

THE RUISLIP EYE

The latest news and views from Ruislip High School



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'An Inspector Calls' comes to Ruislip High

By Dorian (Year 11)

"We are members of one body", reads a well-known quote from *An Inspector Calls*, and Year 11 certainly were as we all gathered together on 11th November to watch Central Youth Theatre deliver an incredible workshop on this exam text.

Opening with a description of the key ideas in any text: themes, structure and form, Holly, the lead actor, used a football metaphor (especially appreciated by the audience's Liverpool fans) to help clarify these concepts.

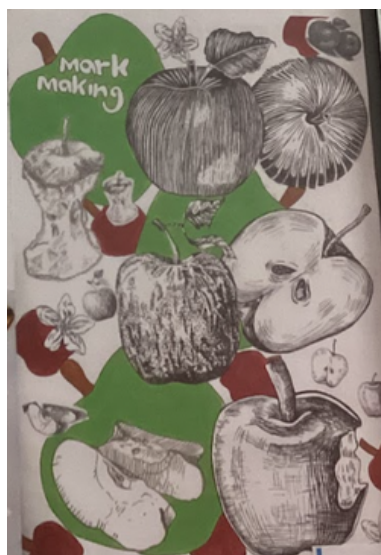
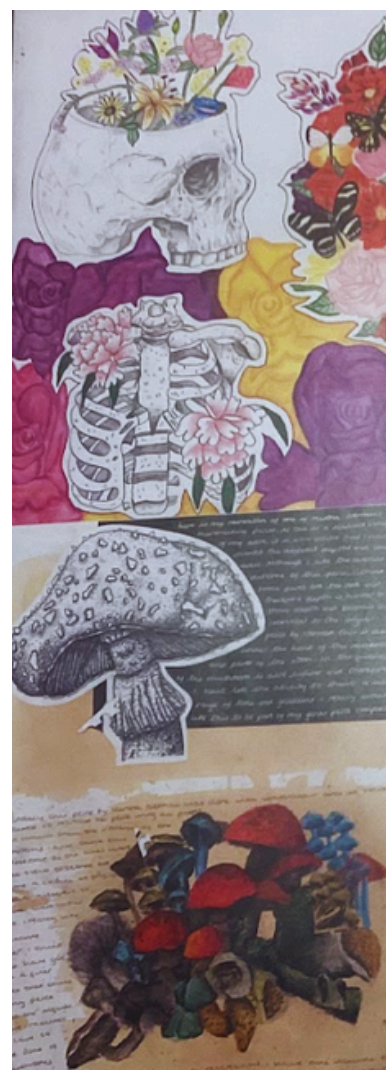
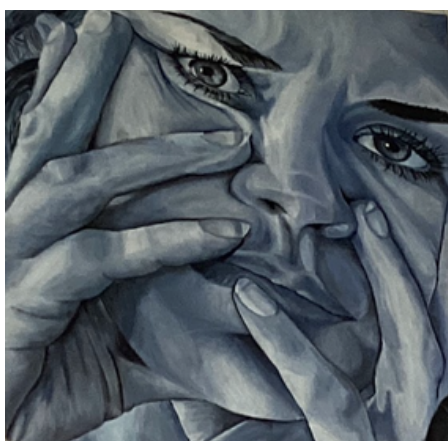


Once we understood the basics, the actors proceeded to act out individual scenes, and teach us to understand them in interactive, workshop-style sessions. Key quotes were analysed, and character development explained, but the team also drew attention to more theatrical choices, harder to demonstrate in the classroom. These included props, entrances and exits, and costume choices, such as Sheila's ornate, expensive scarf symbolising her materialism, and Eric's jacket that he wore in different styles from the beginning to the end of the play, representing his progression as a character.

The whole year group listened attentively throughout the workshop, enjoyed the performance and found it very useful as exam revision for our upcoming PPEs. If only going to the theatre always counted as revision!

Ruislip High School Artwork

It's easy to leave the school's artwork unnoticed, but once you take a look at the amazing pieces around you, you'll be starstruck! Our school is full of talented young artists with many bright ideas. The artwork across our school is full of a range of different themes and materials used. Here is some of the magnificent artwork that we found hiding around the school:



Welcoming Our New Deputy Head

By Zaynab (Year 9)

As many of you may know, the recently appointed Deputy Headteacher, Mr Noble, has joined our school. To find out more about him, I conducted an interview to learn more about him. Here are the results:

What made you want to work at Ruislip High School?

I worked in Hillingdon schools for 10 years and always had great admiration for Ruislip High School's values and culture. When I toured the school I was very impressed with the students' attitude to their education and the amazing opportunities that were provided for everyone in the school. Also, the values of Ruislip High perfectly align with my own values of education.

What is your job title and what do you do on a day-to-day basis?

I am Deputy Headteacher of the school and I also teach Computer Science. For most of my day, I ensure that the curriculum at Ruislip High School is the best it can be for every subject, and that the students at Ruislip High School have the best possible learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

Do you have any ideas for the future of this school?

I am always looking for the next-best opportunity for the students here, and I am always interested in maximising opportunities for every student and ensuring that their experiences inside the classroom are as memorable as possible.

Do you have a motto that you live by?

"The obstacle is the way"

What do you do outside of school?

When I am outside of school, I spend time with my family, play lots of guitar and football, and also spend time walking.

What is your biggest pet peeve?

Lateness!

Can you give me an overview of your career?

After university, I worked in eCommerce for 3 years. I then became a Computer Science teacher in Hillingdon for the next 10 years. Other roles included Head of Year, Head of Sixth form and Assistant Headteacher. After this, I moved to a new school to set up and manage a new Sixth-form in Rickmansworth. After 6 years at this school, I was thrilled to get a job at Ruislip High School as Deputy Headteacher.

As we can all see, Mr Noble is a great addition to our school and will no doubt help us all in many ways in the future.



Sustainability Week: What Happened and Why?

By Scarlett (Year 8)

What is sustainability?

Sustainability is all about keeping our world safe for longer. It could be simple things like recycling glass bottles, to bigger scale things like switching to solar energy.

Why is it important?

Sustainability is important because it helps stop our carbon footprint from growing. This is critical because every parts-per-million amount of CO₂ we release into the atmosphere heats up our Earth by around 0.06°C per decade, which may not seem like a lot at first, but as we are already on an average of 15 degrees celsius, if the temperature rose by only 0.5 degrees, we would lose not only polar sea ice, along with all the animals who call it home, but also all our gorgeous coral reefs around the world.

How did we raise money, and what for?

During sustainability week, we gathered funds for Mankwe, a rhino nature reserve in South Africa that is family-owned and run. It aims to protect and hopefully increase the population of rhinos. All money donated during this week was donated to the reserve.

What happened during this week?

- The 'How Low Can You Go' Challenge - a trust-wide challenge, assessing who is the most sustainable school, the most sustainable year, the most sustainable class, and even the most sustainable student. This year, Year 8 was the winning year group.
- There were quizzes about sustainability, as well as the optional Trust slogan and poster competition.
- There was a donation of £1 on ParentPay you could donate to try to guess the rhino's name, winning an adorable toy rhino.

Top tips to help you reduce your carbon footprint

There are numerous ways to reduce your carbon footprint, but some of the easiest and most accessible ways include:

Walking to school
Bringing lunch in a reusable box instead of cling film or foil
Switching lights off
Leaving the TV unplugged
Reducing the thermostat by one degree



There are many ways to get involved in helping the environment, even now the week is over, and I hope you have lots of fun being more sustainable. The planet will thank you for it!

Things to do in Ruislip

By Emma (Year 8)

Now, Ruislip may seem like a boring town, and it is... but only if you don't look hard enough! So, I'm here to tell you some of the fun and interesting things you can do with family and friends within the vicinity of the school.

1. The Duck Pond Market

This market is one of my favourite places in Ruislip! There are a myriad of stalls with unique, artisan items from a variety of small, independent businesses. From handmade, crafted items to baked goods, to different cuisines from across the world (including Korean fried chicken!) there is something for everyone. The market is at the very end of Ruislip High Street and takes place on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each and every month. I highly recommend it!

2. Kate's Waffle Cabin

Waffles. Dolly Parton music. More waffles - need I say more? But seriously, this family owned business has amazing American style waffles and French toast with loads of toppings, a great atmosphere, delicious food, and it is in need of some more customers!

3. Charity Shops

Now, charity shops may seem like some old, boring ordeal, but I love them! Going to the high street and visiting every charity shop I can see, even just browsing, is a valuable activity. I have found so many of my favourite clothing items and bric-a-brac there. You can get very lucky! I once saw an entire Nintendo Wii (with everything included) and a Tamagotchi! Everything is also very cheap, so you can always strike a bargain.

