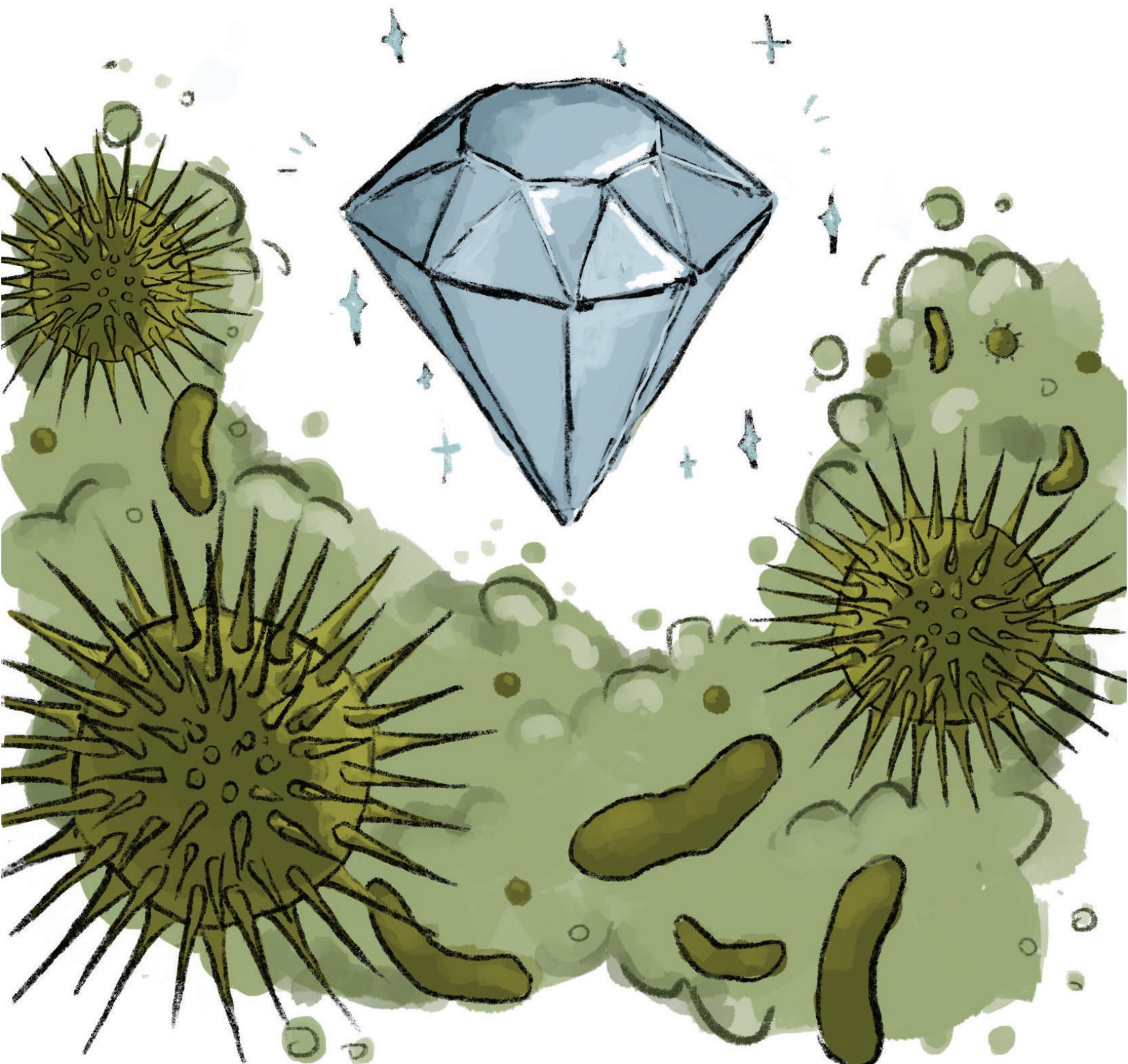


GEMS





GE(R)MS INSIDE

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Students' Opinions | 4 |
| Leisure and Pleasure | 13 |
| Globetrotting | 23 |
| Poems | 42 |
| Stories and More | 46 |
| This and That | 54 |
| Green Pages | 66 |



Editorial

In the ninth issue of Ge(r)ms, you can read about various topics, from the influence of technology and social media to ethical questions such as keeping animals in ZOOs or killing. Other students wrote about trying new sport activities, playing multiple music instruments and being surrounded by lovely pets or plants. There are stories about incidents where something went wrong but luckily with no fatal consequences, and there is a moving one about the loss of a dear family member. I am glad that three girl students were willing to have their intimate poems questioning love and the meaning of existence published. In the Globetrotting section, you can 'go' to London and other European countries and even to the Far East, where incredible things happened. To encourage you to do something good for the planet, some tips to go green can be found in Green Pages. As always, beautiful illustrations make the magazine more attractive.

With AI, it is getting increasingly difficult for the teachers to be sure that what is published in this issue is the students' own work. I hope that in the future we will still be able to encourage students to write on their own, without the help of AI, because it would be a pity to lose creative writing as a way of self-expression.

Helena Doberšek

STUDENTS' OPINIONS

IS IT A GOOD IDEA TO KEEP ANIMALS IN ZOOS?

A zoo, short for a zoological garden, is a facility where animals are kept captive in their own cage. Those cages are arranged for each animal according to its living space in nature. A lot of different species have their living space in zoos so there are a lot of different landscapes. Nowadays zoos can be found almost all around the world.

On the one hand, a lot of people are against zoos. Because they think animals are like prisoners there. They are certain that animals don't have enough space, which would make their living comfortable. They also agree on the fact that animals are wild and should live in nature and not among people who take care of them.

On the other hand, people like zoos. They like to visit zoological gardens and take a look at the animals. There are living species that you probably wouldn't see in your lifetime. They support them because they are sure animals who were born there in those facilities can't take care of themselves in nature.

People have different opinions on a lot of things so having different opinions about zoos isn't something new. I personally believe animals shouldn't be in captivity in the first place. But I also believe the statement that the animals which were born there don't know how to survive in the wild.

Lana Todorović, 2. Zb

TECHNOLOGY

In the last couple of decades, technology has become a huge part of our daily life. We can't imagine a future without it and how people lived before. So, has it become more harmful than useful?

On the one hand, technology is part of us and society so it is our fault that it can be harmful. Apps and games are designed to be addictive and to hold our attention as long as possible, so tech addiction has drastically increased in the last years. Furthermore, it has a lot of radiation that is said to harm our brain. We can decrease that by sleeping far away from our phones or, even better, in a completely different room. Our phones, laptops and other technology with screens radiate blue light, which is harmful to our eyes and eyesight. We tried to prevent that with anti-blue light glasses.

On the other hand, technology is a large part of our lives and we need it everywhere: to pay for parking, public transport and even groceries. All the information we need lies in the palm of our hand so we can look up whatever we need. Also, we all use it to communicate with each other, we can call or text and get the response immediately and don't have to wait for a couple of days, sometimes even a week, as with regular mail. For all those people who are physically impaired or have severe social anxiety, there is online shopping and they can get delivered everything to their doorstep and don't have to have any social interactions.

To sum up, technology is useful to us all but it harms us as well, so we need to balance the use of it and limit it to a healthy amount. Personally, I don't think we will stop the development of tech. It will only advance and harm us more. Basically, every individual will need to know for themselves where the limit is and when to stop, because as a society we can't do much.

Ronja Kopmajer, 4. Kb

IS TECHNOLOGY SOMETHING TO APPRECIATE OR FEAR?

In today's rapidly advancing world technology permeates every aspect of our lives, from how we communicate and work to how we entertain ourselves and navigate the world around us. While technology has brought about countless benefits and advancements, it also raises concerns and fears about its potential negative impacts on society. The question then arises, "Is technology something to appreciate or fear?"

On the one hand, technology has revolutionized the way we live, work and interact with one another. It has facilitated global communication, breaking down barriers of distance and time. Social media platforms connect people across the world, fostering relationships and enabling the exchange of ideas on an unprecedented scale. Additionally, technology has vastly improved healthcare, with innovations such as telemedicine providing access to medical care in remote areas and breakthroughs in medical research leading to life-saving treatments and therapies.

On the other hand, there are valid concerns about the dark side of technology. One of the most pressing issues is the erosion of privacy and the rise of surveillance in the digital age. From social media tracking the government, surveillance programs, technology has enabled unprecedented levels of monitoring

and data collection, raising questions about individual autonomy and civil liberties. Technology has also led to the loss of traditional jobs. Additionally, the addictive nature of technology, particularly social media and smartphone usage, has raised concerns about its impact on mental health and well-being, especially among younger generations.

In conclusion, while technology has undoubtedly brought about tremendous advancements and benefits to society, it is not without its drawbacks and risks. It is important to strike a balance between embracing technological progress and addressing its potential risks. Ultimately, whether technology is something to appreciate or fear depends on how we choose to wield its power and navigate complexities in shaping the future of our society. I personally think technology has more benefits than risks but only time will tell.

Diane Perič, 4. Fb

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ROBOTS

Social implications of robots refer to the potential impact that the increasing use of robots and artificial intelligence can have on human society, economy and culture. The increasing use of robots and AI can cause a lot of good. Self-driving cars could reduce the number of drunk driving accidents, and robots can do jobs that are dangerous for humans. However, many people have expressed their concern on how this is going to affect our society in the future.

Most robots were initially used in factories. But with the technology evolving, they are quickly taking over our day-to-day life. I personally find this quite disturbing. There are several jobs that are at risk of being replaced by artificial intelligence. This could mean large-scale poverty and economic inequalities, which would lead to the growth

of crime as people would have no choice but commit crimes in order to survive.

What also worries me is the robots that may be used in health care in the future. People already talk about the use of robots in nursing homes. There are a few reasons why they think robots could help their residents. For example, they could provide companionship, remind patients to take their medicine and find patients with dementia that have wandered off. The last of the reasons seems to be very useful to ensure the safety of patients with dementia. The others, however, seem unnecessary. Residents can be reminded to take their medication by putting a reminder on their phone and companionship should be provided by humans. And as far as loneliness is concerned, people in nursing homes are lonely as it is and I think it is important for them to have as much human interaction as possible. Some may argue that this is not a problem, as residents can befriend each other. But these situations cannot be compared because residents do not take care of each other's health. Letting someone take care of you puts you in a vulnerable position. And I think it's important that a caregiver is empathetic and compassionate, which robots are not.

Furthermore, in the future teachers might be replaced by teacher robots. Here we face the same problem as with the use of robots in healthcare. The lack of empathy and compassion will not make robots good teachers, especially not for young children. School is not only a place for learning but also for socializing. Children can be really mean to each other. Bullying happens often. Teachers should be there to supervise and help a child in distress. Some children can also deal with social or exam anxiety, which may affect their work in the classroom or impact their exam results. Human teachers can be more lenient or able to reassure students.

Another problem is social isolation. Society is getting increasingly dependent on robots and consequently there is a possibility

that our interaction with other people will considerably decrease. Although we can still meet family and friends, we don't see them every day. This can be especially bad for people who live alone. Imagine going to the store and instead of having a chat with a cashier, a robot scans your products without saying a word. Casual daily human contacts, such as those with shop assistants, are very important.

In conclusion, robots can do some good things for society. However, there is a thin line between robots being helpful or taking over the world, so it's very important that we proceed with caution when developing new technology. Maybe it's the fear of the unknown that's talking, but I find the increasing use of robots and AI very concerning.

Lina Mujić, 4. Fc

THE LIVES OF THE YOUNG ARE SHAPED BY SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

In the last twenty years we got a lot of different social platforms. Because of this we have a bunch of people who refer to themselves as social media influencers. They show their way of life to thousands of people who follow them. Most of the followers are young people because they use social media much more than others and this can impact their life in a positive or negative way.

On the one hand, influencers can have a good impact on the young people. For example, they can speak about some important things with them such as why violence is not good or why we should be good to others. And young people will listen to them because they admire and respect them.

On the other hand, this can also be a big problem. Influencers can talk nice things and be friendly behind the camera but reality is different. For instance, they can be very

disrespectful towards their followers and this can cause great disappointment in them.

Also, social media influencers show themselves and their way of life in a perfect picture where nothing can go wrong. This can cause insecurity in young people because they want to be just like them. When a famous influencer posts a picture, it usually looks really good, and when some young woman looks at this post, she can become self-conscious because she doesn't look similar to her role model.

In conclusion, social media influencers have a great impact on the lives of young people. In my opinion this is not exactly right because young people like me shouldn't compare themselves to them because everyone is special in their own way and it should stay like this.

Lucija Novak, 4. Fc

THE LIVES OF THE YOUNG ARE SHAPED BY SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

In the modern world, since social media has become very popular among young people, there are more and more influencers of all kinds. The young population often tends to look up to them, as they are on social media pages, like Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and others. Therefore, this can have a certain impact on how they live their life, what they do or don't do, and on their opinions about different things in life.

On the one hand, young people often don't know who they are or who they want to be in life and what they want to do. So by seeing and listening to influencers and seeing what their life is like and what they do, they adopt their view on life and their lifestyle and try to make it their own. For instance, if an influencer studies law, documents about it and posts it on YouTube, some teen girl who doesn't know

what she wants to do decides to study law as well, even if she is not really interested in that, just to be more like the influencer. But in contrast to that, there are also bad examples, like if an influencer parties, drinks, smokes, does drugs, etc., some teenager might think that that's alright and he starts doing it too, which can later on have a big negative impact on his life.

On the other hand, everyone has their own life and you can't 'shape' your life like somebody else and influencers can't shape your whole life. Young people can watch influencers, follow them, like their content, but this doesn't mean that they are influenced by them, they can still have their own opinions, views and wishes and live their own life how they want to. Furthermore, even if they are influenced by them and follow their lifestyle for a while, at some point they realize that they must have their own life, their own hobbies and a way of living, because following someone else just doesn't work out, because there are also things that influencers don't show on social media.

All in all, influencers do have an impact on the young, but not necessarily. In some ways yes, in some ways no. I think the lives of the young are not shaped by influencers. They can have a certain impact but in the end everyone realizes they have their life to live and they can live it how they want to and do what makes them happy.

Tajda Todorov, 4. Fc

ARE SCHOOL SHOOTINGS THE RESULT OF AN EASY ACCESS TO INTERNET CONTENT OR IS THERE ANOTHER PROBLEM?

Nowadays school shootings are getting more and more common all around the world. At first the USA was the most known for that, but now they have also started in Europe. About two weeks ago, the first school shooting happened in Serbia (Belgrade), to which I would also like to refer in this writing. This event specifically raised a lot of questions related to children raised in the world of technology. So is this kind of behavior related to the accessibility of information or to something else?

First, let's look at the fact that today children are given way more chances of getting all the information they need and also the information they are not even supposed to come across than in the past. Especially with all different social media platforms which give them opportunities of creating their own view of what is right and what is wrong with all different videos, pictures, comments that other users leave under posts. These perceptions might not always be correct.

Secondly, we should give some attention to online/video games too, especially the ones that involve different types of weapons and violence. This kind of entertainment can also give children the wrong view on how to deal with difficulties and problems that come in their life.

Furthermore, with all the communicating tools that the Internet gives us access to, it also opens the door to bullying. Children can be bullied anywhere, at school, at home, even when they sleep they cannot escape it. And when online, bullies have so much privacy that nobody can identify them easily, which gives them the feeling of freedom of non-identification and with that their words can be even harsher. Bullying is already bad when it is happening at just one place, but when a victim cannot escape it, their emotions can

become so intense that they make the victim go 'crazy'.

On the other hand, all the facts mentioned above are not children's fault, but society's. Society gives them all these false perceptions of violence, which is sometimes even celebrated online. There is not enough talking about mental health, about healthy ways of coping with problems and emotions. Also, Internet access has become easily available to all, even though there should be at least some restrictions with children using online platforms.

What is more, it's parents' fault, because they decide to give their children all this freedom too soon. The dynamic of life in today's world has become so focused on work and money that parents forget that their duty as parents is not just providing their children with food, clothes, phones and entertainment, but also with emotional support, with a safe trustful environment. They forget that they are the first people who give their children the perceptions of what is right and wrong, they are their first role models. Parents should be the first people who children come to when they are in some kind of distress.

To sum up, all the above-mentioned facts play a role in children's behavior and actions, but I think the biggest problem here is the whole society. It has normalized too many things that should not be normal. It has made our life too focused on work, money, and it does not give enough focus on bullying in schools and online, it tolerates too many bad things that are happening and at the same time it does not even consider that all of it is happening in front of children's eyes, it does not consider what kind of 'role models' it sets for them. I hope we will wake up and finally make the world change for the better, especially because children are our future.

Stella Kramar, 4. Fc

COULD AN ORDINARY PERSON REALLY KILL ANOTHER PERSON?

