

Issue

1



Aspropyrgos Times

1st GENERAL HIGH SCHOOL OF ASPROPYRGOS
STUDENT ENGLISH JOURNAL

“Run to the star”
Inner thoughts of
a refugee

Interview with the
WGM Chess player
Anna-Maria Botsari

“Choosing
aesthetics over
value”

“Behind Closed
Doors -
femicide”



“The Perspective”

Editorial Board: Charis Tziovara, Maria Katavouta, Despina Andreadou

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Letter from the Editorial Board

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the digital English-language student newspaper of the 1st General High School of Aspropyrgos, 2025-2026!

This edition brings together a rich collection of ideas, voices, and talents, carefully organized into a variety of engaging columns. All the content highlights students' artistic expression and every page reflects creativity and originality.

In our Creative Writing Corner, imagination emerges through stories and poems, while Culture & Arts explores the wider world of artistic inspiration. For lighter moments, English Humor & Fun offers enjoyment and laughter, and Film & Media Reviews gives students the chance to share their opinions on movies and media. At the same time, Media & Digital Literacy encourages critical thinking about the digital world, and School & Community Life connects us all through shared experiences and events.

We are also especially honored that our students had the opportunity to interview Anna-Maria Botsari, a leading chess player with national and international achievements, who holds the prestigious title of Woman Grandmaster. This experience was truly inspiring and a great achievement for our young journalists.

The design of our Student English Journal is equally meaningful. The logo is inspired by iconic landmarks of England, the timeless figure of Shakespeare—an emblematic voice of English literature—and the image of a newspaper, clearly reflecting the nature of this project. Additionally, the student figure wearing a graduation gown at the bottom of the cover proudly represents that this English journal is entirely the work of our students. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all the students who contributed to this issue. Your participation, creativity, and hard work have made this English journal possible. The effort you put in, the ideas you developed, and the enthusiasm you showed are truly admirable. You have proven that collaboration and passion can create something meaningful and inspiring. This newspaper is your voice! Enjoy reading!

Sincerely,

The Editorial Board

Charis Tziovara

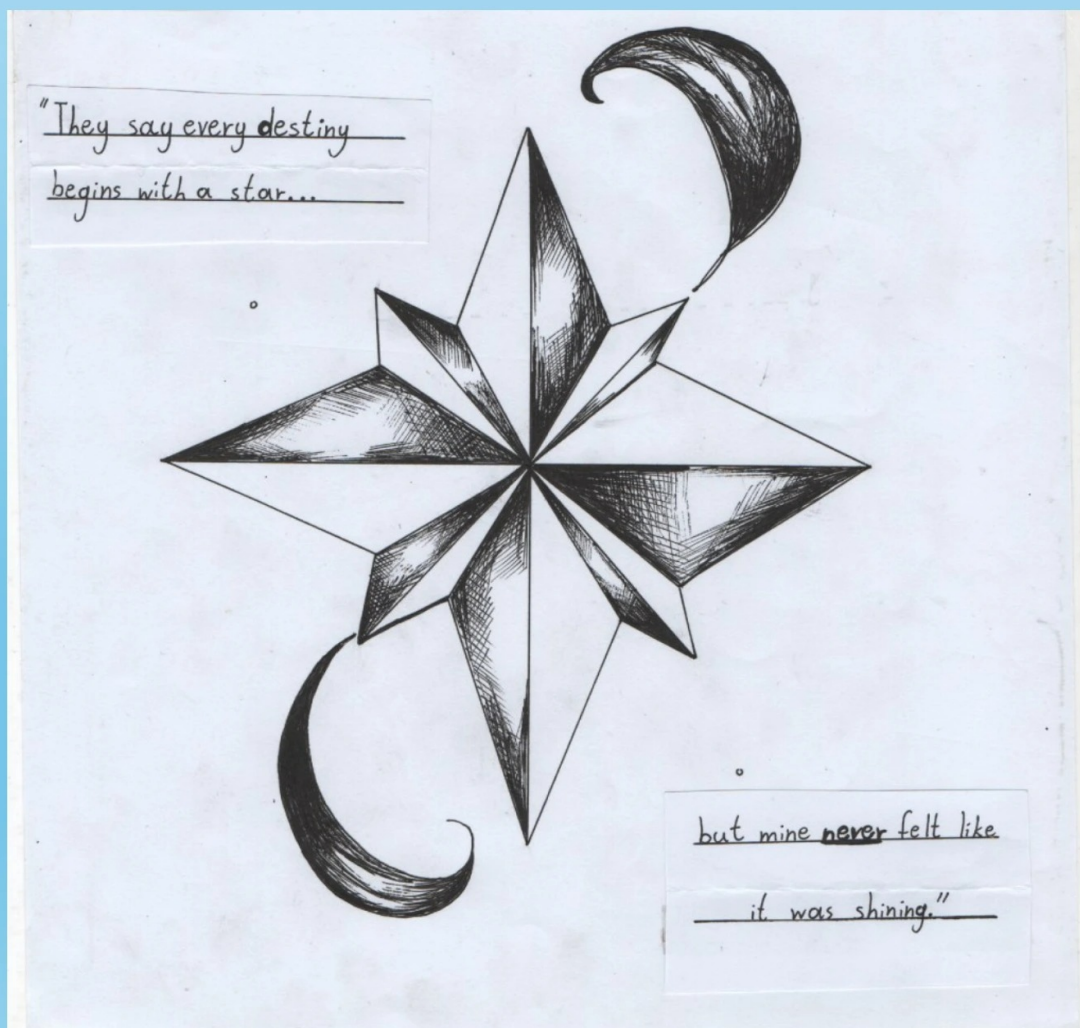
Katavouta Maria

Despina Andreadou

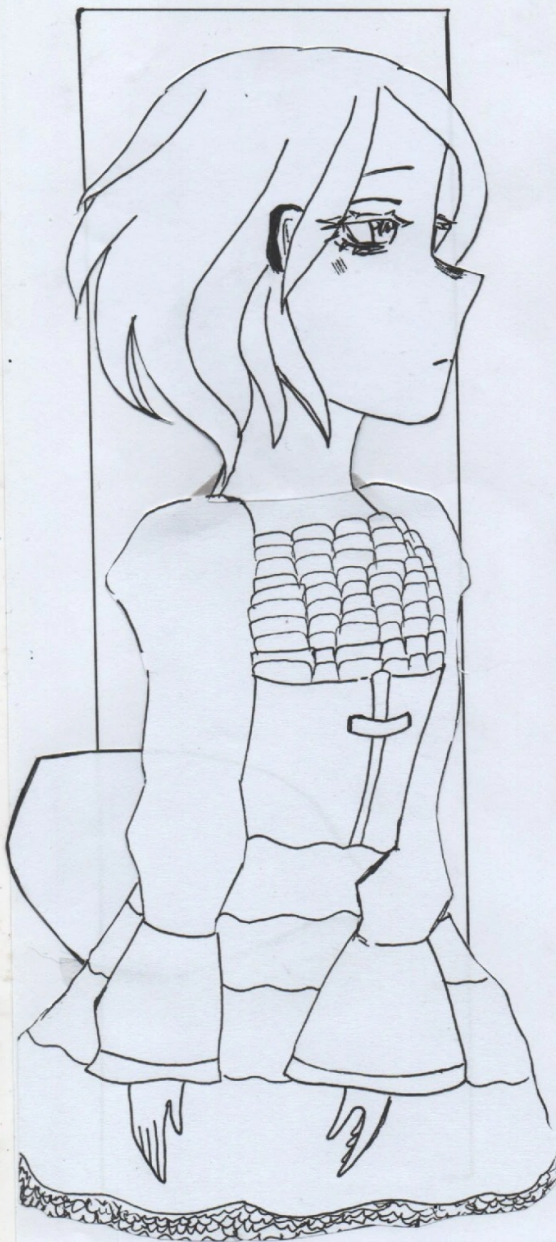
Comics & Visual Storytelling

“Run to the star”
Inner thoughts of a refugee.

