



Independent Research Project

Year 8 - 2022



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Foreword

Independent Research Project – Year 8

Independent Research Project is now in its third year, where all our Year 8 students are given the opportunity to work independently and really challenge themselves.

This booklet is the culmination of a yearlong project that these fourteen students have successfully completed. In September 2021, they attended an introductory assembly where they were given information and ideas about how the project should be approached. They then decided what topic they wanted to investigate and were subsequently allocated a mentor with whom they met at set intervals during the academic year.

All project titles had to be formed as a question and students were required to keep detailed logs of their initial proposal, planning review, presentation record and a concluding reflection. This booklet comprises of all fourteen essays written by our students on their chosen topic as a culmination of their extensive research.

The next and final step of the project is for all fourteen students to plan and deliver an oral presentation to their peers on their chosen topic and their research journey.

Working independently and maintaining both momentum and enthusiasm throughout the year has been invaluable for all our students who will no doubt have learned a wide range of study skills that they will be able to put to good use in their years to come whilst at The Sacred Heart Language College and beyond.

The sheer breath of topics included in the following pages is inspirational. We hope you enjoy reading these essays as much as we have; we are very proud of our students and we wish them ongoing success for the rest of their time here at school and in their future.

Yours sincerely,



G.A. Higgins
Executive Headteacher



N. Starling
Assistant Headteacher (Associate)

How does Louisa May Alcott explore womanhood through her characters in *Little Women*?

Bethan Mitchell



Aims

- Explain why 'Little Women' is not simply a story about female domesticity and submission as many people discredit it for
- Analyse 3 of the main female characters in 'Little Women' and how they represent different aspects of womanhood
- Discuss the huge impact women authors have had in the world of literature and the publishing industry, and how their work should be valued and analysed as much as their male counterparts.

Louisa May Alcott was a 19th Century short story writer and poet. She grew up in Concord, Massachusetts with transcendentalist parents Abigail May and Amos Bronson Alcott. The 19th Century was an important time for female authors, namely, Jane Austen, George Eliot and the Brontës influencing modern society and culture through their works¹. However, their line of profession came with hardships. Due to the prejudice and discrimination faced for their gender, some rose only to fame proceeding their deaths, or gained success hiding behind a pen name for the majority, or all, of their career. Alcott was no exception, writing under the pseudonym A.M Barnard earlier on in her career, to whom she attributed provocative short stories and sensationalist novels depicting passion and revenge. Her most famous works- 'Little Women' and its sequel 'Good Wives' detail the lives of the four March sisters- Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy- growing up during the time of the American Civil War. Alcott chose to step away from the stereotypical way women were written and shine a light on their value and contributions to society. Through her several, unique, fleshed out female characters in 'Little Women' and 'Good Wives', Alcott presents womanhood as multifaceted and complex- highlighting the troubles that women faced in the 1800s, but also captures the creativity and worth of women by writing her characters as skilled, imaginative, and unashamedly themselves.

Jo March is the central protagonist of 'Little Women' and is favoured among readers for her strikingly individual choices. Throughout most of the first novel, Jo is determined not to marry, and presents in a very masculine manner, however, come the end of 'Little Women', she begins to recognize that her home environment does not mirror the rest of society. While she can be whoever she wants within her family home, the real world does not allow that freedom. At one point, Laurie suggests that he and Jo should run away together. This is the moment of realisation for Jo, as she wishes she could accept his invitation, but instead turns 'wistfully towards the window'² and is reminded of the old house that stands there. She answers that because she is a 'miserable girl'³, she must 'stop at home'⁴. Through this scene,

¹ [Female Authors of the 19th Century | A Listly List](#)

² L.M Alcott, 1868, 'Little Women', p. 292, Purnell

³ ibid

⁴ ibid

Alcott presents womanhood as burdensome as Jo feels confined within social expectations of her as a woman in the 19th Century. Her family home no longer offers comfort and solace but rather acts as a reminder of everything Jo must be as a woman. As she matures, she realises she will be expected to marry and raise children as her mother did, even if it interrupts her own dreams and aspirations. Her worth is narrowed to, not her talents and sentience as a human being, but a young woman with the ability to bear and raise children. Alcott's portrayal of Jo provides an interesting reflection of how the worth of women was (and still is) determined by their reproductive capabilities, as well as providing young girls across the years with a strong female role model who they may look up to and see themselves in.

From the very first page, Amy March knows what she wants- to marry a rich, successful man to save her family from poverty. She struggles with conceitedness throughout her childhood, paying attention to her looks and mannerisms- greatly differing from the protagonist, Jo, who struggles to find her place within a patriarchal society, while as Amy seems to have no trouble fitting in. In this way, she is similar to Meg, who wants to marry and be a housewife and have children- all things which are traditionally 'womanly' characteristics (though the end of *Little Women* explores Meg's rebellious side and the way women took back control over their lives and bodies). At least, this remains true for the entirety of the first novel, however, 'Good Wives' sees Amy's character develop and mature. Speaking to Laurie, she reveals her travels abroad 'took all the vanity out of her'¹, leaving her feeling 'too insignificant to live'². One may interpret the adjective 'insignificant' as being used to suggest the lack of power and influence Amy holds as a woman and reflect on the marginalisation women experienced in the 1800s. Amy is widely viewed by readers as selfish and arrogant- though when people claim this, they show the lack of understanding they have of her character. Amy is the most realistic of the March sisters. She recognises the unlikelihood of her being successful and her and her family being comfortable if she does not marry well. In this sense, she could be seen as selfless, even- she gave up her dreams of being an artist to support her family in the only way she could. Amy's ambition is just one way Alcott reflects upon the restrictions women were placed under in the 19th Century and may have acted as a way for Alcott to express her frustration at patriarchal systems preventing women from being successful despite their talents and skills.

Beth March is one of the most beloved of the March sisters- likely due to her unfortunate fate and domestic demeanour making her so tragic and endearing to readers. She does not complain, or argue, but accepts the housework and chores she must complete, showing only the smallest resentment. This may reflect how Beth accepts her role within a patriarchal society- being submissive, passive, and going quietly to her death. She is also completely unambitious- when her sisters and Laurie were discussing their "castles in the air", she wished only to 'stay at home safe with Father and Mother'³ and help to 'take care of the family'⁴. This encapsulates everything society expected of women at the time- to be non-proactive, subservient and unemotional. Through Beth, Alcott portrays a stereotypical female character, leaving many readers to assume the novel is backward and "of its time", however Beth's unfortunate death could establish that though she was good and kind, she

¹ L.M Alcott, 1869, 'Good Wives', p. 268, Puffin Classics

² *ibid*

³ L.M Alcott, 1868, 'Little Women', p.203, Purnell

⁴ *ibid*

was 'a shade too angelic to exist in Alcott's more real fictional world.'¹ With Beth's death, Alcott 'lets an old type of heroine die off.'² This could also imply that, come adulthood, the girls' innocence and ignorance wears away, leaving them to face the realities of the real world as young women.

Undoubtedly, L.M Alcott's 'Little Women' has had a huge cultural impact on many types of readers, especially younger girls who lack nuanced portrayals of girlhood in the literature they read. By exploring different aspects of womanhood through her complex characters, she establishes that women are not homogenous, and their minds and contributions to society should be valued as much as men's. 'Little Women' and 'Good Wives' provide a refreshing change in the representation of women in literature and paved the way for many upcoming women authors to do the same.

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2. 'Good Wives' by Louisa May Alcott, first published in 1869

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¹ [Beth March Character Analysis in Little Women | SparkNotes](#)

² *ibid*

Is music important in today's society?

Shaiyreen Gangatharan



Aims

- I. To explore the importance of music in lives today and how it strengthens well-being.
- II. Analyse and evaluate 4 points in order to reach a strong, justified conclusion.
- III. Discuss how music is something that enables people to express themselves in all areas of their lives.

There are more than 7000 different languages spoken across the planet. Even though we may not be able to master them all while we live, the one universal language of our world is definitely music. Regardless of your culture or background, everyone experiences an emotional response to various chords and melodies and there is even sufficient scientific evidence to prove that music can improve mental health. This essay aims to prove whether music is still an important aspect in today's ever-changing society.

Some believe that music is important in today's society because of its ability to encourage well-being. A study found in Nature Neuroscience shows that dopamine levels increase by 9% when listening to music you enjoy¹. This proves that music is important because of how it could decrease the major spikes of mental disorders such as depression. In 2020, there was an increase in rates of anxiety and depression by almost 25% globally- this over 10 million more cases being added to the hundreds of millions already existing². This is a strong argument because we have already seen crucial improvement in mental health with the use of 'music therapy'. For example, a study published in the British Journal of Psychiatrist followed 79 individuals between the ages of 18 and 50 who had been diagnosed with depression. 46 of these participants took part in traditional therapy methods (medication, counselling, etc.). The remaining partook in the same treatment but they had additional music therapy sessions. After 3 months of treatment, the music therapy group showed significant improvements in depressive symptoms compared to the other group³. Hence why music is still important in today's society.

