that it can accompany pretty much any other dish!



Rwanda & Burundi

Brochettes are a staple dish from the regions; they are essentially meat on a stick – a very popular choice in street markets.

So, next time your family decides on a take-away night, why not suggest an East African meal? It's sure to get your taste buds tingling!

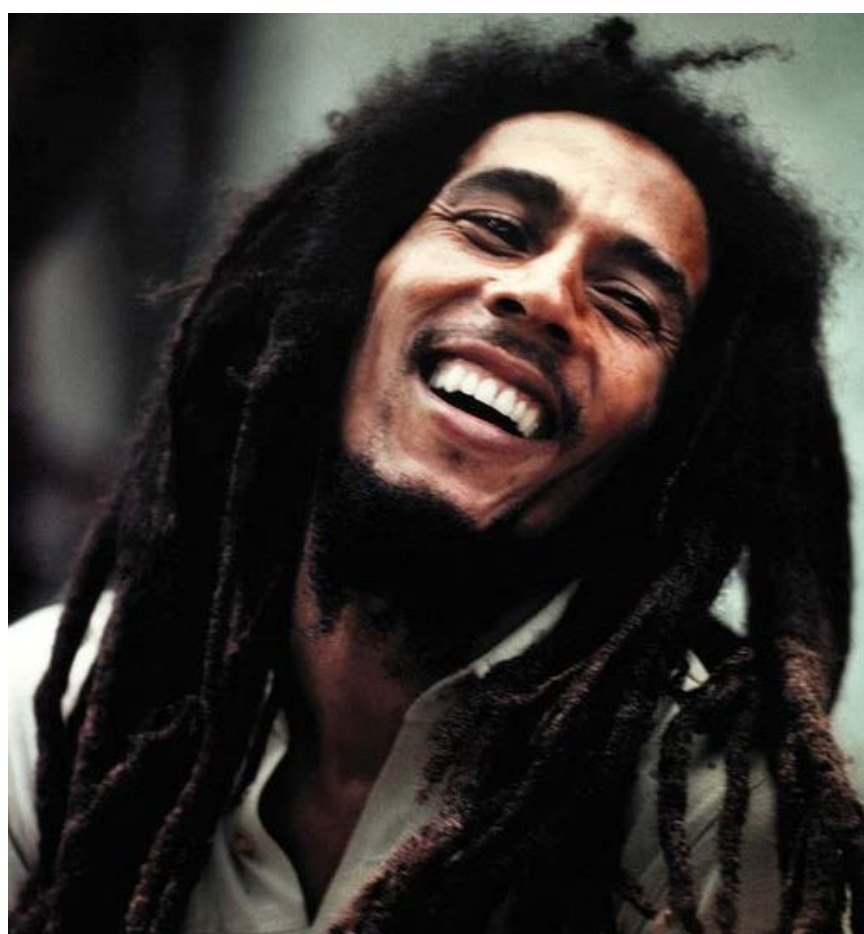


THE POWER OF MUSIC TO MOVE AND MOTIVATE

WRITTEN BY ZAKIYAH ROSE

The power of music to move and motivate is undeniable: it has the ability to connect with us on a deep emotional level and inspire us to be our best selves. It can inspire us, motivate us and touch our hearts in ways that words alone simply cannot articulate.

And while there are many talented musicians out there, some stand out for their ability to inspire and uplift their listeners. Let's take the legendary Bob Marley for example, who is famed worldwide as a symbol of Jamaican culture and music. His music is known for its optimistic messages of hope and change, which reflect the themes of love, peace, and social justice. His reggae songs have inspired countless people around the world and his legacy continues to live on today. His hit songs like *One*



Bob Marley

Love, Three Little Birds and *Redemption Song* contain messages about equality, unity and prejudice, and are considered classics.



Aretha Franklin

Known as the 'Queen of Soul', Aretha Franklin was one of the most influential female musicians of all time. As a child, her gospel singing marked her out as a special talent. As an adult, her powerful voice and soulful performances have inspired generations of singers and musicians. Her songs include *Respect*, *Natural Woman* and *Chain of Fools*, which are still played and sung by her fans across the world.

Stevie Wonder is widely considered to be a musical genius; his career has spanned an astonishing five decades! Wonder was a child prodigy and, despite being blind since shortly after his birth, he went on to learn how to play



Stevie Wonder

instruments as a one-man band. His music is known for its uplifting and positive messages, and his soulful voice and incredible musicianship have inspired countless people around the world. From his classics like *Superstition*, and *Isn't She Lovely* to *I Just Called to Say I Love You* and *Higher Ground*, Wonder has created an incredible legacy of inspiring music.

Closer to our generation, is Beyoncé, one of the most

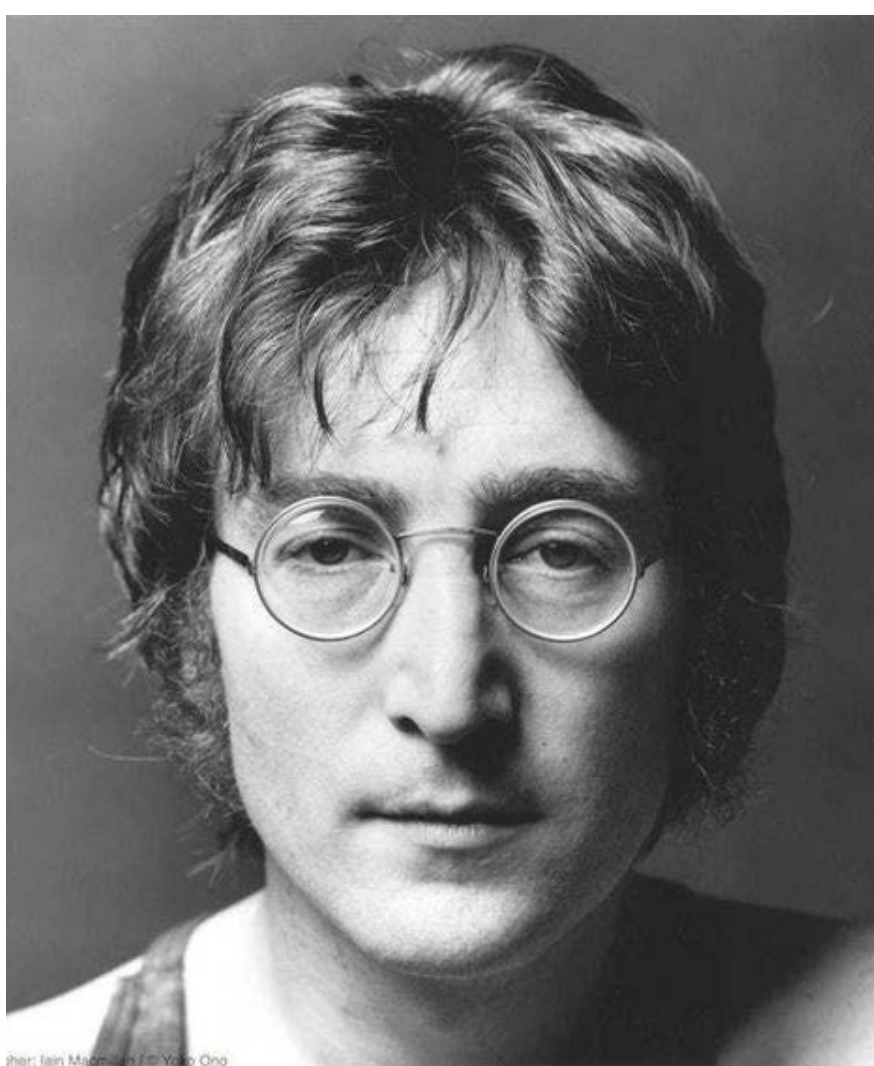


Beyoncé



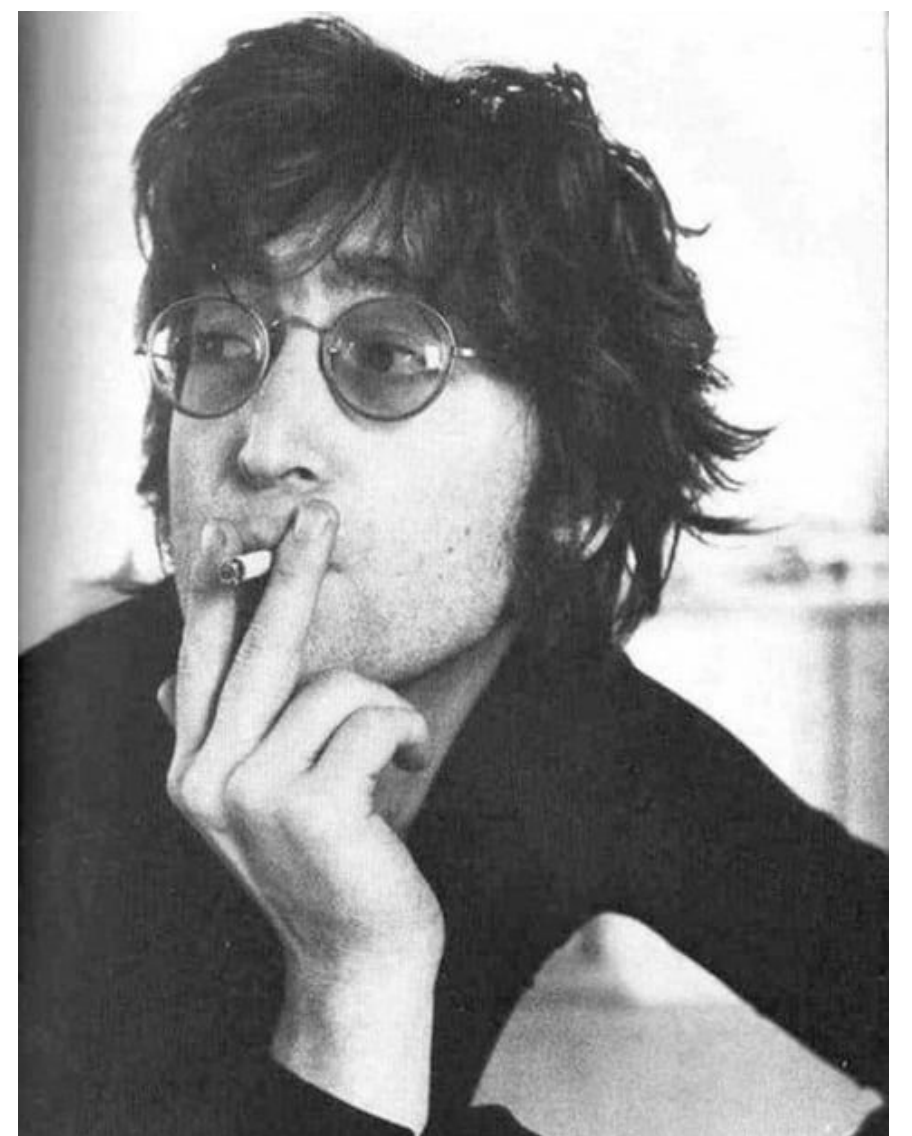
successful and influential musicians of our time. Her lyrics are famed for their celebration of women and their ability to empower millions of people, especially young women and girls. The famous hypophora “*Who Runs The World? Girls*” is a line that reflects the beacon of hope and inspirational messages contained in many of Beyonce’s lyrics.

of the many inspirational musicians out there. Whether through their lyrics, their performances or their personal stories, these musicians have sung directly to the souls of millions and continue to inspire new generations of listeners. Their work is evidence of the power of music to move and motivate us. So, next time you are feeling in need of motivation, inspiration or hope, consider the songs and lyrics that connect with your heart, soul and mind the most.



John Lennon

And let’s not forget one of the most famous songwriters and performers, John Lennon, whom many modern bands and artists credit as a huge influence in their own lives and careers. As well as his astonishing career in The Beatles, Lennon had a successful solo career. His song *Imagine* is perhaps his most iconic, continuing to inspire people around the world to this day. Tragically killed at the age of 40, Lennon’s music and peace activism continue to touch the hearts of millions.



These are just a few examples



U-TURN ON ULEZ?

WRITTEN BY INAYA ROSE



Going to school in Stockwell, you've most likely seen the ULEZ signs that are now all over London. But what exactly are they all about?

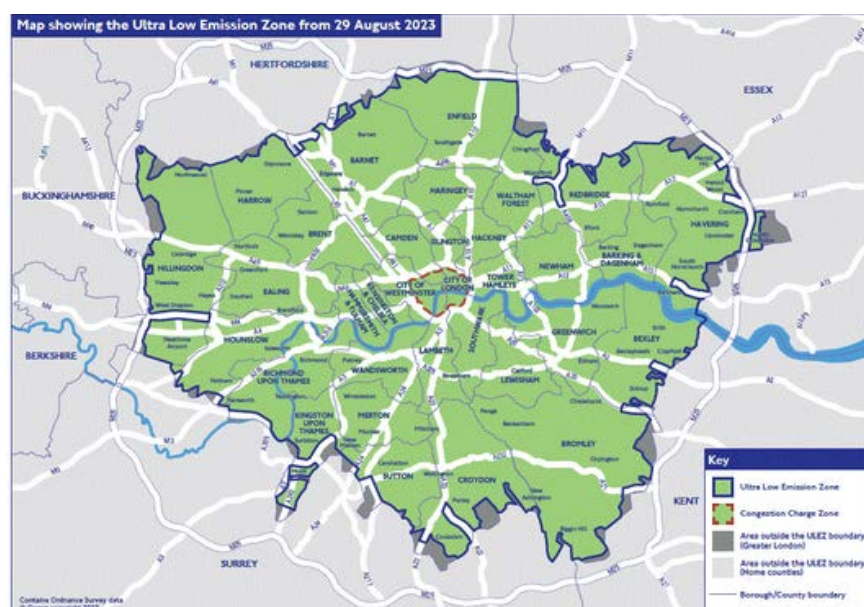
ULEZ (or Ultra Low Emission Zone) is an area in London where a standard charge of £12.50 is applied to all non-compliant road vehicles – in other words, those that are more polluting and hazardous for the environment. The scheme aims not only to reduce carbon dioxide, which is a major contributor to global warming, but also minimise the air pollutants nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter - both of which are the cause of premature deaths and lack of development of children's lungs.

ULEZ was first introduced in April 2019 and came into action in September 2020. On 29th August this year, the ULEZ area was expanded to cover all London boroughs. In

theory, the idea of a scheme to help reduce pollution and make the air for all who live, work and travel in London more healthy, is surely a good thing, right? Well, as we explore in this article, not everyone agrees with ULEZ. But why?

Firstly, whilst Mayor Sadiq Khan's ULEZ scheme seems like a positive change, many individuals have been adversely affected as they rely on their cars as their primary mode of transportation. The daily £12.50 expense has created a financial burden for many individuals who cannot afford to replace their cars with newer, cleaner models.

In addition, citizens living outside the ULEZ zone now face longer commute times and increased traffic congestion because so many drivers are trying to avoid the charges. This has caused frustration and inconvenience for those who have no choice but to drive into the zone for work or other essential reasons.



Mayor Sadiq Khan

However, some Londoners like nurse Alice Montague, support ULEZ, stating *"It's so important for the lungs of Londoners and will make London greener...it is so horrible cycling and feeling the diesel fuel particles go into your lungs."*

In contrast, other Londoners are frustrated with the scheme and the way in which it was rolled out, including local small business owners who have seen a sharp decrease in commuter footfall. In addition, many car owners were annoyed by the Mayor's decisions in recent years. For example, Sinan Alan who lives in Hounslow, bought a secondhand diesel car because it was cheaper than buying a petrol car. However, Alan was left out of pocket when a few months after his purchase, it was declared that the ULEZ region would be



expanded. Like many commuters, Alan was annoyed at the London Mayor for not providing residents with sufficient notice of this intended change: *"Such extensive expansion and not giving enough time to people, only nine months, is absolutely ridiculous. In the current financial climate, people are struggling and this move will make the poor even poorer."*

The Scrappage scheme, which offers drivers up to £2000 to replace their current non-complaint car with one that is ULEZ friendly, has not been as welcomed as you might think; many drivers argue that it would still cost them thousands of pounds to make the switch.

Public anger at the scheme has seen 5 London boroughs



take legal action against ULEZ, though this was dismissed by the High Court. Furthermore, you may have seen on the news that the controversial scheme has resulted in some vigilantes taking matters into their own hands and spray-painting the cameras whose job it is to capture images of those who break the rules.

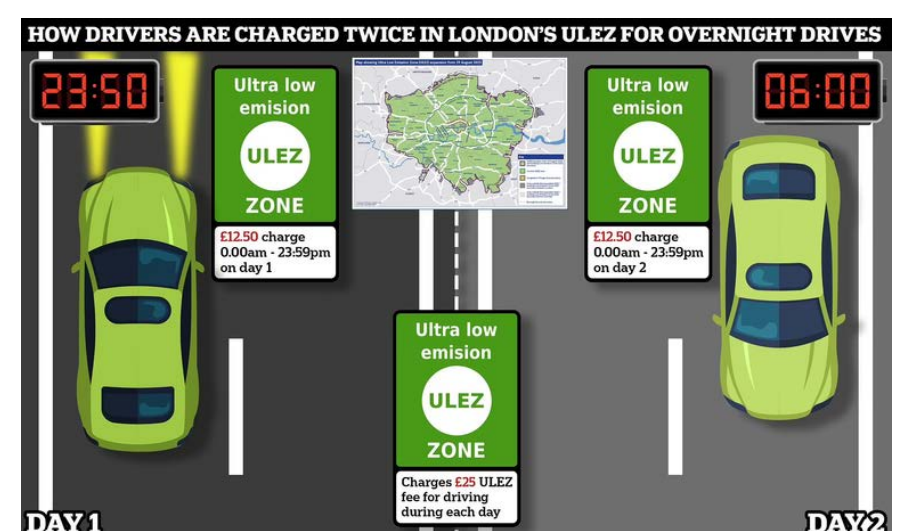
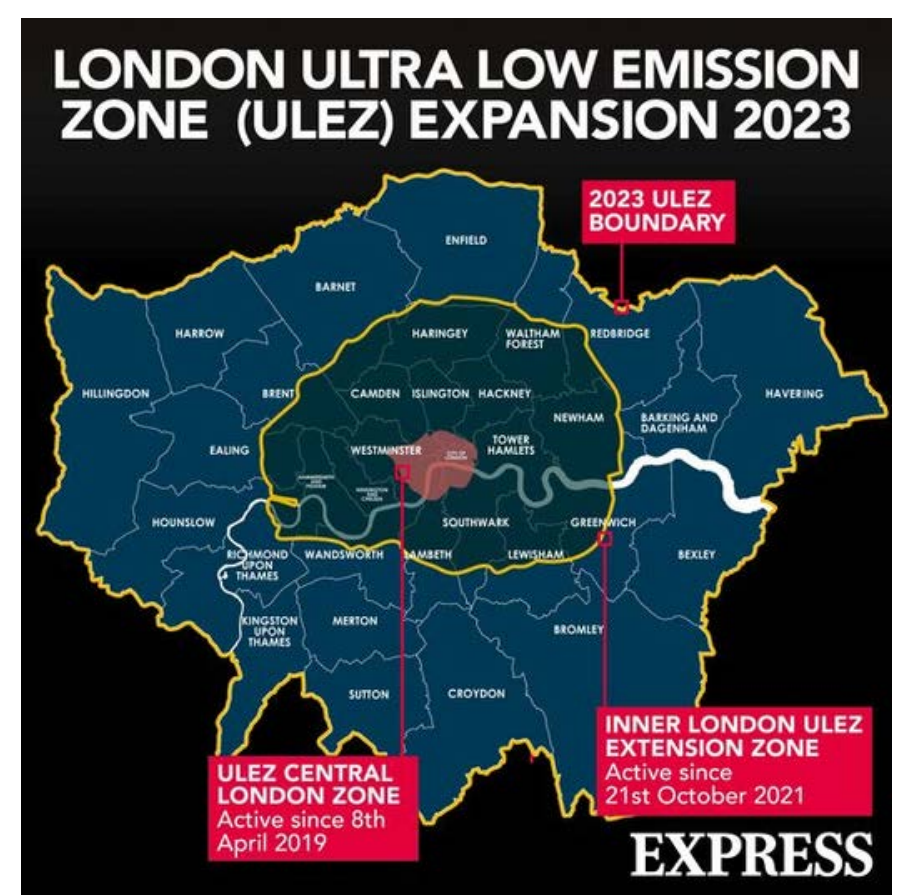
So, has the ULEZ scheme actually made a difference to the environment? Well, 97% of vehicles entering ULEZ areas are now compliant with the requirements. Consequently, air quality has drastically improved.

However, the fact remains that every part of London fails to meet the expected standards recommended by the World Health Organization guidelines for key air pollutants.

So, the ULEZ initiative has highlighted the need for more sustainable alternatives to our vehicles, but also the importance of supporting individuals who are economically impacted by these changes.

As citizens, we must take responsibility for our actions and make conscious choices to reduce our carbon footprint. Whether it's carpooling, cycling or taking public transportation, we all surely have a role to play in creating a more sustainable future for

ourselves and for future generations. The question is, how do we make such positive changes without creating further financial burdens for Londoners today?





INTERVIEW WITH A LAMBETH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

WRITTEN BY ALESSANDRA RIOS + FAITH JABBAR + DAMARIE SMITH



Business partners Steve and Bonita

We were lucky enough to interview the owner of Café Van Gogh, which is a café with a difference, just down the road from us in Brixton.

Could you tell us what makes Cafe Van Gogh different from other cafes or restaurants?

We are different because we are a non-profit café, so that we are not like most businesses that you might go to for your sandwiches; they rely on making a profit and the more profit they make, the better they feel. We're not interested in that: we're interested in providing training opportunities to young people and adults with a learning disability, so they can then get the skills they need to go and get a job. We need to make a little profit so that we can continue as a business, but we're not in this to make lots of cash. The

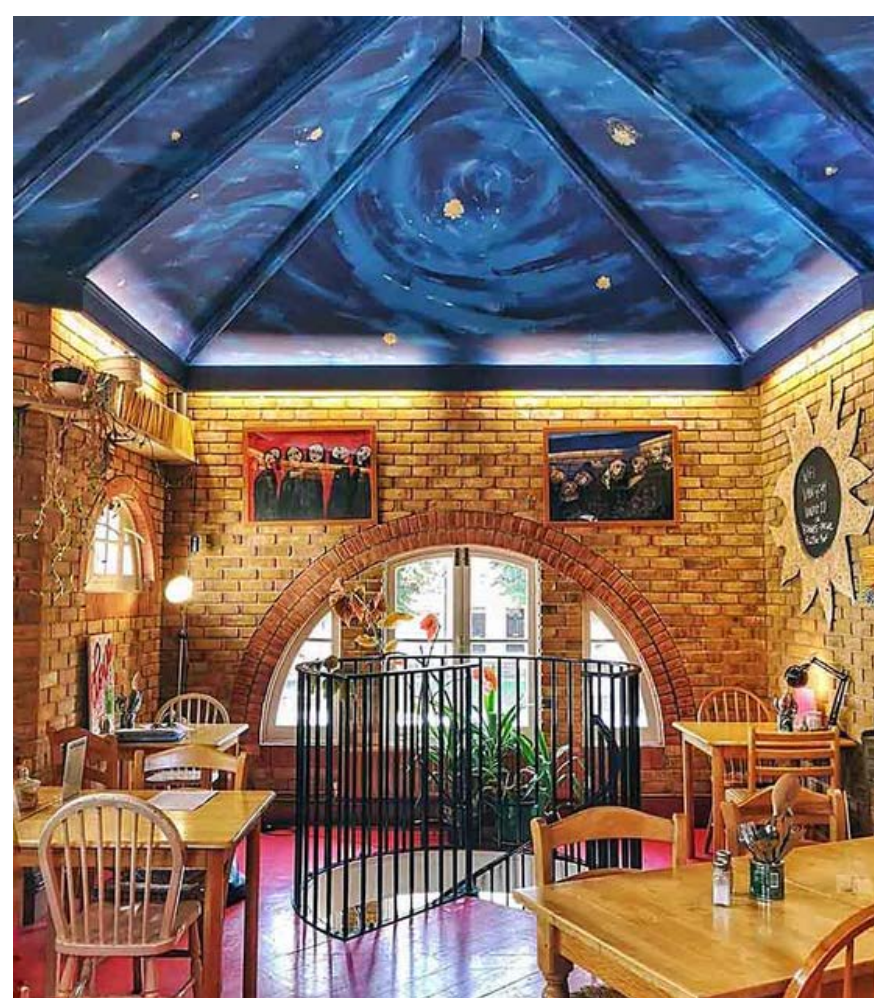
other thing that makes us a bit unique is that we're a vegan café, so use no eggs or dairy, and certainly no meat. Those are the two things that make us a bit unique.

What made you decide to become a Social Enterprise?

My background work before I opened the cafe was working with people who were homeless or who had mental health problems; I loved that work. I loved working with people who needed a bit of help in life. I decided to try to see if I could do something that benefited people - and here we are eight years later.

How do you go about recruiting employees with additional needs?

So, we have a waiting list at the moment. A person can be referred to us and there's a local Special Educational



Needs school that also send young people to us. We have people's parents getting in contact with us and asking if we have any spaces. Social workers can also refer someone to us. Occasionally, people with a learning disability come to us themselves to ask to join Café Van Gogh.

What do your customers think of Cafe Van Gogh being a Social Enterprise?

I hope they love it. I think that it increases what's called customer loyalty because people know that when they come to us and they buy a coffee with us, that money stays in our local community and does good. Other coffee shops might only be interested in profits so that's why I think people love us. The way you can tell is you



can read our reviews on Google Business and people talk about us in a very good way. That's why I believe people like us - because we're a genuine Social Enterprise.

How do you benefit from employing people with disabilities and how do they benefit from working for you?

Our space feels like a very fun place to work because we have a lot of people here with different needs and we all have a good sense of humour. It feels quite like a family at times so that is a benefit. Also, if you hire somebody with a learning disability, statistically the person is more likely to stay with you than somebody without a learning disability, so that benefits us and we love that. It's good for a business to retain our staff. It is also a fact that 95% of people with a learning disability are unemployed - we don't think that's fair; if employers gave people with learning disabilities a chance and gave them a bit more time to achieve things, we know that they could do a great job.

What challenges or discrimination have any of your employees with additional needs faced?

We hope that they haven't faced any challenges in discrimination in our workplace, but I do know that in the workplace sometimes kitchens can be difficult spaces to work in. I've heard

them described as "toxic." We don't think we've actually got any of our people who have come through our doors who have experienced discrimination in kitchens or in cafes, but I'm sure it can happen and will most probably happen based upon why most people discriminate, which is ignorance.

I think that people with a learning disability are already being discriminated against before they even get out of bed in the morning. We still have a long way to go when it comes to employers giving equal opportunities to people with disabilities.