People always feel the need to know if something is right or wrong. Throughout this essay, you can observe my thought process and my opinion on killing and the death penalty. Of course, to kill means to go against all of the human morals taught to us as children, but could killing in some cases be justified? Would you assassinate Ted Bundy if you got a chance? Was it right for the court to choose execution as his sentencing?

First, I would like to address that for me personally, killing is wrong and I couldn't do it. But I can understand why some people would do it if it were for a good purpose with a good reward. On the one hand, if a homeless person was offered 2M in order to assassinate someone who has killed thousands, if we put ourselves in their shoes, we can easily say we still wouldn't be able to do it, well, at least most of us. But on the other hand, is it really our place to judge? After all, we have no idea what it's like to live on the streets. Can we really say that doing something like this is way worse than when somebody betrays a friend without a good reason? When serial killers get executed, hundreds gather to celebrate. Are they any better than the homeless person who did a bad thing in order to make many people happy? When talking about the previously mentioned homeless person, we can't say that they really did a bad thing, can we? But then again, we are going against all of humanity's morals. For one, every child is taught from a young age that killing is bad. Furthermore, how come people can kill in wars? How can we justify these people? How can we say assassinations for the greater good are bad? In my opinion, we can't say that assassins are horrible people, or at least no worse than regular traitors.

When talking about execution, there have always been a lot of mixed feelings. For example, if a person had caused horrible suffering upon you and your family, you would probably say that they deserve to be executed.

But on the other hand, who are you to judge who gets to live and who doesn't? And if we say that serial killers as well as people who have killed many should be executed, are we then any better than they are, acting like it's our choice to decide whether they are worthy of living or not? But then again, they have done such a bad thing that it's impossible for people to grasp that someone is capable of causing so much harm to anyone else. In that case, do we have a right to decide whether they are worthy of living or not?

Although it sounds harsh, I believe we can judge who is worthy of living and who is not. I think that when people kill out of excitement, anger, and with the intention purely for their satisfaction, that's when they lose the right to be treated ethically or with compassion. When a serial killer kills three girls, it's impossible to say to their parents that the person who caused so much harm to their families will only get a life sentence and will be able to walk around the prison, read books, eat and sleep normally. They took something precious from the family and caused them lifelong suffering. Similarly, a dictator who caused hundreds of deaths that were ordered by him is no better than a serial killer.

In conclusion, I can see why people are so torn between these two opinions. For me, it's impossible to decide whether it is okay or not, but I can see both sides of the argument.

Neli Rotar, 3. Fb

COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE FOR WOMEN

On April 5th 2023, we visited the Slovenian barracks, called the Edvard Peperko Barracks, named after the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Slovenia, located at Leskovška cesta in Ljubljana.

When we arrived, the soldiers had been waiting for us with military equipment. We had the honor to listen to one of the soldiers and ask them questions about their work in the field. We could even hold the weapons and the equipment that was laid in front of us. There were also tanks that we could sit in and explore. I had a conversation with a military medic, and he had a lot of interesting stories about accidents that he had seen and stories about where he had been. After that, we had a lecture about joining the military service. They talked about the scholarship, and different boot camps where you could learn about guns, shooting, surviving, getting disciplined, and learning what it really takes to be a Slovenian soldier. In my opinion, the pay that the soldiers get is really bad given that they risk their lives and are away from their families most of the time.

During the visit there was one thing that got me interested and that was that in many of the photos that they showed us, there were not as many women as I expected to be. That got me thinking so I have done some research and found out that in some countries women are obligated to be in the army, unlike in Slovenia, such as the first-world countries Israel, Sweden, Norway ...

Compulsory military service for women has long been a topic of discussion and debate because the field of the army and warfare has always been considered an exclusively male field. A lot of people are still old fashioned and think that women can't do things that men can, especially fighting and protecting their country.

On the one hand, I think there are women

who really want to help the country and stand up for it and I support it but on one condition, namely being able to choose if they want to go or not. A lot of young women who don't really know what to do with their life choose the path of joining the army and I think that is great. They learn about discipline, how to behave, but not only that, they bond with people and become really close.

On the other hand, if you are forced to join and do things that you don't want to do, it is really terrible. For example, I read about a girl named Leah in Israel. She said that the feeling of leaving your family behind and going to war, risking your life was an unimaginable pain that no one should experience. She said that she had met a lot of people who didn't want to be there, being depressed not knowing when they could go back home and see their loved ones.

In conclusion, I think it is a good idea for women to join the army, but only if they are able to choose if they want to do it or not. They could learn about the important things of serving their country and the ability to help it in such situations. But when you are 'forced' to join and do trainings to prepare for potentially fatal situations just doesn't sit right with me and not just for women, but for men too. I personally would never apply to do military service because I don't think I could cope with all the rules and training.

Sara Abdić, 4. Fc

WOMEN AND THE DISCRIMINATION THEY FACE

Every day, plenty of women out there fight for their rights and dignity, so why are there still plenty of people trying to push them down, stop their long-lasting fight?

Lately misogyny has really spread among men and women alike. Men looking and thinking

of women as objects, things they can keep at home, that cook and clean for them and there have been plenty of women supporting that theory as well. The most known example of misogynistic behaviour is Andrew Tate, who, on many occasions, has been really rude and offensive to plenty of women who have also called him out on his behaviour, but he has never seemed to care.

At the same time, plenty of women are fighting for their rights out there against men like Andrew Tate and plenty of others who think of women as only objects for making children, cooking and cleaning for them. Many of these women are getting silenced day after day for only trying to be treated fairly.

In conclusion, I think that it is about time we as society start treating people fairly no matter what gender they are or what they look like because at the end of the day we are all humans and should treat each other respectfully. No one deserves to get discriminated against because of trivial things such as gender.

Aleksandra Kitanovska, 4. Fc

THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH REGIFTING

I've seen people all over social media complain about their friends and family regifting their present. They do get offended. But is regifting really that big of a deal?

On the one hand, I can see why people would get upset. If I put a lot of thought and effort into picking out a present for my friend, I would be really disappointed if she didn't like it. Especially since me and my close friends went full out this year for each other's birthdays. It would feel even worse if the gift I gave them was sentimental. Regifting can send a really bad message to your friends, by regifting you're telling them that you don't value their time and effort and that you don't appreciate what you got.

On the other hand, there are situations in which regifting can be justified. If you are in a situation where two people buy you the same present, or you already own something that was given to you, what are you going to say? Thank you, but I already have this? It comes out as rude and unappreciative. Why not give it to someone that doesn't have it already and would be happy to receive it?

Furthermore, I would like to point out that people regift smaller presents like a box of chocolates or bodywash all the time. I can't remember the last time my mother let me eat the candy we received. This type of presents are usually given to us when we host small gatherings and people that are invited bring them to be polite.

In conclusion, regifting isn't always a horrible thing. If it's a small present or you already own it, you can make someone happy by regifting it to them. But if you regift a present that someone has put a lot of effort into buying it for you, that can be really hurtful.

Lina Mujić, 4. Fc



LEISURE AND PLEASURE

MUSIC – MY LIFE SUPPORTER

I am an eighteen-year-old girl and I can say that music has accompanied me since I was a little girl. When I just began talking, I started to sing in church every Sunday. And when I was seven years old, my music career officially started.

I remember and I will never forget that Sunday morning when me and my family were watching TV. I saw an orchestra for the first time. But there was only one instrument that caught my eye. It was the violin. My parents took me seriously and in the same year I had the entrance exam in music school. I was a little girl and I did not know that I was really talented. I thought that was not a serious thing, only a hobby. It was not expected to become my life changing hobby. On the day of the entrance exam they told me that I had perfect pitch. Ten years ago, technology was not so developed as today, so I did not expect an email, but every day when I came home, I asked my mum, "Has the envelope come?" Finally, one day it did. I had passed the exam.

If I could go back in time, I would definitely write down every date when I had a performance. I can say that I have been on many stages. Before a performance, I was always nervous - I think it was because I always played by ear. All songs, even the eight-minute ones or longer, are still in my memory.

I had a very strict teacher. She really enjoys playing the violin. But not just playing the violin. She lives for music and she is very successful in her music career. She also sees the potential in all her students. She taught me so many techniques.



When I was in my third year, she suggested I take part in an international competition. It was an AMAZING experience for me. The first competition I had was on the beautiful castle Štanjel. However, it was not just beautiful moments, but also a lot of practice. I will never forget that we had intensive practice during winter holidays. Every day like six to seven hours of practice. In my six years of music education, I went to three major competitions. The first time I got the silver award (93%), the second time the silver award (90%) again and at the last competition I won the bronze award (88%).

During the years I lost my motivation, so I decided to stop playing the violin. My teacher was very disappointed, because even nowadays she still says that I am very talented. But then I really stopped mainly because of various other obligations. So nowadays I can say that I finished 6 years of playing the violin.

I also have to mention my participation in Stična String Orchestra. There I met people with so many perspectives on different situations and through their perspectives I learned how I can change my perspective and think outside the box.

However, my music career did not end after six years of playing the violin. After those years I learned how to play the piano at home because my sister played it. I had a lot of knowledge about music theory, so I could start learning to play it myself. The piano was not enough though, so I decided to buy a ukulele. It is so handy, you can take it everywhere you want. And when I received enough money, I bought a guitar. Learning all the techniques for each instrument was not easy, but I really enjoyed them. It is not important which instrument I play - every time I play music, I really express myself.

At the moment I am learning to play the organ. My inspiration was definitely my grandpa, who died three years ago. He was one of the most famous organists in Dolenjska. Before he died, he heard me play a few times, and



he said, "When I'm gone, you should go on playing."

My future goals with music ... I really want to play more than now. Now I often play in school, also in church, and sometimes when somebody from my family has a birthday, I play a song. But I want to play more, not just the violin but also other instruments. I want that everyone will see that I really enjoy playing music and I hope that I may be the motivation for other people who do not want or do not know how to start with music.

Sara Jernejčič, 4. Fc

A NEW ACTIVITY

I have decided to describe an activity I tried a long time ago. I don't have many new experiences, as I am a bit of an introverted person, so describing archery was the first thing that came to mind.

I must admit that the first time I did archery was in elementary school and a long time ago, so I barely remember any of it. When we got activity plans for camps, I would get so excited when I saw archery listed as one of the activities. We had yearly school camps, where we would go and spend a few days or a week at the Center for School and Outdoor Education. All my classmates including me loved those camps. They were such fun, educational and active. In the mornings, we usually had some stretching, breakfast and then sport activities. We always had a lot of time for them. There were so many different ones like climbing, ball sports and sometimes, if we went there during winter, skiing.

One of those activities was archery and I think it was done at most, if not all the camps. The equipment needed to do or train it can be quite expensive. Professional bows can cost well over a thousand dollars. To be good at it you need a lot of strength, especially in the arm, shoulder and upper back area. Archery is a one-person sport, which can cause a lot of pressure compared to team sports. For some people it can also be very relaxing and calming as with every released arrow you release one of your problems. In the past, it was actually used for hunting and combat. These days, however, it is mainly a professional sport or a recreational activity.

As archery is quite a dangerous sport, it was always done in the afternoon after lunch, some rest and, of course, under a lot of supervision. Usually, the people working at these camps set up the target and brought the equipment. The target was set a few meters away from the shooting spot with safety barriers around it. There was always a safety lecture before, and we watched the workers of the centre try it out.



When it was our turn, we formed a line and each one of us shot a few arrows. Some of my classmates were pretty good and got a lot of points and some missed the target completely every time. After each shot you had to go collect all the arrows. There were different difficulty bows. The easier ones had a bit looser bowstring, and the harder ones had a bit tighter one. There was always a competition who could get the most points.

The next day I would usually have sore muscles because they weren't used to so much strain. I think if I had done it more consistently or at least had done more arm workouts, it would have got easier and less painful. Stretching and preparing your arms, even if just a little bit, can always help.

I personally always loved archery and I think a lot of my classmates did too, but there were also people who didn't really enjoy it. This sport takes a lot of strength and accuracy, and of course that is not super fun for everyone. I was pretty good at it myself, which was probably the reason I enjoyed it so much.

Even though the first time I tried archery was such a long time ago, it really stuck with me. I have even thought about getting into archery because it was such fun. I would definitely recommend it to other people, so if you have strong arm muscles, I think you will do really well. I would love to try shooting a few arrows again someday.

Taja Tovornik, 1. Fa

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Last winter me, my little sister Nika and my friend Hana decided to try cross-country skiing for the first time. We had wanted to try a new sport for a long time and that winter we finally decided to tell our parents about our wish. Our parents agreed about it and then they organized almost everything.

We had all skied before, but cross-country skiing was a totally new challenge for the three of us. The day before we left, we had read a little about cross-country skiing on the Internet and prepared all the equipment. We had to prepare all the winter equipment (gloves, scarfs, hats ...) and find out where we could borrow skis and special cross-country skiing shoes.

When we had prepared everything, our parents took us to Bohinj and accompanied us to the track, where we put on our skis and special shoes, which we got in the cottage in front of the track. Before me, Hana and Nika left, our moms naturally wanted to take a photo of us as a memory.

When we finally finished taking pictures, we went to the track. At first it was a little more difficult for us, because we did not know exactly what to do with our legs (how to move them), but after a few meters all three of us mastered the technique and enjoyed cross-country skiing.

When we finished cross-country skiing, our parents took us to the cottage. We had a late lunch there, which was quite nice after a long day. We stayed a little longer, drank tea, returned the skis and special shoes and then our parents drove us back home.

In the evening we were all very tired but at the same time very happy to have tried something new. We decided to repeat this experience and go on a trip to Bohinj this year as well.

Sara Branda, 1. L

EXPLORING SKIING

Last holiday, my family and I went skiing in Austria. My parents already knew how to ski, and I have been skiing since I was little, so I already knew some of the basics and my sister got on skis for the first time on that holiday.

A few days before we went to Austria, we had bought tickets for 4 days, without checking what kind of weather we would have and here I have to mention that we went skiing as a family for the first time and we were a bit confused. We went to many shops to get all the necessary equipment and we also booked an apartment near the ski resort.

The first morning we arrived at the ski resort and we immediately took the ski gondola to the top. The first run was scary and I already wanted to go home but throughout the day I went on and I got more and more control over the skis and I did pretty well. I fell many times too, but I got back up and kept going. Mom and Dad quickly got the feel of skiing, while my sister didn't do so well. I mostly skied with my mother, as my father took care of my sister. We stopped several times at the hut for hot tea and a small snack and then we continued. We skied until the ski slope closed (until 5 o'clock) and then we went to the apartment. Mom cooked a late lunch and then we all washed up and fell asleep very early (due to fatigue).

The next morning we were all well rested and at 8 o'clock we were ready to go to the ski slope. When we arrived at the top, we decided that me and my sister would go to the ski school to learn how to ski. We skied together a little more, ate our sandwiches and then me and my sister went to school at around 1 o'clock and stayed there until 3 o'clock. After school we dared more and were more confident in ourselves. After arriving at the apartment, we immediately fell asleep again.

On the third day, we already skied on more demanding and longer slopes and my sister

and I were no longer afraid. We fell in love with skiing.

On the last day, we had to pack up and leave the apartment by 9 o'clock. We got up early to really take everything in the car and leave the apartment in good condition. Then we went back to the ski slope.

We were enjoying skiing and the hours passed too quickly. Suddenly it was time to go back home. None of us wanted to, but we had to leave. We spent four wonderful days there and I hope we can do it again sometime. I can also say that we were really lucky with the weather, considering that we had bought the tickets very recklessly.

Skiing is a really interesting sport, it's just a shame that it can only be practised in winter, so I highly recommend going in winter.

Zoja Petkovšek, 1. Ka

DISCOVERING AND FALLING IN LOVE WITH A NEW SPORT

About a year ago, I literally fell in love with yoga. The reason for this was that I was watching a video on Instagram, where a girl was doing a handstand and I also wanted to do it.

First of all, I started by researching and discovering what yoga was and how it was done. I also found a lot of videos on the topic of yoga and meditation. As a result, I started doing yoga regularly. I would never have thought that this was something for me. I am an athlete and I run long distances and yoga really helped me calm down, relax and above all, dedicate myself.

Many times, yoga looks very simple and easy, but it can also be demanding and tiring. We know several types of yoga. I prefer to practice ashtanga yoga. This means that throughout

the class, you repeat the same sequence of movements and as you progress, you gradually perform more difficult movements. Ashtanga yoga is one of the most difficult, so you really need to dedicate a lot of time to learning this type of yoga.

With almost everything as a daily practice, it brought me enormous benefits, such as health, stress reduction, well-being, better mobility, pain reduction ...

My opinion is that everyone should at least try practising yoga, because it changes your life in a positive way and it gives you a lot of benefits. It can be done by everyone, regardless of mobility, weight or age. Everything can be adjusted. In the future I want to further my education and become a yoga instructor.

