

DECEMBER 2020

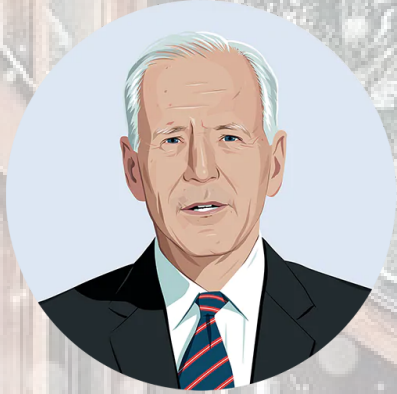
VOL. 3

# WE NEED TO TALK

AN ACTIVISM-FOCUSED, STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER



# THIS EDITION, WATCH OUT FOR:



the transfer  
of power

body  
perception



and the  
evolution of  
art

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# CURRENT EVENTS

edited by Barsha Parajuli

## THE TRANSFER OF POWER

by Barsha  
Parajuli



**Joseph Robinette Biden Jr.** has been declared President-elect and the 46th president of the United States. After a hectic campaign and after-election events (everything from recounting votes in key states, to overturning lawsuits pushed by the Trump campaign), there should be no doubt that on January 20th of next year, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will be sworn in as President and Vice-President of the United States. This article will be discussing what will happen moving forward, mainly focusing on President-elect Joe Biden's cabinet picks, and what one-term presidency of Donald Trump means for the future of the Republican party.



# THE TRANSFER OF POWER

by **Barsha Parajuli**

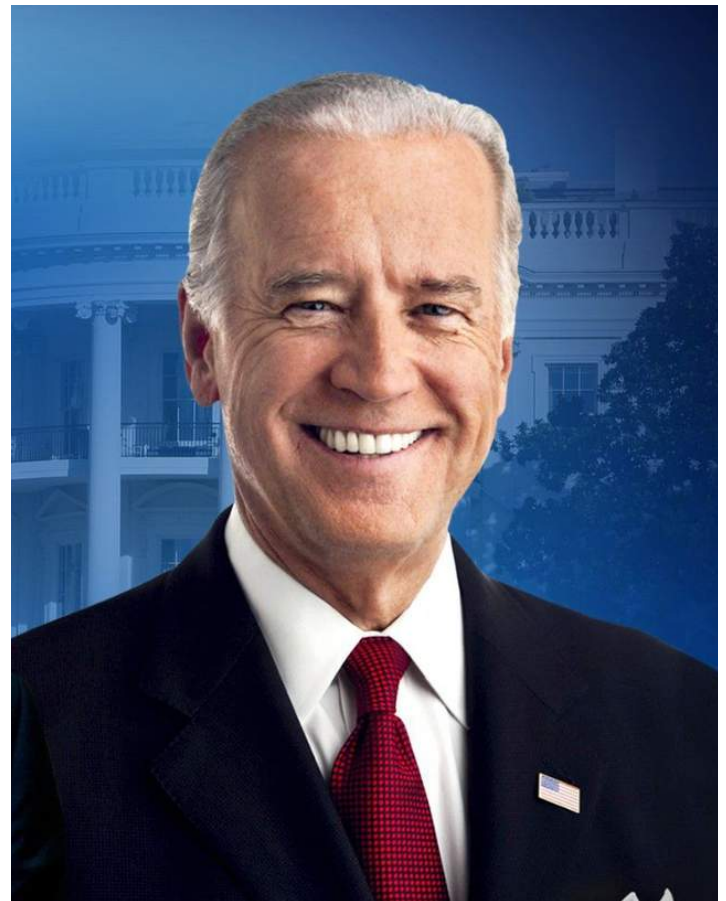


## **Donald Trump and the Future of the Republican Party**

Trump has filed lawsuits in the following states: Pennsylvania, Michigan, Nevada, Georgia, and Arizona, and in addition, has refused to accept the outcome of the election (asked his fellow Republican representatives to do the same), while at the same time hinting at a presidential candidacy bid for the 2024 election, which crushes the battlefield for most Republican 2024 hopefuls. Not only that, but over the last four years, the Republican party grew a lot more conservative, making it a lot harder for moderate conservatives to feel in place in this very new party.

## **Joe Biden and the Future of the United States of America**

After the election results were announced, Joe Biden has received pressure to include a diverse and qualified cabinet for representation and effective policy making for all American's during these unprecedented times. Historically, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury have played the most crucial roles in a president's administration. Joe Biden has, therefore, chosen Antony Blinken as his Secretary of State and Janet Yellen as his Treasury Secretary, though they still have yet to be confirmed.



# THE TRANSFER OF POWER

by **Barsha Parajuli**

## ***Antony Blinken***

Antony Blinken has worked with Biden for over 20 years and their personal relationship is invulnerable. He worked under Biden while he was a senator as one of his top staffers and the Democratic staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. His experience furthered in foreign relations when he became Deputy National Security Advisor from 2013 to 2015 and Deputy Secretary of State from 2015 to 2017. He is known to be a Europeanist, multilateralist, and internationalist. We see historically that the U.S. is isolationist but has started to grow out of it in the past decades, although it is re-emerging because of the Trump administration. Even then, the U.S. mostly intervenes in other states affairs only if they have something to lose or gain in their situation, and when they intervene in things like humanitarian affairs, they do so with much more caution and hesitation. For example, Bill Clinton was heavily cautious into sending U.S. troops into Rwandan territory during the Rwanda genocide, but expressed that his biggest regret of his presidency was not doing so sooner.



