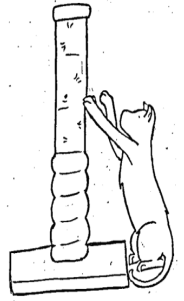




The Scratching Post



Friday, January 24, 2020

Should Public Middle Schools Have Sports Teams?

By: Jaxton Harrison, Maverick Bowles, and Noah Duncan

You probably know WHMS doesn't have any competitive sport teams. Should public schools have sports teams? Many private schools have sports teams so why can't West Hills? Many think it's because of the money it costs, or having a coach. Some people say it's because middle schoolers shouldn't be competing against other middle schools. Do you think West Hills should have a sports team?

For a long period of time, middle schools had sports teams. They mostly had basketball teams, but some had other sports. Around 2010, schools took them away, especially public schools. Jordan School District decided to stop having sports in middle school around this time.

This decision didn't change community sports or private schools. Private schools still have sports teams today. For example, Ascent Academy, the school behind WHMS, has a school basketball team that competes against other private schools. Wesley Curtis is a basketball player that plays there at Ascent.

Many kids wonder, is there a possibility that WHMS could bring competitive sports back, instead of just having after school intramurals? If they were to

be brought back it couldn't just be one school. It

would have to be the whole district.



While some students think this is a great idea there are many negatives that convinced the district to end them in the first place.

One of these is that there can be building pressure on the athletes which could affect their grades and social life.

If the district does change the policy they are likely to have support at WHMS. Coach Sidwell had some things to say about the topic. Should public middle schools have sports teams? "Most definitely, we should."

According to a district policy there shouldn't really be competition between middle schools and their students. But Coach Sidwell doesn't agree with that policy. He says, "Competitiveness is good, in the real world you have to compete for jobs, sports, and stuff like that. It will give you good experience, but there is a limit to competition. You just have to be careful that you don't cross the line."

If we did have sports teams, would you coach them? "Sure, my background is as a basketball coach at the high school level and college level. Also, you guys have a disadvantage because all of the

Granite district schools have competitive sports teams and they are used to playing competitively at middle school, junior high, and high school level."

"The teams that they have are basketball, wrestling, volleyball, soccer, and track. It makes junior high more fun when you've got sports."

If you were to be on the sports teams would you have to have good grades? "Yes you would, playing sports is a privilege. When I was in school we had to maintain at least a GPA of 2.0, but for what I know at Copper Hills you need a 3.0."

A student at WHMS, Wyatt Burbidge, had some very good answers. Should WHMS have sports teams? "Yes I think they should because it makes school more fun for students and people on the team."

If we had a sport team, which sport would you want it to be? "Probably basketball because I feel like it would be the easiest to do and coach."

If you weren't on the team, would you still go to the games? "Yeah, I would still go to the games. I would show some school spirit."

The students seem to want teams, the gym teachers do, but is this a good idea? There is the cost and time to consider. Someone could get injured. Who's going to pay for the injury? Not to mention that it is hard to make sure players and parents don't "Cross the Line." The students could be too competitive out there.

So what do you think? Should the school have sports teams, and have school spirit. Or should the district keep it the way it is now?

The Mystery of the Bermuda Triangle

By Widget B.

The Bermuda Triangle. What exactly is it? What's the big deal? The Bermuda Triangle is a section of the Atlantic Ocean roughly bounded by Miami, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico where dozens of ships and airplanes have disappeared with no explanation.

At History.com, they report on a mysterious incident that happened with some Navy pilots. "The pilots of a squadron of U.S. Navy bombers became disoriented while flying over the area; the planes were never found." Other boats and planes have seemingly vanished from the area in good weather without even radioing distress messages. The reports of unexplained occurrences in the region started in the mid-19th century. But what really is the Bermuda Triangle? Why was it so dangerous? What makes it mysterious? What's the deal with the Bermuda Triangle?

The site LIVE SCIENCE claims, "Records kept by the Aviation Safety Network and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) indicate that many of these disappearances can be linked to storm activity in the area, or to unsafe conditions on the vehicles themselves." Earth's oceans cover approximately 70 percent of the planet, reaching depths of about 12,100 feet, on average, and up to 36,200 feet at the deepest point, according to the National Ocean Service. The seas contain approximately 321 million cubic miles of water, so it's no wonder that boats and airplanes can seemingly disappear into them and leave no sign of their passing. But what if the Bermuda Triangle has an alternative motive? Is there something in our seas that is making ships and planes suddenly disappear?

In 1964, a reporter named Vincent Gaddis claimed that, "1,945 disappearance of Flight 19 —



five Navy planes with 14 crew-members aboard." Another Navy aircraft with a 13-person

crew that was sent to search for the missing Flight 19 also never returned, according to reporter and U.S. Navy veteran Howard L. Rosenberg.