Are there any other local businesses in Lambeth that you know of that have a Social Enterprise element?

There is one in Brixton Hill called Katakata. I know that King's College Hospital also employs people with learning disabilities. But, there are not as many as there should be, to be honest with you. I hope to see more in the future.

What can other businesses learn from Cafe Van Gogh about how to be more inclusive?

I think sometimes people need to give people a chance. Sometimes employers are nervous about taking somebody on with a learning disability because they often think maybe they need more support than they can give -

but we don't believe that is the case. There are many strengths. We have two people with Down's Syndrome and they give everyone the warmest welcome ever. When you enter the cafe and feel the type of welcome that you just cannot get in any other café, we think that's a really big strength. My biggest advice is that people should look at people's strengths before looking at their diagnosis; this is really important.

So, next time you are on Brixton Road, why not pop into Café Van Gogh? It is a little gem of inclusion and equality in our local community.



Welcome to Platanos College Sixth Form

INTERVIEW WITH MS O'CONNELL DIRECTOR OF SIXTH FORM

WRITTEN BY TAHIRA UDDIN + SIDJE KAKOU



Please tell us 3 top things you'd like our readers to know about the new Platanos College 6th Form?

I would like your readers to know just how at home our Year 12s feel in the common room. It really is the heart of the Sixth Form, whether students are playing pool, drinking hot chocolate or discussing their recent assessments, it is always a buzz of activity. There are also quieter areas for pupils to relax away from the more social common room; there are sofas dotted around the first floor for pupils to relax in during their free time.

I would also like your readers to really realise how much more independent they will be expected to be when they enter the Sixth Form. Students

will have Independent Study times when they will be working on assignments, homework or going over their notes from class. They will need to be able to organise and manage their time effectively.

The third thing I would like your readers to be aware of is the support that you will receive here at Platanos College Sixth Form. Yes, I mentioned independence - that is crucial, however you will have support from Academic Mentors, support with work experience and one to one sessions with a qualified work experience counsellor to discover what kind of work would really interest you. Ms Kendall, Assistant to the Director of Sixth Form, works with students on a daily basis regarding their independent study, their well-being and



their progress. This academic year we have also had a variety of speakers in to school to speak to the students, the most notable of whom was Dame Sharon White who is the Chair of John Lewis. Dame Sharon spoke to students about her various roles in Politics, working for Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak's offices.

Year 11 Pupils should ask the Year 12 students about the Sixth Form - that is the best way for them to really visualise what it will be like for them. I can describe it, but when it comes from a student who is living it daily, the information means so much more. So please stop one of our Year 12 students and ask them any questions that you may have.

Please tell us about the first ever cohort of Platanos College 6th Formers.

The first cohort of Sixth Form students was always going to



be a special one and they are.

The Year 12 students are a fantastic group of young people; they are hard working and resilient. The students in Year 12 are also funny, independent and kind. There is an atmosphere of support and friendship amongst the cohort of pupils; they all get along with each other and help each other out.

What do you enjoy most about managing the Platanos College 6th Form?

The students. The students have always been what I have enjoyed in any role I have had in Education; they are the reason we all work in schools. I want to see them succeed and develop into successful, happy adults who have been given an education and the support that will enable them to go on and do whatever it is that they want to do in their future careers. We hope that we are supporting them to develop into well-rounded, intelligent citizens who are needed for the future of this country.

How would you like to see the Platanos College Sixth Form develop over the next few years?

It is already growing and

developing! We have added a variety of new subjects to our unknown future of the jobs curriculum list for 2024, which the Year 11 students will already be aware of. The market in the UK and globally means that we will need to continue to grow and develop consistently. A strength of this Sixth Form is that there are no barriers to what students want to do; we are always changing and adapting to meet the needs of our current and future students.

What do you think Sixth Formers enjoy the most about their experience of Platanos College Sixth Form so far?

The pool table! On a serious note, I think they really enjoy the environment; it is comfortable, safe and welcoming. When times are challenging, assessments are coming up, you're tired, it's a dark morning and you don't feel like coming to school, that is when a calm, warm environment at school will be a reason you come in, meet friends and work hard to ensure that the future you want for yourself happens.

Students are also enjoying their lessons immensely; they have established excellent relationships with their teachers and are working very hard.

How does being a student at Sixth Form differ from being a KS4 pupil?

It is quite a different experience transitioning to Sixth Form after Year 11. You will have more choices that, you need to make independently, the first of which will be choosing your subjects. Yes, in Year 9 you chose your option subjects, but there were subjects like Maths and English that were compulsory. In Year 12 you will choose all of your subjects. This can be daunting for students, which is why the Sixth Form team is there to support you in making those decisions.

As I mentioned, you will have periods on your timetable for independent study; your teachers will not tell you what you should study during these periods. You need to be organised and think about how you are going to fit in homework, revision and notes into those periods. You will be assisted in developing your independent study skills so that you can maximise these periods of study. Transitioning from Year 11 to Year 12 is a period of development both academically and personally for each young person; it is also the first sense of freedom.



INTERVIEW WITH MS KENDALL

WRITTEN BY MARIAMA DIALLO



Could you tell us more about your role in the Platanos College Sixth Form?

I am Assistant to the Director of Sixth Form. My main role is to support students with building self-confidence through promoting well-being and personal development. I offer guidance with studies and a helping hand with any worries or concerns. In addition, encouragement towards harnessing potential via independent study, leadership responsibilities and enrichment opportunities.

How would you summarise what life is like for students in the Platanos College Sixth Form?

From student feedback and observations, life for students at Platanos College Sixth Form is an enriching experience. I can confidently say, students have stepped

out of their comfort zone, realised possibilities and recognised their Sixth-Form journey is one to be embraced.

What do you most like about your role?

We are a community full of team spirit. I value students' mutual respect and positive regard towards staff and their peers. The atmosphere is vibrant and welcoming and students are motivated to engage in their learning. Celebrating success is an honour; whether it be improved essay writing or gaining a boost of confidence when public speaking.

In general, seeing student transformations is the best aspect of my role, as well as the positive student feedback: *"I was happy before at Platanos College, but my levels of happiness increase every day in the Sixth Form as I now have people to socialise with, whether it's to do with day-to-day life or education. We have entertainment provided by the school in the common*



room, such as the pool table and table tennis. I am now able to do compete against my friends and have fun with a variety of activities. When I step into the common room, I have this energised and vibrant feeling where I can properly express myself to my friends.

"The things in the common room make a difference, such as the sofas and vending machine. They help me re-energize throughout the day. I haven't seen any other Sixth Forms with these opportunities to help their students."

"I didn't really speak in school, now with no hesitation, my confidence has grown"

What are the challenges that you face in your role?

To be entirely honest, getting the Sixth Formers out of the common room! I must say, the common room has a vibe where students can chill, relax and socialise. With that said,

there is only so much chilling to be had in the Sixth Form, so students know to listen out for my footsteps.

What is your vision for the future of the Platanos College Sixth Form?

My vision is for the Platanos Sixth Form to continue to provide an enriching learning environment for many cohorts in the years to come. While we are in our early stages, Platanos Sixth Form has developed a reputation of engaging, inspiring and challenging students to prepare exceptionally well for the next stage of their lives.

What advice do you have for current Year 11 pupils who are considering applying to the Platanos College Sixth Form?

My advice for a current Year 11 would be wholeheartedly dedicate yourself to your studies. You will be ever so proud of committing to achieving your very best. When the time comes, Platanos Sixth-Form community will welcome you as you embark on your new adventure.



WIDER OPPORTUNITIES AT PLATANOS COLLEGE SIXTH FORM

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO + EMNET KETEMA + RUWEDA NOR

Since commencing their post-GCSE journeys as the founding members of Platanos College's Sixth Form, Year 12 students have had an array of opportunities to enjoy and learn from.

Workshops

Did you know that our Sixth Formers have the opportunity to take part in a range of workshops and seminars to help them with the future Career choices and wider development? In the Autumn Term, such workshops focused on diversity, the UCAS process and careers in Health and Medicine, as well as in Social care.

Crucially, students were given an overview of the UCAS application process and discussed examples of their personal statements. This enabled our Year 12s to appreciate the importance of their wider personal skills and involvement in community-based projects which could then help them with their personal development and building an interesting and impressive personal statement.

Another very useful workshop that Sixth Formers were invited to attend in their first term at Platanos College, was on Healthy Relationships.

There is no doubt that given the pressures young people face today, including from social media and the internet, it is crucial that mental health and wellbeing are focused upon.

During the Healthy Relationships workshop, Year 12 students were able to develop their understanding of what a healthy relationship looks like and discussed how consent is a critical issue when it comes to personal safety.

Furthermore, the Sixth Form workshops so far have allowed Year 12 students to have inspiring conversations about the types of new committees that they would like to establish this academic year. We can't wait to see what they decide!

"The workshop was very thought-provoking and his story was very inspiring."

- Zoya

"I really enjoyed the session. It is the first week but I have learned a lot already. I can see my journey to becoming a Midwife being a reality now."

- Ranaad

Visit by Dame Sharon White

On 20th October, Platanos College Sixth Formers were

honoured to attend a talk by Dame Sharon White, whompoke about her education, including her own Sixth Form journey that led her to studying at Cambridge University.

Dame White's talk was both engaging and inspiring, as she detailed the difficulties that many people come across when wishing to study at a top university like Cambridge; however, she confidently advised the students to persist and to never give up.

Dame White also spoke about her illustrious career in the Civil Service and her current role as Chair of John Lewis. Asked who inspires her, Dame White spoke of Michelle Obama, for her character and leadership qualities.

"I thought Dame Sharon's talk was really engaging. She made sure to ask the students questions about themselves and seemed to want to get to know them. She gave great advice for our futures."

- Ameerat

"I thought Dame Sharon was inspiring. I am studying Business and Economics and it was inspirational to hear from someone who studied Economics at Cambridge. She showed me that you can

achieve your goals through hard work!"

-Jannat

Visit by a former Platanos College pupil.

Amongst the most thought-provoking voices we can have to inspire our students at Platanos College Sixth Form, are those of our past pupils. So, it was fantastic to be able to welcome back past Graduate and former KS4 Newsletter Editor Rebecca Obadina-Adebowale, who graduated in 2021 and is currently reading Chemistry at the University of Oxford.

Sharing her own challenges, Rebecca spoke about learning with how to deal with losses, as well as finding out how to bring out your full potential and gain opportunities.

Her advice was certainly hugely beneficial for our Sixth Formers, with Sabir commenting that *"Rebecca's career advice was so useful and insightful. It has given me a lot of guidance and reassurance."* Bradley stated *"It was very useful to hear first-hand information about Rebecca's experience of Sixth Form and how she made a success of it."*

Group Sessions and Individual Self-Reflection Sessions

When you're a Sixth Former, the academic pressures and need to direct your own

learning, can be even more challenging than at GCSE. So, to help Year 12 students transition from Year 11 to Sixth Form, Platanos College has introduced a new initiative to support both their personal growth and their wellbeing: weekly self and group reflection sessions. These sessions enable students to have a safe space to not only reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts and reflections on these, but also help to foster personal development.

This collaborative environment stimulates critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as students learn about diverse viewpoints. Furthermore, by discussing challenges and exploring potential solutions as a group, our Sixth Formers are able to create a supportive and inclusive community – one in which they can learn from their peers and develop effective strategies for overcoming obstacles and dealing with the challenges of post-GCSE studies.

In addition to personal growth and well-being, reflection sessions have a positive impact on academic success. Anezka, a Sixth Form student, shared her experience of studying Chemistry, saying, *"Chemistry is really good. I thought it was going to be difficult. Maybe the way it is taught in small chunks makes it easier to study. The topics covered are explained really*

well, which means I have no issues with understanding."

This highlights how reflection can enhance learning experiences by fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for subjects.

Not only this, but subjects themselves can enable students to develop their independence and sense of self. As one of our Year 12 students Soraia, beautifully expressed, *"I love Art, I'm able to express myself and it's so therapeutic for me. We are creating with ink at the moment and it is so much fun to do."* This demonstrates the value that A Level subjects such as Art have on self-expression and students' wellbeing.

Another huge benefit of the Platanos College Sixth Form, is the smaller class sizes.

As Year 12 student Ana says, *"The smaller classes give me the confidence to speak out whereas I was quiet in secondary. I feel confident saying what I want rather than worrying about what others think. Sixth Form is a much better experience for me."* This definitely highlights the positive impact of an open and genuine environment, where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and actively engaging in discussions.

INTERVIEW WITH SIXTH FORMER OLIVE OGUEJIOFOR

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO + EMNET KETEMA + RUWEDA NOR.



What are you currently studying and why?

I am studying Law, English and Psychology. My main interest is Law because I have always wanted to be a lawyer. In the future, I want to contribute what I can to society and do what I love at the same time. English on the other hand, is a subject that I find quite interesting and another way to improve my vocabulary. The most interesting part I think is studying plays and some of the poems that we read. When I chose Psychology, I thought *"this will help me know what criminal minds are thinking,"* but then I realised that Psychology is not all about the mind, because - let's be realistic - no one really knows what's going on in someone else's mind. Instead it's about how the mind works and how it affects our behaviour. So, using this perspective, I see

Psychology as a way to analyse someone's mind through their behaviour. But as you've probably guessed, Law is my favourite subject of all time because the class is not only fun, but the subject is fun as well.

Why would you recommend Platanos College Sixth Form to current year 11 pupils?

I would recommend Platanos College Sixth Form because it has helped me gain a better sense of maturity. By being treated more like an adult, I feel that I *am* one. The teachers are understanding and the classes are interactive, which makes it easier to remember what we have been taught during exams. The homeworks are much more developed, which makes us think at a higher level; this is very important in preparing us for A-levels and universities. I personally think that Platanos College Sixth



Form has a mixture of college and sixth form college and sixth form, because whilst on the one hand we are given the freedom to use the school WIFI for our studies, use our phones and play pool in the Common Room and to go out of school site to buy our lunch, we are also supervised during Independent Study sessions and are provided with mentors too. I think it is very important to keep this balance. Another reason why I would recommend Platanos College Sixth Form is because the staff give us listening ears and encourage us to not hold in our problems, as this can affect our mental health and wellbeing.

What are the main differences between GCSE and Sixth Form and how are you dealing with this transition?

Obviously, GCSE is... well,

GCSE: a fearful set of exams for Year 11s. I was excited to finish secondary school but at the same time I was scared that I was not going to pass my GCSEs. Oh good times! Anyway, in Sixth Form, the timetables are different compared to the GCSE timetables because we have a specific time when we begin each day, and this differs from day to day. This flexibility means I can undertake independent study and it gives me time to organise myself. I mostly enjoy Thursdays because I have Law the whole day. Also, I believe that ‘good things come on Thursdays’, which is true!

Another difference between GCSEs and A-levels is that GCSEs have up to seven to ten subjects, while at A-Level you study four, or in my case, three subjects; this means that we learn things in more detail and in the process, undertake more challenging work. Also, we have to put much more effort in, in order to get into our dream universities, which I will admit is not going to be easy, but I am determined to make it!

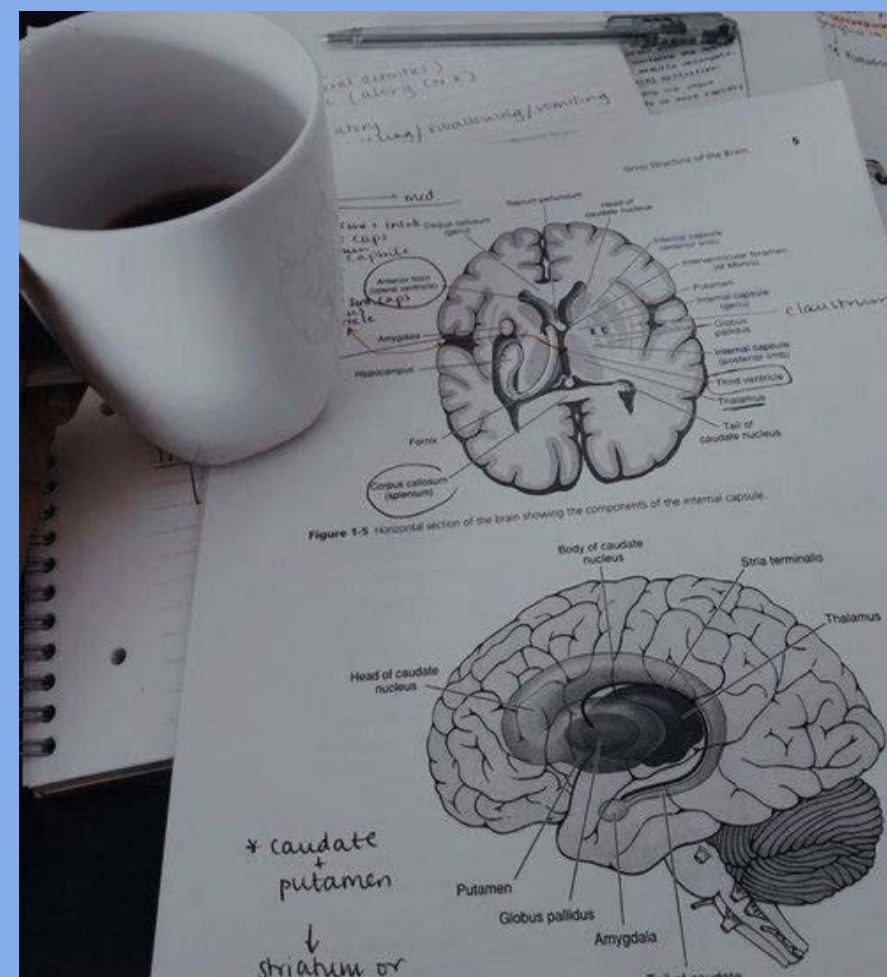
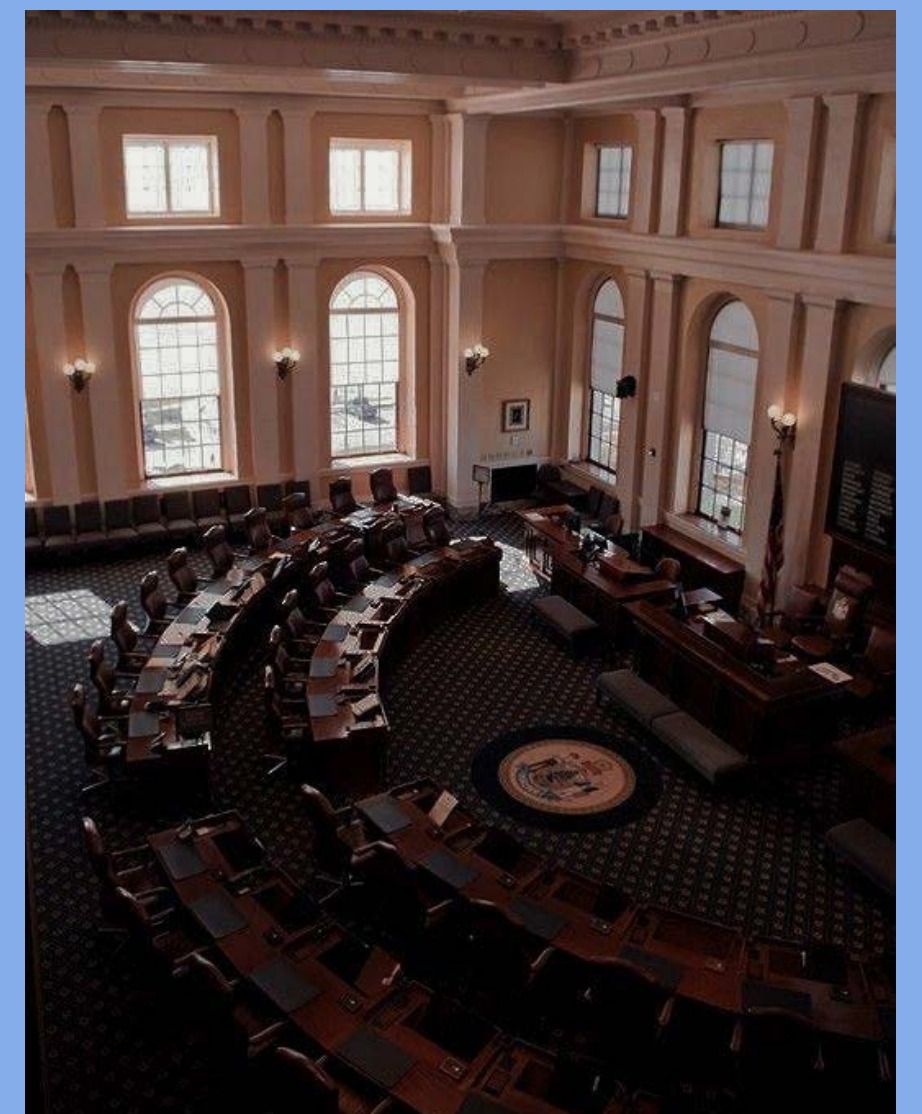
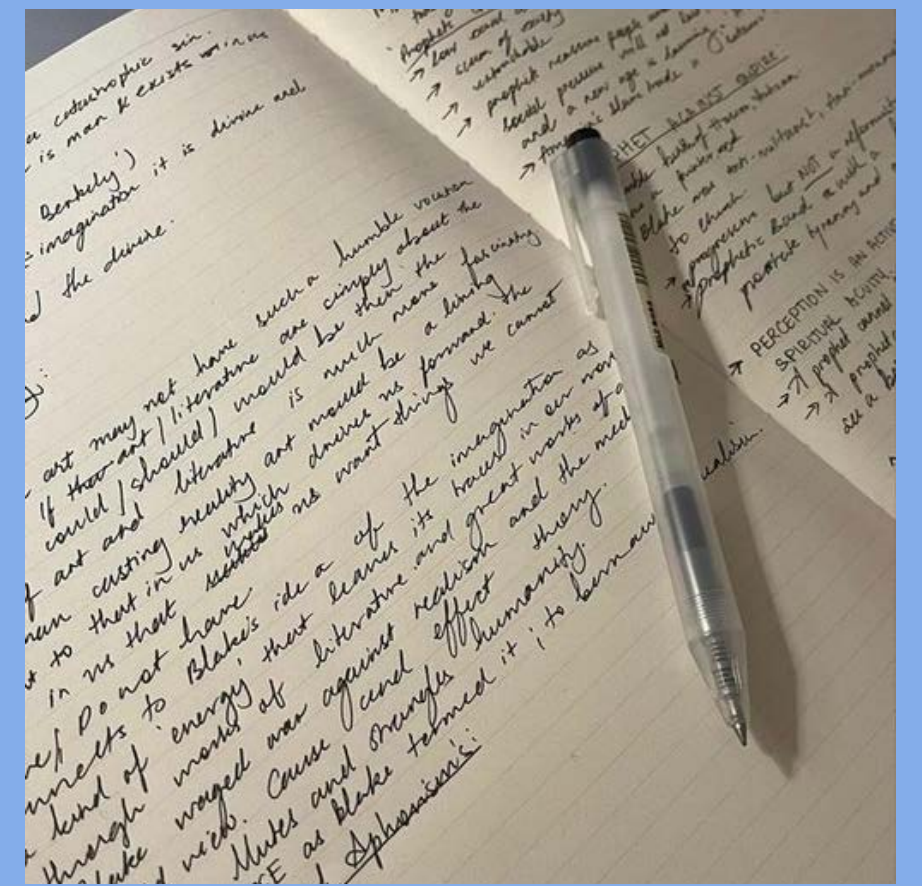
Outside of lessons, what enrichment opportunities or facilities do you have as a student of the Platanos College Sixth Form?

Outside of lessons, I am the Social Events and Rewards Committee Leader and I know that I am going to do well in it.

Also, in my free time I sometimes paint or just draw, which is entertaining and a good practice since I stopped doing Art.

What is your top piece of advice to anyone who wants to study at Sixth Form?

A wise person once told me “a person who asks questions never gets lost,” which has been very helpful because heaven knows how many mistakes I would have made that would have led me into lots of trouble, if I didn’t ask questions! So, whatever you do, if you are not sure of something, ask questions. Trust me - it helps a lot.



INTERVIEW WITH SIXTH FORMER YASIN TOKMAK

WRITTEN BY RICHELLA BIRBAL + ANA SOFIA LUIS



What are you currently studying and why?