4. Ruislip Woods

Ruislip Woods is a sadly under-appreciated part of Ruislip. It's massive and it's a nice place to just walk your dog or play games outside with friends. It's beautiful and great for photography as well. It's also filled with armies of little critters for insect lovers.



5. Ruislip Manor Library

This is one of my favourite libraries, with free printing and computer use, and a large study area with cookies and hot chocolate available. They have a lovely children's area with toys, and a vast collection of books for everyone. It's really easy to join and you won't regret it!

These are just a few of the things you can do in Ruislip, and I bet if you look around and research, you'll find even more!

New Bee Retirement Home in the UK

By Tomasz (Year 7)

Recent studies have shown that a quarter of all known bee species have not been seen for 30 years! Bee-loving fans at Flying Flowers, a UK based company, have decided to build a retirement home to protect our bees. Read on for more information...



Brilliant Bees

There are around 250,000 bees in the UK, made up of nearly 270 species. Each bee produces half a teaspoon of honey in its entire life. This results in 739 litres for the whole population of bees - they truly are incredible animals. Keep in mind that one Queen Bee can lay up to 2,000 eggs a day!

Why Bother About Bees?

Do you like food? Well, without bees you would be starving! According to Greenpeace, we have a bee to thank for every third bite we take. This is because bees spread pollen from flower to flower, dropping bits on their flight, which helps food, grass and flowers to grow. If there were no bees, farmers would have to spend a whopping £1.8 billion a year to pollinate their crops.

Bee Retirement Home

As over a quarter of bee species have not been seen for 30 years, Flying Flowers have decided to stop the chaos and build a bee retirement home to stop bees from extinction. This masterpiece allows bees to live their last days resting. The bees have many activities to do, including, drinking honey and water from the fountains. There is even a special bed for the queen bee!

Fun Facts:

- 🐝 Bees “dance” to say that there is a lot of pollen in the area
- 🐝 Only female bees have stingers
- 🐝 Bees have five eyes

In conclusion, if we do not save our bees, we will not have a wide variety of crops as it will cost farmers almost £2 billion a year to pollinate them. However, we can stop this tragedy from happening by just planting a few bee-friendly flowers in our gardens. Some bee-friendly flowers include: lavender, sunflowers and bee balm. If we all plant a few flowers, we may be able to stop this tragedy!

The Budget: Will It Eat Your Money?

By Ethan (Year 9)

Earlier this year, the Chancellor of The Exchequer - the head of the government department that decides how the government spends its money - announced the budget for the next twelve months. This budget tells the public how the government is going to allocate its money to all the different public services, like the NHS. Some people are very upset by the budget as it means some will have to pay higher taxes, but on the other hand that extra money will allow further development of public services like Transport for London (including buses and the tube) and the free healthcare and schooling we all need.

One of the biggest increases in taxes is called the Capital Gains Tax, which is an amount a person has to give to the government if something they own, an asset, has increased in value. This is increasing from 2 separate rates of 10% and 20% to a higher 18% and 24% respectively. In addition to this, the tax a person has to pay on their inheritance is now applied to the deceased's remaining pension wealth (the money they receive from the government after they have retired.)

As well as this, businesses will be required to pay more money into their employees' national insurance, which is a fund that means an employee gains access to a state pension and money from the government during parental leave.

And finally, the government has sworn to protect working people, and in order to achieve this they are committing to not increasing the basic and higher rates of income tax, the amount of money people need to pay into national insurance and also VAT, which means that tax increases will only really affect the rich, while they are projected to aid public services that support everyone.



Will We All Be Receiving Digital Christmas Cards This Year?

By Scarlett (Year 8)

It is common knowledge that in the UK we do not often send letters and telegrams. Instead, we send emails, texts, and snaps. That said, around 150 million people still send Christmas and birthday cards! This year, though, there may be a problem. 1st class stamps have over doubled in price from 60p in the year of my birth, so £1.35p today.

Especially because of the cost of living crisis, it feels the UK post office may have gone too far this time. Can people afford to send things in the post anymore? Will cards become a thing of the past?

The post office states this price increase is due to the pressure from declining letter volumes and rising business costs in maintaining one-price-goes-anywhere rates. Naturally, the one-price system is perfectly reasonable - not many people want to pay extra for their relatives in Scotland than for family in London!

However, even this does not make the price reasonable, especially at this time of year. The average person sends 17 Christmas cards annually, (requiring 17 stamps) which in total would come up to over £56! Is this affordable, or sustainable? I think not. Christmas cards will undoubtedly be thrown away within a week or two, and ordinary people simply do not have £56 spare to spend on such a luxury product.

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Black History Month

By Ethan (Year 9)

Every year in October, a month is dedicated to the work and achievements of black people in the past: Black History Month. As they are usually overlooked, despite having been crucial to almost every advancement made in human history, it is especially important to celebrate the achievements of black people in countries where racism runs rampant such as the USA and even the UK. As their achievements continue to suffer erasure, they are necessary to celebrate.

There have been many millions of influential black people throughout history, yet the stories of most fly under the radar of the majority of people. Some of the most well-known include: Martin Luther King Junior, a leader of the civil rights movement in the USA; Rosa Parks, also a major figurehead for the movement; and Catherine Johnson, an American mathematician who worked to gain respect in NASA's white male-centric workforce and who did the calculations that allowed the first men on the moon to safely return home to their country and to their families.

This year's theme was "Reclaiming Narratives" which is all about making a significant shift towards recognizing and correcting the stories of black people and culture throughout history. In order to celebrate this month you will have had many lessons about black authors, historical figures and artists in addition to the slides that went on the digital signage around the school which highlight many black people and their achievements, including: Ulric Cross, a Black British war hero; Arthur Wint, an Olympic champion and RAF fighter pilot and Maya Angelou, a Black American poet, who wrote many famous poems and novels including "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings", about her early life as a black child in the USA, as well as "We Had Him", a heartfelt poem dedicated to Michael Jackson and the collective grief and confusion that followed after he died.

Overall, Black History Month is a hugely important time of year because it allows people to truly acknowledge the contributions of black people to society and celebrate their achievements throughout history.



'Oasis' Reunion - How the Gallagher Brothers Finally Reunited After 15 Years

By Tommy (Year 8)

On Tuesday 27th August 2024 at 8am, Oasis, a britpop band, which consists of Liam and Noel Gallagher, who was formed in 1991, posted a reunion video on X (commonly known as twitter). Most of the UK woke up extremely early just to see the incredible news, (including me, as I am a massive fan). In the video, they told us they will be touring around areas of the UK and USA in June to August in 2025.

What caused the split of the Gallagher brothers?

On the 28th August 2009, Oasis prepared to go onstage at the Rock En Seine festival in Paris, but the brothers had a huge backstage argument, causing Oasis to split up due to Noel's quitting. This caused an absolute outrage in the britpop world, finally ending the rivalry between them and a London group called Blur.

What did Liam and Noel do after the split?

Liam was a single artist, making 13 albums. Noel, created a band called 'Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds'. They created four studio albums, one compilation album, four extended plays, one box set, twenty-one singles and thirteen music videos! Liam also continued to play with the other members of Oasis, named 'Beady eye'. They released two studio albums, one extended play, eleven singles and ten music videos. However, the band split in 2014 because of Liam's discontentment with the lack of coverage of the bands, and the small crowds.



How did social media react to the reunion?

Although some might consider the band as 'UK dad music', social media were excited for what the band possibly could have released on that day. Fans who had a large audience online, discussed the possible predictions of the type of songs (this was before anyone knew about the reunion). Newspapers and the news shows were using this story as their top storyline. Then, finally the band released the video about the summer 2025 tour reunion. Ticketmaster allowed fans to buy tickets on the following Friday, with people waiting hours on end to buy the tickets. They went on sale from 9am - 7pm. Everyone online was calling people who bought tickets and there was a great excitement about the reunion.

Why was this such an important event for England?

The Oasis return was a massive event for England. This is because they are one of the most famous bands in English history overall and are also an incredibly popular band. Overall, Oasis is a massive part of English culture and created a massive new wave of music in the 90s, commonly referred to as 'britpop'.

Where will Oasis be playing at live '25?

Oasis will be playing live in both the USA and the UK, much to their world's delight. For all of you out there that are intrigued, Oasis will be playing in the locations:

UK Locations

- Cardiff
- Manchester
- London
- Edinburgh
- Dublin

USA locations:

- Chicago
- New Jersey
- Los Angeles
- Mexico City



Oasis has some of the best music in the world, and I think we can all agree that in August 2025, the world will be stunned

'Wednesday': Season Two

By Mia (Year 7)

22-year-old Jenna Ortega has revealed that she will be an executive producer in the next season of Wednesday. She believes it makes sense for her to be involved, since she is on screen for most of the show anyway.

