

VOICES

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MESSAGE TO READER

Messages from the VYM Multiverse

Mia, Oliver, and Isaiah — You’ve seen them before, on our covers, in different seasons, different places, and different moments. You just haven’t heard from them.

Somewhere beyond our world, they’re living their own stories too — the VYM Multiverse is their home. They’ve seen our stories, our questions, and all the little moments that make up our world. Now, they are sending their messages...

Dear VYM readers,

It is a pleasure to finally speak to you.

For as long as I can remember, the VYM Multiverse has been full of stories —different dimensions, different worlds, and people with perspectives I could never have encountered before. I’ve always been curious about the world beyond ours, and about the people on the other side.

Now, I have the chance to hear from you. Tell us about your city, your community, a place that means something to you, or a story you think deserves to be noticed.

I may not know your world yet, but I would love to.

**Warmly,
Mia**

MIA



Yo, what’s up — VYM readers!

So... apparently, there’s a whole other side of the universe, and you guys are on it.



OLIVER

Not gonna lie, this is kinda insane. One minute I’m doing my homework, and the next moment I’m talking to real VYM Magazine readers—you guys!!

So while we can actually talk, send us something. A weird question, a school project, or some random facts you’ve been obsessed with. Literally whatever.

Maybe it’ll end up in Brain Boost. Maybe I’ll learn something I didn’t know. Maybe we’ll all make questionable decisions and call it research.

**Yeewhaw! Waiting for your move.
—Oliver**

Hello, people from the other side,

You probably didn’t know we are here, which is understandable. But we’ve been watching, from another dimension. (Not in a creepy way, I swear.)

We’ve seen your late-night ideas, school projects, and all the tiny moments that probably don’t seem important at the time. From where I’m standing, they’re interesting. Your world is strange. Loud. Complicated. And I like it. Maybe that’s why I’ve always wondered what it would be like if we could actually talk.

Now that we can, there’s only one thing left to say: **What will you show us?** Shhhh... We’re listening.

—Isaiah

ISAIAH



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BRAIN BOOST Anyone Out There?

Zhengzhou, Seen Again

By Sophia Wang G8 (Vancouver, CA)



As the capital of Henan Province, Zhengzhou sits in the heart of China and has grown into a major transportation and economic center. Trains pass through the city carrying people to different parts of the country, while busy roads connect its many neighborhoods. Modern buildings rise above older streets, and shopping centers stand not far from small restaurants and traditional markets. To someone seeing Zhengzhou for the first time, the city can feel enormous, crowded, and constantly in motion.

This summer, I got the chance to return to this city that filled my childhood memories. The main goal for the return was to visit my family and spend more time with my friends, but this visit also changed my understanding of Zhengzhou itself.

At first, everything seemed familiar. The streets were busy, the sounds of traffic filled the air, and restaurants and shops lined the roads. People moved quickly from one place to another, as if they were all following a rhythm that the city had created for them. Hearing the familiar accents in people's conversations made me feel excited and nervous. Yet, after spending more time there, I began to notice details that I had ignored in the past.

When I first arrived, the city felt overwhelming. Zhengzhou seemed to move at its own pace, with cars filling the roads, people rushing along the sidewalks, and shops opening their doors to the constant stream of customers. I had seen all of this before, but I had never really stopped to think about it. When I was younger, a crowded street was simply a crowded street. This time, I began to notice the small details: the conversations between strangers, the vendors preparing food on the side of the road, the elderly people sitting together in parks, and the endless movement of people going about their daily lives.

One of the most interesting things about Zhengzhou is the way old and new exist beside each other. Modern buildings and large commercial areas show how quickly the city has developed, while older neighborhoods preserve a quieter and more traditional side of Zhengzhou. A new building might stand only a short distance from an older street that has existed for decades. These differences are easy to miss when you are simply passing through. When you stop and pay attention, however, they reveal how much the city has changed.



CITY SPOTLIGHT



Even the ordinary parts of Zhengzhou became more interesting when I looked at them carefully. I noticed people gathering in parks, families eating together, small stores serving local food, and commuters moving through the city every day. None of these things seemed particularly important on their own. Together, though, they showed me what life in Zhengzhou was actually like.

Returning also made me think about how quickly places can change. Streets that I remembered from the past looked different, and some places were no longer there. At the same time, certain parts of the city felt almost exactly as I remembered them. This mixture of change and familiarity made Zhengzhou feel like a city constantly caught between its past and its future.

That may be the most important thing I learned from returning: a familiar place does not necessarily stay the same, and sometimes we do not notice its changes because we are too familiar with it. When we move through a city without stopping, we see only what is directly in front of us. When we slow down, we begin to notice the smaller details—the buildings that have appeared, the streets that have disappeared, the people who give a neighborhood its character, and the traditions that continue despite all the changes around them.

Ultimately, A city is not defined merely by its famous landmarks or impressive skylines, but by the countless ordinary moments that bring it to life.



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CHINA HENAN ZHENGZHOU

When the Sky Turns Gray: Wildfires in Canada

by Ruxin Ma G9 (Burnaby, CA)

Summer in Vancouver is usually a time of blue skies, sunshine, and soft white clouds. But this summer has been very different. For long periods, the blue sky disappeared behind a gray haze of wildfire smoke. The smell of smoke reminded us that somewhere in B.C., another wildfire was burning.

This past August, wildfires destroyed homes and forced many people to leave communities where they had lived for years. For these families, losing a home meant losing much more than a building—it meant losing family photos, precious belongings, and memories that could never be replaced.

For people in Vancouver, wildfires may mean smoky skies and poor air quality. But for those closer to the flames, they can mean losing everything they call home.

So, why are wildfires becoming such a serious problem in Canada, and what can we do about them?

Where Do the Fires Start?

Wildfires usually start from two main sources: **natural causes and human activities.**

One major natural cause is dry lightning. This happens when lightning strikes during a thunderstorm but produces little or no rain. Lightning causes about half of all wildfires in Canada, but these fires account for more than 80% of the total area burned. This is partly because lightning often starts fires

Human activities are another major cause. Campfires that are not completely put out, discarded cigarettes, and sparks from equipment such as dirt bikes, vehicles, and trains can all start wildfires. These fires often begin near towns, roads, and camping areas. Because they can start close to homes and communities, they can become dangerous very quickly.