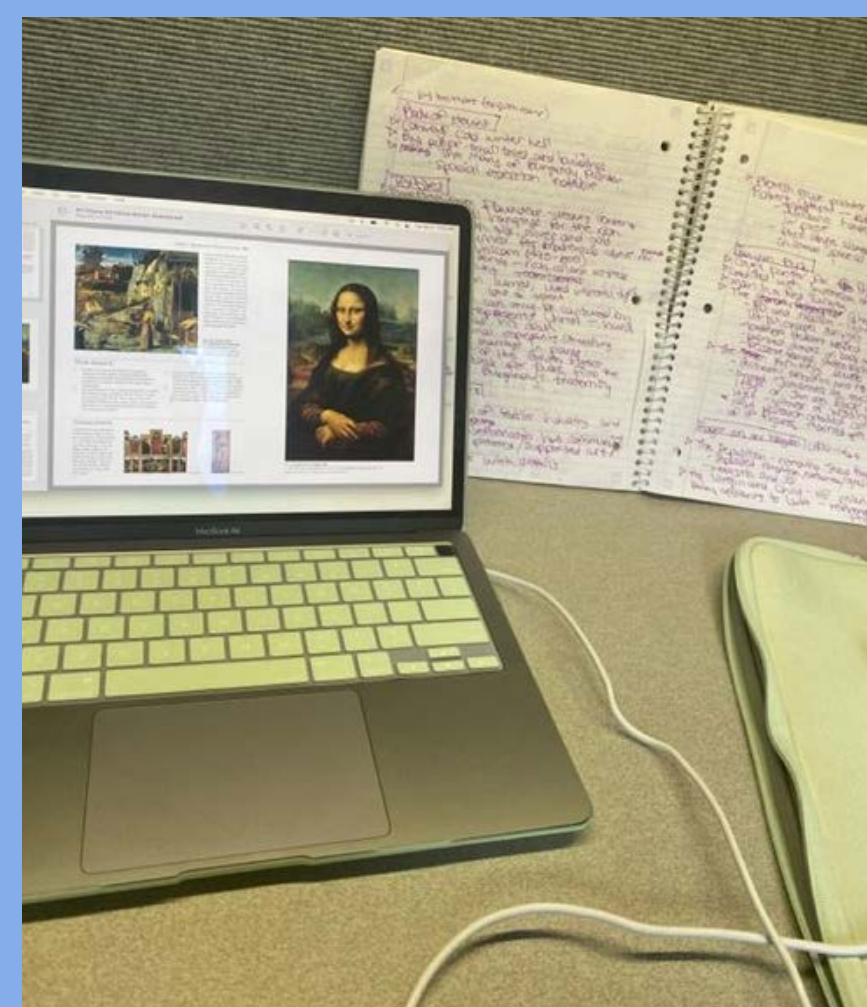
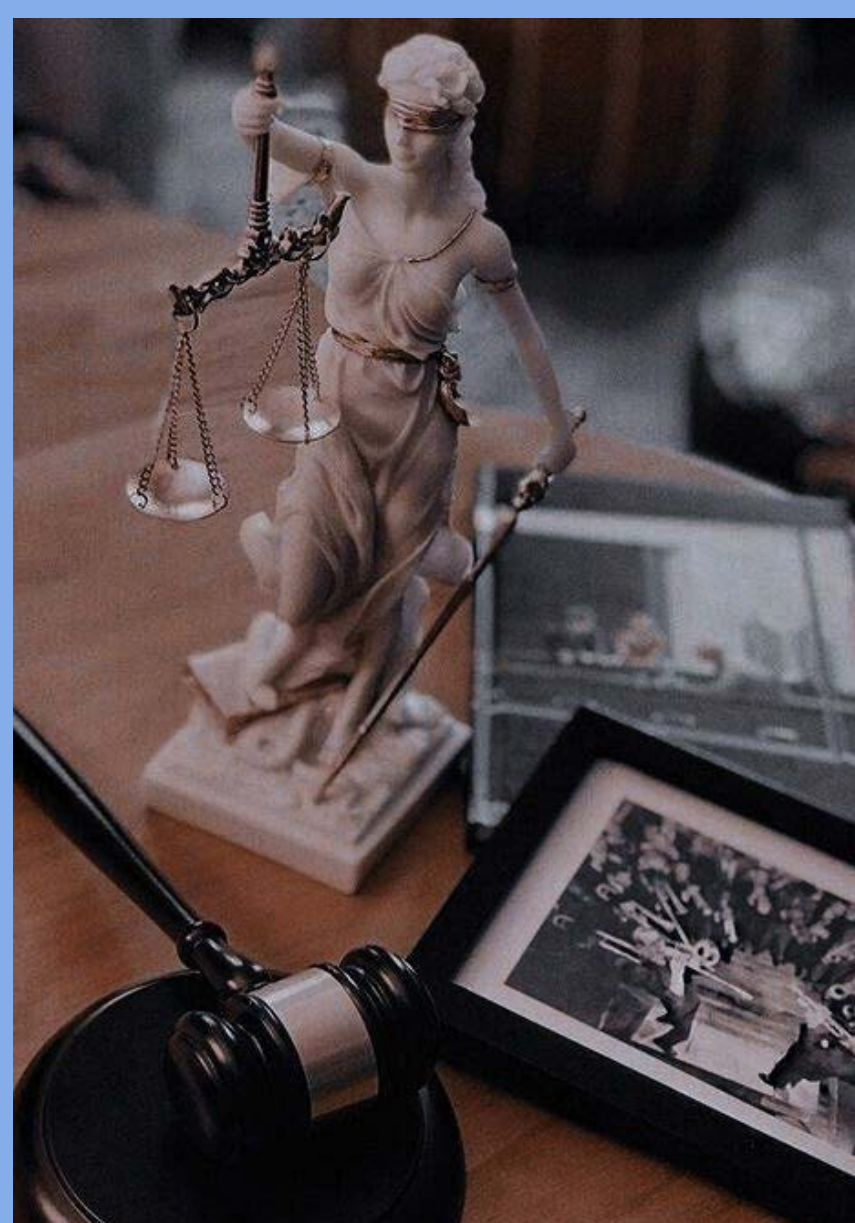
I am currently studying Law, Sociology and History. I am studying these three subjects because I like how they all have an aspect of Politics in them. I have always been interested in Politics, whether it has to do with national issues or global issues. There are plenty of political disputes going on in the world right now and I thought it'd be good to have a rough idea of how Politics functions.

As for History, I have always been interested in the past and how we have risen through tough times and wars and how our technology has become so advanced, so quickly. I am somebody who is very influenced by culture and religion, so I take it upon myself to regularly research my nation and my religion.

Why would you recommend Platanos College Sixth Form

to current Year 11 pupils?

I would recommend Platanos College Sixth Form because it is a very expressive school that provides many opportunities for everyone. The lessons, whilst enjoyable, still provide lots of knowledge that we can use not only in the future, but in our current day to day life. It is easier for you to adapt to the setting if you have studied at Platanos beforehand, especially when it comes to meeting teachers. Some teachers you may know, but the newer teachers are equally as easy to approach and are very welcoming. The rules are more lenient in Sixth Form, and although more homework is given, teachers explain in detail what you must do and provide the important information that you need for independent study.



What are the main differences between GCSE and Sixth Form and how are you dealing with this transition?

The main difference between GCSE and Sixth form is that at GCSE you study a wider range of subjects and topics, whereas in Sixth form you get fewer subjects but a more in-depth and detailed learning experience. In Sixth Form you are also able to study the subjects that you most like. You are provided with a general education in your GCSEs compared to Sixth Form, which allows you to specialise and prepare for University or other post-16 Educational pursuits. It's a transition where you have more control over the things that you learn.

Outside of lessons, what enrichment opportunities or facilities do you have as a

student of the Platanos College Sixth Form?

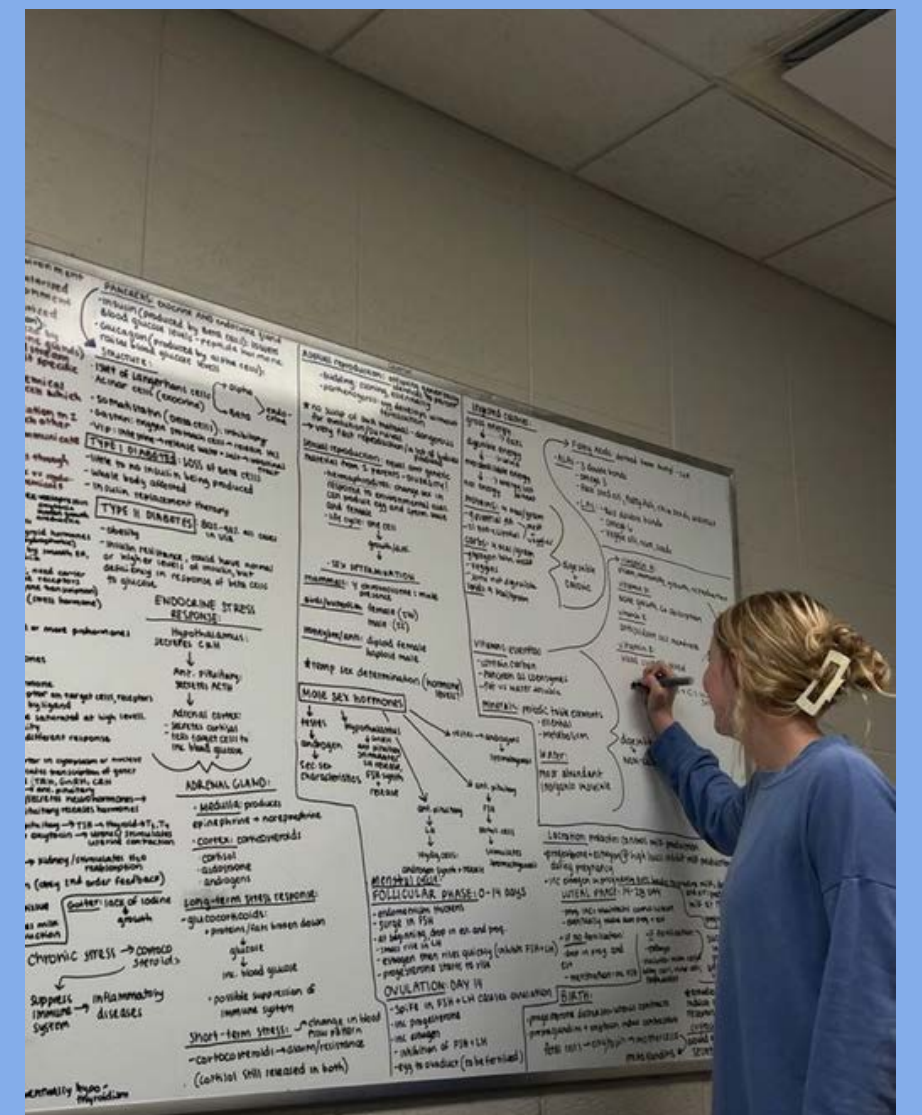
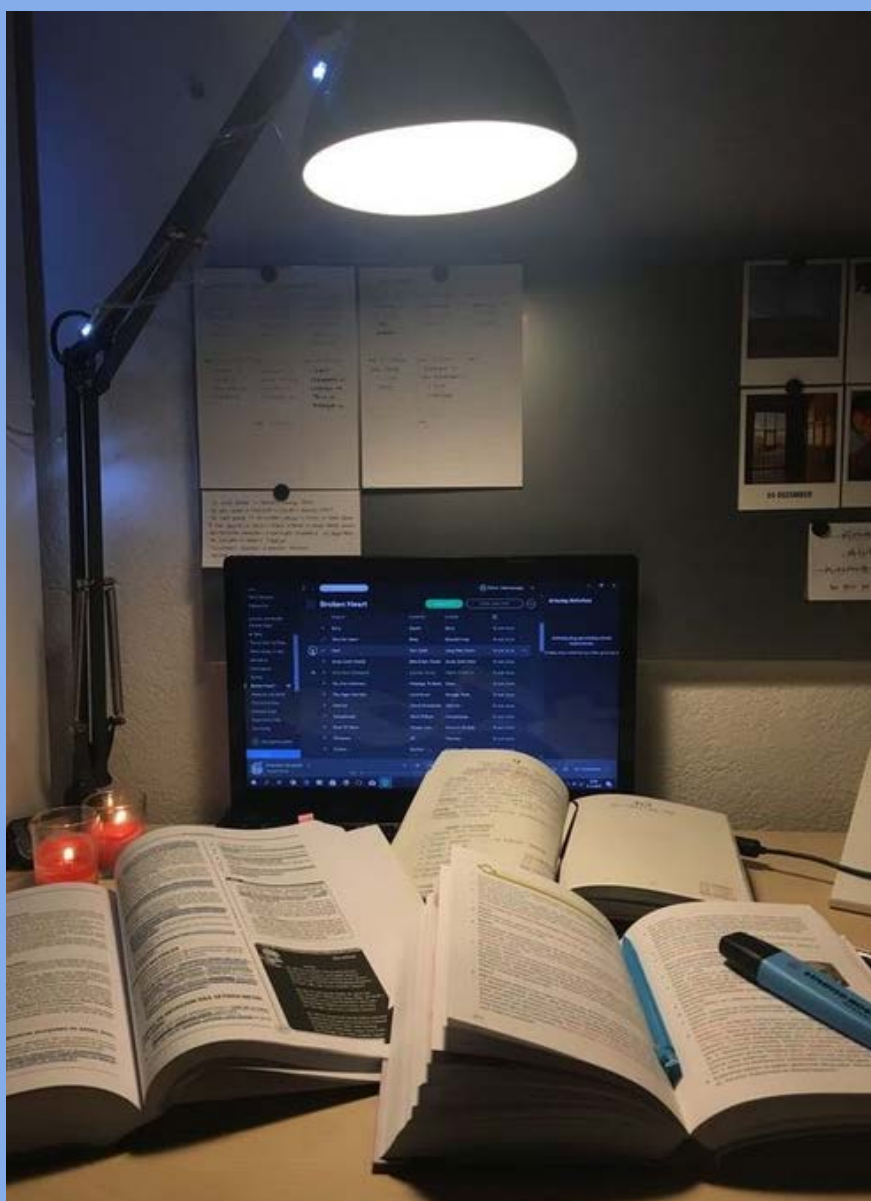
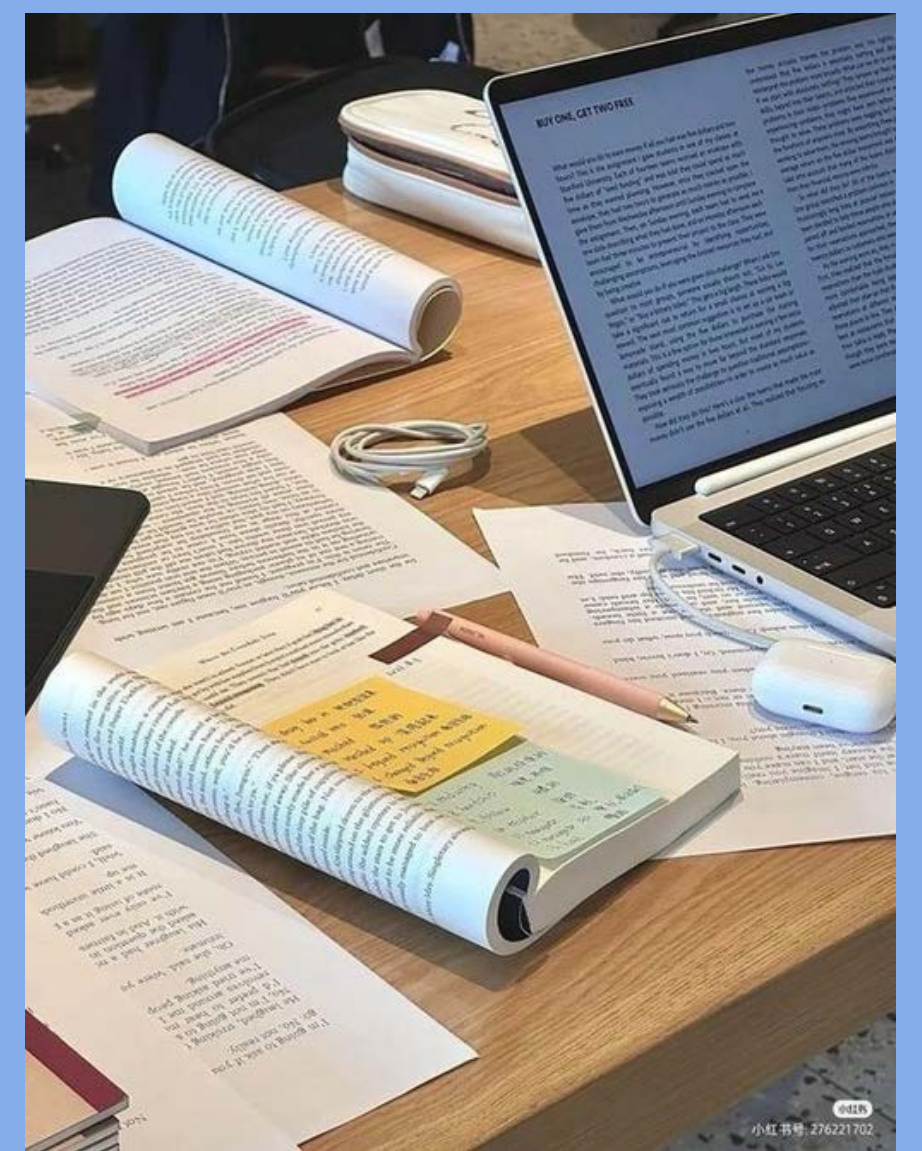
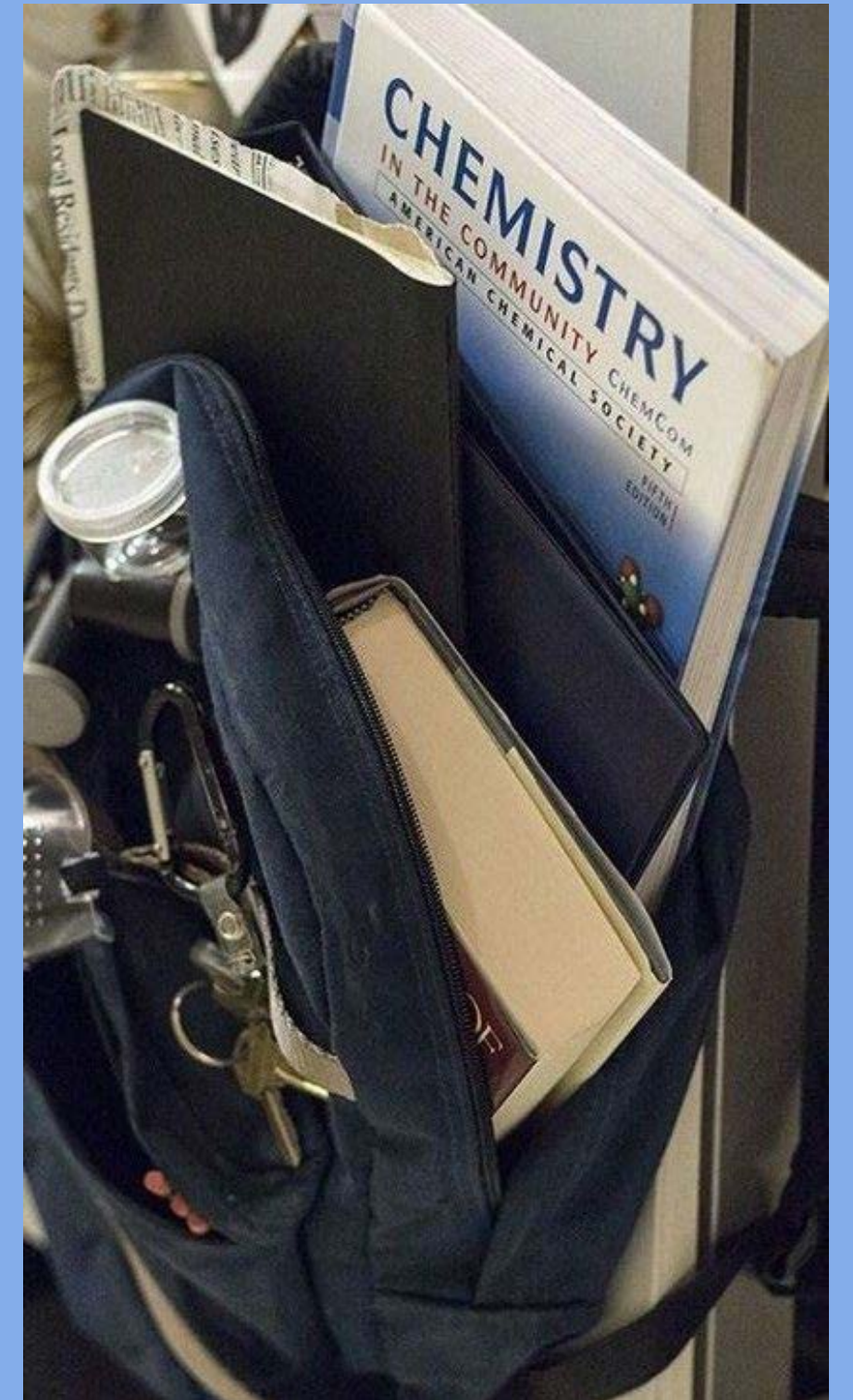
Outside of lessons I mainly study on my own, but there are moments when I study with friends. There are spaces within the Sixth Form area that allow for a better understanding of your lessons and for socialising with other students. These places are a wonderful place to express yourself and for you to socialise with others. Soon we are hopefully also planning for work experience - this will give us a better view of how our chosen line of work functions.

What is your top piece of advice to anyone who wants to study at Sixth Form?

My top piece of advice for those coming to Sixth Form is that you should pick something that you enjoy. Make sure you have a genuine interest in the subject that you are looking forward to studying, as you will likely learn quicker and also tend to have fun during these

subjects. Pick something you have the most interest in and do your best to further yourself in this area. It is easier to complete a subject when you enjoy it, which is the common case in Sixth Form. It is also easier to deal with the demands of Sixth Form if you stay organised and manage your time effectively. You can break down your tasks in a study schedule into manageable chunks and set realistic goals for yourself.

This will help you stay on track and make your workload manageable - though of course, make sure to give yourself time to relax and recharge.



THE JOURNEY FROM SCHOOL TO SIXTH FORM

WRITTEN BY EMNET KETEMA + REGINA FONSECA



We all know that school life is an important part of the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is during this phase that we gain knowledge, develop skills and build relationships that will shape our lives. Each day brings new lessons to learn, new friendships to form and new experiences to cherish forever.

Just like any adventure, school life has its fair share of highs and lows; whilst some days are filled with excitement and accomplishments, others can be filled with frustration and setbacks. From facing a difficult exam to facing the disappointment of a poor grade, we all have to learn to navigate our way through both success and failure. But all these experiences - whether positive or negative - play a vital role in shaping our resilience, perseverance and problem-solving skills, which are important for our future choices and pathways.

One of the most fundamental aspects of school life is the friendships formed during these years. How amazing that we all have the opportunity to meet peers from diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives; all of this helps to expand our horizons and foster a sense of empathy and inclusivity. These friendships provide support, companionship and memories that last a lifetime. Moreover, by working on group projects, participating in extra-curricular activities together and simply spending time in each other's company, we learn the value of teamwork, cooperation and mutual respect.

But let's face it: school life is not without its share of challenges. The pressure to perform academically, juggling multiple subjects, meeting deadlines - all of these can create immense stress for us at times. Additionally, the social dynamics of school can sometimes lead to bullying or feelings of exclusion. Luckily, at Platanos College there are various types of support that we can access should we ever feel the need to.

Despite the challenges, the rewards of Education are plentiful. Learning new

concepts, gaining knowledge and developing new skills provide us all with a sense of accomplishment and confidence. We all can recognise the spark of joy from getting an answer right in class - it fuels our passion for learning and pushing ourselves further.

Ultimately, Education opens doors to endless opportunities and empowers us to pursue our dreams, passions and careers.

With this in mind, why is Sixth Form the right choice for many of us?

Well, firstly, Sixth Form helps us to specialise in subjects we're actually passionate about - not just ones that we have to do for GCSE! In addition, Sixth Form students get more independence and freedom. Sixth Form often offers opportunities for work experience, internships and





community service – all of which can help to pave the way to University and a future career choice. Sixth Form is really all about personal growth and preparing for the next chapter of our academic journey. Not only this, but we get to share that journey with peers who have similar interests when it comes to subject choice.

Another good thing about Sixth Form is that it's a chance to meet new people who share similar interests and passions: it's a chance to spend two years in a community of students who are motivated and focused on their studies and make friendships that could last a lifetime.

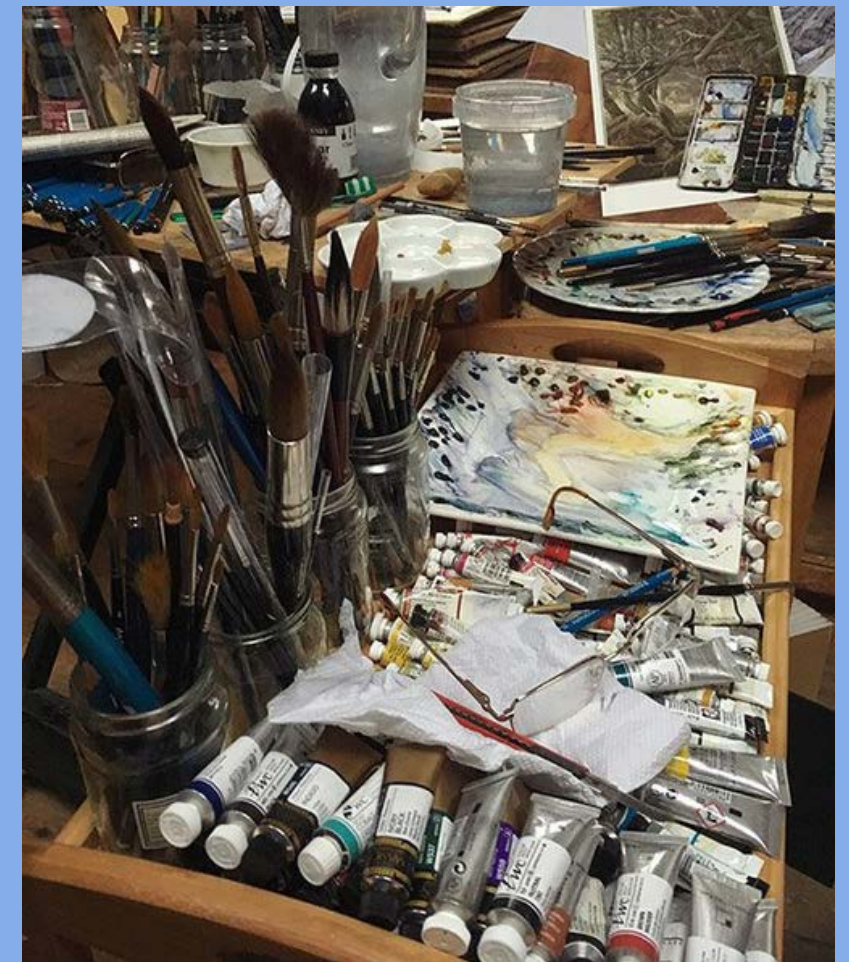
And let's not forget the independence and autonomy that Sixth Form students have; they benefit from the support and pastoral care they're used to from secondary school, but with the added bonus of being able to direct their own time for chunks of the day and essentially being treated more like adults.

So, if you're thinking about undertaking further studies at Sixth Form, here are some of the UK's most popular A Level choices and the potential careers they could lead to...