So far, little is known about what is to come in the new season, as the producers want to keep the new scenes of Wednesday as a surprise. Only some details are known: there will be even more horror and misery, for example. Another detail is that Xavier Thorbe will not be included in the series, largely due to the controversy surrounding the actor regarding a sexual assault allegation. Instead, at the beginning of the series, we are informed that the character has moved to a different boarding school.

Production for Season 2 started in May 2024, and the show is expected to be released in September of 2025 due to writer and actor strikes. It is said that Wednesday Season 2 has begun in Ireland, and will soon move over to Romania.

It has been confirmed that the actors: Thandiwe Newton, Steve Buscemi, Billie Piper, Evie Templeton, Owen Painter, Noah Taylor, Frances O'Connor, Joanna Lumley, Haley Joel Osment, Heather Matarazzo, Joonas Suotamowill, and original Addams Family actor, Christopher Lloyd, (who played Uncle Fester in the 1991 film), will play a role.

On September 19th, Netflix released the 'behind-the-scenes' of the second season of Wednesday that included cast members Luis Guzman, Emma Myers, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Joy Sunday and Thing, welcoming viewers to the set.

"This season is going to be bigger and more twisted than you could ever imagine," Zeta-Jones teases. In the Netflix snippet we have been shown, there is also a snippet of Jenna Ortega shouting: "Fight!" with a fist thrust in the air on stage in what seems to be a rally.

Whatever we can expect, it's sure to be a spooky, action-packed and highly popular foray into the historic Addams family...



The American Election

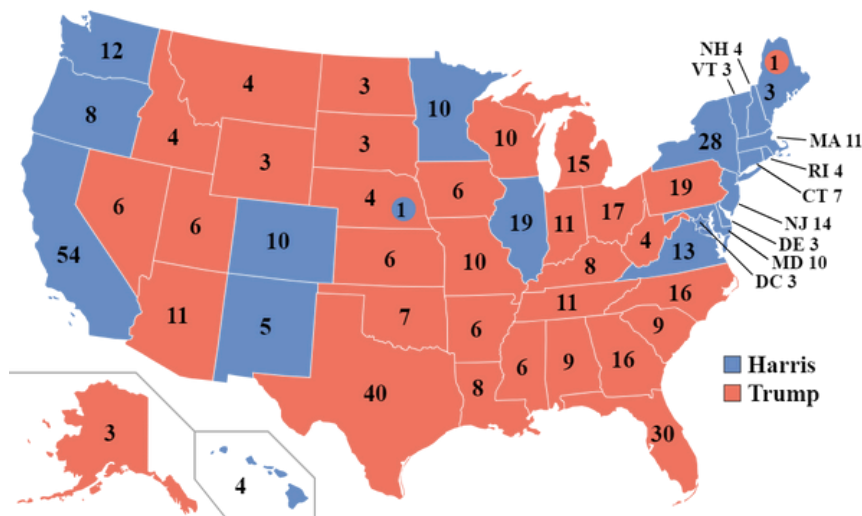
By *Zaynab and Audrey (Year 9 and 7)*

The American elections will affect all of us in one way or another. The election results were announced on Wednesday 6th November. Anticipation of the results was tense around the world as many predictions were made on who would win what is widely considered the most powerful job in the world.

The two parties that ran in this election were the Democrats and the Republicans. Kamala Harris is a Democrat and Donald Trump is a Republican who was President from 2017-2020. Typically, the Democratic party supports social and economic equality, advocates for the civil rights of minorities, and supports a safety net for individuals. In addition, Democrats support environmental protection programs, gun control, less-strict immigration laws, and workers' rights. Republicans typically support individual freedom, economic prosperity, election integrity, and keeping cities clean and safe. Additionally, Republicans support creating local employment, the right to bear arms, preservation of traditional American values, along with restricted immigration laws and increased deportation efforts. Republicans also support a strong military and would like to build an 'Iron Dome' defense system across all of the United States.

Every four years, the entire population of The United States of America votes for who they want to be President. Candidates are proposed by the two most popular political parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. Other parties exist and put forth candidates, but this happens on a state to state basis and there is not much support for those parties. The voting system is not like the one that we use in the UK. Instead, they use the electoral college system.

The electoral college is not a place but a voting system created by the founding fathers of the United States. Votes are allocated to each state based on the population within that state. Every state is allowed a number of votes which must be equivalent to the number of senators and representatives in its congressional districts. Each state has two senators and a various number of representatives based on population. This allows for smaller states to have at least a few electoral votes, but larger states to have a fair say in who is chosen because more people live there.



Because of this each state has a number of electoral votes, roughly in line with the size of its population. California has the most with 54 votes while a handful of sparsely-populated states like Wyoming, Alaska and North Dakota, have the minimum of 3 votes. Generally, states award all their electoral college votes to whoever won the popular vote of that state. For example, if a candidate wins 50.1% of the vote in Texas, they give all of the state's 40 electoral votes to their chosen candidate. Based on this system, Trump won 312 electoral college votes while Harris lost with 225 electoral college votes. Only two states - Maine and Nebraska allow electoral votes to be split between candidates. This election, Maine voted 1:1 with their 2 electoral votes - arguably canceling themselves out, while Nebraska voted 4:1 in favour of Trump.

The electoral college system requires one single candidate to win at least 270 electoral votes to secure their position as president of the United States. Trump, having won this monumental election, has many plans which he has vocalised since he was confirmed as the President Elect. Some of the many things that he has promised include deporting undocumented migrants (people moving to America without the legal paperwork), ending the Russia-Ukraine war, cutting protective climate regulations, and he promises to veto a federal abortion ban in favour of states' rights to decide on this issue.

Come January, when Trump will have his inauguration ceremony - a formal ceremony that marks the beginning of a major public leader's term of office - we will see if Trump fulfils the promises he made while campaigning for the most important job in the whole, wide world.

Our Last Goodbye to Maggie Smith

By Anna (Year 8)

Maggie Smith was one of the world's most known and respected actresses, known for her role in Downton Abbey, but more so for playing Professor McGonagall in most people's childhood favourite movie: Harry Potter. Sadly, she passed away at the age of 89 on September 28th.



She was an Oscar winning 'star of screen and stage' actress. She made her first professional debut on Broadway in 'New Faces of '56'. She was bestowed many awards during her time on Broadway, including a Tony award for 'Private Lives'. Not only did she work on Broadway, but she also worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company - one of Britain's largest and most highly-respected theatre companies. Peter Bradshaw (film critic) said that, "even in the smallest of roles, she set her own terms and every other actor was her satellite".

Although the reason for her death has not yet been publicly announced, we do know that she died peacefully in London Hospital with her two sons by her side.

Not only did the Prime Minister say that her work will be cherished forever, but the King released a statement saying, "As the curtain comes down on a national treasure, we join all those around the world in remembering with the fondest admiration and affection her many great performances, and her warmth and wit that shone through, both on and off the stage."

She was a stunning and wonderful actress and that's why her death was a tragedy. Her final years were not quiet or sad, but marvelous as she did many great things in the world of charity and public service. In her earlier career, she was a part of the Oxford Playhouse and Glaucoma UK charity. More recently, in November 2020, she contributed to 'For One Knight Only' for the charity 'Acting for Others', in which British actors (including herself) talked their inspirations, and about the highs and lows of their careers. We could all learn something from her, from her skillful acting to her full heart and kind actions.

"I will always consider myself amazingly lucky to have been able to work with her ... the word legend is overused, but if it applies to anyone in our industry then it applies to her."

- Daniel Radcliffe

"She was real, honest, funny and self-honouring ... Thank you for all of your kindness."

- Emma Watson

"Speak your mind even if your voice shakes"

Maggie Smith

The Mystery of Pig Latin

By Zaynab (Year 9)

Do you want to talk without other people eavesdropping? Or chat without your parents listening and questioning every word? If so, then today is your lucky day. The answer to this question is Pig Latin.

Pig Latin is a playful, coded way of speaking that transforms words for amusement or secretive communication. Pig Latin is used mainly among children to hide discussions from others but it is also used by adults, though it is very rare.

Dating back to the 16th century, Pig Latin was founded in Shakespearean England. Back then, it was called Dog Latin, and used commonly in East London.

It later resurfaced in the late 19th-century with its modern name: 'Pig Latin'. Despite its name, Pig Latin has no actual connection to the Latin language - or pigs. It was very popular with children, teenagers and even adults to disguise their comments from others, and you could hear it spoken in schools, between friends, and even in film.

Though it's not as popular as it once was, it can still be a fun way to communicate with friends or family when you don't want others to understand your secret messages or discussions. But here's a word to the 'ise-way'. It's not that hard to figure out the secret 'ode-cay'! So be careful what you 'say-ay'!

Did you know that Pig Latin is not only used in the English language? Germans call it Kedelkloppersprook, the Swedish call it Fikonspråket, Italians call it alfabeto farfallino, the French call it loucherbem and Jeringonza is the Spanish name for it. Though it's not an official language, you could say it's kind of a world language used in different ways!

