

LITERATURE UNBOUND

A painting of a woman's face in profile, looking down. She has dark hair and is wearing a blue garment. The background is a deep blue with various shades of blue and yellow flowers. There is a torn paper effect around the woman's face, revealing a lighter, textured surface underneath. The overall style is expressive and artistic.

FEATURING:

Navigating Through the Academic Maze | Gargi Yeolekar

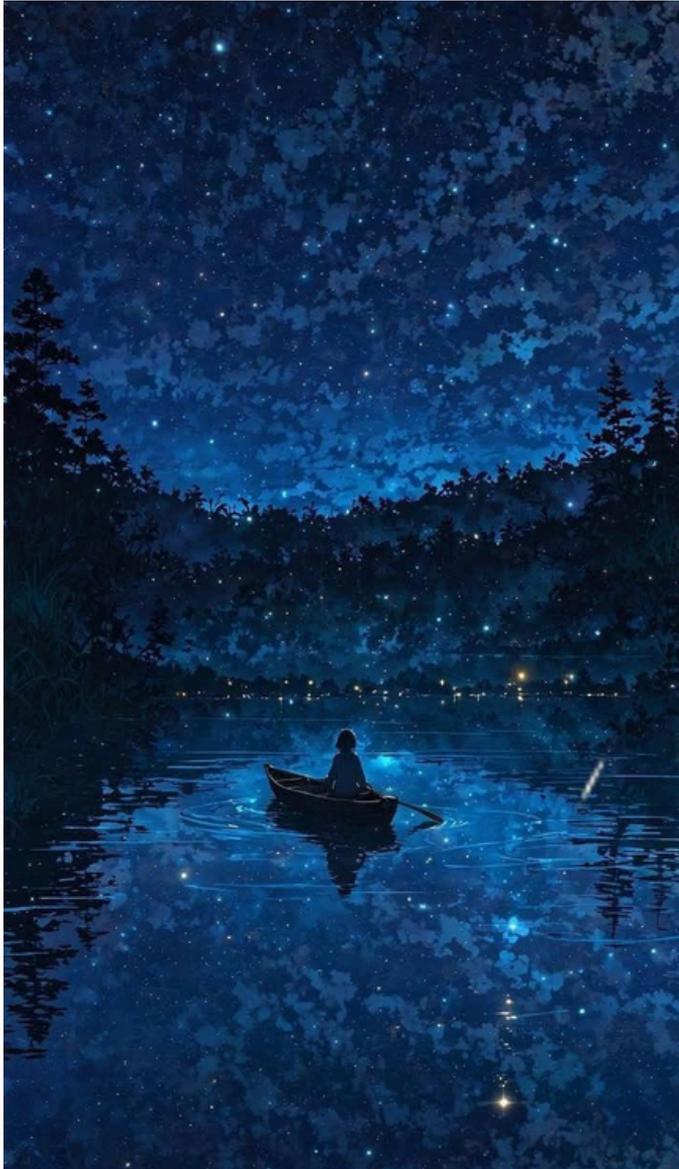
Generation Overload: How Screen Time and Social Media Are Draining | Teen Minds | Lakshita Arora

COVERPAGE
FEATURING
STUDENT
PAINTING BY

Gauri Thete

ISSUE 7: JUNE 2025

Delve into a plethora of intriguing and engrossing student-written articles, poems, stories – where the scope for imagination is endless!



LETTER TO THE READERS

Dear Readers,

Warm greetings, and welcome to the 7th Edition of Literature Unbound: The June Edition! This magazine showcases original poems, articles, and literary works by the talented writers of Grades 9 and 10.

As Celeste Ng beautifully said, "The story is truly finished—and meaning is made—not when the author adds the last period, but when the reader enters." Thank you for bringing life to our words.

We deeply appreciate Meghana Ma'am for her inspiration and unwavering support in creating this platform for literature enthusiasts. Your feedback and contributions are always welcome—reach out at sarah.tshaikh1@gmail.com or aryagupta1635@gmail.com.

Thank you for exploring the world of words with us. Keep reading, writing, and discovering!

Warm regards,
Sarah Shaikh (President)
Arya Gupta (Vice-President),
Literature Unbound

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*Happy Birthday,
Dear Astha Ma'am!*



On behalf of the entire Ashoka family, we extend our heartfelt wishes to our inspiring Managing Trustee, Astha Kataria Ma'am, on her birthday. Your visionary leadership, unwavering dedication, and compassionate spirit continue to shape our institution and ignite countless young minds.

May your year ahead be filled with happiness, health, and continued success.

*Warm regards,
Team Ashoka Universal School*



POETRY CORNER

Where emotions find their voice.

The Leap

A timid crab, she crawled in the shade
Of a broad waxy leaf, a flower's glade.
She scuttled and skimmed left and right,
Her shell glimmered, her eyes alight.

The crab's eyes skidded, they bounced, agitated,
For the clouds were gray, a storm was brewing that
night!

As the little crab's eyes pranced, frustrated,
She lost all hope for a place of respite.

She looked at the coconut tree, its welcoming arms,
The leaves were slumbering despite the state of alarm.
Its trunk stood like a dagger on a sandy crest,
The coconuts were still, in a safe state of rest.

Her eyes then fell on the formidable waves,
They struck the angular boulders, from tip to floor.
Their warm white crests and salty fingers
Engulfed all those who dared to linger.