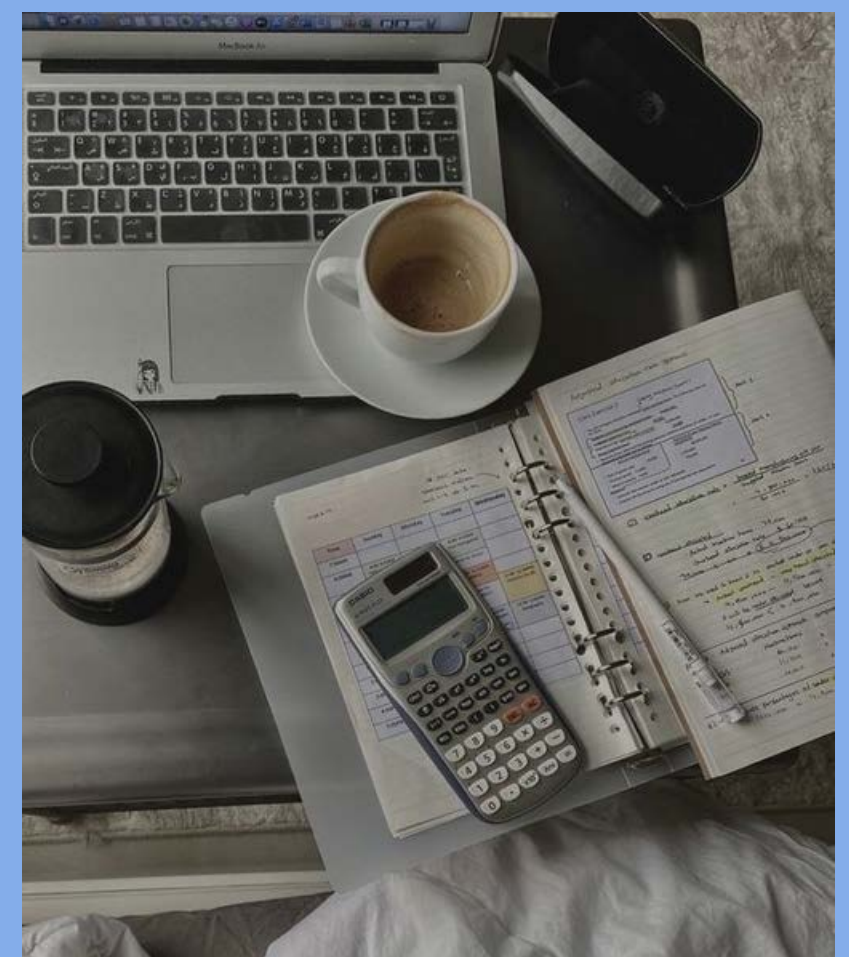
A Level Physics
Engineering
Research
Surveying



A Level Maths
Engineering
Architecture
Economics
Teaching



A Level Art and Design
Architecture
Fashion
Photography
Interior Design



A Level Economics
Finance
Law
Accounting
Starting your own business

A Level Biology
Medicine
Conservation
Agriculture
Farming
Climate Science



INTERVIEW WITH SIXTH FORMER ANEZKA MUAZAM

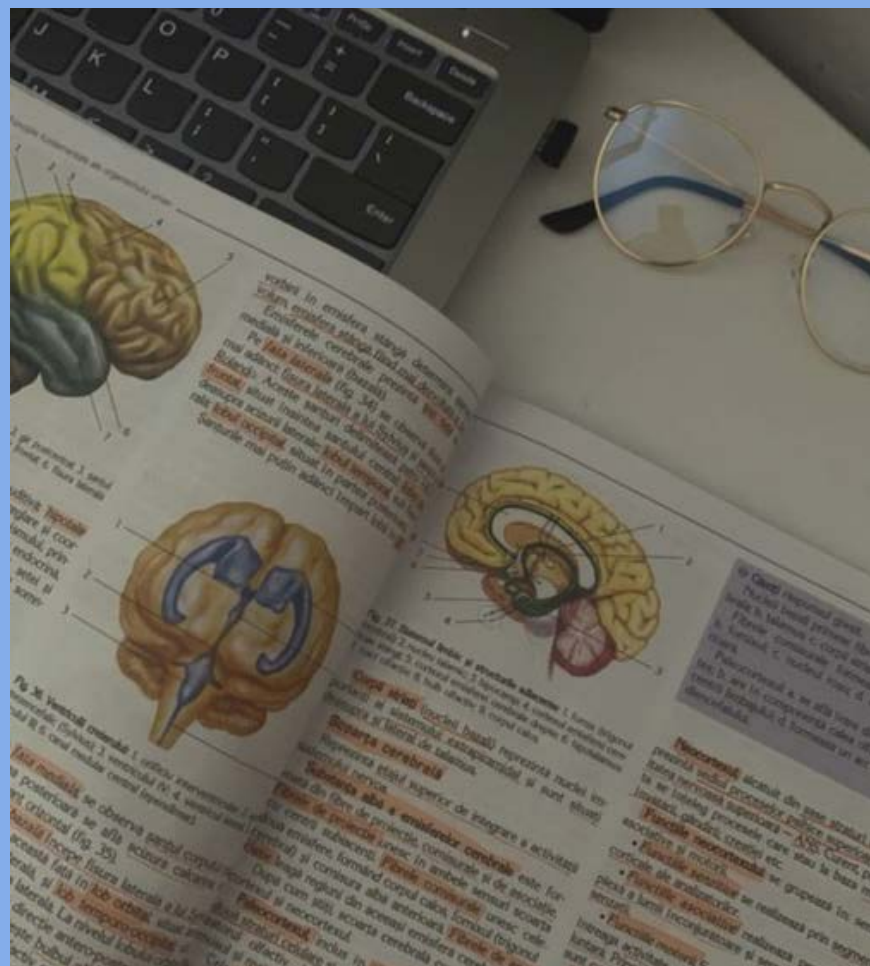
WRITTEN BY ANEZKA MUAZAM

What are you currently studying and why?

I study Psychology, Biology and Chemistry. I chose these subjects because I find them really interesting, especially Psychology, which investigates why we behave in the manner we do and helps us understand the human psyche. These subjects also help me to learn how to be objective, analytical and in turn, solve problems. This particular set of subjects also show employers and universities that you have strong scientific and academic capabilities; I hope they will take me further at University and beyond.

Why would you recommend Platanos College Sixth Form to current Year 11 pupils?

I would recommend Platanos College Sixth Form because it provides a vast variety of



subjects that you can choose from. The environment here is very friendly. Also, teachers are very helpful and knowledgeable, which makes it easier for me to acquire my own knowledge easily.

What are the main differences between GCSE and Sixth Form and how are you dealing with this transition?

The main difference is that A levels are more academically challenging and go into things in more detail. I deal with this by staying organised and regularly revising the work, which helps me feel less overwhelmed and helps me to make good progress.

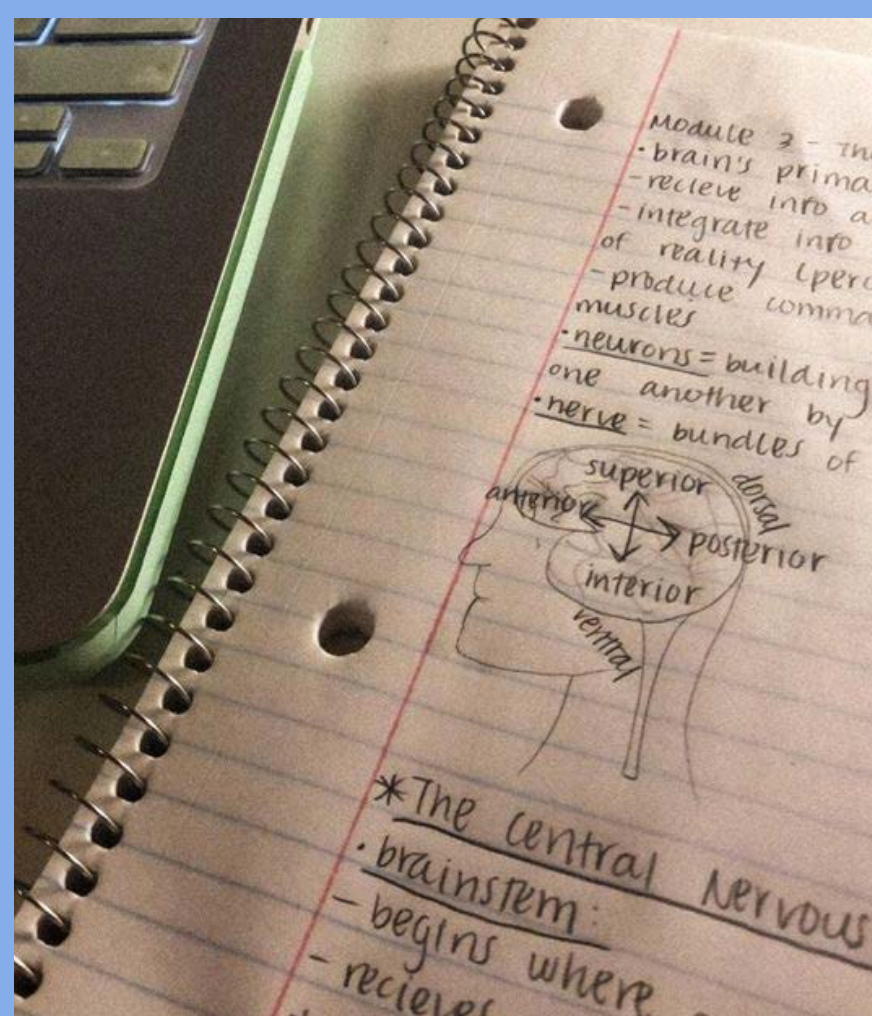
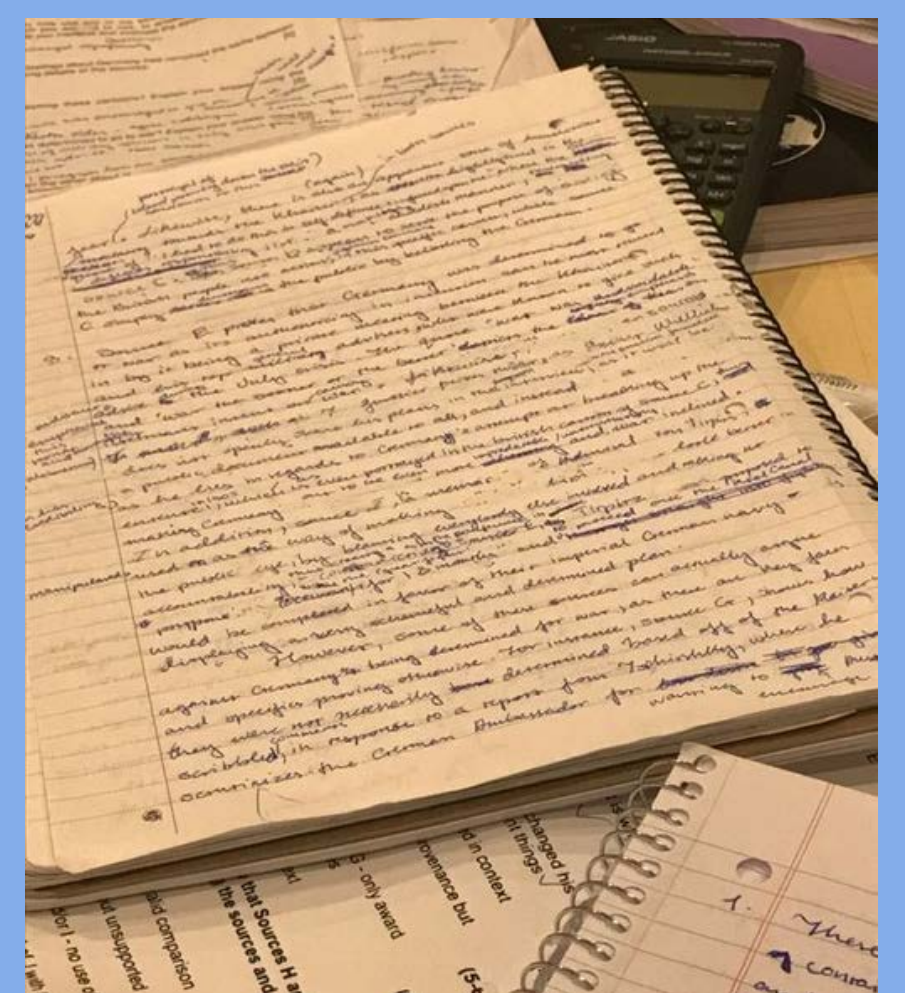
Outside of lessons, what enrichment opportunities or facilities do you have as a student of the Platanos College Sixth Form?

In the common room we are

provided with different facilities, including a pool table, ping pong and a vending machine; these help me to relax between lessons and feel energised for the next one.

What is your top piece of advice to anyone who wants to study at Sixth Form?

My top piece of advice is to get organised and do regular independent studies, because this will help you feel less stressed and enable you to show good progress.





crime & conspiracy

VIRTUAL REALITY, REAL-LIFE RISKS

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL PERSAUD

Many of us enjoy Virtual Reality gaming and it's easy to understand why. VR gives gamers a 3D world experience of the game, so that they can experience it as if they were doing so in real life. Everything you can see in VR moves with you to make you feel a part of the action; it's like being in a movie! VR may seem like a harmless and fun activity for children and teenagers. However, the reality can sometimes be far from the truth.

Firstly, it sounds ridiculous, but physical injury whilst using VR, is a very real danger! It's really quite easy to unintentionally bang into a wall or run into another person when using VR.

Secondly, using VR for an extended period of time puts lots of strain on your eyes. This can lead to changes in your vision and eyesight.

Thirdly, most games involve monetary transactions; there have been cases when young people have used their parents' credit or debit card without permission – technically an act of theft.

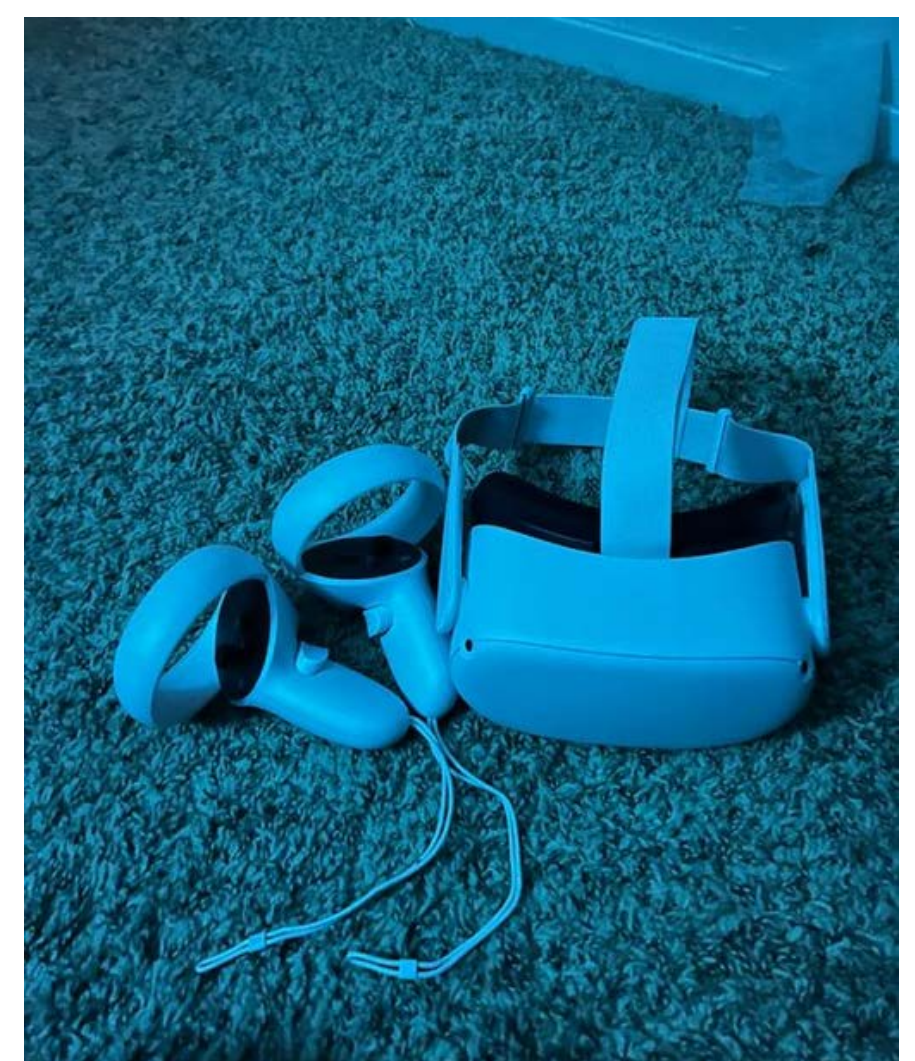
But these dangers can pale in comparison to the effects that

VR can have on mental wellbeing and when it comes to stranger danger from the darker corners of the Web. By its nature, VR is designed to be as realistic as possible. Consequently, some young people can find it harder to distinguish between reality and the gaming world. Some people even feel disconnected from their bodies once they emerge from a VR experience; this in turn, can cause them to feel worried. In addition, players can become desensitised to violence, meaning they can find it harder to empathise with others and to recognise the severity of violence in real life.

And let's not forget that VR - like other types of immersive technologies - allows you to talk to random strangers – and of course, this carries with it very real risks and dangers. In fact, earlier this year, The Independent reported that the NSPCC (National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children), was warning that criminals use VR to groom and abuse children. Furthermore, they are even known to share images of this abuse. Such illegal and immoral acts become even more sinister when you consider that online spaces allow criminals to carry

out their crimes anonymously, by using digital avatars. The Head of Child Safety Policy at the NSPCC, Richard Collard has warned that *"As the Online Safety Bill completes its passage through Parliament, it is vital that new and emerging technology forms a crucial part of the online safety regime."*

So, whilst no one is saying that young people should stay away from VR, it's important that we make sure we discuss with our parents and carers how to set health boundaries, how to recognise potential dangers and what to do if we feel that we are at risk. Afterall, VR and the crimes, dangers and violence we might come across in a game should only ever be part of an imagined, virtual world - not real life.





THE CRIMES OF CAPONE

WRITTEN BY HIEU HOANG



It's the 1920s. America is in Prohibition: The Great Depression is destroying global economies; American mob gangsters run the streets. Of all these criminals, one particular mobster rose to infamy and power: Alphonse Capone.

Born in 1899 to Italian immigrants, Capone grew up in a rough neighbourhood, leading to a life of crime that continued throughout his life. He worked as a bouncer for a club, where he earned the name 'Scarface' after being slashed in the face at a club.

As a young man he carried out so-called low level criminal activities, including working for some mob bosses. Over time, through his charm and charisma, Al Capone rose to the top of the Chicago Outfit, a notorious gang in Chicago.

During his life, Capone became synonymous with

violence, bootlegging (the illegal selling and distribution of items such as alcohol) and other criminal activities. He gained much wealth through the illegal selling of alcohol during the Prohibition.

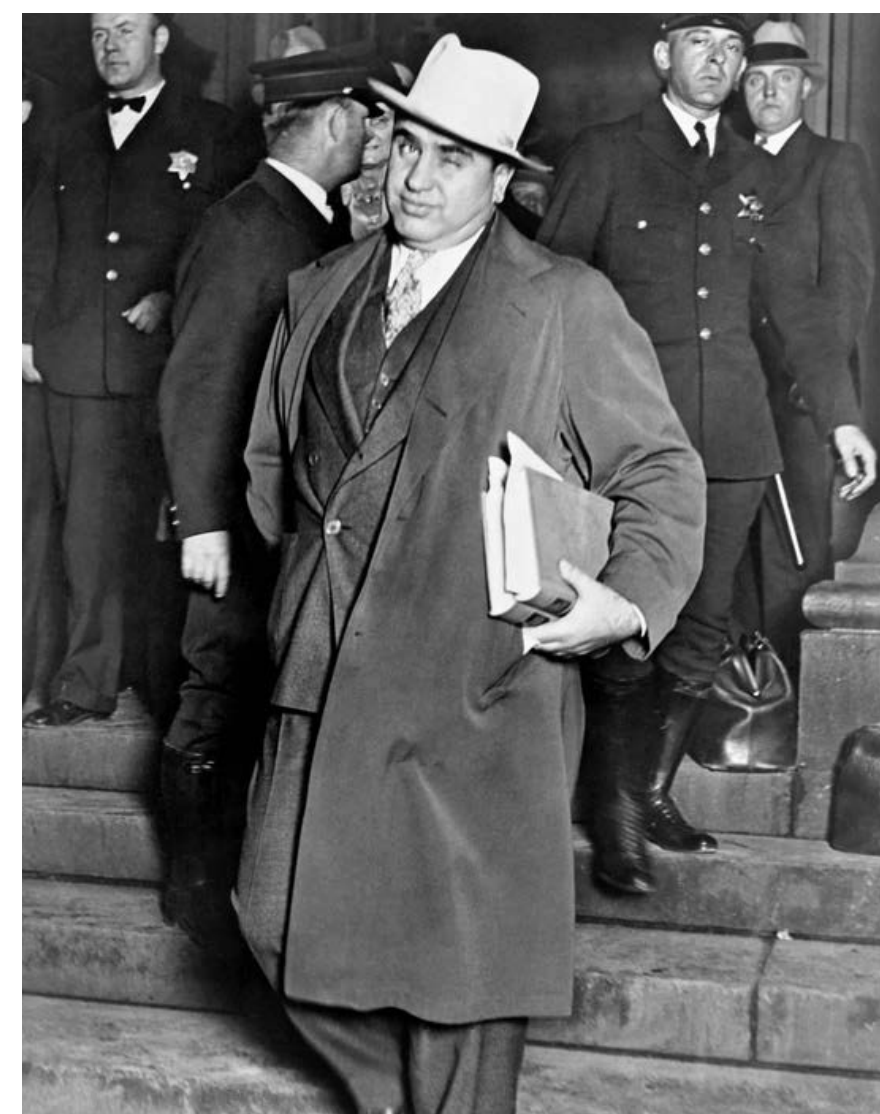
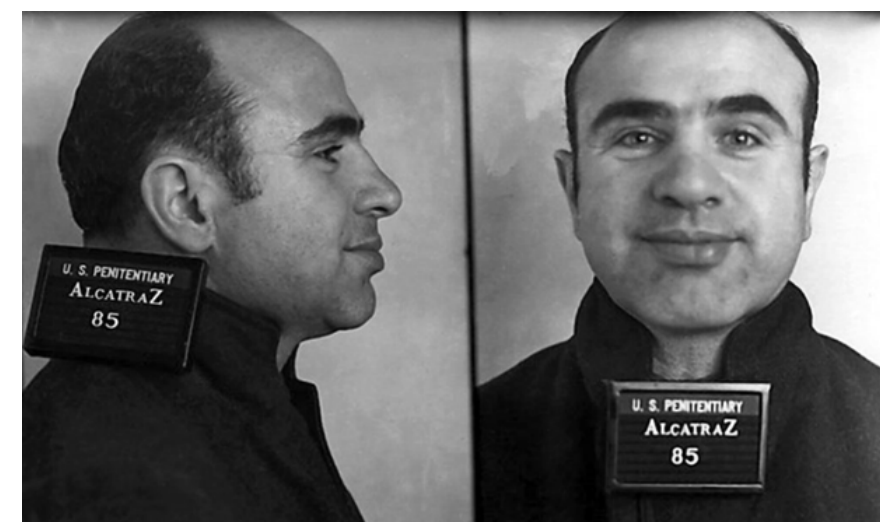
Despite his criminal activities, he was well-liked by the media and was often photographed in well-tailored suits and sporting a beaming smile. In fact, Capone successfully manipulated the media into portraying him as a 'Robin Hood' type figure, who stole from the rich to give to the poor.

However, Capone's enjoyment of both the media and his own notoriety came to an abrupt end following an incident referred to as the Saint Valentine's Massacre. Seven members of a rival gang were lined up and shot by men dressed as policemen. Although the incident was never officially linked to Capone, it was widely believed that it was his doing, and consequently Capone lost a lot of the support and approval of the people that he had enjoyed for so long.

Eventually, Capone was arrested – not for bootlegging or murder - but for the far less dramatic crime of tax evasion! Sentenced to 11 years in prison, Capone was handed

the longest sentence to befall any tax evader before him.

Whilst in prison, it was found that Al Capone had syphilis, which ate away at his brain. Critically unwell, Capone died in January 1947 at the age of 48 after suffering from a stroke, pneumonia and heart failure. Despite having once been feared throughout Chicago, this formerly mighty mob boss's funeral was only attended by a handful of mourners.





DEALING WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE

WRITTEN BY TALIA MAGLOIRE + RANYAH NURHUSSEIN

Women's Aid defines domestic abuse as *"a pattern of abusive behaviour, including violence and coercion, by a partner, ex-partner, family member or carer."*

You might think that domestic abuse is all about violence, but actually, it can take different forms, including psychological, sexual and financial. Abusers might also use what's called coercive control to get their victims to do what they want and can also try to isolate them from family and friends.

When we think of domestic abuse, it's easy for our minds to go to the immediate victim and the perpetrator, but actually, children and young people are hugely affected by it too. In fact, domestic abuse and violence have an absolutely devastating effect on young people – an impact that can often be carried on well into adulthood.

You may be horrified to know that one in seven children and young people under the age of 18 has lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood. The impact of domestic abuse on young people is undeniable. It is known that children can suffer both short and long

term cognitive, behavioural and emotional effects from witnessing domestic abuse.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has stated a range of effects can be seen in children who have experienced domestic abuse:

- Anxiety or depression
- difficulty sleeping.
- nightmares or flashbacks.
- They can be easily startled.
- physical symptoms like tummy aches and wetting the bed
- displaying temper tantrums and problems at school.
- Acting younger than they are.
- Aggressive behaviour
- Withdrawing from others.
- A weaker sense of self-esteem
- Self-harm
- Truanting from school

No one deserves to live in fear, especially not in their own home. And no child should ever have to grow up in a household where they are in fear for themselves or someone they love.

If you are worried for yourself or someone you know, don't forget that you can always reach out to a trusted adult at school. You can also contact

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which offers free

and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247.

*"Mum and dad are always shouting, fighting and dad hits mum. My dad smashed the house up today and I was sent upstairs, but I could hear everything."**

*"I could hear mum crying - none of this is her fault. I want him to go."**

*"Everyone says, 'Happy Christmas' but mine was horrible."**

**Quotes from Women's Aid website*





THE SENSELESS KILLING OF ELIANNE ANDAM

WRITTEN BY PRINCE AMOSUN



Back in September the country was appalled to learn of the appalling and senseless killing of 15 year old Elianne Andam. Only a few weeks into the new academic year, Elianne was murdered on 27th September in Croydon, whilst on her way to the Old Palace Of John Whitgift School.

As reports came through on news outlets and social media sites, it emerged that she had been attacked by a teenaged boy and stabbed in the neck and chest with a foot-long serrated zombie knife.

Shocked by-standers – many accompanying young children – ran away from the scene, terrified of who might be next. A number of passers-by and the bus driver battled to save Elianne’s life, but all efforts

were in vain.

But what on earth could cause a pupil of our age to be so viciously and fatally attacked whilst simply making her way to school?

It has been reported that an argument started outside Croydon’s Whitgift Shopping Centre and that the perpetrator had resorted to violence after being rejected. Due to face trial on 29th April 2024, the 17-year old suspect then fled the scene, before being arrested.

Whilst more information will no doubt come to light during the trial, the killing of a young person with their whole life ahead of them, not only raises the persistent problem of youth violence in London, but also the problem of violence specifically against women. How can we possibly live in an age when a young man cannot accept ‘no’ as an answer? How can we possibly live in an age when a young woman is not free to be clear about her personal choices, only to be viciously attacked for them?