However, the result of putting U.S. troops on the land of sovereign states also may not always be advantageous to anyone, and we can use the deployment of U.S. troops into Afghanistan as an example. Taking over the Trump administration and their isolationist foreign policies, Antony is much more likely to re-strengthen ties with The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other countries that Trump has significantly discarded. Not only that, we can hope and maybe even expect Antony to take on more humanitarian issues across the globe, such as the ongoing Uyghur genocide in China, regardless of whether it benefits the U.S., as he is a strong globalist. Americans can surely expect a lot of productivity in the State Department during Biden's presidency.

# THE TRANSFER OF POWER

by **Barsha  
Parajuli**

## **Janet Yellen**

Janet Louise Yellen was appointed by Biden to be the Treasury Secretary, and if confirmed, she would become the first woman to hold that post. She earned her Ph.D. in economics from Yale University. She furthered her experience in economics as well as public policy: from 1977 to 1978 she worked as an economist for the Federal Reserve Board of Governors and from 1994 to 1997 served as a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. In 2004, she was appointed president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and served as president until three years later when President Barack Obama nominated her as the next head of the Federal Reserve System. In addition to quite the impressive resume, she is also a battle-tested leader who helped the nation recover from the Great Recession, which is more crucial than ever amid the economic crisis surrounding the public health one. Her constant questioning of whether economic models and forecasts are correct helped her become one of the first policymakers to foresee the 2008 financial crisis and become a key architect of the economic recovery.

She has consistently shown that she is capable of working independently from political pressure to advise policies that are best to shape the economy for the better. For example, when building the backbone of the economic recovery from the recession in 2008, many conservatives pushed her to raise interest rates. However, Yellen went slowly, believing unemployment could go lower without triggering inflation. She turned out to be right, and she ushered in a sea-change in thinking at the Fed about how low unemployment could drop. Her impactful, multifaceted, and well-grounded ways of thinking allow her to be the most qualified person in the room for Biden as his pick for Secretary of the Treasury.





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**Below are the appointments Biden has made so far\*. These appointments do not need confirmations unless stated otherwise — if a confirmation is needed, there are three asterisks (\*\*\*) next to the name of the person filling the established position.**

**\*This list only includes appointees publicly announced by Dec. 15, 2020.**

## **Key West Wing Staff:**

- Chief of Staff: Ron Klain
- Deputy Chief of Staff: Jen O'Malley Dillon
- National Security Advisor: Jake Sullivan
- Director of the Office of Management and Budget: Neera Tanden \*\*\*
- Director of the National Economic Council: Brian Deese
- Director of the National Policy Council: Susan Rice
- Special Presidential Envoy for Climate: John Kerry
- Senior Adviser to the President: Mike Donilon
- Director of the Office of Legislative Affairs: Louisa Terrell
- Director of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel: Cathy Russell
- Communications Director: Kate Bedingfield
- Press Secretary: Jen Psaki
- Principal Deputy Press Secretary: Karine Jean-Pierre Key

## **Vice Presidential Staff:**

- Chief of Staff: Tina Flournoy
- Communications Director for the Vice President: Ashley Etienne
- Chief Spokesperson for the Vice President: Symone Sanders

## **Staffers under the First Lady:**

- Chief of Staff: Julissa Reynoso Pantaleon

## **Economic Policy:**

- Deputy Secretary of the Treasury: Adewale "Wally" Adeyemo \*\*\*
- Chairperson of the Council of Economic Advisers: Cecilia Rouse \*\*\*
- U.S. Trade Representative: Katherine Tai \*\*\*

## **National Security:**

- Secretary of Homeland Security: Alejandro Mayorkas \*\*\*
- Secretary of Defense: Retired Gen. Lloyd Austin \*\*\*
- Director of National Intelligence: Avril Haines \*\*\*
- Ambassador to the United Nations: Linda Thomas-Greenfield \*\*\*

## **Other Important Cabinet Members:**

- Secretary of Health and Human Services: Xavier Becerra \*\*\*
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development: Marcia Fudge \*\*\*
- Secretary of Agriculture: Tom Vilsack \*\*\*
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs: Denis McDonough \*\*\*
- Secretary of Transportation: Pete Buttigieg \*\*\*
- Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Dr. Rochelle Walensky
- Surgeon General: Dr. Vivek Murthy \*\*\*

# THE SPOTLIGHT SECTION

edited by Rachel Lewis

## TEENS TAKE CHARGE - LITERALLY - IN THE FIGHT FOR EQUITY IN NEW YORK CITY SCHOOLS

by Rachel  
Lewis

Standing at a booth at the annual New York City (NYC) high school fair for middle schoolers from the Bronx, Nina Worley and a friend were surprised by the amount and type of questions that students and parents were asking them. They were representing the high school they both attended, a specialized public institution for the arts. “Are you a private school? Do you offer scholarships?” They were especially startled when an attendee said, “We’ve never heard of you before.”

Worley is a junior at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, USA. LaGuardia High School is well-known in NYC, so she was disconcerted to realize that some of these students had no idea of the artistic opportunities available at her school.

The NYC high school system is more complex than systems in most other areas of the U.S. Some NYC students simply apply to and attend a high school in their neighborhood, with their admission based on middle school grades and standardized test scores. Thousands of other students apply to one or more specialized high schools, such as the Bronx High School of Science or Stuyvesant High School, which focus on a specific academic discipline (such as science and technology). In order to be considered for admission to these extremely selective schools, students must take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). The students with the top scores on the SHSAT receive the first admission offers from the institutions they applied for. LaGuardia is a specialized high school, but instead of taking an academic test, applicants audition (play an instrument, perform a monologue, submit a portfolio of artwork) for a spot in one of its numerous arts programs.