The website, INDEPENDENT claims, "The triangle is said to be responsible for the loss of at least 1,000 lives along with some 75 planes and hundreds of ships within the past 100 years. Scientists have now claimed that hexagonal clouds creating "air-bombs" with winds of up to 170mph could be responsible for hundreds of unsolved incidents at sea. The storms are said to be so powerful that ships and planes can be plunged into the sea in an instant. Researchers also noted that large-scale clouds were appearing over the western tip of the island of Bermuda, ranging from 20 to 55 miles wide. Dr Steve Miller, a satellite meteorologist at Colorado State University, told the Science Channel's What on Earth program: "You don't typically see straight edges with clouds. Most of the time, clouds are random in their distribution."

Using radar satellites to measure what was happening underneath the unusual clouds, the research group found sea level winds were also reaching dangerously high speeds, creating waves as high as 45ft as a result.

A famous YouTuber Jimmy Donaldson, more widely known as MrBeast, posted a video where he and a couple of his buddies spent 24 hours in the Bermuda Triangle. Nothing mysterious or dangerous happened in those waters. So is the Bermuda Triangle done making ships disappear?

The 27 Club

By: Satia Theroux,
Karsen Mery, and Megan Holliday

Do you know what the 27 club is? The 27 club is a group of artists and actors who died before the age of 27. There are so many talented artists or actors that have died before the age of 27. Amy Winehouse is part of this club she died from alcohol intoxication. Recently, a beloved artist, Juice WRLD died on December 8, from a seizure, by popping pills, at age 21. He wrote a song, Legends about young legends dying, it was dedicated for Xxxtention. It was researched and about 70,000 people in general die at 27, but how many of those are in the 27 club? Some well-known artists that are part of the 27 club are Kurt Cobain, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Amy Winehouse.

It seems that most rappers or artist die from an early age because of drugs or alcohol. Lil Peep died from a drug overdose also at a young age. Some artists get assassinated like 2Pac and Xxxtention. Xxxtention was assassinated at the age of 20, in Florida in June 18, 2018. He was killed in an apparent robbery just outside RIVA Motorsports.

Vickie Button in the

counseling center said, "Most of them die because they think they're 'invincible'. Thinking they can't die." We know that a lot of people do drugs, probably because of that reason.

Ms. Garrick a health teacher at this school said "They probably do drugs at a young age because of friends or the environment." She also says a lot of them die because of "Risky behavior and car crashes."

Mr. Simpson, a counselor, says, "Drugs affect people even when they aren't using them." He is right studies show Drugs can affect other people and it can affect your mental and physical health.

There are also many rappers like JuiceWRLD, XXXTentation, Lil' Peep, 2pac, and The Notorious B.I.G. Many of them died from drugs and alcohol, but some died from murder, suicide, or natural causes. Do you think more people will join the 27 club? And if a 21 club starts like in JuiceWRLD's song lyrics "What's the 27 club-u-u we ain't makin it past 21" Who would want to join that!



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Generational views on LGBTQ+

By: Kloie Reynolds, Ezmeralda Calderon

LGBTQ+ is the representative phrase for people with different feelings and thoughts about their sexuality. A version of the full one is LGBTQIA. L standing for Lesbian, G standing for Gay, B for Bisexual, T for Transgender, Q for Queering or Queer, I for Intersex, and A for Asexual. Some versions have other letters like another T (standing for Transsexual), or a P (standing for Pansexual), just to include the other feelings about the community. Many people are scared to tell their opinions about being LGBTQ+ and some aren't. People are very different about dealing with this situation. Do different generations and ages of people have different views?

According to the UCLA Williams Institute, 4.5% of adult Americans identify as part of the LGBTQ+, 5.1% of women identify while 3.9% of men. 40% of these people are youth under the age of 18.

"I think that those who choose to be part of that community should be respected and loved the same as anyone else." 9th grader Aria Gilbert says. "It is their decision and we shouldn't force them to think otherwise. This is a free country and we all have free agency." A lot of people agree that this community should be treated fairly, like anyone else. They still are human whether they are straight or not.



Aria she says, "We are more used to it and we realize that they are human too. In the past it was something that didn't make sense and didn't really 'fit in'."

One 7th grader, who identifies as gay, had this to say about how she is treated. "If people know me well, and know that I'm gay, they are supportive. Sometimes I am treated unfairly, like on the bus. Some people don't really like me because I am gay. My friends support me ..." She says that when talking about her sexuality, she feels most comfortable around people she knows.

Even though a lot more people are getting used to the idea of the LGBTQ+ community and support them there are still people that don't believe that promoting the LGBTQ+ community is a good thing.

With the growing community, the world view has started to change and many schools, businesses and people are finding ways to support and accommodate them. Most people say this generation seems to be accepting them and treating them a lot better than the last generation. Why is that? According to

One anonymous source says, "It's hard to comment on LGBTQ+ now because you can't say you think their choice is wrong. If you do, people accuse you of being hateful. I don't hate LGBTQ+ people. But I don't support them either. They don't have to believe I am right, but I shouldn't be called mean just because I don't think their beliefs are right.. I still think we can be kind to each other and not accept each other's beliefs."