“My journey didn’t begin with a dream. It began with running.”

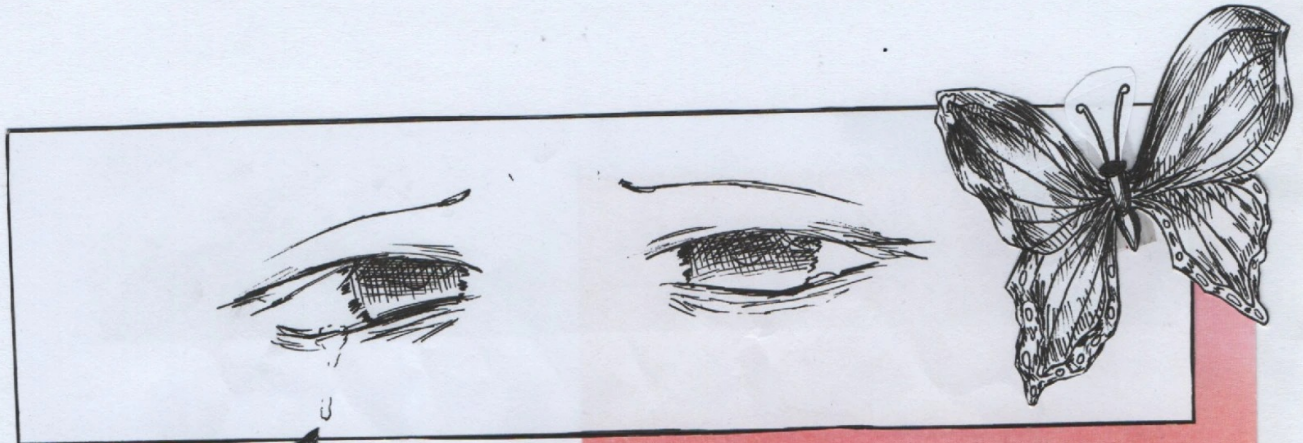






"But life doesn't wait for you to
be ready."

It throws you into the world...
even when you're still unfinished."



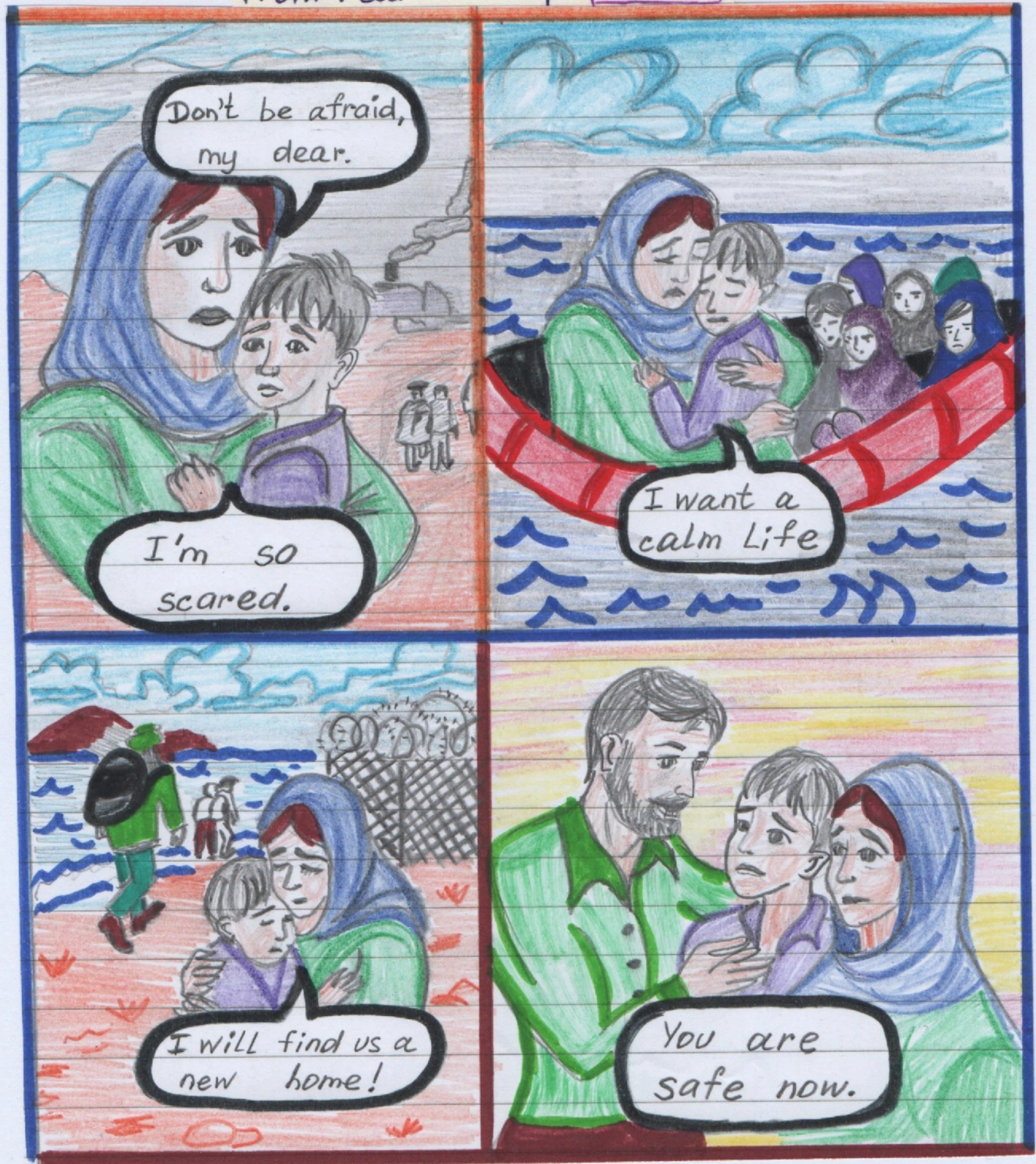
"I was just a kid.
I didn't deserve any of it...
but I survived."

"I survived from whatever tried
to break me.
And now... I'm finally ready to
follow my star."

