

THE Grauer Gazette

No. 14

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 2024

The Grauer School

Food for Thought: College Dining Rankings You Can't Ignore

By MJ C.

College dining can make or break a student's experience, affecting the overall enjoyment of campus life. No one wants to be the student who goes home on break and immediately devours a homemade meal, having gone months without real food or vegetables on campus. The variety and quality of food at college can significantly impact day-to-day life, especially when the same meals are served repeatedly. Luckily, last year's graduates were wise and ended up at some of the highest food-ranked colleges as well as high ranking academic colleges.

UCLA is recognized for having one of the best dining programs in the country, ranked number 1 out of 1,344 colleges by Niche. The quality of its meals is consistently praised by students. Our one and only Kendall B. shares her experience, rating UCLA a 9 out of 10 for their dining. UCLA's multiple dining halls remain an outstanding feature, as well as the countless cafes and restaurants scattered across campus. Many reviews on Niche state, "there is never a time students are left hungry on campus."



San Diego State University (SDSU) is ranked 16th by College Transitions by taking a different approach by partnering with chain restaurants instead of traditional dining halls. This seems to be a hit for the students, as they leave generous reviews. This allows students to use meal plan cards at well-known eateries on campus. According to Gabby C., "We don't actually have a food court; we have a whole bunch of chain restaurants we can use our meal plan cards at. I like using my meal plan card at Everbowl and Poki One N Half." While this offers flexibility and convenience, some students want accessible options on campus.

At UC San Diego (UCSD), the variety of food options is highly regarded, offering students a wide range of choices. Sarai S. commented, "UCSD has really good food and a lot of variety. I definitely wish that they had simpler meals, since a lot of them are super dense. Overall, the poke and frozen yogurt are the best!" The diverse food at UCSD caters to different tastes and preferences, though there is room for improvement in simplifying some of the meal options. Still, UCSD's dining services provide an appealing selection that ranks the school at 19th according to College Transitions.

Duke University is also highly regarded for its dining, ranked 22nd by Niche. The university offers an extensive selection of meals, with freshmen using their meal swipes at Market Place, a dining hall on East Campus that features a wide array of options, ranging from classic burgers to international cuisine. Cooper B., praised the dining experience, saying, "Duke University has everything you could ever wish for, dining related... I wouldn't change a thing!" Other reviews of Duke's high-variety dining include similar statements and compliments concerning their wide range of options.

As important as the location and academics of a college may be, considering the food options plays a crucial role in your decision. Our graduates made excellent choices by attending schools with diverse and high-quality dining options, including healthy choices. Universities like UCLA, UCSD, SDSU, and Duke offer a range of meal options that ensure students never feel limited in their food choices. When selecting a college, it's worth taking the time to consider the dining options available, as they can have a significant impact on your daily life.



What Goes Into Political Campaigning?

By Adele F.

As the election approaches, more and more people receive flyers, brochures, and postcards in their mailboxes – some of them getting a bit too full. Over the past few weeks alone, my household specifically received 38 brochures connected to the upcoming election. This overload of politically affiliated marketing is not a coincidence, it intends to achieve its goal as part of a political campaign that focuses on targeting and opinion shaping.

Political campaigning is a meticulous and resource heavy process. To start, every campaign has a budget. The average cost of a U.S. Senate race exceeds 19 million dollars, and presidential election campaigns go as far as billions of dollars. Campaigns are often funded by raising money

from the people, political action groups, and supporters who strongly back the candidate's platform. Fundraising is critical because it is how campaigns get everything from yard signs to the brochures that clutter our door steps. Another important aspect of the campaign is advertisement and promotion, including direct mail, television, radio ads, social media, and personal contact with potential voters.

Campaigns are often data-driven, targeting undecided voters who may have not voted in previous elections, or those who have not registered to vote in upcoming elections. Getting involved in a campaign is more straightforward than many people think. Particularly in important swing states where campaigns cannot find the resources, they often recruit volunteers

to help spread their message. Volunteers sometimes mail postcards to voters, make phone calls, or canvas the area and speak to residents about the candidate's platform. This "ground game" can be the difference in close elections, as volunteers engage with voters on a personal, eye-to-eye level.

Campaigns demand resources, human and material, which go hand in hand. In 2020, campaigns across the U.S. spent over \$14 billion collectively. Considering the amount of money involved, each letter, each advertisement, and each visit to the prospective voter is extremely deliberate and essential. So, next time you check your mail, remember that each brochure is part of a much bigger strategy aiming to win your vote.

Who Decides? The World of Celebrated Artists and Discarded Graffiti

By Clay B.

If I were to draw a simple black circle—awkwardly off-centered on a square canvas—would it really be considered art? I, the artist, can say it is. But to the viewer, who's to say? What if I wasn't there to tell you it's art, and it was just you, the viewer? Again, who decides?

