

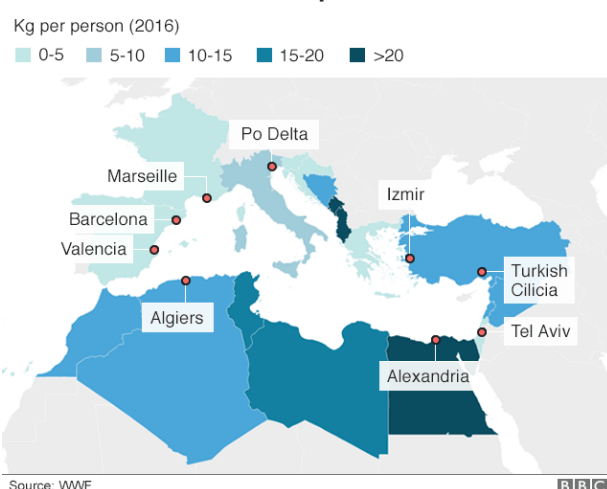
## THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA: NOT JUST A TOURIST HOTSPOT

For many the Mediterranean Sea has plenty of personal associations and connotations. Some connect it with its magnificent past and civilizations, others with its present tourist hotspots, but only a few are aware of its position as the world's most polluted basin. Home to between 4 and 18% of all marine species, nearly half of them endemic, little attention has been given to the environmental degradation of one of the most crucial biodiversity hotspots in the world.

According to the recent report from World Wildlife Foundation (WWF), plastic accounts for 95% of the total waste, found on coastlines and seabeds across the region. Translating this into numbers, the report claims that 570,000 tonnes of plastic were disposed in sea each year - the equivalent of 33,800 plastic bottles every minute. Even though many may rush to accuse the booming tourism as the number one factor exacerbating the situation, the real culprits of this non-point source pollution (pollutants released from numerous origins) situation can be found in the states of Italy, France, Turkey and Egypt. Most specifically, the lack of infrastructure regarding the proper disposal and management of domestic waste, and especially plastic, are the main

factors of the darkening Mediterranean waters. According to WWF, the highest plastic pollution rate can be found in the south-eastern of the Mediterranean region, with 31.3 kilograms of debris per kilometre being dumped in the sea by Egypt alone. Even though the Mediterranean Sea is equivalent to 1% of global oceans, its significance both in ecological and economic terms is tremendous. Tourism, industries and local populations are dependent on the future of the Medi-

**Plastic leakage into nature by country and worst affected hotspots**



[https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/320/cpsprodpb/14238/production/\\_107288428\\_plastics\\_map\\_640-nc.png](https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/320/cpsprodpb/14238/production/_107288428_plastics_map_640-nc.png)

terranean basin, in which plastic pollution is expected to quadruple by 2050. For most plastic is non-biodegradable, the issues of bioaccumulation and biomagnification of micro-plastic parts are harming the local marine species. As the number of global fish consumption increases, so does the consumption of micro-plastic particles by humans - and health problems that are likely to arise from ingesting microplastics.

However, merely the identification of the point source pollution (pollution release from a single, identifiable site) won't bring a ground-breaking change to the fate of the Mediterranean. It is essential to encourage action not only by the local communities, but also by local businesses and governments supervised by EU directives. An impact can be achieved by raising awareness among local populations, by banning single-use plastic items, reducing the plastic production and improving the poor waste management systems. However, unless the attention is given by both the EU and the local governments then the future of our sea might not seem so dark after all.

EMMANUELA EVGENIOU

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

There is news in the structure of the World News section! You may now look forward to editions linked by a common theme. As nature comes to life in the spring, this time we chose to write about the environment. Hence our articles will report on society's approaches to habitats in varying countries and climates, however on just one continent. All themes share a European background to offer you a more regional mosaic depicting (sometimes unfortunately) hot, yet underreported, news in our environment.

While we above all seek to provide information, the articles should raise questions and prompt critical scrutiny of a topic shaping our world. You are encouraged to observe the interplay of diverse analyses that share these pages. What patterns emerge? What can be done better, and what could be a lot worse? What ought to be the next step? Hopefully our section helps answer some of those questions.

I wish you an inspirational read!

VIKTOR ŘÍHA

## TEXTILE INDUSTRY - A THREAT TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

Have you ever decided not to buy a piece of clothing because of environmental reasons? Textiles are European Union's (EU) fourth largest cause of environmental pressure after agricultural practices, housing and transport according to a 2019 *European Environmental Agency (EEA) report*.

The textile industry provides us with clothing, shoes, carpets, curtains, etc. It employs millions of people and includes billions of consumers worldwide, making it highly globalised and one of the largest industries in the world. It is also one of the most polluting industries, creating more greenhouse gases than both the aviation and shipping industries combined. Massive amounts of energy and vast quantities of resources are required in the process of creating textiles including production of raw materials, spinning them into fibres, weaving fabrics and dyeing, which leaves huge volumes of waste. The way textiles are made and what is done with the waste has a huge effect. However, the impact is often felt by third countries, as most production takes place in sweatshops in the third world. In 2015 the EU primarily exported textiles from China, Bangladesh, Turkey, India, Cam-

bodia and Vietnam according to the *European Parliament Briefing*.

In just a few decades, the amount of clothes bought in the EU per person has increased by 40%. This has been driven by very low wages for textile workers, increased speed with which fashion is delivered to consumers, and also by the rapid changing of fashion trends, so-called "fast fashion", that promotes increased consumption and reduces the lifespan of clothing. Since 2000, Europeans have purchased more pieces of clothing but spent less money doing so. Consumers also have a large environmental footprint because of water, energy and chemicals used in washing, tumble drying and ironing. The EEA claims that EU consumers discard about 11 kg of textiles per person every year. Less than half of the used clothes is collected for re-use or recycling and only 1% is recycled due to the slow implementation of the technologies needed showing the impact of the consumer culture on the environment.