For those of you who are interested, here are the instructions to speak this code:

1. If the word in question starts with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u), then leave the word as it is and add the letters "ay" at the end.

Example - enter ➔ enteray

1. Secondly, If the word in question starts with a consonant (all the letters in the alphabet that are not vowels), then you take the first letter of that word and place it at the end of the word. Then, you add the two letters "ay" at the end

Example - hello ➔ elloh ➔ ellohay

1. Finally, it is common to add the occasional "w" or "h" before the "ay" if it sounds nicer. This is completely optional, but still popular

Example - super ➔ upers ➔ upersay ➔ upersway

Bioengineering: How Nature Helps Us Heal

By Ethan (Year 9)

I recently went to a lecture at the Royal Institute by Dr Alvena Kureshi about how bioengineering is used to help save lives, prevent infection and even complete operations without needing to create incisions, causing minimal scarring, all while using natural components to prevent waste and help the environment.

Bioengineering is, at its core, the creation of devices for medical purposes with the goal of increasing the quality of healthcare, but the main focus in today's world is seeing how nature can help advance our understanding of this field. One example of this is biopolymers (or bioplastics), which are biodegradable materials made to mimic the uses and strengths of the current, artificial, environmentally harmful iterations of these materials. A massive focus is currently on the most abundant protein in the human body, collagen, which is already used to increase the rate of healing from skin grafts. This is because it is both biodegradable and biocompatible (is already in humans so there's no risk of your body rejecting it). Collagen starts off as a jelly-like substance, but is then squeezed between 2 metal plates lined with filter paper until it becomes a hard substance, more akin to plastic. This is called the RAFT method and it radically reduces the amount of liquid found in a hydrogel.

Collagen can even be used to help fix people's blindness! People who have reduced or no vision due to damage to the outermost layer of the eye - the stroma - can get a transplant of a completely new and clear stroma made of corneal stem cells grown on this hardened, highly nutritious collagen (often grown in large batches and frozen to prevent it from dying).

Collagen is also used in surgical bandages as a safer, less painful alternative to the artificial ones in common use today. This is a new discovery, as it has taken years to find a way to align the fibres to make them behave more like healthy skin and less like scar tissue.

Funnily enough, one of the lead scientists working on this was Italian, and after a long day of working on trying to find a solution, she and one of her colleagues started talking about where they were from and they got to talking about Italian food, and it was this that caused her to recall how pasta is made - one step in particular - putting the pasta through two metal rollers to flatten it. They decided to use this method on some collagen gel, using a technique now known as the "HSflow" (horizontal shear flow) method, which has the ability to be used in a scaffold to mimic human tissues for use in regenerative medicine.

Overall, the use of bioengineering to advance human healthcare is a rapidly growing field and one with near limitless potential, whether it be fixing people's vision, mimicking human tissues and even completing surgeries without needing to make an incision at all. It truly is a wonder of science and definitely a field to watch.

Your Wacky Questions Answered!

By Anna (Year 8)

There are many weird and wacky things in this world... here are answers to some of the more unusual questions:

Why are oranges orange?

All fruits and vegetables are coloured with plant pigments. The bright orange that makes an orange an orange is from the carotenes (a type of photosynthesis pigment). When carotenes are exposed to cool temperatures during the maturing process, the chlorophyll will die off and the orange colour comes through!

What came first, the chicken or the egg?

This question has been asked for centuries. If you were to ask someone now they would probably tell you they had no clue, but the correct answer is the egg! This is because chickens are birds, so they evolved from reptiles, so the reptile would have laid the egg which evolved into a chicken.

If animals could talk, which would be the most annoying?

If you've ever had a pet you've probably thought about what they could be trying to tell you. Most people think a bird would be the most annoying, and they would be right but what type? It would be seagulls! The constant squawking could translate into repetitive demands or complaining 24/7.

Why are humans so interested in music?

From babies to grandparents we are always interested and curious about anything. We value music because it 'restores' our emotions and positive perception of the world. But the reason we like music so much is because of the process in our brains that controls our emotions and memory. These areas 'light up' when we hear music and that gives you a dopamine hit, which makes us feel great.

How do we know when someone is looking at us?

Before today's society evolved, everyone and everything could have been a threat, and that has adapted to give us almost a 6th sense. We can feel when someone is looking at us because of our peripheral vision and 'our skin is a sensor' but this sense is more common in our early years.

Are there any more colours that we don't know about?

Although there are many things we have not discovered yet, there are no other colours in the universe to discover. However there is the 'Forbidden Colour Theory', which explains how our eyes can only see some colours (i.e. the 7 colours of the rainbow) because of our colour receptors. But there are some that we can't see, like red-green and yellow-blue. It has long been believed that the opponency of colours is an inherent feature of vision and that it is impossible to see these colours with the human eye.

Who is Weird Al Yankovic?

By Haroon (Year 8)

“Weird Al” Yankovic is an American comedy singer who makes parodies of other peoples’ songs, and has sold more than 12 million albums.

An example of his work is the parody of The Knack’s “My Sharona”, “My Bologna”, as well as Michael Jackson’s “Beat It”, which he named “Eat It”.



How did he start?

Al listened to a comedy radio station as a child, Dr Demento's, and became immediately inspired. His first song ever, “My Bologna”, was a great hit, even though it was recorded in a public restroom! His second song was “Another One Rides The Bus”, a parody of Queen’s classic, “Another One Bites the Dust”. It wasn’t as popular as “My Bologna”, but it was still a huge hit.

His relationship with Michael Jackson?

He had a very successful relationship with Michael Jackson, and actually made a few parodies of his songs. Al asked permission from Jackson to make a parody of “Black and White” but Jackson denied it, since it was about race and parodying it could have been seen as problematic. Al agreed.

How was “Amish Paradise” made?

Weird Al wasn’t Amish himself (a strict Christian sect in which followers often live in strong communities without electricity, cars, or modern amenities) but wanted to play with the pop culture perception of them to see if he could get them to like his music as well. The song is a parody of “Gangster’s Paradise”, which amused Al, as the simple, hardworking life of the Amish seemed to him the complete opposite of a life of crime and drugs. He understood that the song is an inaccurate portrayal of the Amish, but said that is what makes it funny. He intended no offence, but perhaps didn’t entirely succeed in this.

In contrast to his stage persona, Yankovic is known by friends and associates to be polite, shy, and introverted, even among family.

Why You Should Start Boxing

By Adam (Year 8)

Boxing is an exciting, fun sport where two people commence in a series of fights, only using their fists. Why do people box, you say? People box for money, they need a way to live too, or some people box just for fun.



Why do people enjoy it?

Some people, like me, enjoy boxing for the pure rush of adrenaline in the ring. On top of that it will make you look super fly, a pretty good flex if you ask me! Boxing is also one of the best sports to relieve built-up emotions. So what are you waiting for? Get off TikTok for once, and find a boxing gym!

What are the basic rules?

In this great sport known as boxing, you're only allowed to use your fists (no head butts, no elbows and no kicks, okay?) That said, you are actually allowed to use your feet but you can only step on the opponent's foot: that's it.

Where can you train?

Where to train, you ask? Because I am so nice, I'll tell you. So it's ideal to train locally, for example nearby there is "ABC West Ruislip Boxing Gym." Also, you can still do basic drills at home, like shadow boxing.

What are the benefits?

There are so many benefits of boxing! You learn self defence, it keeps you fit, and the drills in boxing immensely improve your stamina! And guess what....there's more. It helps your mental health so much. Do you have trouble sleeping? Yeah, me too, but boxing helps with that. Finally, if you end up going to a boxing gym, you'll meet lots of people to train and spar with. That means you'll make lots of friends. And that's why I, Adam Rahman, think you should take up the amazing sport of boxing.

'Hamilton' Review

By Emma (Year 8)

Hamilton is a historical musical that has been playing on the London stage recently. I was lucky enough to see the performance at the Victoria Palace Theatre. I will be giving my opinion on the theatre, the production and the cast members. Please keep in mind that some of these roles have changed since I saw the show.

The journey takes 1 hour and 20 minutes on the tube from Ruislip to the theatre. Luckily, the theatre is very close to the station, so walking doesn't take long. The design of the theatre is pleasing and sophisticated. My tickets were "VIP" ones, so with my seat came with a Hamilton tote bag, a King George pin and a book all about the play, with scenes, photography, song lyrics and a sneak peak of the original set and costume designs. These are all good quality, and I still use them, although I may have broken the pin!

The theatre also had many drinks and snacks available. I just got some chips and water. It might have been a bit overpriced, but that's expected for a theatre.