Art and graffiti have long existed in a complex relationship, often viewed through starkly contrasting lenses. Traditional art, created by the "put-together" artist in collaboration with galleries, is celebrated as a high form of culture. Graffiti, on the other hand, is often labeled as vandalism—a punishable crime. Yet, the vibrant street art culture in modern cities challenges these perceptions.

Take a moment to consider the origins of tagging. During the Great Depression, hobos developed symbols to guide fellow travelers to shelter, food, and warn others about unfriendly towns. These marks, scratched into sidewalks and fence posts, were essential for survival. As urban life evolved, young artists adopted spray

paint to leave their marks, transforming this communication into a form of self-expression. While often seen as vandalism today, tagging carries echoes of its roots: a means to assert presence and create community in an ever-changing landscape.



Now, picture a colorful mural on the side of a building. Is it still graffiti if it beautifies the space? Many of these murals are commissioned and thoughtfully crafted, aiming to bring joy or provoke thought. Even uncommissioned pieces can stir deep emotions, making you stop and reflect. The distinction between graffiti

and mural art often hinges on intent and context. As a viewer, how do you engage with these pieces? Do you see them as art, or does discomfort arise because they exist outside the traditional art world? Most people can't tell the difference between a commissioned mural and a piece created by someone seizing the opportunity to express their graffiti. This lack of distinction makes the art world an incredibly complicated moral industry.

Back to my absurdly basic black circle off-center on a square canvas. Kazimir Malevich, a celebrated artist for over a century, created "Black Circle" in 1913. An art piece identical to my previous description. This seemingly simple work has attracted significant attention in the art market, with a version selling for approximately \$20 million at auction in 2008.

Malevich was given the privilege to declare his piece as art. What if he didn't have that chance? What if it is sitting outside a dumpster, ready to be destroyed in a landfill hours later? Is it still art?

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Swamps, Sunsets, and Shooting Stars in The Boundary Waters

By Luke W.

I was met with life-changing opportunities at every turn in the boundary waters. Located in the northeast corner of Minnesota, the boundary waters cover one million acres of protected land. The Grauer School offered an expedition for fourteen students to experience the boundary waters firsthand, and I was one of them.



Arriving at the airport at 4:30 in the morning was the first of many obstacles thrown at students throughout this trip, and the travel day left us in Duluth, Minnesota. We first stopped at Target in the morning to gear up for items we might need in the boundary waters. From Orbeez guns to protein bars, students got what they deemed necessary for a comfortable trip. Upon our arrival in the small town of Ely, we separated into two groups. These groups were kept throughout the rest of the boundary waters section. I was selected for Patricia's group. Our guide was an ex-marine, and we nicknamed him Overlord Dave. That night was spent all together before our departure the following morning.

Trevor's group departed from Farm Lake first. But Patricia's group, nicknamed the Devil Dogfishes, quickly caught up and overtook the other group. With the momentum, my group quickly reached the first portage. A portage is a stretch of land between lakes requiring groups to carry canoes and all the equipment on their backs. These portages were often through forests and over rocks. There was a level system ranging from unrated to level ten. We struggled through the first portage, which

was unrated and around a little over a half mile. By the end, we were exhausted. Little did we know this would be one of the easiest portages we'd do.

We arrived at the campsite later that night and settled down. We had the best meal of the trip: steaks and potatoes. I have never been more ready for a meal in my life. We all went to sleep very quickly. We had yet to learn what the next day had in store for us.

Day two pushed every single member of my group mentally and physically. Augie was guiding us through every turn of the trip. As a group, we decided to plan a route through two level ten portages. We paddled all day from 8:00 am. After stopping for lunch, we were met with our first challenge. Upon arriving at the portage, we realized it was a swamp, and there was no obvious trail. However, Augie paved the way.

Trudging through the mud, he found a small opening in the swamp. We had to hop from rock to rock with the canoes and gear on our backs. The final obstacle on that portage was the beaver dam. We had to lift our canoes and gear over this dam into the swamp. Once doing so, we swiftly paddled over to the next portage in the series of three. This portage had no trail. We began to push our canoes forward through this swamp. We kept falling through the swamp. The ground wasn't stable, and everyone fell through it at least once. The swamp was floating on top of muddy water. We had to physically push our boats through weeds that were four feet tall. This lasted nearly half a mile, physically exhausting all of us. However, the biggest challenge was right ahead of us.

This next portage pushed everyone in our group to their physical and mental limits. Upon entering this portage, Patricia's canoe hit a wasp nest. The nest fell onto the ground, and the wasps then stung Patricia twice. From there on, we had to be careful not to get stung by the wasps.

Once we passed the wasps, we had to carry the canoes over a giant rock. The branches were so tight the canoes kept getting stuck on each branch on the trail. With our shoulders burning, we pushed through. When we hit the lake, the sun was setting. We all collectively agreed that might have been the most beautiful sunset any of us have ever seen. When we finally reached camp, we all slept under the stars. Countless shooting stars flew over our heads that night.

The next day was lighter; we traveled only ten miles and had some downtime in the morning. On the final day, we traveled eight miles. There were many notable events on the last two days, but the overarching takeaway from this trip was the most significant.