Ela Šeruga, 1. Kb

HOW I FOUND MY SOULMATE IN A SPORT

I've always had a dream of riding a horse. I used to watch films with horses, had a lot of toy horses ... When I turned eight, my dad took me to a ranch nearby where I started to train. At first we got to know horses, how to clean, feed and take care of them, and after a few weeks I sat on a horse for the first time. It was magical. I still remember it to this day. That's when I decided this is how I want to spend my free time.

I didn't have my own horse until my 10th birthday, when I met my soulmate, a beautiful young stallion named Ares. He's got a chocolate brown and white-spotted coat pattern and a dark brown mane. He's an Appaloosa, a breed known to be gentle, intelligent and easy to train, which makes them quite suitable for beginners. Of course, we had to get to know each other to build the bond that we have now. At first we spent a lot of time in a barn just getting comfortable

with physical touch and taking short walks to the forest, but after some time I rode my own horse for the first time. We were made for each other. I never competed in any race or dressage competitions, but I built my own hurdle on the meadow behind our house. We trained there, outside the barn and on the forest paths. Our favorite trail is the one that leads to Brezje nad Kamnikom, because it's near and very peaceful. I can relax when riding and Ares can stretch and maintain his form. I love to braid his mane and comb his coat so that it stays clean and shiny.

Besides Ares, my family owns two more horses. One is my sister's mare Nora, the oldest is my uncle's mare Ira. They're both pure bred mustangs. Ira has been in our family since she was a little foal. Every summer we take horses to the pasture in the mountains, but we can't wait till they come home so we can ride them there. It's even more beautiful than riding at home. I love Ares with all my heart. He's my best friend and the most gorgeous horse in the whole world.

Zala Mali, 1. Zb



HOW I FOUND MY SOULMATE IN A SPORT

I was always a very active child. Every day after school I would go out with my friends and play hide and seek, football ... or take up some other activity. But I never enjoyed being enrolled in activities where I was given exact instructions on what to do.

I was a very stubborn child with a lot of energy. But even if I was stubborn about things and didn't like everything, something always came into my life that I really loved. I tried athletics, rhythmic gymnastics, ping pong, but none of it really pleased me.

But then I came into puberty. And suddenly I started to see all my flaws in my appearance. In order to lose some weight, I started running. At first it was very hard. But I never gave up. Until I could run 7km. I was so proud of myself and I kept running every few days because I fell in love with the feeling that I got after running. After many years I was finally happy with myself.

After several years of running by myself and never exceeding the distance of 8 km, I met a boy. But he wasn't just any boy. I loved him instantly. He was a really sporty person. And at first I felt pressured that I was not fit or sporty enough for him to like me. But then we became a couple and everything changed.

We are still together after almost two years now. And because of him and his supportive family I started running even more. I have taken up mountain running. It's still very hard, but the joy after it is indescribable.

Now after a four-year period of consistent running, I am able to complete a 16km run at a pace of 5:24 per minute. My longest run has been 19km. I'm very proud of how far I have come with the sport that means the most to me. At the same time, I am also immensely grateful for all the support of my boyfriend, my and his family.

I would just like to say to anyone who wants to start running that it is never too late or too early to start. All you need is patience, strong will and determination. Good running shoes would also come in handy.

Monika Rode, 1. Kb

FALLING IN LOVE WITH A NEW SPORT

In 2014, when I was in first grade, my mum and I went to the music school in Trbovlje to look for a new hobby I could take up. Originally, I only wanted to play the violin because I had always been fascinated by it. But when I was introduced to the dance teacher and saw all the dancers, I knew I wanted to be a part of that group.

The first lesson was a little bit intimidating. I didn't know anybody there and everything was new to me. The other dancers I was in the group with had already known some moves from their previous classes. That day I had also been frantically searching for an outfit for the lesson, so I was feeling overwhelmed. By the end of the dance lesson I had gotten to know some of the girls in my group and learned a lot of new dance moves.

I quite liked it, to be honest. I continued to dance for the next six years, but at first it was a whole new experience for me.

Neža Flere, 1. Fc

MY JOURNEY OF FALLING HEAD OVER HEELS FOR A NEW SPORT

Fitness training hadn't always been a part of my life, but once I tried it, I knew I'd found my favourite sport.

It all started when I decided to join a local gym. At first I was a bit intimidated by the intense workout, but as I started to learn, I realised how empowering fitness training could be. I found myself looking forward to each workout excited to see how much progress I could make. Not only did fitness training improve my physical strength, but it also boosted my confidence and improved my mental health.

As I continued my fitness journey, I found different styles and techniques that kept me motivated. I started training three times a week and every time I finished my workout, I felt more and more accomplished. It's such a great feeling when you see how much progress you have made in your fitness journey.

Fitness training has become a really important part of my life. It has taught me discipline and importance of self-care, and that's why I fell head over heels in love with it.

Nika Bašnec, 1. Fc



Schönbrunn Palace

LEARNING GERMAN

I started learning German when I was six. At first, I had no clue about what I was even doing at the course, but the reason for that was probably that I couldn't even read or write. After a few years, a group of pupils with whom I went to courses became constant. We became good friends and at first that was why I liked going there. A few years later, the group fell apart and only me and one of my friends stayed. At that time, I fell in love with the language. Some time has passed and now I have been learning alone with the teacher one on one for the past three years.

In eleven years of learning German, I switched five teachers, which can be stressful at times. It is probably due to the different approach they have. Some of the teachers want you to work on your weaknesses and others are

encouraging you to become even better at things you are already good at. The things the teachers pay more attention to are also different because of your experience and the current knowledge level.

Last year I had one of the best experiences of learning German. I had an opportunity to visit Vienna. I stayed there for a week and learned from native speakers. The trickiest part was that most of the teachers had an accent and you had to get used to it. If you didn't understand the task, you could always ask for the explanation in English.

Now let's take a look at a typical day on the course. The first class of the day started at 8 o'clock and we had breakfast before that. Classes lasted until 12 o'clock. Then it was

GLOBETROTTING

lunch time. If you had the intensive course, you had two more hours of lectures with a different teacher. And after that you were free for the remaining part of the day. There were some activities planned and you could join them if you wanted to. If your parents had left the papers with the permission for you to go out on your own, you could do that as well. The only thing was that you had to be on the campus in time for dinner. And the next day you did it all over again.

Most of the students were from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. There were a few Canadians as well, and the thing that surprised me the most was that there were two brothers from Mexico.

My favorite thing in the whole week was visiting the ZOO and Schönbrunn Palace. For me personally our Ljubljana Zoo is much prettier because it's green and you feel like you are walking in nature. Their Zoo is more commercial, but they have a lot more animal species, for example a panda, a hippo, a polar bear, penguins and so on.

I really like learning German and hope that some day I will live in Germany or Austria. Or maybe even in Switzerland.

Kim Uhlir Selan, 3. Fb

THE SUMMER OF 2022

The summer of 2022 was the best summer I can remember. I was still so young that I had to go on holiday with my parents and old enough to be allowed to go out with my friends at night and to stay out late. I spent more than a month at the seaside, three weeks with my family and one week with a friend. I can say that I enjoyed it more with my family because I was more used to being with them.

The first part of the holiday with my family was right after school and we were at the seaside for a week. I didn't like having to go with them because there were so many things happening in my hometown. I told them repeatedly I didn't want to go because there was a such good party that weekend, so in the end my parents and I made a compromise. I could go to the party and we went on holiday straight after the party had ended. We didn't have good weather but we still went on the boat. It was just daily trips, maybe we spent a night on the boat.

After that I was at home for two weeks. I hung out with my friends, helped my mom do household chores and I cooked for all my family. After two weeks, my dad took me to my friend's house at the seaside, which was far away. He took me on his motorbike and I really loved it, because I like motorbikes and driving fast. My friend was very happy to see me there. I stayed with my friend for a week and we enjoyed every moment we spent together. We went to a concert and there we danced and had one of the best moments of that summer. We went swimming and to the town at night because at night towns are simply stunning. The week went by fast and my friend had to go home. But for me the holiday wasn't over yet, basically the best part of the holiday had just started.

My family came to get me at my friend's seaside house in our boat, on which we stayed for the following twelve days. Then our big cruise began. The first night we were at Pakostani. I was there for the first time and I liked it. I remember that there were some delicious pancakes I really loved and the amount of which might have been the reason I didn't sleep very well. Our third night on the boat was spent at Stari Grad. This was also my first time being there and it was amazing, but because this was me and I love pancakes I couldn't help not buying some. The pancakes were good but not as delicious as the ones at Pakostani. The next morning we went to Korčula, which was my second favourite destination. We went to see Oliver Dragojević's grave, which was big and it had a lot of flowers. We wanted to stay at his traditional concert, which has been held every year since he died, but the weather wasn't really good so we didn't go. The next day I saw a big military boat in the middle of the sea, which made me feel a bit uneasy.

That night we were anchored on the Island of Murter. It was probably the scariest night of the holiday. In the middle of the night a storm began, the wind was blowing, it was raining and thundering. I was probably the only one scared, because when the storm began, my dad woke up and went to see what was happening and then simply went back to sleep, but I didn't sleep since then. In the morning, we went straight to Biograd na Moru. In the evening, we went to town and I saw the amusement park. I needed to go there because I like adrenaline and heights. Next, we went to our special island called Silba. This is a really calm island because there are no cars on it, which I loved and so did my family especially my mom. I can say that it is my happy place at the seaside. We stayed there for about four or five days. One night it was stormy again, but it wasn't as bad as on Murter. Our last night on the boat was spent on the Island of Rab, where I got myself a fake tattoo. My dad wasn't really fond of it because I hadn't told him I had been planning to get one. There was also an amazing

concert, but I didn't eat pancakes there. I had a burger instead which I will definitely eat again. The next morning, we woke up and went to Baska for a daily trip. There were some water slides, where me and my brother had to go. To prove I was brave, I needed to go on the most dangerous and highest one. I somehow fell down and I sprained my ankle. After that, I spent the remaining four days in our apartment. But when it was time to go home, I was magically well again and the ankle didn't hurt anymore.

When I got home, there were only two or three weeks of holidays left so I went out a lot with my friends. At the weekends, I also went to parties, which I loved the most. A lot of things happened there and I don't regret a single one. That summer was probably the wildest since I was old enough to party like a teenager and also went on holiday with my family. I really enjoyed that summer so I hope this year it will be even better, hopefully without any injuries. I cannot wait until this school year ends and the summer break begins.

Masa Šilc, 2. Za



The house of Oliver Dragojević on the Island of Korčula.



1

1. St Nicholas Fortress in Šibenik
2. The view from the Tower of Love, the Island of Silba
3. The Tower of Love on the Island of Silba



2



3

LONDON

Taking in one of the most culturally rich capitals in Europe ... London, of course! Peacefully sitting in nothing but air, slipping past the clouds, watching the blue sky and the sea exchanging colour ... About two hours later we landed, got off the plane and finally stepped onto the English ground. I wasn't even surprised since the weather wasn't as nice as I had hoped. "Well, this is London after all," I thought to myself. After every single one of us got their luggage, we started heading towards a coach that came to pick us up. It was quite unusual realising that we were driving on the left-hand side of the road. Also, the time was different and we were one hour behind the Slovenian time.

After a little uncommon journey we ended up in Greenwich. A hill, apparently the highest in London, surrounded by a big green park that stretches towards Greenwich Palace. What a beautiful sight! A peaceful park, green land with lots of trees with people walking their dogs, jogging or just enjoying their surroundings. I noticed that many people were jogging and running around the park, and later also around the city, which made sense because London is known for its marathon, called the London Marathon. After some time spent walking around, exploring Greenwich, trying the unique fish and chips, we went on a boat trip. Our eyes saw some of the most iconic London sights. We drifted past the London Eye, under Tower Bridge and the boat stopped right at Big Ben, where we disembarked and continued our sightseeing tour on foot. It was only our first day in London and we had already experienced the spirit of the Swinging City, their food and also their bittersweet weather.

The whole next day was also spent outside. Seeing the Changing of the Royal Guard, men dressed in red uniforms with big bearskin caps, riding black elegant horses, the sound of power coming from beneath the hooves ... We visited the Natural History Museum and the feeling of power continued as we saw the



Buckingham Palace



The Tower of London



Millennium Bridge and St. Paul's Cathedral



In front of Tower Bridge



Inside the Natural History Museum

city becoming smaller and smaller from the London Eye. Another great day of exploring and learning ended. It left us feeling tired but satisfied as another day of strolling around the streets was about to begin.

I must say this was the day with the worst weather, but also the day I personally liked the most. The highlight was when we got the opportunity to see and 'meet' some of our role models at Madame Tussauds. Taking several photos and videos of them almost made our dreams come true. I mean, come on, Brat Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio at the same place at the same time as me? Sounds like a dream! Also, the Royal family showed up along with Spiderman, Obama and some of the most famous Hollywood faces you can imagine. What a breathtaking experience! After our eyes took its time for recovery, we rewarded ourselves with the warmth and comfort of Asian street food that really hit the spot on a rainy day like that. The first time riding on the red double decker bus was also something brand new and unfamiliar. Next stop was Oxford Street, where we split and individually took a look around, admiring the diversity of the area, the people and of course the shops, which was the real reason why we were there. Nobody left empty handed, shopping bags were overloaded with souvenirs, filling us with joy. Exhausted, we returned to the hotel.

Our school trip was almost complete, with only one day of exploring left. The last stop before returning home was the seaside resort Brighton. This is basically a bigger and advanced version of Portorož. People come here during vacation. Brighton is known for its vibrant cultural, music and art scene, shopping areas, making it one of the warmest and most welcoming places to visit in the UK. Famous for its Palace Pier, where visitors can spend their time in casinos, playgrounds, fast food restaurants, amusement parks ... After some time spent on the pier we went for a little walk around the city, including visiting the Royal Pavilion, which is a palace built in Oriental style, which really makes you feel



Camden

like you were somewhere magical, just like in the Aladdin cartoon. We didn't get to see the interior, but I believe it's just as fascinating as the exterior.

Now our trip was sadly ending. The coach driver was already waiting to pick us up and that was just when we realised that all the strolling, sightseeing, trying out new things, getting to know the locals and also getting to know each other, shouting at one of my best buddies, Lenart or Drejc, who kept me company, making sure we all together had as much fun as we possibly could, were over. All that was really enjoyable and knowing that it was all a once-in-a lifetime experience made it worth it and if you weren't there, I feel sorry for you. London really made me fall in love with its beautiful architecture, culture, history, and most importantly, the British people, who were really polite, making us feel welcome.

Thank you London for being such an amazing place!

Ivana Lesjak, 2. Za



The Royal Pavillian, Brighton

LONDON AND BRIGHTON HIGHLIGHTS

I was really looking forward to the excursion to London, because it is a city that has always fascinated me. I was most impressed by the musical Mamma Mia and I will probably go see it again sometime. I saw many of the main sights, such as Big Ben, Tower Bridge, Oxford Street ... The food is also good, but the quality still can't be compared to ours in Slovenia. In London, people really focus on themselves and don't give unnecessary attention to other people, which I really like. This is a city that really impressed me and will forever remain in my heart until I visit it again as a tourist and maybe one day as a pharmacy student.

Tilen Puc, 1. Fa



At the Tube station



Tower Bridge

There are so many different cultures and there are not the same people everywhere as in Ljubljana. Nobody judges you and all cultures are accepted. You can notice many different styles of clothing that will not be present here in Slovenia for several years to come. What I liked the most was that London is a very big city and you can always find some place to explore and you'll never get bored.

David Podlogar, 3. Fb

In February, on a four-day school trip to England, London, I had an amazing time. The people were friendly and I loved talking to them and hearing their British accents. The atmosphere, especially on the square where people sang, was memorable. London's typical windy weather and occasional light rain didn't bother the locals. I admired the colorful doors on the houses and loved the old-style architecture. We explored famous landmarks like Tower Bridge, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, the London Eye and visited much more using the Tube and double-decker buses. In the park, there were animals like ducks and parrots, and feeding hazelnuts to squirrels was a highlight. The number of red telephone boxes, some still in use, was surprising. It was interesting to see many people running in shorts, likely preparing for the London Marathon. On the final day, we visited Brighton, which didn't impress me as much as London, but it's probably livelier there in the summer.

Laura Marinko, 2. Fc



Big Ben

During the excursion to London, I experienced some unforgettable moments and unexpected experiences. We started in Ljubljana, where we took a bus to Venice Airport, from where we flew to London Stansted. In Greenwich, we visited the Prime Meridian, then took a boat to Westminster, saw Big Ben, explored the Chinatown district, and went to Leicester Square. We had time for souvenir shopping and a meal before we went to the hotel. The next day, we enjoyed the city view from the London Eye and visited the Natural History Museum. On the way we saw parrots, something I didn't expect in London. After lunch, we walked to the oldest hotel, where the only street with cars driving on the right, similar to Europe, is located. We visited the oldest original underground railway and then took the Tube to Tower Hill. On the last day, we went to Brighton, walked along the pier, and fed squirrels with hazelnuts near the Royal Pavilion. The excursion was full of interesting experiences, and I liked the relaxed atmosphere on the streets of London, where people seemed unconcerned about the opinions of others. My experience in London was very positive since I met new people and explored the culture of the city.