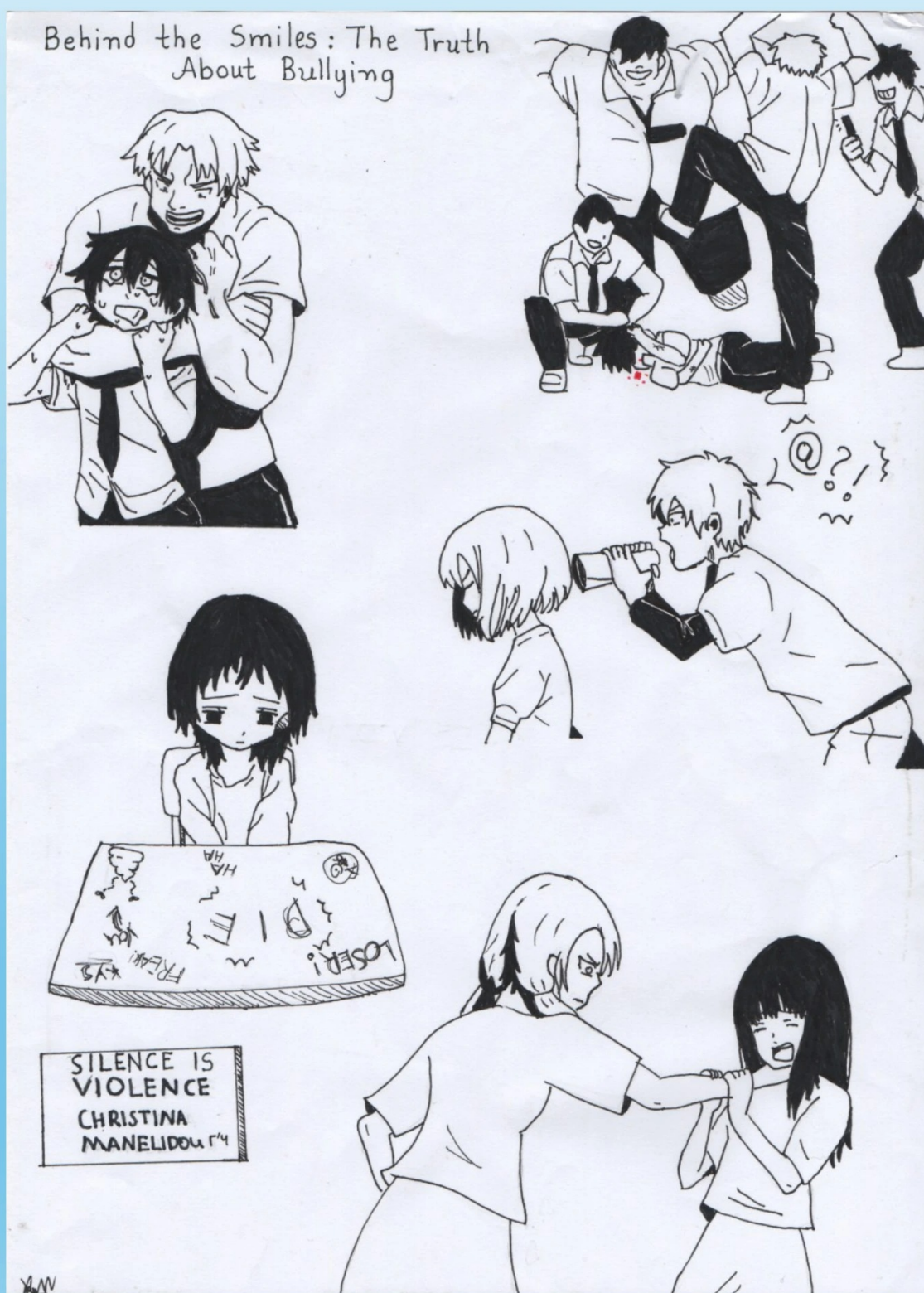


From Fear to Hope

From Fear To Hope 



Behind the Smiles: The Truth About Bullying



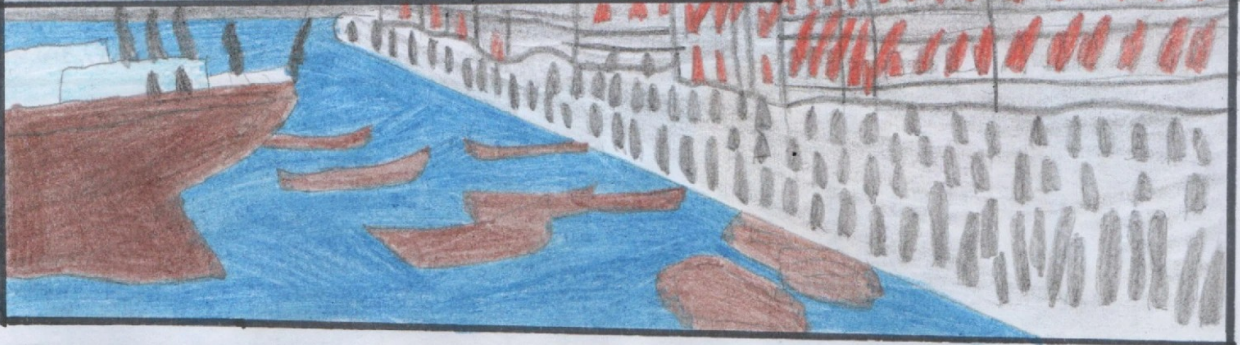
When He Sings...



The Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City



The victims were 80.000 and the refugees 1500.000
the fire that burned all the houses, lasted 4 days
the people waited for the ships amidst the
smoke, the fire, the ruins and the violence!!!!



Tsevas

THE **HAPPINESS** PROFESSIONAL

by
Cleo Stefani
A'10

Monday morning. The sales department huddled together under a banner that said—

**BE HAPPY-
WORK BETTER!**

Good morning, team! Are you ready to feel productively joyful today?

1

Happiness is a choice! Smile long enough, and your brain will believe it!

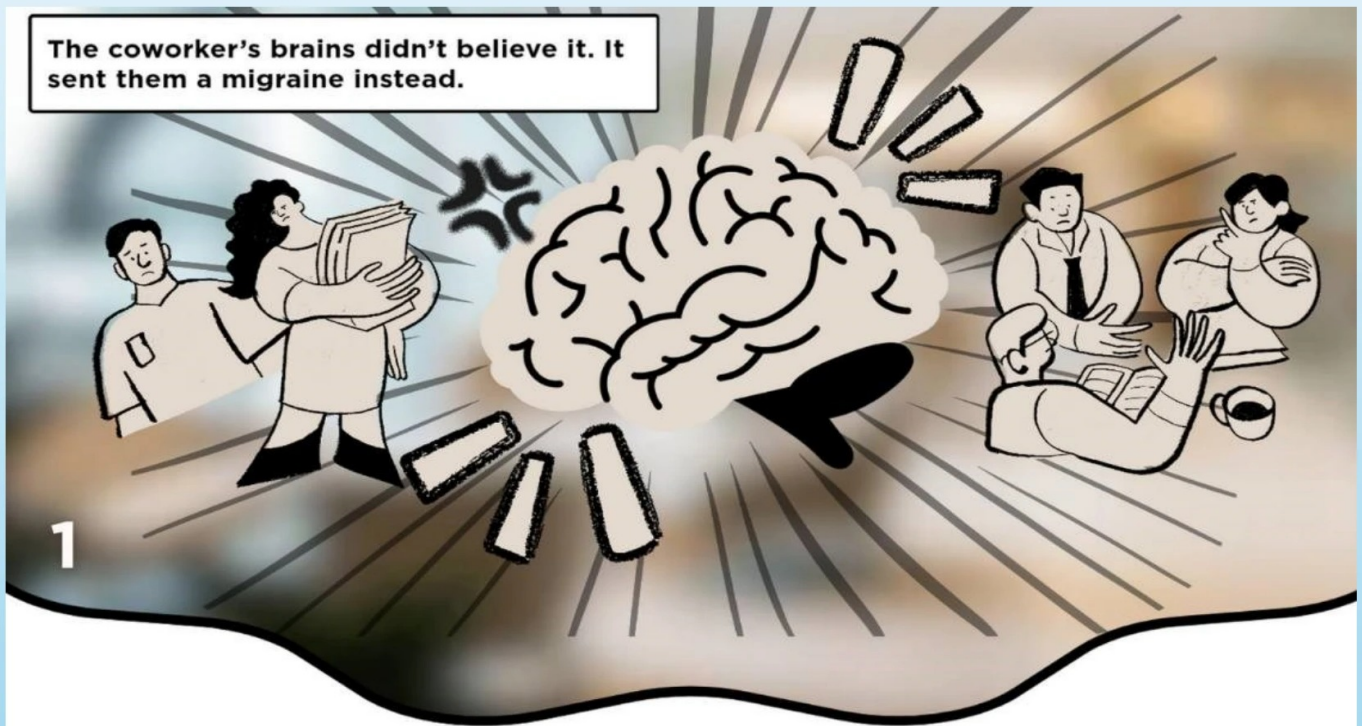
If I drink one more coffee, I'll start seeing God giving me feedback.