Ideal Conditions for Wildfire

Starting a fire is only the beginning. For a small fire to become a major wildfire, it needs the right conditions.

First, **high temperatures and low humidity** dry out trees, grass, leaves, and pine needles, creating plenty of fuel for a fire. Second, **strong winds** help flames spread quickly and can carry embers far ahead of the main fire, starting new fires along the way.

Canada's vast boreal forests also provide plenty of fuel. They contain large numbers of coniferous trees, such as pine and spruce, as well as other vegetation that can become very dry during hot, dry weather.

Climate change is also making these conditions more common. Warmer temperatures can dry out forests, extend the wildfire season, and increase the risk of extreme fires.

When hot, dry, and windy conditions come together, a small fire can quickly grow into a dangerous wildfire.

Ecological Impact

Wildfire can have both positive and negative effects on nature. Smaller fires are a natural part of forest renewal. They clear dead plants and branches, return nutrients to the soil, and allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor. Some trees, such as the Lodgepole Pine, even depend on heat to open their cones and release their seeds.

However, today's megafires can be much more destructive. Extremely intense fires can destroy large areas of forest, kill wildlife, and damage the soil. When fires burn too hot, new trees and plants may struggle to grow.

Wildfire smoke is another serious problem. It can travel hundreds or even thousands of kilometers, affecting millions of people far from the fire, including those living in Vancouver—and sometimes even across the U.S. border! After all, wildfire smoke does not need a passport to travel.



How Is Canada Adapting

It is becoming clear that stopping every wildfire is not possible. Instead, Canada is focusing on reducing the risk of dangerous fires, protecting communities, and making people better prepared.



1. Prescribed and Cultural Burning

Parks Canada and provincial fire services use prescribed burning in some areas. These are small, carefully controlled fires set under safe weather conditions. They can remove dry grass, leaves, and underbrush before the hot summer months arrive.

Governments are also working with Indigenous communities and learning from traditional knowledge about cultural burning. These practices can help keep forests healthy and reduce the amount of fuel available for large wildfires.

2. Community FireSmart Programs

Communities across British Columbia are also using programs such as FireSmart to reduce wildfire risks. Residents can remove dead leaves and branches, trim trees, and use fewer flammable materials around their homes. These steps create safer spaces around houses and can make it harder for wildfire to spread into a community.

3. Early Detection and Emergency Response

Canada is also improving the way wildfires are detected and managed. Satellites, aircraft, and other technology can help firefighters find fires earlier and monitor how they spread. Better warning systems and evacuation plans can also help communities respond more quickly when a wildfire threatens homes.

Conclusion

As global temperatures rise, wildfire seasons in Canada are becoming longer and more intense. We cannot prevent every wildfire, but we can reduce the damage through better forest management, fire bans, prescribed burning, community programs such as FireSmart, and better emergency planning.

Wildfire may start with a single spark, but its impact can reach far beyond the forest. We may not be able to stop every wildfire, but we can choose to be better prepared for the next one.



Scattered Cameras

By Xintong Yu G8 (Vancouver, CA)

Life at Lord Byng Secondary

Everyone sees life through their own lens, capturing different films from their own perspectives. Yet in a Vancouver high school, these separate stories constantly cross paths—in crowded hallways, narrow locker spaces, cozy classrooms, and open green fields. Countless simple moments become lively in the same frame as students and staff follow their daily routines, while the camera keeps moving.

Opening Shot — A Cat, Apparently

“Wait—no, I have an idea!” Sophie suddenly leaned across the table, one hand already reaching for a pen, while Michelle tried to get everyone to be quiet.

Half-finished notes, open textbooks, and scattered worksheets covered the big table. Six students sat around it, trying to find something they could all agree on.

Michelle looked over the mess of notes for a moment, already exhausted.

“Okay, Sophie, can we just quiet down a bit? Just to be clear, Ms. G told us to write about the major reasons that led to the collapse of the Roman Empire. So, wanna share?”

“OMG yes, I’ve been waiting for so long, Mich!! So can we draw a cat on the assignment sheet?? PLEASEEEEE—hey!”

Michelle shook her head and pressed her hand over Sophie’s mouth.

“Sophie, we need to actually focus on our work. You can draw whatever you want after we’re done! Alright, has anyone else gotten a point?”

The table slowly became quieter—or at least a little more organized. Though chaotic at first, the little incident had livened up the atmosphere. More and more group members joined the discussion as Michelle broke each idea down and pushed everyone to think more deeply. Sophie took on the role of “scribe,” jotting down all the points.

And, thanks to her hard work, she eventually got everyone's approval to draw the cat.

CUT!

The Roman Empire could wait.

The cat could not.



Frame Two — Where's Our Spot?

"Phew, it's finally over. Wanna grab some lunch?" Fiona walked out with the crowd.

"Sureee, let's go meet the friend group!" Sophie followed her out, grabbing Fiona's arm as they hurried between the tall, tree-like Grade Twelves.

After several turns and stops, they reached the cafeteria, where Michelle, Ruby, and Sue were already waiting for them.

"What's up? Enjoying your morning so far?" asked Sue, the "mother" of the group.

The two girls nodded, still catching their breath.

"Gang, why're you in such a hurry?" Ruby asked with a bright smile. "So where should we eat? The cafeteria is always full and loud. What about our old spot?"

Most days, they ate together in a circle on the grass field.

"Actually, no. It's so windy today," Fiona said, zipping up her jacket.

"For real... Wait, wanna go to Tim's? I miss my Orange Tangerine Lemonade Quenchers!!!" Sophie added excitedly.

"Erm, according to my calculations, we can't make it back on time," Ruby said in an intentionally robotic voice.

The whole group burst into laughter. Except Sophie.

"Guys, I have an idea," Michelle said. "What if we just eat in the hallways? Indoors and quiet!"

The group quickly agreed.

A few minutes later, they were sitting on the second-floor hallway with their food, talking as suddents walked past them. Eventually, no grass field, no cafeteria, no Tim's. Just a hallway.



CUT!