WHMS wants everyone to feel like they can be themselves and believe their own truths. How our school helps the LGBTQ+, according to Mr. Knight is, "As counselors we want and work to make everyone feel welcome at our school."

While more and more people today support the LGBTQ+ community there are always going to be people who don't support it. Despite what people believe, more people are coming out as LGBTQ+ every year. As this happens it's clear that the younger generation of Americans are handling it pretty well; treating them like anyone else.

While the USA is changing to make things less prejudiced there are still problems for LGBTQ+ people. In some places in the world they don't allow same sex marriage, or classify some groups (like the transgender group) as a mental health issue and don't allow it.

The debate on what is fair and what is right is likely to continue for a very long time as not everyone agrees with their choices, but things are defiantly getting better and more accepting for those who are LGBTQ+ in the USA.

When do kids stop believing in Santa?

By: Isaiah Dorlarque

Many parents tell their kids about Santa, The Easter Bunny, and The Tooth Fairy because they're fun traditions. Believing in these beings creates an excitement and magic for kids during the holidays. A lot of parents want to pass on this feeling and tradition of what they believed in when they were kids. They want to share and create for their kids what they were excited about when they were young. But all too soon kids find out the truth and stop believing. When does this usually happen? When is the age of not believing?

In an interview with Alex Casanada, he said he doesn't believe in Santa, the Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy etc. He stopped believing in Santa in elementary school because

other kids told him Santa was fake. He also said that one Christmas he heard someone down stairs so he looked and saw his mom walking out of the bathroom. So he told himself his mom was the one that put the presents by the tree.

In another interview with Rylan Wilstead He also answer No to believing in Santa. He said he stopped believing at age 12. I asked him if he thinks it's bad for parents to lie to their kids about Santa he said not really because it's not really a big deal and that parents just want their kids to believe in Santa just like they did when they were young, it was a fun thing.

In an interview with Braxton Poli his answers were different. Braxton still believes in Santa even though most people don't. He says he still believes because parents buying all those gifts and hiding them doesn't make sense. "Santa is real."

According to Times Live the average age to stop believing in Santa in the United States is eight. For many kids the end of believing in Santa comes from hearing other

kids talking about it, or catching their parents with their presents While the fantasy comes to end for almost everyone, many wish that it didn't. 34% of adults wish they still believed in Santa, and 65% of kids still play along at believing even though know it isn't true.

So do you still believe? Did you find out earlier or later than eight? Do you plan to keep pretending to keep the magic alive? What is your experiences with believing in Santa?



Does WHMS need a mascot costume?

By: Braxton Sailor, Matthew Munoz

more school spirit to our school."

Why do other schools have a mascot costume but WHMS doesn't? Is there a reason? It seems like every school has a mascot, but not every school brings their mascot to life with a costume. Should WHMS change and get a named and costumed mascot?

According to Principal VanderMeiden, "We don't need one because we can't use it like in high schools because they have football games and pep rallies."

Having a use for a mascot is one consideration, but is there any use for a mascot in middle schools? Principal VanderMeiden continued and said "The SBO's were talking about how if we do get one it could be used at assemblies, opening day, and for food drives." So while middle schools don't have sports events and teams like high schools, there are still things the mascot could get involved in.

The last question we asked Principle Vander Meiden was, If all the students in the school pitched in would you be willing to buy a costume for the school? She said "We wouldn't make the students pay the school for the costume, because we as the school have enough money."

So the question is, 'Would a mascot be worthwhile for WHMS. According to Principle Vander Meiden "The SBO's were talking about having a school mascot costume at their last meeting." So the idea is being considered.

John Raft an 8th grader at west hills middle school, said that he wants our school to have a mascot costume because he believes that, "It would bring



Some students think WHMS should have a mascot because other middle schools do. One such school is Sunset Ridge. While Sunset does have a mascot, it is one of the few middle schools in the district that do. People who

want a school mascot say, "so that means we would be one of the unique schools." Fred Jones said, "I feel like our school needs a mascot because if we had one we would be unique from all the other middle schools."

There are some downfalls to consider when talking about a mascot costume. There's the cost, usefulness, and the question of who would get to be the mascot.

One WHMS student brought up another concern. Carter Jacks a 7th grader described another unpleasant situation clearly." I think that the mascot costume will get dirty and will look gross."

While the question of if we will even get a mascot costume is still undecided, some people are still pushing for it. One student has even gone so far as to put forward a name, "If they do get a costume the name I would give it would be Willy the West Hills Wild Cat." Carter Jacks.

So in conclusion, It looks like most people like the idea of a school mascot to have something that defines our school. If the school gets one still is undecided. We will just have to wait and see and keep asking for something other than just a picture to represent the school.

How Weather Affects People's Lives

By: Jaylin Grajeda

Many people don't realize just how much the weather plays into all lives. As the year goes on, the weather changes, and as it's changing, so do people. Sometimes looking around the school people may notice the differing moods of everyone. What's the science behind all of it? Does seasonal depression really exist? This is something that everyone will have different opinions on.