# TEENS FIGHT FOR EQUITY IN NEW YORK SCHOOLS

by Rachel  
Lewis

When Worley and her friend were deciding which borough's high school fair to volunteer at, they saw that no one had signed up to represent LaGuardia in the Bronx or Queens (the five boroughs of NYC are the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island). There are almost two and a half times as many African American and over twice as many Hispanic residents of the Bronx as there are in Manhattan. Someone who approached them during the fair mentioned that the Bronx had not seen students representing LaGuardia in years. Worley also noticed that the students at the Bronx's fair were given very little information about the NYC high school admissions process, including a sufficient overview of the wide variety of schools that were supposedly available to them.

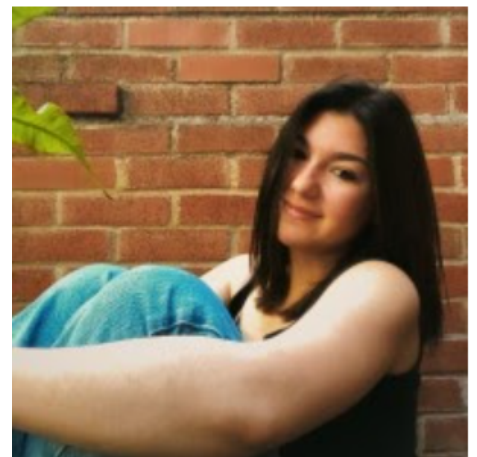
"Students [are] all given a high school book [with] all the [public] high schools in the city... this book is usually gigantic. They were just giving this sliver of a book [at the Bronx fair] with really no good information in it," Worley said. "Both my friend and I had gone to pretty good middle schools, and I hadn't registered that other [middle and] high schoolers around the city were not getting the same things."

This was effectively a wake-up call for Worley, since LaGuardia does not have many students of color.

"When I took a look at who was in my school building, I think that's when I started really getting into activism. I'm Latina, and my mom's from Argentina, I speak Spanish... I realized that I was missing a huge part of my identity in my school," Worley said. "I realized that this was something really important, not just for me, but for other students."

During the summer of 2020, Worley began to search online for organizations that were working to increase diverse representation in NYC's elite public high schools.

"I was really looking for a student-led organization. Once I kind of felt out the [Teens Take Charge] community and heard more, I reached out to



Nina Worley is a junior at LaGuardia High School in NYC. She recently joined Teens Take Charge as an organizer for their "Education Unscreened" campaign, whose goal is to remove factors from the high school admissions process in NYC that make it difficult for students from underrepresented groups to attend the "best" schools. Photo courtesy of Nina Worley.



# TEENS FIGHT FOR EQUITY IN NEW YORK SCHOOLS

by Rachel  
Lewis

someone. I definitely knew that this was a community I want[ed] to be a part of,” Worley said. “They have different campaigns that you can work on, and I felt that this was a very student-led initiative that didn't feel hierarchical and felt very open to new people.”

Teens Take Charge’s primary goal is to make NYC’s public high school system equitable, which would mean that it promotes academic success for all students, regardless of their background. They have multiple ongoing campaigns focusing on different aspects of the inequity in NYC, including one working to remove the “screening” system that many high schools, especially the most specialized ones, employ. Worley is an organizer for this campaign, called “Education Unscreened”.

“The specialized schools are like the Ivy League. You need to take an exam to get into [those schools]. They don't look at your grades, they don't look at anything except for that test score,” Worley said. “The main issue with... the SHSAT is that the exam covers topics... that [are] not taught in the Common Core, in class. You need outside tutoring; it's not really an optional thing if you want to do well on the exam. That's why you see a lot of white students and wealthy students going into those schools.”

The specialized high schools not only provide focused electives in subjects like engineering or visual arts, but they also prepare students for post-high school opportunities, including college.

“The ‘best’ schools, unfortunately, in New York, all screen in a certain sense, and... they have the most resources, the best teachers, the most beautiful classrooms,” Worley said.

Teens Take Charge’s efforts have led to the implementation of multiple critical policies. During June last year, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) created an assembly of students from every high school in NYC to amplify student voices in DOE policy and established restorative discipline (instead of punitive discipline) systems in all schools, among other changes. Punitive disciplinary measures, such as suspension and expulsion, are correlated with high dropout rates and recidivism (committing a violation of school rules again, even after receiving consequences for the first violation). Studies show that students of color are more likely to be

# TEENS FIGHT FOR EQUITY IN NEW YORK SCHOOLS

by Rachel Lewis

suspended or expelled than white peers in the same age group. The restorative discipline system, by contrast, focuses on repairing relationships between teachers and students through discussions of the student's violation of the rules. However, these measures are only steps on the long path to true school integration and equity.

“Politicians are complacent and that's where Teens Take Charge comes in... we're showing them the hard, cold facts. Now we're waiting for... them to get [it] through their head[s] that there's an issue in the city and they have the power to control it. If they really wanted to tomorrow, they could... start to fix this problem,” Worley said.



Dozens of high school students from New York City (NYC) stand on the steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall, holding signs calling for integration in NYC's most selective public high schools. Teens Take Charge organized and led the protest, which took place on Jan. 13, 2020. Photo courtesy of <https://www.teenstakecharge.com/unscreen>.