These pressures and impacts occur in every phase of the textile creation process making the textile industry espe-

cially demanding in terms of resource and land use. The textile industry produces 15 -35 tonnes of CO2 per tonne of textiles produced according to the *EEA* which makes it a significant cause of greenhouse gas emissions, in fact the fifth highest producer. Chemicals and water pollution are another concern, for many of them are classified as hazardous for human health or the environment. Washing plastic-based textiles, such as polyester, the most used material of all, releases chemicals

and microplastics into household wastewater and later into the ocean.

The goal of the EU is to reduce these negative environmental impacts. Current EU policies adopted in 2018 require all Member States to collect textiles separately by 2025 and to ensure that waste is not incinerated or landfilled. For years, the European Parliament has advocated promoting the use of ecological and sustainable raw materials and the re-use and recycling of clothing. It also aims to increase funding for research and development, including the field of clothes recycling, and stress the right of consumers to be informed on sustainability, in adherence to human rights and environmental credentials.

The textile industry, as one of the largest industries and has a huge impact on the environment not only in the EU but in the whole world. It is important to note that even we, as consumers, have a great impact on how this industry will evolve in the years to come.

KATEŘINA ROUŠAROVÁ



<https://www.beltandroad.news/2019/10/19/china-will-speed-up-investment-and-development-of-the-textile-industry-belt-road-investment/>



## WHERE DOES THE V4 STAND ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

On Thursday 16th January, Visegrad Four (alliance of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) countries met in Prague with Austria in order to discuss renewable energy as well as other topics. According to Radio Prague, Austria and the V4 disagreed over the idea of building more nuclear power plants in order to achieve carbon neutrality.

Although all of the countries share a common goal of becoming carbon neutral by the year 2050, members of the V4 claim this is not possible without relying on nuclear power. Prime minister Babiš went even further by declaring that Czech Republic will build new power plants even if it is against the laws of the EU.

Austria, which has a law banning the import of nuclear energy since 2015, is unhappy with the views of V4, Euractiv reports. According to Austria's Prime Minister Kurz, Austria will not support construction of new nuclear power plants, as "the funds should be allocated for development of renewable energy sources."

Even though the V4 are criticized for proposing the use of nuclear energy, it is believed that the countries are interested in fighting climate change. The server Vlada.cz reports that members of V4 together with France made a joint statement in November 2019 with the purpose of working together on European priorities.

ties. Among the four points published, it was stated that both parties strive for a carbon neutral Europe in line with the Paris agreement.

However, it is suspected that V4 is mistrusted by other members of the EU when it comes to environmental issues. Previously in June 2019, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland rejected the idea of becoming carbon neutral by the year 2050 and received heavy criticism, Euobserver reports. The three countries claimed that the conditions were too specific. Several environmental non-governmental organizations were also disappointed with the result, as this decision delayed the environmental progress they were hoping for.

FABIAN ROTT



<https://www.dw.com/en/this-is-how-the-visegrad-group-works/a-47402724>



[https://www.euractiv.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/01/h\\_55773077-800x450.jpg](https://www.euractiv.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/01/h_55773077-800x450.jpg)

## IT BOILS DOWN TO BOILERS

Wicked witches gave boilers a bad name, but the Czech government moved to restrict them in 2019 for a different reason. Old-fashioned coal and wood powered household heaters were found responsible for over 95% of carcinogen airborne particles in city air.



<http://thermalhc.com/what-we-do/>

The European Air Quality index ranks Prague below London, France and Berlin in terms of average air quality. Czech officials proposed a solution following a meeting with their EU colleagues. A stick and carrot plan is full steam ahead for September 2022. Boilers falling into the lowest two of five emission categories will be withdrawn and their owners compensated. They are already eligible for subsidies and interest-free loans to help replace the heat sources at minimal financial cost. In fact, it should even pay off. Heat Roadmap Europe, an EU-funded project, suggests a switch to district heating networks and thermal infrastructure would save money for 50-70% of European households. Alternatives to burning coal and wood end up cheaper. Until today, the problem for many was to muster the money for transition. This plan seeks to solve that.



<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/air-quality-atlas-europe-mapping-sources-fine-particulate-matter>

Czech attempts fit the trend of increasing heating-source awareness. The case study of Britain stands out. A country known for its dependence on coal has managed to diversify and replace its heat energy source in a matter of just a few decades. Governments in the European west have been dealing with the issue effectively from the outset of the 21st century and their policies are now making their way to the rest of the continent.

Many Czechs criticize the perceived small scope of the new policy. Environmentalists living in a country sceptical of ecological policies celebrate it as a win regardless.

VIKTOR ŘÍHA

## NORWAY'S DREAM OF A 'LOW CARBON SOCIETY'

Environmental issues have been a major challenge for not only our population but also the whole world. These issues range from the current wildfires in Australia to mass melting of glaciers in Antarctica. Norway, as a wealthy country, has taken these problems seriously and is dealing with them quite effectively, according to 'Eco expert' study claimed that Norway is 'number one country to most likely survive the climate change apocalypse'. Due to climate change, Norway is facing the threat of higher sea levels and abnormally strong storms.

Norway has always been active with

solving and helping nature with the issues that it was having at that moment. They have taken part in the EU Emission Trading System (EU-ETS) since 2008 and included it into the Norwegian climate policy. Norway has led in the field of electric vehicles compared to other countries. These cars cover about 8% of the used cars in the country. Depending on how the electricity is produced, electric cars are much more eco-friendly compared to normal cars. Due to the wealth of the country, Norway has been 'the number one country' in this specific area for years now.