The types of weather people don't prefer will affect the way they're feeling. Leaving them to have a different outlook on life that isn't necessarily positive. After asking Mr. Link Simpson, a counselor at West Hills, throughout all his years of being a counselor if there's a specific time of year he notices students go to counselors the most, he replied, "Around holiday times and winter they do tend to come in a little more." He also gave advice on how to lift people's spirits during those times saying, "Focusing on activities they already enjoy doing. Sometimes when we don't feel so great we have to force ourselves to do things. Getting out there and doing activities will help improve your mood." As reported by *Psych Central*, *doctors suggest using light therapy to help, which deals with being exposed to artificial light. Many people say it's beneficial.*

As talked about earlier, most people are aware that winter is the time of year when people aren't very happy. Symptoms can begin to appear, thus showing the change of mood. According to *Mayo Clinic*, *one of the main reasons why people get so gloomy around winter is because of the lack of sunlight. However, there are different reasons for everyone. Some people even find that seasonal affective disorder doesn't exist. After questioning Spanish teacher, Mrs. Maylett, if she believes different weather and seasons affect students and their class progress, she explained, "Yes I do. I see it es-*

pecially in February and March. Students are restless and they seem distracted." Although there may be times where things get hard, students have to keep on going and try to make the most of things.



A different point of view to this is those who actually enjoy the winter time as opposed to those who don't. As everyone thinks differently, these people find this time more enjoyable. Whether it's the weather or the Christmas holiday, there's something about that time of year that gets those people going. After questioning 10th grade, Copper Hills student, Kailey Springer, if she prefers any season compared to others and why, she shared, "I prefer winter, because the sun makes me grumpy, and the cold is just relaxing and calming to me." Claimed by *Know Myself*, *some people enjoy the winter more, because being isolated in the comfort of their home gives them a sense of safety.*

No matter what it is that's getting you down, there are things to do to become more cheerful.

Being open about how you're feeling and letting others know can truly help sometimes. Especially, if you're needing help with anything in your life. Spending time with those you love is also helpful. Another thing you can do are small acts that will make you feel better about yourself. Self care goes into that as well. It's good to take some time for yourself. Even if that means getting away from others sometimes. As long as it's something that makes you feel better. Everyone is different, and different is good. Enjoy the little things in life that make you who you are. Don't dwell on the things that take away your happiness. Make changes in your life for the better.

Is The Grading System Fair?

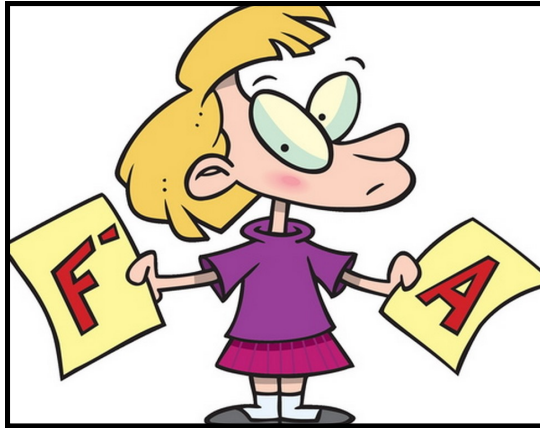
By: Karli Sadler

This year middle schools in the Jordan district switched to a new grading system: Standards based grading. The idea was to make grading more fair and have grades show what students can do, but has is done that? Some students at West Hills Middle School are saying that the new grading system is not very accurate.

Logan Sadler says, "I don't like that with this system you aim to get a B. You have to do extra work to get an A. In my opinion, the system isn't very accurate." The idea that being able to do a skill doesn't get you the top grade of an A makes many students angry. Some ask,

Why should you have to do more work? I thought this way of grading was to make sure we could do skills, not make us do more busy work just to go up to an A."

While some don't like the new system, others like the change. Maysi Christensen states, "I think that Skyward is pretty accurate now. The only thing that I'd change is you shouldn't have to go above and beyond to get an A."



Some students remember that in elementary school, you'd get a score out of 100 and then on your report card you would get a 1, 2, 3, or 4. Kate Cahoon said, "It's confusing. I think that getting a 19/20 on an assignment is better than getting a 4 because, when you get a 3 or 4, you don't really know what you need to improve

on. However, when you get a score like 19/20 you know what you need to work on."

Some students still don't think grading is fair for other reasons. Does your score also depend on how your teachers grade? All teachers grade assignments differently. The way each teacher grades changes your grade on your paper and on Skyward. Some teachers are really strict when grading important assignments or assessments, others are more easygoing. Some teachers, if they know you tried your best, won't take off as many points from your score, others will.

The differences in grading was one of the reasons the district moved to the new grading system. It was hoped that by focusing on the standards and having teachers at the same school give the same tests and assessments that there would be less chance of unfair grading happening.

While the new grading system still has problems it is here to stay for the rest of this year and probably for the next few years at least. Hopefully teachers here at WHMS will be able to help fix the problems with the system to make it more fair.