Neja Primožič, 2. Fc

I was very excited to be visiting London because I had never been there before. I can say this was one of the best experiences of all time. Even in such a short time we saw so many beautiful buildings, fun shops and attractions. My favourite activity was the musical Mamma Mia. I loved the singing very much and the atmosphere was amazing. It was funny and I laughed a lot. The Tube was also really fun when it was not completely crowded so we could sit down. I would definitely love to go there again.

Taja Tovornik, 1. Fa

The London experience was a lot of fun. We did a lot of sightseeing and visited several different parts of the city. I made friends with students from our school. I liked it the most when we went to Oxford Street. There are many different and prestigious shops that cannot be found in Slovenia. It was a lot of fun and I hope to go there again sometime.

Filip Cvjetinović, 1. Fa



Big Ben and Houses of Parliament

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: Visiting London and Brighton during the winter holiday was a very pleasant experience, but for :
: me London was the more enjoyable part of the trip. The city is huge and I feel like it would take :
: some time to get used to it and to navigate around by myself. Nevertheless I really liked it, I think :
: the city is very vibrant and there's a lot going on, there are always a lot of people outside and it :
: never feels empty or dull. The city has some great and interesting architecture, especially in the :
: city center, where a lot of the main landmarks are located. What I found unusual is the fact that :
: even when it was raining outside there was still a pretty big number of people that didn't use an :
: umbrella or even a hood and just casually walked around in the rain. As for the highlight of the :
: trip, I would say for me it was Oxford Street. Although the majority of the shops there are more :
: on the expensive side, it was still nice to just walk around and windowshop.
:

Matic Jančar, 3. Fb



Brighton

.....
: What I liked the most was probably the musical :
: Mamma Mia. It was amazing and I just loved how :
: good the actors were and the vibe was definitely it. I :
: also loved the coffee shop Starbucks. I had never tried :
: it before and I loved it. Me and my friends also tried :
: the food at Wendy's and it was amazing compared :
: to McDonald's, which we really didn't like because :
: the food literally had no taste. I saw their culture and :
: lifestyle and it was pretty interesting. I thought Big :
: Ben and the London Eye were also really beautiful, :
: but Madame Tussauds was amazing. We saw so many :
: different famous people there (not real people), and :
: we also went to watch some kind of short marvel :
: movie in 4D and that was really cool. Overall, I loved :
: the experience, just the weather could be a little :
: better.
:

Laura Gartnar, 2. Za

.....
: Many people had told me it always rained in London and finally I believed them. It was rainy and :
: cloudy for the most part of our excursion but bad weather did not interfere with all the excitement :
: I felt visiting this breathtaking city. Apart from popular attractions, parks were the places I felt like :
: I entered a new world. They were so peaceful and exotic animals were one of the things I did not :
: expect to see there. Another unforgettable experience was the underground ride. At first I was :
: nervous as it was my first time on the underground, but the last ride to the hotel will certainly :
: remain in my memory. Moreover, the musical Mama Mia was the highlight of the excursion. I had :
: never thought a person could experience so much joy and pride for work of a stranger but this :
: masterpiece surely gave me goosebumps. To round up, after London visiting Brighton was like a :
: treat. It was not crowded, but quite comforting. We also had a chance to spend the remains of :
: our change in the arcade game park.
:

Zala Brancelj, 4. Fb

During my time in England, I really enjoyed every day there. It was an adventure filled with education and unforgettable memories. I enjoyed exploring busy London streets and seeing all the famous attractions like the London Eye, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Tower Bridge, the Natural History Museum and others. One of the best times there for me was the free time, because we could do whatever we wanted and went to see things we wanted to. I think that London is a city where there is always something new to discover around every corner and that's why I like it so much. In conclusion, staying in England was an amazing and unforgettable experience.

Noemi Sušelj, 1. Fb

I found the way they drive on the opposite side extremely confusing. The Tube was also strange because there were too many people, it felt really crowded and it was also hot down there. The highlights of this trip were the London Eye because I could see the whole city as well as Madame Tussauds. The boat tour was particularly memorable because we saw two different parts of London in a quicker and more entertaining way. I also enjoyed shopping in London as there are stores we don't have in Slovenia, so it was interesting to explore them. I didn't manage to try any of their traditional food but I definitely will on my next visit.

Tia Kališek, 2. Ka

1

Globetrotting



2

Inside a capsule on the London Eye

MY FAVOURITE TRAVEL

Last summer at the end of June, right at the beginning of the holidays, my dad and I travelled to Valencia, Spain. I had been waiting for this trip all year, and it had motivated me to finish school. It was also my first time flying, so I was even more excited. In primary school I had studied Spanish for three years, so I was excited and wanted to see how well I could communicate with locals.

Our journey began at the airport in Trieste. Everything felt new and exciting to me, from going from the check-in desk to passing through security. However, my dad had a small pocket knife with him, which he says was handy, not for causing harm. When the security found it, they pulled us aside, and for a moment, I felt scared and didn't know what was happening. The security guards used detectors to search us both. They let us through and took the knife. Looking back now, my dad and I find it funny.

Next, we headed to the departure lounge and joined a queue for document checks. Suddenly, I noticed a sign saying that the queue we were in was for Dubai, while the queue next to us was for Spain, Valencia. We almost ended up in Dubai by mistake. We quickly moved in the right queue, but for a moment, it was both funny and scary.

We boarded the plane, and the two-hour flight passed quickly for me as I slept, listened to music and looked out the window. Overall, my first flying experience was good and I wasn't scared, except for the weird feeling in my stomach and head during the takeoff.

Surprisingly, on the plane, my father and I met a Slovenian couple who lived in Valencia, returning home from a visit. I was glad we had met them because we ended up taking a taxi together and they recommended which sights were worth visiting. They were incredibly kind.

When arriving at our hotel, we received the

key, it was nighttime and we were tired, so we went straight to bed.

The next morning or the first day of our stay in Valencia we began with breakfast at the hotel. Then we borrowed bicycles and explored the city, admiring its beauty. Along the way we visited a castle and a church. We then stopped at a local restaurant, where I surprisingly ordered in Spanish and understood everything the waiter said. I felt incredibly proud. We continued cycling until we reached the beach with its beautiful palm trees and the breathtaking view. We sat on the sand, gazing at the ocean and even took a nap. Then, we returned to the hotel, my father tired and myself not even a little from the adrenaline.

On the second day, we bought metro tickets. The metro is a popular kind of transportation in Valencia. It is similar to train and everyone there uses it. Trains arrive every five minutes and are fast unlike in Slovenia. We took the metro to the beach, where we enjoyed swimming in the ocean and sunbathing. It was refreshing, especially because of the heat. While at the beach, we took a long walk along the coastline. We dined at a restaurant overlooking the beach, eating a delicious meal and trying Valencian salad.



L'Umbracle park

During the next three days of our trip, we had a mixture of relaxing and sightseeing days. We visited museums, explored the marketplace, looked inside an old castle, and simply enjoyed the city's beauty. We even attended a beach bonfire event, not even knowing it was happening, where thousands of people lit bonfires and celebrated a local tradition. I was happy about trying *churros*, a traditional Spanish treat, and they were truly amazing. I had tried *churros* before in Slovenia, but they couldn't compare to the ones in Spain.



The marketplace



Catedral de Santa María de Valencia

I was a bit sad when the last day came and we had to leave. We flew back to Trieste, where organized transportation took us to Ljubljana. There, our family was waiting and drove us home.

This trip to Spain is an absolutely unforgettable experience for me. I love everything about it - the city, the food, the people, and the fact I spoke their language. This experience made me want to travel more and explore different cultures.

Laura Marinko, 2. Fc



In the city

OKTOBERFEST IN CALELLA

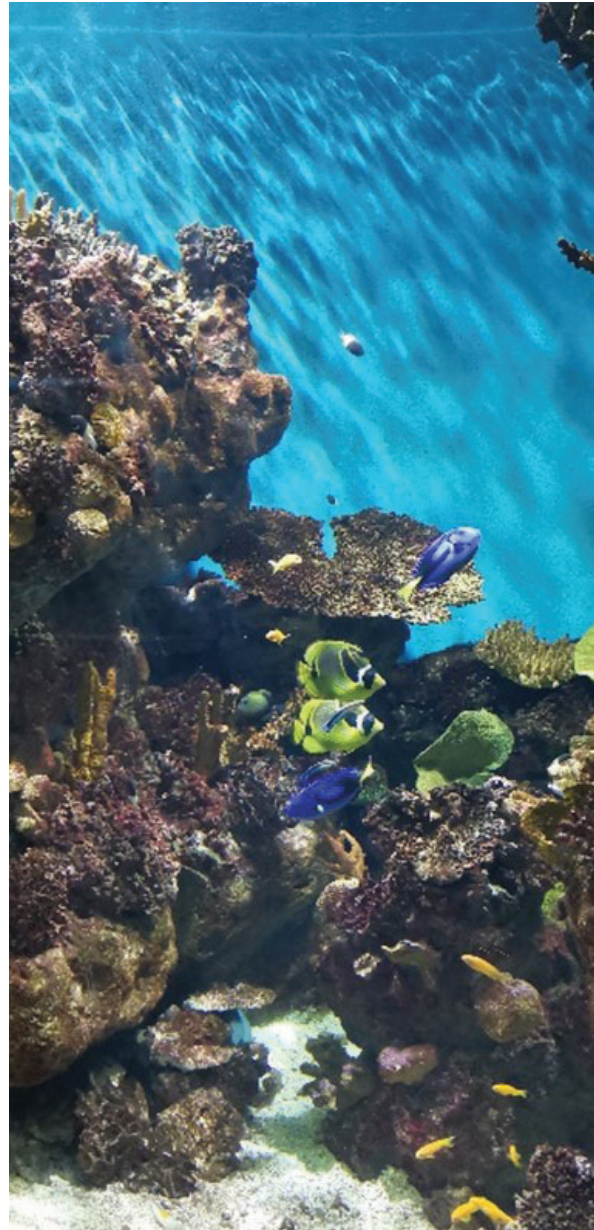
I absolutely adore music. Music has taken me to different places of the world. I have decided to describe one of them, namely my favourite trip to the music festival Oktoberfest in Calella, Spain.

I started playing the saxophone when I was seven. In the seven years of playing at the music school I have participated in many competitions, played different versions of the instrument and have been part of the music orchestra. In the fifth grade I joined the Wind Orchestra Kulturno društvo Godba Slovenskih železnic Zidani Most. There I made new friends and we have made a lot of memories together.

We found out about the trip six months before leaving, so we were all looking forward to setting off. I can't tell you how happy I was about going to Spain. Two days before we set off, my stomach started to hurt and I was scared about getting sick. However, it turned out that those were just emotions. I couldn't wait to go but at the same time I was scared of being far away from my family. I was also worried about school; I was absent for the whole week and I missed a lot of important lessons, activities and exams.

If we had gone by plane, we would have flown for four hours. The cheapest version of travelling was going by bus, so we went on a large coach. You can imagine that it wasn't a short journey, actually it lasted more than 20 hours and we drove about 1,500 km. It was a long way to get there, and the seats were uncomfortable. After getting there we settled in a hotel and started preparing for our first concert. It was more like a parade with hosting orchestras and bands where we played marches.

The next day we had free time and we went to the beach. We were there in the middle of October and it was still warm and perfect for swimming. I have to say that the beach was perfect. It has a beach volleyball court and we



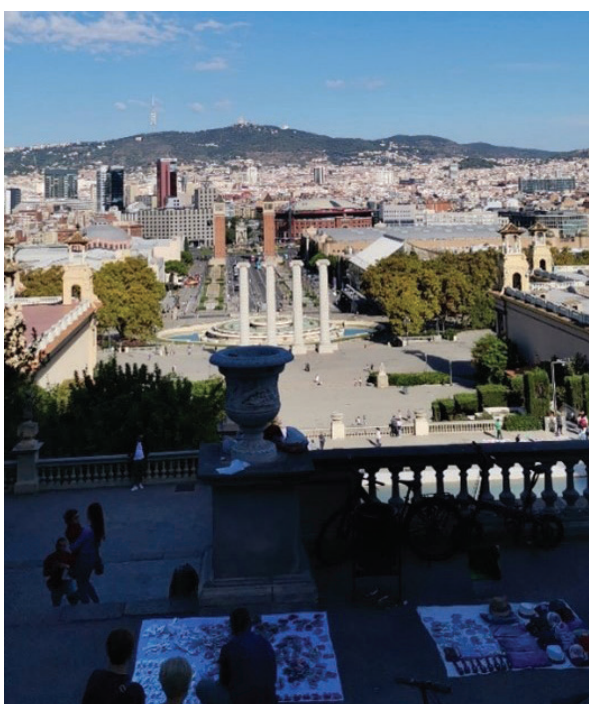
Barcelona Aquarium

were playing volleyball almost all day long because we had concerts in the night-time. There were many other orchestras, bands and other musical representatives, so we could listen to them and see the cultures from other countries. The most fascinating moment was when we all sang the Oktoberfest anthem *Ein Prosit*. Many different people from different countries singing the same song. I loved it!

On the fourth day we took a bus to the centre of Barcelona. A guide showed us some of the most iconic spots, like the cathedral Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família and Barcelona Aquarium. The aquarium was very interesting because they have several different sea



Barcelona



Barcelona



Calella Beach

animals and you could even feed some of them, but the cathedral was being in the process of building. In fact, they want it to be finished at the hundred's anniversary of the architect's death, in 2026. The architect Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926) started working on the project in 1882 and devoted more than forty years to the cathedral.

On the last day, we had the biggest concert playing some popular songs of all time, like I Will Follow Him, Bodyguard and Tom Johnson. The highlight of the concert was the Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody and the entire audience was singing it with us. The feeling was incredible and it made me get goosebumps. All the lights were turned off, only the phone lights were lit.

In the morning, we had to pack our luggage and leave the hotel at ten a.m. The way back wasn't that long and most of us fell asleep because we were very tired. We didn't have many stops while driving, so we arrived in Zidani Most in nineteen hours. When I got home, I had to unpack everything and prepare for Ljubljana. I didn't want to go to school knowing that I had a lot of work to do, but I have never regretted going to Spain because it was one of the best times of my life.

To sum up, I really enjoyed being in Calella and I can't wait to go again this September. For me, going there was like entering a completely different world. It was incredible and I was absolutely amazed.

Žana Avsec, 3. Fb

WITH MUSIC TO CHINA



GODBA SLOVENSkih ŽELEZNIC

I'm Žana and music is my life. When I was five I started going to music school. In the first year I played the flute and then the saxophone. After a few years I started playing in the school orchestra and in the saxophone group, where there were different versions of the instrument. I preferred that because I had an opportunity to play the soprano, tenor, and baritone saxophone. In the last three years in music school I participated in many competitions and in most of them I came second.

In the fifth grade I joined the Wind Orchestra Godba Slovenskih železnic Zidani Most. Joining the orchestra changed my life. Only then I really started enjoying playing, because in music school you play basic etudes and scales in every possible way. I know practicing them helps you learn to play, but I must admit that they were boring and I hated playing them. But now, when I start practicing, scales are the first thing that I play, because I need to warm up before I actually start practicing. I remember my first performance and the feeling which I had is hard to explain - I enjoyed being on stage more than anything.

Next year, in August 2019, we got an invitation to the China International Wind Music Festival at Rizhao. We decided to go, so we started practicing for our show three months before. We didn't have just concerts there, but also a show music where we played music and had choreography at the same time. We played a march and a mix of Slovenian songs.

We drove by bus to Ljubljana and then we had an eight-hour flight to Moscow. That was my first flight that lasted that long. We stayed at the Moscow's airport for some time and then we had a flight to Beijing. We landed at around 3 p.m. and then we had to wait for five more hours for the train. That was an overnight train and it had couchettes with six bunk beds in each. I remember that it was very uncomfortable to sleep and there was very little space, so we stayed up all night. In the morning, we finally arrived in Rizhao and took a bus to the hotel.

In China, they have very tall hotels, and we were placed on the top, on the 30th floor. I have to admit that I had a feeling of moving all the time. The worst was when there was a

typhoon and the top of the hotel was actually slightly moving. We were there in August, when there was the biggest heat wave, it was really hot and very humid, so we drank at least four liters of water per day.

We stayed there for nine days and almost every day we had a concert or a show. First we performed at the opening event and then had some concerts. We also attended some parades at the seafront, where we could see the sculptures made from the sand. I was impressed by them, especially I liked the SpongeBob SquarePants' one.

During our stay we visited some of the most interesting tourist attractions. We walked through the typical Chinese streets and saw some of the Beijing's traditional houses, called *siheyuan*. Everywhere we went, on our every step, the streets were crowded with the Chinese and tourists. In some places, there were so many people that we could barely move. People were sitting and sleeping on the floor with all of their luggage. If you ask me, I think that the Chinese are just copies of one person because they all look alike and it's hard to distinguish them. As a blond person with long hair I must have looked very strange to them and they were looking at me in a weird way, but with time I got used to it.