In addition, Norway was the first country to sign the Paris Agreement in November 2016, which is still taken as the first global agreement in the history of environmental issues. Its purpose, since 2016 is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by the year 2030. Meanwhile in 2017, this country has reached the point where electricity generation is easily sustainable by having 96% of electricity generated by hydro power plants and of course having Fjords as a huge source. Norway has taxed almost 80% of the greenhouse gas emissions not even a year later with the. The European Union and Norway are still in cooperation and are working on their project and aim for the 2030 goal.

Norway's most recent policies include the parliament that voted in June 2019 to extend divestment policies. They banned Fund investing for companies that have more than 10GW of electricity from coal. Norway has even set a goal for the year 2050 to reduce 90 to 95% greenhouse gas emissions.

Because of the country's attitude towards the problems and how effectively and actively, even after them being a major polluter, in the past they are solving it, they have become one of the safest countries dealing with environmental issues.

ALŽBĚTA ŠMIDBERSKÁ



<https://www.lifeinnorway.net/how-climate-change-is-going-to-impact-norway/>



## ALMOST REACHING OUR DESTINATION

I greet you fellow wanderers on supposedly our last interaction. As the May examinations are approaching fast, let me give you some final tips.

Because it is probably the last time you experience such an extensive Oktava Christmas Holiday, enjoy them! Use them as a way to rest, gather motivation and encourage yourself for the first real challenge of your academic life. That doesn't mean though that you shouldn't finish some rests for school. Try to dedicate just one or two hours per day to your academic life in order to prepare for exams, work on your extended essay or internal assessments. Trust me, the deadline for submissions approaches fast and the last thing you want to do is to adjust all your assignments on the last day. After all, you want to successfully get to your destination, am I right?

As alluded to, the Mock exams are one of the biggest rehearsals you will ever have faced. Therefore, prepare yourself however you want, but map your approach towards each of the subject and type of exam. Afterwards, when you receive the results you will be able to determine what approach suits you the best and could be also effective during the final examination. So, do not only focus on the outcome, but mainly on your approach that is reflected with the result you receive.

Now, there is nothing more to learn. Account for yourself as an individual prepared for your first real test of knowledge and personality. Revise, study but also rest and enforce yourself in order to be successful. I believe in you wanderer, you are almost there!

All in all, as this is the end of our journey I would like to thank you for everything, and I wish you the best of luck at achieving your destination in the near future. Have fun, wanderer!

PETR BARTOŠ



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## WINTER PROM ALIAS CHERRY ON TOP

The time has come for the winter prom to hit its second year. Girls are looking for the perfect dresses, so they can look like princesses. They are doing their best to choose the perfect shoes and perfect necklaces to have everything ready for the day D. On the other side of the spectrum, boys are looking for their stunning suits and are ready to charm all the girls on the dance floor.

Everyone is trying really hard, but before the actual prom starts, there is one important thing to do. Nobody wants to go all alone to the prom, so it is in everyone's favor to create the best and the

with an original invitation for someone they adore.

What is interesting and makes this prom authentic is that it is not very traditional in Czech schools. Thanks to our school, we can prepare and experience a true American winter prom, just as we see in the movies. Not only do we have these "American" Promposals, but we also have the Prom King & Queen competition. During the night, everyone has a chance to vote for their favorite king & queen, and therefore, people really have a strong motivation to impress others. This year it was Míša Rendlová and Tonda Bawai, who won the king & queen, and they won a delicious cake. The prize for best Promposal went to Michal Míšek and Paris Peska, in the form of gold chocolate!

Lastly, after the beginning of the prom, people could enjoy various kinds of music. It was not only disco music, but we also got the chance to listen to some classical music. So, revamp classical dances. During the night, people were able to taste various kinds of cakes, which were prepared by students, and to make this prom even more unforgettable, we could also take pictures in a photo booth. It was an astonishing event that enabled a girl to turn into a princess and a boy into a prince.

KATEŘINA VAŇKOVÁ



photo provided by Kateřina Vaňková

most unique invitation. Last year there were several original invitations, and in my case, I found mine as a part of my test during the Czech lesson. There are a million ways to surprise someone with a proposal, so don't waste your time. Most importantly, it is not only the boys' "obligation", but girls can also come up

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers, the newest edition of Variety is best to read while relaxed and with a cup of your favorite tea (trust me). Even though it seems that winter has not arrived just yet, you can enjoy the snow sensation through poetry.

Recently formed school tradition undoubtedly connected to winter is the Winter Prom which took place at the beginning of February. Find out what to expect from this event in an article below.

"New Year, new me" is what many people would hope for. Setting New Year's resolutions is very common among all generations, but people often can't keep up with their plans. However, there

is no rule that all resolutions need to be set at the beginning of a year only. If there is something you would like to change or improve about your habits, just start anytime! And if you are looking for some inspiration, see what resolutions our fellow students have set.

The series about the IB student journey reached its conclusion. If you are an IB student, pre-IB or younger, you may find the tricks and tips as well as words of encouragement useful during your diploma programme years.

This editor's Note is also my farewell note to you and to the OG Chronicle, as I will be taking IB exams at the time the third edition will be in process. I have been part of the team since the Chronicle got its form as we know now, and I have spent all those five years in the Variety team. I am very grateful for the opportunity to gain new experiences, both regarding writing and team leading, as well as being part of an amazing team of students I am afraid I would not have otherwise got to know well. Thank you all for being here and for reading all the things we writers have to say.

The Variety team wishes you all the best of luck in 2020!