Even though I didn't have the space to cover all the other special moments on this trip, we all came away with a similar takeaway. We had to lift each other up during the portages regardless of the conditions. Every member of the group had to "give a hand" to another member. We all realized you can apply this principle to more aspects of our lives besides this trip. When you see someone going through a rough time, like a portage, give them a hand and make them feel a sense of belonging. Boundary Waters was a great opportunity to really get to understand this concept. The boundary waters were a life-changing experience for everyone on this trip. This trip will always hold a special place in my heart. The most valuable thing I walked away from this trip was the new friendships I came home with.

What if Grauer Had No Grades?

By Brandon D.

I had an interesting conversation with Dr. Stuart Grauer, the founder of The Grauer School, during an expedition to Mammoth Mountain in 2022. He told me about his vision for the school to have no grades. Though I was skeptical, the thought lingered in my head for years after this conversation. When I asked fellow students and teachers about their thoughts, I mostly received responses of similar skepticism. The main criticisms were that students would have no incentive to perform beyond the bare minimum, and teachers would care less about their classes if students weren't trying. Now, in my senior year, I reached out to Stuart for an interview to explore his reasoning and satiate my curiosity.

What is the idea behind an ungraded system?

After starting The Grauer School with a graded system, Stuart progressively gave his initial idea of an ungraded system more thought and realized "...how beautiful it could have been..." to have a system of education based on students' intrinsic motivation. He believed that most students would be self-driven to reach a higher level of learning without the pressure of attaining grades. As the school became more established, it would be disruptive to suddenly switch to an ungraded system. To compromise, Stuart instituted the "Pass-Fail" option in the school, which is still available today.

Stuart Grauer is not the only person who has thought of this idea. A significant portion of colleges and universities in the United States offer pass-fail options, including Columbia University, MIT, and UC Berkeley. The Skaggs School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences at UC San Diego, one of the top pharmacy schools, operates exclusively with a pass-fail system and produces many accomplished graduates. This trend demonstrates a growing movement in education which values personal growth and intrinsic motivation over traditional grading systems.

How does an ungraded system affect students' intrinsic motivation?

Stuart's issue with the traditional grading system was that most students' main source of motivation was to achieve some numerical value on their grades. He says that some students are "...not really thinking about going into a classroom for the full process of discovery. They're going in thinking about, '...how can I comply with this so I can get the grade that I'm required to get?'" He believed that in an ungraded system, students would change their attitude about their purpose for learning. It would create a non-competitive environment where students are free to learn what they love in the ways they learn best. Stuart says, "When traditional grades get eliminated, what we find is assessments get restructured so that teachers are more liable to give real-world applications and focus on personal growth." Students will realize that "the only thing that they can do in this world is learn, and that all of them are going to learn very differently." With this realization, Stuart claims, students will develop intrinsic motivation to learn about the things they love.

How does the ungraded system benefit student well-being?

Stuart states that "...removing grades reduces the pressure students feel to perform solely for simplistic, numerical or letter-based evaluations." Literature on the subject appears to agree that grades can negatively affect students' mental health. A study from UC San Diego concluded that academic stress not only hinders students' ability to learn but also harms their well-being, potentially leading to health issues such as depression, anxiety, poor sleep, and substance abuse. A study from 2006 from the Journal of Educational Psychology further found that students in self-directed learning environments demonstrated higher levels of enjoyment and engagement than those in traditional classrooms.



Takeaway

After interviewing Stuart Grauer, I gained a better understanding of his vision. From my personal experience, intrinsic motivation has allowed me to learn many of my greatest skills, including playing instruments and producing music. I believe that all students have this innate inspiration to learn something, and perhaps removing grades will create an appropriate environment to allow students to learn without the pressure and stresses that traditionally come with school. However, some of my skepticism remains. Students probably wouldn't be excited to study subjects they aren't intrinsically motivated about. Students might not be adequately prepared for college-level courses. The majority of colleges still require grades for major requirements, and these classes are significantly more challenging than high school courses. Students who spent four years learning in a gradeless environment might find themselves out in cold water, unable to keep up with the curriculum. Nevertheless, I believe some aspects of Stuart's idea can be combined with traditional grading to create an ideal learning environment where students still experience "healthy stress" while also developing intrinsic motivation to learn by discovery.

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Beneath The Surface: The Shocking Motive of The Menendez

By Leyton G.

The year 1989 was a magnificent year. The Berlin Wall fell, Michael Keaton starred in Batman, and Erik and Lyle Menendez murdered their parents with Mossberg 12-gauge shotguns. Erik and Lyle Menendez seemingly had the perfect life. Erik was a shy kid growing up and looked up to his older brother Lyle. He was an extremely gifted tennis player and took an interest in screenwriting and modeling. Lyle was also an outstanding athlete and excelled academically, which resulted in him attending Princeton.