On the other hand, many believe that music is not important in today's society considering the way it can be used to stimulate negative feelings. A paper published in the Journal of Personality and Psychology follows an experiment which concludes that music can incite aggressive thoughts⁴. The study consisted of 75 female and 70 male school students each listening to music from different genres. It was found that 'those who heard a violent song were shown to feel more hostile than those who heard a nonviolent song, from the same

¹ BBC News, "Music 'releases mood-enhancing chemical in the brain'" (2011) {<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-12135590>}

² Theresa Gaffney, "Rates of depression and anxiety climbed across the globe in 2020, analysis finds" (2021) {<https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/08/mental-health-covid19-pandemic-global/>}

³ Erkkilä J and others, "Individual Music Therapy for Depression: Randomised Controlled Trial" (2011) 199 British Journal of Psychiatry 132

⁴ APA, "Exposure to Violent Media: The Effects of Songs with Violent Lyrics on Aggressive Thoughts and Feelings" (2003) Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Vol. 84, No. 5, 960–971

artist and style' ¹. Some results show that those who listened to violent songs then interpreted the meanings of ambiguous words such as 'rock' and 'stick' with hostility. Additionally, when asked to fill out surveys, a majority of those who listened to violent songs completed the blanks with aggressive words, showing that music should not be regarded as something essential in society. This however is a weak argument because music can also be used in many good ways such as the deterrence of crime, as proven in a book written by musicologist Lily Hirsch². She writes about how music was used to prevent loitering in her hometown. In 1996, the city leaders played classical music in order to keep young people away from the city's Old Courthouse Square. As many teens did not enjoy the music, they left, persuading the city to keep the music playing. Hirsch tells us that we often identify with music based on who we think we are. She explains that, "If you see classical music as music of the fancy, white elite, you might think, 'I am not any of those things,' and then disassociate yourself from the music. In this situation, people identify themselves in the negative- namely, who they are not- through certain music." This then proves that music is still important today.

Contrastingly, others believe that music is still significant in today's society because of how it evokes certain emotions within people. An article by Abbey Road Institute tells us that the word emotion is derived from the Latin word 'emovere', which means 'to move or stir up'. If someone is 'moved' by a piece of music they are often describing their emotional state. When trying to express this, they often use words such as sadness, anger, fear, etc. Emotions and feelings are often used interchangeably, but there is a difference. Feelings happen as someone begins to think about an emotion and 'lets it soak in'. In English, 'to feel' is used for both physical and emotional sensations. Someone could physically feel cold as well as emotionally feel cold. This means that a 'feeling' is something that we sense. "A mix of emotions often fuels feelings, and most of times, last longer than emotions." When looking from a scientific approach, "emotions are the chemicals released as a response to our interpretation of a specific trigger"³. This process is when a sequence of sounds (interpreted by the brain as music) acts as the trigger which will evoke emotions to the conscious mind. This will influence thinking, behaviour, past memories and turn it into feelings. The human mind has trouble grasping what occurs in those split seconds, which explains why describing feelings can prove difficult at times. This is a strong argument because it explains that humans can find emotional connections to certain types of music. This can help people connect to others who feel the same way, creating a bond between them- therefore proving that music is important in today's society.

Nonetheless, some argue that music is irrelevant in society today because of how it can lead to road accidents. A study shows that "motorists listening to higher tempo songs in the car are more like to drive erratically"⁴. The people who took part in the study completed 60 tests using a driving simulator. The two music genres that were considered were rock music and light music, with 10 songs chosen from each genre. The experiment found that the participant's heart rate was higher when listening to rock music, compared with when a participant was listening to light music or no music at all. Quick rock music made participants drive from 5mph to 10mph faster than those listening to light music. The drivers on average

¹ ibid

² Lily E. Hirsch, "Music in American Crime Prevention and Punishment" (2012)

³ Abbey Road Institute, "Emotion in Music, Giving you the Chills" (2019) {<https://abbeyroadinstitute.nl/blog/emotion-in-music-giving-you-the-chills/?cn-reloaded=1>}

⁴ Wen H and others, "Effect of Music Listening on Physiological Condition, Mental Workload, and Driving Performance with Consideration of Driver Temperament" (2019) {<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31382474/>}

changed lanes 70 times during the simulations, but when listening to high tempo rock music the figure shot up to 140 times. “This indicated a higher crash rate”¹. Despite the risks proven by evidence, it can be seen that this is a weak argument because ultimately, when driving, we have the choice to listen to less intense, quieter music. Warren Brodsky (the man who conducted the study) has changed his attitude to in-car music himself, “I’m now more careful in my choice of music”². This proves that as humans, we can consciously make these small efforts to ensure the safety of ourselves and those around us.

After analysing all points made, it is clear to see that music is definitely important in today’s society. Music allows everyone to and create friendships with those who can relate with them and understand what they are going through. There is a reason why music is considered the ‘window to the soul’, and that is because when we cannot express ourselves, music has the power to imitate what we are feeling and speak for us.

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Will humankind be able to use the Moon to help find life in Interstellar Space?

Selini Kolonne



Aims:

My aims for this essay include stating the likelihood of humankind finding life in interstellar space, highlighting past and recent expeditions, and discussing the evolution of solar system exploration. This essay is based on the background study of astrophysics (the branch of astronomy concerned with the physical nature of stars and other celestial bodies, and the application of the laws and theories of physics to the interpretation of astronomical observations), cosmology (the science of the origin and development of the universe. Modern cosmology is dominated by the Big Bang theory, which brings together observational astronomy and particle physics) and astronomy (the branch of science which deals with celestial objects, space, and the physical universe as a whole), mainly due to the fact that these fields of study merge together to help explain new discoveries. The motivation for this study came from an interest in quantum physics (the study of matter and energy at the most fundamental level) because of how quantum technology powers our discoveries. Quantum technology is done through supercomputers that produce CGI (Computer Generated Imagery) simulations of potential occurrences in the wider universe.

Introduction:

In brief, this essay will discuss as to whether humankind will succeed in being able to use the Moon to help find life in interstellar space. This essay will review the advances that have been made in the field of space exploration and determine if there has been any major progress that suggests we will ever succeed in finding other intelligent life before Earth's resources are diminished by cosmic rays, which will wear down Earth's gravitational field.

Humankind will be able to find life in interstellar space:

Humankind will be able to find other intelligent life in Interstellar space because space exploration can be stationed on the Moon, due to underground caverns on the moon that are big enough to hold space exploration hubs and launching pads. These hubs would be stationed in the Moon's lava tube caves and the Moon holds lots and lots of a substance called 'water ice'; as said by Henry Hertzfeld, who teaches space law at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., "If we're going to have human spaceflight, the moon makes the most sense for now."¹ The mission is already taking place and preparations are underway, such as 'It all starts with U.S companies delivering scientific instruments and technology demonstrations to the lunar surface, followed by a spaceship, called the Gateway, in orbit around the Moon that will support human and scientific missions, and human landers that will take astronauts to the surface of the Moon'², this shows that evolution and progress in Lunar exploration is coming along quite fast. One of the major benefits would be International Cooperation, "Lunar exploration can become a tremendous

¹ Six reasons NASA should build a research base on the Moon, National Geographic, Article

² Moon to Mars, Nasa, Article

focus for international cooperation, which I think would be highly desirable, especially in today's international climate.”¹ Says Ian Crawford, a professor in planetary science from Birkbeck, University of London. Crawford's point is that the National Space Station has always brought about international cooperation mainly due to the fact that The International Space Station Program brings together international flight crews, multiple launch vehicles, globally distributed launch, operations, training, engineering, and development facilities; communications networks, and the international scientific research community.² This is a strong argument because multiple factors are mentioned and they all state their own benefits from the current advances underway, e.g. Mission Gateway, Mission Moon to Mars, etc.