KAROLÍNA HRABALOVÁ



<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/4-resolutions-you-should-actually-make-this-new-year>

## MISSING GLOW

What is winter without snow that paints the streets in silver glow? And even though it blinds our eyes, and turns our fingers into ice, we ask when it will come so we can play in it and run, because everyone becomes a child when that frosty dust around is piled.

Yet I haven't seen it in a while.  
And fields are just empty miles  
without blanket that's soft and warm  
that's helping life in seeds to form.  
I want it back at least once more  
before oceans flood their shores,  
and seasons would not change a bit  
and snowman becomes just a myth.

ELIŠKA STRÁNSKÁ



<https://hips.hearstapps.com/hmg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/images/snow-covered-pine-trees-on-sunset-royalty-free-image-615101076-1541521490.jpg>



## THE CASE WITH MATHS AND MATURITA

These days, fewer and fewer young people choose to study courses that end in vocational certificates as their dream secondary education school. Somehow it has become a standard to strive for such schools that grant maturita upon graduation, probably because it is a requirement for being accepted at a university and a master's degree generally gives you a better position in the job market than a vocational certificate. The maturita seems to be a really desired certificate. However, some people simply cannot get it, even though their school results would be comparable with those of students who passed; they would be comparable in all subjects but one.

One of my friends wished to become a nurse. She chose a specialized secondary school that offers the maturita certificate and studied there for two years. At the end of the second year she was kicked out, however; she was failing at math. Another friend of mine went on to study graphics. He has a talent for design and his plan was to take the maturita course. The issue in his case was his severe dyscalculia and the fact that if he took the course, his year would be the first one to undergo the mandatory maturita from mathematics, which effectively prevented him from ever being able to complete the course. These two young people could not study the fields they desired, all because of a subject completely irrelevant to their eventual careers in those fields, a

subject they were taught for nine years in primary school and a subject in which they have already learned all the basics that are actually necessary in real life. And as if this was not enough, the Chamber of Deputies is now considering postponing the date for the mandatory math maturita, after all the havoc they have caused with it.

In my opinion, the righteousness of making math obligatory for everyone in secondary education has always been dubious. The fact that you are in secondary education means that you have either already chosen a specific path for your studies or you will very soon start to consider it. Therefore, it is completely useless for some people to be taught the advanced nuances of a subject they plan on never using again in their lives. The first nine years in primary education already give you the necessary basics for surviving in the modern world and all beyond these years is only extra knowledge. And on top of this illogical demand that everyone be taught mathematics for thirteen years instead of the sufficient nine, the statesmen come up with a mandatory test from this subject that will be an important factor in getting the maturita and then juggle with the date, moving it back and forth as they wish. The planned introduction alone has affected the life and career choices of young people as many of them had to choose alternative courses or even alternative study fields to evade

it. Now the government plans to postpone it, but this does not repair the damage already caused. For some there is still hope in the form of transferring courses, but those who went to study completely different fields than they originally wanted to have only a small chance to change anything now.

And finally, what is most important is that this is not only about the current situation. If the obligatory maturita from mathematics for everyone does not get cancelled, it will continue affecting young people's school and career choices in the near and distant future. The idea of the obligatory math maturita was to increase the general level of mathematical knowledge in the nation, but as it is now, it will rather lead to a decreased chance of passing maturita, subsequently to a decreased chance of getting your desired job and if taken to an extreme, this could lead to an increase in the unsatisfied lower-middle class population whose dreams could not be fulfilled due to one extra exam from a subject irrelevant to their career. Therefore, I believe that the only plausible solution is to cancel the all-schools-mandatory maturita from mathematics altogether, and the necessity to have math classes in all types of secondary education schools with it.

JOSEFÍNA DUŠKOVÁ

## A FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD POLITICIAN: DREAM OR REALITY?

Many young people might have a feeling that politics is a very distant domain for them since they cannot vote or practice any of the responsibilities belonging to legal citizens. The fact that only a small number of politicians are as young as them even intensifies such an approach and may lead to disinterest and indifference. Most importantly, they think that they do not have the power to change something because of their age. However, this is not true! Let's prove the young wrong and show not only the juveniles but the whole world that young people have the opportunity to make a change and that their voice matters more than we think.

The fear of not being able to change something keeps us too pessimistic and inactive, however, some of us have learned how to overcome such feelings and started their own initiatives at a very young age and have become extremely successful. These are for instance the global movement Fridays for Future or Ngoc Nguyen's initiative for the reconstruction of an old ski-jumping park in Harrachov which has been cankering for a long time. And you can do even more.

Despite not being a legal citizen, you can still educate yourself, show your political preferences and express your opinion by attending politically-oriented events, such as demonstrations. From my own experience, your presence there is extremely meaningful to you since you are

developing your core ethical values and you are actively taking part in an event of socio-political importance which might result in significant changes. In the past, many non-democratic regimes collapsed as student activism helped to mobilize masses against tyranny, such as the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Nowadays, demonstrations are an important feature of a functioning democratic state, because they serve as a check of political activities and distribution of legal powers, and you can freely be part of them regardless of your age.

A minimum of people actually knows that Czech politicians or even foreign diplomats seek advice on local affairs from young people. This is because of the reality that they are not able to fully understand the mindset of younger generations or different nationalities. So even youngsters can become advisors of the

U.S. ambassador in the Czech Republic through the official institution of the Youth Council, which I had the pleasure to be a part of. Such groups offer a gathering place for young people intending to engage in affairs of political or social matter and to break down the prejudice about the young not being responsible and knowledgeable enough to be involved in important decision-making processes.

The young generation really matters since we will be the upcoming economically active part of the population and the one capable of fulfilling our legal responsibilities. Therefore, we need to be involved in politics at an early age in order to maintain or improve the prosperous and liberal environment that we will live in for the rest of our life. And it is important to keep in mind that the young, teenagers, the juvenile, youngsters and whatever else you call them can make changes. Because even a little participation counts and by your actions you can fight even against the indifference of adults.