If God joins the meeting, I'm definitely taking notes

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3

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EXCEPT FOR THE ONES...



2

WHO WERE FIRED ON FRIDAY...

3

**NOW EVERYONE, SAY IT WITH ME —
I LOVE MY JOB!**

I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

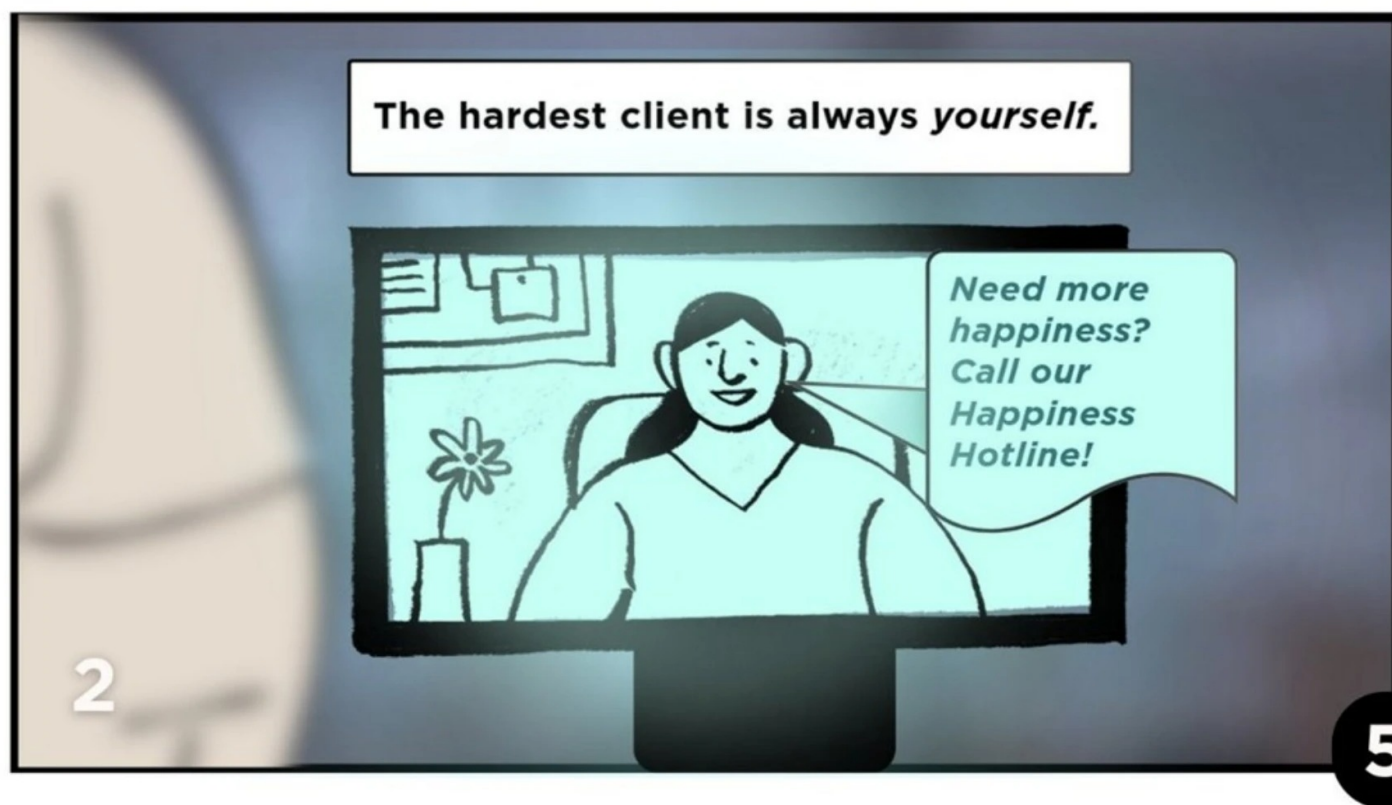
I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

I LOVE MY JOB!

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Creative Writing Corner

The Valor of Thomas

Thomas was a veteran firefighter in a small community, admired not only for his unwavering courage but also for his deep sense of compassion and his profound altruism. He was a pillar of the town, embodying the very spirit of self-sacrifice.

One frigid winter night, a fire broke out in an old apartment building. Thick, black smoke filled the air as Thomas and his team arrived with urgent determination. They managed to evacuate many residents when suddenly a desperate voice cried out:

“My cat is still inside!”

Without a moment's hesitation, Thomas plunged back into the collapsing structure. Fighting his way through the blistering heat, he found the terrified cat trembling beneath a fallen frame. Gently, he wrapped the creature in the folds of his protective gear and turned toward the exit.

But the building's structure was failing. Flames devoured the wooden beams as debris rained down. Shielding the cat with his own body, Thomas carved a path toward safety. Through a shattered window, he handed the frightened animal to a fellow firefighter—just moments before the ceiling gave way.

The roof collapsed, and Thomas was lost beneath the wreckage.

The following day, the entire community gathered to honor his memory. They remembered him not only as a public servant but as a man who gave his life fulfilling his sacred duty. Though his flame was extinguished, his bravery continued to burn brightly in the hearts of those he had served.

The Perspective

In recent months, conflicts and geopolitical tensions across the globe, including the escalating confrontation between the United States and Iran, have once again forced countless civilians to abandon their homes in search of safety. **As a result, increasing numbers of refugees arrive in foreign countries, hoping to rebuild their lives.** However, their presence often sparks divided opinions within host societies.

On the one hand, some citizens argue that accepting refugees places considerable pressure on national economies, public services, and employment opportunities. They express concerns that a sudden influx of people may strain healthcare and education systems, increase competition in the job market, and potentially disrupt social cohesion. Additionally, there is a fear among certain groups that large-scale migration could challenge cultural identity and lead to instability within local communities.