At the hotel, the food choice was rather limited, and the same food was offered for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I didn't really like anything, so we ate roasted beef noodles from the near-by tobacconist's and just poured boiled water over them. We bought them in large quantities because that was the only thing that we ate for the whole week.

The Chinese are known for Chinese teas. We were served many types of tea. For each one



Zhongnanhai



we were told what it was good for. I wasn't impressed by some of them, but I really liked the fruit one, also called a dessert tea. They showed us how they prepare them and I found the accessories they used really funny. To prepare tea, the water needs to be the right temperature. They use the Yixing Tea

Pet, a small figure of a Chinese man. If you pour it with hot water and it starts peeing, the water has the right temperature.

Two days before leaving, we went to the Great Wall of China. That day was extremely hot and we had all the music instruments with us, so we took a gondola to the top. There we played *Golica*, as the first orchestra ever which has done that. Another highlight was while we were in the center of Beijing and we saw the Zhongnanhai, which is the residence of the Chinese president Xi Jinping. It was the most valuable residence of G20 world leaders.

The next day we had to pack and leave the hotel at 10 a.m. We went by bus to the train station and then got on the overnight train. Although the beds were uncomfortable, most of us fell asleep immediately, because we were so tired. After two long flights, we arrived in Ljubljana in the afternoon and there our journey ended.

As I said, we weren't very luck with the food in the hotel, but I can't say that food there isn't good, it just depends on the individual taste. Our leaders were invited to a traditional dinner by festival organizers where they ate snails and fried crickets with noodles. They said that they weren't that bad, but I didn't want to try them.

I don't regret going to China. Now I appreciate everything that we have in Slovenia much more, because I have learned that some things like drinkable water, nature and clean air can't be taken for granted, so we should be happy to live in this country.

Žana Avsec, 3. Fb

A SCOUT SMILES AND WHISTLES UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

July 25th was the date I was looking forward to all summer. I couldn't wait nor sleep the night before I went on the most anticipated travel so far. I had started packing almost a week before, so I wouldn't forget anything important. Once I was done packing, I put my scout scarf and passport on the top of the suitcase and went to bed. After a sleepless night of tossing and turning, I said goodbye to my grandmother and dogs and drove to Ljubljana Airport. And so it began! The journey I was waiting for for over a year. But little did I know it would soon turn into a disaster.

170 Slovenian scouts including myself were waiting for a connecting flight to Istanbul and then to Incheon Airport, South Korea. After fifteen hours of travelling, we had finally arrived to Seoul. We travelled across the world to attend the 25th World Scout Jamboree. It is a ten-day camp where scouts from all over the world gather and make new friendships and memories they will never forget and cherish forever. It's held every four years in different countries.

As soon as we exited the airport terminal, we were shocked by the heat and humidity. We took the metro to our hotel and took some rest. There was a week of sightseeing ahead of us before taking part in the Jamboree, so we needed to beat jetlag. Asian culture has fascinated me ever since I was a little girl, so obviously I was beyond excited to explore every bit of the country. All in all, my favorite were the temples and the DMZ, which is the border between North and South Korea. There we visited a tunnel in which North Korean soldiers used to hide before they attacked and the Dora Observatory, where I got a chance to peek into North Korea with binoculars. We went to Nami Island, Gangnam, Buan-gun, Swon, and saw all major sights of Seoul. We also visited the National War Memorial, in which I learned a lot about the tragic war on the Korean Peninsula.

The food was exceptional. I had figured that I would like it since Chinese food is my favorite. There were a lot of seafood, noodles, dumplings and too much rice. In fact, I didn't eat rice for a whole month after I came home. My parents found it hilarious, so they cooked rice for lunch as a joke, on the same day I arrived home. However, the tastiest dish was *toppoki*, which are long rice cakes with a very spicy sauce, the texture of which was quite similar to Italian gnocchi. The best traditional food I tried was on the Gwang-jang Market.

After an amazing week of experiencing Korean culture, we had to leave Seoul and go to SaeMangeum, where the Jamboree was held. And this is where the disaster began.

We were told the bus was going to pick us up at the airport between 11 and 12 o'clock. As soon as we arrived at the airport, we saw a huge mass of scouts waiting for their buses. There was a queue of more than 400 people waiting. Five hours had passed before we got our transport. After a four-hour ride to the west of the country, we arrived on the Jamboree site. It was already 8 o'clock in the evening and we found out that we had to put up our tents and cook dinner. By the time we finished putting up the tents, we had been starving. A few of us went to the subcamp's office, where we had to pick up the ingredients for dinner, made dinner and then we finally ate. Exhausted from the whole day, we went to sleep. I couldn't sleep though, because of the heat and the fear of bugs and venomous spiders crawling into my sleeping bag. All of us woke up before 7 o'clock because it was impossible to sleep due to the heat.

The next inconvenience occurred at breakfast. Actually, the breakfast never came. There were 40,000 scouts from 158 countries and no breakfast for the majority of us! They gave us some rice and that was pretty much it. For lunch, we got lunch packets which contained junk food which was supposed to keep us going till dinner. Dinner came with a delay, because the British had accidentally taken our food box, so we had to wait for over an

hour to get it back.

By then we had got the idea of the poor organization and I was bitterly disappointed, to say the least. The lunch packet situation was awful, the food wasn't either healthy or tasty, we were hungry and lived on convenience store sandwiches for over a week. In addition, the camp organized activities that were always full because there were so many people, so we had to queue in the hot sun.

After the first evening, we had an opening ceremony with live K-pop music and dancing. Even Bear Grylls and the President came and gave us a speech, which was spectacular. It was amazing till it was over and we had to exit the concert site. Imagine 40,000 people trying to exit at once ... A lot of people fainted as a result of the heat and dehydration, it was disastrous. Thankfully, nobody from Slovenia fainted or had a heat related illness, because we followed the protocol and drank four liters of fluids and wore a cap at all times. But the participants from other countries weren't as cautious as us and had some problems.

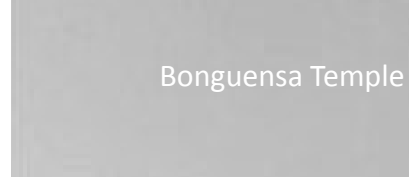
Thinking that the worst was over, we found out there was a typhoon coming in two days, so the Korean government evacuated all of us in one day. We had been waiting for the whole day in excruciating heat before a bus finally came to our subcamp. We were evacuated to a catholic university in Seoul, where we had better living conditions and better food, so we were quite relieved.

After almost a month in South Korea I came home. I was in two minds about the bitter-sweet experience, but after a week back in Slovenia I realized how fortunate I was to have experienced things most teenagers don't. I made new friends, saw a beautiful country, ate amazing food and felt special among the scouts from all over the world. And because of that that I will never look at this experience with regret or annoyance but rather with happiness and joy.

Žana Čamdžić, 3. Fb



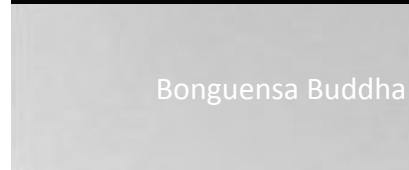
Traditional Korean food



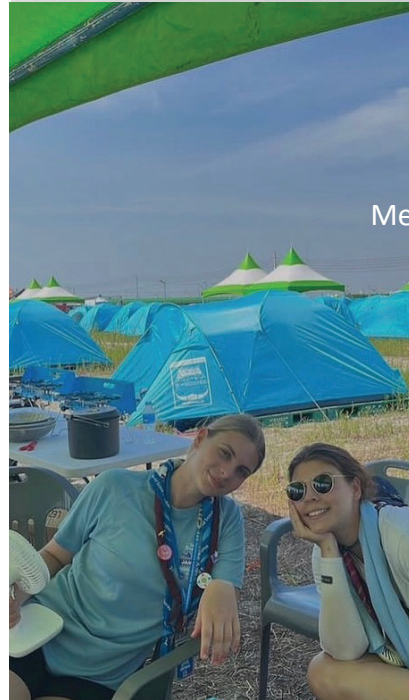
Bonguensa Temple



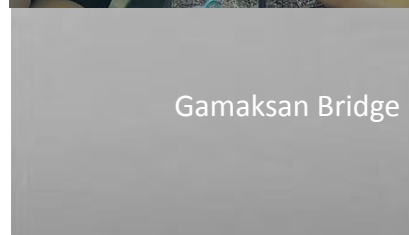
Traditional Korean food



Bonguensa Buddha



Me and my sister at the campsite



Gamaksan Bridge



DO YOU?

I sit and think up on a tree
Does he love me
Or does he love me not
My mind doesn't stop.

In my head I think and think
Overthink and never blink
I just stare into my phone
The pain is here, I'm all alone.

I need you now, where are you, love?
You're all that I've been thinking of
I wonder where, I wonder why
Are you alone or maybe shy.

Sometimes I think you do not care
'Cause you just take your love
somewhere
But then you show it just for free
It's like you want something from me.

I don't want to know what it's for
That changing love, but I want more
I want to be safe in your arms
I'm blind for all of the alarms.

Taking all of my free time
Staring waiting for reply
My eyes bursting into tears
You've just opened all my fears

The fog is dense and very heavy
My mind is cold and they can't carry
All my struggles and my fears
I can't stand that many tears.

So I am asking one more time
Because asking isn't a crime
Do you love me I must know
Till then my heart will never grow.

FAIRYTALE

As a little girl I waited
Happy ending and my life upgraded
Now I'm thinking "just forget"
I was stupid and a threat.

Someday my dreams'll come true
And on that day all will be true
All my dreams were filled with
nonsense
They were having almost no sense.

Unicorns and colored rainbows
And prince charming on a white horse
In my mind was not a story
Will it ever be my glory?

But my childish wildest dreams
They were dropped on wooden floor
They were stolen from my mind
I was stupid and quite blind.

I just let them break my spirit
My background was out of frame
All my plan I couldn't see it
My flame couldn't burn the same.

My false thinking and my drinking
Got me hopeless, got me soulless
And my constant overthinking
Was just taking all my self love.

But in sorrow, all my horror
There was light and there was love
I was lost in every hour
Till I found it
My true love.

Tinkara Vačovnik, 4. Fa





SITTING ON THE BEACH

Sitting on the beach,
this beautiful sunset right in front of us,
the warmth of the sun on my eyelids
makes me wanna stay.

I can feel your love
just by the look in your eyes
as magically blue as the ocean's one.

The moment is timeless,
your love fills my beating heart
and I finally feel myself Alive.
I can finally look at my body
and accept all the bruises, wounds,
hair, stretch marks, cellulite
and scars that I left on it.

It's kinda painful to look at them
after finally realising,
that you were given this body
to be a vessel for your soul,
and I tore it apart myself -
- as if other people haven't already ...
How can I be so cruel? –
Suddenly it all disappears.

Hello?
What is happening?
The Eminem starts playin',
my heart skips a beat
and I realise,
it really was too beautiful
to be real.

Sleepy eyes full of burning tears,
the fresh wounds start to ache,
my head automatically
filling with the darkness
I hide in a faked smile,
'cause no words in this world
could describe the emptiness, loneliness
and the war between my soul
that wants to escape this suffering
and my body on the other hand,
that will do anything
to keep me going through it.
- And I shall be thankful to it.

ŽK, 3. Fc

ON MY SKIN

It all started with you, my baby.
But it's funny 'cause you're not even here,
yet I can feel you
in every single piece of my heart
you left behind.
We have had a story
I wrote on my skin
and carry it with me ... -
- They say I can not take it back.
It's really strange
how I can take any physical pain
but still can't accept the fact that
I'm not the girl you love anymore.

GLOW

They say that the stars
can only shine in the dark.
Maybe that's why some people
need to be in such a dark place. -
to really Glow in the Darkness of life.

THIS GIRL I USED TO KNOW

I watched her disappear -
This girl I used to know.
The girl whose eyes used to be as soulful
as the sunrise after stormy night,
and who used to laugh so hard
her stomach'd always hurt.

She even fell in love,
but when the spring came
she began to vanish from my view.

In the 5th grade,
she used to play volleyball
with her toxic best friend.

In the 6th,
her only struggle was
keeping quiet when
laughin' off their heads.

In the 7th grade
she gave her whole heart
to a boy who soon

crushed it into pieces
as she began to drown.

The next grade was spent
in school bathrooms
hiding secrets that were
only hers to know.

Alcoholism on her
family's way -
- no wonder why she
didn't want to stay ...

So I wrote the first letter to her,
unsuccessfully I'd say,
and rewrote it early
in the ninth grade.

Summer was spent in the hospital
having panic attacks over food,
but forced to heal my bloody wound
to prepare myself for high school.

On the 4th of November
I was penning the letter once more.
2 fortnights have passed
and my parents' trust have left.

Now 2 years are gone -
- It's already the junior year.
Everything keeps falling apart,
even when I've already drowned.
Oh Lord, what have I done?

Holding tight the pen again,
still breathless, I write,
Forcing myself asleep
to bring me a relief,
while drowning with pain
into the deep.

She's gone now -
this girl I used to be.
I'm only the pieces
of what world's left of her;
the already dead soul
with a big void heart,
full of secrets
that are mine to deny.



THE WORLD IS A MESSED-UP PLACE

When I was little, I saw a bird in the garden, right in the middle.
It was happy, young and alive.
It flew to me and sat on my arm.
It knew I meant no harm.

It was like a fairytale, and I was a princess,
The sun was shining, and the water was glistening.
Back then, everybody was listening.
The world was bright and fun.

Back then, the worst thing was to be found in a silly game of hide-
and-seek.

That's when my world was at its peak.
I had friends left and right.
I spent every day outside.

There were no rainstorms, or long lonely nights.
No wondering about the rights and wrongs.
Back then, we played pretend
Until our days would come to an end.

Then I finally turned thirteen.
I couldn't wait to be a teen.
But I discovered something strange:
Our world is full of rage.

There're children crying
And people dying.
There're wars unfolding.

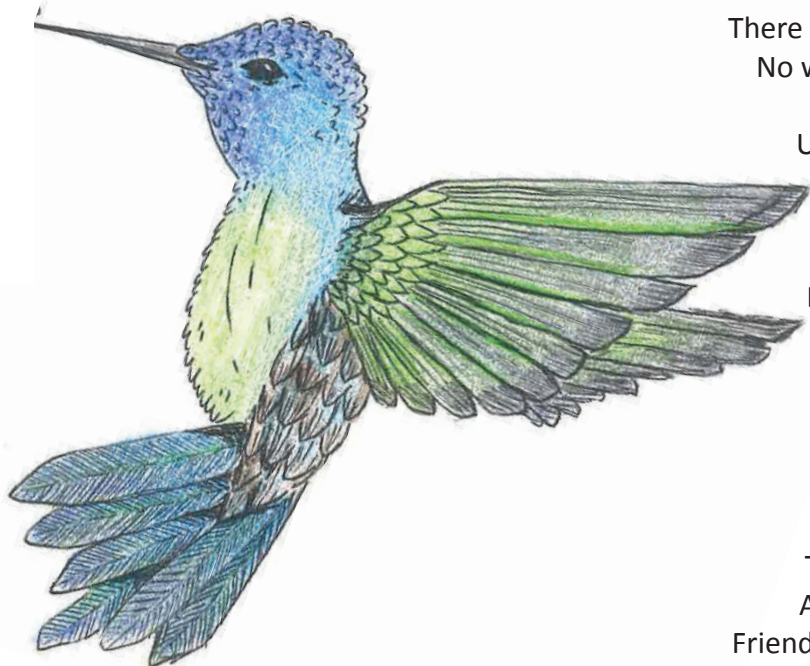
That's when I stopped going outside
And my mind entered the other side.
Friends stopped calling and I'm always sobbing.

My mum's hugs don't fix everything.
My clothes are stained with tears instead of dirt.
I've never again worn a skirt.

People are stressed and depressed.
There's madness all around
And it's not hard to get lost and never found.

The bird in the garden is about to fly away from this awful life.
I'm watching it with envy and begin to cry.
I wish I had wings so I could fly.

But I'm not a bird and I cannot fly, so I'm left hopeless in the dark.



STORIES AND MORE

LEARNING HOW TO RIDE A BIKE

There is one event that is deeply etched in my memory. I was four years old and it was a beautiful sunny day on September 15. My sister was celebrating her eighteenth birthday on that very day.

During that period, I was just learning to ride a bike. I was able to handle it, but I was still a beginner. Also, I always watched older kids riding fast down the slope and I wanted to be like them. Since I was still improving my riding skills, my parents used to say to me, "You are doing well, keep going, but be careful." And especially my mother would say to me, "If you ride slowly, you get far." But I did not really listen to my mother. I enjoyed the breeze on my cheeks when I pushed the pedals harder and when my bicycle went faster.