My (quite stiff) seat was in the middle, and the view was fine, other than a few tall people in front of me (but we can't control those types of things). The set design was impeccable, looking exactly like the Broadway one. And so the show starts! It is a bit loud at first, but you quickly get used to it. The actors were amazing and funny too! My favourite characters were Thomas Jefferson, Hamilton's political rival, King George, and definitely the Schuyler sisters. They just had a way of making everyone laugh, and stunned the audience with their influential, feminist take on the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson's flair in the song, "What Did I Miss?" and King George's humour in his songs really was something! I even saw the actor of Aaron Burr slip out of character and laugh.

I also want to talk about the ensemble. The fluidity of their dance moves amazed me. I was so focused on them that I never realised the change in scenes!

In conclusion, I really recommend you watch it if you can; it's so much better in person than on Disney+, and it's truly an unforgettable experience!



‘Only Murders in the Building’ Review

By Audrey (Year 7)

‘Only Murders in the Building’ is highly popular: it is fresh, new and funny, but murderous. It is a series with a vast and loyal group of fans that stars a handful of famous people you may know: Selena Gomez (famous for her amazing singing voice and being Mavis in ‘Hotel Transylvania’), Cara Delevingne (a famous model) and Meryl Streep (commonly known for her astounding acting careers and starring in ‘Mamma Mia!’ ...) They have all found themselves in ‘Only Murders in the Building’.

In the show, three ‘out of the ordinary’ friends come together to construct a popular podcast based on the real murder which takes place in their high-end New York block of flats. Each season, a new murder lands in their laps. In Season 4 (the brand new season,) join Charles, Oliver and Mabel on their journey to find yet another killer. In Season 1, a friend of Mabel is found dead in his apartment after being shot. The death is assumed to be a suicide, but Mabel and her friends think differently... In Season 2, 3 and 4, things only escalate!

If you like dramatic, funny shows with a big shock-factor, or want to find out more about true crime, then this is definitely the show for you.

‘Skulduggery Pleasant’ Review

By Ellie (Year 9)

Skulduggery Pleasant is a fantasy fiction book series (it was and still is one of my favourites), which I have read many times. It is rated 11+, so available for all years here at Ruislip High. There are 15 books in the series, with an average of 526 pages per book (rounded up). The series is about the adventures and misfortunes of detectives Valkyrie Cain and Skulduggery Pleasant: a 12 year old, and a living skeleton. The books follow them as they defeat villains, overcome obstacles, and defeat evil magic.

The series has a deep and emotional storyline, and you can get very emotionally attached to the characters. Don’t get too close to them though, as they could be ripped away from you! They are complex, all with their different motivations and, of course, magic: an interesting thing to explore, as you learn about all different types of magic and how this new world works.

The story is written in the third person, which allows you to see a character’s insights and still notice the other details and viewpoints. However, the main character that we follow is Valkyrie Cain, a young woman who we see grow up from 12 to 27 years old. We see her face many challenges and go through many things, which are shown really well throughout the series, as well as how they affect her and her decisions.

I love this series because of how emotional and exciting it is, and because the plot twists are unexpected and fascinating. If you would like to pick up a new book, or get out of a reading slump, I definitely recommend trying out this series!

Six Great Cars You Can Aspire to Buy

By Haroon (Year 8)

Buying a car is a very difficult decision to make, taking into account brand, model and what is affordable and reliable. I'm going to introduce and recommend to you several cars you should consider buying in the future.

6. The Toyota Camry

The Toyota Camry is a very reliable saloon car with 5 doors, that will last about 30 years unless you have an accident. Most Camrys are petrol hybrids, which is great since it takes less fuel, saving both money and the environment!



5. The Ford Focus

The Ford Focus is an American brand. It is a very affordable car. Most of the new Ford Focuses are petrol hybrids but the old ones are fully petrol-powered. This car is perfect for many people, but the majority of them are manual cars, which may deter some more modern drivers.

4. The Ford F150

The Ford F150 is a delightful pick up truck. It is commonly found in Canada and the United States of America since the roads in the United Kingdom are way too small for it. Overall it's a great off-road vehicle with 4 wheel drive, but they are mostly diesel powered. If you're planning to live in North America you should consider getting this car. Pretty cool, right?



3. The Honda Accord

The Honda Accord is a fabulous car. Unfortunately, it stopped being manufactured in the UK because it became too large. You can still get ones from 2015 which are available at a very good price. It is highly reliable but the older versions are unlikely to come with a full service history or a warranty.

2. The Mercedes C180

This car is incredibly comfortable and fun to drive, but it is not very reliable. The parts are so expensive since they are branded and come from Germany. Its handbrake is also where the gas pedal is, so it's hard to drive at first but you will adjust to it (so my dad says, anyway!).

1. The Lexus IS200

The Lexus IS200 is a spectacular car. It is very old and has not developed problems over the years. My parents have had this car for 12 years and it is amazing! The car is Japanese and I highly recommend it.



In conclusion, these are six amazing cars, and I hope I have convinced you to buy one when you are a bit older!



Dear Agony Aunt,

I have been struggling lately with motivation and creative block. I've been trying to finish my creative writing assignment for English, but every time I sit down to write it, I either get distracted or sit there and stare at my page, with nothing or very little written down. And that is only when I can even find the motivation to sit down - procrastination really hits hard, and I can't find the effort to do my work, and I often finish assignments last minute. It's not that I haven't been trying - I've tried to get myself to do work and reward myself when I do do it, but I just find myself getting sidetracked again and again. I was hoping that you may have some advice as to how to gain motivation and get myself into the right mindset and the habit of doing my work on time, not at the last minute.

Many thanks,
Lethargic Lenny



Dear Lethargic Lenny,

Thank you for reaching out to me. I'm sure many people, including myself, can sympathise with you and your struggles. Creative block and a lack of motivation can be hard to overcome, but as you mentioned, the right mindsets and habits can be very helpful, even critical, to getting work done on time and with extra time to spare. Although there is sadly no one major trick to getting rid of these problems, and creative block can happen a lot, there are some tips I can give you to try to help out. Firstly, make sure that your work area is suitable for what you are doing. If you are surrounded by things that can distract you, you are much more likely to get sidetracked or lose focus of what you were doing. Having a set area that is just for you working can help you get into that focused mindset.

As for problems such as procrastination, I like to add something nice into my work. For example, when I work, I like to do some easier work first, or something more creative and relaxed, and listen to a relaxing playlist that I've made for myself. Then, I move on to the perhaps harder work feeling less tense and unmotivated. Making a work schedule like this is very helpful. And finally, creative block. This can be very frustrating and difficult to get over. Finding inspiration can be very helpful, and very fun. Read some new books, and then reread them - find what you like about them. Go outside, take a walk and get thinking :) If you make this a fun task, this can also help with your motivation.

I hope this was helpful, and best of luck with your English assignment,



Agony Aunt

Matilda: The Ending Rewritten

By Zaynab (Year 9)

"Daddy, wait, I have the adoption papers – please don't take me to Spain, I want to stay with Miss Honey!" cried Matilda, desperately, thrusting the documents into her father's hands.

Mr Wormwood looked at Matilda, his face was contorted with rage and annoyance, much to Matilda's amusement.

"No way, Missy, you're coming with us!" he yelled from his beloved car.

Miss Honey looked bitterly disappointed, as did Matilda. They had grown to love each other like mother and daughter, and they refused to let it end now. Matilda's mind was rapidly attempting to form a plan that would let her stay with Miss Honey. A mental lightbulb suddenly illuminated; she had a solution.

"Daddy," she said coolly with a hint of defiance in her voice, "I'm not going to tolerate any more of your silly behaviour. You've never cared for me, and I don't think you ever will." A cheeky glimmer appeared in her mossy green eyes.

At first, Mr Wormwood looked at her in bemused exasperation, but then he burst out laughing. "You think you can do anything to me? What are you, six?" he laughed "I'd like to see you try!"

Matilda smiled and, on cue, pointed at her father's car, winking at Miss Honey. The car started to rise. It hovered higher and higher, and the cries of her parents grew louder and louder as the car landed perfectly on the flat roof of Matilda's house. The expression on Mr Wormwood's face was priceless. It was one that Matilda had never seen before and she took every second possible to relish it. Shock, amazement, anger, rage and awe were all visible on the man's reddening, chubby face. Miss Honey, who remained unnoticed by the Wormwood parents, exploded into hysterical laughter.

Mr and Mrs Wormwood looked around uncomfortably as the whole street was staring, gob-smacked at the scene unfolding before them, rubbing their eyes to confirm that what they had just seen was not a dream. Mr and Mrs Wormwood begged and pleaded with Matilda to bring the car back, and said they would do anything for her as compensation. She told them to sign her adoption papers and as they did, she asked them a question that she had been deeply contemplating on, for a long, long time. She queried "Daddy, Mommy, what did I ever do wrong for you to loathe me so much?"