On the other hand, it is essential to recognize that refugees are individuals who have been forced to flee under extreme circumstances. War, violence, and political instability leave them with little to no choice but to seek safety elsewhere. In many cases, they are compelled to leave behind their families, careers, and lifelong possessions. **For these people, migration is not driven by ambition or convenience, but by the fundamental need for survival, dignity, and the hope of a peaceful future.**

Moreover, history has shown that refugees can make valuable contributions to their host countries. Given the opportunity, many integrate successfully, enrich cultural diversity, and support economic growth through their skills, resilience, and determination.

In conclusion, while the arrival of refugees may present certain challenges for host countries, it is crucial to approach the issue with empathy and a balanced perspective. By acknowledging both the concerns of local populations and the hardships faced by refugees,

societies can work towards sustainable solutions that promote integration, mutual respect, and shared prosperity. Ultimately, offering refuge is not only a humanitarian responsibility but also an opportunity to build stronger, more inclusive communities.

©Alexandros Katselis & Raphaela Gialouri, A2

Don't Stay Silent

In silent halls and empty space,
there hide words that deeply sting,
a falling glance, a quiet face,
and all the hurt that they can bring.
A sharpened laugh, a cutting sound,
like blades that pierce into the soul,
a "joke" that seems to go around but
leaves a wound that takes its toll.
Yet every child's a shining light,
a star that's one of its own kind,

and if you dim it out of spite,
you lose a magic rare to find.
Speak up, stand tall, don't turn away,
silence feeds the growing pain,
with kindness leading every day,
you break the cycle, stop the chain.
And if you see someone fall,
offer hands instead of blame,
for love can change the world for all,
and kindness burns a brighter flame.

©Elpida Papadopoulou, A9

A Silent Crisis: How Human Actions Harm Animals—and What We Can Do

Our planet is facing serious challenges. Pollution and climate change are widely discussed, but many people forget that animals also suffer greatly because of human actions.

Many species are losing their natural habitats due to pollution and deforestation. Forests are cut down to make space for human activities, while oceans and streets are filled with waste. As a result, animals struggle to find food and safe places to live, which threatens their survival. In addition, humans often use animals for entertainment, such as in circuses and shows. **Others are exploited for fashion or scientific experiments.** In these situations, animals are frequently kept in poor conditions, where they experience pain, stress, and fear. Wild animals are also at risk because of hunting. In

some cases, species are pushed to the point of extinction, which not only harms biodiversity but also disrupts the balance of nature.

There are several ways in which we can make a difference. First, we should treat animals with respect and kindness, whether they are pets or stray animals. It is also important to avoid supporting activities that involve animal cruelty, such as visiting shows that exploit animals or buying products tested on them. Furthermore, helping animal shelters through donations or adopting rescued animals can significantly improve their lives. **Reporting cases of abuse to animal protection organizations is another important step.**

Finally, raising awareness by informing others—through social media or personal conversations—can encourage more people to act responsibly. Even small actions can have a positive impact. **If we all take responsibility, we can reduce animal cruelty and help create a safer and better world for all living creatures.**

Culture & Arts

Petals in the Sea

A fragile rose floats
as a symbol of
remembrance and
mourning.

It honors those who
perished seeking
safety across the
Mediterranean.

Each lost life is not a
number, but a story
interrupted too soon.



Behind Closed Doors - femicide

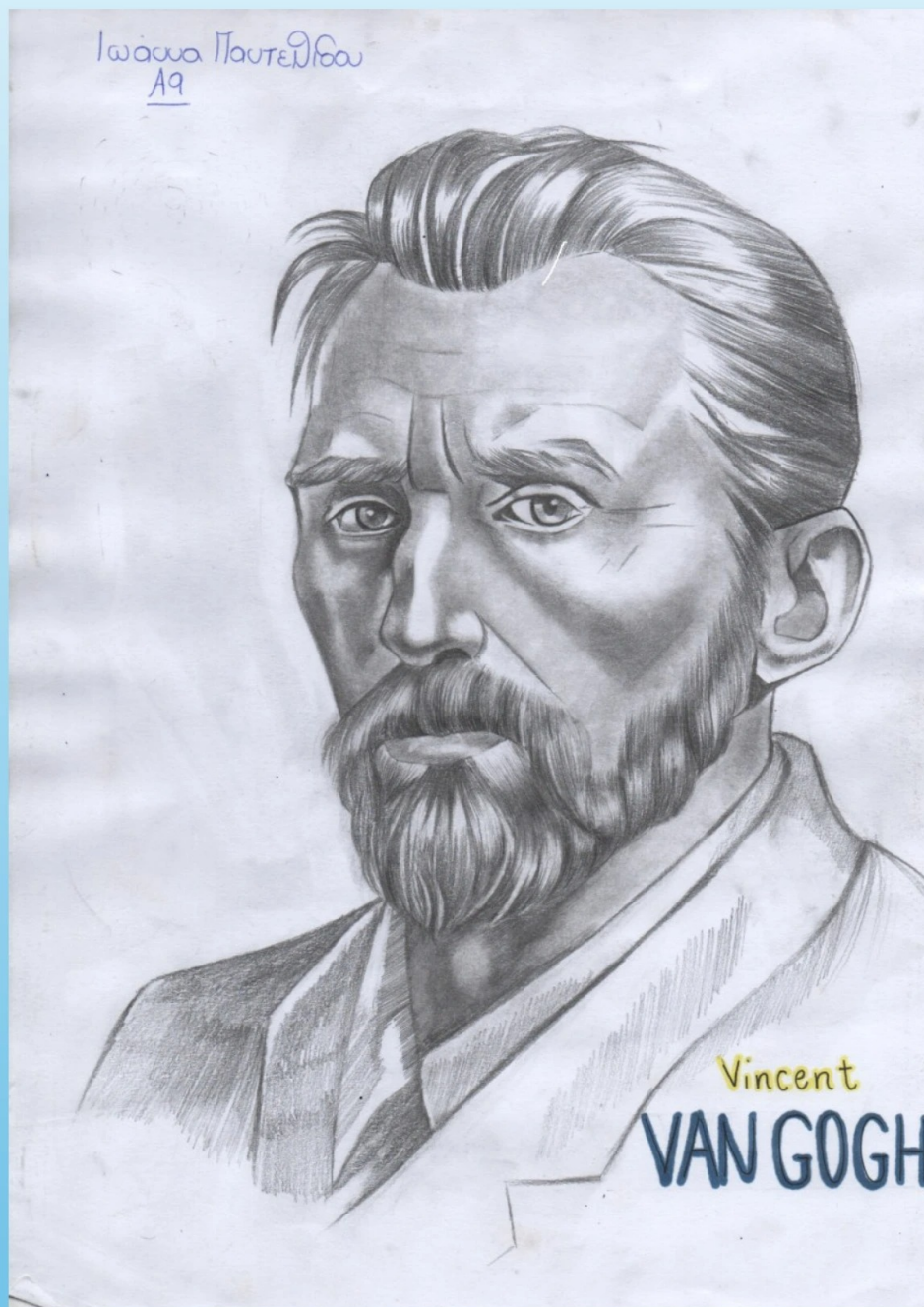


This figure withdraws into darkness, embodying fear that remains unseen yet deeply real.