This cannot be accomplished by humankind:

Humankind won't be able to find other intelligent life in Interstellar space because the Moon is moving slowly away from us, due to our gravitational pull not being strong enough; 'The Moon continues to spin away from the Earth, at the rate of 3.78cm (1.48in) per year, at about the same speed at which our fingernails grow. Without the Moon, the Earth could slow down enough to become unstable.'³ This statement can support the undeniable acknowledgement that the Moon won't be viable for use in a certain period of time, this is due to the fact that, 'The Moon is kept in orbit by the gravitational force that the Earth exerts on it, but the Moon also exerts a gravitational force on our planet and this causes the movement of the Earth's oceans to form a tidal bulge. Due to the rotation of the Earth, this tidal bulge actually sits slightly ahead of the Moon.'⁴, but this gravitational pull will be fatal one day because the moon will either be torn apart by Earth's gravity or 'the Sun will swell up into a red giant. At the peak of its expansion, it may swallow the Earth and the Moon.'⁵ Conditions on the Moon are quite discouraging because scientists have found that the radiation exposure on the Moon is **1,369 micro sieverts per day** - about 2.6 times higher than the International Space Station crew's daily dose.⁶ Another contributing factor to this is the fact that the Moon is weak because it only takes 1800 times more energy to destroy the Earth than it takes to destroy the Moon⁷. Some of these statements create a weak argument because the process of the Moon moving away could potentially happen after billions of years.

Conclusion:

Assuming that the Moon is viable for a sufficient amount of time, we can see a bright future for innovation in the Lunar exploration sector/field of study. Humankind is moving rapidly in their advances to scout out a suitable lava tube under the surface of the Moon, this is being executed via drones and other space equipment, such as the Orion spacecraft and SLS, which are being used in future and current lunar missions.

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Does celebrity worshipping have a more positive or negative impact on teenagers?

Athena So



Aims:

- to explore the positive impact of celebrity worshipping on teenagers
- to explore the negative impact of celebrity worshipping on teenagers
- to evaluate whether celebrity worshipping brings more positive or negative impact on teenagers

Many celebrities can set a good example to teenagers and treat them as their role models, but over worshipping can sometimes turn into a real obsession, mindlessly following their behaviours and actions in a bad way. However, we can feel more confident about our heritage or culture and understand more about our identity from celebrities. Teenagers also shouldn't waste too much money and focus more on celebrities than their family and friends.

Nowadays, teenagers spend a lot of time worshipping celebrities, learning about their behaviours, life, hobbies and so much more. Celebrity worship is an addictive and obsessive disorder where someone becomes excessively interested and involved in the personal life of a celebrity but it comes with either positive or negative effects. Teenagers can become passionate fans of celebrities which can influence them in so many aspects of their lives. A fan is an individual who is enthusiastically devoted to something, such as a media personality, sports figure, or a singer. In this essay, we will be discussing whether celebrity worshipping brings more positive impact on teenagers.

People may believe that celebrity worshipping brings a more positive impact on teenagers because celebrities can set a good example for teenagers. ¹“Yes, for me it was an inspiration and an inspiration for many, many girls out there. She is a great athlete and a great champion.” 28-year-old Tennis opponent Bogdan said. Emma Raducanu is the youngest winner of the US Open and the British first woman's Grand Slam Singles winner. Despite her young age, she worked hard towards her incredible achievements, showing teenagers that everything's possible. ²‘Everything is achievable if you work hard, if you believe and keep being positive.’ Teenagers in particular, started picking up tennis rackets without a doubt. She was a positive role model for teenagers, especially girls. It was always a dream come true for her ³‘to encourage and inspire more young people to get out there and get active.’ She achieved her goal by becoming an LTA ambassador to help more children and young people enjoy the benefits of playing and staying in tennis, whatever their age, gender, ability, disability, or background. Many teenagers are inspired by her and the hard work she

¹ Tumaini Carayol, Oct 17 2021, Emma Raducanu is an inspiration, says Transylvania Open opponent Bogdan, The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/oct/27/emma-raducanu-is-an-inspiration-says-transylvania-open-opponent-bogdan>

² ibid

³ <https://www.lta.org.uk/news/emma-raducanu-and-the-lta-team-up-to-inspire-the-next-generation/>

put into what she enjoys doing, indicating that celebrities worshipping brings a positive impact on teenagers as they can be inspired and focus on what they love.

Secondly, celebrities influence teenagers by promoting educational and cultural awareness. Through social media, multiple teenagers can share their experiences with celebrities and how they changed them. Stephanie Le stated, ¹'BTS made me realise that my failures do not define who I am. Seven people who sing exactly what I feel truly help me understand myself and find new ways to evolve. BTS inspires me to love myself without feeling ashamed.' Celebrities can help teens to fully understand and love themselves no matter what. Some teens can also be inspired by BTS to have pride in their own culture. ²'They proudly speak Korean during important award speeches (like their UN speech), wear hanbok (traditional Korean dress), and promote Korean culture.' Celebrities can show us that we should not be ashamed or insecure about our heritage, instead, we should be proud and confident to live by them. Ashley Cho also stated that she was always embarrassed about being different, she became a fan of BTS with the intention of acknowledging the shame she used to carry and healing her broken relationship with her cultural identity. It is inspiring to help teens who are mentally struggling and it helps teens to understand themselves better. After teens become fans of some celebrities, it clearly showed that they helped those who feel different from others, stronger and prouder of their culture. These examples suggest that celebrities bring a positive impact on teens as they helped rejuvenate them, heal racial trauma and understand their identity.

However, people may believe that celebrity worshipping can have a more negative impact on teenagers. Over-worshipping sometimes can turn into a real obsession. Obsessive fans may not be able to realise that celebrities are bringing a bad influence on them which causes them to believe that their wrongdoings are correct and appropriate and mindlessly follow them. To emphasize that most of the fans are teenagers, they will start treating their celebrities as their role models; immaturely following their actions or doings like behaving badly in the public or to others. For instance, The Times stated that ³celebrities are encouraging their millions of fans to follow accounts that encourage gambling, unlicensed lip filter treatments and plastic surgery. ⁴Anti-gambling campaigners and cosmetic surgery regulators said that the campaign was "dangerous and irresponsible" because teenagers were the most likely followers of Instagram influencers Hassan, 23, and Rae Knight, 29. Teenagers will start participating in these events or promoting illegal websites because their favourite celebrities are promoting them. These pieces of evidence show that celebrities bring a bad influence on teenagers as they will mindlessly follow celebrities' behaviours, meaning that they bring a negative impact to teenagers.

Secondly, people may agree that celebrity worshipping brings a more negative impact on teenagers because they will buy many items about their favourite celebrities such as albums, concert tickets, posters, light sticks and much more which leads to waste of money. Other than that, teenagers may focus more on social media to learn the latest news about

¹ Stephanie Le, Hibaq Farah, 14 Dec 2021, 'BTS taught me that I am worthy': readers on why they love the K-pop superstars, The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2021/dec/14/bts-taught-me-that-i-am-worthy-readers-on-why-they-love-the-k-pop-superstars>

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³ Shayma Bakht, Tom Knowles, May 31 2021, "Influencers 'lure teenage fans' to gambling and surgery sites", The Times <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/influencers-lure-teenage-fans-gambling-sites-love-island-0xb2b2805>

⁴ ibid

their favourite celebrities and will get distracted easily or neglect schoolwork. They may also be more distant from their families or loved ones as they pay most attention to celebrities. These examples show that celebrities bring a negative impact on teenagers because ¹most fans are so addicted to their fanaticism that they tend to forget their real priorities, lose track of the time, and lead to procrastination and wasting money.

In conclusion, I believe celebrity worshipping brings a more positive impact on teenagers than negative as it is essential for teenagers to have a role model to look up to. Celebrities can set a good example for teenagers and they can learn from it. Through the encouragements from celebrities, teenagers can be prouder of their heritage, instead of feeling ashamed or embarrassed. Although it is undeniable that there may be a negative impact too, this can be avoided. Teenagers can manage their time wisely so that they can focus on both celebrities and schoolwork. With parental guidance, teenagers will not just follow celebrities blindly and can make rational judgement.

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Does playing an instrument improve your attitude to learning?

Cordelia Jarville



Playing an instrument can be a very enjoyable and pleasant hobby. Some people say that it is a waste of time or just extra stress, however I believe it can also relieve stress. Although playing music has many positive sides, does it actually help people academically and with their attitude to learning? In this essay I shall evaluate whether playing an instrument really helps you improve your attitude to learning and increases academic achievement.

In this essay I aim to see if playing an instrument can help with students' progress and attitude in learning. I want to see, not only if there are benefits but also explore downsides. I have always had an interest in music and this statement got me wondering if there is a correlation between playing and academic achievement.

In this essay I have evaluated many websites and interviewed both teachers and students to find if playing an instrument actually helps with your attitude to learning. I have found that there are many strong arguments supporting the question: "does playing an instrument help with your attitude to learning?"; and there are also some weak arguments, both supporting and opposing the statement. I concluded that playing an instrument actually does help with your attitude to learning.