On that day, when my mother was not paying attention because she was preparing everything for my sister's celebration, I left the house, took my bike and went down the slope that led to our house. From a distance, my brother and father noticed me and started shouting, "Slow down!!" But I panicked and completely forgot to use the brakes and slow down, so I ended up under the tractor that was parked nearby. I felt a strong pain in my head and on my left cheek. I touched it with my hand, and my little hand was covered in blood. I still remember how my brother ran into the house to get some fresh clothes and the cold compress that my mother pressed on my bleeding cheek. We immediately got into the car and my parents took me to hospital. The doctors and nurses were very nice and I remember I got a special get-well-soon card from a kind volunteer. Fortunately, everything ended well.

I could have died that day, but I was very

lucky. Only years later I began to realize that. Now I also understand that what our parents tell us is not all stupid.

Neža Rožac, 2. Fc

LEARNING TO RIDE A BICYCLE

When I was about five to six years old, I received a new pink bicycle, which I instantly fell in love with. I was excited to learn how to ride it, so that I could join my friends, who were already good at cycling. With my parents' help I began practising in our backyard during the summer.

At first, I struggled to keep a steady balance, so my dad attached stabilizers to the bike. However, I was impatient and convinced my parents to let me ride without them. Although they were concerned about me falling, they let me. Unfortunately, my confidence led to falling and hurting my knee. The fall made me scared of falling again and I lost my motivation to continue learning.

After a while, I found courage to give it another try. I realized that progress comes with patience, and even if I fell, I continued trying. Then, one time, my mom, who had been holding my bike, suddenly let go without me noticing. I was surprised that I was riding the bike perfectly fine without any help.

In the end, I felt happy, excited and proud of myself. This experience taught me the importance of patience and accepting that learning and being good at a new skill takes time. It's important to acknowledge that being the best at something right from the start doesn't happen really often, but with motivation, effort and practice, you can achieve your goal. Each time I learn something new, I feel some accomplishment, because I know I have put effort in it.

Laura Marinko, 2. Fc



THE START OF A NEW CHAPTER

It was August 31st, the last day of me living at home. I had just finished packing my last bag when my mom came to tell me it was time to go.

We drove to Ljubljana and went to the dorm. I was full of anticipation and a little scared to meet my roommates. Thankfully, I got put in a room with Pia, who I had already known from primary school. My second roommate Nina turned out to be pretty great as well, although I will never forget our first interaction. She came through the door with a dozen bags, which she plopped on the bed right beside her. She was wearing big sunglasses and a slick back bun. I have to admit I was quite scared of her at first, but after we exchanged a few words, I realized she wasn't so terrifying after all.

All of our parents got on extremely well from the very start, so we naturally had to go grab a drink in the nearby café. Eventually it was

time to say our goodbyes, so I said goodbye to my parents, my sister Tinkara and my best friend Amelie, who tagged along on my moving day. Then we went our separate ways. To celebrate our first day of living together we decided to explore the city center. We got some bubble tea and began discovering Ljubljana. Suddenly it started raining, so we were forced to end our little adventure. When we got back and got ready for bed, we talked until late at night and got to know each other much better.

I would describe my first week of school as a chaotic emotional roller coaster. I never considered myself an extroverted person, but I put myself in a situation where I had to make new relationships with new people at a new school and city, and it wasn't easy. I don't think it was easy for anyone. I felt so out of place and I questioned my decision all the time. Beside that I was still trying to adapt to my living situation and the fact that you have

very little to no personal space and time. After some time, I started getting to know people in my class. I got to know so many different personalities but a few in particular stood out to me. One of them was Klara. We clicked instantly and started sitting next to each other in every class. We randomly found out we were born on the same day, so we also share a birthday. Once I made the first real friend, going to school wasn't so unbearable anymore. By that point, me and my roommates had also spent together enough time so we knew each other's preferences, favourite foods and drinks, biggest fears and background stories.

After the first few weeks, we also grew closer to a girl named Nuša, who lived next door to us. We started having movie nights together, going for walks, participating in different activities in our building, baking pancakes and helping each other with schoolwork.

Since then we've spent together many days, we've experienced and learned so much about one another, we've grown and had our ups and downs, we've made an absurd amount of inside jokes and to this day they are some of the few people I'm so deeply grateful to have met and I can't wait to see what the future holds for us. In the beginning, I wasn't so sure that moving to Ljubljana was the right choice, but it turns out that with the right people every bad day and hard task can be manageable.

Maruša Kuhar, 1. L

WHAT A NIGHTMARE

The day started quite normally like any other day. My family and I decided to go shopping in Ljubljana. When we finished everything in Ljubljana, none of us expected such a journey back as we experienced.

I was sitting in the car and looking out the window, when suddenly the fog descended on us. In the beginning it wasn't problematic, but when we came to Litija, we couldn't see

anything, not even one metre ahead. We drove forward very slowly. We didn't know where we were or which side of the road we were driving on.

We were all worried, but suddenly we saw lights ahead. We were happy because we caught up with a driver. We all thought that he knew the way and we followed him. But did he really know the way? After a few meters, the car in front of us stopped and the driver came to our car and asked us if we knew where we were because he had got lost. We told him that we were only following him because we thought he knew the way. So there we were all lost in the fog. My mother got out of the car and looked at the road lines so that we could at least see which side of the road we were on. She also got out of the car at each sign and read us what it said and in which direction we had to go, and that was how an hour-hour ride from Ljubljana turned into a three-hour ride.

The next day this fog was already mentioned in the news on TV and in the newspaper. They reported how many drivers had been lost, how many were injured and how many birds were lying dead on the ground because they couldn't see where they had been flying and had crashed into the walls.

At the time we didn't think it was funny at all, but now when we remember that moment, we all start laughing.

Sara Branda, 1. L

WHAT A NIGHTMARE

The story I'm about to tell you is just another great story about me and my family's adventures. It happened during our second trip to America. The trip was ending but before we left for home, we stopped over in Orlando. I had never heard of the city or any of the fun things you could do there before.

I want you to picture the incident that occurred on our second night in the city. Throughout our stay, the weather was beautiful and warm. In general, it was a very memorable trip. The day before our so-called nightmare we went to Sea World where we watched some dolphin shows and just walked through the park. We enjoyed the sunny and hot day. By the end of it, we were supposed to go to our apartment, but I really wanted to pet the dolphins. Of course, my dad couldn't say no to me. We returned to the aquarium, where the kind workers gave me some additional food to feed the dolphins. They took pictures of us and later framed them. My mom still has them on the desk in her office.

When we finally returned to our apartment, we were all exhausted. We all got ready for bed and then my parents were making plans for the next day. My mom was preparing plans for dinner and she wanted us to try out the toaster. My dad helped her and they figured it out. It was simple to use, because you just set the timer on the toaster by moving the button. Everything was set for the next day, so we went to sleep.

The night quickly passed and it was time for us to head to the rollercoaster part of Sea World. Me and my sister were so happy, because we were able to go on all different kinds of rides. Looking back, I'm extremely grateful to my parents. Even though they hate rollercoasters, they still spent their entire day at the park. I remember the name of the ride I loved the most was Stingray. After such a fun and exhilarating day, we went back to our apartment.

It was around six o'clock when my mom started making toast for dinner. Meanwhile I fell asleep on the sofa, my sister was showering and my dad was answering some emails. We were not paying attention to my mom at all. During the time the toast was in the toaster, she got on her phone and forgot about it. Maybe around 15 minutes passed and the timer didn't go off. The whole room started to smell like burnt food. But that strong, bitter

smell didn't wake me up. It was the loud fire alarm that went off immediately after. The whole room got foggy because of the smoke. My whole family started panicking and my dad took the toast out. We were so stressed and didn't know how to turn the alarm off. We even saw some people evacuating through the window. After 5 minutes of pure shock, we finally thought of opening the door and the alarm stopped. The system makes a lot of sense, because if the fire alarm went off in our room, they needed to know that we had got out safely.

The next thing we found out was that the reception had called us to ask if everything was okay and we explained the whole situation. There wasn't any damage, so they calmed down. We had a good laugh about it afterwards. But as if that wasn't enough stress for my mom, around 20 minutes later we heard firefighter sirens. And by luck, they took a right turn to our apartment. My sister and dad saw an opportunity and proceeded to tease my mom that the firefighter trucks were for us. My mom relived that stress again because she realized how much trouble she had caused to the apartment complex. Later she found out that the firefighter trucks thankfully were not for us.

This story still haunts my mom to this day. Wherever we go now, she always double checks any cooking appliance there is. Now I can say that it really was a funny and educational experience for me and my mom. But my dad always says that even traumatic and embarrassing stories make great memories. That is true. Wherever my mom goes now, she can always break the awkward silence or start a conversation by telling the story about how she accidentally set off the fire alarm. At the end of the day, these moments make my mom more unique and that is why we love her even more.

Julija Judež, 1. L

THE WRONG TRAIN

It had come at last – the morning I had waited for, for so long. It was Sunday morning. Me and my sister had planned to see an exhibition and we had waited for months to see it. It was a messy morning and we were in a hurry. We got on the train ready to go to Vienna.

The journey was nicer and more comfortable than we had expected. But when it was time to get off, we weren't there yet. And then to our horror, we realized that we were sitting on the wrong train! We asked the passenger sitting next to us if he knew where we were. "Almost in Budapest," he replied.

And then the realization hit us. We had been so excited when we had been looking for a train that we had taken the wrong one! The passenger who was sitting next to us saw that something was wrong and we told him what had happened. He was surprised and thought that it was very funny but then he felt sorry for us. It turned out he was a tourist guide and he told us that Budapest was a beautiful city and advised us which places we should visit. We thanked him and when we finally got to Budapest, we were so amazed that we stayed there for two days.

Thanks to him we saw many hidden places that we would never have seen if we hadn't met.

Katja Cerar, 1. L

PROBLEMS ON THE WAY

It had come at last - the morning I had waited for, for so long. It happened last year, in Prague, on the day we had our final handball match. We were all nervous and excited, but we didn't know what would happen to us that particular morning.

In the morning, we woke up at around 7 o'clock, sleepy but full of energy. While we were having breakfast, we were all thinking about the game, nothing else. We were

feeling amazing and ready for the win. After breakfast, we went to our rooms, got ready and gathered in front of the hotel. We went to the subway, where we had a train at around 9:42. The game was supposed to start at 13:00, and we should be there already at 10:30 to prepare for the game. But not everything went according to the plan.

We were waiting for the train, which was more than an hour late, which spoiled our energy a little bit, but we still thought we would have enough time to prepare before the match, so we remained positive. When we were almost in front of the hall, some random group of people started touching my teammate all over. She was trying to push them away, but they didn't stop. She started screaming and when our coach heard and saw it, he wasn't going to let it just go, so he pushed them away a little harder and that was when they went crazy. They pulled out the weapons they had with them and started threatening us. One of the passengers on the train was watching all this and immediately called the police, who got in at the next station. The police misunderstood everything and tried to take our coach with them. He was trying to explain to them that he hadn't done anything and that they should take the offensive group away, but they weren't listening to him. They handcuffed him and waited for the next stop to take him to the police station. Meanwhile my teammates and I thought of the cameras on the train and showed the footage to the police. They were looking at it for a while and in the end they apologized to us for the confusion and took the troublemakers away. That all took up too much of our time again and it became tense for us ... it was already 11:30 and we weren't there yet. We were panicking a little that we would run out of time to prepare for the match, because we knew that without a good preparation it wouldn't go as we had planned.

We arrived at the hall a little before noon and we immediately noticed a ton of people waiting in front of the hall to finally be able to enter. We went to the dressing room,

completely scared and upset, because so far nothing had gone according to the plan, but we tried to regain the energy we had had in the morning. We had to prepare really quickly, because there wasn't much time, and that also scared us a little, because usually we take time for a slow and good preparation for a match.

The match started and for a change everything went well. We played very well, even though the whole match was very tense. In the end, we won by just one goal and we became the champions of the tournament. We were all filled with joy and enthusiasm and we couldn't even believe what we had really achieved. We all forgot the disturbing events from before and celebrated our great victory.

The next day we returned home, where we continued with competitions. Later we laughed many times when we remembered that day, which we will surely remember despite the trouble in a more positive than negative way.

Elma Mujkić, 1. L

PAGES OF MEMORIES

I like to think of our lives as a book. You don't know what will happen on the next page, you can only guess. You can read the book again, but it will never be as good as the first time you actually experienced it. There are happy chapters in our books and of course there are also sad ones.

I like to open this chapter in my book and remember the characters in it quite often. I don't really remember the first day of the chapter. I just remember how it felt. Imagine someone strapping a bomb to your chest and pressing the big red button to make it explode. The pain slowly spreads through your body and the only thing that could stop it is gone. That's how I would describe the day I found out about my grandfather's death.

I was in the dorm getting ready for school when my dad called and told me to come downstairs. I ran down to the first floor and hugged him. Little did I know he was about to smash my heart into a million pieces. The moment he told me that my grandfather had died, the whole world stopped. I was stuck in that moment, re-reading every line in my book that ever mentioned him. I wanted to stay in that moment forever, but we had to leave. We walked slowly to the car, where the rest of my family was already waiting. We got in the car and the longest and most painful ride of my life began. The silence was too loud and the air was too thick. I cried my heart out, which exhausted me so much that I fell asleep.

The next thing I remember was my grandparents' house. It looked the same. The same carpets, the same television programme playing on the small TV, the same washing machine making strange noises. But something was different. Someone was missing. I ran to my grandmother to hug her, and I remember thinking how much she must have been suffering if it hurt me so much.

The next few days are only a vague memory. Getting up late, my eyes puffy from crying all night. Visitors trying to comfort us, me hoping my grandfather would just walk through the door and end my misery, conversations with my family and the repetition of it all. I don't even remember the funeral service.

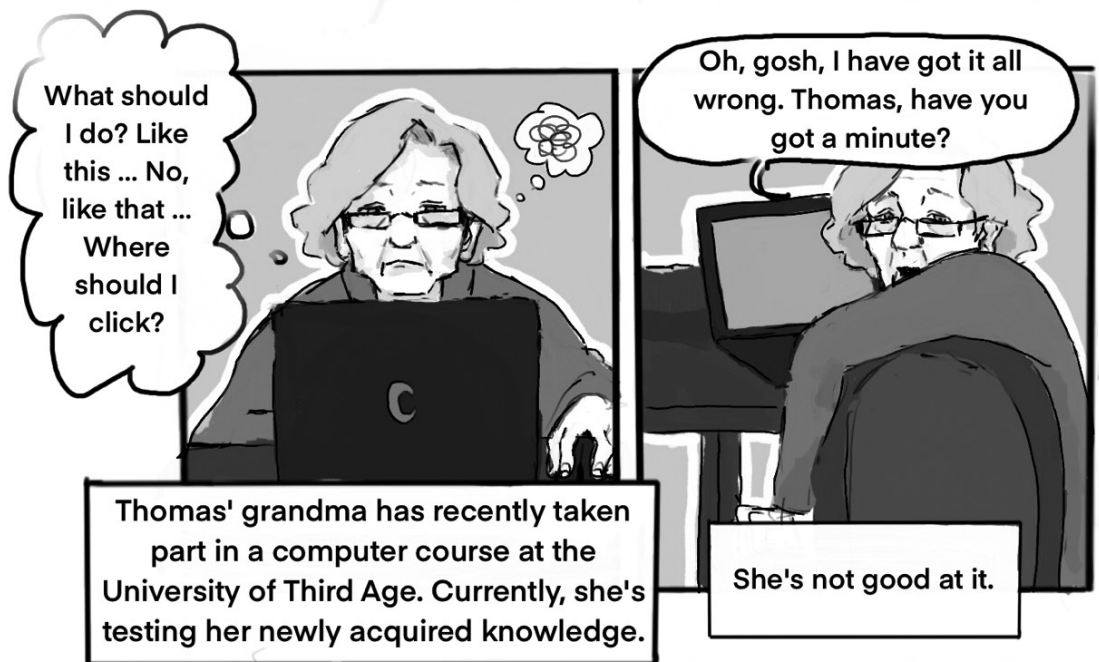
Pain is capable of overwhelming every feeling and memory you have. That's exactly what happened to me. The next few pages in my book are covered in black ink. The only moments that shine through the black pages are happy moments, like laughing with my family because one of us had shared a precious memory with Grandpa.

I remember when my brother and I would sit on the couch, waiting for our grandfather to come home from work. He would always bring us this specific candy, which I didn't really like, but I never had the heart to tell

him. I loved seeing how happy he was giving it to us. It made the candy feel special. After giving us our candy, he would go to his room and roll cigarettes for a few hours. The whole room smelled of tobacco, but we didn't mind it at all. We respected his alone time. He was the only person capable of making cigarette smoke a comforting smell. After rolling his cigarettes for the week, he would lie down on his designated spot on the couch and talk to us. He told us stories and listened to ours. Those evenings remain engraved in my heart as beautiful memories.