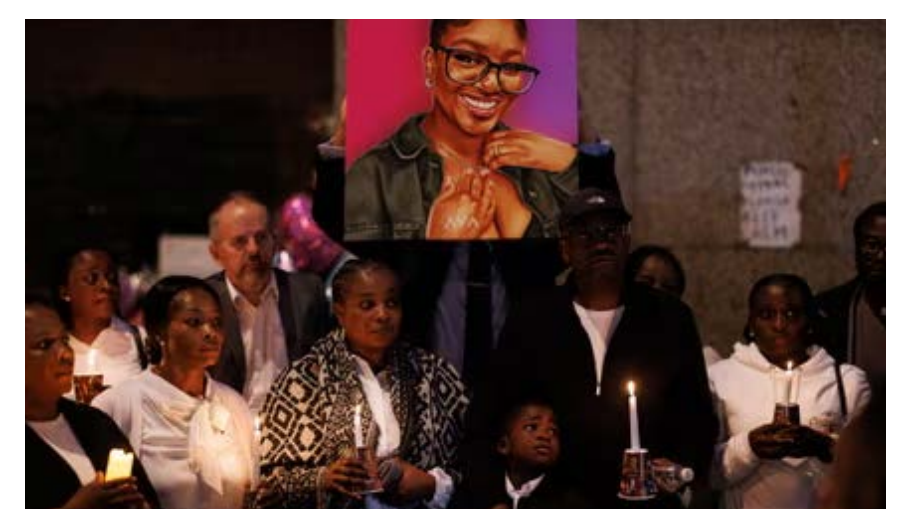
In the aftermath of the killing of Sarah Everard and the issues this terrible crime exposed about misogynistic attitudes and violence against

women, the savage murder of Elianne Andam once again raises the concern of violent crimes perpetrated against women by men. Do we once again have to question what is leading some boys to grow into men with such entitled and misogynistic attitudes?

How many more young women are to lose their lives just because a minority of men believe they have the right to control them and force them to do their will, or suffer the consequences?

Elianne, whose funeral took place at the New Life Christian Centre, was described by her family as *“the light of our lives”*, whilst her school stated that *“We are deeply shocked by the senseless and tragic death of our much-loved and valued friend and pupil”*.

On 11th November, Elianne was finally laid to rest; she was tragically the fifteenth teenager to be killed in London in 2023.





office of opinion

DANGEROUS SCHOOL BUILDINGS

WRITTEN BY THAMANNA ALI



Back in the summer it was reported that a number of schools in the UK had to shut down due to safety fears regarding their buildings collapsing.

Causing despair amongst parents, over 150 schools closed from the start of September, delaying the return of thousands of children back to school. Parents and teachers worried that the late start to the new academic year could potentially affect pupils' ability to settle back (or settle into a new school), as well as having adverse effects on pupils' progress. In addition, the last-minute decisions made, resulted in schools struggling to find appropriate accommodation for their classes.

But what exactly was the problem? And why did it seem to appear overnight?

Well, all of these schools had one thing in common: the material of the buildings.

Many of the schools were built between the 1950s and mid-1990s, using materials that were not of high quality as this was not a priority for the government at the time. As a result, buildings made during this period used more affordable and available materials. One of these – the cause of the crumbling buildings – is reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, or RAAC. It is much less durable than normal concrete and can create many safety risks. In fact, it is compared to Aero bars – you know the ones we mean – filled with bubbles and, well, air. Not exactly what you want your ceiling to be full of...

Back in the 1980s and 1990s, roof collapses led to buildings being demolished and concerns being raised about RAAC. More recently, in 2018 and 2019, further concerns were raised about RAAC. However, it seems that it was only this year that the problem started to be adequately addressed.

But surely a safe, well-maintained environment is the bare minimum that we as pupils deserve? Of course it is not only schools themselves, but local authorities and the

government who have responsibility for our safety as well. Indeed, problems such as inadequate concrete should be problems of the past if we are to ensure that there are no holes when it comes to the safety of our schools, or the education of the pupils at the centre of them.





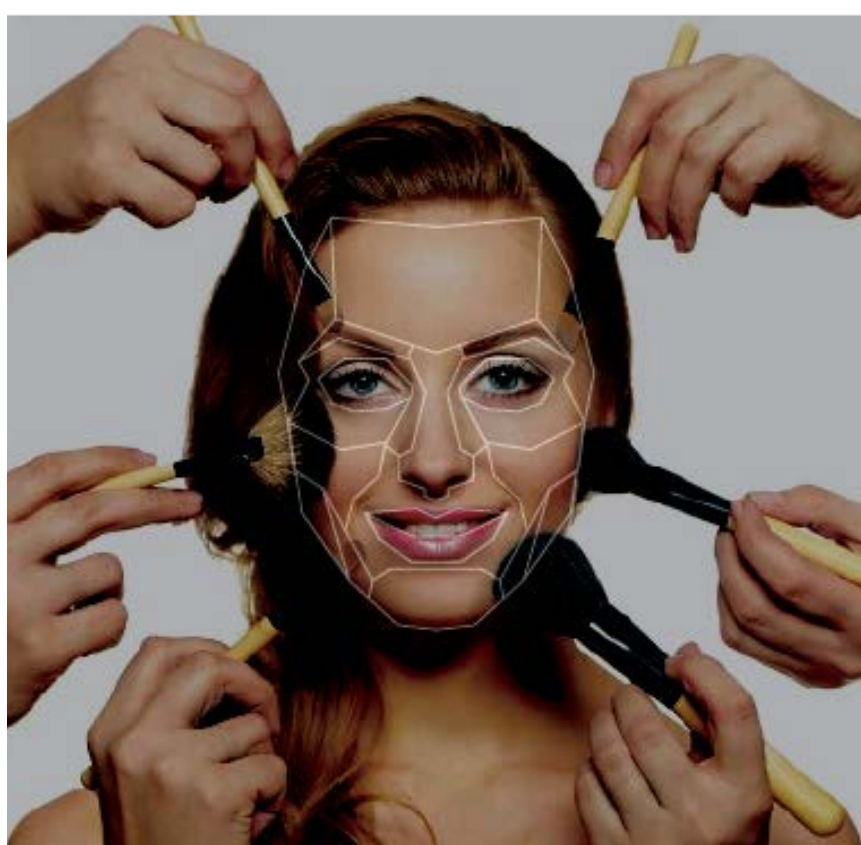
TURNING BACK TIME

WRITTEN BY ALESSANDRA RIOS

We live in a time when - thanks for medical advances and technological development - people can expect to live longer lives than ever before. According to the United Nations, in 2023 life expectancy was 70.8 years for males and 76.0 years for females - though figures differ from country to country. But, as populations live longer, what are the implications of ageing for women in particular?

It could be argued that the impact of ageing on women is a significant and often overlooked part of our society. Mothers, older sisters, grandmothers, aunts - the list goes on - and these are all older women who are probably in your life and whom you likely hold in high regard. However, a critical social issue is that ageing women face many challenges that we have yet to tackle.

There's probably at least one



woman in your life for whom you feel deep appreciation: perhaps she provides you with wisdom, helping you to learn from your mistakes. Or maybe her support at times of challenge has been invaluable to you. Or perhaps it is the sacrifices she has made for you during her lifetime that are what you appreciate the most. Each of these gifts stems from the love she has for you, and so, perhaps we all owe a heartfelt thank you to the older women who have played a crucial role in shaping who we are today.

And this is why we should be outraged that these very same women are not receiving the support they deserve as they get older.

In today's world, numerous challenges confront women as they advance in age. Coping with physical, health and financial changes, can be particularly demanding. And of course, let's not forget beauty standards and expectations that celebrate youth and encourage the search for the elixir of youth - all of which can be worsened by the portrayal of younger vs older women in media and advertising.

In 2012, a study of American films from 1920 to 2011 was



conducted that found that overall, men accounted for two-thirds of all roles in mainstream movies. At the age of 20, women play 80% of lead roles; contrast this with age 40, when the male-female divide becomes 80:20!

And it's not just the Media or Film industries. Take the Beauty industry, where "anti-aging" is a buzz word, striving to address the various signs of ageing such as wrinkles, fine lines and uneven skin tone. Aging it seems, is something to be feared, despite being an entirely natural process.

But what about men? Don't they also have to contend with the expectations of youth?

Well, yes, but let's face it, not to the degree that women do.



Men can enjoy the image of the 'Silver Fox' whilst women are expected to get themselves down to the hairdressers to conceal those greys.

Ageing is a part of life: no one can stop it even if we try. The beauty industry makes millions, if not billions selling anti-aging to the masses. And yet, maybe we need to shift the narrative; perhaps aging should be seen as a privilege. You have experienced life and you're still here and have a lot more to make of the rest of your days. And perhaps we need to celebrate those older women in our lives, for their sacrifices and their love. For one day, the girls we are today will be the women of tomorrow.

I feel like I'm so much more interesting now, as a soon-to-be-50-year-old woman, than I was at 25. I can bring so much more to the table. You may not have the stamina that you had at 25, but what do you know now? So much better.

Regina King

Ageing is relative. If people say that I look young for my age, it's because I feel like I'm a newbie. I feel like I'm just beginning, just learning how to do things.

Jane Fonda

The best thing about being over 70 is being over 70. Certainly, when I was 45, the idea of being 70 was like, 'Arghhh!' But you only have two options in life: Die young or get old. There is nothing else. The idea of dying young when you're 25 is kind of cool — a bit romantic, like James Dean. But then you realize that life is too much fun to do that. It's fascinating and wonderful and emotional. So you just have to find a way of negotiating getting old psychologically and physically.

Helen Mirren

I am convinced that most people do not grow up ... We marry and dare to have children and call that growing up. I think what we do is mostly grow old. We carry an accumulation of years in our bodies, and on our faces, but generally, our real selves, the children inside, are innocent and shy as magnolias.

Maya Angelou

Some people are old when they're 18 and some people are young when they're 90. You can't define people by whatever society determines as their age. Time is a concept that human beings created.

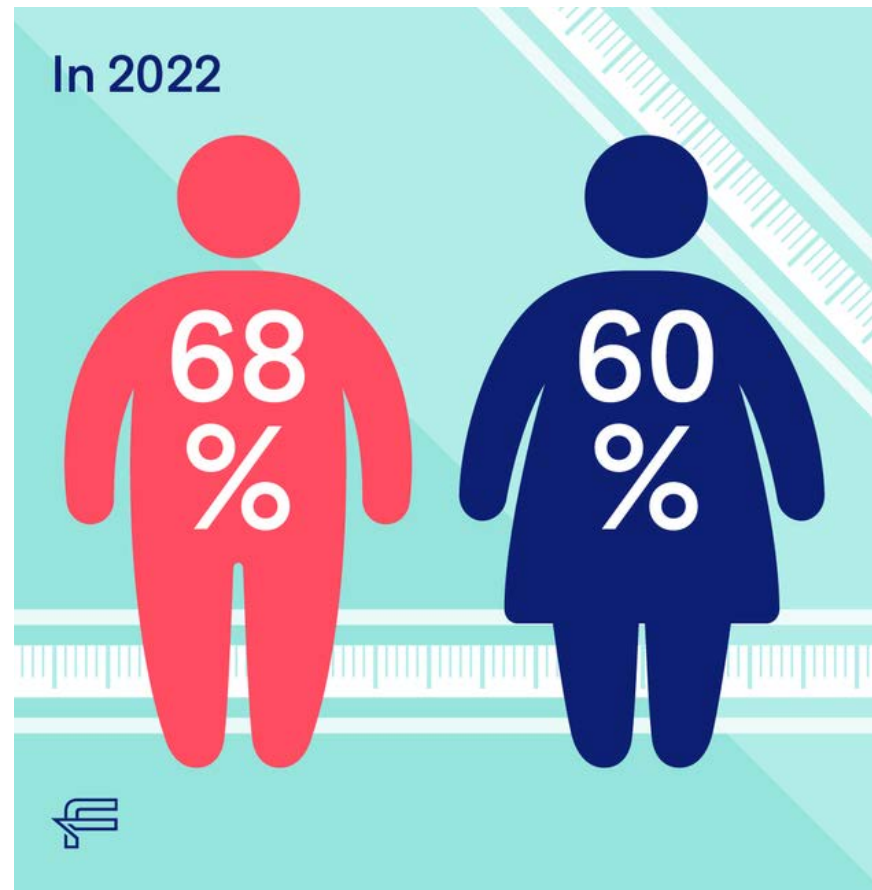
Yoko Ono





THE UK'S OBESITY CRISIS

WRITTEN BY CRYSTAL JOY AZZOPARDI



According to recent figures, 26% of adults and 23.4% of children aged 10 to 11 in England are living with obesity. This places huge pressure on the NHS and the health care system as a whole. By taking action, people can make healthier decisions about their obesity: this can save lives and reduce pressure on the NHS, a critical service that is already under huge strain.

But what exactly is obesity and what causes it? Obesity is when someone is extremely overweight, perhaps caused by eating more food than the recommended intake. This then gets stored as fat in their body. In the UK, one in three people is now classified as obese. Furthermore, five million of us are estimated to be at risk of contracting Type 2 diabetes, which itself has many risks.

We know that lifestyle choices are a major factor when it comes to rising obesity levels.

Lack of exercise is a key concern; exercise reduces our chance of becoming obese as the more we exercise, the more calories we burn. This is because when we exercise, the glucose in our bodies turns into energy, so less fat is stored in our internal organs.

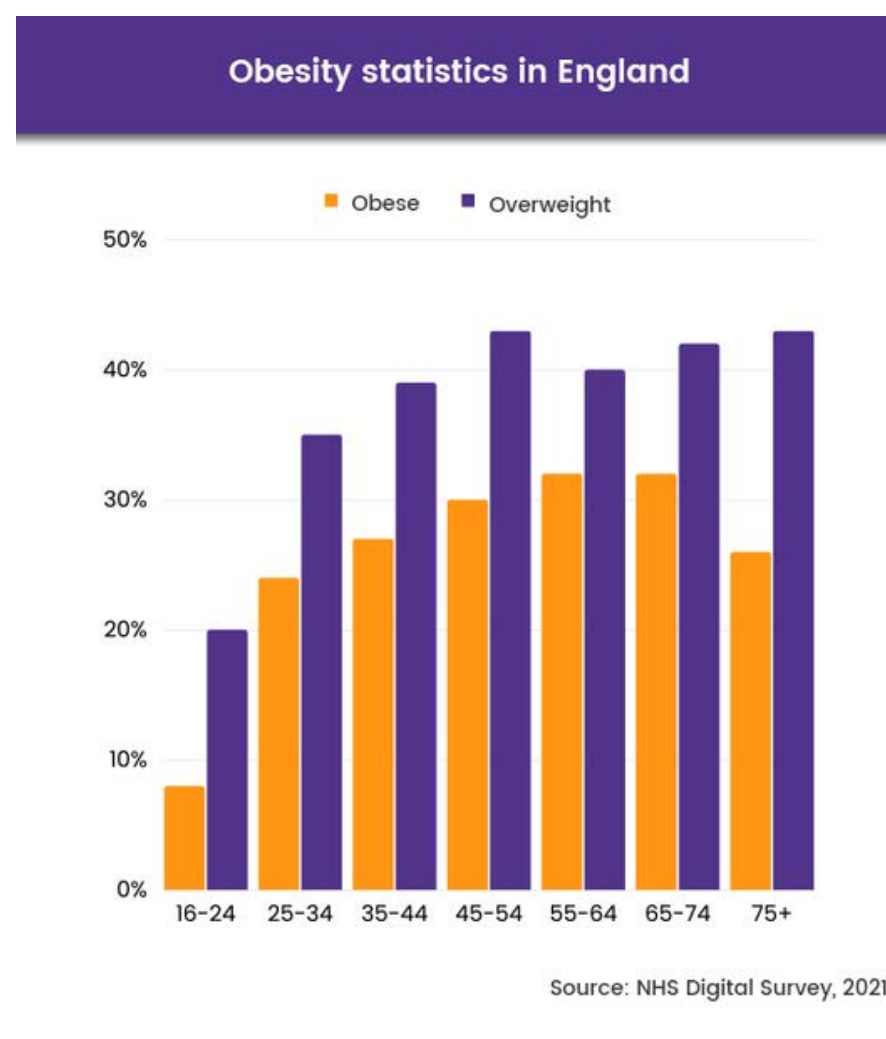
According to a new report backed by health experts and environmental campaigners, one way in which we can tackle the UK's obesity crisis is by capping domestic sugar production. The UK grows and imports more than two and a half times the population's maximum recommended sugar intake, according to 'Sugar Pollution', a report by Feedback Global and Action on Sugar (a group of specialists in Medicine, Nutrition and Public Health). The excessive supply encourages food manufacturers to use more products. British farmers are growing sugar beets rather



than growing fruits and vegetables. Also, these campaigners have called for a quota, which would inevitably cut sugar production in the UK by half. They would do this by introducing tariffs on imports of sugar cane and refined sugar and subsidising farmers to grow more fruit and vegetable crops.

Back in 2018, the UK Government introduced a sugar tax, which effectively penalised soft drink companies on their sugar content. Not only has this caused a decline in the number of children requiring the extraction of rotting teeth, but it's been suggested that a 40% reduction in added sugar intake over a period of five years, could reduce obesity figures by roughly half a million.

A further factor in the UK's obesity crisis is the system by which we produce and distribute food. We all know that we have suffered from a Cost of Living Crisis; indeed,

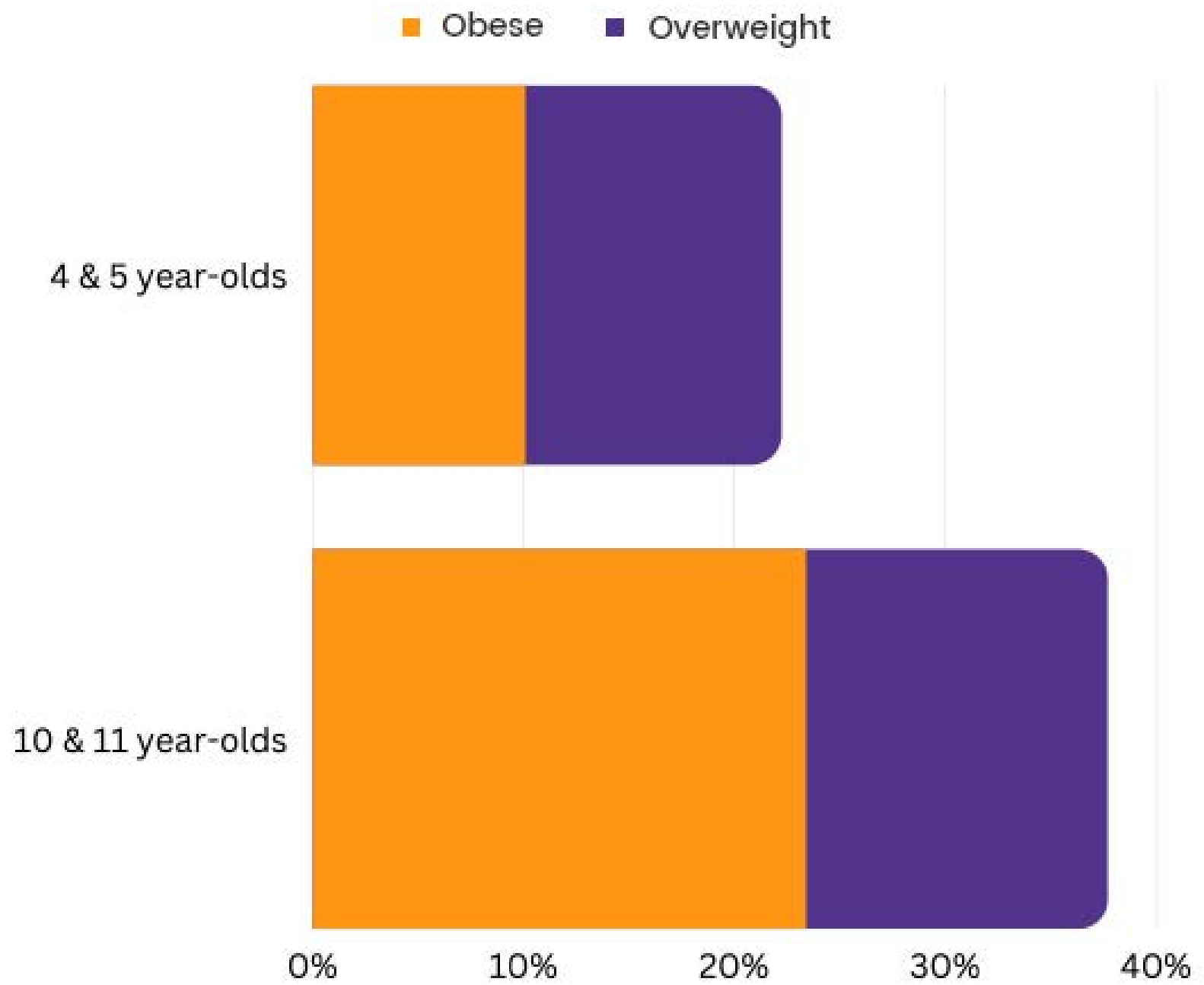
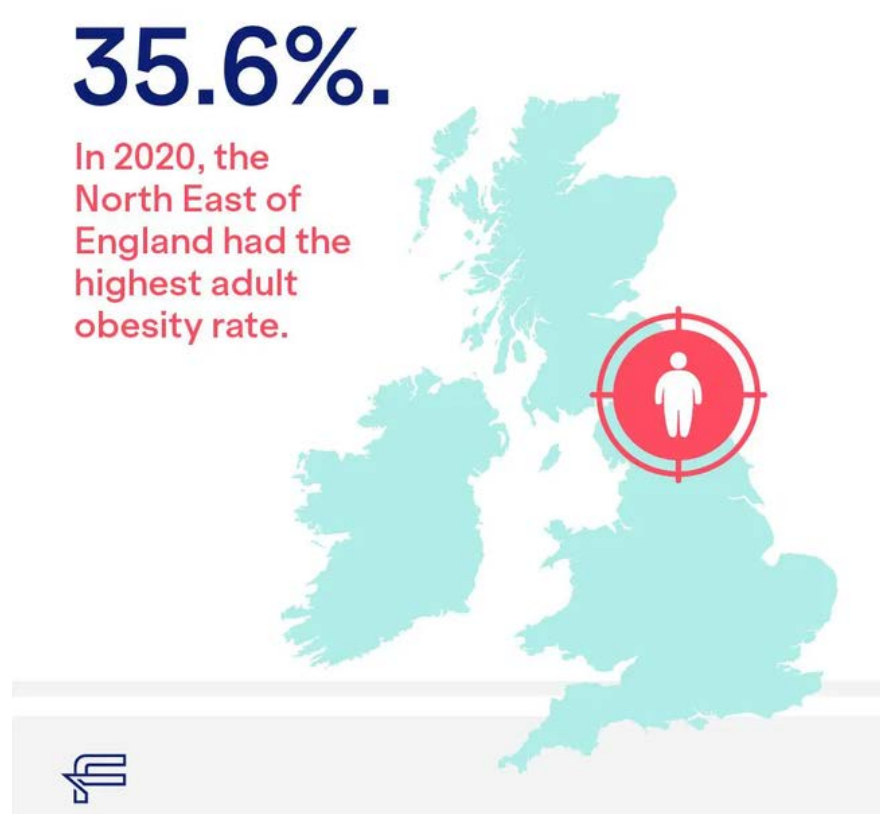




UK food prices rose 19.1% to March of this year. Last year, two million people used food banks. Brits tend to consume cheaper, more fatty food compared to other European countries. And yet, the cheapest foods on supermarket shelves tend to be the least healthy.

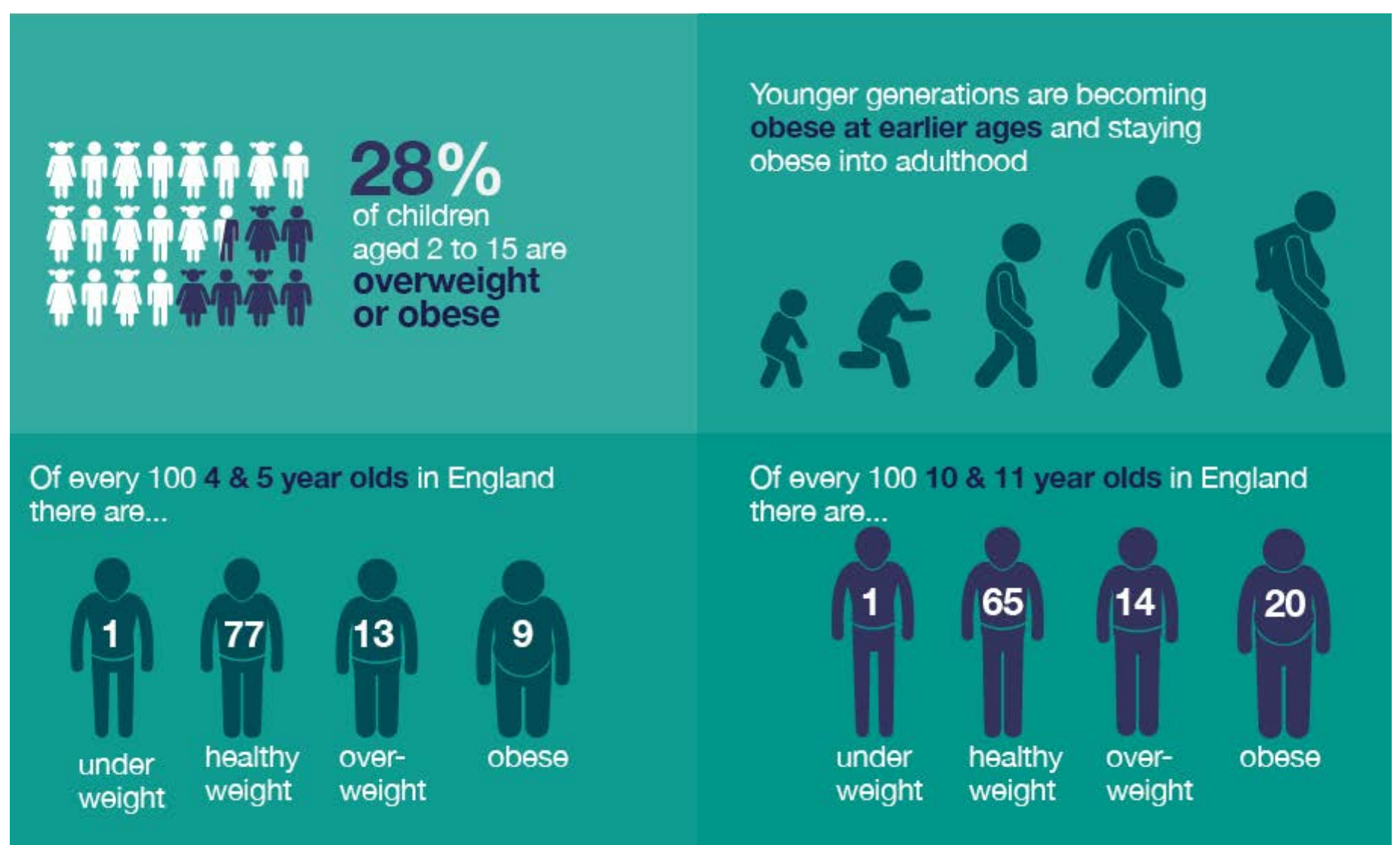
In a bid to tackle obesity, in September, specialist NHS weight management services started to prescribe weight-loss jabs (Semaglutide) alongside a reduced calorie diet. Furthermore, drugs like Ozempic became available to the British public. Such jabs are aimed at those with a BMI above 30 and who have at least one weight-related comorbidity, such as cardiovascular disease. By losing up to 15% of their body weight, those who take the jabs can not only achieve a healthier BMI, but in doing so, reduce hospital pressures.