Are Video Games a Waste of Time?

By: Jayden Hallmark and Alani Jackson

According to the Center on Media and Child Health, "56% of teens ages 13 to 17 play video games for an average of 2.5 hours per day. Some people say this isn't a waste of time. Some people say video games challenges you to think, and are worth the time. Whatever view people have, almost everybody plays games on electronics. Is there really a difference between playing a game on your phone or playing a video game? So are video games and games on your phone are a waste of everybody's time, or are they worth the time people spend? What do students and teachers at West Hills think about video games?

One parent of a 7th-grade WHMS student had this to say. "I don't like video games because my kids don't listen or come down to eat when they are playing them."

59% of adults think video games are a waste of time according to Pew Research Center. Some people go further and say they are bad. They say that video games affect the brain, memory, and vision, and that some violent video games may even cause depression, migraines and seizures. Additionally video games get in the way

of how well students do in school! They can cause anger issues and social problems, and grade problems. This is because a lot of time is spent gaming. Teenagers spend an average of two hours every day gaming.

These problems affect more men than women because 15% of men say they are gamers and only 6% of women. But if you count gaming on phones as well, then women are even more affected.. 63% of mobile gamers are women and 37 % are men. Research has shown that these problems don't only happen when playing video games. They can also happen when gaming on your phone

211 million people, or 67% of Americans, of all ages, play video games. Some people say they can cause stress, anxiety, and even isolation if the addiction gets severe enough. Video games can even kill brain cells and interrupt a person's sleep.

A Counselor from WHMS named Alison said: "I think video games are a waste of time because of violence and it teaches unrealistic views of the world, and how to handle conflict".

While video games have many critiques, they also have many supporters.

One student from WHMS named Peter in

7th-grade says that "I think video games are not a waste of time because there are different games that let you do different things. I like to play Lego games they are not violent; they are calming."

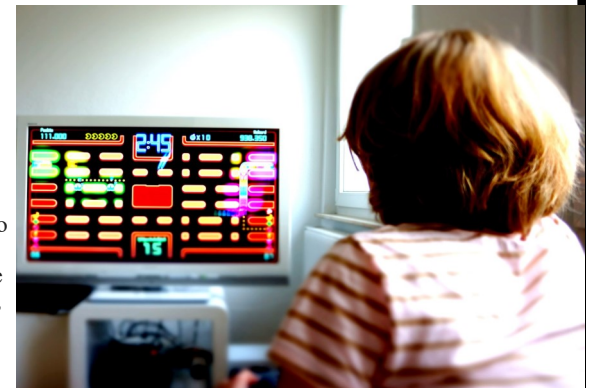
Another 13 year old, Alejandro, said, "Video games are the best thing to do in my free time. I like to play them because they just give me that freedom and some games that I play was just like real life yeah. I play violent games, but they do not really affect me like they do to my brother."

There are many reasons people like video games. Most people say video games challenge you to think, they have engaging stories, they help develop hand-eye coordination and they keep kids out of trouble. Almost everybody plays games on electronics. They do it because they are fun. People need activities in their lives that help them destress.

Video games are fun and can help people relax. ... Video games are designed for relaxation. They give people a chance to escape from their busy, stressful and routine lives. One WHMS says, "When people say playing video games is a waste of time, they are referring to those who play all day or all night long. If you do it for only an hour or two a day it's just a fun hobby."

Another defense of video games is that there are many careers and opportunities for jobs with them. There are gaming tournaments all over the world where amazing gamers can win millions of dollars. "How is hoping to be an NFL player and different than wanting to be a professional gamer?" One student says. "Sure your chances aren't great, but you should still do what you love and go for it."

There are lots of different opinions about video games and gaming in general. What do you think?





Most popular sports in the world

By: Emma Garamendi and Jake Brown

The world's most popular sports might surprise you, especially if you live in the United States. Because none of the top three most popular sports in the world are very popular in the United States. If you live in the US you might think football, baseball or basketball would be some of the top sports on the planet. In reality the three most popular sports in the world are field hockey, cricket, and soccer. All of these sports have over 2 billion fans each and soccer is the leader with over half the world's population being a fan of soccer. So let's take a deeper look at all three.

Let's start with the third most popular sport field hockey. Field Hockey has over two billion fans and is most popular in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. For those unaware of what field hockey is it's very similar to soccer except the players use sticks to drive the ball instead of their feet. The best field hockey player in the world is Dhyhan Chand, he is considered the

greatest field hockey player of all time.

The second most popular sport is Cricket. With close to three billion fans. Cricket is very popular in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries. From an outsider's perspective cricket looks a lot like baseball but the two sports are actually very different. Cricket has 11 players on each team and the main goal is to score more points than the other team. The first game of cricket that ever took place was in 1646.

Last but not least the most popular sport in the world is Soccer or as the world knows it outside of the US Football. Soccer is popular all around the world. Ancient soccer has been traced to China as far back as the second century. Currently it is played by 250 million players in over 200 countries, making it the most played sport on the planet.