*Optionless, the crab took a leap of faith,
She jumped into a little shell that got swallowed by the waves.
The torrents rumbled, the water quaked,
But the little crab tried to keep her composure unscathed.*

*The torrents, dismayed, landed the shell on the shore,
On a land uncharted, with surprises in store.
But the little crab had a smile on her face,
For she knew she had braved the storm
with grace.*

— Sarah Shaikh

A Cold Winter Night

*Neon lights and passing cars,
The heavy traffic with concrete rivers, and shining stars
In every street and valley, a story hides,
But the footprints fade away in sands of time.
Memories are lost but, the whispers still linger in the chambers of time
The air is crisp and sweet like cinnamon, the scent's warm
Stars fill the sky, keeping it calm,
In icy skies, they gleam like pearls
They come together in soft curls
The wind is strong, but they still shine and fill the dark with light
They wander free, without a care, beneath the sky so wide and bright
Beneath that sky of ink and frost the world might feel still
But it is not lost
Wrapped in the quilt of star filled skies,
The cold winter night whispers by
in the stillness of this night, people come together
And share comfort in one another.*

– Aanya Uniyal

A Song that Shattered

*The walls spoke in echoes, hollow and wide,
Footsteps on the floor, with nowhere to hide.
Silence hummed like a melody's thread,
The silence never ceased, words left unsaid*

*Sky stretched endless, unshaken, alone,
A world where the whispers were mine to own.*

*No borrowed laughter, no echoes new,
Just winds in the curtains, and evenings blue.
Then came a tremor, ever so light,
A ripple that sung in the quiet of the night*

*A voice, a presence, a mere shadow,
Something so small, yet barely hollow.
Footsteps were doubled where only one grew,
An emotion so thick, in the silent view.*

*Silence was disturbed in a laughter unseen,
The song was still quiet, but no longer serene.
And yet in the corner, flicker remains,
Of a ghost of me who still walks empty lanes.*

*A world once mine, mine to rule,
A world now shattered, its pieces askew.*

— Saanvi Patil

Everyman's Lament

War! War! War!
The world is left etched with a deep scar.
The peace is gone...
In this crushing agony, the nation craves for a
pleasant dawn.
Bomb blasts echoing like rumbling thunder,
The Elysian fields know men's blunder.
Punishing each other without mercy,
the heinous deeds shrouded in controversy.
Harsh! The truth is harsh!
The call of fraternity is all a mocking farce.
If that's not true,
Then why this abhorrence grew?
Mind you all, live in peace,
For then only we all can live in bliss.
Care for others, stop being sly,
Repent your act, and help each other fly.
Count the blessings, not the stars,
The nations stand united, truly can go afar.

— Ms Munmun Datta



PEN & PERSPECTIVE

Ideas in ink, perspectives in motion.

Nashik students broaden horizons through global visits

Ashoka Group of Schools in Nashik is fostering an atmosphere where students aren't confined to classrooms, but are learning, presenting, and performing on global platforms. Through its Global Connect Initiatives, students have represented Nashik and India at the United Nations, European forums, and international sports tournaments, shares Dr Dinesh Sabnis, AGM (Sports and Activities). He says that these pioneering experiences have transformed Ashokites into ambassadors of diplomacy, culture, sustainability, and peace.

A FOOTSTEP IN DIPLOMACY

In May 2023, a 20-member student delegation from Ashoka embarked on an educational tour to Vienna, Austria—merging global learning with Indian ethos. They visited the United Nations Office at Vienna and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), presenting research on Sustainable Development Goals. Ashoka students presented ideas focusing on inclusive growth, climate action, gender equality, and sustainable peace. Their confident delivery earned appreciation from international delegates and Nidhi Dhiman, first secretary of the Indian Embassy in Austria,” shares Dr



Students with their mentors visited the United Nations Vienna Office.

Sabnis, and elaborates, “The journey, blending intellect and culture, included a soulful Kathak performance and a regal interaction with Princess Herta Margarete of Tuscany, who awarded them honorary badges. Further visits to the Ban Ki Moon Centre, the Diplo-

matic Academy of Vienna, and landmark Austrian sites enriched their understanding of European heritage and global governance. Their journey concluded with accolades where they were honored as young cultural diplomats.”



The school's football team during a match in Hungary

GLOBAL SPORTS, LOCAL PRIDE

Ashoka Group of School's global vision extends beyond academics. He informs, “In May 2023, a 12-member U-16 football team from Ashoka participated in a cross-cultural sports exchange in Budapest, Hungary. Compet-

ing against local and international teams in a global league, students proudly clinched third place. Beyond the matches, the real win was in the learning. Students interacted with expert coaches from Hungary and Bulgaria, explored international career pathways in sports, and at-

tended high-impact sessions at Budapest's prestigious Sports University. The core objective of this initiative was exposing Indian students to world-class coaching, techniques, and training methodologies on a global platform, helping them grow as confident, future-ready athletes.”

Building responsible Global Citizens

The school has built a strong foundation for global citizenship through continuous collaborations with countries like Russia, Ukraine, Malawi, France, Australia, and Belgium. From virtual UN Day events to international tours, the Global Connect Initiatives are shaping socially responsible, culturally sensitive, and globally aware young leaders. “We strive to create confident, informed, and



Students and their mentors at the United Nations Office at Geneva in 2023.