It confronts the reality of violence against women and the tragedy of femicide.

Breaking the silence is not only necessary—it is urgent.

Echoes of a Turbulent Soul



In this portrait, intensity and vulnerability coexist. Vincent van Gogh painted not what he saw, but what he felt, turning inner turmoil into vivid color. His art stands as a testament to resilience in the face of silent struggles.

Van Gogh

Sunflowers

The Potato Eaters



SUNFLOWERS:
French: Tournesols

This specific painting is from Van Gogh's famous series Arles, from 1888-89, depicting a bouquet of sunflowers in a vase. He also has another famous series from Paris, in 1887, showing cut flowers on the ground. The reason he made these paintings and started this series was to decorate his studio named "Yellow House" for his friend Gauguin. While there isn't one single painting named "Sunflowers", these iconic works are known collectively by that title. Van Gogh liked painting flowers, painting primarily to express gratitude, friendship and using them as vibrant symbols of optimism and nature's beauty. He saw sunflowers as radiating light, representing hope and the vitality of life, and experimented with yellow to capture these powerful, life-affirming feelings.

VAN GOGH:

Vincent Van Gogh's life, from 1853-1890, was a turbulent journey from art dealer and preacher to one of history's most beloved Post-Impressionist painters, marked by intense artistic passion, mental struggle, financial reliance on his brother Theo, and a tragically short but prolific career that produced iconic works like "Starry Night" and "Sunflowers" ending in his suicide after a period of severe illness. His artist journey started after he was dismissed as a preacher. Van Gogh committed to art around 1880, supported financially by his brother Theo Van Gogh. His early work focused on somber, earthy depictions of peasant life, like "The Potato Eaters" influenced by his time in the Netherlands. Vincent Van Gogh's paintings rose in fame after his tragic death by his brother's wife who took them and sold them.

THE POTATO EATERS:

The potato eaters, a painting by Van Gogh made in 1885, showcases a poor Dutch peasant family sharing a modest meal of potatoes under lamplight, aiming to depict the raw, honest reality and dignity of rural working-class life, emphasizing their hard labor and connection to the earth through earthy colors and rough, expressive brushwork. It's a statement piece from his Dutch period, highlighting manual labor and simple existence rather than romanticizing poverty, portraying them with coarse features and bony hands that have filled the soil. Something people find fascinating is how Van Gogh captured the feeling and essence of poverty through his earthy color palette, consisting of: dark browns, greens, and grays reflect the soil and the "dirty potato" color of their faces, linking them to earth. While another detail is how he chose potatoes as the main theme of this painting because it's an easy, cheap and quick food for people living in poverty.



CS Σαρώθηκε με το CamScanner

Easy Cookie Recipe



Ingredients

200 g butter (unsalted, cold, cut into small cubes)

375 g all-purpose flour (plus extra for dusting)

125 g powdered sugar

1 egg

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

Decoration of your choice (e.g. pattern stamps, sprinkles, icing)

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 160°C. In a bowl, mix the butter and powdered sugar until smooth. Add the egg and mix well. In a separate bowl, combine the flour and baking powder. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the mixture and knead until a soft dough forms. Lightly flour your counter and roll out the dough. Cut into shapes using cookie cutters or stamps. Place the cookies on a baking tray lined with baking paper. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until lightly golden. This recipe makes about 10 cookies, depending on their size. You can decorate the cookies before or after baking, depending on your preference.

©Angelike Grenda A8

English Humour & Fun Jokes

I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places.

-Why was the math book sad?
-Because it had too many problems.

-What did the ocean say to the beach?
-Nothing, it just waved.

-How do celebrities stay cool?
-They have many fans.

-What did the mayonnaise say when the refrigerator door was opened?
-Close the door, I'm dressing.

I found a book called How to Solve 50% of Your Problems, so I bought two.

-What is blue
and not heavy?
-Light blue

My Sunday was sad but
the day before was a
Sadder day.

-What happens if someone
slaps you at a high
frequency?
- It Hertz.

-Why can't pirates finish
the alphabet?
- Because they get lost at
C.

-Why do
programmers love
dark mode?
- Because light
attracts bugs.

- Do you know why
British people
pronounce the
word as Bri ish?
- Because they
drank all the T.

Film & Media Reviews

Pride and Prejudice

A Film review

The film *Pride and Prejudice*, directed by Joe Wright, is a romantic drama about Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. At the beginning, they don't really like each other because they misunderstand one another, but as the story goes on, their feelings slowly change.

The plot is interesting, but sometimes it feels a bit slow and quiet. However, the characters are very real and easy to understand. Elizabeth is strong and independent, while Mr. Darcy is more serious and shy, which makes him seem cold at first. The acting is really good and helps you feel their emotions.

I really liked the scenery and the atmosphere of the film. Everything looks very beautiful and calm, and the music matches perfectly. On the other hand, some parts were a little confusing or boring.

Overall, I think it's a nice film, especially if you enjoy romantic stories, even though it might not be exciting for everyone.

Hidden figures

A film review

Hidden Figures is an inspiring and engaging biographical drama based on the true story of three talented African American women—Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson—who worked at NASA during the Space Race in the 1960s.

The film is directed by Theodore Melfi and is based on the book by Margot Lee Shetterly. It shows how these women faced racial discrimination and gender inequality, while at the same time making important contributions to space missions, including John Glenn's historic flight.

The performances are one of the film's strongest points. Taraji P. Henson plays Katherine Johnson and presents her as a highly intelligent and determined woman. Octavia Spencer, as Dorothy Vaughan, shows how she adapts to change by learning new skills and helping her colleagues. Janelle Monáe plays Mary Jackson, who fights for her right to become an engineer. The supporting cast, including Kevin Costner and Kirsten Dunst, also adds depth to the story.

Overall, the film has received very positive reviews because of its emotional impact and strong message. Although some people believe that it simplifies certain historical issues, it still succeeds in educating the audience and highlighting important social problems. In conclusion, Hidden Figures is an uplifting and meaningful film that combines history with powerful storytelling. It is especially suitable for young viewers, as it promotes values such as perseverance, equality, and the importance of education.

Media & Digital Literacy

Digital Posters





CHOOSING AESTHETICS OVER 'VALUE'

By: Nick Petsalidis



Introduction



Something has shifted in the way young people see the world nowadays. If you scroll through any teenagers phone and you'll notice everything is about how things look. The right café, the right clothes ,the right outfit , and the right filter to use. This is not just about being vain or shallow. It's about teenagers growing up in the world where just a photo gets more attention than a real conversation, and where a carefully curated feed can feel more than real than our actual lives. Social media is not creating insecurity in teenagers, but it gave it a megaphone.

And the pressure is actually real. When our entire social world runs on images and videos, it makes sense that we start seeing ourselves through that lens too.

Social media and their obsession with image



Pinterest, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat.

These platforms run on visuals.

What they get rewarded isn't depth or honesty, it's aesthetics.

A beautiful photo will always be a meaningful caption. Teenagers are watching influencers wake up in spotless apartments

wearing the perfect outfits, and living what looks like an effortless life.

Nobody shows the mess behind the camera.

Nobody would talk about the three hours they took to get that natural shot. What teenager scene, constantly and repeatedly, is a message that looking good is the same as being good.