Jose was a Cuban immigrant, who was extremely hardworking and was a very successful entertainment worker for RCA Records. Although Jose was very successful, he was known to be very arrogant and cruel. Kitty Menendez was a stay at home mother who struggled a lot with alcoholism and drug addiction; she was also very suicidal towards the time of her death. How-

ever, there were many dark secrets that were kept deep within their family. Jose was known to put a lot of pressure on both of his sons. Many people claimed that he was a very demanding father and expected the best of both his sons.

This treatment resulted in a detrimental situation for the Mendez brothers. On August 20, 1989, Eric and Lyle Menendez fatally shot their parents to death with shotguns. Both of the brothers did not confess at first. They claimed that their father had done business with a variety of shady people throughout the past years, which resulted in the mafia murdering both Jose and Kitty Menendez. Months later, Eric confessed to his therapist, Dr. Oziel, that Lyle and himself had killed their parents.

On March 8, 1990, the Mendez brothers were arrested for murdering their parents. The world was shocked that two seemingly picture perfect boys would kill their rich and "loving" parents. It was as if

it were an episode of a soap opera. Two rich boys brutally murdering their parents and inheriting their money.

The Menendez brothers were then put on trial. While on trial, the Menendez brothers confessed to murdering their parents out of self-defense. They told the jury about the physical, mental, and sexual abuse that their parents put them through. Eric and Lyle confessed that their father was molesting and raping them at just the age of 6 years old. The Menendez brothers also claimed that their mother knew about the abuse, and completely neglected it. Eric and Lyle Menendez stated that their parents were plotting to kill both of their sons. This was another factor in this murder for vengeance. Eric and Lyle Menendez did not kill their parents over money: if they wanted to do that, they could have been much more subtle in their execution. They wanted revenge for the torture that their parents put them through.

Lyrical vs Non-Lyrical Music

By Milan B.

If you've been at Grauer long enough, you probably remember the old rule of no lyrical music in class. According to Dr. Stuart Grauer, "If you're working on something that needs deep focus, non-lyrical music is usually the better choice because it lets you stay in the zone without pulling your attention away." Despite this hypothesis, many students still prefer to listen to lyrical music while working and claim that this helps them focus better. Is this really the case?

A poll taken in 2022 from a panel of 2,000 randomly selected Americans showed that an estimated 58% of students aged 18 to 25 claimed they were able to learn and concentrate better with music in the background. To investigate this claim, a study was conducted by Alessandra S. Souza and Luís Carlos Leal Barbose in May of 2023 assessing the objective and subjective effects of music with and without lyrics on cognitive tasks.

In this study, the researchers had college students complete tasks involving verbal and visual memory, reading comprehension, and arithmetic while listening to instrumental music (hip-hop lo-fi), lyrical music, or no music at all. The students would judge their learning and performance both during and after each task. The study found convincing evidence suggesting that music with lyrics hindered verbal memory, visual memory, and reading comprehension but had a negligible effect on arithmetic.

However the instrumental music did not hinder or improve performance.

While this research does suggest that listening to lyrical music is detrimental to studying performance, you might find that lyrics work better for you. Listening to lyrical music that you enjoy can help boost your mood or motivation, which could be beneficial when doing repetitive or physical tasks. However, when doing tasks that require deep concentration and memorization, avoiding lyrical music or music altogether may be beneficial.

Multitasking can be difficult for your brain; in Dr. Grauer's words, "You cannot, can not, focus on two thing[s] at once. You can't: So, when you're listening to lyrics, your brain has to work harder to 'tune out' the words of the song." Ultimately, every person is different and should choose which method works best for them and their studies.



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Amtrak, Albuquerque, Allan, Aliens: The 2024 New Mexico Expedition

By Asa S.

When I first heard about an expedition to New Mexico I thought: What the heck is in New Mexico? Oh boy, was I underestimating the great, glorious state of New Mexico. We met up at the Solana Beach Train Station at the very reasonable time of 1:40 pm, a time I was thrilled to see (gotta get that beauty sleep). The train first went north to Fullerton and then we hopped on our connecting train heading west to Albuquerque. The views were great while they lasted as the sunshine quickly turned to moonlight. My initial excitement about sleeping in a train would turn out to be misplaced as the constant rocking and humming of the train against the rails kept me awake.



We arrived in Albuquerque, grabbed a quick bite to eat, and headed off to Taos. On the way to Taos, we stopped at the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge, one of the most remarkable landmarks I have seen in a long time. We checked in at the SnowMansion hostel, which was quite small despite the name. We stayed there for two days and made good use of the pool table in the common room. On Tuesday we explored the Taos Pueblo, driving very close to Los Alamos, the birthplace of the atomic bomb. Afterward, we took an Earthships Tour exploring buildings made of tires, glass, dirt, and other recycled materials. These buildings are completely off-grid and sustainable through the use of solar panels. We then headed off for an afternoon dip in the Ojo Caliente Hot Springs. My favorite pool from the hot springs was the iron pool, but the arsenic pool was also relaxing. I also really enjoyed the sauna and steam room. The next day we went for a brisk morning hike in the Bandelier National Monument, but the highlight of this day was not the hike, it was for sure the ghost tour we had. Our