However, some people are against jabs like Ozempic, arguing that this is merely a quick fix to a national crisis that needs more long-term and fundamental changes.



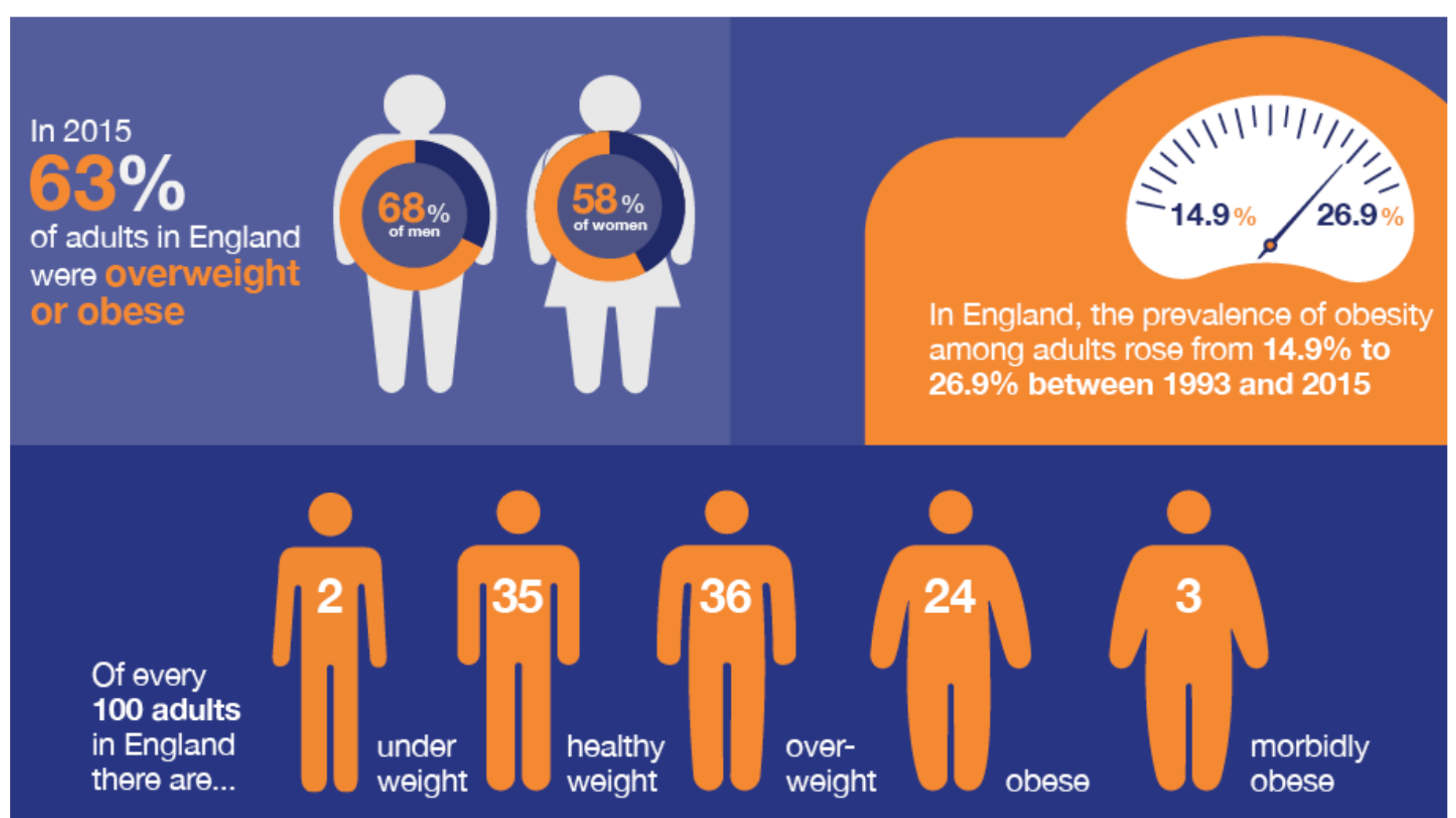
Public Health England

Healthmatters Obesity in children



Public Health England

Healthmatters Scale of the problem





DETENTION FOR THE EDUCATION SECRETARY?

WRITTEN BY MEDINA ABDI



What would you expect to happen if you swore in front of your teacher? What about if you swore in front of your whole year group? Now imagine you are on national television...well, that's exactly what happened when the Education Secretary Gillian Keegan was being interviewed by ITV back in September.

Speaking about the problem of crumbling concrete in schools (known as reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete or RAAC), Keegan started to get frustrated because the issue had existed long before she became Education Secretary, arguing that it was not the Department for Education's job to ensure that school buildings are properly maintained.

Having completed the interview with Reporter Daniel Hewitt, Keegan stated "everyone else has sat on

*their a****" and that no-one had praised her for doing a "f***** good job".*

Later, Keegan offered an apology for her expletive-filled rant, with the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesperson stating that the comments were "not acceptable."

But the incident ignited a debate about the expectations of professionalism for government figures and the consequences if they fail to adhere to them. After all, surely a Government Minister with responsibility for Education should be setting an example for the young people they serve?

However, some would argue that it was understandable that Keegan lost her temper and that feeling frustrated is something we can all relate to and that a slip of the tongue is not the worst of offences. But what do *you* think?

Our own pupils were unimpressed with the Education Secretary's language, with one Year 10 pupil stating that "Swearing on live television is very unprofessional; since her role is to help children in the Education system, swearing

might not be the solution."

Idil Osman, also in Year 10, commented that "As Education Secretary, your words set a standard for professionalism and communication."

Since the 2019 Election, Keegan is the sixth person to hold the title of Education Secretary. But does her inability to control her language suggest that a seventh person might be better suited for the job? What do *you* think?





SPANISH SOCCER SCANDAL

WRITTEN BY KHIMON FRIDAY



Back in August, the excitement of the Women's World Cup Final ended with a disappointing loss for England. But perhaps the biggest disappointment came for winners Spain, who found their victory tarnished by the controversy that followed the unsolicited kissing of Jennifer Hermoso by the Spanish Football President, Luis Rubiales.

Born on the 23rd August 1977, Luis Manuel Rubiales Béjar was a former Spanish football Official, former Vice President of UEFA and professional Defender, appearing in 53 La Liga matches over three seasons. His career was no doubt impressive – that is, until this infamous incident that led to his resignation.

Before delightedly kissing Hermoso on the lips, Rubiales had earlier been seen grabbing his crotch. Later, Hermoso said that she had neither invited nor wanted the kiss, stating that she *"felt vulnerable and a victim of an*

impulse-driven, sexist, out of place act without any consent of my part."

For his part, Rubiales argued that the kiss was *"spontaneous, mutual, euphoric"* and consensual, but he did eventually apologise, stating that his actions were carried out *"in a moment of euphoria"*.

National outcry followed, with women taking to the streets to protest against what they saw as a display of sexual harassment on the world stage, representing the everyday struggles against misogyny, gaslighting and harassment that women have to face. And it wasn't just women who criticised Rubiales: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called for Rubiales to resign, whilst the Fédération Internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels (FIFPRO), demanded that his actions be investigated in line with the FIFA code of ethics.

Initially however, Rubiales refused to resign, stating that *"A social assassination is taking place. I don't deserve this manhunt I have been suffering."* Nonetheless, he found little sympathy in prominent male figures in Spanish football, including

Hector Bellerin, David de Gea and Borja Iglesias.

Spanish publication El Confidencial, reported in an interview with Rubiales' uncle and former colleague Juan Rubiales, that he required *"a social re-education program"* as he was completely obsessed with women and power.

Finally, on 10th September after much procrastination and speculation, Rubiales stepped down from his positions as both the Federation's President and as Vice-President of UEFA.

So, what do you think? Were Rubiales' actions merely the 'harmless' expressions of someone who was feeling euphoric about his country's win? Or are they indicative of more sinister misogynistic views?





SHOULD SUPERSTARS SUPPORT SAG-AFTRA'S STRIKES?

WRITTEN BY CHYNA-CHAE QUAIN-BROWN

Have you heard of the very catchy title SAG-AFTRA, or The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists? Well, if you have, you may be aware that earlier this year members of this Union went on strike in protest over salaries, pensions, health insurance and concerns over both streaming and the increased use of AI in the Hollywood film industry.

The strike meant that work completely stopped on scripted films and TV series, with actors also not taking part in any promotional work such as premieres or interviews.

Oscar winner Jamie Lee Curtis, whose family is well known in the film industry, stated on Instagram that "The



Cynthia Nixon

@sagaftra symbol used to be the masks of the actors face. REPRESENTING the EXPRESSIONS. The EMOTIONS. The FEELINGS generated by the WORDS of their UNION MEMBERS! Union contracts PROTECT our SAFETY and EXPLOITATION! We are UNION STRONG!"

Also in support, actor Cynthia Nixon tweeted "I am proud to be standing tall with the @WGAWest and @WGAEast as actors and writers together demand a fair share of the record-breaking profits the studios have been reaping from our labor for far too long. We will win this!"

Taking part in the strike, Orange Is The New Black actress, Kimiko Glenn stated that some of the people who worked on the show were paid so poorly, that they were still

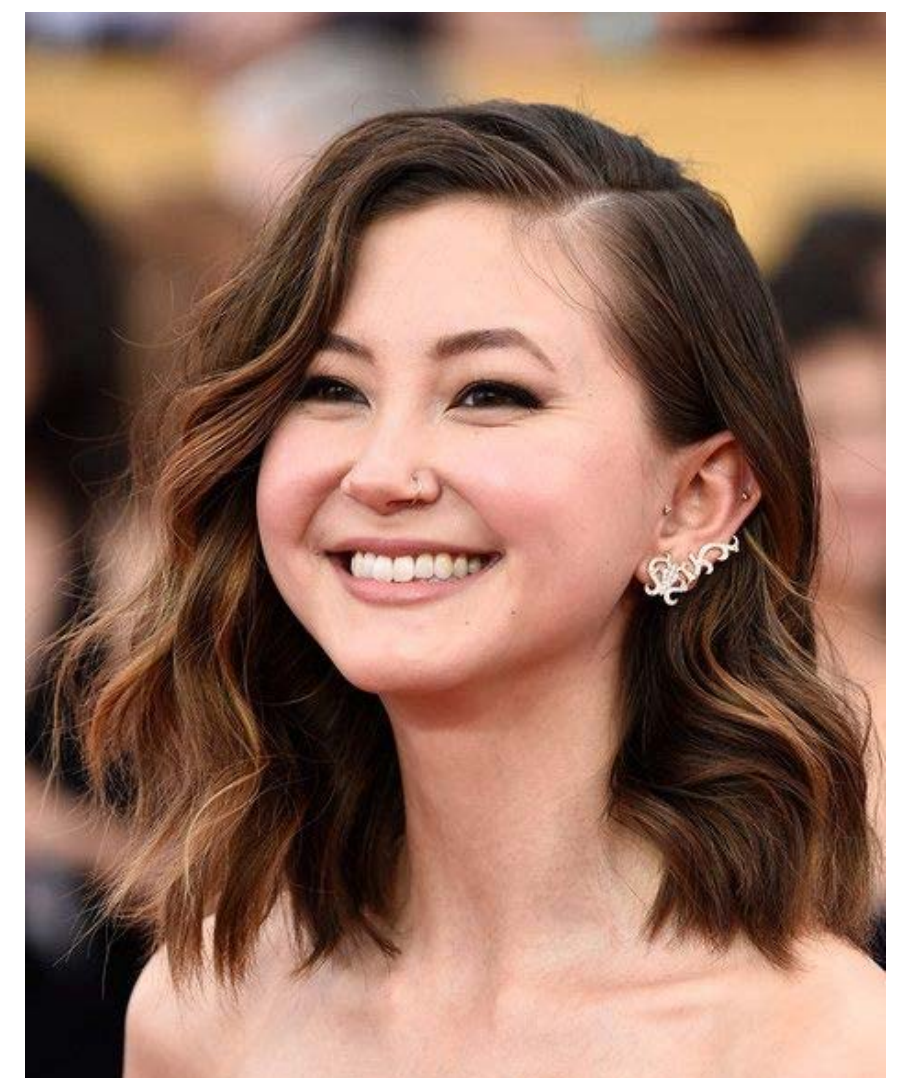
unable to resign from other jobs: "People were bartenders still. People had their second jobs still...[actors who are] internationally famous, couldn't go outside, but had to keep their second jobs because they couldn't afford to not."

However, is there a degree of hypocrisy in megastars who reap the rewards of a successful career in Hollywood, yet then complain about the poor salaries received by their less famous colleagues?

Let us take Margot Robbie for instance, whose meteoric rise from Neighbours to Hollywood stardom went stratospheric this summer when she headed up the cast of the Box Office-breaking Barbie movie. Should



Cynthia Nixon



Kimiko Glenn



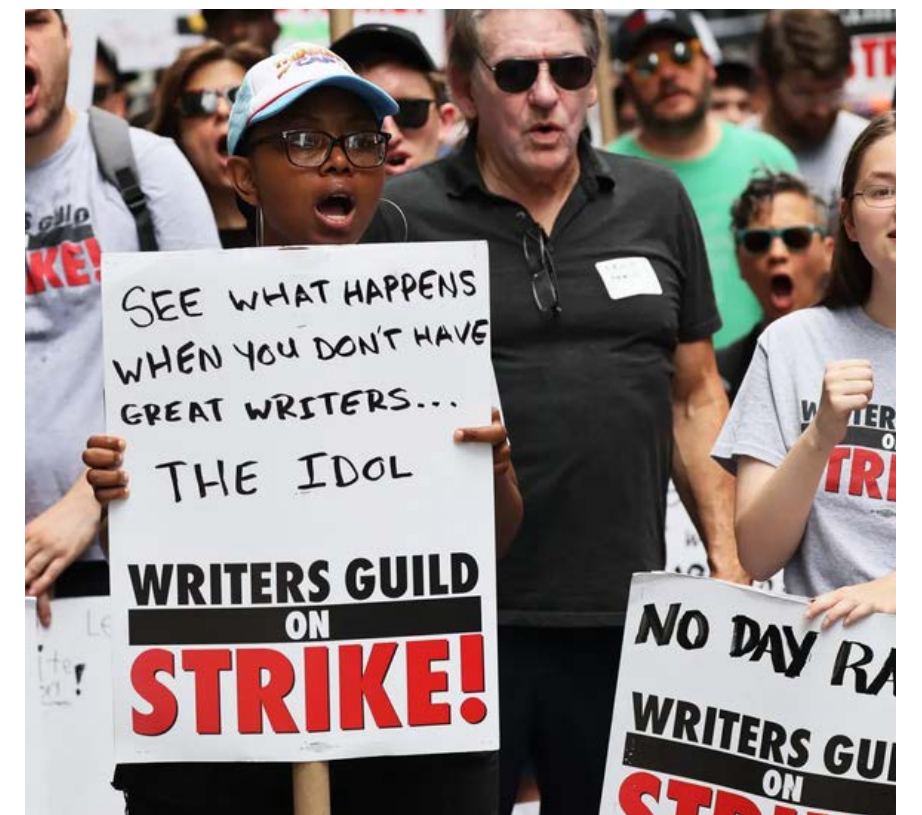
Margot Robbie

someone like Robbie – who reportedly earned \$12.5 million just for the Barbie movie – be striking with hard-up actors and writers, when she receives such hefty salaries herself? Some argue that her substantial bite of the pie means there is less for those who are ‘beneath’ her. In other words, Robbie herself is part of the problem.

However, surely this is the wrong attitude to have? In an industry that has faced criticism for its lack of diversity and inclusivity, Margot Robbie's decision to support lesser-known actors is a step in the right direction. It sends a message that talent should be recognized and celebrated and fairly remunerated, regardless of status or fame.

As cinema continues to evolve, it will face issues to do with technology – as we have seen with streaming services and the use of AI. But it is the

human collaboration between all actors and writers, and indeed, all of those who come together to make the Hollywood film industry the phenomenal success that it is, that will ultimately foster a more inclusive, equitable and dynamic landscape for all artists.





GLOBAL HEALTHCARE: HOW DOES THE UK FARE?

WRITTEN BY ASHWAQ OMAR

61%

increase in the number of over 65s in the UK by 2032

Britain's over 65s already outnumber its under 16s



Is the British Healthcare system the best in the world? We know that as medical advances improve, people are living longer than ever; this means that countries' healthcare systems need to meet the demands of their aging population, which means even more pressure on them to deliver critical services.

As most of us know, the UK provides free healthcare at the point of use. This means that everyone pays into the system according to their ability to pay, and everyone receives healthcare regardless of how much they have contributed. This is because, unlike the USA where citizens have to pay for health insurance, in the UK our healthcare is covered by taxes generated through people's wages. When we need to see a GP in the UK, we simply make a call and try to arrange a suitable appointment; in contrast, in the USA an initial visit to a doctor costs from \$100!

Earlier this year, The King's Fund published research carried out into the standards of global healthcare. They found that whilst the UK healthcare system compares well in terms of some aspects of efficiency, waiting times for common procedures are not the best, and, since the Covid-19 pandemic, have rapidly declined. Furthermore, whilst the UK does protect unwell patients from the financial expenses of their treatment, life expectancy is lowered due to a lack of preventative care and timely interventions. Furthermore, when it comes to finances, the UK spends less per patient than other comparable countries.

However, the research did not suggest that any one country in the world has 'got it right' when it comes to national healthcare. Countries such as Germany and Singapore, which are both known for having excellent healthcare systems, are also finding challenges when it comes to



their ageing populations. Perhaps it's worth noting that in Germany, a third of hospitals are run by charities, a third by for-profit companies and a third by government. Does this make a difference to funding and therefore provision and choice of care for patients?

However, it's also perhaps worth noting that America - where people do not have equal access to healthcare - has the best survival rates for rectum, lung, breast and prostate cancers. In fact, the USA spends more on healthcare than any other country in the world, yet it has a higher percentage of uninsured people and lower life expectancy than other high-income countries.

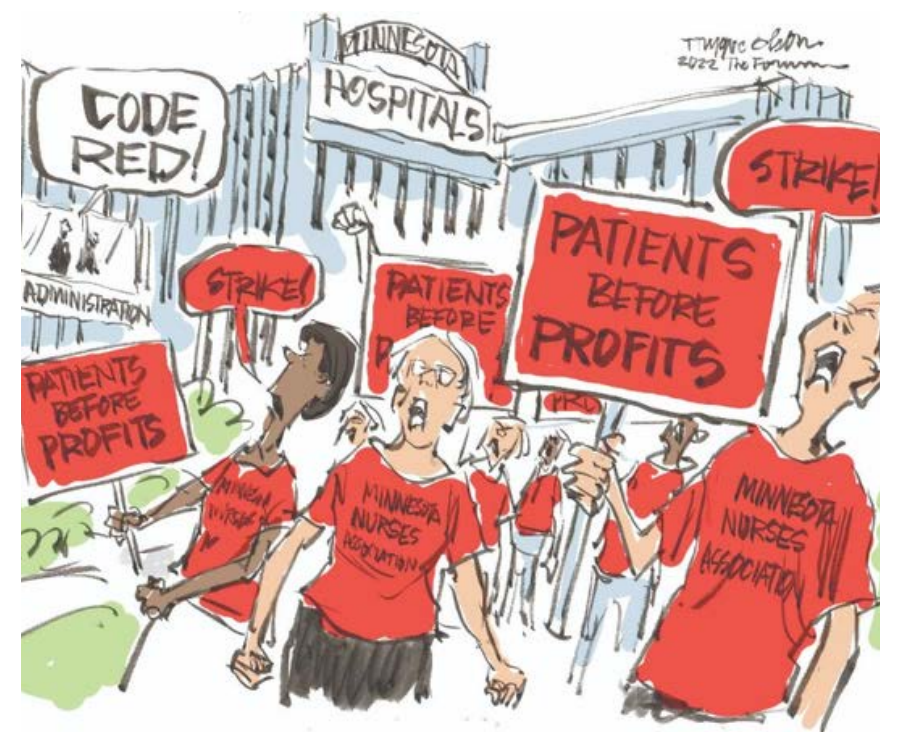
So, in conclusion, is the UK's NHS as good as healthcare systems in comparable countries like the USA? There is no doubt that the NHS leads the world in terms of



equity of access and ensuring people don't suffer financially when their health suffers. But, many would argue it is severely underfunded and struggling to retain staff and meet the demands of its patients. Writing for Business Insider, Jennifer Still, an American living in the UK, argued that the NHS is far superior to the US system: *"While the NHS is far from perfect, as an American, I've seen how hard the doctors, nurses, and other NHS staff members work on a daily basis to provide the best possible care for hundreds of thousands of patients throughout the UK on a daily basis. The system certainly needs a lot of improvement — more government funding would be a good start — but I'm grateful for its existence on a daily basis and only wish America would get behind a similar system."*

Thomas Cawston of the Think Tank Reform, argues in favour of a privatised system, stating that *"poll after poll shows patients value their right to choose which hospital to go to and what treatment they receive"*. However, Professor Stephen Hawking once warned against pushing the NHS *"towards a US-style insurance system, run by... private companies...we must prevent the establishment of a two-tier service."*

So, what are your thoughts on the NHS? Could we learn something from international healthcare systems and if so, what? Whatever the future of the NHS, what we all need to remember is that it is a precious service that none of us should ever take for granted: so next time you can't or don't need to attend an appointment with your GP or at hospital, make sure you cancel it well in advance. Let's all do our bit to protect the NHS now - whatever it's future may hold.





IS THE NHS FIT FOR PURPOSE?

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO



At some point in our lives, we have all used the NHS. In fact, you more than likely received care from the NHS before you were even born! The UK has long been the envy of the world in being able to offer the 'free at point of use' services of the NHS. In fact, it is one of the few completely publicly-funded healthcare services in the whole world.

Since 1948, the NHS has treated and saved the lives of millions and millions of people. It exists to improve our health and wellbeing, our mental and physical wellbeing and to provide healthcare for us from before we even enter this world, to the day we die. Look at a country like the USA and you will find citizens paying extortionate private healthcare costs to ensure they receive the appropriate standard of care when they need it – a system that does not exist for all. In contrast, the NHS is a national institution that we ought to be proud of – a service for the people, a service that offers equal treatment to all, in its aims to ensure the best health

outcomes for every one of us.

However, there have been some widely-publicised cases where the outcome has been far short of the best, or even adequate service. Although tragic and fatal mistakes are thankfully rare, they do still happen and at times, these can make the public question whether the NHS is truly fit for purpose.

Let's take the case of Martha Mills. Back in 2021, 13 year old Martha tragically died after failures to identify and properly treat a case of sepsis that developed while she was being treated at King's College Hospital in London. Martha had initially been admitted to hospital having suffered a laceration to her pancreas due to a minor accident whilst cycling. She was transferred to the hospital where doctors stated that her condition was not thought to be life-threatening.



After a while however, Martha's parents stated their concerns that her health was deteriorating and urged the doctors to do anything they could, but the doctors reassured them everything would be fine. Initially Martha's symptoms included a high temperature, diarrhoea and low blood pressure.

However, on 21st August she contracted an infection. By 29th August, Martha had high fever, low blood pressure, a racing heart and a rash; these symptoms were tragically misdiagnosed by a junior doctor and she was not treated for sepsis.

Following her death, Martha's mother Merope stated, *"I felt that my anxieties about all of Martha's symptoms, and especially what they might mean when put together and considered in the round, weren't given proper acknowledgement."*

By 30th August, Martha went



into septic shock and was no longer responding to treatment. After she tragically passed away, her family accused the hospital of neglecting patient care. Her mother stated that *"Even if you were to give the doctors the benefit of the doubt and say they were trying not to worry us, the result is that they did not give us any agency in demanding the correct treatment for our daughter - and that control, that overconfidence in yourself and your decision-making - is absolutely fine if the system works perfectly, but the system is so far from perfect!"*

Merope also helped the The ThinkTank Demos to write a report urging the NHS in England to establish a rule that would *"effectively formalise the idea of asking for a second opinion, from a different team outside the team currently looking after you if you feel you are not being listened to"* - this was then called 'Martha's Rule'.

No one can deny that the NHS is a service that we should all value and protect; however, cases like Martha's raise questions about how it is run and the policies in place. Few could argue that the NHS is under huge pressure and many - including those who work on the frontlines - warn

that for such a critical service, it is severely underfunded.

Earlier this year, The Guardian reported that the number of people waiting more than 18 months for treatment rose above 10,000. Stuart Bloom, an NHS Consultant, stated that *"We could have a healthservice that is internationally acknowledged as excellent, given a concerted effort. But change needs to be devised by clinicians, validated by patients, and facilitated by politicians and administrators - rather than the failed model of change devised by politicians and imposed on staff and patients."*

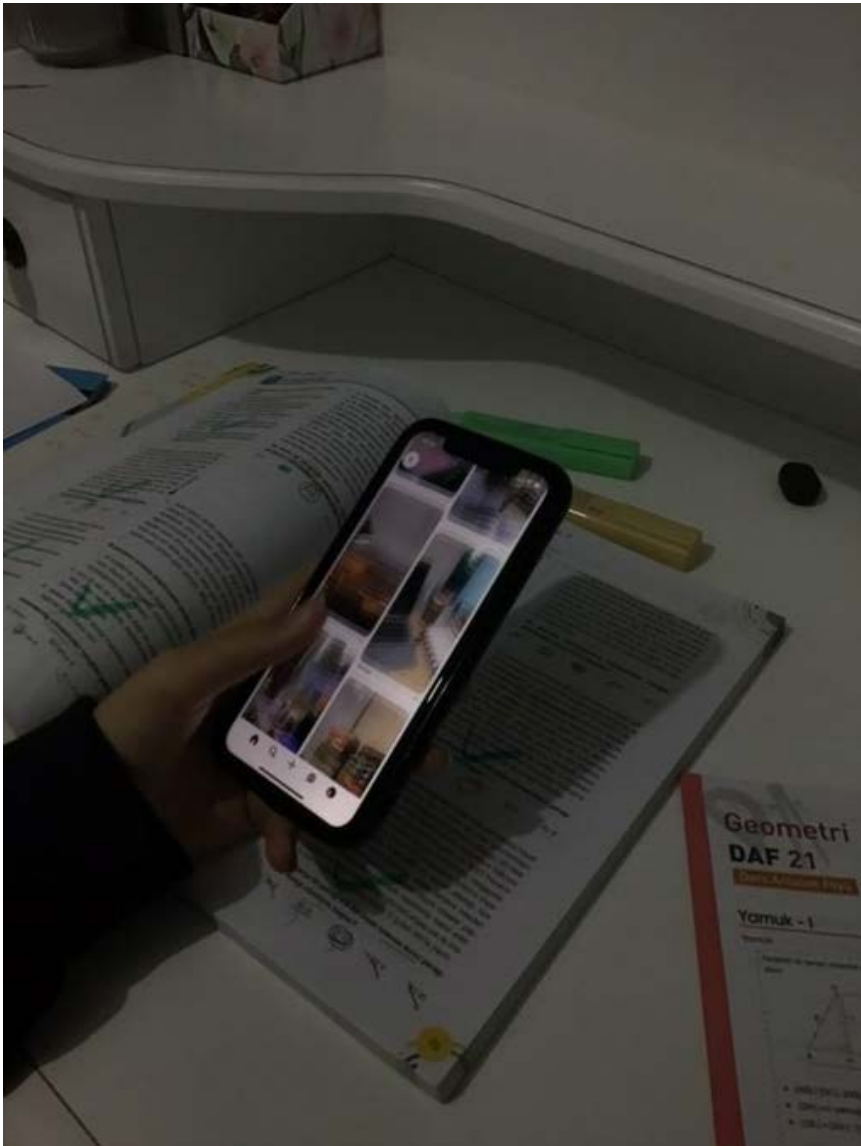
So, is the NHS currently fit for purpose? And what do you think we need to do to ensure it can provide all of us with the standard of care we need, so that avoidable cases like Martha's never ever happen again?