GLOBAL TRIUMPHS WITH LASTING IMPACT

Dr Sabnis further says, “In 2023 and 2024, our students became one of the first Indian school delegations to participate in United Nations Peacekeepers

Highlights included a French language presentation, sessions with ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, and interactions with the Russian mission. They also visited the International Labour Organization, World Trade Organization, Geneva School of Diplomacy,

armament, labour policies, and human rights, and gained valuable insights into careers in Indian Foreign Services from Arindam Baschi.”

He goes on to add, “The takeaway was clear: Ashokites returned not just with certificates, but with a deeper under-

standing of global issues. Dr Sabnis insists that with every UN visit, cultural performance, and overseas match, Ashoka students are not only transforming themselves—they're placing Nashik on the global map. “Their journeys are proof that world-class potential can be nurtured right here in India's heartland. Our school's commitment to raising globally conscious changemakers sets a benchmark for educational innovation and holistic development.”



SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr Sabnis, who leads all global connect initiatives shares, “Building on the rich learnings from school's international education and knowledge exchange tours, our student Geet Poddar has been selected for the prestigious Harvard International Relations Scholars Program—with a scholarship.” He adds, “A passionate and driven aspiring diplomat, Geet will now engage with global experts, tackle real-world challenges, and



Geet Poddar

WALTZING THROUGH DIPLOMACY — OUR JOURNEY IN AUSTRIA

BY NIHARIKA KHEDEKAR

Touching down in Vienna felt like entering a story I didn't know I was already a part of. Except this wasn't fiction, it was very, very real. A place where every building whispered history, every room echoed with purpose, and every moment felt like a step toward something greater.

Our journey began at the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, where the focus was clear: climate action, SDGs, and shaping careers

that don't just survive the future, they sustain it. We dove into workshops on green jobs, and it hit me, this isn't something you read about in a textbook. This is our reality to build.

In one of the most unforgettable moments, we got the honor of meeting Her Imperial Highness Herta Margarete, Princess of Tuscany and Duchess of Austria. She was every bit as regal as you'd imagine, but what struck me most was her sincerity.

And in front of her, we had the privilege to perform a beautiful Kathak performance, an Indian classical dance that felt like a bridge between worlds. Art really does speak louder than words sometimes.

Our cultural performance didn't stop there. We also brought Kathak to the UN Symposium and the Lazarus Union Investiture Ceremony. Imagine representing your country not just through speeches but through rhythm, grace, and centuries of tradition. It wasn't just dance. It was diplomacy in motion.

Visiting the Austrian Parliament felt like

stepping into the heart of democracy. Behind the grand architecture were stories of real decisions, heated debates, and change that affects millions. Being there reminded me that politics isn't distant, it's deeply human.

The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna showed us the true face of diplomacy. No, not just suits and treaties. But listening. Negotiating. Understanding. It made me realize, this isn't just a field of interest. It's something I want to dedicate myself to. It's not just a passion anymore. It's a purpose.

One of the most powerful stops was the International Atomic Energy Agency



(IAEA). Just being there, knowing it's the epicenter of global nuclear safety and peace, was surreal. We talked about energy, international cooperation, and responsibility, and it reminded us just how connected the world really is.

Then came the jaw-dropping St. Stephen's Cathedral. That Gothic architecture? Straight out of a dream. It was so grand yet so silent. The kind of place that humbles you in the best way.

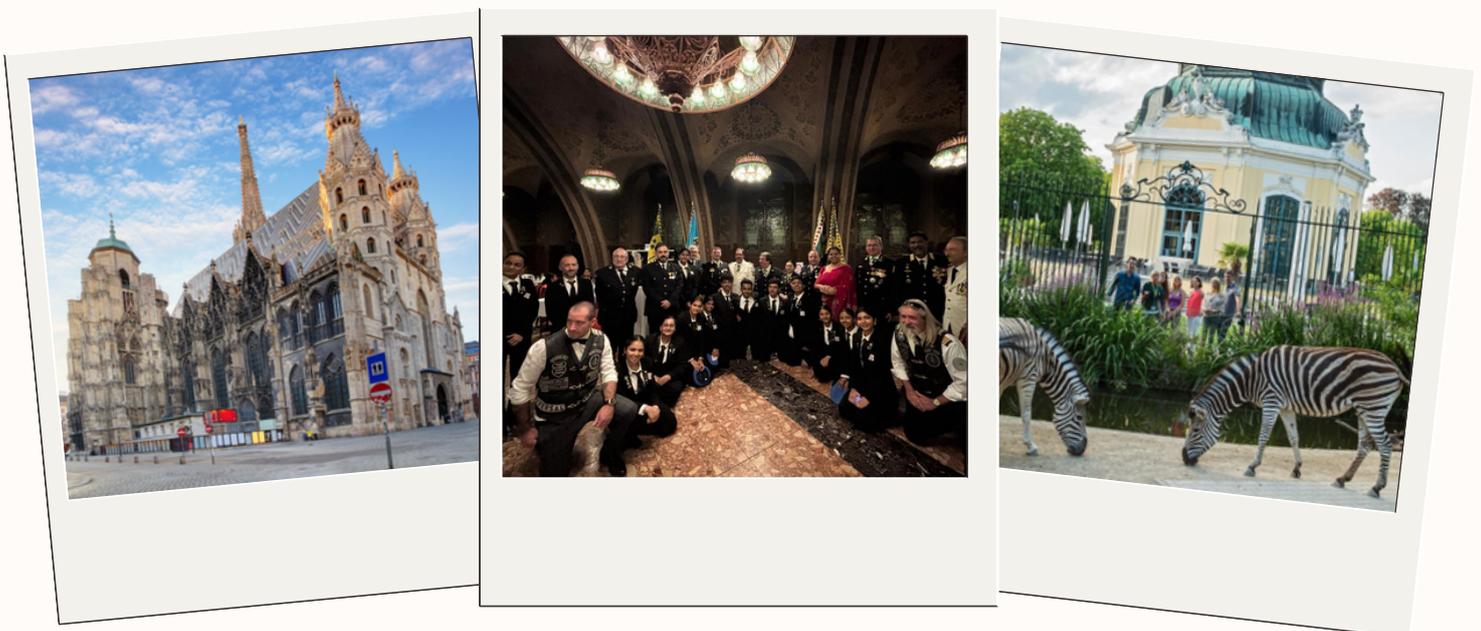
At Schönbrunn Palace and Zoo, we strolled through the same golden halls once walked by emperors and empresses. Every corner glowed with history. And outside? The world's oldest zoo, where conservation meets royalty. Watching pandas do their thing while