They looked at her in guilt and before they could reply, three police cars pulled up on the drive, with several police officers jumping out in unison. They stormed towards the house aggressively, along with four furious looking people, who, to Mr Wormwood's disadvantage, were all victims of his car-selling scams (Mr Wormwood was an unethical car salesman, who stole cars, painted them, put sawdust in the engines, so it dies after a day or two, then sells the faulty cars for more than quadruple the price to innocent citizens).

Mr Wormwood was rescued from the car on the roof of his house, and hauled away with great difficulty by two of the burly police officers who ignored his protests of innocence. Once the police left with Mr Wormwood, Mrs Wormwood looked down at her daughter from the roof, afraid and ashamed. Matilda pointed again at the car, and it floated gently down on command and positioned itself exactly where it had been just a few minutes ago. The flustered Mrs Wormwood and her befuddled brother Micheal, turned on the engine and left as fast as they could. They were gone – forever.

And as for Matilda, well, life for her was sweet as Honey after that.

The Amazing Arcade (short story)

By Mia (Year 7)

Chapter 1: The Discovery

It was Alex's third time running away from home, she just couldn't bear the stress of her parents fighting and arguing everyday; it was too much. She wandered around the deserted, silent street until she stopped in front of an alleyway: she had never been fond of alleyways but something about it felt different in a way..... special, like it was calling for her, reaching out to her. Maybe it was the fact this alleyway had beautiful, talented drawings on the walls that surrounded it unlike the other ones that consisted of rude drawings or inappropriate language or maybe because it wasn't full of beer cans and old burned out cigarettes, or maybe because there wasn't that common stench of sickening vomit, or old men that clearly hadn't showered in days; who knows. As she stepped foot into the alleyway, she felt a sense of relief wash over her, like all the pressure had been lifted off her aching shoulder in just a matter of seconds. Now she was sure this alleyway was special. As she gazed around, whilst walking through the alleyway she spotted a picture that caught her eye. It was of two girls who looked the exact same, one was in a beautiful meadow full of wildlife and vibrant coloured flowers as the sun beamed down on her and another was a girl with tears running down her face in a dark creepy forest with nothing but her teddy to keep her company. In a way Alex felt a connection to this picture, she understood how it felt. After a few minutes of admiring the picture she decided to continue walking along the lit path until she was stopped by a door with a barely lit sign that read The Amazing Arcade. She moved closer cautiously, not certain if this was a way into a horrible trap or just an ancient, abandoned sign that was left behind. Where the sign hung was a rusted silver door that had a picture of smiling children playing arcade games, underneath was a cold metal handle.

Chapter 2: Inside

Slowly, she reached her hand out towards the knob of the door and twisted it clockwise, making a squeaky, ear piercing sound. As the door slid open, she tiptoed in, as silent as a mouse. Wary of the possible dangers, she made note of her surroundings. Suddenly she heard a noise coming from the shadows like something rattling around. She jumped and began to back away in fear. She saw the shadow of a petrifying monster with razor sharp claws. Her eyes widened in panic. Rushing, trying to get to the door, she tripped over a wire and fell onto the floor landing on her wrist. She tried to pull herself up as the shadow of the monster grew closer and closer but her wrist throbbed in pain and she fell back down. She covered her face with her arms hoping the monster wouldn't notice her. It got closer. And closer. And closer....but nothing happened. Confused, Alex peeked through the cracks in between her arms and what stood before was nothing like she had imagined...it was dog-like but had 3 eyes, two small antennas and had the fluffiest blue fur she had ever seen, with white spots. A smile washed over her face, she put her arms down and she held out her hand for it to sniff. The alien dog was hesitant at first but moved closer to her slowly and moved its head towards her hand. Alex felt the soft fur of the dog brush up against her hand. Her heart stopped racing and her breathing slowed down.

Chapter 3: The Arcade

Alex stood up slowly, the pain in her wrist a dull throb that she had nearly forgotten in the presence of the strange creature. She watched the little dog-like being sniff her hand, its three eyes blinking in a curious, almost amused way. It wasn't what she expected, but somehow, it made her feel more at ease.

"Hey there, buddy," she whispered softly, unsure if it could understand her. She smiled nervously, sensing there was more to this place than met the eye.

The creature let out a soft, almost melodic growl in response, its antennas twitching excitedly. Alex's pulse quickened. She had no idea what was going on, but she felt... connected to it in a way. The odd feeling she had when she first entered the alley was returning. Tentatively, she took a step back, glancing around the dimly lit room. The walls of the arcade were covered in old, faded posters for games she'd never seen before. Some of them seemed familiar, almost nostalgic, like games she'd played in her childhood. But others were completely foreign—full of neon-coloured monsters, strange creatures, and far-off worlds. As her eyes scanned the room, something caught her attention: a massive arcade machine at the far end of the room. It was like no machine she'd ever seen. Its screen flickered with static, the game logo unreadable. But the words beneath the logo were clear: "Enter the Game. Play to Win." Alex's curiosity tugged at her. Without thinking, she started to walk toward it, the alien dog following closely behind, its three eyes watching her every move. As she approached the machine, she felt the air grow cooler, and the atmosphere seemed to hum with a strange energy.

She reached out and touched the screen. For a moment, nothing happened. But then, the screen blinked to life, glowing brightly with colourful lights that almost hurt her eyes. The words "PLAYER ONE" appeared in bold letters, followed by: "Insert Coin to Begin." Alex blinked. "Coin?" she murmured. But when she looked down, she realised she didn't need to search her pockets. The dog, sensing her confusion, nudged something small and round toward her with its nose.

Alex picked it up. It was a shimmering coin, metallic and smooth, with a symbol she didn't recognize—a crescent moon, with a jagged line cutting through it. It seemed to pulse with a soft, ethereal light. She hesitated, her thumb grazing the coin's surface, then decided to put it into the machine. The moment she did, the screen flickered again, and before she could even process what was happening, a bright light enveloped her.

Chapter 4: Into the Game

Suddenly, Alex was falling. The world around her twisted and warped as if she were being sucked into the screen itself. She could feel the ground beneath her feet, but it wasn't solid—it was like walking on air, a soft, misty surface that sent a chill through her. Before she could fully comprehend what was happening, the world around her solidified. The arcade machine was gone, and in its place was a vast landscape, stretching out as far as the eye could see. She stood in the middle of a glittering, otherworldly meadow, much like the one in the picture she had seen earlier. But now, the sun was a strange, lavender hue, casting long shadows across the landscape. The wind was warm, and carried with it an almost musical hum. She turned in a circle, taking it all in. The world was both beautiful and surreal, its colours too vibrant to be real, its details too precise, like a dream she couldn't wake up from.

"Where... am I?" Alex whispered aloud, her voice echoing strangely in the quiet air.

The alien dog appeared beside her, its three eyes scanning the horizon. It gave a soft bark—more like a chime than a traditional bark—and then began to move, nudging her gently with its nose. It was leading her somewhere. Unsure of what to do but feeling the undeniable pull of adventure, Alex followed. They walked for what felt like hours, the scenery constantly shifting around them. One moment, they were in a meadow, the next, standing on the edge of a glowing lake, its waters rippling with strange, rainbow-like patterns. Finally, they came upon a large, dark forest—like the one from the picture. The trees were twisted, their branches reaching up like skeletal hands. The atmosphere was heavy, thick with an oppressive silence that sent a shiver down Alex's spine. The dog growled low in its throat, its antennas twitching. Alex took a deep breath and stepped forward, her heart pounding. Something told her this was where her journey truly began.

Chapter 5: The Forest of Echoes

The forest loomed ahead, its twisted trees like sentinels standing guard over a place long forgotten. Alex hesitated for a moment, her feet rooted to the ground as the eerie silence of the place weighed down on her. The alien dog, however, didn't seem to share her hesitation. It trotted ahead, its three eyes blinking in unison, antennae twitching. Its fur shimmered faintly under the strange lavender sun, as if it were alive with stardust. Alex took a deep breath and followed, though her heart beat louder with each step. The air was thick with an unsettling stillness, and the shadows of the trees seemed to move—slowly, subtly—as though they were alive. Each time the dog paused to sniff a new scent or check the path, Alex felt a sense of dread, but also curiosity. This world was beautiful, but it was wrong, in some way she couldn't place. The deeper they ventured into the forest, the more Alex noticed. The trees here weren't just trees—they had faces. Their bark was covered with patterns resembling eyes, mouths, and twisted expressions that seemed to watch her, judging her every move. The branches twisted unnaturally, as if reaching for her, but every time Alex looked away, they seemed to shift back into place.

"What is this place?" she whispered, more to herself than to the dog.