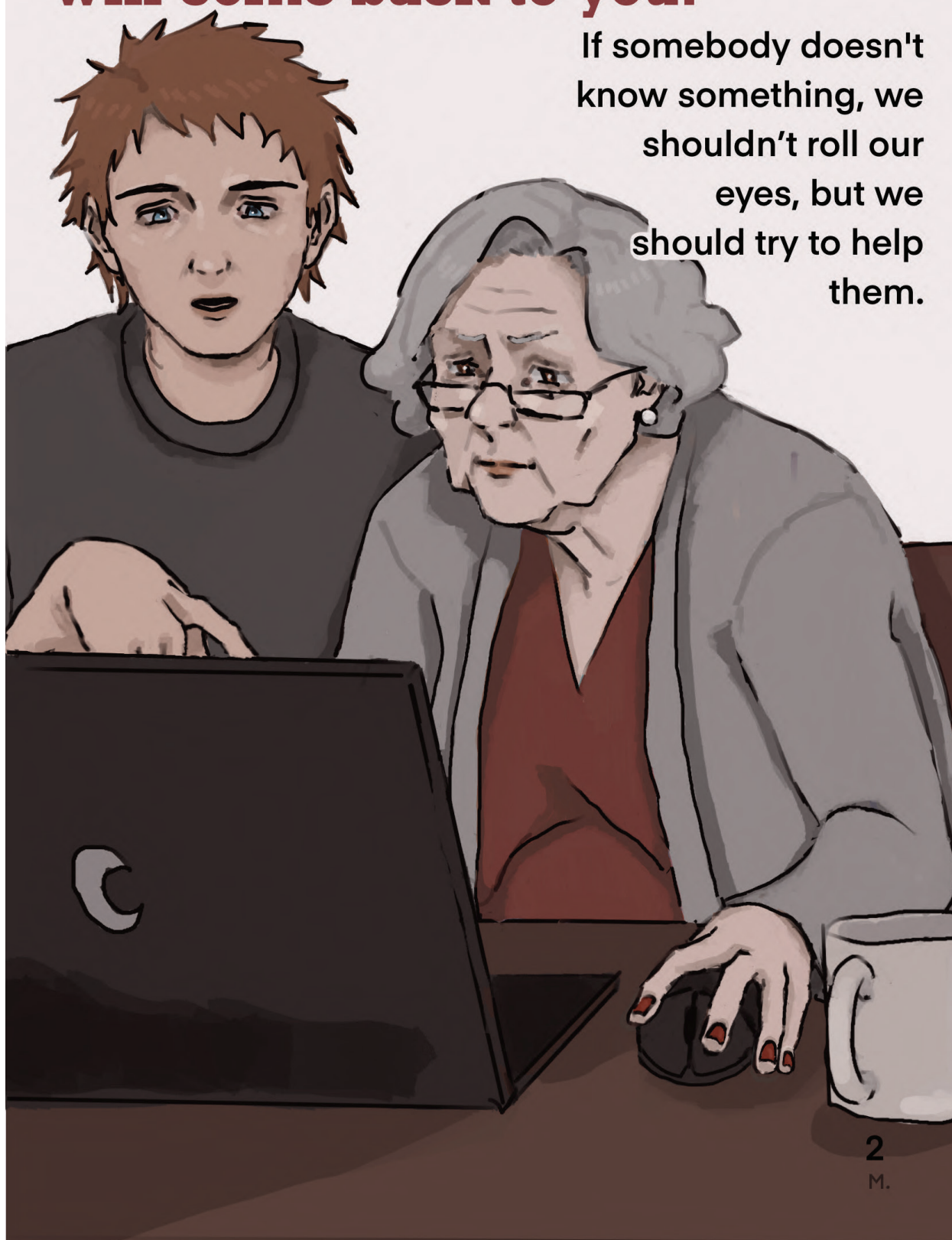
Grieving is not a straight line. Even on the saddest days, there are bursts of laughter powered by shared memories. The tears, as bittersweet as they may be, are a map of memories which ensure that Grandpa's spirit continues to live in the stories we tell and share with each other.

Hana Nušinić, 2. Fc



**If you do good, good
will come back to you.**

If somebody doesn't
know something, we
shouldn't roll our
eyes, but we
should try to help
them.



2
M.

THIS AND THAT

MY LIFE GOALS

I am very ambitious and have many goals in life. I am already working on some of them. I strongly believe I will achieve them one day, perhaps not all of them.

- The first goal is to finish high school successfully. I would also like to study pharmacy if I get excellent grades in high school. It's a huge step, but I will be happy even if I am just a pharmaceutical technician. It's charming for me to work in a pharmacy, to be dressed in a white coat and to aid people.

- One day I would like to have my own family, a person I will marry and two kids – mini versions of me and a person I love very much. I want to raise them well, to teach them good manners, to be proud of them.

- I want to have enough money to live comfortably. I do not imagine myself living a life of luxury, but when I say enough money, it means that I do not have to worry to make ends meet.

- It is a special feeling when you decide about your own space, how and what it will be. You decide about the room decorations, the order of objects, when to do household chores, etc.

- There are so many sights in the world, so my wish is to see at least a few of them, for example the Eiffel Tower, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Acropolis of Athens ... I would like to take photos so that I have memories and can tell stories about where I have been, what I have seen.

- People often resent me for being late and I know it is irresponsible of me. Especially when I ride on buses, my desire to pass the driving test is enormous. I can go whenever I want and I won't have to rush or worry to catch the bus.

- I love being at the seaside and would love to have a holiday home there. I wish to enjoy various beach activities during the summer.

- I want the friendships I made in high school to last forever. So that I can count on them in times of need and we can talk, have fun ...

- I would be happy to be an example and inspiration to other people through my successes and good deeds.

- I love to aid people. When I can I will donate to orphans, the homeless, etc. We never know when we will need help.

- I do not read much, so I wish to read more books in the future.

Naida Keranović, 2. Fc

MY PETS

I have been growing up with animals around me my whole life. Ever since I was young, we have always had dogs, cats, birds, bunnies and fish. Now we have three dogs, three cats, fish and my sister has a hamster named Didi. When we travel, both of my grandmas take care of them. At home, we all take care of them, but mostly me and my mom.

BLU

Blu is twelve years old and he is a Yorkshire Terrier. He is our oldest pet. Even though he is the oldest, he doesn't act like it. Blu was never a dog that would play with a ball, but when he was younger he would always play with some kind of toy or play outside with our last dog Bobi. Ever since we got him, he has been in love with going to the seaside and swimming. Blu is a very hyperactive dog, so he doesn't like being cuddled for too long and he always does something. He is most attached to my mom.



MAX

Max is nine years old and he is a Chihuahua. A lot of people think that just because he is a Chihuahua he is going to bite and be aggressive, but in reality he is really nice. Like Blu, he also likes the seaside, but only to be out in the sun and not swimming. He is not a playful dog, but he likes to cuddle a lot and always being next to you. When he sleeps, he is under a blanket all the time no matter how hot it is outside. When it's nice outside, he likes to go for a ride and be outside in the sun. He is most attached to my sister and is always with her but also really likes her boyfriend and being with him.



ASTA

Asta is almost three years old and she is a dachshund. She is the only female dog and also our first. My sister actually brought her home without any of us knowing because my mom would always say how she wanted a girl and now we finally had one. She is the craziest dog I know and she is obsessed with a tennis ball, sometimes she even falls asleep with it. Asta loves when there is snow outside, but she also likes swimming a lot. When we go for a walk, she always has to be first, but overall she is a really nice dog and very friendly. Because she is still young, she tends to annoy Max and Blu. I would say she is equally attached to all of us.



FELIX

Felix is a cat and he is seven years old. We actually got him with his twin brother Tom. We wanted one cat, but because they were the last kittens from the same litter, my uncle brought them together. He loves to sleep like any other cat, but likes to cuddle too. He is my favourite. Since he was little, we have always been together sleeping, spending time with each other and he is always around me wherever I go. When I go to the seaside in the summer, the hardest thing is to leave him because he can't come with me, so while I'm gone he will wait in front of my room all the time. Just like any other cat, he sleeps during the day and then goes crazy at night.

This and That



TOM

Tom is the same age as Felix and he is the calmest of all of them and we like to say that he is the most emotional one. We are told all the time that he is the most beautiful one and everyone likes him the most. His favourite thing is to cuddle and when he is sleeping

he has to touch you so that he knows he is next to you. When we got Felix and Tom, we were told that he was a girl, but it turned out that he wasn't, so again we had another boy. When someone has a glass of water, his favourite thing to do is to drink out of it. Tom is obsessed with eating olives, so when we eat them he is waiting to get one. He usually sleeps next to my dad or my mom but also next to Blu.



KENZIE

Kenzie is 6 years old and he is a younger brother of Felix and Tom. We like to say that in the past life he must have been a person, because he acts like one. He likes to eat lettuce like the only dish, and chips and olives like Tom. He likes to play with us and opens the doors of the freezer, so now we have to put a chair in front of it every single night before we go to bed. He is the most energetic one, so he always does something around the house, and at night he is always jumping around. At first my dad said, "No more cats", but now he cuddles with him all the time and Kenzie



sleeps next to him every night. He is usually the one that does something and then acts like he hasn't done anything, so we are never bored with him.



At the end of the day, I wouldn't have it any other way. All my life I have been told that I have so many animals like in a zoo, but to me it has always been normal. Of course, the hardest part is losing one because animals will always love you more than anyone else no matter what. There is no such love as what you have with your animals and also the bond with them is like no other. They will always be the ones that are happy to see you at the end of the day.



Lea Martinc, 2. Fc

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY IN MACEDONIA

The dominant religion in Macedonia is Orthodox Christianity. Not only Macedonians but also other Orthodox nations and cultures have the typical Orthodox cross – it has a clover on each side. We wear bracelets which are called *brojanica* (a prayer rope) on our left hand. Another thing that each house has is holy water, which is water that is blessed on a special day called *Krstovdan*, when all waters around the world are blessed. This water really helps when you are sick or you have some problems. We, Orthodox Christians, celebrate our holidays later than Catholics because of the Julian calendar. It is typical for each house to have wall paintings of Jesus, his mother Mary and other saints. These paintings are called icons. There is also an oil with a beautiful smell, called myrrh and it can help you to go peacefully through your problems.



Our Orthodox churches are decorated with paintings of Jesus, his mother Mary, crosses and other saints. In the front part of the church, there is a golden altar with a cross and icons. Also, we have a special place where we can light candles that are long and yellow and are typical Orthodox candles. When you enter a church, most parts of your body must

be covered, you should not enter in shorts. Women can wear a soft scarf over their hair, but it is not necessary. There are some differences between Orthodox cultures, so in the following text you will learn about Orthodox customs in Macedonia.

HOW WE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

On 5th January, the night before Christmas Eve, people light fires and we go around singing carols. This night is called *koleda*.

On 6th January, women prepare food for Christmas dinner all day, men go to the forest and they break branches from trees, which is called *badnjak* and children go around singing carols and from each house they can get some money, fruit or walnuts. Before the evening, we go to church to attend a mass. In the church, we light candles, but we can also buy some to take home because during Christmas dinner candles must be lit. There we can also pick *badnjak* (branches from the tree). When we get back home, we walk through the house with burned *tamijan* (balls with a special smell, believed to destroy every bad thing in the house). When it gets dark, we start preparing the dinner table. Nowadays, most people eat at the table, but an old habit is that we must eat on low wooden bases. Under them, we put hay, fruit and our wallets, because it means that you will have a lot of money during the following year. Before we start eating, two members of the family go out with wine and holy bread and call Jesus to come to our dinner.

Typical food at Christmas is holy bread, in which a coin is put. Each member gets a piece of holy bread and the one who gets the piece with the coin will be the luckiest during the following year. The most important dishes are fish, pie, baked pumpkin and *sarma*, for dessert we eat *baklava* or cake.

After dinner we have some rest, we spend time with our family and watch a film about the birth of Jesus.



Badno granče



Brajanice

We celebrate Christmas for three days, from 7th January to 9th January. On these days we do not go to school, we visit our family and we congratulate each other with words, "*Hristos se rodi*", which means "Christ was born!" and the other person replies, "*Navistina se rodi!*", which means, "It is true, he was born!"

HOW WE CELEBRATE EASTER

Easter is celebrated every year on a different date, but the day is always Sunday. There are three important days before Easter.

Good Thursday: On this day, women should wake up before the sunrise and they must paint three holy eggs. One of them is called *cuvarkukje*. During the year, this egg protects our house from bad things. Another one is usually brought to the church and we bathe with the last one, which protects your body from illness. Then, during the day all eggs can be painted.

Good Friday: It is the saddest and hardest day in Orthodox Christianity, when Jesus was

tortured. On this day we fast strictly, we do not eat any animal food and some people do not eat and drink anything on this day.

Good Saturday: On this day we usually prepare the food that will be on the table next day. In the afternoon, we have a bath with the above-mentioned egg, late at night, we always go to church to attend a mass. At midnight, we leave the church and we walk around it three times. Each of us holds an Orthodox candle in the hand. The mass continues until morning. Those who have been fasting for 40 days, eat a piece of holy bread and drink wine, and the fast is over.

At Easter, we have lunch with our family. There can be some differences about the food in each family, but the most typical are eggs. An interesting custom is that we beat our family members' eggs with our egg. The winner is the one with the strongest egg.

Just like Christmas, we celebrate Easter for three days. We visit our family and we congratulate each other with words, "*Hristos Voskrese!*", which means, "Jesus has resurrected!" and the other person replies, "It is true, he has resurrected!"

HOW WE CELEBRATE SLAVA

For Orthodox people another typical holiday is *Slava*. This is the day on which we celebrate saints. Each saint has a special day, for example, Saint Nicholas' Day is celebrated on 19th December, Saint John's Day is celebrated on 20th January, etc. Each family celebrates one saint. But we have another *Slava*, when each city celebrates the same saint. The food at *Slava* can be different, and we always invite our friends and family members to come and celebrate with us.

Slava is similar to celebrating your name day. For example, if your name is Petar, you will celebrate on Saint Peter's Day, if your name is Nikola, you will celebrate on Saint Nicholas Day.

FASTING FOR HOLIDAYS

In Macedonia, we have different fasts for different holidays. The most important are four of them. The Easter fast or Lent is the longest and lasts forty days. Another one is the Christmas fast, which also lasts forty days. There is also the Apostles' fast, which lasts thirty days, and the Virgin Mary's fast, which lasts two weeks. When we fast, we do not eat animal food but we can choose if the food we eat will be prepared just in water or oil.

We have also one-day fasts. They are always on Wednesday and Friday or when we celebrate important holidays.

CHURCHES AND MONASTERIES IN MACEDONIA

In Ohrid, which is the most popular and tourist city in Macedonia, there are 365 churches, so people can visit one church every day. The most known are: Saint Jovan Bigorski Monastery, Saint Naum Ohridski Monastery (here you can hear the beat of Saint's Naum heart), Church of Saint John at Kaneo and Church of Holy Fifteen Martyrs.

Marija Petrova, 4. Fc



A baptizing place

WHAT RELIGION MEANS TO ME

I have decided on this topic because I think it will be interesting to write about the religion which is not that common in Slovenia. The religion is Islam and the people who follow that religion are called Muslims. Our prayers are different from prayers of other religions, for example we have five obligatory prayers a day and we pray in Arabic, which is actually quite fascinating, considering that most of us don't understand or speak Arabic. But our holy book (*Qur'an*) was written in Arabic and sent to us in that language, which is why we try to keep everything in that original language.

Firstly, I would like to share my experience with Islam and how it all began. Ten years ago, when I was seven years old, I started attending Muslim school. The school is similar to any other school, but in this one we learn about religion. We go to school at weekends, on Saturdays and Sundays. When you pass all the basics of Islam and when you learn to read in Arabic, an event called *Hatme* is organized. *Hatme* is something like graduation or a final exam. For this event, families whose children participate in it invite their relatives and friends and everyone gathers in the mosque (a building where Muslims pray). That event usually happens before the afternoon prayer, where the *imam* (a person who leads prayers and who teaches children) asks the children questions about religion in front of all gathered people and also gives them a part of the *Qur'an* to read in Arabic. The children prepare for that event for a couple of weeks, so of course they repeat everything they have learned about religion up to that moment and practice reading in Arabic. They also have to dress nicely and in accordance with the rules of the religion, just like everyone invited. The interesting thing is that everyone participating in that final exam must be dressed the same - all girls must have dresses and *hijabs* in the same color and pattern, and boys must have similar suits. Another interesting thing is that after the event you get money and gifts, which is, of course, one of the best parts of

the day. After that, all the invited guests go to your house for lunch. For me that event was very stressful but also a nice memory. I was the youngest in the group that took the exam so maybe that also had a little effect on the stress. During the years, spent in that school, I got close to a lot of people and we became best friends, and besides that, I learned a lot about religion.