And because adolescence is already a time when teenagers are figuring out who they are, that message lands heavy. You start speaking close based on how they photograph you. You visit a café because the walls are the same right shade of blue as your outfit. You pick up a new hobby not because you like it, but because it looks interesting online.

The question stops being do I enjoy this? And becomes will this look good online?

Identity built on trends

Let's say every generation of teenagers has tried on different identities. That's normal and healthy of course. But now those identities come prepackaged with names and aesthetics. Clean core, dark academia, swag, y2k. You pick one, dress part, act the part, and suddenly you belong somewhere. Train move fast. What everywhere in January is embarrassing by March. Sewing who anchored their identity to a look find ourselves scrambling to keep up, inventing ourselves not out of growth but out of fear of looking outdated to everyone else. That's exhausting sometimes. And it leaves very little room to figure out what you actually value, not just what we want to project.





Brands selling you a personality

Companies figured this out long long ago. Nobody is buying sneakers for the rubber sole anymore and not out of comfort. They buy them for what the sneakers say about them. Skin care isn't sold as skin care. Clothes aren't a expressing to they are a signal and status.

Teenagers are the perfect target for this kind of marketing because the pressure to fit in it's already so much for them.

When everyone around you buys something not having it feels like a statement you didn't mean to make. So you buy.

Not because the things is useful or well-made or ethical or something you actually want, but because it looks right to wear something like everyone else.

What it does to your head

Constantly measuring yourself against curated filtered professional elite version of other peoples lives is not nothing or neutral. It wears on you. You start noticing everything you're not instead of everything you are.

When your self esteem is tied to how you look online, a post that gets fewer likes than expected stops being just a post.

It starts to feel like a verdict.

That kind of fragility in us adds up over time.

Friendships can suffer too.

What you bond with people over a shared aesthetic rather than shared values, the connection tends to be surface level.

None of this means aesthetics are bad, creativity is real, fashion art. Visual expression is a legitimate way to explore who you are. The problem only shows up when the outside replaces completely the inside.



Getting the balance right

This shift doesn't require some dramatic rejection of social media or trends. It's more about slowing down and asking yourself honest questions. Do I actually like this or do I just like how it looks in the photos? I'm choosing this for myself or because I think other people will like it or approve it. Will I care about this in a year or not?

Sound very simple, but they're surprisingly hard to sit with when you're used to making decisions at a scrolling speed.

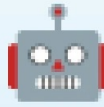
Media literacy helps! Understanding how algorithms work, how influencers content is always produced, and whole advertising targets identity rather than giving teenagers more room to make real choices instead of reactive ones.



Conclusion

Teenagers prioritising aesthetics over actual volume isn't a sign that something is wrong with them. It's a sign of the environment they're growing up in. A world built around visual content instant feedback, and constant comparison will naturally push people towards the surface. But real confidence doesn't come from a well curated feed. It comes from knowing who you are, what you care about, and what you are actually doing or actually done. Well, young people find ways to hold both things at once, looking good and meaning something, that's when their identity becomes something worth having...





AI in the Classroom: A Smart Helper or a Hidden Danger?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming more and more common in education. From smart apps to virtual tutors, AI is changing the way students learn. But is it a helpful friend or a dangerous threat?

On the one hand, AI can be a very useful tool in the classroom. It helps students learn at their own pace and understand difficult subjects more easily. For example, AI-powered programs can give instant feedback and explain mistakes step by step. This makes learning more personalized and effective. Teachers can also use AI to save time on grading and focus more on helping students.

On the other hand, there are some concerns about using AI in education. Some students may become too dependent on technology and stop thinking for themselves. For instance, they might use AI to complete their homework without really learning anything. In addition, not all students have equal access to technology, which can create unfair situations.

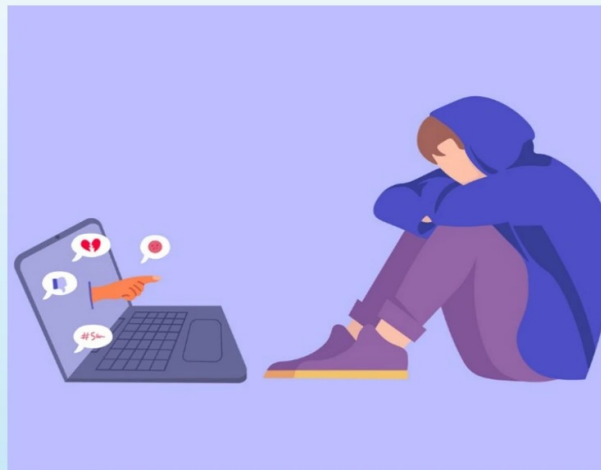
In conclusion, AI can be both a friend and a threat in the classroom. It is a powerful tool that can improve education, but it must be used carefully. Students and teachers should use AI to support learning, not replace it.

Cyberbullying: A Contemporary Plague

In today's increasingly digitalized world, social media and online communication have become an integral part of teenagers' everyday lives. However, alongside the numerous benefits of technological advancement, a serious issue has emerged: cyberbullying. **This modern form of harassment has evolved into a pervasive contemporary plague, affecting millions of young people worldwide.**

Cyberbullying refers to the use of digital platforms, such as social media, messaging applications, and online forums, to insult, threaten, or humiliate others. Unlike traditional forms of bullying, it can occur at any time and has the potential to reach a vastly wider audience. **Hurtful comments, embarrassing images, or malicious rumors can spread within seconds, causing profound emotional distress to the victim.**

The consequences of cyberbullying can be particularly severe. Victims frequently experience anxiety, diminished self-esteem, social isolation, and even depression. Many young individuals feel powerless, as the harassment follows them relentlessly,



invading even the supposed safety of their own homes. In particularly tragic instances, **cyberbullying has resulted in long-lasting psychological trauma.**

Nevertheless, this issue can be effectively addressed if society takes decisive action. Schools, parents, and students themselves must collaborate in order to foster a safer online environment. Promoting digital literacy, implementing more robust reporting mechanisms on social media platforms, and cultivating empathy among young people are all essential measures.

In conclusion, **cyberbullying constitutes one of the most pressing challenges of the digital age.** Only through heightened awareness, mutual respect, and collective responsibility can we ensure that the internet becomes a space for meaningful communication and support, rather than one characterized by hostility and harm.

School and Community Life

**Interview with the Woman Grand Master (WGM) chess player
and coach, Anna-Maria Botsari**

How did your passion for chess begin?

Through my family, by playing with my brother, and also due to the coincidence that the Chess Olympiad took place in Thessaloniki in 1984.

What was your first chess club?

The chess department of SFGT Kavala (Friends of Letters and Arts Society).

At what age did you realize you wanted to take chess more seriously?

Since I was already a champion at a very young age (13), it was something that came as expected rather than as a conscious choice.

How did your parents react to your decision to pursue chess?

It was a decision made collectively within the family.

Did you experience gender stereotypes and prejudice during your involvement in the sport? Tell us about them.

Of course. At a time when there was no other Greek female chess player competing for world achievements, combined with my young age, I was often treated dismissively due to the division between women's and men's chess, regardless of my excellent results in both.

How were you treated by others in the sport?