Playing an instrument can help students improve their attitude to learning by expanding their working memory capacity. A researcher from Fairmont school has found that ¹"not only does playing a musical instrument increase blood flow in your brain, which can help an individual in need of energy, but it also contributes to an increase in brain development and long-term memory abilities. Playing a musical instrument requires the student to employ a high-working memory load, which helps to expand his or her working memory capacity." When playing an instrument there are many things that you must learn and remember off by heart. Your brain starts working on its memory skills and consequently learns memory skills. Keeping your brain working also helps it grow and improve, which vastly impacts your attitude to learning and how much effort you put into it.

A teacher and piano/drum player Nesta Jarville, who I interviewed, has found that it helps exercise her brain. Ms Jarville said ²"I feel happier with a target to work towards and because you're practicing skills you begin to learn quicker. Playing an instrument exercises parts of your brain to make it more capable. Instruments also help with coordination." She went on to say, "it doesn't really interfere with schoolwork and people I know that play instruments are actually more organised. In my opinion, I have found that most of my higher-level students play instruments, they also tend to be better at their homework and the effort they put into work." She has found that as a teacher her students that play instruments benefit from it and even as a grown adult she has too. Many would argue that it is stressful to find

¹ <https://www.fairmontschools.com/blog/students-benefit-from-playing-musical-instruments/>

² Interview with Nesta Jarville (teacher and drum player) – 1st March 2022

time however she argues that it encourages learning and actually helps people be more organised.

Organ and accordion player Mr Smietanka has said, ¹“it’s a beautiful thing which gives satisfaction. It also helps with co-ordination, memory, and reflexes since you are doing many things at once.” It can improve how your brain works.

A student who plays the drums believes that although it can be useful it has it’s downsides. She said, ²“I feel like my attitude to learning has improved since starting and has improved my view of musicians and their music however drums can damage your hearing.” This shows that it can be both positive and negative.

A fellow student has found that there are some pros and cons of playing an instrument. She said ³“I’m happy with my progress at school and the level I’m working at. I used to play an instrument however I stopped a while ago and my learning hasn’t really changed since I stopped. I believe that it helps you become a better listener however there would be lots of class work to catch up on that you miss because of instrumental lessons.” This shows that although playing an instrument helps with attitude to learning because it improves your listening, it can make you stressed, catching up on missing work and fitting everything in. Another student agrees and says,⁴ “I don’t think I would start playing an instrument because it would be too much to worry about” another student also says, “I don’t think playing an instrument really has an impact on you attitude to learning and I haven’t seen a link between my attitude to learning and playing an instrument.” This shows that playing an instrument doesn’t help academically.

After evaluating the evidence, I have found that playing an instrument does have a link with your attitude to learning, even if the link is small. There is a lot of academic research from multiple sources supporting this. After interviewing a few classmates, I found that the majority thought instruments didn’t help, however they don’t play an instrument, so it was only based on opinion and not facts like the websites and instrument players that I interviewed. Therefore, I found that because none of the people who argued against the statement had first-hand knowledge playing an instrument does help with attitude to learning.

Source one is a website discussing the impact playing an instrument has on learning. This is a compelling source because it has strong evidence supporting this conclusion. There are also a lot of other websites which support the same idea. Source two is a teacher who spends a lot of time with her students, so she would be able to see the way their learning develops. She also plays an instrument at home so would know how it affects her. Sources three and four are interviews with students who believe the statement is false. Since they don’t play an instrument themselves, they have not evidence and facts therefore this is a weak argument.

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How did the Second World War impact on life in Harrow?

Rihanna Miftode



World War Two was a global conflict between twenty-three countries. It happened between 1939-45 and it affected Great Britain when it declared war on 3rd September 1939. It also impacted the Borough of Harrow, London; I have chosen to focus on Harrow instead of London because Harrow was an important location due to the role of Bentley priory, and it is where we live. I have chosen to do WW2 because it is a very interesting topic to learn about and is very important in the history of the UK. In this essay I will be focusing on how children in Harrow were impacted by the war; I will also evaluate women's work and the role of Bentley priory. In addition, for the conclusion, I will evaluate which reason was affected the most and why Harrow was impacted during the second world war.

One of the biggest impacts that WW2 brought to Harrow was the amount of children that suffered and were evacuated. Many of the diaries of the children were discovered and published¹. The diaries show the pain, and the frustration the children had to face at such a young age. Many children in Harrow went through great changes in their lifestyle. At school life changed to keep all the children and adults safe. For example, Stanburn Primary School² was built in 1938, and air raid shelters were constructed in 1939 in the school grounds to protect the children in the possible event of enemy bombing raids. Although Harrow didn't have official evacuations, families did send their children in safer areas around Britain, often in the countryside with relatives. A quite large number of children were evacuated from Harrow and Stanmore. Also, many of these evacuations were from Kodak and they created a scheme for the employees' children to be evacuated to families in kodak park, New York. The children who left for America are often referred to 'KodaKids'.³ The parents and families were truly devastated when their children had gone away. For example, one army parent quoted, "I shall never forget as long as I live the day we went to the governor's house, London, and said goodbye to our children and saw them file out on their way to Liverpool. Our house was so quite after all the children left"⁴.

In addition, The blitz was an intense bombing campaign undertaken by Nazi Germany against the United Kingdom during World War II. The first bomb of the London blitz may have been the one dropped on Wealdstone, just after 3am on 23rd August 1940. These caused damage to two cinemas, a dance hall, bank and houses etc.. During the war 170 people died on the streets, in the homes and in the hospitals of Harrow as a result to the bombing, continuing until 1945⁵. Until the end of the war, only fifteen V1 bombs landed in Harrow⁶. When the air-raid sirens sounded, people immediately took shelter, either in an

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/87/a2051687.shtml>

² <https://www.stanburn.harrow.sch.uk/blast-shelter/history-of-the-blast-shelter/>

³ Information from the headstone manor museum in harrow.

⁴ Information at headstone manor Museum

⁵ Information from Headstone Manor Museum.

⁶ The history of Harrow book, from Stanmore library.

Anderson shelter¹, or public shelters across the borough. Only a few people know that there in the woodland next to Headstone Manor are the debris of a buried air-raid shelter! The total number of explosive bombs in Harrow was a total of 38! The Home Guard of Harrow (originally called The Local Defence Volunteers) were calling for volunteers for the new organisation to give them their names in at their local police station; within just days, 250,000 volunteers had stepped forward. The Home Guard helped as they had an advantage over the enemy that they were familiar with the towns, villages and public services that they would be defending whereas the enemy could not². The job of the Home Guard was to undertake night-time patrols on fields in which the enemy gliders or troops might land. Women also took a big part in the war. One example of this was that they were also allowed to join the Home Guard in December 1941.

Furthermore, during the Battle of Britain, Harrow and the surrounding area became particularly important due to the role played by Bentley Priory. Bentley Priory is best known for the role as Headquarters Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain in 1940³. This includes that Winston Churchill visited Bentley Priory on the 6th June 1944, with Jan Smuts and King George VI, as from the evidence of the photograph taken at the entrance hall of the RAF Bentley Priory⁴. When the men went to join the army, the women of the house were given many more responsibilities and opportunities. In particular, World War II led many women to take jobs in factories around the country. These jobs provided opportunities to move into occupations previously thought of only importance to men, especially the aircraft industry, where a majority of workers were women by 1943, when the war broke out. The Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), was the female Royal Air Force during World War II. More than 2,000 women enlisted every week in London! This had a huge impact on Harrow, not only on how people viewed women from then on, but after the war, women had more freedom.

In conclusion, I believe the biggest reason why life in Harrow was affected by the war was because of the big role Bentley Priory had. I believe this because Bentley Priory was the headquarters of Fighter Command in the Battle of Britain and Harrow also has a close proximity distance to Central London, which meant Harrow was an important line of defence.

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Do cats adjust their behaviour according to how much attention they receive?

Savannah De Sa Pinto



Aims:

- To find out how cats behave.
- To find out if there is a link between how cats behave and human interaction.
- To develop my own understanding on the subject.

Domestic cats are often called house cats when they are kept as indoor pets. Feral cats are domestic cats that live away from humans. Cats are one of the most popular pets in the world. They are kept by humans for hunting rodents and for companionship. In this essay, I will aim to discuss whether cats adjust their behaviour according to the attention they receive from humans.