Apparently, every group has its own ol' spot.

Sometimes, you would just love to find a new one.

CAMPUS BEAT

Frame Three — Whack! Thump! Tap! Smack!

After the third block of class, students waved goodbye to their teachers and rushed out of the classrooms.

It was Tuesday, which meant FIT—Flexible Instructional Time—had begun.

Some students headed to the library. Others relaxed in the cafeteria. A few simply wandered around. And several students rushed straight into the gym. Ruby, Sue, and Fiona were among them.

“Hey, ready to ‘cook’ our opponents?” Fiona punched the air as Sue tried to fit both backpacks into a public locker in the girls’ change room.

“Girl, we are gonna NAIL this,” Ruby said, suddenly switching to a valley-girl accent and rolling her eyes.

Sue sighed as she finally managed to close the locker door.

The three girls headed toward the volleyball courts. The gym floor shone under the overhead lights. The nets were already set up, and a volleyball sat on each court. They stood on one side, warming up as more students gradually joined.



Soon, the other side had six players, while Ruby’s side had five.

“Service!” Fiona was the first server. She tossed the ball high into the air.

Whack! The ball flew toward the net.

There were no bad players on either side. Even though some of them had met their teammates only a few minutes earlier, they played as if they had known each other for years.

Thump! The middle-back player bumped the ball straight into the air.

Tap! The right-front player quickly set it toward the net.

And almost at the same moment— **Smack!**

The ball shot back toward Ruby’s side. For a split second, nobody moved. Then Ruby lunged forward, her hand barely reaching the ball before it hit the floor.

“Up!” she shouted.

The rally continued, faster and louder than before, until one final spike sent the ball over the net.

“That’s our point! YES!” Someone on Ruby’s side shouted with excitement. Her teammates hugged and high-fived each other. Even the opponents clapped for the great rally.

CAMPUS BEAT

After another thirty minutes or so, a high-pitched whistle marked the end of the FIT block. The court erupted in cheers.

For those few minutes, it barely mattered who won.

CUT!

The students had started as strangers.

They left as teammates.

Final Shot — Hallway

The hour hand on the clock finally reached three.

Across the school, doors swung open. Hallways filled with students, and voices spilled into the air. Hundreds of students rushed out of the building, while a few boys played basketball on the court, the ball bouncing in a steady rhythm.



Ruby waved goodbye to her friends and stepped onto the pavement leading home.

The school slowly became smaller behind her, eventually disappearing behind the hill.

And yet, as she walked down the street alone, she could still hear something lingering in her ears— laughter, footsteps, scattered words, and the echoes of another ordinary school day.

Maybe the school hadn't really gone quiet. Maybe the voices were still echoing in her mind - and perhaps, she would never want them to stop.

Camera pulls away. Fade out. End credits.



How to Pick the Perfect Cinema Format: IMAX, Dolby, LUXE, ScreenX and 4DX

By Eason Sun G8 (Shanghai, China)

For most people, sorting out different cinema formats can be really confusing. This article breaks down key tech, costs, pros-cons and real-world cases in plain language.

After watching *The Odyssey* in an ordinary auditorium, I deeply regretted my choice. Dim shadows looked washed-out, fine landscape details turned blurry, and powerful soundtracks felt flat. The same film delivers different experiences across different halls.

Many of us only know names like IMAX, Dolby Cinema and LUXE, without understanding their underlying engineering, sound algorithms and origin stories. Below is a full comparison of mainstream formats, ending with my ticket pick for the new Spider-Man film.

Standard Theater Hall

Core tech: Basic 2K digital projection and ordinary white diffuse-reflection screens. Limited color gamut and standard 5.1 surround sound without spatial audio. No HDR brightness control, leading to over-exposed bright shots and lost shadow details.

Cost: \$40,000-\$80,000 for full equipment and decoration, low certification and maintenance requirements.

Representative filmmakers:

1. Greta Gerwig (*Little Women*, *Barbie*): character-driven emotional stories, less dependent on heavy visual effects.
2. Noah Baumbach (*Marriage Story*, *White Noise*): realistic literary dramas with simple visual language.
3. Richard Linklater (*Before Sunrise Trilogy*, *Boyhood*): slow life-observation narratives.



Recent screening example: *A Real Pain*

Pros & Cons: Low-cost and relaxing. Poor for high-contrast blockbusters; best fit for comedies, literary and dialogue-heavy films.

IMAX (Image Maximum)

Core tech & fun fact: IMAX was invented in the 1960s in Canada, originally for science museums and educational documentaries rather than Hollywood blockbusters. Its first release *Tiger Child* (1970) was a science short.

Traditional 15/70 IMAX film frames are 9 times larger than standard 35 mm film, capturing extraordinary detail. Modern Laser IMAX uses dual 4K laser projection and the exclusive DMR remastering algorithm. Native IMAX supports the unique tall 1.43:1 aspect ratio.

Cost: Genuine Laser IMAX renovation costs \$1.2-2 million. Physical-film IMAX has extremely high maintenance, making such auditoriums rare globally.

Representative filmmakers:

1. Christopher Nolan (The Dark Knight, Interstellar, Oppenheimer): popularized IMAX for commercial blockbusters.
2. Denis Villeneuve (Dune Part 1-2, Arrival): uses IMAX's dynamic range for cosmic and desert visuals.
3. Michael Bay (Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen, 6 Underground): records practical explosions with IMAX high resolution.

Recent screening example: Dune: Part Two, Oppenheimer

Pros & Cons: Ideal for epic sci-fi and large-scale war films. Note: many titles only go through DMR up-conversion without native full-screen IMAX footage.

RealD LUXE

Core tech & fun fact: Built to fix dim, ghosting 3D. Ordinary 3D screens reach only ~30% light reflectivity. LUXE uses a 92%-reflectivity silver nano-screen plus circular-polarization optics; colour distortion is corrected in real-time. Viewing stays bright even when viewers sit off-center. Most LUXE halls pair with Dolby Atmos.

Cost: \$300,000-\$600,000 for upgrades, mainly screen replacement and optical calibration.