The mosque in Ljubljana

However, a few months after the event, I moved to Slovenia, which distanced me a little from my religion. Also, when I first came to Slovenia, I had no friends who were Muslims, which affected me. But my parents didn't let me forget where I was from and what my religion was, for which I'm grateful. A few years later a mosque was built in Ljubljana, which is one of the things that brought me even closer to my religion. And to this day I have worked hard on my faith in God and tried to strengthen it as much as I could, which I am going to continue to do for the rest of my life.

So that this text wouldn't be only about me and my experience, I would like to say something about Islam that you might find interesting. Apart from the fact that we have five prayers a day and perform them in Arabic even though we don't understand the language, maybe someone will find it interesting that it is mandatory that we visit Mecca and Medina once in our life. Before each prayer or taking the holy book in our hands, we have to perform *Wudu*, which is the ritual of washing certain parts of the body (such as hands, feet, face). Apart from that, some may find it interesting that in Islam names have meaning. For example, my name is Lejla, which means 'a dark night', my brother's name is Edin, which means 'faith'. Another interesting thing is that, in Islam, a man is allowed to have four wives, while a woman is allowed to have only one husband. In our religion we practise another name for God, which is Allah. Islamic holidays are also very interesting even though a bit complicated to explain. The most famous is *Eid (Bajram)*. Although we have 2 *Eids*, the first *Eid* is marked by visiting relatives and friends, dressing up nicely, making cakes ..., while the second *Eid*, the so-called *Eid al-Adha*, is marked by all these things as the first one, but the main thing is that we share the *Qurbani* (parts of meat, most often lamb, with friends, relatives, neighbors and the poor). We also have a fast that you probably think is nothing special because other religions have it too. But in Islam, for a month from dawn

to sunset, we are not allowed to eat or drink anything, smoke or have sexual intercourse. For us, *Ramadan* (the month in which we fast), means the month of cleansing from sin and seeking forgiveness from God.

Moreover, I think it would be good if I answered the question what religion means to me. I would say that it is a support in life, when everyone disappoints you, you can rely on that faith and God, because He will never disappoint you, at least I think so. Religion is like a refuge where I feel safe, where no one can hurt me. For me, religion is something special and as I have already said, I am always going to try to maintain and strengthen it, because besides all the beauties of Islam, it brings me closer to the country I come from, and it also reminds me of my childhood and all the beautiful memories of my hometown.

To sum up, I have tried to include as many facts about Islam as possible and to actually write about my experience with religion and

what religion means to me. Of course, this is not all, I could write twice as much about Islam. I have tried to list a few interesting things that might help you remember Islam in a nice and interesting way. And also, with this text, I would like to leave something for you to think about, which is, 'What does religion mean to you?'

Lejla Islamović, 3. Fb

IDIOMS AND PROVERBS IN SLOVENE, POLISH AND ENGLISH

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| reven kot cerkvena miš | zelo reven |
| POLISH | |
| biedny jak mysz kościelna | bardzo biedny |
| ENGLISH | |
| poor as a church mouse | to be very poor |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| 2. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| kupiti mačka v žaklju | kupiti kaj, ne da bi stvar prej poznal, videl |
| POLISH | |
| kupić kota w worku | kupić coś bez obejrzenia, sprawdzenia |
| ENGLISH | |
| to buy a pig in a poke | buying something without looking at it |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| živeti na koruzi | živeti s kom v zunajzakonski skupnosti ali nesklenjeni partnerski zvezi; živeti brez poroke |
| POLISH | |
| żyć na kocią łapę żyć na kartę rowerową żyć na wiarę Slovene translation: živeti na mačjo šapo živeti na kolesarsko izkaznico živeti na zaupanje | żyć bez ślubu (kościelnego) |
| ENGLISH | |
| to live in (open) sin to be married over the broomstick | to live with someone that you are having a sexual relationship with but are not married to |

| | |
|---|--|
| 4. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| imeti glavo in rep biti brez glave in repa / biti brez repa in glave | imeti logično povezavo, smisel biti brez logične povezave, brez smisla |
| POLISH | |
| mieć ręce i nogi nie mieć rąk i nóg / (być) bez ładu i składu | coś ma sens, jest przemyślane i dobrze poukładane coś nie ma sensu, nie jest przemyślane i nie jest dobrze poukładane |
| ENGLISH | |
| to make sense without rhyme or reason | to be without any obvious reasonable explanation |

| | |
|---|--|
| 5. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| delati / narediti se Francoza iti se Francoza | narediti, delati se brezbržnega, nevednega, neumnega |
| POLISH | |
| udawać Greka Slovene translation: delati se / narediti se Grka | symulować, robić wrażenie, stwarzać pozory |
| ENGLISH | |
| to play opossum / possum to play dumb | to pretend to be dead or sleeping so that someone will not annoy or attack you |

| | |
|--|---|
| 6. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| pustiti koga na cedilu | pustiti koga brez pomoči, podpore |
| POLISH | |
| zostawić kogoś na lodzie wystawić kogoś do wiatru Slovene translation: pustiti koga na ledu postawiti koga do/v smeri vetra | zawieść czyjeś nadzieje, oszukać kogoś, pozbawić go pomocy w trudnej sytuacji |
| ENGLISH | |
| to leave someone in the lurch stand someone up | to leave someone at a time when they need you to stay and help |

| | |
|---|---|
| 7. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| ubiti dve muhi na en mah | z enim dejanjem hkrati opraviti dve stvari |
| POLISH | |
| upiec dwie pieczenie przy/na jednym ogniu Slovene translation: speći dve pečenki na enem ognju | załatwić dwie sprawy jednocześnie |
| ENGLISH | |
| to kill two birds with one stone | to succeed in achieving two things in a single action |

| | |
|--|---|
| 8. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| délati iz muhe slóna | močno pretiravati |
| POLISH | |
| robić z igły widły Slovene translation: delati iz šivanke vile | wyolbrzymiać coś, przesadzać |
| ENGLISH | |
| to make a mountain out of molehill | to make a slight difficulty seem like a serious problem |

| | |
|---|--|
| 9. Idiom | |
| SLOVENE | |
| debeli četrtek | četrtek, ki naznanja pust, zadnji teden karnevala, zadnj četrtek pred začetkom posta |
| POLISH | |
| tłusty czwartek Slovene translation: mastni četrtek | ostatni czwartek przed wielkim postem; ta dan lahko se naješ do sitega |
| ENGLISH | |
| Fat Thursday | the last Thursday before Lent |

PROVERBS

| | |
|---|--|
| 10. Proverb | |
| SLOVENE | |
| Žlahta, strgana/raztrgana plahta. | na družino se ni mogoče zanašati, zlasti kadar gre za finančne zadeve, posle |
| POLISH | |
| Z rodziną najlepiej/dobrze wychodzi się (tylko) na zdjęciu. Slovene translation: Z družino najbolje/dobro izpademo (le) na sliki. | na rodzinie nie można polegać, a szczególnie gdy chodzi o sprawy finansowe |
| ENGLISH | |
| Only on photographs would your kin look nice. | Family cannot be relied upon, especially when it comes to financial matters, business. |

| 11. Proverb | |
|--|--|
| SLOVENE | |
| Če/Ko mački stopiš na rep, zamijavka/zacvili. | izraža, da buren odziv na kritiko kaže, da je bila kritika upravičena; opisuje situacijo, ko se kdo burno odzove na dejanje ali izjavo, zlasti ob omembi, izpostavljanju njegovih pomanjkljivosti, napak, slabosti |
| POLISH | |
| Uderz w stół, a nożyce się odezwą. Slovene translation: Udari v mizo, a se škarje odzovejo. | osoby, które czują się winne, reagują nawet wtedy, gdy to, o czym mowa, nie odnosi się do nich |
| ENGLISH | |
| a hit dog will holler the hit dog hollers | An offended or defensive response to a statement suggests that the statement applies to the person complaining. |

| 12. Idiom | |
|---|---|
| SLOVENE | |
| Kadar/Ko mačke ni doma, miši plešejo. | Kadar je kaka skupnost brez nadzora, njena disciplina popusti. |
| POLISH | |
| Myszy tańcują, gdy kota nie czują. Gdy kota nie ma, myszy harcują. Slovene translation: Kadar/Ko mačke ni doma, miši plešejo. | gdy nikt nie pilnuje, nadużywana jest swoboda |
| ENGLISH | |
| While the cat's away, the mice will play. | Without supervision, people will do as they please, especially in disregarding or breaking rules. |

SOURCES:

SSF = KEBER, Janez, Slovar slovenskih Idiomov, www.fran.si

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<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Marko Jan Vukajlović, 3. Zb

GREEN PAGES

GO GREEN

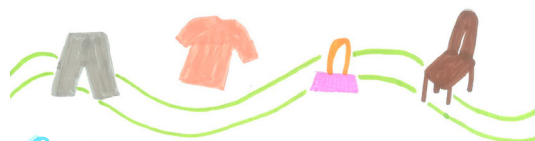


HOW TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT?

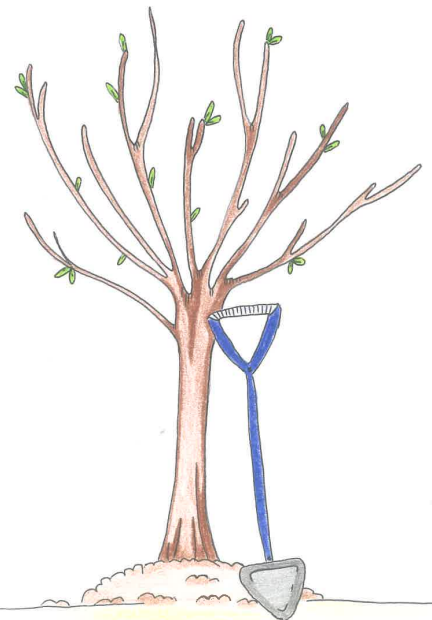
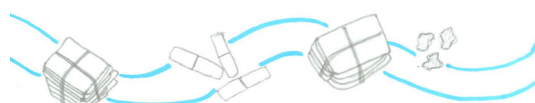
- use public transport or walk or use a bike
- avoid or reduce buying plastic bags, buy/ use cloth bags instead, reuse plastic or paper bags, don't discard them
- reuse plastic bottles and containers
- recycle your own appliances and devices, batteries ...
- take back glass bottles to the shop
- travel by electric means of transport
- collect rainwater to water your garden and to flush the toilet
- use wooden or steel utensils (spatulas, ladles ...) in the kitchen
- buy reusable straws, cutlery
- buy wooden cutlery and crockery for picnics
- save the leftovers for your pets or chickens or eat them later
- have solar panels installed
- don't drop litter on the streets or in the countryside
- buy in bulk and use your own containers
- insulate your house
- use/install cleaning devices or filters where possible
- take part in or organise a local clean-up

Edited by Lejla Osolnik, 2. Fc

BUY SECOND-HAND



COLLECT WASTE PAPER



buy products which don't contain much packaging

Zoja .M. 2.ZA

recycle organic waste to make COMPOST



THE GREEN ROOM

Hello, we are Janja and Alja. We attend the dental technician program, but our second passion is plants. You can see this right away. When you enter our room in the hall of residence, you immediately notice the greenery. People say that our room is a room of plants and that they love visiting us. We also spread our love for flowers to our friends and family, as we believe that flowers are a nice gift for everyone, and just looking at them can brighten up your day. We always have fun doing our little gardening and it brightens up our days. We also go for walks where we collect bunches of flowers. We found relaxation in plants and we want to expand this because plants are very important for our well-being and the world.

Janja Renko and Alja Feltrin, 3. Zb



WE SHOULD GROW OUR OWN VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

A lot of people grow their own vegetables and fruit. Having your own crops is becoming more and more popular these days. It's a great way to have fresh and organic produce right at your fingertips. Having your own garden can be a rewarding hobby that helps you and our planet. But many people nowadays live a fast lifestyle and they just don't have time or place to grow their own vegetables and fruit.

People decide to grow their own crops because they want to eat fresh food that has been grown naturally and without any artificial chemicals. Nowadays, most fruit and vegetables sold in grocery stores are imported from other countries. You don't know where they grew, in what conditions and which chemicals were used during their growth. It is far better to buy crops from local farmers or organic food from special sections in grocery stores. People who live in houses usually have their own garden, where they can grow vegetables and fruit which are suitable for their environment, temperatures, and needs.

One of the great benefits of having your own garden is that you are minimizing your plastic waste. When you go to a grocery store, you'll see that the majority of food is packed in plastic bags or containers. When you use the food that has been packaged that way, you also contribute to plastic waste. But if you grow your own vegetables and fruit, you are minimizing the waste that is not biodegradable.

Another benefit of producing your own crops is that you have easy access to your own produce. You can just go outside and pick your fruit directly from the tree. And you know it's fresh and you can eat it straight away. The same goes for vegetables. Furthermore, you are creating a new ecosystem for bugs and small animals who live in gardens, even though they aren't always helpful and can cause quite a lot of harm. It's also nice to be able to say that something is homegrown when you serve it at the table. Gardening can be a fun and rewarding hobby. It can relieve stress, help you spend more time outside, and it makes a perfect outdoor activity for all family members.



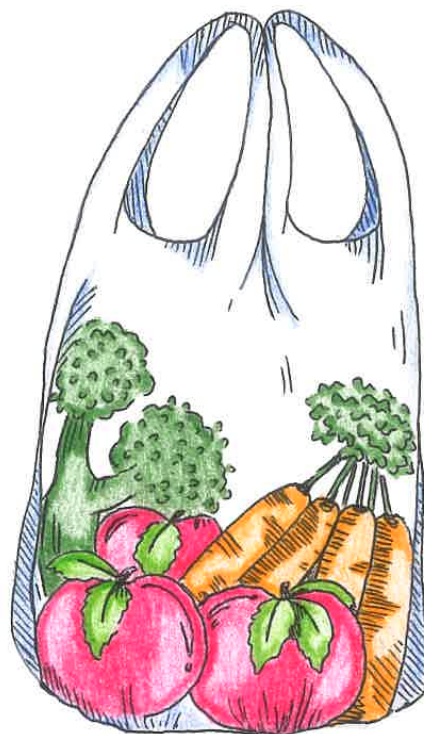
However, it can be difficult to live from your produce alone. This is because Slovenia has four different seasons. In the winter, the soil is 'resting' as well as trees. That means that we get less to harvest. And in the autumn, we have plenty of stuff to harvest. So with that said, not everything is always available. Furthermore, we can't forget natural disasters, such as flood, strong winds, sleet, hailstorms ... which can destroy our crops. For example, in the summer, the drought can hit, with high temperatures that can kill our plants if they aren't used to it. And there are many more factors that can affect us. Because of air pollution, the climate change is getting worse and worse every year. The earth is warming. Winters are now getting warmer and warmer. Because of that, a lot of trees start blooming earlier than they should. This happens because of the temperature rise. And then suddenly the temperatures drop, blooms freeze and die. And we are left without any fruit for the season.

If you look around, you will see that people have gardens of various sizes. That, of course, depends on their living conditions, hobbies, lifestyle, available space, and their interest or

time they're willing to spend taking care of the garden. A lot of people, especially in big cities, don't have a garden. Because they live in flats, they just can't grow much more than some herbs or vegetables that don't require a lot of space. They usually grow them in pots on their balconies. Others who are lucky to live in a house even if with just a small yard, can still plant a tree or grow some vegetables enough to partially provide for their needs.

In conclusion, I believe that having your own garden is great. You know that your vegetables and fruit are organic and fresh. I'm happy that I have the chance to live in a house that has a beautiful garden. My grandpa is the one who takes care of it with love and passion. I believe that plants sense that love from him, and that's why we have a lot of great fruit and vegetables every year.

Zoja Mažera, 2. Za



Zoja . M . 2. ZA

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Front and back page illustration
M.

Other illustrations

Class 2. Fc p. 67

M. pp. 42-43, 47, 52-53, 67

Zoja Mažera, 2. Za pp. 44-45, 67, 69-70

Lina Mujić, 4. Fc p. 19

Janja Renko, 3. Zb pp. 12-13

PHOTOGRAPS

Žana Avsec, 3. Fb pp. 35-39

Žana Čamdžić, 3. Fb p. 41

Helena Doberšek pp. 26-28, 30-32

Alja Feltrin in Janja Renko, 3. Zb p. 68

Lejla Islamović, 3. Fb p. 61

Sara Jernejčič, 4. Fc pp. 14-15

Nastja Kolman, 2. Za, p. 27

Laura Marinko, 2. Fc, pp. 26, 28-29, 33-34

Lea Martinc, 2. Fc pp. 55-57

Marija Petrova, 4. Fc pp. 58-60

Neja Primožič, 2. Fc pp. 26, 29-30

Kim Uhlir Selan, 3. Fb p. 22

Maša Šilc, 2. Za pp. 24-25

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