A young cat is called a kitten. The behaviour of a cat is influenced by the way it is raised as a kitten. Scientists have shown that, in order for adult cats to be affectionate with humans, they need to have been handled during the 2- 7-week period after birth. This is known as the “sensitive period” of kitten development. A kitten that hasn’t been handled at all by around 8 weeks is unlikely to develop a relationship with humans; such cats usually become feral in nature. A kitten’s mother, can also affect its friendliness toward humans, through her own behaviour. It has been shown that the temperament of the father has a distinct effect on the subsequent behaviour of his kittens, with friendlier fathers producing friendlier kittens. Cats can also influence the habits and lifestyle of their owners. Cats with active owners are much more active themselves. Also, cats with early-bird owners also tend to get up early. Meanwhile, cats that were left outside at night become much more nocturnal. As such, owners have some degree of influence over their cat’s eventual personality. A recent study out in Japan found that cats use their ears to mentally map where their owners are, keeping tabs on their people even when they are out of sight. These are a few ways in which a cats’ behaviour is positively influenced by human beings.

However, the downside to cats relying on humans can also bring about negative results. Research has shown that cats prefer to interact with their owner than with a stranger. Some cats, develop such strong attachments to their owners that they suffer from separation anxiety when left alone. Many cats regard their owners simply as providers of shelter and food and will spend hours away from home, only fleetingly returning for a snack. Others may settle on a window ledge, waiting patiently for their owners to return, then follow them around and curl up on their lap the minute they sit down. Cats become part of our families, to the point that they take on human habits, good and bad and adapt their lifestyle with that of their owners, says new research. “Cats are intelligent animals with a long memory,” explained Jane Brunt, the executive director of the CATalyst Council. “They watch and learn from us, noting the patterns of our actions, as evidenced by knowing where their food is kept and what time to expect to be fed and where their feeding and toileting areas are.” Humans even serve as role models for their cats. Studies have shown that cats are social animals and that people are their main social group. Cat lovers will probably say that

their pets show affection, by purring and rubbing up against their legs. But there's good reason to believe that, these sorts of behaviours are conducted with entirely different goals in mind. Many cats, for instance, will rub up against the leg of their owner or another human, when the person enters a room. It's easy to construe this as a sign of affection. But many researchers interpret this as an attempt, by the cat, to spread his or her scent; as a way to mark territory. These are a few drawbacks in the way that cats adjust their behaviour negatively according to the attention they receive from their owners.

An interesting way that communication takes place between cats and humans is by purring. As part of a 2009 study, researchers at the University of Sussex recorded the purring sounds made by 10 different cats in two types of situations: when they wanted food and when they did not. As it turned out, the food-related purrs were noticeably different: the otherwise low-toned noises had a spike, which is similar to a baby's cry. What may be going on, the researchers concluded, is that cats have figured out how to purr in a way that triggers humans' parenting instincts. This way of communicating, shows intellect and understanding in their interaction with humans.

Another way where cats' behaviour may be negatively influenced by human attention may be noted in certain actions like tail wrapping, an upright tail and a "question mark" shape of the tail are all positive mood indicators, but lashing, tail puffing and a lowered horizontal tail are all negatives. According to Jessa Paschke, pet behaviourist at Mars Petcare, a hiding cat is not a happy cat and will hide if they are unfamiliar with a space or is new to the family. Experts agree that a clear sign of resentment from a cat is biting. If a full-grown cat is hissing, it is a sure fire sign that they are potentially feeling threatened. However, hissing, growling and swatting are all normal behaviours in kittens as they try to develop.

Most studies seem to agree that the genes kittens inherit from their fathers, result in a tendency to either create bold or shy cats. Bold cats are more likely to approach anything new and are more receptive to lots of human attention. Shy cats can overcome their timidity and anxiety, given time and patience, to alter their early perceptions of people. Aloof, affectionate, serene, endearing, exasperating, elegant, enigmatic and even savage; the cat has been described in many ways throughout its shared history with humankind. It is most notorious, however, for its independence, a quality that some may scorn but others truly admire and yet it is partly this independence that has enabled the cat to become one of the most popular pets today, in some countries. Since studies have shown that cats can help relieve stress and improve heart health, I strongly and personally believe that owning a cat is a major plus. This is a pet that is relatively undemanding, keeps itself clean and not only provides rewarding companionship but also aids human well-being. A tall order, but the domestic cat has most definitely risen to the challenge.

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Is it worth learning foreign languages?

Justyna Galecka



This essay will discuss if it is worth learning languages. My aims are to have a few statistics, have at least one quote and be able to have a strong conclusion to end the essay.

Many people love the idea of being able to speak many languages but are not sure if it is worth it. It can be stressful but when you have reached your goal, you can communicate with so many more people. The many cognitive benefits of learning languages are undeniable but not when you are no longer interested in the language. In this essay, it will be discussed whether it is worth learning languages.

One of the main reasons that it is worth learning languages is that you are given a unique opportunity to communicate with a wider range of people in their personal and professional lives and be able to learn about other traditions, religions, arts, and history that are associated with the language. It is easier to meet new people and have a greater understanding with them especially because even as the global language, 80% of the population does not speak English. It also teaches tolerance, empathy, and acceptance of others. Learning a new language can change how you view the world and gives you a unique perspective on things and you gain awareness on many aspects of life.

Not only does learning a second language improve communication skills with others but research shows that knowing other languages means that it is easier to pick up another one. "When you learn a new language, you develop new brain networks that are primed and ready when you embark on learning a third language."¹ People have improved problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, ability to multitask, and better listening skills and boosted confidence as you must move out of your comfort zone especially when you speak the language for the first time in public. Countless studies have been done on bilingualism and brain health and how learning a new language can help medically. Brain scans have shown that learning a new language will help your brain stay healthy and researchers have found that bilingual people have a better working memory, have better attention, and better decision-making abilities. Other studies also found that bilingualism can even delay Alzheimer's disease and dementia and can also improve the ability to recover from a stroke.

Others would disagree and say it is not worth learning languages because a lot of people are monolingual and get by speaking one language. Over 90 percent of the world's population are monolingual or bilingual with limited fluency in the second language and they still lead happy lives, travelling, communicating with others, and expressing their feelings. People also argue that since English is the global language there is no need to learn another one and learning a new language opens a world of possibilities, people have managed to communicate using online translators or using body language to understand each other.

¹ <https://www.leadwithlanguages.org/why-learn-languages/top-ten-reasons-to-learn-languages/>

Life is short and wasting time, money, and energy on something that is not helpful in your life is pointless.

Another argument against learning a new language is the fact that a lot of people do not have the time to study, and it might be a waste of time if they are not devoting adequate time to it. You need a lot of spare time, and most people prefer to do other things like going out with friends or gaming. Spending around 50 hours every month for three to five years may overwhelm people, and some may get fed up, leaving midway which would be a waste of effort. This would cause unnecessary stress and just is not worth it for some people. There is only about 5% of people who started to learn a new language that accomplished any meaningful high proficiency level, which is not a lot. Gary Vaynerchuck said *“I don't put a lot of value on knowing other languages. Clearly in a decade I'll be able to go to any foreign countries and be able to put earpieces in and everything will be translated proper. And so, the value I put on it has gone down as I recognize technology is going to fix that issue.”*¹ It may be useless if you do not need it for work or experience and you could be using the time for something else. You need to show a genuine passion for the language, and if it gives no benefits in your life, then it is the last thing you want to spend countless hours on. “Learning a foreign language may sound enjoyable and thrilling to the ears but with so much diversity in communication, the world keeps moving on”.² Learning a foreign language takes time, patience, skills, good study habits and dedication otherwise you will get nowhere.

Personally, I believe it is worth learning languages. As a bilingual, languages have helped me so much in life, from being able to communicate with friends and family to learning about more cultures and history. Yes, everyone can just use their devices to translate everything, but it will never replace human interactions. Even if it is a simple “hello” and “thank you” in the local language, you can show great respect and consideration of their language and culture. It will help getting the job you wanted because employers are seeking professionals who can communicate seamlessly with customers in new and expanding overseas market. The language you speak is a huge part of who you are as a person. “It is your pride, your identity, your culture, your memories, and your relationships”.³ A language is a lot more than just a bunch of words. You will learn an entire new way of life. It will open your world in ways you cannot even imagine. “Learning a new language is a big project to tackle but if you can get in the right state of mind and you are not looking for overnight fluency, the progress you make will make you feel incredibly proud”.⁴

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“Know your brain- feed it, test it, stretch it”
Nicola Morgan ,2007, Walker Books

Are books or films better?

Giulia Filip



Books and films are both great sources of entertainment, but also help learning creative stories and developing literature skills. Books give details through descriptive writing and literature, and develop imagination, whereas movies show details visually through different scenes played by actors. Films are one of the greatest forms of entertainment in the 21st century. In this essay I will argue whether books or films are better.