eccentric tour guide, Allan Pacheco, guided us around the oldest chapel in the United States, rumored to be haunted. He entertained us with his fantastical beliefs which left us amused but also slightly unnerved. The following day we went to the Meow Wolf, an art museum with immersive art installations, multimedia elements, and a mysterious narrative throughout. We then arrived at the Alien capital of New Mexico, Roswell, being the site of an alleged 1947 UFO crash. We arrived at our new hotel and immediately made tin foil hats to protect us from the alien rays. A highlight of this day was learning how to play "Let's Summon Demons" with new friends. Our final full day in New Mexico consisted of seeing the natural wonders of the state. In the morning we explored the Carlsbad Caverns, a massive cave system underground. It also had the ominous bottomless pit "I finna be in the pit. The pit in question," we joked. In the afternoon we concluded our trip by visiting the White Sands National Park, admiring the setting sun upon the white dunes.

The Effects Characters Have on the Adolescent Mind

By Zoe Ba.

It is a worldwide phenomenon, children finding solace in fictional characters. Some parents will blame TV for their children's obsession with fictional entities. However, TV does not always deserve the blame. Rather, the answer lies within the human brain. The importance stories have played for humanity goes back centuries. Back when stories were told over campfires or painted on walls, they focused on telling a cautionary tale and providing guidance on how to survive. These stories were not only told to warn people of lurking dangers but for socializing purposes as well. Humans are innately social creatures; therefore, we have a tendency to connect with others, fictional or otherwise. The attachment ad-

olescents form with fictional characters is labeled as "parasocial relationships". These relationships are a common occurrence that develops because the brain is unable to distinguish that these characters are not real. To the human brain, the bond it shares with these fictional characters is as real as the one they share with their friends.

Children are constantly taking in their surroundings, therefore, not only are they mimicking the behaviors demonstrated by their parents but also the actions deemed acceptable by movies, tv shows, or books. Because of this, there are parental guidelines on TV; some behaviors showcased are simply not appropriate for younger children. Mimicking behaviors is also a result of the brain's subconscious desire to

be accepted and belong: a crucial part of human nature. As we grow older, the connection we feel to our favorite characters stems from their relatability. In order for humans to feel fulfilled, feeling understood is essential. Therefore, when we see characters that share similar characteristics, we instantly connect with them. As we grow older, these characters trigger the feeling of nostalgia or a "wistful affection for the past" (Oxford Languages Dictionary). It can be seen that the connections we form with fictional characters result from a desire to belong and receive validation through the qualities we are drawn to. The characters you grew up with may have caused more of an impact on your psyche than you might have originally imagined.

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Chappell Roan: A Rising Star

By Kate Z

In the technological age of today, people's fifteen minutes of fame come and go like fish in the ocean. First, they're all over every social media page and talk show, then they're swept away by the tide of the next big thing. Some have learned to capitalize on their time in the spotlight, making a fortune and a half and coasting on to an early retirement. Music, especially in the last ten years, has shifted towards this. Names like "Tate McRae" and "Shaboozey" rose to the top of the charts and stayed there. Personally, I have no idea who these people are, mainly because I don't listen to the Top 50 all that much. But one name has caught my attention with her campy attitude, strong vocals, and sound that I am genuinely impressed with. It's none other than Chappell Roan, babe.

I cannot stress enough how incredible it is that this woman is topping the charts right now. In spite of her record label dropping her and going through a rough breakup, Roan continues to produce music

and shows no sign of stopping. Furthermore, she was recently diagnosed with type II bipolar disorder, a condition that makes social interaction and sustaining a work-life balance difficult. And yet, here she is, dominating the Top 50. With her newfound fame, she's taking the opportunity to speak out against the treatment of celebrities.



It is common knowledge that to put yourself out there is to open your image to every person on Earth. The masses are free to do what they want with your voice, likeness, and everything in between unless you set boundaries — which will most likely be overstepped regardless. Roan, in interviews and photoshoots, has set fairly aggressive boundaries for herself. She speaks out about her experience with invasive

paparazzi and the pressure she's received to make political statements. We are witnessing an average person speak out about the treatment of a group of people, and her negative feedback is only seen as complaining because there is a comparative (and noticeable) lack of it from other, more mainstream artists. They've, sadly, gotten used to staying silent. She hasn't.

I want to talk about Roan's sound for a moment because it's familiar and unique all at once. She started producing music at 17. She's been dropped and picked up by labels multiple times, but her sound is still completely hers. She is unapologetically creating a mix of 80s pop and indie, combining sounds from each genre to create a style of music that's nostalgic, riveting, and exciting.

I know it sounds like I'm "glazing" her, but she truly deserves the recognition she's getting. It is undeniable that she has real talent and will continue to bring it to the spotlight for as long as she can hold the attention of the ever-changing Internet.