[They] believe that this is their school and this is their area, and that we should not change it,” Worley said.

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread to the US in the early spring, Teens Take Charge did not stop campaigning for equity. However, social distancing guidelines have shifted Teens Take Charge's work meetings from in-person to virtual, although they did hold a small gathering outside the NYC City Hall in October 2020.

Not everyone supports the policies that Teens Take Charge advocates for, especially families whose students are not harmed by, or even benefit from, the current admissions system.

“A lot of students at my school disagree with my opinions about de-screening, and have spoken out against me about it, because they're [from the] Upper West side... and come from really wealthy families.

# TEENS FIGHT FOR EQUITY IN NEW YORK SCHOOLS

by Rachel Lewis

“Everything we do is on Zoom... but I think [Teens Take Charge does] a really good job of creating community through [activism] workshops, and really making sure everyone feels included,” Worley said. “I feel like I know these people really well, so it doesn’t feel too weird.”



Adult allies and some of Teens Take Charge’s student leaders participate in a protest outside New York City’s City Hall to demand that NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio and other public officials change the current high school admissions process to improve equity for students of color and those from low-income households. Photo courtesy of <https://www.instagram.com/teenstakecharge/>.

Although Worley is extremely passionate about her work with Teens Take Charge and appreciates the opportunities she has found with the organization, it’s sometimes difficult for her to manage everything: schoolwork, extracurriculars, activism, and a social life.

“The way I’ve had to organize my time has been important, remembering that I’m 16 years old. I can’t save the world in a day, and sometimes I feel like

I expect myself to,” Worley said. “But I think I have good friends that, while they’re not involved with Teens Take Charge, I think they do a good job of helping me ground myself and remember [that] I can’t fix the world today.”

Even if Worley and her fellow organizers cannot enact political change by themselves, they believe in the positive impact of their continuing fight for educational equity, now and in the future.

“People call me radical, but I call this change,” Worley said. “This really isn’t radical. This is just asking for equitable resources for everyone.”



# THE OPINION SECTION

edited by Vishakha Singh

## TODAY'S YOUTH ARE INDEED PRIVILEGED, BUT ISN'T THAT THE POINT?

And no, it is not because of that damn phone!

by Vishakha  
Singh

This generation, Gen Z, has far too often been condemned for “having it easy” as a result of technology’s presence. Many have heard sentences from “Kids these days don’t know the world outside of their screens!” to “It’s all because of that damn phone!” at least once in their lives.

Largely, the older generations think that the world was much better without the internet; the younger generations fail to even recall a time without the internet. Thus, the topic of technology has created a divide between the elders and the youth who have very contrasting opinions and perspectives upon technology and the internet.



# TODAY'S YOUTH ARE INDEED PRIVILEGED, BUT ISN'T THAT THE POINT?

by **Vishakha  
Singh**

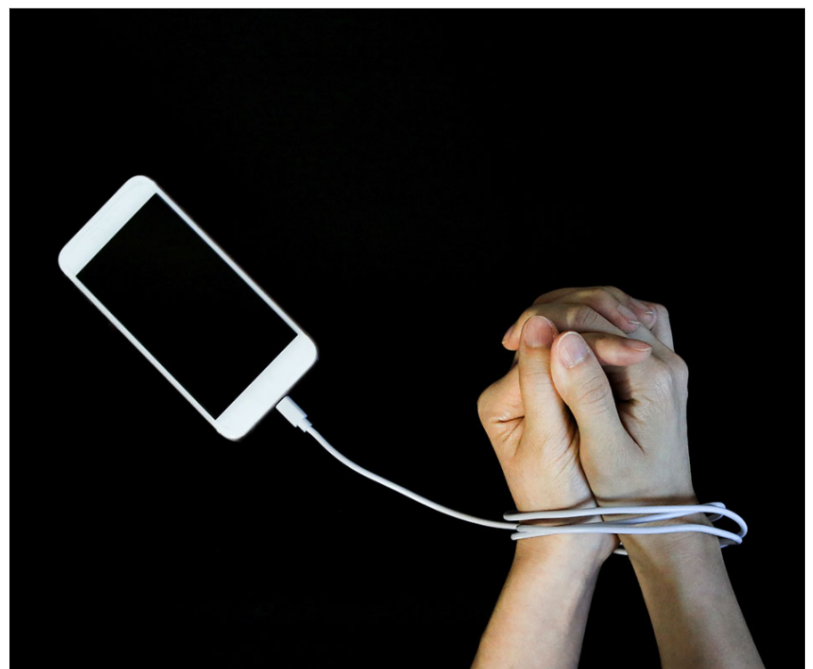
The elders claim that it makes us dependent and kills our creativity, while the younger people believe that it has made our lives easier, enhanced our thinking and helped us become more open-minded. Both sides of the argument have fairly valid points— the elders and our parents have seen us glued to the screens. For instance, my mom is giving me The Look as I type on my laptop. On the other hand, Gen Z is particularly accepting of changes and inclined to humanity, liberty and freedom rather than political beliefs, racial differences and more.

However, the argument becomes baseless when one realizes that they are accessing this article, among others, on their gadgets, using technology. In the pandemic, we have also seen how useful technology is with our online classes and tests; the biggest corporations are functioning all thanks to technology today. Without such modes of communication the students, businessmen and many others would have suffered greatly.

This leaves the argument to be about the younger generations being dependent, un-thinking and lazy. However, looking at activism and leadership, we see that the younger generation is breaking the rules of the society which have been prominent and rigid for our parents and elders while also progressing quickly to a digital era of life.