On one hand, it can be argued that books are better than films. Evidence to support this would be that books can let you imagine the setting or events happening in the story and are also more detailed, as films sometimes leave out key details, for example in the Harry Potter¹ series the Marauders were in the books but left out of the movies. This conveys that books are better, as it expands the readers imagination and books give more key information crucial to the story. Moreover, Paulo Coelho says “The book is a film that takes place in the mind of a reader”². This shows that books are better than films because they expand on the reader’s imagination. Watching films on a device requires electricity, internet, and Wi-Fi. Furthermore, books are also better for people with certain disabilities, e.g. A deaf person would be able to read a book and create imagery in their head, by reading the book.

However, it can be argued that films are better than books. Evidence to show this would be that films display content much quicker than books³. Moreover, ‘Beauty and the Beast’ the film⁴ is better than the book. This is because in the book, the rose is what creates the whole plot, but in the film, the rose counts the days until the Beast’s demise. Furthermore, the images of films are easier to remember long after being displayed. This shows that films are better than books, as they show the audience images, which are easier to see than being imagined. Furthermore, films can sometimes be more fun than reading books, as they can be visualized with friends, family, etc. This also engages socialising between people.

Finally, it can be argued that books are in fact, better than films. Evidence to confirm this would be that books have no limit. John Leonarz says “They are ready when you are. You are a participant and a mere observer”⁵. This shows that while reading a book, one is free to read at their own pace and enjoy the story, however films are limited to a time slot to capture people's attention. Books also expand on a wide variety of literature. Furthermore, films may change the appearance of characters⁶. For example, the actors may look different, and the characters’ appearances are not like the ones in the book. Some may find this disappointing and lead to disliking the film.

¹ Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban’, 1999, JK Rowling.

² Quote from Paul Coelho- Pinterest

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In conclusion, I believe that books are better than films because they expand on a variety of literature, create better imagery, are a way of relaxation, a form of entertainment, do not use electricity, do not cause pollution, and lastly, they are relaxing to read. Although, it is true that there are positive aspects of films too. For example, films are more visually appealing¹, but overall, books are considered better than films because you can interpret the plot to your liking² and let your imagination run wild.

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What is Artificial Intelligence and what is the impact of AI on our lives?

Chloe Medeira



Artificial Intelligence or AI is a method of making a computer, a computer-controlled robot, or a software think intelligently like the human mind. **AI** is accomplished by studying the patterns of the human brain and by analysing the cognitive/reasoning process. The outcome of these studies develops intelligent software and systems. Since the mid-20th century, scientists have attempted to develop a system capable of carrying out tasks perceived as requiring human intelligence. The earliest substantial work in the field of artificial intelligence was done in the mid-20th century by the British logician and computer pioneer Alan Mathison Turing¹. The Turing Test², measured machine (artificial) intelligence. Turing's development tested a machine's ability to think as a human would. The Turing Test became an important component in the philosophy of artificial intelligence, which discusses intelligence, consciousness, and ability in machines.

In the past few years, **AI** evolved into a powerful tool that enables machines to think and act like humans. Machines and computers affect how we live and work. Some of the more common uses of **AI** today are:

- Banking Fraud Detection: **AI** learns to predict if a new transaction is fraudulent or not.
- Online Customer Support: **AI** is now automating most of the online customer support and voice messaging systems.
- Cyber Security: Using machine learning algorithms and ample sample data, **AI** can be used to detect and respond to threats.
- Virtual Assistants: Siri, Alexa, Google and Cortana now use voice recognition to follow the user's commands. They collect information, interpret what is being asked, and supply the answer via fetched data based on user preferences.

While the opportunities of **AI** are great, there are challenges and risks involved. **AI** rely on datasets (fed by humans). When the datasets are incomplete or biased, they may lead to biased **AI** conclusions. Humans are increasingly using deep-learning technologies to decide who gets a loan or a job³ and do not provide humans with insight as to why and how **AI** may be reproducing bias. Software, including the software that runs cell phones, security cameras, and electrical grids, can have security flaws. These can lead to thefts of money and identity, or internet and electricity failures.

¹ Alan Turing, in full Alan Mathison Turing, (born June 23, 1912, London, England—died June 7, 1954, Wilmslow, Cheshire), British mathematician and logician.

² Turing worked for the British government during World War II to decipher the German Enigma codes. His success helped give the British advance notice of German military plans. In addition to his considerable mathematical skills, Turing was a brilliant logician who made significant contributions to early computer theory.

³ Due to the volume of applications, most resumes or loan applications must pass through an automated test based on **AI** before humans ever see them. As many as 75% of employers rely on this technology, according to a Harvard report.

New threats to international peace and security can also emerge from advances in **AI** technologies. For example, machine learning can be used to generate fake video and audio to influence votes, policy-making and governance.

Here's a quick rundown of some **AI** advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages

- It reduces human error
- It never sleeps, so it's available 24x7
- It never gets bored, so it easily handles repetitive tasks
- It's fast
- Machines don't feel emotions

Disadvantages

- It's costly to implement
- It can't duplicate human creativity
- It will replace some jobs, leading to unemployment
- People can become overly reliant on it
- Machines cannot feel compassion and sympathy

So what is the future of **AI**? **AI** is projected to have a lasting impact on just about every industry imaginable. We're already seeing artificial intelligence in our smart devices, cars, healthcare system and favourite apps, and we'll continue to see its influence permeate deeper into many other industries for the foreseeable future. Given how artificial intelligence has been portrayed in the media, in some of our favourite sci-fi movies, it's clear that the advent of this technology has created fear that **AI** will one day make human beings obsolete in the workforce. A recent paper published by the MIT Task Force on the Work of the Future entitled "Artificial Intelligence and The Future of Work," looked closely at developments in **AI** and their relation to the world of work. The paper paints a more optimistic picture that **AI** will continue to drive massive innovation that will fuel many existing industries and could have the potential to create many new sectors for growth, ultimately leading to the creation of more jobs.

To summarise, **AI** is a technology first introduced in 1956, which mimics human thinking and task solving capabilities. There are several advantages to **AI**, such as taking on tasks that are too complex for the human mind; completing tasks rapidly compared to humans; reduce errors and defects, and to discover trends and meanings in data. **AI** has the capacity to make life simpler, easier, and more advanced. While there are numerous benefits to **AI**, notable personalities such as Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates, and Elon Musk¹ have warned against the rise of **AI**. Hawking, in particular, stated that **AI** will be "either the best or the worst thing, ever to happen to humanity."

Despite all the advantages and disadvantages of **AI**, industries are adopting **AI** to do the work more efficiently and with less cost. It ensures different opportunities for different **AI**'s, such as assistants or those in videogames and call centres. We saw the advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence. Today machines possess almost human-like abilities and **AI** is a perfect example of this fact. The outcomes in **AI** are getting better rapidly.

¹ By 2014, both physicist Stephen Hawking and business magnate Elon Musk had publicly voiced the opinion that superhuman artificial intelligence could provide incalculable benefits but could also end the human race if deployed incautiously. Mr. Gates said, "I am in the camp that is concerned about super intelligence. I agree with Elon Musk and some others on this."

Therefore, it is best to accept the changes in the world we live and take benefit from all the amazing features that artificial intelligence has to offer to us. **AI** is also a great place to focus your energy as a career, especially when you consider that **AI** will have such far-reaching impacts across many industries. **AI** and machine learning are at the top of many lists of the most important skills in today's job market. Jobs requesting **AI** or machine-learning skills are expected to increase by 71% in the next five years. According to a recent World Economic Forum report, robots, automation, and artificial intelligence could replace 85 million jobs globally by 2025. However, it will also create 97 million new jobs in the future. This can be seen as a huge beneficial impact so that is why I believe...

AI is the future. And we as future adults should embrace it and learn all about it, as it is the only way to ensure that fears about it are minimized. So we control and use AI to better our lives.

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Additional Resources & Websites

<https://kids.britannica.com/>
<https://www.simplilearn.com/>
<https://workofthefuture.mit.edu/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-54622189>

Which Dystopian book links the most to today's society?

Lilija Ivanauskaite



This research proposal aims to debate which dystopian trilogy (out of three) links the most to how we live as a community in the 21st century. It aims specifically to navigate through modern issues in dystopia that parallels our society today, and to analyse associations discovered in famous dystopian novels.

In the world that we live in today we are met with a multitude of issues that corrupt our society from within. Some include homophobia, the class system, and the constant addicting waves of technology. Many of these issues are reflected vividly in dystopia, a compelling and thought-provoking book genre that takes place in terrible alternative outcomes for our future, such as a world administered by Artificial Intelligence, or a world where women's thoughts are silenced but men's are released for everyone else to view. Very often, we can make clear parallels between the society depicted in dystopian books and our very own.