COULD YOUR PHONE BE PUTTING YOU AT RISK?

WRITTEN BY RUWEDA NOR



Could you live without your phone for a year? OK, let's try a month? How about a week? Maybe a day?

In today's fast paced society, it's no secret that we have all become fully dependent on the little gadgets we keep in our pockets. These devices have become an integral part of our daily lives, serving as our constant source of information, entertainment and connection. Surely that's a good thing, right? Well, despite all its obvious benefits, your phone could actually be doing you harm. In fact, studies have shown that adolescents are the demographic most likely to develop a phone addiction – and that's definitely not a good thing!

So, what are some of the

dangers when it comes to our phones? Well, as we all know, the media has a heavy influence on us - showing us videos and information based on our preferences. However, this infrastructure of information can negatively distort reality as we know it, drawing us into a dangerous loophole of fake news and misinformation!

And let's not forget the constant barrage of trends that emerge on platforms like TikTok. Some of these trends encourage illegal and criminal activity, such as the *Devious Lick* trend that circulated on TikTok two years ago. This trend showed pupils vandalising and stealing items such as sinks from their schools – clearly showing scant regard for their own community, or appreciation of the costs involved in having to replace such necessary items. These trends show how easy it is to lose sight of your own sense of morality, because of



the temptations being promoted on our phones.

Some trends go even further, encouraging evidently dangerous actions, thereby putting people at risk of potentially life-threatening consequences. Last year for example, a popular trend involved two people tripping over a person from behind, causing them to fall backwards. As a result of this, a number of fatal casualties occurred.

And yet, such wantonly destructive, anti-social and criminal behaviours are being normalised. Greg Hoplaziam the Academic Director of the Emerging Media Program at Loyola University in America stated that "*Just by getting likes and shares from friends, it makes people feel good...*"And unfortunately, that can drive people to do things they otherwise



wouldn't."

And of course, if you're a regular reader of the Platanos College KS4 Newsletter, you'll know that we frequently write about the dangers of social media. One of these concerns is that the more young people are glued to their phones, the more they tend to withdraw from society, reducing their face-to-face interactions with others. This consequently causes many of us to prioritise our phones over real life connections, therefore leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness and hindering social skills development - a critical part of growing up from child to adult.

But it's not just us young people who have issues with being constantly glued to our



phones; adults do too! Did you know that recent studies have shown that 80% of car accidents are caused by distracted driving? According to THINK! drivers are four times more likely to be in a crash if using their phone.

Did you know that there are now some key terms related to phone addiction, from Nomophobia (fear of not having your phone on you), to Textxiety (feeling nervous due to receiving and responding to texts immediately)? Phone addiction is a very real problem and can result in very real dangers to our health, including fatigue, blurry vision, thumb or wrist pain, insomnia and poor performance at school.

According to VeryWell Health, these are some signs of phone addiction. Do any of these apply to you?

- You are constantly reaching for your phone.
- You spend a lot of your time on your phone.
- You wake up during the night to check for notifications
- If you can't check your phone, you get angry or anxious.

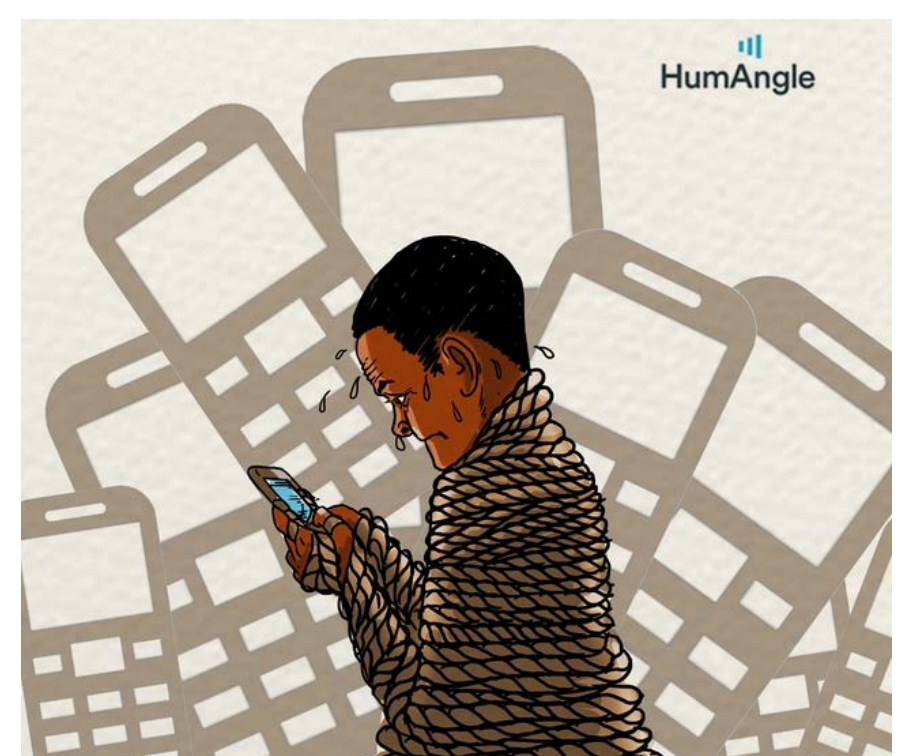
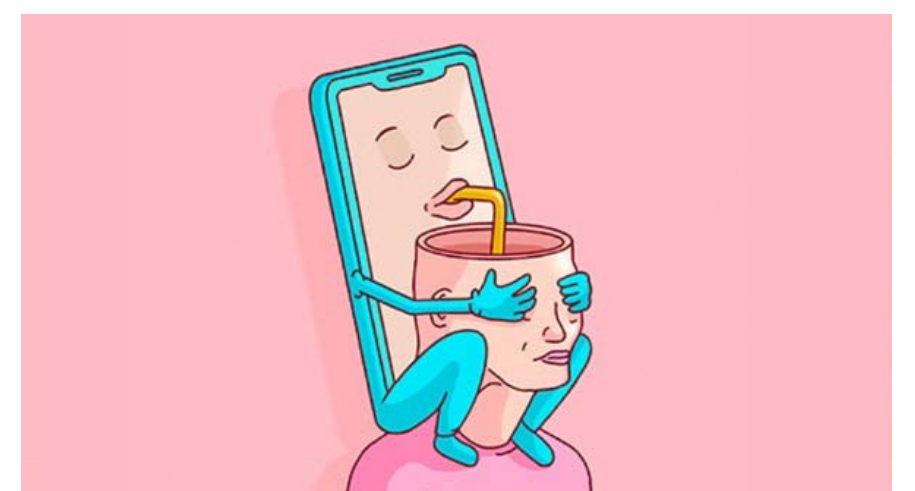
So, what can you do if you're worried that your use of your phone is putting you at risk or harm?

Here are some top tips:

- Remove apps that take up the majority of your time.



- Eliminate notifications on your phone
- Charge your phone in a place that is not easily accessible, especially when you're doing something that needs your attention, such as homework or revision
- Try to replace phone use with other activities you enjoy.
- Try the switch to a non-smart phone
- Speak with your parent or carer about how they can support you with your phone usage





inspiration station

BARBIE: A LESSON IN FEMALE EMPOWERMENT?

WRITTEN BY CRYSTAL JOY AZZOPARDI



If you think back to the summer, you may be reminded of a flurry of pink diffusing across a plethora of advertising all around you. Because on 21st July, the long-awaited Barbie movie graced the cinemas and smashed Box Office records. Director Greta Gerwig told the New York Times that she wanted to *"make something anarchic and wild and funny and cathartic and the idea that it's actually being received that way, is sort of extraordinary"*. Many hailed Barbie as a pivotal movie in highlighting the issues that women and girls face today; but is Barbie – which made an eye-watering \$1.36 billion globally – a genuine lesson in female

empowerment?

Gerwig is renowned in the film industry for putting women and their untold stories at the heart of her movies, such as *Little Women* and *Lady Bird*; Gerwig uses female characters to voice important matters today. In *Barbie*, the once two-dimensional character who for generations little girls have loved to play with, has been reimagined as a fleshed-out real woman who embarks on a journey to the real world.

Many would argue that *Barbie* showcases a powerful role model for girls and women everywhere, exemplifying strength, resilience and ambition, encouraging girls to pursue their aspirations and telling them that they are enough. Moreover, the titular character is not portrayed as a



damsel in distress, but instead as someone confident, a problem solver and a natural leader. These qualities instill in girls that they can excel in leadership roles and break the stereotype that women are somehow the weaker sex.

For many generations, the Barbie doll has been synonymous with traditional stereotypes of what it means to be a woman and has shaped ideals for girls from a very young age. However, the *Barbie* movie portrays the idea that somebody's worth is not defined by their appearance, but by who they are; it urges girls and women to embrace their uniqueness and to not be influenced by the unrealistic beauty standards in the media – which is perhaps ironic given



how much such pressures has been fuelled by the image of the Barbie doll itself.

A pivotal moment in the movie is when the character Gloria, (played by America Ferrera), delivers a powerful monologue about the challenges women face in today's society, which is a catalyst for Barbie's existential crisis. She denounces society's expectations of women, stating that *"It is literally impossible to be a woman... You have to never get old, never be rude, never show off never be selfish, never fall down, never fail, never show fear, never get out of line. It's too hard!...I'm just so tired of watching myself and every single other woman tie herself into knots so that people will like us."*



Moreover, the movie presents strong and supportive friendships between the different Barbies, who build each other up and are loyal and understanding towards one another. This discourages jealousy and competition as it teaches a valuable lesson to young girls about female camaraderie.

Gerwig was determined to tackle the challenges and criticism she knew the image of Barbie evokes: a shallow, appearance-focused airhead who, due to her body shape, creates unrealistic standards of beauty. So in the movie, when Barbie discovers that some of the women hate her in the real world and find her oppressive, Gerwig *"felt like [they] had to give the counter-argument to Barbie to not give her short shrift, but give it real intellectual and emotional power"*.

However, many have criticised the movie for being 'anti-men', with presenter Piers Morgan arguing that *"If I made a movie that treated women the way Barbie treats men, feminists would want me executed."* Others feel that the message of empowerment actually falls flat, as it fails to recognise that life experiences are different for different groups of women, so issues of femininity have to be explored in the context of inequality beyond a woman's gender, but also her race, ethnicity, social class and

sexual orientation. Indeed, one viewer argues that the movie *"doesn't properly criticize patriarchy and the message it pushes would've been groundbreaking in the 60s but in 2023 it falls flat and completely ignores any intersectionality."*

Overall however, the Barbie movie has been widely praised for addressing the issues women face today, the theme of female empowerment and the sense of hypocrisy that lies within the image of the doll itself.

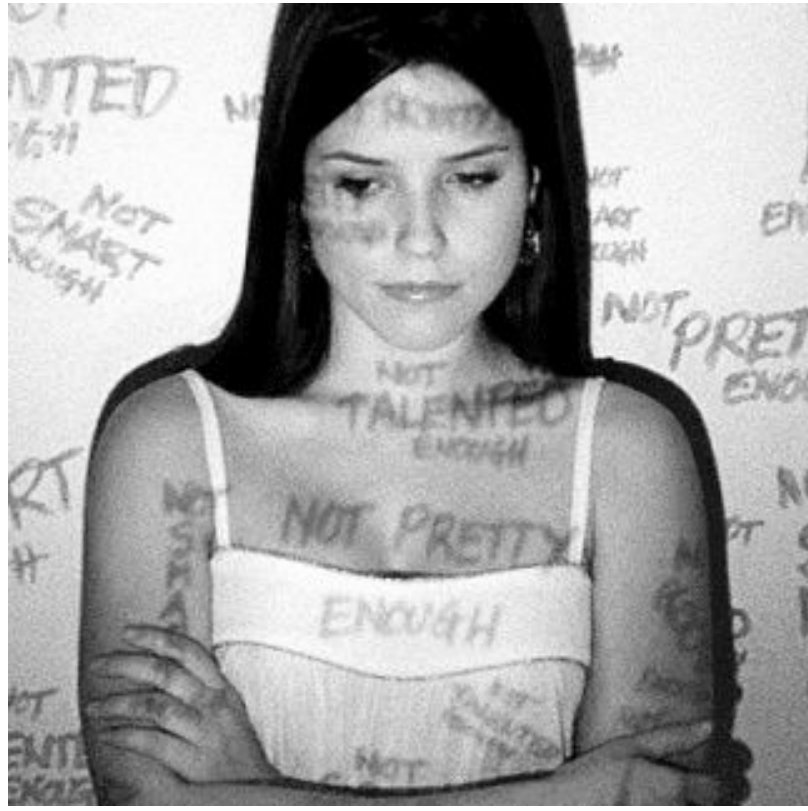




cacophony of colours

PERFECT

WRITTEN BY SYDNEY WHITE



Today a boy told me my
"eyebrows are looking mad..."
So I went home, looked in the
mirror
And plucked every loose hair
Until they were perfect.



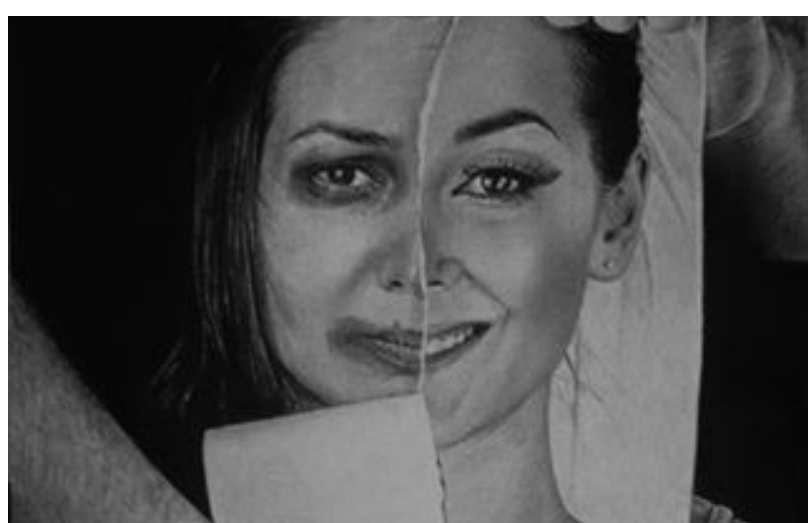
Today I heard some girls laughing
at my acne...
So I went home, looked in the
mirror
And applied makeup
Until it was perfect.



Today my parents told me I was
gaining too much weight...
So I went home, stood in front of
the mirror
And told myself not to eat,
So I could be perfect.



I stood in front of my mirror for
Hours on end making myself
Perfect...
I looked at the person in the
mirror.
Who was she?
She wasn't the kind, caring, funny
kid who loved herself.
She was the kid who was self-
absorbed, didn't smile and who
cared too much what people
thought.



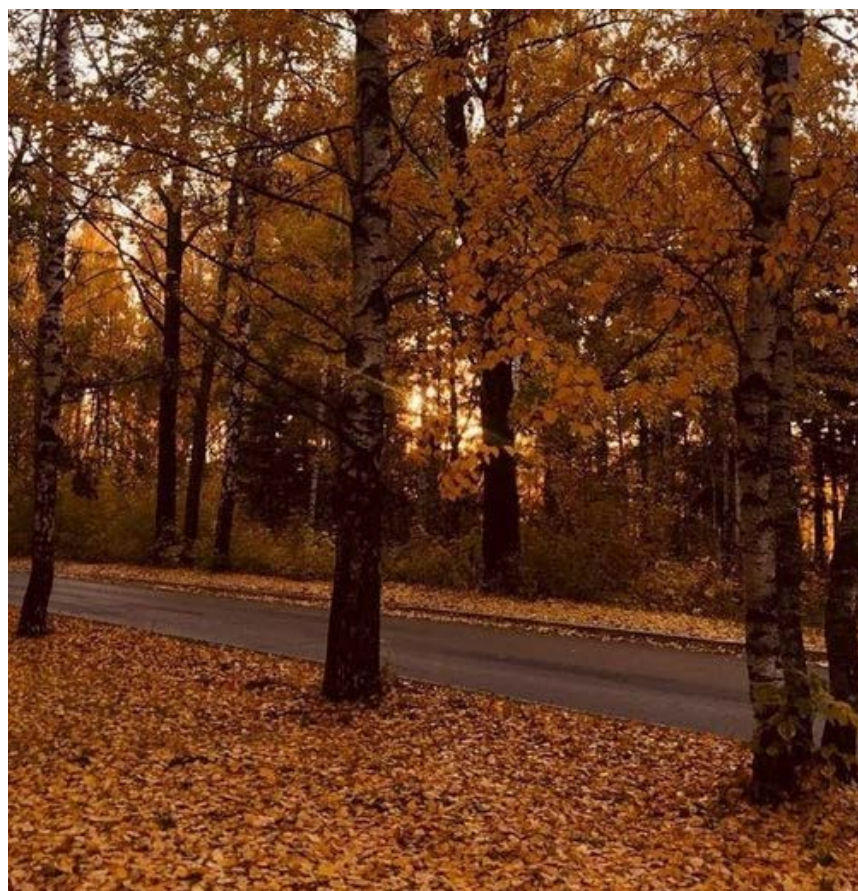
I turned all the mirrors away from
my broken reflection
And cried the person away...
All that was left
Was the broken girl within.





SHATTERED

WRITTEN BY TEANNA TRAN



Shattered. Flakes of golden cinnamon embedded in copper. Leaves crept down like worthless sheets of paper.

They lay over the mounds of slumped autumn trees and plastic lighting beside our street one early misty morning... I hope you are happy.

With your curled-up lips, your fabricated wings and your hollowed-out eyes, you haunt me. Even if we got lost in a crowd, we can sense us by footsteps alone, your pace noiselessly clear, while mine's a faint scaring under my own breath. You locked me in your



stares, mesmerised.

I am tired. So very tired. We were in a daze on the horizon. After the storm, you were a candle: poised, untouchable, alight. Waiting for nothing, as a poet might say.

I've mistaken your gestures for composure and calm. But now, the humble words you say slip from your deceptive tongue.

Clank! 5:00 am. Buildings dumbfounded next to the metallic sky. Left. Right. Left. Right. Early workers scattered like water ripples in a pond, disappearing as quickly as they emerge. Quietness returns with a browbeaten stare.

A silver plaited railing stood blank as droplets from tears in the sky flared out onto a weathered bench. For a moment, the rain drowns the blazed secrets of silence.

I hope you are happy. This is the last time you'll have evidence that I was here. All of who you are to me, to us, was never real. We have never met, and all of this was merely a daydream.

I can almost believe it.

Because you are the word that the earth cannot even

describe; a memory so earnest that the decades we spent might have been engraved into drops of an unimaginable rain. You are a feeling only I am allowed to recall. A daze on the horizon at sunset.





THE LAST PIECE

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

I'm lying on a hospital bed, hooked to machines that beep and whir. I'm 52 years old and I have nothing left to live for.

Except for one thing. One thing that haunts me every night. One thing that I need to remember before I die. The last piece of the puzzle.

I close my eyes and let my mind drift back to the past. To the year 1997, when I was a young and ambitious journalist. When I made a promise to myself and to my sister. When I started working on the case that would change my life.

For 364 days, I've been working on this case. If I don't figure it out by tomorrow, they will kick me out of here. I made a promise to solve it in a year. But time flew by, and I'm still stuck. I've chased so many leads, followed so many clues. I've travelled across the country, but I still can't find the culprit.

Culprit: that's a strange word, isn't it? I'm trying to find the culprit behind the suicide of a young girl. You might wonder how someone can be blamed for another's suicide. Well, it's simple. Every word you say to someone is a piece of the puzzle. Every word has an impact. I want to know who the last piece was. I need to

know; I can't let my sister's death be ignored like this.

My phone buzzes. I pick it up and hear the detective's voice.

"Do you still want the lead I found?"

"Of course," I say eagerly. I grab my notepad and jot down everything he tells me.

When he finally hangs up, I head out to my car. My heart is racing; I'm scared of what I'll find out. I drive to the location: my sister's school.

I never once took her there. I never once asked her how her day was. Or how she liked school. I never once cared about that. It's funny how things change all too late.

I walk through the gates and see a tall man waiting for me. He introduces himself as the teacher who was overseeing the investigation. He escorts me to a classroom, where two students are sitting opposite me.

They look nervous, avoiding my gaze.

"Your names?" I inquire politely.

"May," says the girl. "Jake," replies the boy.

"How did you know the deceased?" I probe gently.

They tell me different stories.

May says she was her best friend, her only friend. Jake says she was her classmate, nothing more. May says she was compassionate and gullible. Jake says she was envious and deceitful. May says she adored Maths because it was a puzzle that she could always solve. Jake says she cheated on the Maths test and failed miserably. May says she was tormented by everyone in school. Jake says she brought it upon herself.

I nod and jot down their words. I don't know who to believe. They both seem emotional, but also guilty. I look at the teacher and say, "Thank you for your time. I appreciate you letting me come here." He smiles and says, "Not a problem. A pleasure to help."

I head back to my car and head home as fast as I can. I head into her room. I stare at what I had been working on. I read over everything trying to piece together the new information. To learn who was telling the truth.

I see flashes of memories in my mind.

My sister's smile when she aced the Maths test. Her tears when she found out they had changed her mark. Her voice



when she called me for help that night. Her silence when I snapped at her and hung up.

I feel a pang of regret in my chest. I see flashes of clues in my mind. The note she left on her desk saying, "I'm sorry". The Maths book she threw in the bin with scribbled notes saying, "May is right". The photo she kept in her drawer with her and May smiling together. The email she sent to Jake saying, "Leave me alone".

I feel a surge of anger in my head. I see flashes of suspects in my mind.

May, who claimed to be her best friend, but also manipulated her with lies. Jake, who claimed to be her classmate, but also bullied her with rumours. The teacher, who claimed to be helpful, but also...

Wait a minute.

The teacher. He was there when I interviewed them both. He was there when they told me conflicting stories. He was there when they left the room crying.

He was there when...

Oh God. He was the last piece of the puzzle.

I open my eyes and gasp. I remember everything. I remember how he followed

me to my car and offered to drive me home. I remember how he took a detour and drove me to a deserted road. I remember how he slammed the brakes and hit me with a wrench. I remember how he whispered in my ear "I'm afraid I can't let you catch onto me that easily."

I remember how he left me there to die. But I didn't die. I survived. And now I know the truth. He was the one who accused her of cheating and failing her test. He was the one who turned May against her and fed her lies. He was the one who spread rumours about her and made everyone hate her.

He was the one who pushed her over the edge. He was the one who broke his promise to me. He was the one who said he would help me solve the case in a year.

But he never did. Because he never wanted me to solve it. He wanted me to forget it. But I couldn't.

I have to expose him for what he is. A monster. A murderer. The culprit.

But before I can reach for my phone, I feel a shiver. I look at the door and see a silhouette. A familiar silhouette. A silhouette that makes my blood run cold. It's him. He's here. He's found me.

And he's not going to let me go

this time.

He steps into the room, holding a wrench in his hand. He smiles wickedly, showing his yellow teeth. He says in a low voice, "Hello, my dear. Did you miss me?"

I try to scream, but no sound comes out. I try to move, but I'm paralysed. I try to think, but I'm terrified.

He walks towards me, slowly and deliberately. He says in a mocking tone, "You know, you're quite a stubborn girl. You just wouldn't give up on this case, would you? You just had to dig deeper and deeper, until you uncovered the truth. The truth that I was the reason for her death. The truth that I killed her with my words."

He reaches my bed and leans over me. He says in a whisper, "But you see, words are not enough. Words can be forgotten, words can be denied, words can be erased. That's why I had to use something more... permanent. Something more... physical. Something like this."

He raises the wrench and swings it down at my head. I close my eyes and brace for the impact.

But it never comes.

I hear a gunshot and a thud.