Still, I would emphasize that it is important to look at the youth who have ruined themselves due to technology to understand what is being done wrong to correct it. Being surrounded by gadgets and attracted by it, we are prone to become obsessed.

The question is: Are we addicted? Do we not realize that there is a world outside of our screens? Most of the youth would disagree



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with the notion that they don't look up from their screens. They do not deny that some problems do root from social networking and gadgets, but technology alone isn't to blame for every problem that they have.

Problems such as constant comparison of oneself, lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem often develop from excessive use of social media. Stalking, online paedophiles and online predators are other issues to be greatly concerned about when it comes to social networking.

However, if one is losing interest in school or is getting bullied and fails to stand up for themselves, it is most likely a bigger problem than the damn phone.

Another problem that comes with "tech-blaming" is that most of the serious problems aren't taken seriously. Topics of mental health, any kind of abuse, cyberbullying and more should be taken care of in all seriousness rather than by taking away one's phones. Instead of trying to cut technology and the internet from the picture entirely, the children should be taught about the dangers lurking online and to avoid them. They need to be taught to call for help when they need it and to face cyberbullying as well as to talk to their parents about what is troubling them. This way, the potential problems could be solved and damage could be prevented without taking away the child's luxury.



It isn't possible to keep children and teens away from it all, so we must focus on making it as safe as possible for them.

Additionally, this is more or less the same problem that our elders faced. The difference is that they would spend hours and hours reading books and talking to their friends.

Today's generation, on the other hand, has such connectivity that they don't always need to get out of their homes or even let go of their phones



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to read a book or meet their friends.

The older generation is less likely to adapt to and accept changes the way the younger generation does since the former have grown up in a rather rigid environment with many limitations on their liberty and freedom.

It was the environment which influenced their mindset, and since Gen Z has grown up in a liberal and open-minded environment, they are accepting rather than conservative.

Thus, in this fast-moving world of technology, a misunderstanding arises that it is destroying the younger generation. However, destruction is not caused by the internet itself but because of lack of self-discipline in the user, regardless of whether they are young or old. A knife is meant to be used for domestic and horticultural purposes but it is also used for murder. Same way, social media is meant to enhance life and to help connect people all over the world. However, it is very much capable of ruining one's life if used carelessly.

Media, be it news or Instagram, helps most children and teenagers to connect with people, discover activities and hobbies as well as keep up with global current affairs. This generation has grown up much faster because of how aware they are of the world around them self-awareness is what makes Gen Z different from our elders.

Therefore, the concept of the younger generation growing up pampered and in a sheltered environment is but a poor optimization of the bigger picture.

The point is that the younger generations need to be taken seriously and not condemned for the privileges they were born into. If the next generation doesn't have privileges over Gen Z, it means that Gen Z did not progress and develop as a race; this is more alarming than the youth being lazy or privileged.

If a new generation is not progressing and does not have the privileges the older generation didn't have, the concern should be about the growth and development of the human race instead.

# TODAY'S YOUTH ARE INDEED PRIVILEGED, BUT ISN'T THAT THE POINT?

by **Vishakha  
Singh**

Human growth works in such a way that the generation after us should have privileges that we currently don't. To put it into perspective, my parents wouldn't want my brother and me to have a childhood and resources worse than they did. That does not make us privileged, it is the proof of human development through generations.

And if one wants their kids to have a childhood and resources worse than theirs, spare them the suffering and don't have kids.

Gen Z has its own set of struggles just as the older generations did.

While the older generations struggled to break their limitations set by the thinking of their times, the Gen Z are responsible for whether or not our planet survives since they have the most access to vast knowledge and news.

While the older generations struggled to own property and get stable jobs, the Gen Z faces an even tougher and larger competition for employment.

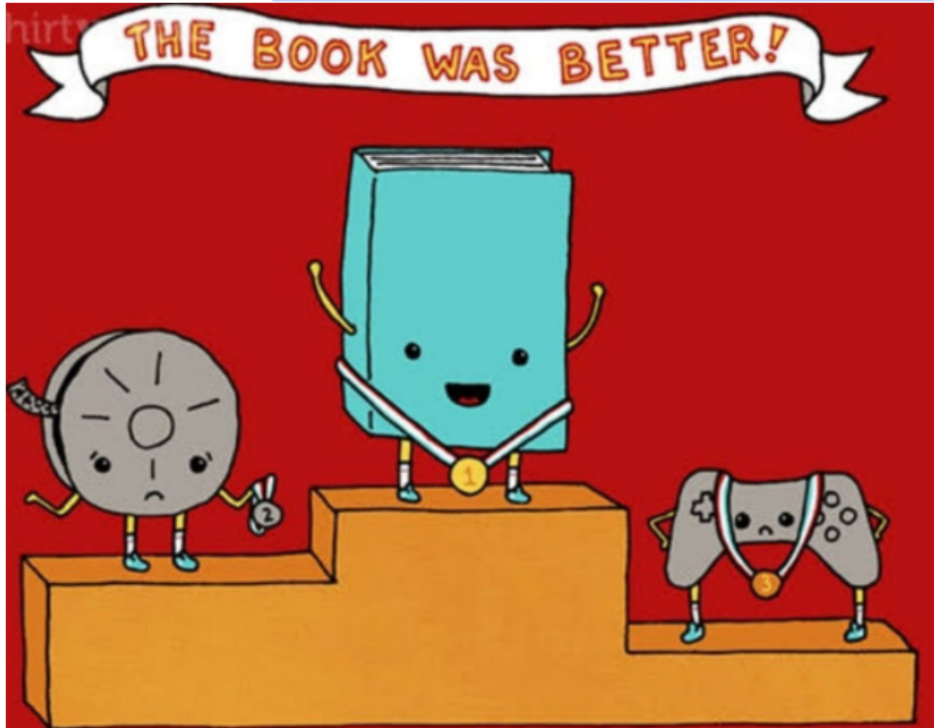
Moreover, Gen Z, from any country or circumstances face challenges which didn't exist before. Thanks to the connectivity today, we grew up earlier and are more self-aware of the many issues social, cultural and political alike which need to be handled assertively. The youth have accomplished feats which seemed impossible for teenagers with activism, freedom and leadership skills in any and every field. From dunking on the head of the most powerful country in the world with nothing but an app and mutual desire to do what's right to setting off worldwide protests for climate change, women's rights, BlackLivesMatter, children's rights, each move made leaves a mark of our leadership in the news, the media as maybe even the history textbooks of the future.