How to Avoid the End of Quarter Panic

By: Emma Garamendi

Many students don't care or pay attention to their grades when they're in the middle of the quarter. They think "I have lots of time to make it up," or "This game or activity is more important right now." They plan to catch up on what they put off, and then never do. Then it gets to the end of the quarter and now they're in a panic mode. You don't know if you will be able to fix your grade. Many teachers just give up on calling in certain kids to WIN because it's always the same students that wait till the last minute to fix their grade or because they don't think there is enough time for that student to actually learn the skill before the end of the quarter. But here are some things for you to try next time you see your grade is going down.

The first thing is very simple, study before the test or assignment so you never have to make it up and do it all over again. Planning to wing it and knowing you're likely to fail is not a good way to do school. If you plan to fail and re-do it later your just planning to give yourself more work later. If you can get it right the first time with a little bit of work, you should. It will save you a lot of

stress. But sometimes even when you study, you still don't do as good as you thought you would. If this is the case, you should study again while looking at what you messed up and get a re-do in as quickly as possible. The longer you wait the more you'll forget.

Most students can get their grade where they want it if they work hard enough, get help and have a decent relationship with that teacher and feel like they can ask questions. Teachers don't want to help you if you don't respect them and you don't want to get help from someone you don't respect. So try to keep mutual respect in your relationships with your teachers. So make sure next term you don't wait till the last minute to get your grade where you want it, and try to better your relationship and communication with your teachers.



How to Avoid Getting Sick this Winter

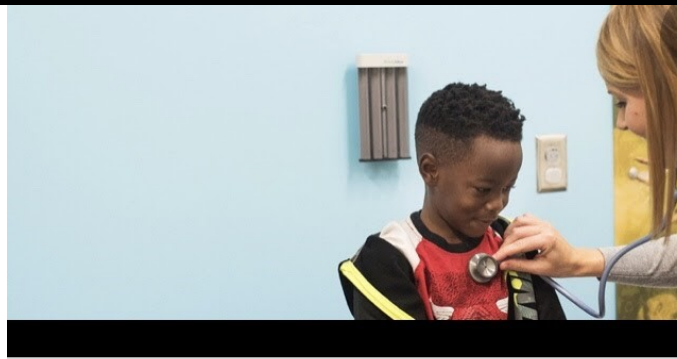
By: Heber Adams and Thailund Larsen

During the winter, it's much easier to get sick. From the common cold to the nasty flu, sickness is everywhere during the holiday season. Everyone is inside for the most part. Spreading germs all over the place. However, there are many ways that you can avoid becoming ill this winter.

A big mistake a lot of people make is forgetting to wash their hands before they eat. When you touch your food with your unclean hands, all of that bacteria is going to go in your system. Washing your hands multiple times throughout the day is a good habit to have. It will keep your hands mostly free of bad bacteria.

Valerie Rahaniotis gave some advice on how to stay healthy this winter. "Make sure you're getting your annual checkups. and if something feels wrong, don't hesitate to come get it checked out by a doctor. Good hygiene is important. And an active and healthy lifestyle is sure to keep you healthy."

Another good way to avoid getting sick might be a little



surprising. Getting enough sleep is necessary for good health. Without enough sleep, your body is susceptible to getting sick more easily. When your body has time to rest and heal, you'll feel much better.

A healthy diet can keep your health in good shape as well. Eating fruits, veggies, and drinking plenty of water everyday will have your body feeling great. Your body will be in better shape in order to fight sicknesses successfully.

Arin Draper is a ninth grade student that attends West Hills Middle School. She gave some input on staying healthy.

"Honestly I have a good immune system so I barely get sick. Sometimes if I'm feeling a little sick I'll take Zicam to avoid getting more sick. It's all about how good you take care of your body." she said.

The most common type of illness in the winter is the common cold. It's easily treated, but there are a few more serious things to watch out for this winter. Pneumonia is a viral respiratory infection. It's seen mostly in very young children. However, some elderly people get it often as well. It can be very serious and dangerous if not treated. It can lead to fluid in the pleural. From there, the fluid can get infected and cause very serious side effects.

Mononucleosis, or mono is a common illness among teenagers. Also known as the kissing disease. It gets its name because it's spread from saliva. It will have you down in bed for a few days. Some symptoms include, sore muscles, sore throat, fatigue, and fever. The symptoms can linger for months if not treated.

Those are just a few examples of common winter sicknesses that you should look out for. To conclude, a good diet and lifestyle along with good hygiene practices can help keep you out of the doctor's office this winter.

Teen Stress

By: Miranda Duncan

Teens experience both mental and physical stress. A few symptoms are anxiety, feeling nervous, procrastinating or neglecting ideas. Teens will feel tired and have changes in sleeping habits. Teen stress isn't an easy thing to deal with. Teens will have negative thoughts and feel overwhelmed.