MAZE 101

WRITTEN BY SURI DAGI



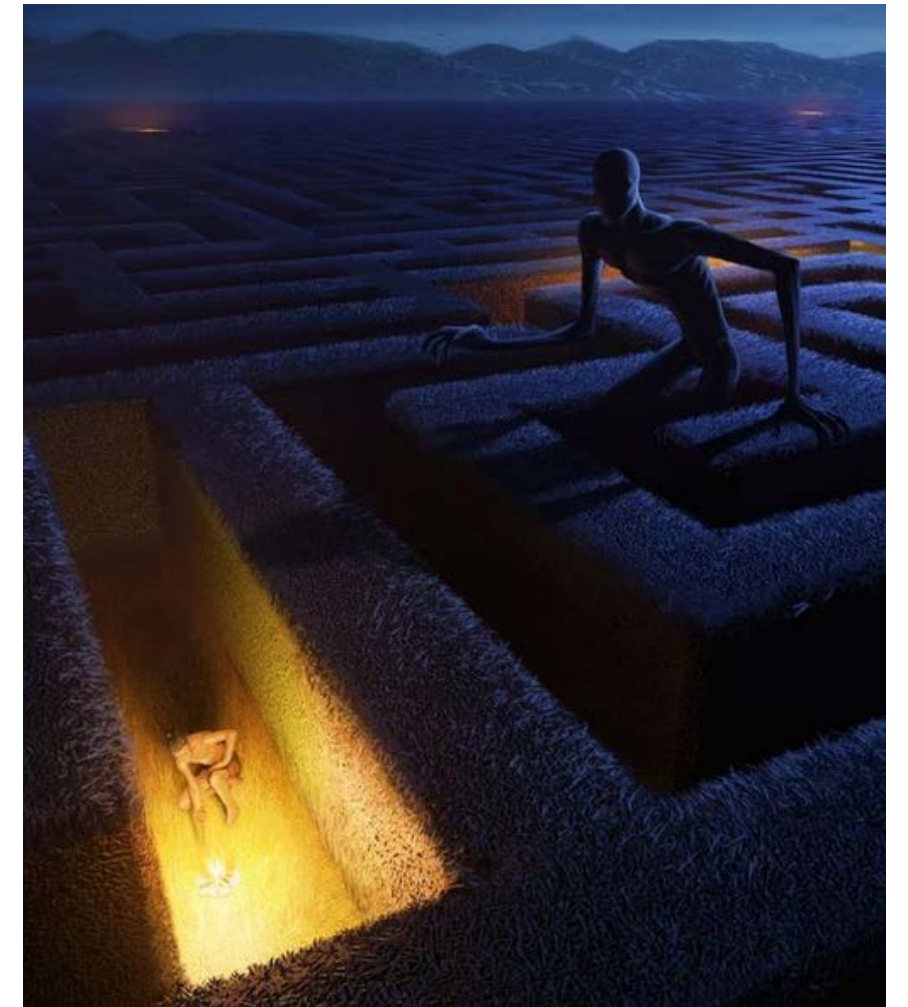
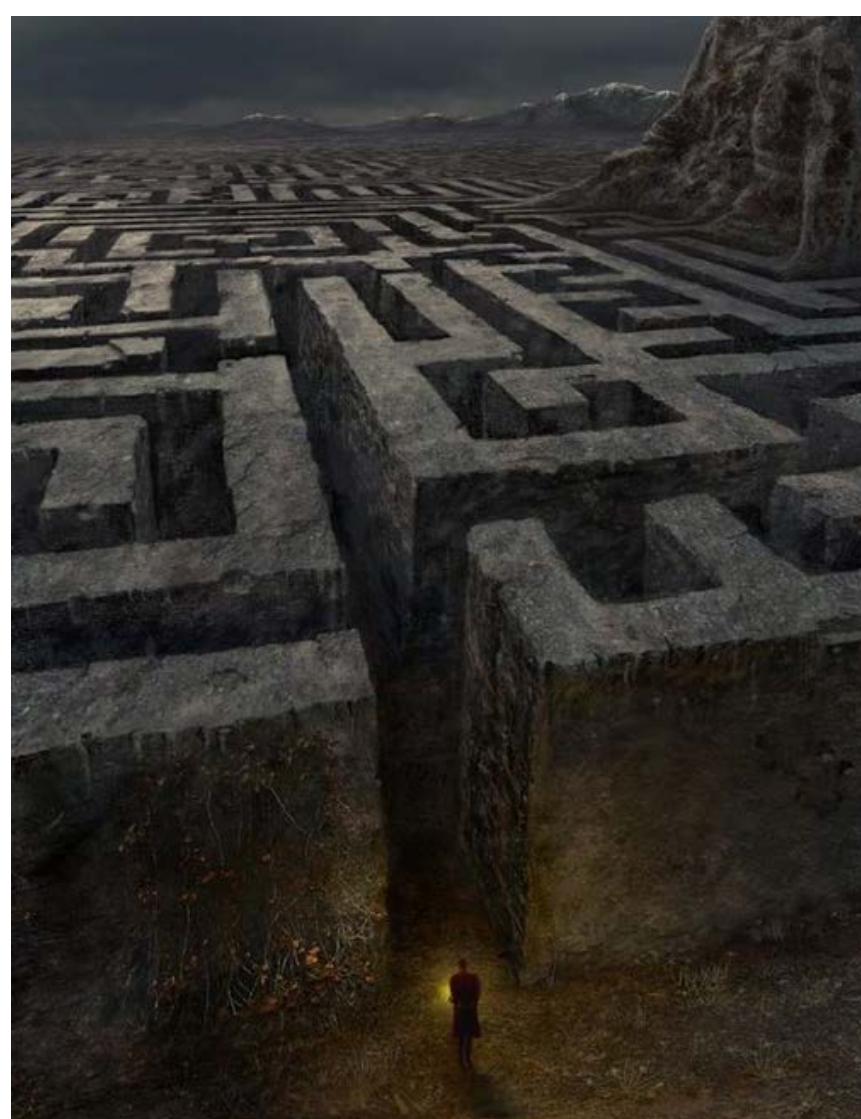
Nobody ever told me how scary being in a maze was, maybe because it isn't and the idea that you will eventually find a way out was comforting. However, in my case, death was the only way out. I couldn't blame anybody but myself, allowing my curiosity to get the best of me and following a stupid note that I had seen in a hallucination; it had all led me to my current disastrous situation.

I wasn't that naïve though; there's more to the story.

My best friend went missing four years ago, and each year on her anniversary I'd encounter vivid hallucinations with different notes leading me to different locations. For three years, I'd simply ignored them and told myself it was a coping mechanism as I didn't want to give up the hope that she was really gone.

But in the fourth year, I told myself it couldn't be a mere coincidence anymore; she had to have been trying to send me a sign. This was something I couldn't tell my mother or any of my friends; I would seem delusional and be instructed to go back to therapy..

The dream started off in a sandstorm - a whirlwind of sand in tornado form was spinning around aimlessly. Dust was clogging up my eyes and filling my nostrils as I shuddered from the unpleasant feeling. Rubbing my eyes frantically, I discovered a scroll beneath my feet. A scroll, the type of notes you would see back in the Egyptian times. It might as well have been hieroglyphics as I found myself struggling to make out the lettering before I finally realized it said 'MAZE 101'. I looked it with utter

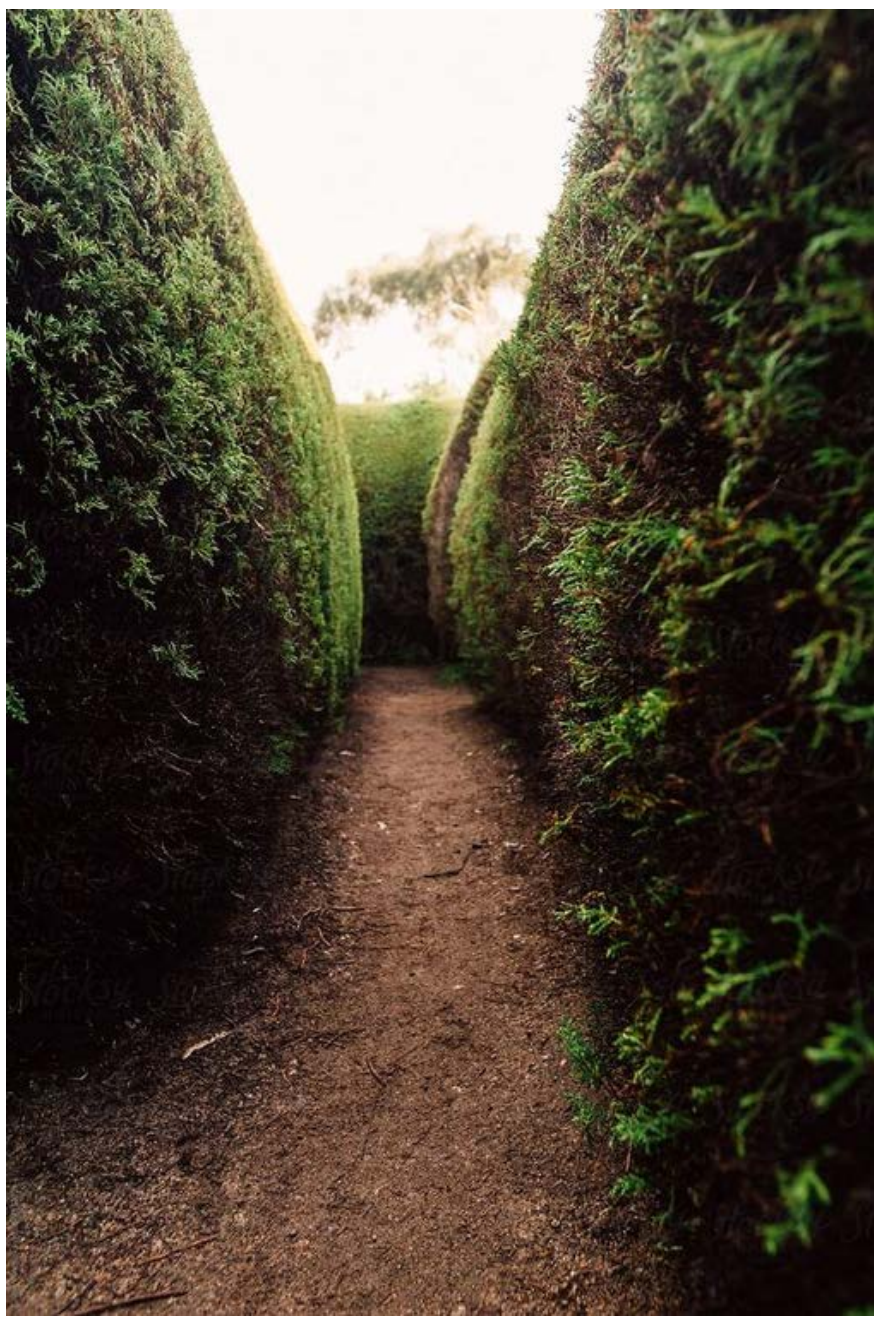


confusion before I heard my mum scream out my name, rapidly snapping me out of my hallucination.

In all honesty, I ignored it for five whole days, but the suspense was quite literally eating away at my insides. It was the only thing that lingered in my mind, consuming all of my thoughts. I knew I had to do something, but what? Maze 101 was

hardly something I could search up and receive an answer for. I knew what a maze was of course, but never had I heard of one nearby and especially not with the numbers 101 after it. In fact, 'Maze 101' seemed like something you would encounter in some kind of Spy movie.

But thinking logically was never satisfying enough, so 34243 before I knew it, I had a



had been living in my quiet suburban area my whole life and knew everything that was within a one hour distance.

Without further procrastination, I started my mum's car and commenced my journey. Within fifteen minutes, the trees became more sparse and what had turned out to be sand, became more visible. I continued driving until I came to a sudden halt in front of a not so discreet sign with the labels 101 and a straight-ahead arrow on it.

Maybe my adrenaline was rushing, or maybe I had simply waited too long without answers. Nevertheless, as soon as the road came to a dead end, I sprinted out of the car. Aimlessly, but cautiously, I found myself taking steps on the sand, trying to find a possible entrance to a possible maze.

But it was the fourth step I took that had me falling.

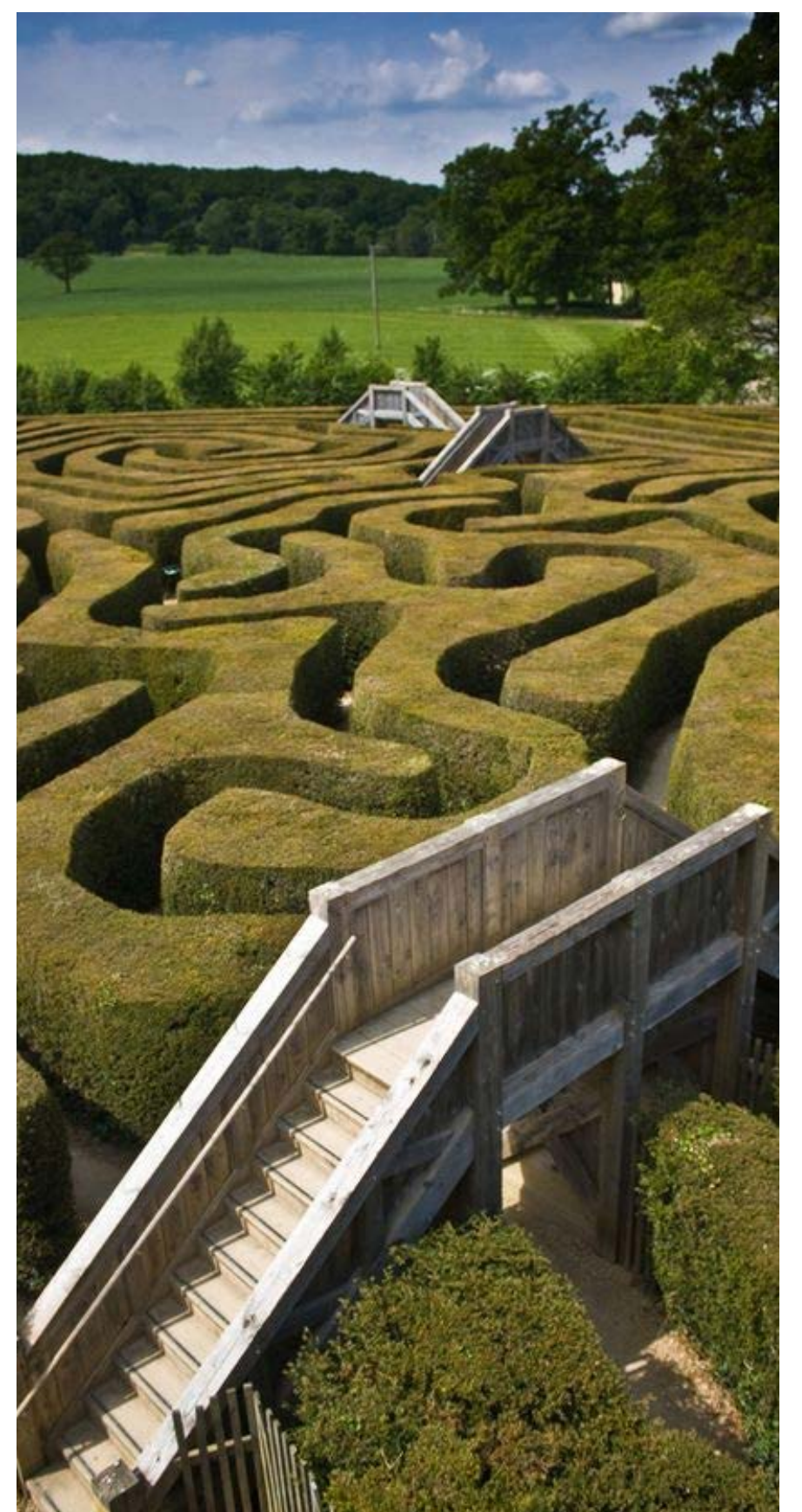
Falling and twirling, just like the way the sandstorm was moving around in my hallucination.

I don't know how long I was sleeping for, but I remember waking up to a booming voice bellowing as if it were in a speaker. A few seconds passed before I realised that it was coming from inside my own mind. I staggered myself upwards as if I were a drunken man and took a second to gather my bearings. Before I knew it, I was standing right in the middle of a maze, an empty, sand infested maze. It looked as simple as something you would find in a children's park. Or so I thought. But that was before the shadowy figure appeared in front of me - a figure that resembled a familiar human face, yet seemed to be made from sand. That's when I heard a sudden click and everything around me became rock solid, as



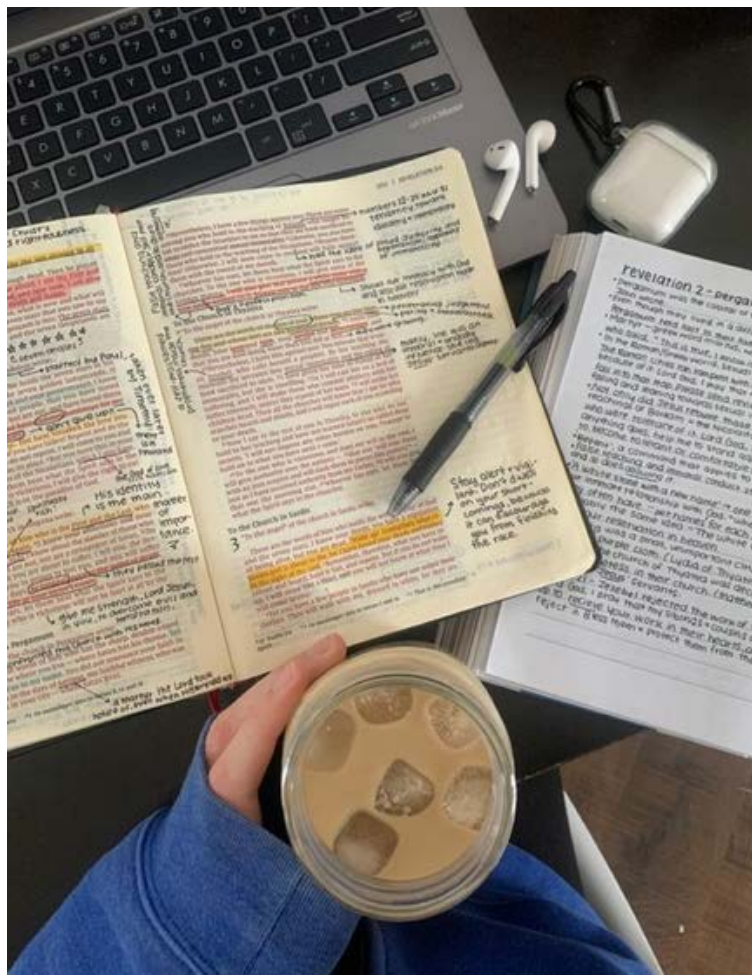
metal bars with small daggers coming out of them surrounded the exterior.

"Why did it take you 4 years to come home?" whispered the distinctly familiar voice of my missing best friend.



SCHOOL TO SIXTH FORM

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CANDIDO

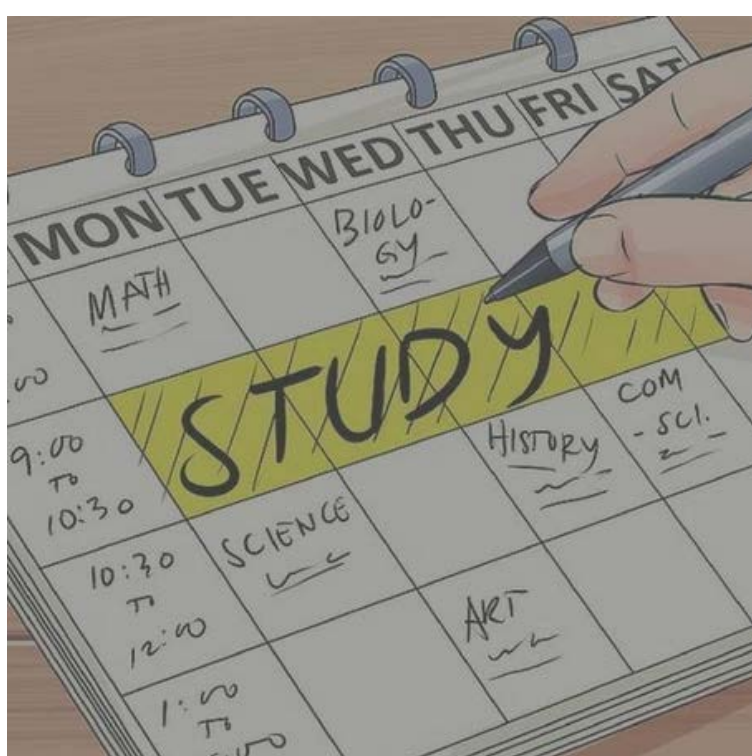
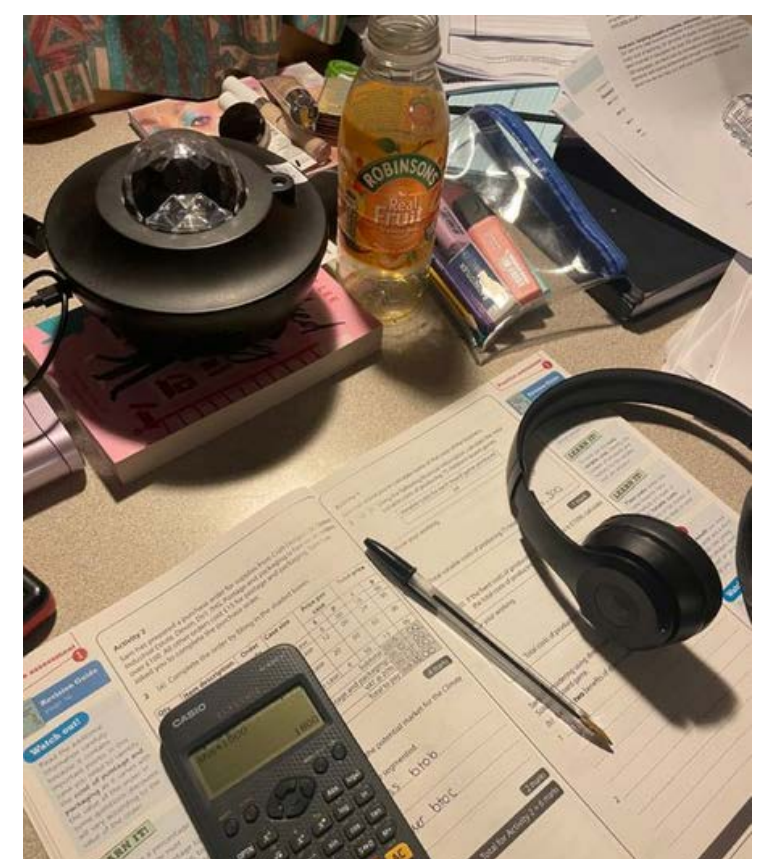
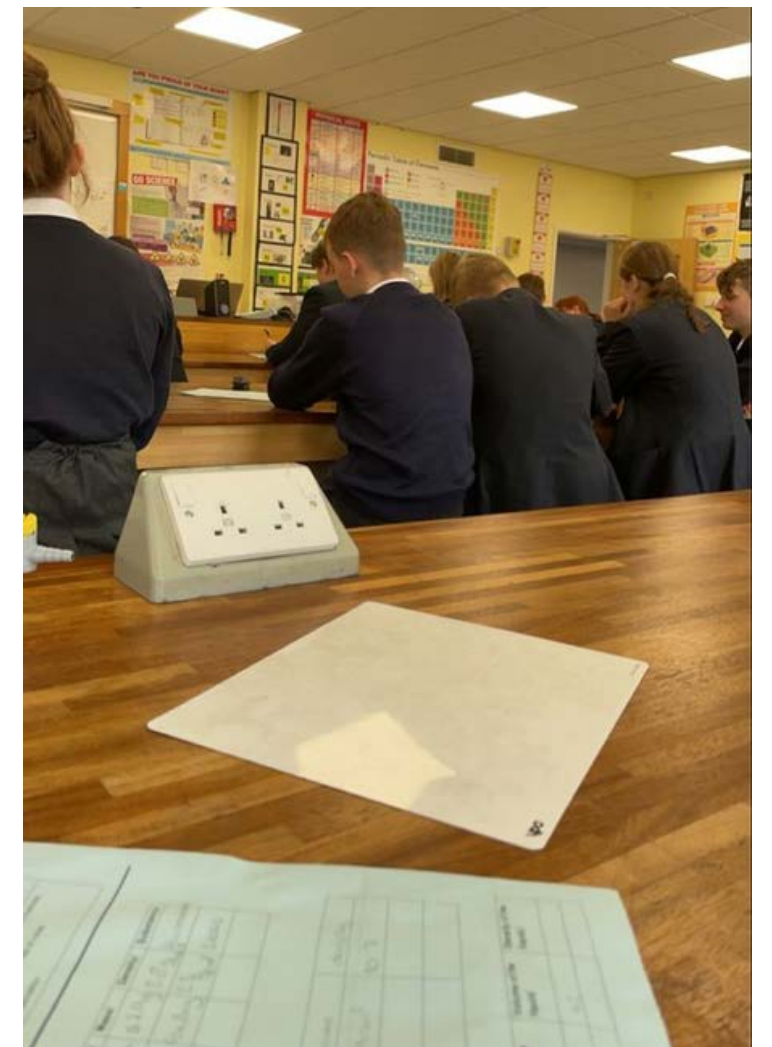


Time flies and before you know,
You've completed
Secondary school.

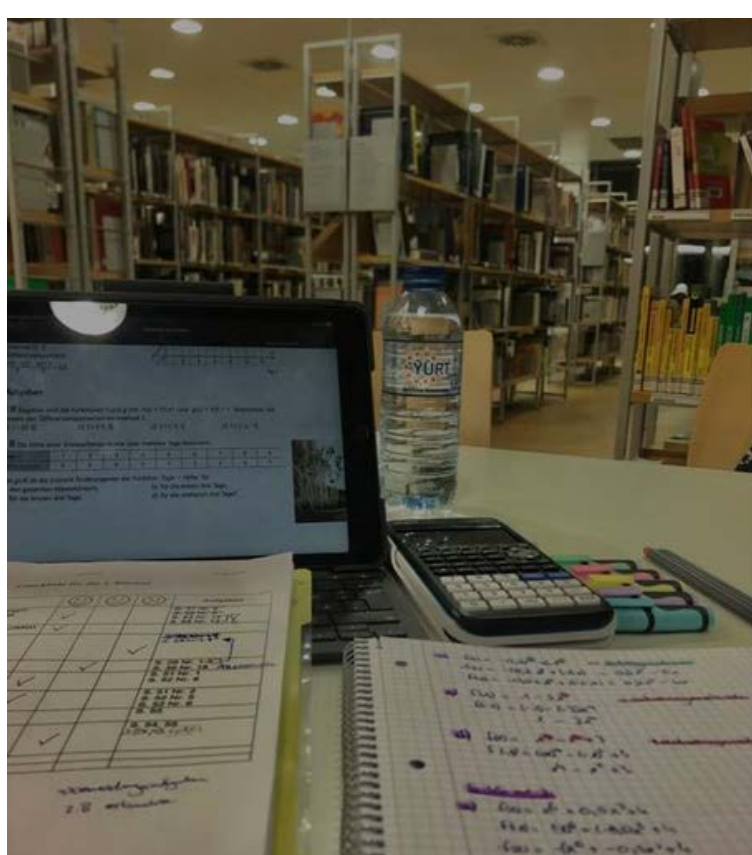
You wonder and search for
Your next steps in your
Education, Your future career,
Your life...

And before you, a new gate
Appears and welcomes you
With open arms...
Sixth Form!

For you to carry on your
journey,
To find out who you are and who
you want to be.
For you to discover your path
And support you in your
Journey towards adulthood.



As the first generation of
Platanos College Sixth Formers
Establish the way,
They bloom and thrive to be the
best they can be.
To lay the footprints for those
of us who will follow.



They represent a new chapter in
The history of
Platanos College
And stand as role models to the
rest of us,
Epitomising the message we
heard way back in Year 7:



Attitude Determines Altitude.

"Attitude Determines Altitude"