That being said, it is just as ignorant to call all our elders conservative as it is to blame technology for all of the youth's problems. We need to understand that not the entirety of the older generations is conservative supremacists. And if some of them are, it is our responsibility to help open their minds to a world they never had the opportunity or the freedom to explore.

# IS HIGH SCHOOL GROOMING US TO BE READERS?

They have noble intentions with terrible implementation.

by Vishakha Singh



I have always believed that books are better than any other medium of entertainment, be it movies, smartphone, YouTube etc. The reason is simple: only with books can I fall into a rabbit hole of mindless exploration where I begin reading in the afternoon with a story about a half-god teenager and find myself reading about how cats are evil at midnight.

In other words, books keep me from falling down an unending spiral of mindless exploration unlike the internet.

Books are always better than movies and no one will ever convince me otherwise. However, I'd be lying if I said that I have always loved reading. There was a point in my schooling where many of my friends and I, who were enthusiastic about reading, gave up on it.

One of my friends who had read five series of books the previous year read nothing but the literature textbook she was obliged to read. Despite English being my favorite subject, I gave up on being enthusiastic about my English classes too, Soon enough, I found myself falling asleep upon opening a book.



# IS HIGH SCHOOL GROOMING US TO BE READERS?

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My teachers, parents, friends and especially my grades did not take this unfortunate series of changes in my behaviour and enthusiasm very well.

Turns out, my friend and I weren't the only victims of such a sudden loss of enthusiasm. Every time I look around in the library, there are no eyes thrilled to turn the page; only tired and uninterested ones wanting to be outside. While I love playing outside too, it is sad to see students, in general, lose their enthusiasm for reading.

Why does this happen?

With a little bit of research, I found that there are certain patterns in which regulations are implemented to get children to read. Although a systematic way of teaching is advantageous in many ways, it falls short to instill a passion to read in children.

# IS HIGH SCHOOL GROOMING US TO BE READERS?

by Vishakha Singh



Assortment of classics that students are required to read.

Firstly, what a student reads greatly affects the image they paint for themselves about reading. High schoolers are given books like “To Kill A Mockingbird”, “Catcher In The Rye”, “Scarlet Letter” and “The Great Gatsby” to read in their teen years.

In my case, we have chapters and extracts of books written in the 1940s, one of which is, “A Hundred Dresses”.

While all the above-mentioned books are rightfully classics and great to read, they only kill any enthusiasm in a child to read.

With all due respect to the authors, these books are quite boring to teens and tweens. This is because these books are based on topics which need to be dissected and magnified to understand, and there isn’t an engaging storyline to keep active students interested in what is happening.

Such books are called classics because they artfully project the truths of life. But another reason that they are called classics: not everyone can read them. To understand the true beauty of classics requires the experience of life and intellect,

# IS HIGH SCHOOL GROOMING US TO BE READERS?

by Vishakha Singh

both of which aren't taught in school and thus, cannot be expected out of such young individuals.

These books are to be read to expand your sense of judgement and to gain a wider perspective on life and the world you live in, not to enjoy reading on a Sunday afternoon. Or any time of the day.

Secondly, the way a student reads plays a big role in whether or not they'd like to adopt reading as a hobby. At school, the way to read a book or a chapter is to have students randomly stand up and read. Then, choosing another and have them continue from where the former left off.



While I do believe that class participation is necessary, this manner of reading makes it worse for everyone to read. Students develop a feeling that reading is a chore which needs to be done and get over with. Additionally, this manner causes the quick-paced readers to yawn away to glory and lose interest while the slow readers end up with anxiety upon the thought of reading since they cannot keep up.

This leads me to another question: Is school grooming students to be enthusiastic readers?

Seeing the number of students who yawn during the class, and the amount of yawns our teachers have to tolerate, I'd say the answer is no.

However, our English teachers and professors themselves aren't to blame. The whole point of introducing reading novels at school (or in my case adaptations and



# IS HIGH SCHOOL GROOMING US TO BE READERS?

by Vishakha Singh



extracts from classic literary works) is to teach children to read. That's it.

To instil a passion for reading in a child, it needs to be built little by little. If you hand a thirteen-year-old “The Tragedy of Julius Caesar”, chances are, the child would never pick up another book again.

On the other hand, if you hand the same child a copy of Harry Potter, they will learn to find themselves in the story. The plot is intriguing enough and the characters themselves are likely to become a reflection or a fictitious friend of the child.