The dog responded by barking softly—a melodic sound that echoed eerily, blending with the whispers of the wind. She couldn't tell if it was answering her question, or if it was merely trying to comfort her. Still, she followed it, though she couldn't shake the feeling that she was being watched by something unseen. After a few minutes, they came to a clearing. In the centre stood a large stone monument—shaped like a glowing, translucent pillar. It was a tower of sorts, but more ethereal, as if it were made of liquid light frozen in place. On the base of the pillar, strange symbols pulsed softly, as though alive. Alex instinctively stepped closer, drawn by the light. Suddenly, the forest around her began to stir. The wind picked up, and the ground beneath her feet rumbled. The alien dog froze, its fur standing on end as its eyes widened in alarm. A voice—soft at first, but growing louder—echoed through the trees.

"Why have you come?"

Alex's breath caught in her throat. The voice wasn't like anything she had ever heard before—deep and ancient, but also strange, almost like it came from all directions at once.

"I... I don't know," she said, feeling a chill run through her veins. She glanced at the alien dog, which seemed to be bracing itself for something. "I just... I followed the dog. I don't understand—"

"You must understand," the voice interrupted. "The path you walk is not of your making. It is a path that has been chosen for you."

Before she could respond, the pillar of light began to hum, its glow intensifying. The air around her crackled with energy, and the symbols on the base of the pillar began to shift, rearranging themselves like a puzzle. The voice spoke again, but now, it sounded as if it were inside her mind, weaving through her thoughts like a thread of fate.

"You are not the first to be brought here. Many have walked this path before you. Some were lost in the game. Some... never left."

Alex's heart pounded. She felt a deep, primal fear rise in her chest, but at the same time, she also felt a pull toward the pillar, an urge to understand, to uncover the truth.

"I—I don't understand. What do you mean, 'the game'?" she asked, her voice trembling.

"The Amazing Arcade..." The voice's tone shifted, almost wistful now. "It is not just a game. It is a test. A place where the lost souls of this world must play and win, or else be consumed by the darkness within." Alex's mind raced. Was this some kind of twisted nightmare? A dream she couldn't wake up from? She tried to focus, to make sense of the words, but before she could respond, the pillar emitted a bright flash of light, and everything around her went black.

Chapter 6: The Game Begins

Alex awoke with a start, gasping for air as if she had been underwater. She was no longer in the forest. The air smelled different—drier, sharper. And the ground beneath her feet was smooth, cold metal. She was inside the arcade. She glanced around, disoriented, as she stood up. The room was dim, illuminated only by the flickering lights of several arcade machines. They all hummed softly, some displaying strange images—alien landscapes, giant creatures, and futuristic cities. She had no idea how she had got back here, or what had just happened, but the air felt... heavy. The alien dog was with her, sitting quietly by her side, its three eyes focused intently on the machines.

"Where are we?" Alex murmured, though she wasn't sure if she was asking the dog or herself.

The dog's antennas twitched, and then it padded over to one of the arcade machines. The screen flickered to life as if responding to its presence. The game that appeared was unlike anything Alex had ever seen—a surreal, otherworldly place with floating islands, waterfalls of liquid light, and strange creatures running across the landscape. In the centre of the screen was a message: "Welcome, Player One. Are you ready to play?" The dog turned its head toward Alex, its three eyes gleaming with an almost knowing expression. It seemed to nod, then sat back on its haunches, waiting for her response. Alex swallowed. The voice had said something about a test, about a game. Was this what it meant? Was this the way out? Or was this just another part of the twisted nightmare she had found herself trapped in?

"I don't know if I'm ready," Alex said softly, but she could feel something stirring inside her, something beyond fear. A sense of determination. She had no idea what this game was, or how it worked, but she knew one thing: she had to play. To win. With a deep breath, she stepped forward and inserted the shimmering coin into the arcade machine. The screen flashed.

Chapter 7: The First Challenge

The moment Alex inserted the shimmering coin into the arcade machine, the screen flashed so brightly she had to shield her eyes. A strange, heavy pressure seemed to press down on her chest as she felt herself being pulled toward the screen, as if the world was dissolving around her and she was falling into the game itself. Her body jerked as though yanked by an invisible force, and when the dizziness finally stopped, Alex found herself standing in an entirely new place. The arcade machine, the glowing pillar, the forest—everything was gone. Instead, she was in a vast, open desert. The sky above was a pale orange, tinted with streaks of purple, like the dying light of a sunset. The ground beneath her feet was dry and cracked, as if it hadn't seen rain in centuries. Jagged rock formations rose from the sand in the distance, casting long, distorted shadows. Alex blinked, her breath coming in short bursts. Was this part of the game? Was this the test? A voice, cold and detached, echoed in her mind. "Welcome to the First Challenge, Player One. Your task is simple. You must survive."

"Survive?" Alex whispered, looking around nervously. "What does that mean?"

Before she could process the words, the landscape began to shift. The ground rumbled beneath her feet, and the air seemed to shimmer with heat. A low growl pierced the silence, and Alex's heart leapt into her

throat. From the shadows of the jagged rocks emerged a creature—a massive, four-legged beast with scales as black as coal and eyes that glowed a fiery red. Its mouth was wide, full of jagged teeth, and it moved toward her with terrifying speed. Alex's legs froze, her body refusing to move, caught in a paralyzing sense of dread. She had no weapons, no tools, nothing. Just her. Alone. The beast's growl grew louder as it advanced, its steps shaking the ground beneath her. There was no escape. It was closing in on her fast. This is it. I'm going to die here, she thought, panic rising in her throat. Suddenly, a familiar bark echoed through the desert—a musical, chiming sound. The alien dog appeared out of nowhere, sprinting toward her from a distance. Its fur shone like a comet, and its antennas were raised high, twitching. "Run!" it barked, though it wasn't in words but in a sound, a command that Alex felt in her very bones.

The dog rushed to her side, nudging her leg with urgency. Alex hesitated, her feet frozen in place, her mind battling with fear and confusion. I can't outrun that thing. How can we possibly fight it? But the dog was insistent, its three eyes gleaming with an intensity she had never seen before. The creature was almost upon them now, its growls deafening. With a final, desperate surge of adrenaline, Alex turned and sprinted. She didn't think—she just moved, following the dog as it bounded ahead of her, weaving through the rocks and the sand. The desert stretched out endlessly, and Alex could feel her body screaming with exhaustion, but she didn't stop. The beast behind her was relentless, closing the gap with terrifying speed. "Where are we going?" Alex gasped as she ran, her lungs burning. The dog didn't answer. It just kept running, always staying just ahead of her, its movements fluid and graceful. Alex couldn't keep up with its speed, but somehow, it felt like she didn't need to. The dog was guiding her—leading her to something, though she had no idea what. Finally, they reached a large rock formation. The dog darted through a narrow opening, its body sleek and quick. Alex followed, squeezing through the tight space just as the massive creature lunged at her, snapping its jaws with a roar. She tumbled into a hidden cave, rolling to the ground, her chest heaving as she struggled to catch her breath. The dog followed, its three eyes flashing with warning as the growls of the creature echoed in the distance. For a moment, the cave was still. The sound of her heartbeat pounded in her ears, and the oppressive silence of the desert seemed to hang over them like a dark cloud. The dog moved closer, nudging her gently, as if reassuring her that they were safe, for now.

Alex looked up, her eyes wide with disbelief. "What just happened? That thing—was that... part of the game?"

The dog sat in front of her, its head tilting as though it understood her confusion, but it didn't speak. Instead, it reached forward with its paw and gently touched the side of her face, like it was comforting her. And in that moment, Alex felt it: the connection, the bond. The dog wasn't just some alien creature; it was her guide, her protector in this strange, surreal world. It had brought her here for a reason—and that reason wasn't just to survive. It was to win.

The voice from before rang in her mind once more. "Congratulations, Player One. You have completed the First Challenge. Now, you will face the Second. Continue on. The game has only just begun."

Alex exhaled sharply, the weight of the words sinking in. Her body was exhausted, but there was no time to rest. The game was far from over. With the alien dog by her side, Alex stood up and dusted herself off. She wasn't sure what was coming next, but one thing was clear: this wasn't just about playing—it was about surviving, about confronting the darkness that lurked inside herself, just as it lurked in this world. She turned toward the narrow passage that led deeper into the cave. The dog padded ahead, leading her into the unknown. And, for the first time in a long while, Alex felt the spark of hope—a tiny, flickering flame in the darkness. She didn't know what would happen next, but she wasn't alone. Not anymore.

Chapter 8: The Second Challenge

The cave seemed endless, its winding passages twisting like a labyrinth. The walls were slick with moisture, and the air grew colder with each step. Strange echoes rang through the stone, like whispers just out of reach. Alex kept her eyes fixed on the glowing shape of the alien dog ahead of her, feeling its presence like a steady beacon in the growing darkness. It didn't speak, but its every movement seemed purposeful, as if it already knew the way. And yet, as they moved deeper into the cave, Alex couldn't shake the feeling that something else was lurking, watching. Something else was part of this game, something far darker than the desert creature they had just escaped.