Most teens say that homework and school cause a lot of stress. Peer pressure and parental pressure also cause stress for teens. Expectations and pressure to do good from parents and family members can cause a lot of stress. Time in a teenagers life will cause them to feel overwhelmed, pressured, or feeling like there's so much to do in such little time. Technology is a very common cause of stress and pressure. Research shows that social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat have increased the feelings of isolation and depression in teens.

Doctors commonly prescribe selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) to help with anxiety and stress. SSRIs increase the levels of serotonin and affect mood, appetite, sleep and memory. A few common medications are: Lexapro, Prozac, Axil and Zoloft. These can help treat stress including anxiety as well. Some side effects of taking

these are; nausea, dizziness, and drowsiness. If you're concerned about the medications and how they are affecting you, then talk to your doctor. Make sure you're being safe when taking these, and make sure your doctor prescribed them.

It's always a good idea to relieve stress, especially when you're super over-

whelmed. You always want to make sure to take time for yourself and take care of yourself. A few stress relievers are; be active, get out and do something like jogging. Exercise, yoga. Connecting with other people is also a good stress reliever, connecting with others can distract you from everything that's stressing you out. Getting enough sleep is a good way to reduce the amount of stress in your life. Eating healthy will help you take care of yourself. Meditation can help calm you down and it can help to clear your mind. Make sure to try out any of these examples if you're feeling stressed out.

Author and director Jay Winner, MD, says "stress doesn't only make us feel awful emotionally, but it can exacerbate just about any health condition you can think of." A few health problems stress can cause are; obesity, heart disease, Alzhimers disease, diabetes, depression and asthma. Too much stress can make us sick. It can cause physical problems like headaches, upset stomach, high blood pressure and chest pain. Stress can also lead to emotional problems like depression, panic attacks, or other forms of anxiety.



What was the Meme of the Decade?

By Freddy H.

Memes are something that nearly everyone knows about. They're funny images with captions with slight differences that are spread around like the plague and give everyone a good laugh. There were a lot of memes in the 2010s, each one different from the others. But which one of these memes top the others? Which is the meme to top them all?

This is a hard question to answer, since there were hundreds of different formats over the years, a lot of them being not so good. Some of them were forced, and others were dragged on for way too long and became annoying. Others just simply died off and became irrelevant. These memes likely won't be winning any awards anytime soon, since they've either been completely forgotten, or we'd just rather not remember them because of how annoying they were.

This leaves us with the memes that are currently "alive". The majority of these memes, however, are recent. The memes that can become meme of the decade should be the ones that lasted the longest. These are the formats that had a long life during the decade, and weren't "killed off," and were able to be posted on Reddit for years without the comments being spammed with people saying "dead meme".

Memes that fall into this category are the Drake meme, press F to pay respects, Skyrim memes, Doge, and SpongeBob memes.

While the Drake meme fizzled out near the end of 2019, it still lasted a good 5 years, which lets it qualify for meme of the decade. "Press F to pay respects" falls into the same boat as the Drake meme, however, this one lasted a year longer.

Skyrim memes come in many forms, some being about the game itself, while others are their own formats that apply outside of the

game (the most common format is "Sneak 100", "Destruction 100", "Illusion 100", etc.).

Doge is a meme that sort of comes and goes when it comes to relevancy. It was one of the first memes to come to the internet, so it holds a special place in most people's hearts. Doge is probably the most likely to win meme of the decade, due to the fact that it's won lots of votes across many "meme of the decade" websites.

However, despite the love for Doge, there's one meme that should be the winner. And that is SpongeBob. SpongeBob comes in so many different formats. From top-bottom impact font memes of 2010 to the more modern "Aight Imma head out" meme, SpongeBob himself has appeared dozens of times throughout the decade, and the formats are always relevant. But it's not just SpongeBob, other characters frequently appeared in formats, making the entire show one big meme.

Not many people have considered SpongeBob the meme of the decade, which is definitely a mistake, as the show has made such a big impact on the meme community that it's honestly surprising that people aren't talking about it more.



So, as cute as Doge is, SpongeBob should be the one to earn the title of "Meme of the Decade." Not just the character, but the entire show deserves a reward for being so meme-able.



Greatest Movie in 2019

By: Braylon and Keegan

Movies are great and fun to watch. But what is the best movie that came out this year? It is a tough question because so many good movies just came out.

Almost every major genre will be covered. To make it fair we will also be looking at opinions on the movie and how much money it made in the box office.

- Action: The best action movie of 2019 is "Avengers Endgame", It is the end of The Avengers series Which had many people excited going into because of the other Avengers movies that came out before it, it made 2.79 billion in the box office.

- Horror: the best horror of 2019 was "Happy Death Day 2 U", this movie going in had some big shoes to fill with the

first movie doing so well although it did not do as well but still very good. Happy death day 2 u made 64.5 million dollars in the box office.

- Animated: The best animated film of 2019 was Frozen 2. Frozen 2 had fans waiting for a very long time for it to come out. Frozen 2 made a lot of money they only spent 100 million on the movie, but they made 1.69 billion dollars in the box office worldwide.