surrounded by Baroque beauty? Unmatched.

The adventure dialed up even more at Kreuzenstein Castle. Legit looked like something from a fantasy movie, ivy-covered towers, secret passageways, creaky wooden doors. I half expected a knight to hand me a sword.

The UN Symposium was a core memory in itself. We didn't just attend, we spoke. We presented our vision for the SDGs in front of global representatives, not just talking about the world we wanted but taking the mic and declaring it.

And the Lazarus Union Investiture Ceremony was all about legacy, service, and stepping into responsibility. Again,



our Kathak dancers performed, reminding everyone in the room that tradition and change can walk side by side.

When we hit the House of Music, it was like diving into the heartbeat of Vienna. We conducted orchestras, felt vibrations of sound, and danced through centuries of musical history. And then came Prater Amusement Park, where joy met adrenaline and we all collectively screamed our diplomatic stress away on the roller coasters.

This trip wasn't just about ticking off tourist spots. It was about stepping into roles bigger than ourselves.

It taught me that being a global citizen means showing up, not just for your country, but for the planet, for people, for peace.

And as for diplomacy? It's not some faraway dream anymore.

It's no longer our passion. It's our purpose.

AUSTRIA GAVE ME MEMORIES, YES. BUT MORE THAN THAT, IT GAVE ME
DIRECTION.
AND NOW — I'M RUNNING WITH IT.

— Niharika Khedekar



MY SINGAPORE TRIP – A *JOURNEY I’LL NEVER FORGET*

My Singapore trip was an amazing adventure. We started at the Science Centre Singapore, where cool exhibits and the 8K 3D Omni-Theatre made learning exciting. That night, we visited the Night Safari and saw wild animals from a tram in the dark. It felt like an adventure movie. The next day, we tried a Flight Simulator, then went to Sentosa Island for the Luge Ride and the S.E.A. Aquarium.

We also visited the Sustainable Singapore Gallery and learned about



MY SINGAPORE TRIP — A *JOURNEY I'LL NEVER FORGET*



cover how drawing with Apple Pencil Pro in reform and Procreate brings your strations to life on iPad.

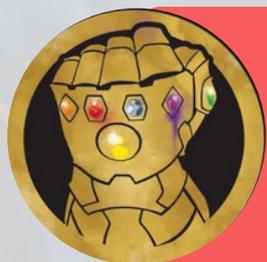


protecting the environment. At Universal Studios Singapore, we had a blast on the Transformers 3D ride and the Revenge of the Mummy roller coaster. It was full of fun and laughter with friends.

trip with a peaceful Singapore River Cruise, enjoying the city skyline. This wasn't just a vacation, it was a wonderful adventure I'll never forget.

— Manya Shetty

On the last day, we explored the City Gallery, NUS Museum, and had fun at an Apple workshop. We ended our



WHAT IF... THANOS WON?

BY ANAY VARMA

“I’m inevitable... and so is silence.” These words were said by the Mad Titan Thanos after wiping away **half of existence**. But as all **Marvel fans** know, the Avengers stopped him by time travelling, ultimately emerging victorious. What if they didn’t win? What if they couldn’t stop him? What if... HE WON?

A FRESH START

Resources are no longer scarce, it is sufficient... more than sufficient. But is it worth the price of life, diversity, culture and, most importantly... **SPIDERMAN!** We can’t lose Spiderman! He’s a hero and my favorite one! What would a world without Spiderman’s wit and bravery look like? Can we truly say that resources are ‘sufficient’ if it means losing the people and things that make life worth living?

THE AFTERMATH

Infinity Gauntlet #6: In this issue, Thanos’s character arc is explored further. Despite achieving his goal, Thanos feels **melancholy, ashamed, unfulfilled**. We can see at the beginning of the movie **“Avengers: Endgame”** that some of the survivors, a.k.a. Captain America and some other people who I don’t know about, are sitting together and... talking. There isn’t a smile on anyone. They all are talking about who they lost, and Captain America is encouraging them to not give up, to keep pushing forward.

People would consider Thanos as a messianic figure, but I do think that Thanos was trying to do the right thing, as in a prequel-sequel movie called **“The Eternals”**, which explains that at a certain amount of population, **a Celestial would be born, destroying Earth** in the process. **Arishem**, another Celestial, explains that Tiamut (the Celestial to be born from Earth) was delayed from existence due to a major decrease in population, and that was because of Thanos’s snap.