While books like Percy Jackson and Harry Potter may (deceitfully) sound to be only little children's books, I assure you, they are not just for kids. Both the stories have a character you and I can relate to easily, a particular picture of the dynamics of life, plenty of morals to think about as well as engaging world-building in it.

It is a perfect start to introduce children to reading novels and as they learn to grasp the essence of the joy of reading, they will reach out to more genres and eventually make their way to reading classics all by themselves.

# SOCIETY'S STANDARD OF BODY IMAGE

by **Sanjana  
Mittal**

## TRIGGER WARNING: EATING DISORDERS

"The only person you should try to be better than, is yourself." Society's standard for people in this day and age, have them comparing them to each other. Constantly making a person's desire to match someone else's beauty. They stand in front of their mirror and think:

"I need to get a smaller waist"

"Why are my legs so short!"

"She looks a lot prettier, how did she get her stomach to be so thin?"

"Oh God, I've gained so much weight, I look ugly!"

As they look at their imperfections, they don't realize they will never be satisfied no matter how much they attempt to "fix" themselves. There will always be someone that seems to be more "ideal" in this competitive society which is the primary reason illnesses start to rise.

This endless cycle can result in damage that is too great to prevent or salvage. The negative mindset that takes place in almost every child's mind at some point, is very likely to be driven by how they want to appear to the world.

Body dysmorphia is the main illness which is concerned with a person's persistent fixation on a supposed lack of beauty. Body dysmorphia is not the only illness that people can develop from their insecurities as it depends on what they want to "fix" or how major their insecurity is. Anorexia is another dangerous disorder, most commonly seen in children, is where someone starts starving themselves or over-exercising to lose some fat. Bulimia, on the other hand, is where people start to binge eat and use harmful methods to lose weight. The most common way to try to lose weight when you have bulimia is by throwing up or purging.

**"Insecurities feed mental health issues like depression, low self-esteem, and anxiety. They are also often a contributing factor to eating disorders and substance use disorders."**

**- The Light Program**

# SOCIETY'S STANDARD OF BODY IMAGE

by Sanjana  
Mittal

The irreversible damage that comes from these disorders and illnesses can all start from a simple body-shaming insult, obsession with beauty trends on social media, or a comparison of their body to someone else. Hiding your insecurities are temporary and it doesn't take your insecurity away, which causes disorders and illness. Insecurities are a prominent factor that contributes to a person's well being and is caused by comparisons, obsessions, or insults. Fighting against yourself is a dangerous game, as it makes the people around you make the decisions you should be making. Thinking, "What will she think if my shirt is too tight" or "What will happen if I tie my hair up" is the start of losing yourself and who you are. It is vital to accept the insecurities you have as they come instead of trying to hide them from the world all the time. Although it seems hard to embrace your insecurities, once you do, your point of view of yourself becomes a lot more positive which is crucial to a good state of mind.



Insecurities can cause plenty of damage but how it is caused is just as crucial and traumatizing. Comparing oneself's image to someone else's based on appearance causes insecurities because they want to look at how they look, no matter how fake it might be. If people compare themselves to images of people on Instagram or any



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social media surface, they will never stop even if many of those images are photo-shopped for the user's liking. Some of the filters on social media include making your teeth look whiter or making you look taller. This tricks people into thinking the edited version of themselves should be the person they should look like at all times. Although social media can positively affect a person's physical health in several ways, it has as many negative effects on people's perception of their body.

**“This means there are profound psychological consequences for women's body image when they compare their physical appearances to others.”**

**- King University.**

A study conducted by the Florida House Experience concluded that about 87% of women and 65% of men out of a thousand participants each, compared their physical appearance to pictures of people on social media. Since people feel pressured to look perfect, they try to “correct” their bodies in all the wrong ways possible. Some people skip meals, others try to exercise to the point of putting themselves in dangers and some count calories to the extreme. All of these ways have proven to end up in some sort of eating disorder or permanent damage either mentally or physically.



Moreover, trying to get the perfect body from social media is harmful in more ways than one. The safe, achievable and healthy body for the person on your screen might be dangerous to try for you. At the end of the day, we need to be careful that we are achieving our body goals safely and healthily.

# SOCIETY'S STANDARD OF BODY IMAGE

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Mittal**

In this day and age, technology is a huge factor in society's lifestyle as some are dependent on it. Although this can be a positive outlook for some, some are harmed by these platforms. Social media has several brutal platforms with people who do not hold back from pointing out and destructively criticising a part of someone which isn't up to their impossible standard. Cyberbullying is just as impactful as physical bullying as they ruin a person's positive state of mind anonymously. Pointing out if a body part does not look like a norm in society, can cause new insecurities within a person to rise also causing them to develop illnesses or disorders.

Eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia can be caused by body dysmorphia illness as it can be a desperate way to lose weight by an uneducated teenager who doesn't understand the real harm of them.

The education system has been starting to change to address more problems and adding information about a disease that is common among several kids can be something to look into. Learning about the negative effects of disorders can allow teenagers to understand what is happening to them every time they vomit their food out for the sole purpose of losing/maintaining their weight.



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Mittal

The common misconception of there being a preferred body type in society ought to be removed as the effects it has can cause people's health to quickly deteriorate. Social media plays a big role in causing damage to people's physical as well as mental health.

**“According to new research teens who spend just 30 minutes a day could have increased feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness and notably poor self-image, the latter of which could lead to unhealthy eating behaviors.”**

**- Forbes**

Although insecurities are normal for everyone to have, they are there to an extent. If you are causing harm to yourself and not losing weight for the right reasons or the right way, you should not continue to do so. It is important to accept your insecurities as they are, they make you unique, even if society doesn't see it that way.