Dystopian literature links to our community today in many ways, and this essay aims to analyse and portray how dystopian books clearly display how we live today. Many dystopian authors' aims are to link their literature to certain increasing issues in the planet today, and therefore this essay will observe a selection of dystopian novels and trilogies to decide which book conveys the most links to our society today. The novels this essay will analyse are: 'The Hunger Games' trilogy by Suzannah Collins, the 'Chaos Walking' trilogy by Patrick Ness and 'The Loop' trilogy by Ben Oliver. All these novels focus heavily on many daunting topics in the world right now, managing to adopt a story-like tone whilst discussing the class system, rich privilege, climate change, gender inequality, artificial intelligence and many more.

'The Hunger Games' trilogy by Suzannah Collins is a world-known and bestselling dystopian series. It links very heavily with today's society, portraying the negative effects of the class system and rich privilege. In the novels, there is a flood-torn world with two communities, the poor, that are placed in an arena to fight for the rich's entertainment, and the higher class. The three books vividly display an exaggerated version of our society today, and this essay will explore the parallels in this trilogy. One of the links made is how the higher class in the Hunger Games dress and display themselves to society through overly rich and vibrant makeup and ridiculous clothes and hair to gain attention, approval, and notice. Alecia Li Morgan says that "*In both societies, extreme fashion and makeup are used to show prestige, style and importance*"¹. In order to claim attention, everyone from the Capitol must be more flamboyant and less natural than the last. This is portrayed when Collins describes that "*Katniss feels vulnerable in her plucked skin but doesn't mind standing naked in front of her prep team since they are hardly human with their dyed hair, dyed skin, and high-pitched accents*"². Suzannah Collins portrays the higher class as a ridiculously coloured and dressed crowd, and looking at today's modern celebrities, this is a clear link.

¹ Alecia Li Morgan, Reddit

² Suzannah Collins, The Hunger Games trilogy: Catching Fire

Another dystopian trilogy that parallels our society today is 'The Loop' by bestselling author Ben Oliver. Over the three books, he portrays a world which mindlessly follows a robot-advised government that outcasts the poor, using innocent "prisoner's" energy as a battery to run their technology driven world. Oliver uses captivating plot to mimic our automation consumed civilization and makes mass articulations between a supposed future and how our society is run today. It adopts a narrative tone whilst also consulting serious topics and issues initiated today. Ben Oliver displays his view of humanity when saying "*You seek immortality through evolution, yet you annihilate everything in your path. Humanity is cancer, humanity is bacteria, humanity is disease, and you need to be destroyed.*"¹ by stating this, Oliver implies that the way humanity is run today is disconcerting, whilst endorsing the perspective of an AI. The books overall demonstrate how attached we are to the utopic vision of fresh technology, but as each new iPhone releases, we grow one step closer to a world managed completely by robotic technology that surveys humanity's existence as a parasite and disease. Primarily, it has been proven that the Loop trilogy parallels the society we live in now, submerged completely in newly rising technology.

The final trilogy that will be examined is the Chaos Walking novels by the well-known author Patrick Ness. The trilogy consists of three books that are established in a new-found planet called 'New World' containing a disease that thrives in the males, causing their thoughts to be heard aloud for the world to hear. Collectively, all these unveiled thoughts are called Noise, and are what they all must deal with in their everyday lives. Notwithstanding, the women are kept silent and are left to deal with the men's Noise for as long as they live. This concept has an extensive connection to our world today, where it can be said that as a gender, men's thoughts are let exclusively out for everyone to hear but the women are almost forced to stay silent and deal with what their men desire. Ness portrays how the men in New World view women when he says '*I know your truth. An orphan, runt, weak. Just like a woman.*'² Displaying the men's outlandish thinking process, he links to how sexist our society is and how too many people still think like this. Overall, it is clear to see that the Chaos Walking trilogy links very strongly to our community.

What this study reveals is that, although Suzannah Collins and Ben Oliver's works discuss controversial issues that are parallel to our society today, Patrick Ness proves to be the most prominent with his best-selling dystopian trilogy Chaos Walking. This is because of the vivid reflection of how we used to (and some still are) be brought up to believe that men are the fountain of all knowledge and should always be listened to, whilst a woman is taught to be silent.

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¹ Ben Oliver, The Loop trilogy: The Loop

² Patrick Ness, Chaos Walking Trilogy: The Knife of Not Letting Go

Is it better to be a listener or a talker in school and in friendships?

Rosa Serban



My aims in this essay are to find out if it is better to be a listener or a talker in school, if it is better to be a listener or a talker with friends and if it is better to be a listener or a talker in general as well. After having undertaken my research, I believe I am able to provide an objective conclusion answering these three questions.

Is it better to be a listener or a talker? This is an interesting question that many people ask to themselves, and many do research on it. This is also a very controversial question since listeners are seen as quite observant and mysterious, however, talkers are often seen as very smart and sometimes ambitious. In this essay I will be answering and analysing the question of if it is better to be a listener or a talker in the sense of school and friendships.

As part of the daily school experience students have to take part in many discussions; some students prefer to be silent whilst others enjoy sharing their ideas. On mylot.com it tells us how ¹'Listeners usually are quiet and seem like a wise person and can be a reliable source for advice while talkers usually are very expressive and incredibly open to others (...) talkers usually seem "not wise" and "too emotionally involved".' This can make an enormous difference in school with teachers who are able to observe the dynamics between these different groups.

Consequently, it might be hard being a listener though, some find it 'painful' to be a listener. On teachingselfgovernment.com it says that some people find it ²'Painful to not say what is on a talker's mind.' This can show us that being a listener can get too far to the point where you do not feel comfortable not saying what is on your mind. You could feel like your opinion is not wanted anymore and that is why you would need reassurance by talking to someone. Some people might see this as a dreadful thing as you could be seen by others as 'annoying' or 'too full of yourself'.

On the other hand, being a talker can also lead to misinterpreting different things. If someone tells a person that is a talker something, the person might think that the other is saying something that is completely misunderstood and could find themselves talking about the situation. On psychologytoday.com it tells that ³'Listening is much more than allowing another to talk while waiting for a chance to respond'. This can show us that many talkers are sometimes not listening but just waiting to talk which is not good since you might misinterpret things and misunderstand the other person's true point. Many different talkers

¹ mylot.com, "Which one is better- listener or talker?", Astry Fernandy, April 27th, 2011

² teachingselfgovernment.com, "Talkers vs. Listeners", Nicholeen Peck, October 29th, 2008

³ psychologytoday.com, "6 reasons why nice people can hurt your feelings", Barbara Markway, April 21st, 2015

are not aware of their surroundings as they are too caught up in their own things that they are talking about. This is a terrible thing since, most of the time, you must be very observant with your surroundings for you to be more mature and wiser but also so that you do not hurt anyone's feelings by what you are saying. This causes drama and destroys friendships.

However, saying that being the listener is better for a long-lasting friendship is not true all the time. Many people can say that it is better to be a talker since they are the leaders in the friendship and can carry out an extended conversation with the other person. On uniquedevelopment.com tells that ¹It is important for leaders to show boundaries with friends. In friendships, we may get ahead of ourselves and forget that our friend is a human being. We can generalize that the talker/leader would be the one getting carried away but that is not always the case. When a listener may get carried away the leader is the one who is meant to prove reality and set the friendship back to place.

As a summary, I find that being a listener is better rather than being a talker. This is because it develops your friendships and school life. In school, it is much more likely that the better approach would be listening as it shows that you are taking the time to internalise the discussion and do not jump to an emotional reaction, and therefore this can be interpreted as being more wise. In the context of friendships, being a listener would make you seem more interested in what your friends are saying and might even help with having longer-lasting friendships as your energy is focused on actively listening to what your friend is trying to tell you rather than waiting impatiently for your turn to voice your opinions.

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Is social media the main cause of teenage depression?

Elbethel Mhretab



Social media has played a big part in many teens' lives and in 2018 Pew Research Centre, surveyed nearly 750 13- to 17-year-olds and found that 45% are online almost constantly and 97% use a social media platform, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat. Social media is a platform that allows teens to create online identities, communicate with others and build social networks. Teens also use social media for entertainment and self-expression. The platforms can expose teens to current events, allow them to interact across the globe and teach them about a variety of subjects, including healthy behaviours. However, social media use can also negatively affect teens by distracting them, disrupting their sleep, and exposing them to bullying, rumour spreading, unrealistic views of other people's lives and peer pressure. In this essay I will be exploring all the different viewpoints to make a concluding judgment on whether social media is the main cause for teenage depression.