JASMÍNA ŠVARCROVÁ



<https://time.com/5550823/climate-change-protest-schoolchildren/>

## MODERN HISTORY AND US

Modern history, such as World War two or communism, is an essential topic to discuss. Our generation didn't live through these rough times, and we grew up in luxury. We may consider food, education, etc. as a must today, but that wasn't the case for people our age a few decades back. Some were starving. Some weren't allowed to study at a particular school because they either didn't support the system or their family members escaped, and the government found out. The government cut out information from notebooks and much more. People grew up with discipline. I think that we should know more about modern history and its events.



[https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolektivizace\\_v\\_%C4%8Ceskoslovensku#/media/Soubor:Bundesarchiv\\_Bild\\_183-R90009\\_Budapest\\_II.\\_Weltfestspiele\\_Festumzug\\_t](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolektivizace_v_%C4%8Ceskoslovensku#/media/Soubor:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-R90009_Budapest_II._Weltfestspiele_Festumzug_t)

When someone mentions this era, I think about the essential events, but what about everything else? People my age (13) are not taught about it. But why not? Is it considered inappropriate? There were a series of events which may be disturbing for some, but it's the truth. I would rather learn about them without any lies rather than with a small amount of changes which we do not know if they are true or false. I personally like history and this era is my favorite one. But what about the others? Some may not enjoy it as much as I do for example, yet they need to face the point of learning it. We may be affected by technology a bit but that doesn't mean we aren't showing interest in learning. Now is the time we can change. Our world is changing, and we need to adapt. By thinking about the future and our lives in 5 or more years, we can forget about the harmful events. At this point, there are a lot of people who survived World War two and they want to tell us their story. My great grandma is one of them. I really enjoyed her telling me about it.

And with that I want to learn more about the past 100 years. It is still affecting our lives today, and why shouldn't we know and learn about it. Otherwise, we will forget about it. When adults ask us about what happened, we don't know, when we are asked who killed who or what day forget about it because it is not that important. Then what should we learn? The hard times have taught our parents and grandparents the truth and reality of this world. And we should know more about it sooner rather than later.

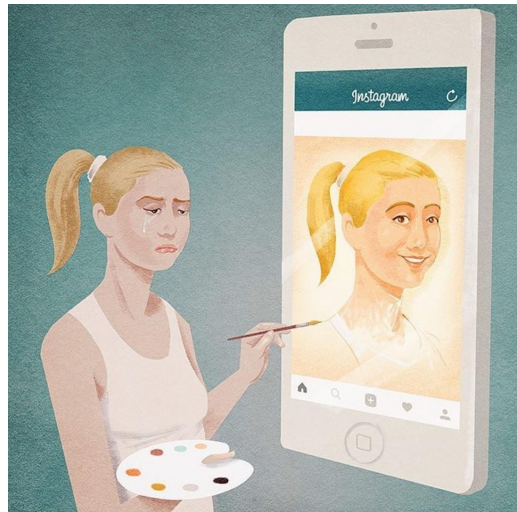
CALISTA MAŘÍKOVÁ



## THE THREE PS OF INSTAGRAM

Probably one of the most frequent topics associated with today's youth is the internet and social media. If you're like me, you probably find time throughout the day to catch up on what has been going on in the world, often with just one simple click on an ombre-rainbow camera logo - no other than that of Instagram. This Facebook-owned social network is one of the most widespread of them all, having over one billion active users. It is famous for its eye-catching visuals and a great variety of topics to follow.

What happens to me sometimes is while I'm scrolling through the pictures, I start to wonder whether I should believe everything that I see. To what extent is the content delivered to us reliable and real? And this is exactly why I decided to



<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/b5/62/21/b56221145313bc6f.jpg>

characterize Instagram with three simple words: power, pressure, and perfection.

The network has been active for over ten years now, and recently, there has been a rise in the popularity of Instagram "influencers". Because of the incredibly fast pace of communication and distribution of information, these influencers have a wide audience and therefore have a certain power over it. Social media communication is truly fast, so it is easier than ever to gain popularity and become well-known. But the **power** is not one-sided. Since the internet does not always include face-to-face communication, many of us find it to be a "safer place". This can sometimes have negative consequences, as ordinary users see the platform as an opportunity to hate on others, without being affected by it in their real life. This sense of anonymity brings more security, leading people to act this way.

What follows next is the creation of **pressure**. Again, this is not a matter of one side only. Followers can be very rude and are capable of putting a lot of pressure on influencers, who have to not only keep up with making entertaining content on their profile, as well as deal with all the negative comments the others leave. In reverse, I can prove that Instagram is a platform that can cause major anxiety and self-questioning, since the content we see isn't always the reality and often is far from it. However, because it is presented to us, we tend to compare ourselves. "This model's skin is flawless, and I'm

over here with a face full of acne. Oh, this celebrity is on vacation in Madagascar, my life is so boring..." - I'm sure we've all been there at some point - wishing our lives would be more "entertaining" and "perfect".

Which brings me to the last P - **perfection**. What is perfection? What is beauty? How do we define it? Is it by the size of our waist? Or by the number of hearts an Instagram post gets? Why we may not realize it while observing an Instagram photo, the truth of beauty lies somewhere completely different. But today's world is preoccupied with constant comparison, hate, and pretending to be perfect - which are all results from the pressure created by the popularity and expectations of social media. The truth is that nobody is perfect, even if we may think they are from observing one's profile. Every one of us is unique, and that's what makes us beautiful.