Now, we don’t know for sure if Thanos knew what he was doing, other than making the world ‘balanced’. BUT, there is a theory stated by **Matthew Patrick, or MatPat**, the genius behind the channel **“Film Theory”**, and the theory is that **Thanos was an Eternal as well (stated in the comics), which might mean that he had the same mental dysfunction as one of the Eternals (Thena), who was shown in the movie as someone who could see visions of previous missions, and of Celestials being born**. That’s just a theory, a **FILM THEORY**...

How the world would evolve depends upon how humanity chooses to respond to this new reality. Would we find a way to rebuild and thrive, or would we succumb to our own desperations? The possibilities are endless. We can only ponder...

– Anay Varma

NAVIGATING THROUGH THE ACADEMIC MAZE

BY GARGI YEOLEKAR

I'm Gargi, and I'm in Grade 10 – right in the middle of what is called “one of the most important years of our lives”. Grades 9 and 10 are the years where we are buried under assignments, tests, projects, extracurriculars and seemingly endless examinations. We face constant pressure to keep up- with our grades as well as everyone’s expectations.

The hardest part is the pressure to be perfect, to ace everything. We want it to go exactly as we have planned. Everyone wants good grades, become a top performer, and to live up to our parents’ and teachers’ hopes.

In the midst of trying not to disappoint anyone, we start to forget what we need, leading to social isolation and internal disconnection.

Then there’s peer pressure – the need to fit in. We start to compare ourselves with others – wondering if we are doing enough or if we’re falling behind. Being introverted makes it even harder to make friends, and it just makes our anxiety worse. But here’s the truth: **YOU ARE DOING BETTER THAN YOU THINK**, Don’t get consumed by only seeing your flaws and being insecure. Instead know your true worth



pretend to be someone you are not. It gives rise to the fear of judgement and need for validation.

Sometimes we have to deal with stress. Remember that it's okay to not feel okay, and that help is always available. Talking to someone is very important, be it a trusted adult, friend, or counselor. Asking for support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Simple habits like getting enough sleep, eating healthy meals, taking breaks, and staying physically active can help manage stress levels. Journaling can also help in clearing your mind. It's important to avoid comparing yourself to others and to focus on your own progress.

Here are some tips which might help you to cope with your academic pressures:

· Firstly, stop procrastinating i.e. “let’s deal with it tomorrow”. Try to finish your planned tasks on the same day itself (a to-do list or planner may help).

- Create a study schedule based on your learning style and goals.
- Set time for breaks. Even a 15-min break for music, a walk or a nap can create a huge difference, giving you a quick energy boost.

- Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques.
- Don’t compromise on sleep: Get adequate sleep to improve learning and memory.
- Use effective techniques: Try the Pomodoro Technique, Feynman Technique, spaced repetition, active recall, flashcards and mind mapping.

Most importantly, don’t isolate yourself too much. That will only build more anxiety. Engage with others, share how you feel and build meaningful connections. Be kind to yourself. Prioritize your mental health. Marks are important, but so is our peace of mind. Celebrate your efforts, not just achievements. Recognize your worth and never change for someone else’s approval. Accept your strengths along with the imperfections. What matters is showing up, doing our best, and taking care of ourselves. Your grades don’t measure your value- but yes, please still do your homework. Take it as a challenge to prove to yourself that you can do it.

You are enough, just as you are.

— Gargi Yeolekar

GENERATION OVERLOAD

How Screen Time and Social Media Are Draining Teen Minds

BY LAKSHITA ARORA

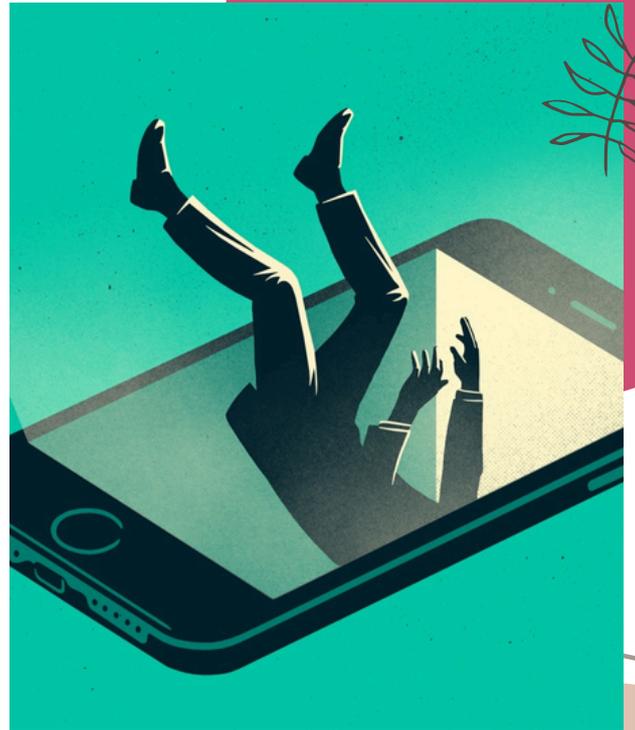
THE AGE OF ALWAYS ON - WHY TEENS CAN'T LOG OFF

The glow of a phone screen is often the last thing teens see before sleep and the first thing to greet them in the morning. For Generation Z, being constantly connected isn't just a habit; it's a way of life. But beneath the surface of endless scrolling, notifications, and online pressure, a silent crisis is brewing: digital burnout. As screen time soars and social media sets the pace for self-worth, more teens find themselves exhausted, anxious, and overwhelmed by the technology meant to connect them.