Roast vs Rizz

By Isabella M.

Do our teachers understand the modern dialect that students are flaunting around campus? And what better way to find this out than to quiz them on the words they hear us saying in class?

The first interview I did was with Paul Michael. Some excerpts include:

Question: What do you think of the words Skibidi Toilet?

Answer: I've seen the song too many times, [and] whether it has actual meaning other than people just being weird, I'm not quite sure... So sevvies have been going around saying one toilet with a head inside?

Overall, Paul Michael received the most average score out of this series of interviews, earning a 62 percent.

The second interview I did was with Isaac, who obtained the singular 10 out of 10 score. I also must thank him for suggesting the idea of this article post ex

peditions, having spent the previous week with the sevvies.

Statement: Skibidi toilet means a toilet with a head inside.

Response: Is that really... How often is that used in the vernacular?

The third interview I performed was with Alicia, who unfortunately received the lowest score of the group.

Question: What do you think the word 'rizz' means?

Response: Oh, I think that means to make fun of somebody.

We believe that this answer may have been influenced by Dana's speech at Assembly. In this interview, we were fortunate enough to receive a quote from another student.

Question: What does the word 'ate' mean? As in "I ate?"

Response: Does that mean to eat dirt?

Zoe Brisbois: That has another word after it.

The final interview was with the beloved Louise, who received 70 percent.

Question: What does the phrase Skibidi Toilet mean?

Response: That is absolutely disgusting, and I don't want to clean it.

Question: What does sigma mean?

Response: It's the name of a frat house.

Question: What does it mean to crash out?

Response: What happens when you give licenses to fifteen-year-olds.

I must thank Louise for giving me beautiful quotes that make it difficult to only pick a few.

The average score our teachers received was 65%. Do you think you could do better?

Words Included in Quiz: slay, skibidi toilet, rizz, aura, sigma, crash out, ate, cooked, to cook, & preppy

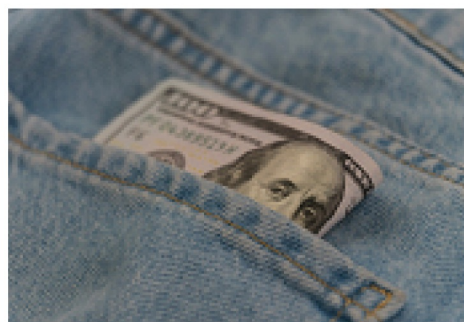
"It's literally nonsensical stuff to just confuse adults."

- Isaac Langen

One Bad Apple

By Anthony B.

...spoils the whole barrel. A recent study about the Grauer school and Apple products just came in, and it says the number of students who use Apple products is: a lot. Apple has recently unveiled its new virtual reality product, the Apple Vision Pro, earlier this year—a bold yet risky move in terms of marketing. However, Apple is not your mom-and-pop tech company, as it earned a net income of almost 100 billion dollars as of last year. What makes Apple tick, and are their products truly worth buying?



First, we'll talk about what Apple does right. Apple's ecosystem is perfectly interconnected, as their apps, services, and devices connect almost seamlessly.

For the consumer or business who doesn't want to worry about hardware or software problems and just wants a premium product at a premium price, Apple is the brand that calls their name. MacOS in particular has a clean and friendly user interface that feels good just to look at. Their newest Macbooks are industry leaders in terms of battery life, energy efficien-

cy, and displays. Their devices have good backwards compatibility: newer software is supported on many older devices. The iPhone XR was released almost six years ago as of October 2024 and still supports the latest iOS version.

Now we get to the bad part. Through a combination of marketing, public appearance, and product design, Apple has created a company lacking innovation, confining its users to the ecosystem, and squeezing as much money out of patrons as possible. While Apple added widgets, customizable home and lock screens, custom app icons, and hidden apps to iOS relatively recently; each feature has been preceded by similar Android features that have already existed before.

The interconnectedness of their devices may seem promising; however, there is a notable lack of cross-compatibility between products, so you will likely be disappointed while trying to cross-match iOS and Windows, or MacOS and Android.

If you want to connect peripherals directly to your device, too bad. They removed most of the ports from their laptops and phones, forcing you to buy an adapter if you want to connect to a different port type and incentivizing you to buy one of their own. Furthermore, repairs are outrageously expensive. Expect to dish out more than \$500 for a screen replacement.

The Apple tax, as they say, is the most well-known example of price gouging from Apple. Let's consider a scenario. Imagine you want to buy the latest MacBook Pro, but you work in video editing, so

you need at the very least 16 gigabytes of memory and at least one terabyte of internal storage. Well, the base Macbook comes with just eight gigs of RAM and 512 gigs of storage. Do you want 512 more gigs of storage? That would cost at least \$200 more. Every additional eight gigs of RAM will be an additional \$200, and you can't even get 32 gigabytes of RAM anymore. Do you see how this can be a pain for the average user trying to buy a truly future-proof laptop? You might as well be paying extra for the whole experience itself rather than the hardware.