Representative filmmakers

1. Ang Lee (Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk): high-frame-rate 4K-3D works fit LUXE's brightness and refresh performance.
2. Zhang Yimou (Full River Red, Shadow): post-production colour tuning tailored for LUXE screens.
3. James Cameron (Avatar series): optimized for modern 3D fantasy worlds.



Recent screening example: Avatar: Fire and Ash

Pros & Cons: Top choice for 3D fantasy, animation and high-fps action films. Cannot match IMAX's gigantic screen scale.

Dolby Cinema

Core tech & fun fact: Represents top-tier theatrical image quality. Dual-RGB pure-laser 4K projection with Dolby Vision HDR delivers 1,000,000:1 contrast, rendering deep blacks and bright highlights simultaneously. Combined with object-based Dolby Atmos, sound floats freely in three-dimensional space. Important note: many venues advertise “Dolby Atmos”, but genuine Dolby Cinema demands special wall treatment, acoustic calibration and strict official certification.

Cost: Certified hall build costs \$1-1.8 million with strict hardware & environment standards.

Representative filmmakers:

1. Brad Bird (Ratatouille, Incredibles 2): HDR-enhanced animated features.
2. Denis Villeneuve (Blade Runner 2049, Dune series): final grading and mixing done for Dolby’s premium standard.
3. Wong Kar-wai (The Grandmaster, In the Mood for Love): subtle colour and atmospheric sound design.

Recent screening example: Dune: Part Two, Kung Fu Panda 4

Pros & Cons: Excellent for dark sci-fi, thrillers, stylized blockbusters and premium animation. Tickets are expensive and certified halls are scarce.

ScreenX

Core tech & fun fact: 270-degree immersive viewing by projecting extended footage onto left-and-right side walls via multi-channel synchronized projection. Side content is manually expanded in post-production. Without official ScreenX adaptation, side walls remain blank.

Cost: \$250,000-\$500,000 for hall transformation with extra projectors and image-fusion processors.

Representative filmmakers

1. Destin Daniel Cretton (Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings): superhero flying-action scenes adapted for ScreenX.
2. Yoo Seok-jong (The Battle: Roar to Victory): wide-angle large-scale war sequences.
3. Wen Muye (The Battle at Lake Changjin): expanded battlefield immersion.

Recent screening examples: Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire

Pros & Cons: Great for flight shots, monster fights and big battle scenes. Side-wall resolution is lower than main screen; quality fully depends on official adaptation work.

4DX

Core tech & fun fact: The format combining moving seats and environmental simulation. Six-axis servo-motor seats deliver shaking, tilting and rolling. Wind, water spray, flashes, scents and air jets are frame-by-frame pre-programmed by specialists; effects are not random.

Cost: \$400,000-\$700,000 per hall. Dynamic seats are costly and require frequent mechanical maintenance.



Representative filmmakers & supervisors

1. Bong Joon-ho (Snowpiercer, Okja): tight-rhythm stories matching physical immersive feedback.
2. Michael Bay (Transformers series, Ambulance): high-speed chases and explosions pair well with vibration and wind effects.
3. Lee Jae-seon: 4DX effect programmer for Avengers: Endgame, Jurassic World.

Recent screening example: Fast & Furious 11

Pros & Cons: Fun for casual-entertainment action and monster films. Mechanical effects distract from emotional literary plots; unsuitable for motion-sickness-prone audiences.

Conclusion & my Spider-Man viewing choice

My disappointing *The Odyssey* screening taught me that cinema labels are more than marketing names. Behind each ticket choice lie sophisticated optics, audio algorithms and decades-long industry evolution.

IMAX grew from educational museum tool to giant-screen blockbuster standard. Dolby Cinema pursues ultimate light-shadow precision. LUXE solves long-standing 3D-darkness pain points. ScreenX delivers panoramic immersion, while 4DX adds physical interactivity.

For the upcoming Spider-Man movie, full of high-altitude city dives, fast street chases, bright suits and dynamic action, IMAX will be my first pick. It faithfully reproduces sweeping urban vistas and fine movement details intended by the director. Picking the right format is one way to respect great cinema.

SPQR: History of the Roman Civilization

By Sophia Chen G6 (Guizhou, CN)

I. Roman Legends

According to Roman myths, twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, were abandoned as infants and raised by a she-wolf. When they grew up, they decided to found their own city. After an argument, Romulus killed Remus and founded Rome in 753 BCE. Romulus and Remus were not real historical figures, and the story is just a founding myth.

II. Roman Kingdom and early Roman Republic

Rome was ruled by kings for more than 2 centuries. Then, at around 509 BCE, the Romans overthrew their King, Rome became a republic. A republic is a form of government where the leaders are elected by the people and the leader's power is limited by a constitution.

***IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE ROMAN KINGDOM AND EARLY REPUBLIC WERE POORLY DOCUMENTED.**



III. Roman Republic

Rome was led by two elected consuls who served for one year. Each consul could veto the other consul's decisions and actions. Dictators (who had absolute control for 6 months) would be appointed during emergencies. However, the dictator had to step down when the emergency was resolved, or they reached the end of their term. While some dictators didn't abuse their power, Julius Caesar didn't step down when their terms ended, instead, he even went one step further by declaring himself "Dictator for life"[More details below in section V]. The senate, which began as an advisory council for the king, its job in the Republic period was to "advise" consuls (in reality the Senate held immense power and control). Only patricians (wealthy elites) could join the Senate, the plebeians (common people) could not join the Senate.

Initially, the plebeians had almost no political influence. However, they eventually gained power.

And again, it's important to note that the Roman Kingdom and Early Republic periods were poorly documented.



Rome became powerful and expanded far beyond the city. Later, getting in conflict with Carthage, a Phoenician founded city in North Africa that was already a superpower in the Mediterranean by the time the Punic Wars began.

IV. The Punic Wars

The First Punic War began in 264 BCE and ended in 241. Carthage and Rome declared war over Sicily. Carthage had a powerful navy, while Rome had a powerful army, but an irrelevant navy, however it quickly built a navy with around 330 ships. You might think Carthage would win and keep Sicily. Surprisingly, Rome won the war and forced Carthage to surrender Sicily and pay Rome 3200 talents(which was a lot of money).