THE HARSH REALITY

Our brains are fried, or at least that's what it feels like for most of us. There's no secret. Every one of us is on our phones or digital devices too much. Ourselves included. We're losing the battle to the engineers who are designing these apps to keep us scrolling and pulling the digital slot machine.

You try to read a book, but can't focus. Sit with loved ones, your mind drifts to work or



notifications. Feel a buzz in your pocket, but there's no notification. We're not just distracted; we're digitally disoriented.

There's even a name for it: Digital Dementia. It describes the forgetfulness, lack of focus, and chronic mental fatigue caused by tech overuse. We're living in constant partial attention-task-switching, never going deep. Our phones aren't just distracting us. They're rewiring how we think, feel, and engage.

A mountain of research confirms it: Frequent phone use impairs working memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility. Why? Because our brain sucks at multitasking - but your phone demands it.

The result? You're never fully present anywhere. Always half-here, half-there.

It gets worse. Constant task-switching activates your stress response, but with no outlet. You feel the pressure of a hundred micro-stressors, but never get to act on or resolve them. Over time, that buildup leads to burnout, irritability, and mental fog.

Researchers found that higher smartphone addiction scores = worse self-regulation, poor flow states, and constant mental wandering.

Even more alarming? Just having your phone near you, even off, can lower your focus and cognitive performance.

Our attention isn't just stolen, it's trained to scatter.

Let's break the cycle

Here's how to break the cycle:

1. Out of sight, out of mind: Leaving your phone in your pocket or on silent isn't enough. Studies show that even seeing someone else's phone on the table impairs focus. Our brains have been

trained to treat that rectangular object as the most important thing in the world. It's not just about social media or texts; it's a constant reminder of everything we have to do, and can do, in the world.

2. Don't Charge it in the Bedroom:

The Bedroom is a battleground for your attention. Most people charge their phones next to their bed, but research links nighttime phone use to poor sleep, more stress, and even depression. The solution? Charge your phone in another room and use an old-school alarm clock. It might feel inconvenient, but your brain will thank you.

3. Try a Digital Sabbath

Pick a day to go device-free. At first, it might feel like withdrawal, but eventually, it becomes a reset. Studies show that even short breaks from technology – especially in nature – restore attention and cognitive function. Try living like it's 1995, just for a day.

4. Train for Depth

Deep reading, especially books, rebuilds attention and comprehension. Like running, it takes the first ten minutes might be tough, but push

through. Concentration is a muscle; Use it or lose it.

5. Spend Time Alone in Your Head:

Go for a walk without your phone or music. At spotlights, on public transport, or in a line, resist the urge to check your phone. We've replaced moments of solitude with instant distractions. Spending time alone with your thoughts may feel uncomfortable at first, but it's essential. If we never do, being alone in our minds becomes unfamiliar and stressful.

CONCLUSION:

Screens are here to stay, but so is our need for real connections and good mental health. By finding balance, we can protect ourselves from digital burnout and build a happier, healthier future.