And this is why, in my opinion, it is important to look at Instagram from a higher, more distant point of view and realize that the content we see is not truthful and that we do not need to compare ourselves with anybody else. I encourage you all to live your life and not to capture the moment with your camera only, but rather store it in your memory - in your *real* heart - that is way more valuable than double-tapping a photo, trust me.

JULIE SEDLÁKOVÁ

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

As the days are short and meaningful amounts of snow are still nowhere to be found, many of us seek to escape these gloomy lands, both physically and mentally. Yet even in these dark times, the writers of the social commentary section sat down and reflected on some of the issues they encounter in their everyday lives.

Whilst Ád'a and Calista look at the critical importance of educating oneself in languages and history respectively, Josefka presents a detailed analysis of the issues with the mandatory maturita from maths. Jasmina gives us all much insight into the involvement of the younger generation in politics, whilst Julie explains the importance of not giving too much credit to content on Instagram. Lastly, Ondra takes a deep dive into the world of young players in team sports and whether it's right or wrong.

This edition's greatest strength is its diversity of articles, and I am sure everyone will find something to pass these dim days with. I wish all of you a great read, and now go and enlighten both your day, and your mind!

NICOLAS WICHERT

## LANGUAGES ARE THE KEY

Young people are nowadays often measured by the amount of knowledge they learned either in school or through life experiences. Most parents try to get their children the best education possible and not surprisingly, languages are often an important factor for them. But why is that and why do we give languages such a significant role in modern society? The importance of languages is visible in the job opportunities we get, the schooling that we are provided and the language expectations from the new generation.

It is well-known that languages help people with their memory and understanding, yet the quality of languages in the educational curriculum is doubtful. The expectation of society is often that we come out of high school and know at least three languages at the level of a native speaker for a real job opportunity to come. However, sadly, this expectation is wrong because the current schooling, at least in the Czech Republic, lacks teachers with enough expertise to be able to get students to a high level of understanding in a foreign language. If you don't attend a private school or a school specialized in languages, then your level of English or any other language probably doesn't exceed the level of the Czech maturita. That is wrong because it means that most of us, who don't pay for it, don't get a higher level of education in languages than hairdressers, laborers and other people that don't need such knowledge in their jobs.

However, the role of languages in the job opportunities that we get is enormous. Each additional language that you know can raise your pay greatly, in fact it can increase your wage by 15%! This happens because as the world is becoming globalized, languages are becoming a key to success. Therefore, much pressure is put on us, the young, to learn as many languages as is in our abilities, but we don't get the right conditions to do that unless we pay for it. So, this is becoming a vicious cycle for us. Society pushes us to do our best, yet the ones that ask so much of us don't provide us with much of an option to achieve this.

To sum up, the number of languages we know is a factor that may greatly influence our future lives; however, right now, this requirement of society is very hard to fulfill due to the limited options that are provided to us. The statement that the more languages you know the more times you are a person is true, yet we should all think about an easier way to be able to achieve that. A key step to allowing more people to gain success through the use of foreign languages is teaching them these languages in the first place, and we shouldn't forget that.

ADÉLA ARCHALOUSOVÁ

## BENEFIT OR DISADVANTAGE?

Do young players have chance to have big role in the team and how good are the academies for them?

This difficult task is presented in almost every sports club to the coach as one of the goals of his work. The young player in the team is not welcome competition for "old ones", but also a potentially very interesting investment for the club in the future. It brings a fresh wind to the cabin and often the physical performance of the whole team improves after the arrival of the youth. He is less used up, so even regeneration after a match takes less time. Teams that are not afraid to include teenagers in teams are clearly more likely to succeed in long-term competitions. For example, there are academies in football in many countries, which prepare young talents for possible entry into professional sports. Youngsters use older players as role models, and many older players are then going on a coaching journey based on this experience, which is a win for both players and the club.

Of course, it is not easy for any coach to include youngsters in their teams / lineups, as club owners usually do not give them time to integrate young players into the team regardless of team results. That is why some coaches are afraid of this step and young players are not given a chance. The young player does not play important matches against his older teammates, so he may be nervous in the matches. He has never been under pres-

sure, he can make mistakes in a match. We know cases when a young player entering the professional sport had "gotten a headache" and had not used his talent in the finals. Young age can be a disadvantage in crucial important phases of a match where calm and discretion are needed.

Are we supposed to give the youngsters a chance? My answer is clearly yes. Without youth there is no advancement, they would not push the limits of the reachable. The advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages. We know many examples where young people play a leading role in a team, such as Kylian Mbappé, Jadon Sancho or hockey player Connor McDavid. And if we look outside team sports, an example might be the current achievements of fifteen-year-old American tennis player, Corri Gauff.



<https://www.europeanfootballacademy/football-scholarship-programme/>

ONDŘEJ GALYÁŠ



## WHAT MAC MILLER'S MUSIC MEANS TO ME

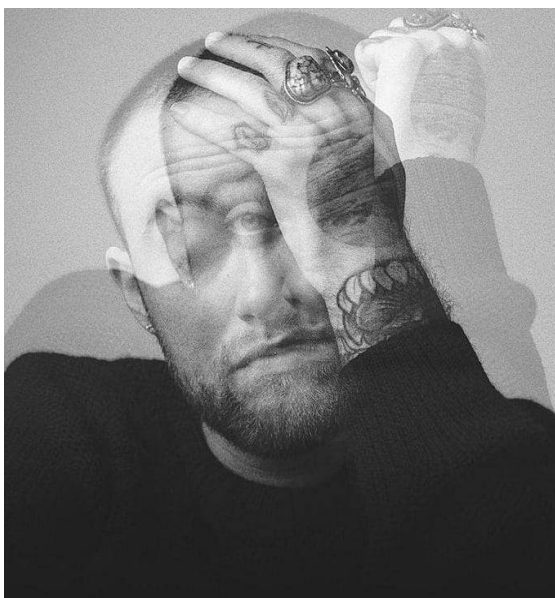
Mac Miller is a very talented rapper and artist, who could've been 28 years old, but unfortunately he died to drug overdose on September the 7th 2018. Mac's music created a big impact on many people, including myself, and his songs will never be forgotten. Apart from other rappers, he openly talked about depression, drug addiction, relationships and many more real life struggles. For that, I will always appreciate him.