The Second Punic War began in 218 BCE and ended in 201. The famous Hannibal led the Carthaginians and Scipio Africanus led the Romans. The war began when Hannibal attacked Roman territories in 218 BCE. Rome demanded Hannibal to be handed over for punishment, but Carthage refused, so Rome declared war. Hannibal's army famously marched across the Alps with elephants. Hannibal's forces reported to kill tens of thousands (the exact number varied by source) of Roman soldiers in a single day at the Battle of Cannae in 216. Now, you might think that Carthage would definitely win this time with Hannibal. However, Scipio Africanus attacked Carthage's North African homeland in 205 BCE. Carthage was defeated at the Battle of Zama in 202 and Rome claimed victory. Carthage was forced to surrender its navy and pay Rome.



The Third Punic War began in 149 BCE and ended in 146. The economy of Carthage was recovering. Cato famously declared in the Senate, "Carthage must be destroyed". When the Numidians (their neighbors) had a border dispute with the Carthaginians, Carthage intervened, breaking a Roman treaty. Rome declared war on Carthage over this. Rome besieged Carthage, destroyed it, and sold its remaining population to slavery. Rome wanted to ensure their enemy will never rise again and become a threat. Carthage is now a Roman province. Some people consider the Third Punic War unnecessary because Roman treaties already limited Carthage's power and dominance.

V. Julius Caesar

One of the most significant Roman figures is Julius Caesar (c. 100 BCE - 44 BCE). He played a huge role in the Roman Republic's fall. He first rose to power as a general, the conqueror of Gaul, the creator of the Julian Calendar, and "Dictator for life". He was a brilliant general that he conquered Gaul (in modern day France) between 58 BCE and 50 BCE. He sparked the Roman Civil War after crossing the Rubicon river without permission, and he won the civil war. His most famous quote is "Veni Vidi Vici", meaning "I came, I saw, I conquered".

He eventually became the BCE, "Dictator perpetuo" (Dictator for a long history of hatred to Kings. King, on the Ides of March (March assassinated him during a had saved the Republic. The and enemies of Caesar. Octavian (later Augustus) in

Julius Caesar also He introduced the Julian months, 365 days in a year. mathematicians realized 365.25 days in a year, so every four years. The Julian foundation of our modern month of July is named



Dictator of Rome, and in early 44 life). The Romans and the Senate had Terrified of Julius Caesar becoming 15th) in 44 BCE, the Senators Senate meeting, thinking they assassins were a mix of friends Caesar officially adopted his will.

changed the Roman calendar. Calendar. There are 12 However, Caesar's there are actually approx they introduced a leap day Calendar is the Gregorian calendar. The after him.

VI. Aftermath of Caesar's assassination and the end of the Republic

The assassins thought they would be viewed as heroes who saved the republic, however, the public hated them, especially after Mark Antony's funeral speech. And instead of saving the Republic and bringing the old Republic spirit back, the assassination just led to civil and political unrest in the city. Assassinating one guy will rarely bring back peace and harmony back.

After defeating the assassins, Mark Antony and Octavian turned on each other, Antony allied with Pharaoh Cleopatra and got into a civil war with Octavian. In 31 BCE, Octavian defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium and defeated them in Alexandria a year later. Egypt is now a Roman province. Both Cleopatra and Antony committed suicide after their defeat in 30 BCE.

(THE STORY OF ANCIENT ROME HAS NOT ENDED!!! COME BACK NEXT ISSUE TO LEARN MORE!!!)

The Season of Transition

By Lexin Chen G9 (Surrey, CA)



A new beginning
Wings take flight
The Autumn breeze
Feels quite right

Green turns to Orange
Orange turns to brown
And quickly beyond that
They all fall down

Within moments time
The leaves take flight
Flying from their homes
Just like a kite

The wind howls
It blows with emotion
Each single breath
Just like the ocean

A crashing wave
A tragic storm
Yet still it is
A majestic form

Captured by its beauty
Many stop in their tracks
To look past the waters
And to the climax
Where the waves seem to meet
the sky
The moon, the stars
There no longer is a border
Or a fence, or bars

But as this moment fades
All seems to start
The wind continues to blow
As though with a heart

The leaves reach the brown
The kite no longer soars
As the adventure is over
And no one kept score

Yet this is still, a new beginning
Where wings take flight,
The Autumn breeze
Still feels quite right



Beyond the Wire

By Ethan Q G4 (Zibo) & Bernie G4 (Beijing)

(CONTINUED FROM BEYOND THE WIRE, VOL1 ISS 3)

Chapter 3: Into the Academy

Coach showed the boys to the dormitory. There were two boys to each room. The older boys already knew where to go. Coach called to the new kids. “Kofi! David! Come with me,” he barked. The other kids snickered. “Just arrived, and the poor village kids are getting in trouble! Ha ha!” said the bully leader. Coach told them to mind their own business and brought Kofi and David to their room. The boys looked around. Their jaws dropped. David grabbed his hair and yelled. Kofi almost fainted. It was the biggest, most modern, most luxurious room they’d ever seen.



Near the window were two brand new bunk beds with Snow White sheets. Mounted on the wall opposite the beds was a TV – the old-fashioned kind, but still a luxury the boys could never have imagined. On the desk was an old-fashioned red telephone. And most amazing of all were two sets of brand new football kits. There was also a desk for writing or studying, and a little porch suspended in the air with a door leading to it, offering a view of the stadium and other buildings. On the wall there was a phone with a rotary dial. The bathroom was perfectly clean, with packed soap, and on one desk a device that heated water for drinking, plus sugar and freshly ground coffee. Kofi and David gasped. “This is our room!” David said in astonishment.

The coach nodded and said, “By the way, here are your new football shoes, Tshirts and socks,” pointing to the clothes on the bed. “And on Saturdays and Sundays we don’t have training or lessons, so you’re free to do anything! Also, about the meals — you must go to bed by 9 p.m. at the latest. You shouldn’t bully other kids. And most importantly, you should focus and do your best. Do not damage school supplies. Breakfast is at 7 a.m., lunch at 11 a.m., and dinner at 6 p.m. It’s almost time for dinner — get down there quickly!” the coach said as he closed the door.