# THE ART SECTION

## THE EVOLUTION OF ART

by **Deeksha  
Chitale**

Art has been created by people since the Stone Ages, and is enjoyed for many reasons. When new visual ideas are first introduced by an artist, they are often seen as incoherent, and even shocking. However, with time, the best and most passionate of these ideas become widely accepted. Art has shown us how people change with time, for the better or worse, and has even kindled revolutionary changes in society.

**Renaissance art** materialized as a distinct style of art in Italy in the 15th century. It marks the transition of Europe from the medieval period to the Early Modern age, and comprised painting, sculpture, architecture, music and literature. It developed under the influences of an increased awareness in nature, classical learning, and individualism. “Mona Lisa” and “The Last Supper,” two of the most famous and recognised artworks in history, were painted by Leonardo Da Vinci during the Renaissance.



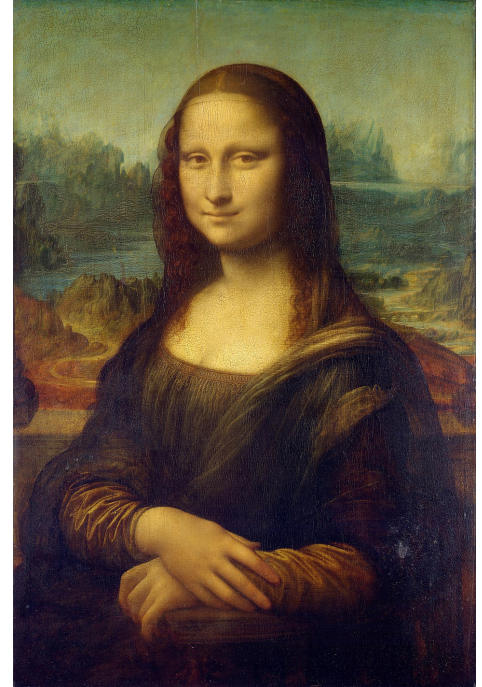
# THE EVOLUTION OF ART

by Deeksha  
Chitale

The Renaissance was, without doubt, a cultural and artistic revival in history, and an inspiration for the many art forms which emerged in later centuries.

**The Baroque** is a style of architecture, music, dance, painting, sculpture and other arts that blossomed in Europe from the early 17th century until the mid 18th century. It was encouraged by the Catholic Church as a means to counter the simplicity of Protestant architecture, art and music. Ornamental elements from the Renaissance are observed in all variants of this style of art. The Baroque style used contrast, profound detail, deep colour and splendour to achieve a sense of admiration.

Sculptures and decorative arts from this time display intricate ornamentation. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a musician and composer, observed in the “Encyclopédie” - “Baroque music is that in which the harmony is confused, and loaded with modulations and dissonances”. A famous classical composition which reflects this style is The Four Seasons by Antonio Vivaldi.





# THE EVOLUTION OF ART

by Deeksha  
Chitale

**Romanticism** was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. It is said to have partly been a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, preferring the medieval rather than the classical.



**The Realism** art movement originated in France in the late 19th century. Led by Gustave Courbet and Jean-François Millet, it was a polar opposite of Romanticism; realists rejected the glorification of the past and instead portrayed the people and situations of the period with uncompromising accuracy.





# THE EVOLUTION OF ART

by Deeksha  
Chitale

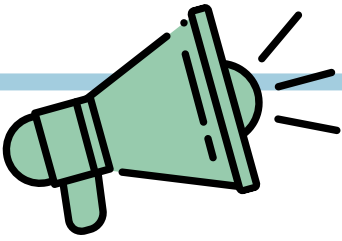
**Surrealism** was a cultural movement which developed in Europe in the wake of the First World War. The movement is best known for its visual artworks and writings and the collocation of uncommon imagery. Artists painted disconcerting, illogical scenes, sometimes with the precision of photographs. Painting techniques were developed which allowed the unconscious to express itself. Surrealists rejected rationalism and literary realism as they believed that the rational mind suppressed the power of imagination.



**Pop art** is an art movement that emerged in the United Kingdom and the United States in the mid 20th century. The movement was an opposing reaction to traditions of fine art, characterized by bright colors and use of conspicuous imagery from popular media and culture such as advertisements, celebrities and comic book characters.



**Contemporary Art** is said to be the “art of today” and broadly encompasses the artworks produced in the late 20th century and the 21st century. It is a dynamic melange of materials, techniques and subjects that challenge the boundaries previously set for art. It is distinguished by a lack of a uniform, general idea, or “-ism”.



# Call to Action

1

<https://www.teenstakecharge.com/>

This link is the website of a high school student-run organization called Teens Take Charge that aims to increase equity in the New York City public high school system.

2

<https://youthactivismproject.org/resources/>

This website contains lots of resources and ways for youth to get involved in activism.

3

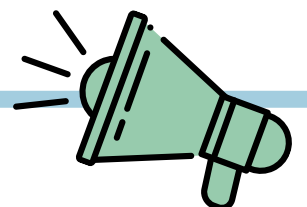
<http://chng.it/SkJxCF7xVk>

Petition to protect LGBTQ+ people in Poland!

4

<https://www.welcometostratagem.com/post/10-habits-of-someone-who-doesn-t-know-they-re-anti-black?>

Interesting article: “10 Habits of Someone Who Doesn’t Know They’re Anti-Black”





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## Icons

- Writing by Vectors Point from the Noun Project