- Comedies: the best comedy in 2019 was Spider man Far From Home with a 94% on rotten tomatoes far from home was a good movie. Over all making \$253.9 million in the box office.

All of these movies are good but according to Cameron Bernard "The best movie of 2019 was *Endgame* it showed the end of *The Avengers* movies and is my favorite movie ever."

According to Max Smith: The best animated film this year would have to be *Frozen 2*. *The little lizard dude is cool, plus the songs are kind of fire.*

According to Oswaldo Becerra "The best movie of the year for me was *Spider-Man Far From Home*. It showed more about him and I will avoid spoilers but that was the best movie of the year."

These were the best movies of 2019. The movies had to be rated pg-13 so some movies may be inaccurate. We hope you agree with us and what was your favorite movie of 2019?

Dear Abby,

I have a problem I eat too much junk food. Like Taki's, Hot Cheetos, McDonalds etc. I don't want to get any more fat because I'm getting really big. It's hard to run. How can I fix this?

Please help Love, human figure

Dear human figure,

Changing our diet to be healthier is hard. A lot of people struggle with this. Try to change your diet a little bit at a time. It is easier to stick to it if you gradually make changes. If you do this you will see change happening. Limit how much you eat out and how much junk food you eat.

You should also start being more active. Once again start slow. Maybe also exercise for at least 5-10 minutes a day you will also see progress. Just stay on top of it; keep challenging yourself to be better and don't quit, and you will see a lot of progress.

Hope this helps.
Your friend, Abby



Dear Abby,

I have a problem. I am very claustrophobic and being in the classroom makes me feel anxious. I have talked to most of my teachers and asked to keep the door's open. I have talked to all my teachers to keep it open but a certain one teacher said she would keep it open but then when I sat down she closed it and also every time I walk by the teachers classroom the teacher's door is open. It makes me wonder if she does it on purpose?

From, I love dancing

Dear I love dancing,

I'm sorry that you are not being made comfortable in your class, and that you feel like your teacher is purposely ignoring your needs.. Sometimes teachers forget, or leave the door open more as the day goes on because of how hot the room gets.

Try talking to the teacher about it and also ask if you can move seats by the door. Ask your teacher if you can be in charge of the door. I heard sitting by the door helps and this way you have some control. If this doesn't work, or if the teacher is purposely ignoring your needs, go and talk with the administration. They can make sure you get the learning classroom you need to do well.

Hope this helps!
Your friend, Abby

Dear Abby

Hello everyone, Abby speaking. If you submitted a letter thank you, if you would like to submit a letter come to Ms. Fawcett's room: 203. Have a great day!



Dear Abby,

Every time I play with my dog I always get bit or hurt so when I play I try no to get hurt, but I do.

From Rose.

Dear Rose,

I'm sorry that you get hurt while playing with your dog. Maybe you can try to reward your dog when it doesn't jump up or scratch at you. Training your dog is important and it helps if your dog knows that if they are good they will get treats.

If that doesn't work, maybe you could talk with your parents on ways they think could help. Maybe hire a professional dog trainer, or have you wear a long sleeve shirt or gloves while you train your dog. Hope this helps. Remember, you are amazing.

Thank you for your letter! Hope this helps!
Your friend, Abby.

Dear Abby,

I'm failing a class and I can't find a way to fix my grade in that class.

Help please, Isa

Dear Isa,

It's hard to get behind in a class and not do as well as you were hoping. You should try to talk to your teacher about what assignments you can work on to get your grades up. You should also take advantage of Win time; it's a great opportunity to get a grade up.

Sometimes it's harder to understand how to do the work if your not paying close attention so you should try to be more quiet and productive and pay attention in that class.

Hope these ideas help you get your grade up.
Your friend, Abby.

Dear Abby,

I have a problem. The boy next door has a crush on me, and he comes over every day. I have work to do, and I have chores. I don't want to sound mean, so I say yes every time. How do I say no without hurting his feelings? Please help me!

From, Heartbreaker.

Dear Heartbreaker,

It's hard when someone likes you more than you like them. Especially when they feel romantically interested and you don't. You just need to be honest and tell him the truth or you will give him false hope which will end up with him possibly asking you out.

When he comes over you should be honest. If you are busy, tell him, "I'm sorry but I actually have plans today." When in doubt, being honest is best.

Hope this helps.
Your friend, Abby.



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Contest

Design the best Valentine's Day card.

Submit entries to Ms. Fawcett, Room 203

Entries due: February 7th

Winners will be chosen in the following categories:

- Funniest
- Most Romantic
- Most Creative

Enter now for a chance at a SWEET reward!

Valentine's Day Word Search

K S Q S J I V R T D S R Q G K
R Q Q T D M A B X U F N Q J J
K G D A S N L Y E U S F S N S
S V E E M B E R I G C E V O L
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I M T M Q S K U R A U N P E H
C A R D S K A A E T W I I G U
M C D I R R M H H X E P D P N
W Q K L Y S R E W O L F J O J

CANDY
CARDS
CUPID
DEAR
DOVES
FEBRUARY
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