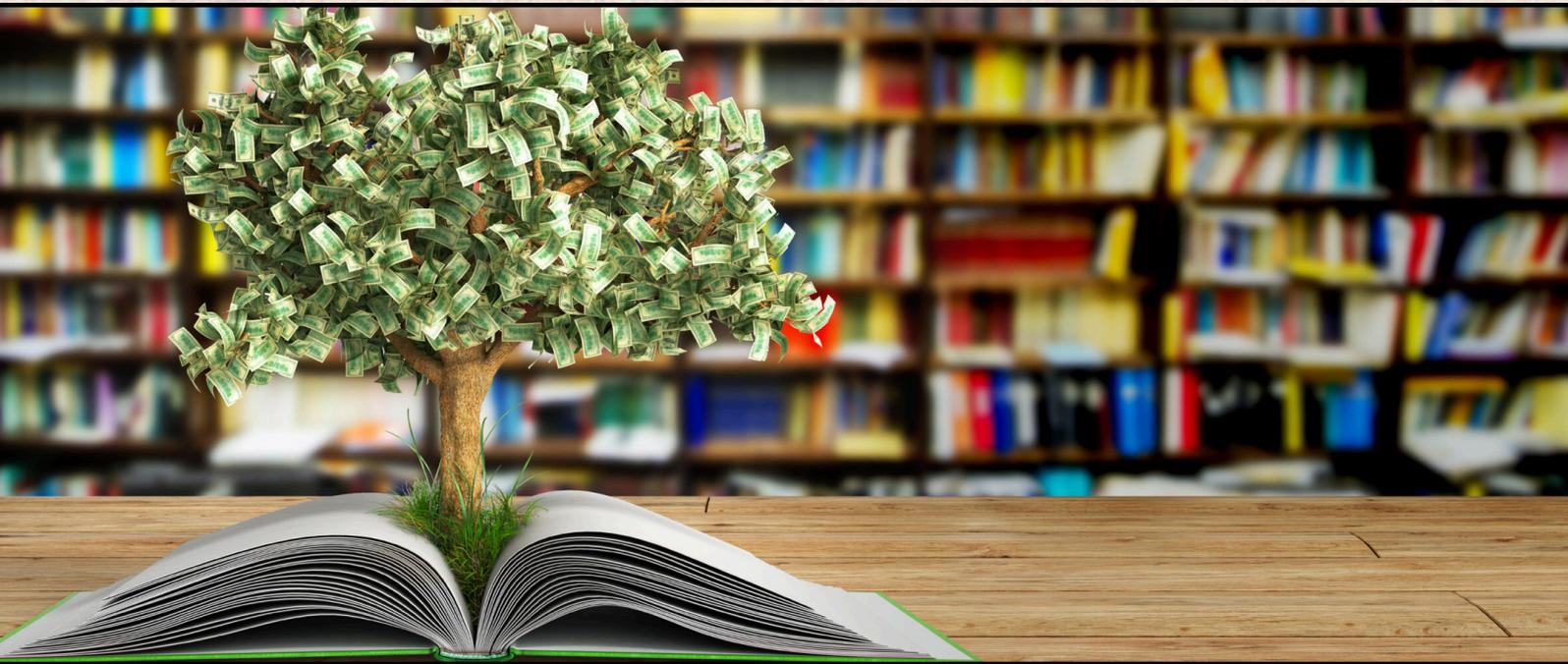
– Lakshita Arora



IN A WORLD THAT NEVER STOPS SCROLLING, CHOOSE TO
PAUSE AND THRIVE.



WHY FINANCIAL LITERACY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER



WHAT IS FINANCIAL LITERACY, AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT? _____ BY KARTHIKEYAN IYER



Financial literacy is an essential life skill—not a highfalutin' buzzword. It's knowing how money works: budgeting, saving, investing, and debt repayment. In other words, it's making money work for us, not the other way around. (And yes—counterfeiting money is illegal!)

Without financial know-how, even the brightest individuals can get caught up—accruing debt, losing assets, or harming their credit. It's like driving without knowing how to steer—you're headed somewhere, just in the wrong direction.

SMART MONEY MOVES: THE POWER OF FINANCIAL LITERACY



AVOIDING DEBT TRAPS

Knowing about loans, interest, and credit cards makes it safer to borrow. Debt is not money—it's a responsibility. Making poor decisions can have repercussions for a lifetime.

BUSINESS AND INNOVATION

A wonderful idea is not sufficient to start a business. Proper financial handling is the most important key to turning dreams into reality. Budgeting and prudent spending are as important as the idea itself.



INTELLIGENT SPENDING AND SAVING

Money management is merely keeping track of day-to-day expenses and staying above the trap of spending more than we earn. Budgeting prevents us from experiencing that sinking feeling when the account balance is running towards zero.

PLANNING AHEAD

Whether it's for college, a vacation, or retirement, financial literacy enables us to save and grow money well. Small savings, when invested, grow over time—like planting a tree that bears fruit years later.



STRONGER ECONOMY, STRONGER FUTURE

When individuals use money responsibly, they help the entire economy. It's like rowing a boat together—when we all use money responsibly, we row smoothly farther together.

YOUR GUIDE TO BECOMING FINANCIALLY SMART

HOW TO GAIN FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

Begin Early: Teaching how to manage money in school can prepare us for adulthood. States like Odisha already follow this practice.

Use Technology: We can utilize free websites and apps to monitor spending, budgeting, and even practice investing.

Seek Assistance: Parents, teachers, and financial planners can be approached for assistance.

Keep Learning: The world of money is changing all the time. We can learn through books, podcasts, and video.



CONCLUSION

Financial literacy makes us intelligent, allows us to dream bigger, and eliminates unnecessary stress. The sooner we learn this, the better and stronger we will become. It is not about having money—it is about knowing how to use it.

Mastering financial literacy today is the key to unlocking a future filled with confidence, opportunity, and lasting success.

— Kartikeyan Iyer



CRITIQUE & CHRONICLE

Plot twists, popcorn, and plenty of opinions.



Unlocking Ancient Magic: A Dive into The Red Pyramid

BY ARNIB RAMEEZ MIR

“The greatest magic is the magic of knowledge.”

—Ptahhotep, an ancient Egyptian vizier



‘The Red Pyramid’, a fantasy adventure novel written by Rick Riordan, focuses on Egyptian mythology and provides brief information about gods and ancient rituals. It is a fast-paced read with good pacing, even though the book is 500 pages long.

The story begins with a boy named Carter Kane, whose father, Julius Kane, is a brilliant Egyptologist hiding a secret from his children for their own good—but it can no longer remain hidden. Carter and his sister, Sadie Kane, have lived apart since their mother’s death. Carter and his father were only allowed to meet Sadie twice a year. During one of their meetings, they decided to visit the British Museum. At the museum, they saw an ancient Egyptian artefact: The Rosetta Stone.



Their dad had a secret plan that went horribly wrong. He accidentally blew up the museum and shattered the Rosetta Stone, releasing the five gods: Osiris, Horus, Isis, Nephthys, and Set. Their dad was captured by Set, the evil god of chaos. Sadie and Carter now had to save their dad, but didn't know the cause of the magical explosion.

Later, their uncle Amos Kane took them with him to his mansion. Amos explained to them what had happened at the museum. Apparently, their father had wanted to bring their mother back with the help of Osiris, the god of the underworld, but he failed and accidentally released the most evil god: Set. Now Set wants to capture Sadie and Carter, as they are from the bloodline of pharaohs, and are hosting the gods Horus and Isis.

Now, if they want to save their dad, they will need training in magic – though they are fast learners. Sadie and Carter are the most powerful magicians born in centuries, as their mother and father were both from a very ancient bloodline of pharaohs.