Chapter 4: The Feast Begins

Kofi and David hurried down to the dining hall. When Kofi entered, he was amazed at the high ceilings, big lights and glass walls. At the front of the dining hall was a large stage with a podium in the middle. The back of the stage was a large window, which, because it was dark outside, looked like a giant mirror reflecting the dining hall back at them. A candle was burning on the podium.

CREATIVE HUB

“Woah, is this the best room in the academy?” Kofi said.

But just then a bell sounded. Kofi looked up at the stage and saw a large fat man climbing onto the stage, ringing a bell. He had a long blue and silver beard and blue hair. He was wearing a blue suit and shiny blue shoes. The man—who the older boys called “Big Panda”—shuffled over to the podium, looked up at the reflection, and, thinking the reflection was the dining hall, turned his back to the audience and started speaking.

“Let us welcome our new students, and they will be distributed to the four teams, and after that we will have dinner.”

Kofi turned to David. “Who is that?”

“I heard from the others he’s the Headmaster. They call him Pandora blues, but everyone just says ‘Big Panda’.”

“That guy’s nuts!” said Kofi. “And a bit weird!”



Just then, the boys started laughing and shouting. The candle on the podium had tipped over and lit his suit on fire. Big Panda noticed, grabbed a glass of water, and poured it down his suit—only to find it was full of gin, which made the fire worse! The coach ran out holding a fire extinguisher and sprayed it all over Big Panda, who stood up shakily, looking like a snowman. The boys were dying of laughter.

Chapter 5: The Sorting and the Feast

When the commotion died down, the headmaster rang the bell again to get everyone’s attention. They instantly stopped chattering. He spoke with a clear and strong voice.

“I’m not tired,” he said (though nobody asked). “I trust that your coaches have already told you the rules, and the times to eat and sleep. And also, as you can see, you are in different houses, and there will be an inter-house competition between them. The winner will get to hold the House Cup. You will have lessons in classrooms and on the outside fields. If your team wins the cup, then you will go on to compete in the Junior World Cup. And if you win that, it will promise you great wealth and fame—to the winning team, of course! Oh, and also, everybody has three years of study and plenty of time to compete, so if you don’t win this time, don’t be disappointed—work harder next time.”

The headmaster finished with a smile, slowly descending the flight of stairs, not looking behind him, and ended up landing loudly on the marble floor on his butt. Everyone burst out laughing again.



After that, the sorting began. A round of applause rose from the players as names were called. Kofi didn't catch all of them, but he heard his own name and David's—they were both placed in the Lions. The bullies from the bus all went to the Cobras. They glared menacingly at the new kids at the Lions' table, but Kofi didn't care because the feast was so yummy that he stuffed his belly so full he almost puked. There was pork, steak, eggs, pudding, cake, ice cream, rice, broccoli, lettuce, toast bread, jam, and many other things. They also met a friend called Tom.

Tom was a small guy, not very muscular, and wore a pair of big glasses. He looked like a professor, not a football player.

"You're new here, so I will take you on a tour through the academy," he said.

Chapter 6: A Tour and Lights Out

They left the dining hall and Tom pointed out the buildings. "Here are our bedrooms—they're on the first and second floors. And here is the meeting room. We go to meetings here. We used to train here, but that ended after Eleanor kicked a ball so hard that it broke the window and landed on Panda's head! So that was the end of training in here."

Tom led them further. "The meeting room is heavily guarded every day by two students, to keep enemy team spies from hearing our strategies. We also have a secret password—it's 'elephant pudding'. We change it every week when we have a meeting. And the Cobras' bedrooms are on the first and second floor too. Their place is so heavily guarded that it's like a safe, and the Cobras aren't very nice. They mostly bully, and the worst bullies are the boys they call *the Trucks*, because they barge into anybody who stands in their way, on the pitch and off! The first one is called Tommy, the second Hugo, the third Jax, and the fourth Alfie."

Tom showed them the Lions' common room, a cosy space with sofas and a fireplace. "And this is the blue door of the Lions. That's our symbol."

In the distance a clock tower rang eight times. Suddenly, the lights went off and the students stood there in the dark.

"Oh, that means it's time for bed," said Tom.

Kofi and David went off to their bedrooms and climbed into bed. Kofi lay there, his thoughts swimming. The day felt like a dream. What would tomorrow be like? Would he wake up in his hometown? For that matter, what was happening back home? Was everyone okay? Despite all these thoughts spinning around in his mind, as soon as he closed his eyes he fell asleep.



Why Do People Procrastinate?

By Isabella Feng G9 (Burnaby, CA)

Why do people procrastinate? Many people think it's because they are lazy, but in reality, people delay tasks because they feel overwhelmed, fear failure, or get distracted by more enjoyable activities.

First, people often feel overwhelmed by their workload, especially when it is due soon or the expectations are high. This creates immense stress and exhaustion, tempting them to take a quick break—which can easily accidentally turn into losing an entire day of productivity. As this cycle repeats, it becomes harder to stay focused or motivated, turning even simple tasks into heavy burdens and leading to even more procrastination.

Second, fear and dread are major triggers for procrastination. When people receive a large assignment, usually their first instinct is to review the entire package. After realizing how big the project is, they will start to think how long it will take to finish, and that will spark the fear. Just the thought of how challenging the assignment is might make them decide not to do it. Worried about failing or making mistakes, they might keep putting the task off to avoid the discomfort. As a result, they delay their work until the last minute, leaving themselves rushed and overwhelmed.

Lastly, addiction to social media and video games plays a huge role. These activities are way more entertaining than writing an essay, preparing a presentation, or memorizing study notes, making them an easy escape from hard work. A person might tell themselves they will only scroll for three minutes before starting their homework, but quickly those minutes turn into hours, and suddenly the deadline is right around the corner.

In conclusion, procrastination is rarely a sign of laziness; rather, it is a response to feeling overwhelmed, fearing failure, and being easily distracted. Understanding these root causes is the first step toward overcoming them.



YouTube: More Than Just Entertainment

By Diana Da G8 (Shanghai, CN)

Who doesn't know about YouTube? As the world's second-largest search engine after Google, as well one of the most-used online platforms in the world, it has billions of users every month. However, YouTube is restricted in some countries because some critics argue that its relatively loose content restrictions can allow violent or abusive videos to spread across the internet.