The game had only just begun...

2024 Crossword

By Harley (Year 7)

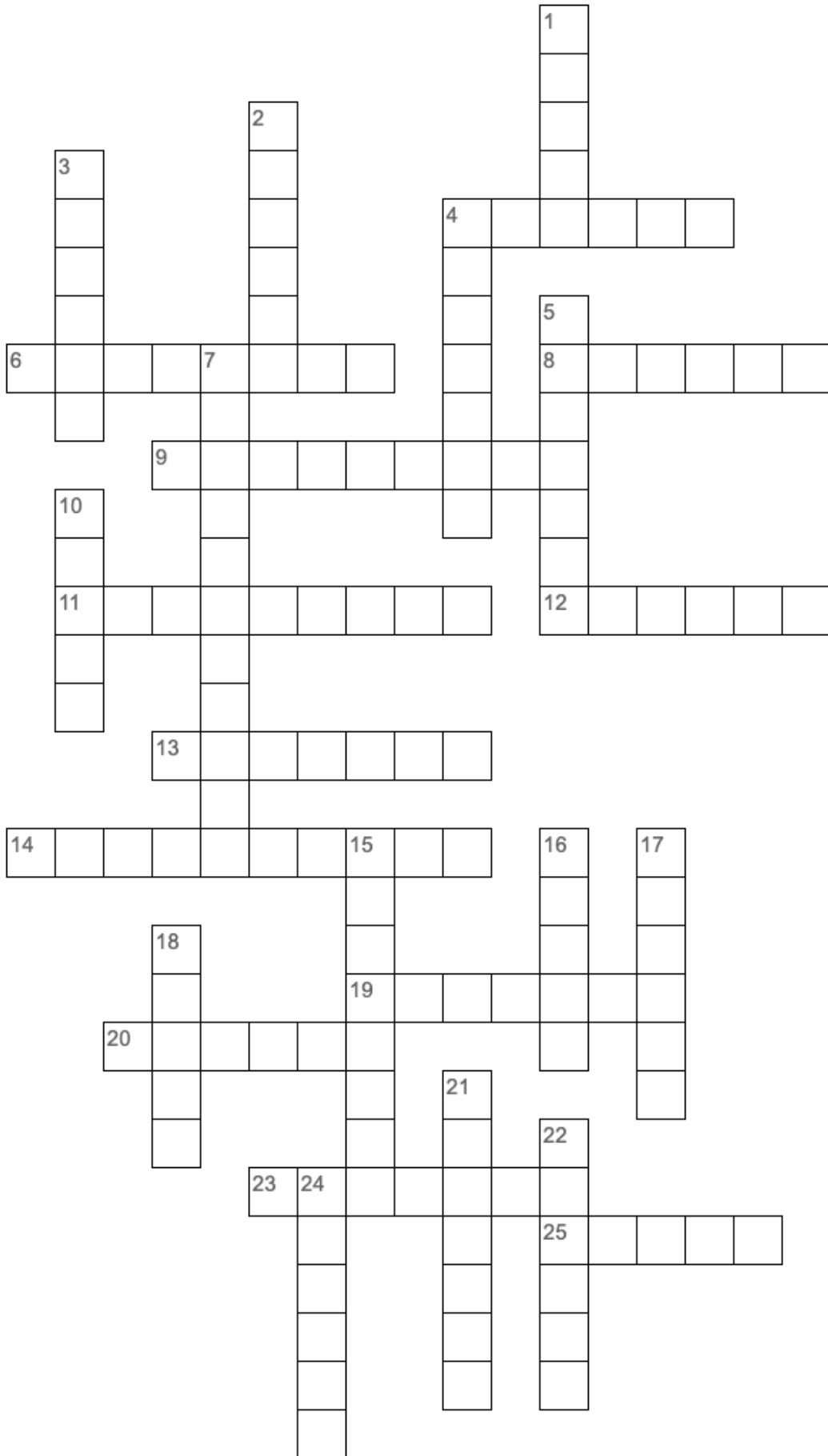
Can you follow the clues to complete this crossword on all things '2024'? Cast your mind back to the start of the year... and good luck!

ACROSS

4. Which country hosted the 2024 Olympics?
6. Which sport does the highest-paid athlete this year play?
8. Who won Best Song at the Grammys, with "What I Was Made For"?
11. It has been 50 years since which fast food chain arrived in the UK?
12. Which historically neutral country joined NATO?
13. Name a variety of cryptocurrency often discussed in the news.
14. What is the surname of the Meta CEO told off in court this year for failing to protect children online?
19. Who is the most followed person on Instagram?
20. Which popular film starred Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling?
23. Which state in the USA was hit by a massive hurricane in October?
25. Who won the men's Ballon d'Or in 2024?

DOWN

1. Which country is the most populated?
2. Which country did the British government plan to send asylum seekers to earlier this year?
3. Fill in the name of Beyoncé's 8th studio album: Carter
5. There has been a huge increase in the number of cases of which disease following a decrease in vaccinations?
7. Taylor Swift earned enough money to officially become a _____.
10. Who was the youngest athlete in the 2024 Euros?
15. Which popular song by Sabrina Carpenter came out?
16. The founder of which popular car brand was appointed by Trump to be 'Head of Government Efficiency'?
17. What's the brand that released the iPhone 16?
18. Which country won the Euros?
21. Which social media platform, rebranded to 'X', is rapidly losing followers this year?
22. What is the surname of the woman who lost the American Presidential Election in 2024?
24. Which political party won in the UK election on July 5th this year?



Christmas Tips From the Ruislip Eye Team!

We're coming up to the most festive time of the year, and in this wondrous time it can be difficult to know just what to do and how to celebrate in your own way, so we at the Ruislip Eye have put together a list of tips to help you throughout this holiday season!

My Christmas tip is don't spoil people with presents because next Christmas they will expect a lot more and get greedy, which is bad! Anyway, stay safe and stay AHHHMAZING.

Haroon, Year 8

Make sure you wrap up warm with many layers and gloves.

Ethan, Year 9

Hello pookies! I am Emma and I am here to say to not follow all the trends online you see because Christmas is different for everyone and we all enjoy it in different ways and if anybody judges you, they are not a person you should waste time listening to! However it's okay to get inspiration from others and create your new traditions with family and friends. Even if you don't celebrate Christmas, you can use these tips for your other holidays and if you don't have any holiday it's still a nice time to be happy with family and friends.

Emma, Year 8

My Christmas tip is to think and reflect, because Christmas came to be a thing because of Jesus, and Jesus Christ would think about wanting to give love and peace to make those around him smile.

Adam, Year 8

While you're running around trying to prepare for the festivities, don't forget to watch these classic Christmas specials from the nation's favourite shows:

-Gavin and Stacey Christmas Special - Will Smithy accept Nessa's proposal?

-Outnumbered Christmas Special - How will the Outnumbered family get together this Christmas?

-Call The Midwife (a two hour special this year!) - What is happening in Poplar, East London 1969 at Christmas?

Whilst we sit quietly near the TV with family, enjoying our presents after our roast dinner and pudding, what will we find out?

Tommy, Year 8

But while you're deciding which special to watch, don't forget about all the classic Christmas movies like: Home Alone, The Christmas Chronicles, Polar Express, A Boy Called Christmas, and the Jim Carrey classic: The Grinch!

Mia, Year 7

During the Christmas season you will give some gifts to the people you care about. But what if you're on a budget (like most of us are)? While it is the thought that counts, here are some things you could give that show your appreciation while leaving some money for a rainy day.

1. Anything warm and cosy - Slippers, blankets or even a little teddy bear are all essentials for the winter weather so why not give something like this to a friend who's always shivering.
2. Bath sets - If you want to give a lot all in one go then gift a bath set (or any type of gift set). Not only is it a cheap gift for Christmas, but can be used all year round.
3. Gift cards - Sometimes if you don't know what to get someone, the best option is gift cards as long as you know where they like to shop.
4. Handmade gifts - The easiest gifts to give loved ones are the handmade ones. These don't just have to be art crafts but can be baked goods, or anything else that you can make!

Anna, Year 8

Tips on what to wear, and what not to wear.

Christmas jumpers:

Most Christmas jumpers are perfect to wear and most will be comfortable, warm and in general keep you feeling very festive. However, tinsel Christmas jumpers are something I would definitely not recommend as they are itchy and very annoying to wear.

Also, be wary of Christmas gemmed earrings. This is because the gems will fall off, which will mean you will not be able to use them in future years to come!

Scarlett, Year 8

And finally, to round off the article, a final tip:

Make sure to wear warm, thick socks.

Tomasz, Year 7

From the whole Ruislip Eye team, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Merry
Christmas