Malcolm James McCormick was born on January the 19th 1992 in Pennsylvania and loved music since he was a kid. He learned to play the piano, drums, and guitar, and by the age of 8, he already started writing rap lyrics. Mac Miller's inspiration came from the greatest old school rappers such as OutKast, A Tribe Called Quest, Lauryn Hill, etc. Mac also mentioned that bands like The Beatles or Pink Floyd had an influence on his art. When Mac was 14 years old, he released his first album called 'But My Mackin Aint Easy'. Some of his most known songs like 'Knock Knock' and 'Best Day Ever' are from the beginning of his rapping career.

My personal favorite album would be 'Macadelic', which was published back in 2012. It has 17 tracks, which feature big names such as Kendrick Lamar, Lil Wayne, Iman Omari, Joey Badass and more. If I had to choose just one song which I love the most, it would probably be 'Thoughts from a Balcony', an introspective track in which Mac raps

about what's it like to be on the top of the rap game. This song gives me the impression of being invincible and trusting yourself. I noticed that throughout Mac's music he often mentions what it would be like if he left, and how bad would his fans and the closest around him feel. In his interview with Larry King, Mac said that 'fame was one of the major factors of his depression'.

The album called 'Swimming' was released on August 3rd 2018, a month before Mac's tragic death. The name 'Swimming' is a metaphor for trying to swim to the shore from all of your problems. Mac creates a very interesting contrast



<https://images.app.goo.gl/d2rtYTVAvMeZhAzN6>

between the depression he has to deal with and positive thinking in this album. Personally, my favorite tracks would be 'Self Care' and 'Come back to Earth'. 'Swimming' was nominated for Grammy Award for Best Rap Album, three months after Mac passed away. In the end, the category was won by Cardi B and her album 'Invasion of Privacy'. This upset many of Malcolm's fans, because they think that the album deserved better, and I can't disagree with them.

On January the 17th 2020 Mac's family put out his unreleased album 'Circles', saying that 'Malcolm was well into the process of recording his companion album to Swimming, entitled Circles. Two different styles complementing each other, completing a circle - Swimming in Circles was the concept.' The album has 12 songs in it, and it may be the most beautiful album I've ever heard. Especially the song 'Complicated' and 'Good News', to which I can relate the most. I'm really glad that Mac's family decided to publish this piece of art.

Mac Miller is and forever will be missed. And if you haven't listened to his music yet, go ahead, really, it's worth it. His music is timeless and I hope that it will continue to inspire other people. Mac will forever stay the dopest.

JULIE SCHOLZOVÁ

## ONE SAGA TO RULE THEM ALL

Peter Jackson's unique movie trilogy, The Lord of the Rings came at just the right time to leave a truly indelible mark on the lives of millions of people all around the world. This wizard of movie production geniusly enthralled his audience by fantasy and heroism of main characters during an apocalyptic fight with forces of darkness. This could be actual for everyone who feels in his heart that even the smallest person can change the fate when the day seems the darkest. And this personal lesson of the movies and books of Tolkien's inimitable world finds new and new fans who love this great story.



[https://www.reddit.com/r/lotr/comments/7azawb/3\\_great\\_olod\\_wallpapers/](https://www.reddit.com/r/lotr/comments/7azawb/3_great_olod_wallpapers/)

However, someone can disagree and say that the Star Wars saga of George Lucas contains even a better story with all its universe, different nations, and cultures. That statement could be similar to the one when a small kid thinks that the greatest achievement of the surrounding civilization is his bicycle. And now I will offer you some arguments on why is

LotR much better than Star Wars.

The very first thing is the comparison of the two movie soundtracks. Luca's films composed by John Williams, the man who also created themes of Jurassic Park or Harry Potter. His melodies are beautiful and rhythmical, however, when it comes to the genially organized soundtrack of LotR by Howard Shore, with his progression of music throughout the whole movie, we must bow in front of this genius of the film industry. He used special and unique musical themes for the Shire of Hobbits, Mordor, Rivendell, Rohan or Gondor. Even the characters sometimes have their special melodies, for example, Gollum or Nazgûls. It is interesting that Shore even gradually included more and more instruments with the plot progression, so in the end the main, orchestral theme of the whole trilogy strikes. Star Wars is famous for its first theme song, which is changing during the movie, but the soundtrack lacks the detailed sophistication of Lord of the Rings.

When it comes to stories of these two movies, we can see many different features. Star Wars' plot (which was written as a script, not as a book, so it lacks all the details that books usually have) is basically full of strange and very Hollywood like nonsense. Firstly, even if there were in total two Death Stars plus one Starkiller base, how is possible that rebels just blew its core every single time and the Empire was defeated? It was also

very heartbreaking for me watching the poor imperial stormtroopers getting shot one by another and being unable to hit any rebels even from ten meters, despite the fact that they had a predominance, bigger firepower. The crown of this comes when Rey, some random dust woman from Jakku, defeats the highly trained Kilo during the lightsaber fight. Yes, even in LotR there were sometimes similar scenes (goblins vs. Legolas), however here we can fear about the fate of our favorite characters, because the forces of darkness are here more realistic and powerful, considering the fact that even Theoden and Boromir were killed by orcs and Nazgûl, or when Gandalf fell in Moria or when Frodo was stabbed on Weathertop.