At the same time, YouTube also has many benefits, especially its educational videos and wide range of online resources.

YouTube isn't a place for entertainment. It can also be a useful tool for learning. Teachers can introduce students to additional visual learning resources, while students can search for instructional videos that match their specific needs. This can encourage self-directed learning.

Students often enjoy watching videos on YouTube, which not only helps them understand difficult concepts, but also improves their listening and communication skills. At the same time, teachers can spend less time explaining complicated concepts and more time helping students develop their learning potential.

YouTube can also support online and micro-learning. Students can watch shorter videos when they need to focus on one specific topic, making learning feel more manageable for those who find it difficult to concentrate for a long time. In addition, YouTube videos can be viewed on computers, smartphones, and tablets, making learning more flexible and accessible.

Furthermore, one major feature that differentiates YouTube from many other social media platforms is the variety of information and perspectives it brings together from around the world. The stage is much wider. By visiting YouTube, you can encounter people from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds. You can learn how other people live, think, and see the world. In this way, YouTube connect you to the world, helping you develop a broader perspective and extend your knowledge beyond your own classroom, school, or community.

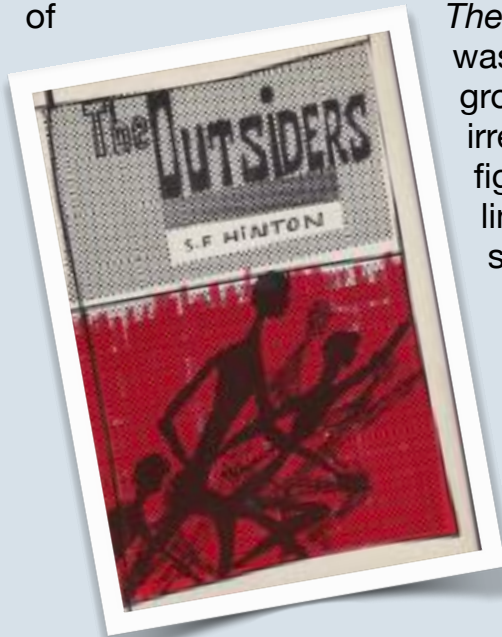
Ultimately, YouTube offers far more benefits than entertainment alone. When used wisely, it can provide educational resources, support self-directed learning, and open a door to a much wider world. It can help students save time, understand difficult subjects, and discover new ideas—not only academically, but also culturally.

YouTube is not simply a place to watch video, but also **a window to the world.**

My Thoughts on The Outsiders

By Xintong Yu G8 (Vancouver, CA)

Can you imagine a violent, bitter, and long-lasting conflict, almost like a mafia war, unfolding among a group of



group of teenagers in Tulsa, Oklahoma? Welcome to the world *The Outsiders*, written by S. E. Hinton in the 1960s. The story was set in a world where a few streets could separate one group of teenagers from another, each filled with an almost irreversible hatred toward the other. After years of arguing, fighting, and competing with one another, they had drawn a line between them—and once that line was crossed, there seemed to be no way back.

The story followed Ponyboy Curtis, a fourteen-year-old Greaser who had lost his parents and lived with his two older brothers, Darry and Sodapop. The Greasers often fought with the wealthier Socs, who looked down on them because of their social status. Although Ponyboy never intended to become involved in the conflict, he gradually became part of it after meeting Cherry Valance, a Soc girl. Later, Ponyboy and his friend

Johnny were attacked by a group of Socs. Ponyboy was nearly drowned by Bob, one of the Socs, and Johnny killed Bob while trying to protect him. The two boys hid in an abandoned church, where they later rescued several children from a fire. The reports suddenly changed them from “wanted murderers” into “kids sent straight from heaven.” However, Johnny was seriously injured in the fire and eventually died from his injuries, shortly after the Greasers defeated the Socs in a rumble. After Johnny's death, Ponyboy began to understand the meaning behind everything that had happened and decided to write about his experiences.

Shaped by a difficult life and the painful loss of their parents, the Curtis brothers learned to respond to their struggles in different ways. Ponyboy grew into an intelligent, sensitive, and thoughtful person, setting him apart from the stereotypical image of a Greaser. At first, he mistook Darry's strict behavior for indifference or a lack of care. Yet as the story progressed, he realized that Darry's strictness came from fear and responsibility. After their parents' deaths, Darry had given up his own future to take care of his younger brothers, often feeling pressured by the responsibility. Sodapop, on the other hand, was more cheerful and affectionate, often trying to keep his brothers from falling apart. Although the three brothers expressed their love in different ways, their relationship showed that love was not always expressed through words or gentleness.





TEEN VOICES

Johnny and Dally showed another side of the Greasers. One clear piece of evidence was that at the drive-in, Cherry was able to recognize that Johnny was different from the rough image she had of Greasers. Johnny was portrayed as quiet, nervous, and deeply affected by the violence around him, but he was also kind and sensitive. Dally, who seemed to be his complete opposite, was aggressive, disrespectful, and determined to make everyone believe that he did not care about anything. Yet the contrast between these two characters became especially interesting because Dally actually cared deeply about Johnny. While Johnny's suffering made him more gentle and understanding, Dally seemed to have responded to suffering by becoming "tuffer" and more reckless. They represented two different ways of surviving in the same harsh world: one tried to remain kind despite everything he had experienced, while the other protected himself by becoming someone who appeared impossible to hurt.

Cherry Valance made the boundary between Greasers and Socs even more complicated. She was a Soc, but she did not fit Ponyboy's idea of what a Soc should be. She talked to him honestly, understood some of his feelings, and admitted that being a Soc did not mean having a perfect life. At the same time, she still cared about Bob, even though he had hurt others. I think this made Cherry more interesting than simply making her "the nice Soc." She was able to see both sides of the conflict instead of only taking the side she seemingly belonged to. Through Cherry, Ponyboy started to realize that the people he called Socs were not simply a group of cruel, wealthy teenagers. They were also individuals, just like the Greasers were.