There are a myriad of extra tidbits I would have loved to share about the company itself, such as the workplace environment, privacy issues, using children under seven to mine cobalt in the D.R.C., and much more. However, you shouldn't be swearing an oath to never buy from Apple again just yet. Apple products are still extremely high-quality and provide an excellent user experience. Windows and Android can almost seem too complex and finicky at times and are much more prone to errors and viruses due to their widespread use.

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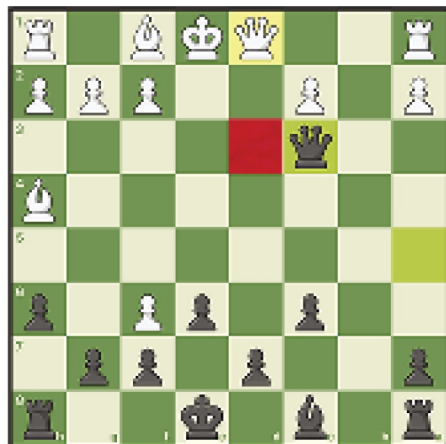
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ChatGPT Can't Play Chess

By Ezri R.



"I'll block the check with:

12. Qd3

Your move!"

ChatGPT responds to my Qxc3+.

In standard chess notation, the first letter refers to the piece moving, and the second and third correlate to where it moves. Beyond that, there are all sorts of specifications: an x for a capture, an O-O for kingside castling, and a + for a check. Among this information, available to anyone who cares to look up the rules of chess, there is one fact crucial to playing the game: "a player may not make any move that places or leaves their king in check."

ChatGPT is brilliant, with access to the entire internet at its fingertips. It scored on the 99th percentile on the GRE, 91st on the SAT, and 90th on the bar exam—no small feats. So, one has to wonder how this basic rule of chess eluded it.

Qd3 moves the queen to a square highlighted in red, and it's more than a bad move. It's simply illegal. Now, ChatGPT acknowledges the check, but its method of countering it is nonsensical and breaks the rules of the very game. One could brush this off as a simple error, a mix-up in the piece placement, if it didn't repeat itself one move later.

Once corrected and urged to

change its answer, it makes the legal and best move in the situation Qd2. I follow it up with Qxa1+, bringing the board here:



At this point, ChatGPT makes its second (but far from final) illegal move of the game: Rxa1. Even if one ignores the king currently in check, the rook is locked in on h1, blocked by both the bishop and the king on its journey to capture the queen.

A couple of moves and half a dozen more illegal choices later, it claims, incorrectly, that I have checkmated it and declares the game as over. Why?

Of all the jobs theorized to go extinct with the creation of ChatGPT, chess player is arguably the lowest on the list. But why is ChatGPT that bad? Beyond bad, in fact. It plays chess like a kindergartener who hasn't yet realized the game is bound to a two-dimensional plane, where rooks can't teleport, and pawns can't be conjured out of thin air.

Hundreds of chess computers exist online, from the game-changing Deep Blue created in the 1990s to the modern version of Stockfish, precise to nearly the 25th future move. But ChatGPT doesn't work with numbers and logic. It can help to write incredible essays and efficiently summarize large chunks of text because, in ultra-simplified terms, it is based on prediction. Based on already existing knowl-

edge and the wording of your prompt, it can predict what answer is most likely to be correct. With language and writing, this works wonderfully, providing answers that, though not always factual, make grammatical sense and answer the prompt. But once chess expands beyond theory and book moves, foraying into the middle game, "prediction" fails. By analyzing everything on the chessboard, comparing it to similar situations, and applying similar answers, ChatGPT is using this strategy somewhere with strict rules. Suppose, in the above game, ChatGPT compared it to a similar one, where the bishop was gone, and the king had already castled.



Then the check would not be a check, and the rook, now on f1, would be free to perform the move it initially volunteered of Rxa1. While, for any chess player, that new position seems vastly different, ChatGPT noticed the similarities in the state of the board and considered them interchangeable.

Asking ChatGPT to play chess is like asking Stockfish to write you an essay; it's simply not programmed to do so. And while I can't speak for the capabilities of future versions of ChatGPT, right now, if you're searching for an ego boost in your chess-playing capabilities, try a game against one of the most powerful AIs and see how you do.

ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 2024

Musician Spotlight

By Zack H.

Music has always been my pathway to relaxation and stress management. Studies back up the fact that music chemically changes our state of mind, allowing us to function more efficiently. However, there is another level to music, achieved not by listening, but rather through creating music. To find out more about this, I set up an interview with the local Grauer legend himself: Tommy Ragen. Tommy is a sixteen-year-old guitarist and vocalist who has been pursuing a career in music since the young age of six.

I asked him to tell me a little more about himself and how he got to where he is now with his love for music.

Tommy said, "I started playing the guitar when I was six and writing songs when I was seven and fell in love. I made my first album when I was eight. And then, after that, I went on the first nation-

al Broadway tour of the Musical School of Rock. It was fun, but I knew my passion was in creating music. After that, I made three more albums before joining Grauer."