At first, very hostile, due to my sudden appearance and young age. It was difficult for the chess establishment of the time to accept that a 12-year-old girl from the provinces would suddenly become the top Greek female player and one of the best young players in the world. Of course, later on, strong bonds were formed with my teammates.

What is your current involvement with the sport?

I have moved into coaching, mainly aiming to promote and expand chess.

Who was your role model?

Bobby Fischer.

Did you have support throughout your journey?

There wasn't the necessary support, as there was no experience in handling such a case, either from institutions or from my close environment.

Do you consider chess an easy sport? What were the main difficulties you faced?

Chess is a very demanding sport, one of the hardest ones in my opinion. The effort and work required involve many hours of daily training, studying, and countless official games. The pressure of results, whether in team or individual competition, is relentless because a game lasts over 4 hours and it is purely a product of concentration and knowledge. There is no luck, nor any room for error.

How do you feel about having become Greek champion so many times?

I feel proud of my overall journey; I don't separate my achievements into small or big ones.

How are you treated by the outside world? Do people recognize you? Is chess a popular sport?

In Greece, it's a bit unusual when a woman says she is a chess grandmaster. Within chess circles, I believe I am recognized and well-liked. Globally, chess is quite popular. In Greece, we hope it will start being promoted more by the responsible institutions, beyond those of us who simply love it and understand its value for society.

What are you most proud of among your achievements?

That during very difficult times, I maintained my integrity and dignity.

Are there young people, especially girls in Greece, who remind you of your younger self?

I don't view new talents from that perspective. There are many of them, and I believe in individuality—that each athlete contributes their own piece to the path toward the top. My reward is that I was and still am a stepping stone for future Greek achievements.

What actions would you like the state to take to upgrade the sport in Greece?

Chess is globally established in the educational systems of developed countries. Ideally, I would like to see such a model implemented in Greece, with chess as a core subject in schools and recognized more broadly in society for what it offers to the mind and character.

Do you know Aspropyrgos Chess Club? What is your opinion about chess in our area?

I know it, although I haven't been active in recent years. I believe it has excellent potential and, with proper organization, it has got very bright prospects.

Thank you for this interview, it is a great honor for our school.

It is my pleasure! Congratulations for this initiative of creating an English Student Newspaper!

© Theodora Asimoglou-Antoniadi, Alexandra Grouzoulidi & Natalia Athanasiadou, A1



Anna-Maria Botsari: Inspiring the Next Generation

Anna-Maria Botsari, born in Kavala, Greece, is one of the most prominent figures in Greek chess history. She earned the title of Woman Grandmaster in 1993 and has been a leading representative of Greece in international chess competitions for several decades. Throughout her career, she has won the **Greek Women's Chess Championship** multiple times and has achieved significant success in **international tournaments, including medals at the World Junior Championships**. She has represented Greece in numerous **Chess Olympiads and European Team Championships**, consistently performing at a high level. In addition, she set a **Guinness World Record in 2002** by playing over 1.100 opponents in a single simultaneous exhibition, highlighting her extraordinary skill and endurance.

Anna-Maria Botsari has made important contributions to Greek chess by raising its international profile and serving as a role model for younger players. Her participation in major competitions has helped promote women's chess worldwide, and her achievements have inspired many to pursue the game professionally. Her long-standing career and accomplishments demonstrate the impact of dedication, skill, and perseverance in the development of chess both in Greece and internationally.

School & Community Life

A Perfect Tsiknopempti Celebration

Tsiknopempti is one of the most exciting days of the year in Greece. It is the Thursday during **Carnival** that marks the last weekend when observant Greek Orthodox Church members can eat meat before the Lenten fast begins. Its name comes from the Greek words Pempti (Thursday) and tsikna, which refers to the smell of grilled meat—hence one of its popular nicknames, “Smoke Thursday” or “Barbecue Thursday.” Some even call it “Fat Thursday,” similar to Mardi Gras’ “Fat Tuesday,” because of the abundance of meat and the fat that drips during cooking.

I woke up very early that morning, full of energy and excitement. I dressed up as a rich independent woman, did my makeup, and felt confident and ready for a day full of fun. I have always loved Carnival, and this Tsiknopempti was no exception. At school, **the yard slowly filled with students in colorful carnival costumes**. Some were funny, some creative, and a few completely unexpected—one student even dressed as a sandwich, which made everyone laugh. Lessons were relaxed, and we spent time admiring each other’s outfits and enjoying the festive mood. One of the highlights was cutting the traditional vasilopita, eagerly waiting to see who would find the lucky coin, which, in our case in my class, went to Virgin Mary. Later, the fifteen-member student council offered some gorgeous tasting experiences to the students according to the tradition of the day! I hadn’t paid for food, but my friend Maria kindly shared some with me, and it tasted even better because I hadn’t expected it! Soon, music filled the air, and we danced several dances. At one point, even some teachers joined the big circle, making the celebration even more special.

Traditionally, Tsiknopempti is a day for meat lovers. Restaurants and taverns offer special menus featuring grilled meats, especially souvlaki. People often go out with family and friends to enjoy as many different meat dishes as possible. The smoky aroma of cooking meat fills the streets, creating a lively, festive atmosphere that everyone looks forward to each year. Similar celebrations occur in Germany and Poland, though on different dates due to variations in Easter calendars. As the day came to an end, I felt tired but incredibly happy. Tsiknopempti is not just about traditions—it is about friendship, joy, laughter, dancing, delicious food, and creating memories that stay with us forever. It was truly a perfect school day, and I will never forget the dancing sandwich!

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School & Community Life

Student Celebration for March 25th

My school, the 1st General High School of Aspropyrgos organized a celebration for March 25th. It was a very interesting event, as it took place in a theater where the students presented an impressive play about Theodoros Kolokotronis.

The students dressed up, prepared themselves carefully and learned their lines in order to perform the play for us and honor the Greek heroes. Then, some of the students gave speeches which they read to the audience.

Finally, the most interesting part was the songs and dances. The children wore traditional costumes and performed traditional dances, which were truly impressive, while others sang Greek songs that they had prepared especially for March 25th.

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Honoring our history through theatre and dance



Our student team

Maria Tsaitouridou, A7	Angeliki Grenda, A8
Sofia Theodoridou, A1	Theodora Asimoglou-Antoniadi, A1
Christina Manelidou, G4	Alexandra Grouzoulidi, A1
Katerina Tsakalidi, B4	Natalia Athanasiadou, A1
George D. Tsevas, B4	Sofia Sopiadou, B4
Cleo Stefani, A10	Kiriaki Kalaitzidou, B4
Alexandros Katselis, A2	Chrissa Telioridi, A6
Raphaella Gialouri, A2	Lia Sevastopoulou, A6
Elpida Papadopoulou, A9	Nick Petsalidis, A9
Sofia Melidou, A8	Marilena Beidai, A6
Agapi Triantafillidou, A7	Valeria Soilemezidou, A6
Ioanna Pantelidou, A9	Georgia Koukouvinou, A1
Despina Kamenidou, A2	Amelia Kotsiai, B2
Anna Galanaki, A2	Sofia Tsiatova, B7
Maria Theodoridou, A2	Katerina Tsomidi, A7
Anastasia Erixidi, A2	Victoria Sidiropoulou, A6
Irene Efremidi, A8	Katerina Antoniadou, A8