Once Ponyboy began to see these individuals instead of simply seeing "Greasers" and "Socs," the conflict between the two groups looked very different. Neither side truly understood the other, while both groups made assumptions based on money, appearance, and reputation. The Greasers saw the Socs as "privileged and heartless," while the Socs saw the Greasers as "dangerous and aggressive." Yet characters like Cherry, Johnny, Randy, and even Dally showed that these labels could not explain everything. What I found most meaningful about the novel is that the conflict did not disappear simply because one side defeated the other. Instead, Ponyboy slowly learned that there was never a simple "good side" and "bad side" to begin with. This made me think about how easily people can become enemies when they only see the group someone belongs to instead of the person standing in front of them.

In the end, Ponyboy realized that Greasers and Socs were not so different. After losing Johnny, Bob, and Dally, he understood how much pain the conflict had caused. Instead of letting their stories be forgotten, he chose to write down their stories so others could see beyond the labels of "Greasers" and "Socs." The whole story finally gave me a sense of closure, as if the curtain had fallen on this tragic drama—the story of *The Outsiders*.

VYM Mini MUN Shaping the Future of Education

In August, VYIF hosted a Mini Model United Nations (MUN) centered on the inspiring question: **“What Should Students Learn for the Future?”** 7 young delegates represented **Canada, China, the United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland, Australia, and India**, taking on the roles of diplomats and decision-makers.

Each delegation looked at education from the perspective of its own country and selected three courses that it believed students most needed to learn, considering its unique characteristics, needs, resources, and future challenges. **These courses covered areas such as Technology & Future, Business & Thinking, Society & Global Issue, Personal Development, Creativity & Culture.**

Then the Open Debate took the discussion further. Delegates defended their proposals, questioned other countries’ priorities, and explored opportunities for cooperation and compromise. Later, **three alliances were formed**. Each alliance worked through discussion, cooperation, negotiation, and compromise, to select 4 priority courses, while balancing the needs and interests of its member countries.

These courses were brought to the final vote. Each country could vote Affirmed, Abstain, or Denied. Five courses received at least five votes and were successfully adopted in the final resolution: **AI & Technology (#1), STEM & Future Science (#2), Entrepreneurship & Innovation (#5), Climate & Sustainability (#7), and Communication & Public Speaking (#13).**

	Course Name	Course Description
Technology & Future	1. AI & Technology	AI Tools, AI Ethics, Digital Technology AI and Society
	2. STEM & Future Science	Science, Coding, Robotics, Engineering, Biotechnology
	3. Future Careers & Workforce Skills	Career Exploration, Adaptability, Workplace Skills
Business & Thinking	4. Financial Literacy	Saving, Budgeting, Investing, Taxes, Personal Finance
	5. Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Starting a business, Innovation, Marketing, Risk Taking, Business
	6. Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving	Logic, Evaluating Information, Decision-making, Problem-solving
Society & Global Issue	7. Climate & Sustainability	Climate Change, Renewable Energy, Conservation, Sustainable Living
	8. Global Citizenship & Culture	Global Issues, International Cooperation, Different Cultures Understanding
	9. Civic Education & Law	Government, Democracy, Laws, Rights & Responsibilities, How Communities Work
Personal Development	10. Media & Information Literacy	Fake News, Fact-checking, Social Media, Online Safety, Evaluating Sources
	11. Life Skills & Independence	Living, Basic Needs, Time Management, Organization
	12. Health & Well-being	Nutrition, Sleep, Exercise, Stress Management, Healthy Habits
Creativity & Culture	13. Communication & Public Speaking	Presentation, Debate, Negotiation, Teamwork, Persuading Mass
	14. Arts, Creativity & Design	Visual Arts, Music, Creative Writing, Design, Creative Problem-solving
	15. Languages & Cross-Cultural Communication	Foreign Languages, Cultural Understanding

Alliance #1	United Kingdom, United States, and Switzerland	a. #5. Entrepreneurship & Innovation b. #13. Communication & Public Speaking c. #2. STEM & Future Science d. #7. Climate & Sustainability
Alliance #2	Canada, Australia	a. #1. AI & Technology b. #2. STEM & Future Science c. #8. Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving d. #7. Climate & Sustainability
Alliance #3	China, India	a. #1. AI & Technology b. #2. STEM & Future Science c. #7. Climate & Sustainability d. #8. Global Citizenship & Culture

More than an introduction to MUN, the activity gave students an opportunity to speak up, cooperate, and learn to negotiate and compromise. At the same time, their course choices offered a glimpse into how young people see the world and what they believe matters most for the future. From AI and STEM to entrepreneurship, sustainability, and communication, their choices reflected both the

skills they hope to develop, and the challenges they believe the next generation will face. **Through Mini MUN, VYM gave young people a voice in shaping the future.**

Anyone out there?

By Khloris Qiu G8 (Richmond, CA)



Many people believe that aliens exist, while others are skeptical. Although there's no proof that aliens exist, I personally believe they do. However, I don't believe they are bald, green people with giant eyes.

One reason I think they exist is because the universe is so big. Actually, maybe "big" isn't even the right word -- it's incredibly huge. I just can't imagine that Earth is the only planet in the entire universe where life exists.

I recently did a science presentation and learned that scientists believe one of Jupiter's moons, Europa, might have an huge underground ocean beneath its thick layer of ice. Since water is one of the key ingredients needed for life, scientists think Europa's ocean could possibly have the resources needed to support simple forms of life, such as microbes, which are extremely tiny living things that are usually too small to see without a microscope. Scientists also believe that Europa's underground ocean could be enormous. It may even contain more water than all of Earth's water combined.



Europa isn't the only moon suspected of having an underground ocean, but scientists pay special attention to it because it is considered one of the most promising places in our solar system to search for signs of life.



Obviously, there is still no actual proof of alien life. But I still believe they exist. After all, anything that doesn't live on Earth could technically be considered "alien".

Another funny thought I had yesterday was: What if aliens are soooo much bigger than we think? What if they see us the way we see ants? That would be so funny. What if Earth was actually a little human enclosure in some alien named Roberto's room?

Okay, anyway, if the universe is so enormous, why haven't we found any life outside Earth yet? What do you think?

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