A large percentage of adults with teenagers agree that social media is the main cause of teenage depression because teenagers are being exposed to the ideal body type, leading to constant comparisons and unrealistic standards. Research clearly shows that media exposure contributes to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. Social media is unfortunately shaping our concept of beauty. A negative body image can cause unrealistic expectations of how the body should look and can lead to unhealthy eating behaviours and disordered eating. Doctors who have studied this field have found a correlation between the time spent on social media and a negative body image. The correlation is especially true when participants are scrolling through appearance-related content, like accounts of a fitness instructor or model on Instagram. Social media images are filled with people presenting the "enhanced" version of themselves. The data and statistics that have been taken by various companies that focus on this e.g., The mind set clinic, clearly shows that more than 37% felt upset and 32% felt ashamed in relation to their body. However, social media can also have positive effects on body image and can promote body positivity. Viewing body-positive content on social media platforms can help individuals become more accepting and appreciative of their bodies. Additionally, social media can connect teenagers with others to build a body-accepting community. In order for this to be done many sites and pages have been set up for teenagers to express themselves and share e.g., how they feel whilst getting the support from adults. To summarise I believe that body image plays a huge part in teenage depression. Although pages and websites were and still are being created, currently, more negativity is spread than positivity and beauty standards are constantly raised.

However, there is also a belief that social media is not the main cause of teenage depression as it keeps us in 24-hour contact with the people we love. In times where teenagers feel low or upset about something, contacting people who can guide them or support them really benefits a teenager's mental health. Data reflects on this point as more than 70% of teenagers have stated that talking to people through the media lightens their mood and makes them feel happier. During the covid-19 period, 24 hour- contact as well as social

media as a whole played a massive role when we were all told to stay home. Education was able to continue through the use of video calls and people abroad or far away could be contacted daily. However, 24-hour contact can also be very dangerous and could lead to things such as bullying, rumour spreading and grooming. Over the past couple years, the grooming cases have gone up by 70% making 2021 the year with the most cases. Young teenagers are exposed to inappropriate behaviour and are often asked disturbing questions through online usage. To summarise I believe that although teens could be exposed to online bullying and grooming it is a weak point as there are ways to prevent this. As a parent daily to weekly phone check-ups could ensure your kids safety online so that they can still contact the people they love while staying away from the danger online.

On one hand, more than 57% of adults with teenagers and teachers who teach teenagers have noticed that teenagers' schoolwork ethic and overall behaviour has changed through the use of social media. In result of inadequate sleep because of constant social media use, teenagers are exposed to distractions, peer pressure and bullying which then has an effect on their educational life. In 2019, research shows that one teenager in every two classrooms experienced online bullying and it had an effect on both their mental health as well as their educational learning. Teachers were able to notice this because the student would be quieter in the classroom and assignments and homework's would be handed late or not handed at all. However, through the use of social media teenagers have been able to connect with one another and get in touch when struggling on a particular homework. When group projects are set, social media allows easy contact and students can help each other through its usage. To summarise I believe that a teenager's schoolwork ethic is affected by the use of social media. Even though students can help each other online, the percentage of teenage social media users is so high that teenagers lack sleep which can then affect one's determination towards their school life.

On the other hand, social media is a place where jokes and videos can be shared and more than 65% of adults and teenagers have stated that it is their main source of entertainment. Apps such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube can help a teenager's mental health and keep them happy. However, through these social media platforms racially motivated and offensive jokes are exposed to teenagers. This can leave people of colour thinking they are not good enough or people of a certain religion or culture feel like they are an outsider. Statistics show that more than 30% of people feel unaccepted or different because of the kind of content they are exposed too. To summarise, although sometimes the jokes can be upsetting many platforms have parts where teenagers can band certain videos and filter out content they do not want to see, meaning social media can still be their source of entertainment.

To conclude, I believe that social media is the main cause of teenage depression. Although there is 24-hour contact and jokes that help mental health, the arguments that affect a teenager's mental health are a lot more convincing such as the unrealistic body standards and the negativity spread about one's body. Racially motivated comments and jokes may be funny to others but sadly slowly breaks down a teenager's self-esteem. "Research is mixed"¹ according to Dr Mayshack "and there is no clear correlation between social media and depression but when looking at the long-term social media leads to depressive symptoms." After creating a questionnaire for both adults and teenagers, more than 90% of

¹ Deakin University (doctor Mayshack)

people agreed with the statement leaving me to conclude that social media is the main cause of teenage depression.

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Is cancel culture right?

Dora Ng



WHAT IS CANCEL CULTURE

Have you ever said anything offensive? Oh no, you might get canceled! Cancel culture is a new term created around 2015 on Twitter, the definition of Cancel Culture is 'cancel culture or call-out culture is a contemporary phrase used to refer to a form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles – whether it be online, on social media, or in person. Those subject to this ostracism is said to have been "canceled". (According to Wikipedia) that means that abusers will be boycotted after doing offensive actions online and in real life. The aim is to punish the abusers and gain justice for the victims. But is this the most effective way of doing it? In this essay, we will be discussing whether cancel culture is right.

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF 'CANCEL CULTURE'

The positives of cancel culture are It helps less powerful people express their opinion and let them be heard. For example, the #metoo social movement, which is a movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment, which let victims share their experiences by adding the hashtag METOO to get attention and support from social media. "I aimed to empower women who had endured sexual violence by letting them know that they were not alone." (According to the Metoo movement creator, Tarana Burke) The Metoo movement empowers victims and cancels abusers. Canceling them could make them feel ashamed and reflect throughout the whole boycotting and canceling process. It is a clever way to show righteousness and give comfort to the victims. For example, the famous writer, JK Rowling, has been accused of posting a tweet that has been seen as transphobic. Many LGBTQ+ in society feel humiliated by the tweet, cancelling JK Rowling can punish her and let her reflect on herself, also can be seen as fighting justice for LGBTQ+ in our community. We can see the cancel culture as letting abusers and bullies get punished and judged by us, also making us feel good about ourselves as being on the side of justice. It is also a brilliant way to punish abusers when the law cannot. But is it justice or is it just cyberbullying?

Although cancelling culture might be effective, there are also negative aspects about cancel culture. Using a boycott as punishment might bring awful influence. We should not do horrendous things to punish people who do unpleasant things. Using crime to punish crime is not right. It could affect younger social media users' mindset, thinking that boycotting someone is right if he or she is a 'bad' person. For the education of children and teenagers in our society, we should not encourage them to bully anyone in any situation. The former president of America, Barack Obama, talked about cancel culture in one of his interviews, he said "People who do really good stuff have flaws," suggesting that we should not cancel someone because of a small mistake and ignore the good things they did before. Also, there are much better ways to punish people instead of canceling them. For example, giving them a chance to reflect and mend.

On the other hand, canceling someone may also be counted as cyberbullying. For example, the famous singer Taylor Swift was canceled after the Kardashian incident when Kanye, another famous singer, invaded Taylor Swift's MTV video music award stage in 2009. Taylor Swift expressed herself in a vogue interview recently saying that "When you say someone is canceled, it is not a TV show. It is a human being. You are sending mass amounts of messaging to this person to either shut up, disappear, or it could also be perceived as, Kill

yourself.” This clearly highlights that cancelling someone can easily evolve from the original aim to serious bullying. We would not say things such as “kill yourself” “you should disappear” “you are a snake” in real life. But on social media, people tend to forget that behind that screen, everyone is real humans with flesh and blood instead of those icons. People started to misuse the canceling process to vent their anger on others and feel good for themselves ‘showing justice.’ Canceling culture is toxic and should not happen in our civilized community.

IS IT RIGHT TO HAVE POWER TO CANCEL SOMEONE?

Mostly, people judge before seeing the whole picture. That also happens throughout cancel culture. Often people cancel or boycott someone without knowing ALL the details of the case or incident. This is a big problem because cancelling someone brings a significant impact on the life of the target. They may get bullied by family and friends, and even worse, they may get fired from their companies. It is not a clever idea to let social media users have such power to judge and punish people. If it is right for us to punish people, then why do laws and courts exist?

MY OPINION ON CANCEL CULTURE

Every coin has two sides, it is hard to decide whether cancel culture is good or not. Cancel Culture is awesome because we can help the victims take revenge as comfort. But does revenge really help the victims? No. Revenge only gives them a short period of happiness; it does not solve problems; it only makes more people suffer. Canceling and bullying abusers cannot wash away the victim’s pain, it also does not allow the abusers to correct one’s mistakes and apologies. It is never too late to mend. No one is born perfect, and everyone makes mistakes. We should give everyone a chance to change. Canceling someone is only creating more victims and abusers. Therefore, I strongly disagree with cancel culture, and I think that everyone should stop canceling people. You are not a hero when you cancel others, you are a villain.

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