But Tommy's work doesn't end with music: he's also an actor. When I asked Tommy to tell me a little bit about his acting career

he said: "My acting career started with music on the Broadway tour, but, after that, I acted in the movie *Mighty Oak*, and most recently in the movie *Reagan* as the young Ronald Reagan."

Later, Tommy discovered something beautiful in social media, where he has learned to self-advertise. He has grossed over 60,000 followers on the platform TikTok and hundreds of thousands of listeners on Spotify.

I asked him, "Where do you find your ideas for your big hit songs?" Tommy responded with, "Most of my inspiration for my music comes from life experiences such as heartbreak and many other topics". Many Grauer students are fans of this young man's music career. This is because he often writes songs about school-related experiences, and Grauer students are some of the lucky few who get to understand the special meanings behind his songs.

Legacy of Orisha Trilogy

By Zoe Ba.

The first book of the trilogy "Children of Blood and Bone" was released in 2018 and at the time it was considered one of the most anticipated Young Adult novels of the year. Not only did this novel demonstrate exemplary world-building

and diverse characters, the plot was fast paced, immersive, and highly addictive. The story follows our protagonist Zélie as she embarks on a journey to restore magic to the oppressed lands of Orisha. In doing so she must trust her magical abilities as a

Reaper to aid her and join forces with the daughter of her oppressors. The following book in the series was released in 2019 and successfully follows the plot line set up in the first novel. While reading "Children of Virtue and Vengeance", you will truly be entrapped by Tomi Adeyemi's descriptive writing and beautiful storytelling, the same cannot be said for the third book. "Children of Anguish and Anarchy" was released this year on June 25, 2024 and it is safe to say that after three and a half years, it was highly anticipated. After reading the first two books of this series, my expectations were set high. However, I found there was no cohesive plot, the worldbuilding was random and incomplete, and the ending was abrupt and unsatisfying. I would recommend reading this series, solely for the first two books if nothing else. The third book, although abrupt with many plot holes, serves as an adequate ending to the series, resolving the conflicts that arose throughout the series.



ENCINITAS, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 2024

Chic on a Budget

By Chiara C.

penny.

If you are interested in fashion trends and how to be stylish without breaking the bank, say no more! Fashionable, chic, stylish—when most people think of these words, the first thing that pops into their head is expensive clothing and luxury brands like Gucci, Nike, and Levi's. This often leads to the belief that good style is not achievable without a hefty budget. However, this couldn't be further from the truth! Although many believe that name-brand clothing or accessories are essential to elevate an outfit, there are countless affordable yet fashionable alternatives that can help you achieve that most desired "it girl" status.

Having a good style is a skill that everyone should value. It is a well-known fact that people often judge you based on your appearance and the way you present yourself, therefore, being able to put together fashionable looks benefits you throughout your life. Creating an outfit isn't just about grabbing a shirt, pants, and shoes; it's about understanding how to combine different pieces to create a cohesive and unforgettable look. This process may involve visiting local thrift shops, exploring online resale platforms, or even doing clothing swaps with friends to update your wardrobe without spending a single

Additionally, learning to mix and match patterns and textures can bring your outfits to life and shows that you put effort into your looks. By being resourceful and creative, you can curate a unique style that stands out. Some people may opt to have a pop of color in a t-shirt and match their shoes with the same color in order to bring the entire outfit together. Others may wear a very basic outfit with neutral colors and bring it to life with silver or gold jewelry and a bright statement sneaker. The key is to focus on fit and quality—well-fitting, inexpensive clothing can look much better than bad-fitting high-end pieces. Embrace the joy of fashion as a form of self-expression, and remember that style is about confidence, creativity, and being true to yourself, regardless of the price tag. When shopping, try to think about what catches your eye and how you would style that outfit with other pieces. I myself have an abundance of pieces in my closet that are cheaper in price but are still great quality staple pieces that truly make the outfit.

In addition, seasonal trends can often be taken on without fully having to put much effort into them. Opt for accessories or small statement pieces that capture the essence of current styles without the financial burden of an entire wardrobe



overhaul. Adding a knit scarf, gold hoop earrings, a dark brown belt and a statement purse can easily bring a boring outfit from a five to a ten! Keep an eye on fashion blogs and social media for inspiration, and don't hesitate to DIY any items you already own. The beauty of fashion lies in its ability to adapt and evolve, allowing everyone to showcase their individuality. Ultimately, the most fashionable statement you can make is one that reflects who you are and your personality!

The Grauer Gazette Sudoku

		5		7	3	6	8	
8	6	9	1	5		7	4	
7		4			6	2		1
								8
3			7	8	4			
			6			3	7	
6	1	8		4		5		
	4					8		
	5	7					9	

				2	8			
8	5							
			1	9	5	2		
4								
1			2			6	9	
			5		4	8		
					6	7		
5	3	6					4	1
7	2			5			8	

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