They are chased away by Set's minions and begin training in the House of Life –an Egyptian temple of magic that has existed for thousands of years. Later in the story, they meet some kind magicians and allies like Zia Rashid, Anubis, the god of death, Bast, the goddess of cats, and many more. This book is the first of the three in the series The Kane Chronicles. This book is highly recommended and a bestseller, as it provides insights into Egyptian mythology and emphasizes love and respect for parents.

– Arnib Rameez Mir

*With its thrilling twists and ancient magic,
The Red Pyramid is an unforgettable
adventure that will leave you spellbound!*

Inception Review: When Dreams Become Reality

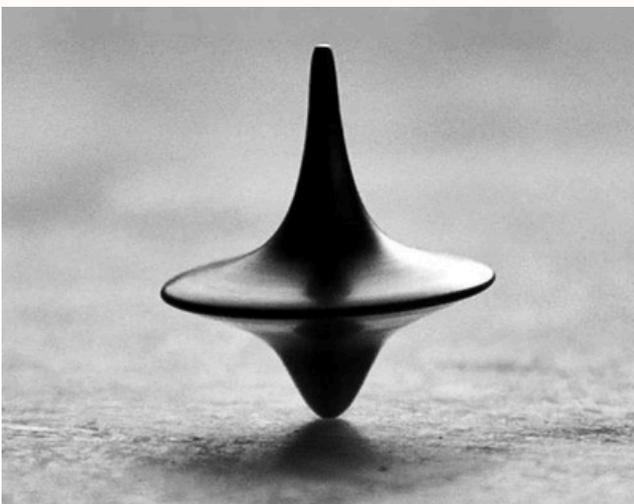
BY OMAR BAKSHI

Have you ever wondered what happens when dreams can be used to get information, be weaponized, or to consume you?

If any of that intrigues you, you may like Inception.

Inception is a science-fiction movie directed by Christopher Nolan in 2010 with the soundtrack composed by Hans Zimmer. It stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Elliot Page, Tom Hardy, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt along with others. It's rated PG-13.

Inception's plot is relatively simple to understand on the surface.



Cobb, an Extractor, is hired by Saito to convince a wealthy businessman's son, Fischer, to dissolve his father's business after said father's death. To accomplish this, Cobb recruits Eames, Arthur, Ariadne and Yusuf to perform Inception, the act of probing deep into someone's subconscious and placing the seed of an idea. Cobb performs Inception on Fischer to plant Saito's idea after building various dreams that go deeper into Fisher's subconscious. The plan goes awry in many places, including death, and could lead to a heavy cost...

Inception was a resounding success and won 4 Oscars.

The movie's plot is simple on the surface, but gets confusing when you try to wrap your head around it. Even so, its execution is both flawless, if confusing. In Inception, the dream has

multiple layers, each with its own rules, making it difficult to understand while adding various stakes. It may drive away people who don't like such movies, or aren't as interested in the concept.

Other than those few flaws, it is a great movie. It has a good soundtrack, script and actors, and many great twists that made you feel like you knew what would happen, but still caught you off

guard. I would highly recommend this movie to anyone interested in a well-thought out, well-made and enjoyable movie.

I would rate it 9.5/10.

Well-made, Enjoyable, Good casting, Excellent script and Great pacing.

– Omar Bakshi





TALES UNTOLD

Stories waiting to be discovered.

THE BOOK THAT *Knew Me*

BY MADHURA SANGALE



It all started with an old and worn library book I picked up a few days ago. I was completely immersed in its story – until something unusual pulled me out of it. A small note was sticking out between the pages. Curious, I unfolded it.

“Sometimes, the quietest places hold the loudest secrets...”

I almost laughed. A prank, I thought. But then I turned it over – and almost froze. My name was scribbled on the back. A chill went down my spine. Who had written this? And why? I immediately thought of my friends. They’d pranked me before, often and

successfully. So I reached out to them.

“Very funny,” I said, showing them the note. “Now tell me which one of you did this?”

They looked genuinely confused. “What’s that?” one asked. I explained. The moment they saw my face, the laughter faded.

“Don’t worry so much, Ava. Someone’s just messing around,” one of them said.

“Yes, probably some random student,” another added.

But I could tell they weren’t lying – they really had no idea. Soon, they were back to chatting about movies, exams, and



weekend plans. But I couldn't think of anything else. My mind kept wandering back to the note. It felt like there was more to it than met the eye.

Determined, I went back to the library that evening. With the note in my pocket, I went to the quietest corner of the library. I searched for a good two hours hoping to find another note, but without success.

Then suddenly, my eyes fell on a distant shelf – and it became my last hope, as I had almost finished searching every other shelf in this area. It was full of journals by people I didn't know.

As I moved my fingers across each one of them, I found one with the same title as the note – 'Sometimes, the quietest places hold the loudest secrets.' As I read the author's name, my heart skipped a beat. It was my name – Ava C. Rayne. And the year 1975 was mentioned. How was that possible? I didn't even exist in 1975. Was this some bizarre coincidence? Maybe, the note wasn't meant for me at all.

I walked out of the library, unfolding the note from my pocket. I looked at it – not feeling cryptic, but ineffable, knowing that not all mysteries are meant to be solved. Some are just meant to be felt, not understood.

– Madhura Sangale

*“To survive, you
must tell stories.”*

– Umberto Eco

Do you have a story to tell, a poem to share, or an idea to express? Join us in shaping the next edition of *Literature Unbound!* Reach out at sarah.tshaikh1@gmail.com or aryagupta1635@gmail.com.