Lastly, Tolkien's world is an incredible fiction place, where everything has its detailed background story and mythology, language, and script. Tolkien's passion for language and history can be brightly seen through the whole universe. Lucas maybe made more planets in his mind but without such a description. So here we can compare the quantity of Star Wars against the deep quality of Tolkien's brilliant masterpiece.

To conclude, all the benefits of LotR can be summed just to one number - 17 Oscars awards. No other film in the record of movie-making has one more. Now you can decide, which saga is better.

NATAN KRATOCHVÍLA

## LEGENDARY KOBE

January 25th, Philadelphia: LeBron James scores 29 points against the 76ers and although the Lakers lost, nobody cared. James surpassed Kobe Bryant in the NBA's all-time scoring list. Bryant scored 33 643 points throughout his 20 seasons for Los Angeles Lakers and LeBron is now on 33 655. Bryant tweeted congratulations to James. Nobody knew then that this is the last tweet of the American basketball legend.

A day later, Kobe was travelling in his private helicopter with his daughter Gianna and 7 other people when suddenly the helicopter had engine complications and burst in flames. Nobody survived. The world lost a legend. Everyone was shocked and asking the same question. Why?

Kobe was just 41 when he passed away. The internet was overwhelmed with condolences to Bryant's family. Celebrities hardly searched for words. Even the toughest men of basketball like Shaquille O'Neal (played for the Lakers with Kobe from 1996 to 2004, won three titles together) were crying. Even those who never cared about basketball knew who Kobe was. In every NBA game of the following round, players broke the 8 and 24-second violation rule to commemorate the two numbers that Kobe wore in LA Lakers. Both of these numbers are retired, so no Laker can wear them anymore.

In his career, Kobe played 20 seasons for the Lakers, 10 of them with the number 8 and 10 with the number 24. He may be the only sportsman to have two retired numbers by one team. He won 5 NBA titles, 2 NBA finals MVP, 1 league MVP, 1 Slam Dunk contest and 2 gold Olympic medals. He had four daughters. After he retired, he trained his daughter Gianna's basketball team. Gianna was expected to be a very successful basketball player as her father was. Kobe also loved football, both American and soccer. He was a fan of his hometown NFL team Philadelphia Eagles and European football teams like FC Barcelona and AC Milan.

Kobe Bean Bryant was a man of many faces, a hero, an idol, a friend, a husband, but most importantly, a loving father. He may have passed away, but his spirit will be always with us on the court because legends never die.



<https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2020/01/kobe-bryant-dead-helicopter-crash>

ADAM CHÁRA



## STAR WARS STRIKES BACK

Star Wars and Lord of the Rings, the two greatest franchises ever created. Both of these universes have stolen hearts of millions fans worldwide. Both of them have an amazing story, remarkable characters, and a large impact on the movie industry. Only few other franchises can be compared with them, but now it's time to compare these two, and tell you, why Star Wars is better.

Star Wars was originally a film trilogy, and the three movies were released in



<https://www.zeme-deti.cz/Fleece-deka-Star-Wars-ST-122696>

1977, 1980 and 1983. Given the earned money and pleasant critiques, it was a success. It continued with prequel trilogy, a spin-off TV show, and many video games, books and comics about the characters, or describing events which occurred during, before, or after the time of the saga. After Disney bought Lucasfilm, the studio creating Star Wars, the books, comics and video games were erased from canon, however Lucasfilm under Disney continued to make films and TV shows. The size of the universe is the first reason why SW is better, the Lord of the Rings franchise has only six movies, four books on which are the films based, and other few books about history of Middle-Earth (world where LotR takes place), but they are long, boring, and with structure similar more to a historical encyclopaedia, than to a normal book. Star Wars book and comics, despite not considered as canon, are about epic stories, and I kindly recommend you to read some of them if you liked the movies.

Another thing so special about SW is its music. Of course, LotR has nice music, which can induce the right atmosphere, however SW music is just iconic, legendary and composed by even more legendary film composer John Williams, who made music for other famous movies such as Jurassic Park, Indiana Jones, and Harry Potter. I assume only LotR fans have ever heard of Howard Shore, the man who did the music for LotR. If you play music from LotR to someone, who

has not seen it, they will probably say that they heard it somewhere, but if you play music from Star Wars to someone who has not seen Star Wars, they will know.

The last (but not least, of course) factor why SW is better is because IT'S STAR WARS! It is the essence that influenced so many lives of young and old people, who are not just watching it, they are living it. Everybody knows someone who is obsessed with SW. SW is also a huge brand, you don't have to just watch Star Wars, you can wear Star Wars, you can play with Star Wars, or you can drive Star Wars. Star Wars is also a religion, specifically the knights of Jedi, and it became registered as religion in 2005 in Texas as the Temple of the Jedi Order. Star Wars has also its own day. The Star Wars day is celebrated on 4<sup>th</sup> May, because a pun "May the Fourth be with you" is very similar to the Jedi greeting "May the Force be with you". The celebration of the day is simple, you watch Star Wars, perform a cosplay, and with your costume you can join one of SW parades, which are organized in some bigger cities.

All in all, Star Wars is great and LotR is not that great, so if you're bored, go and watch Star Wars. Or, read an article by Natan about why LotR is better than SW, that will make you laugh.

VÁCLAV VOSTOUPAL

## FIGHTING STRESS

I think most of us can identify with this exact situation; you come home after school, check managebac, and see that you have a horribly high number of assignments and tests due the following week. It's all incredibly overwhelming and there seems to be no way that you can get it all done in time. In this situation, it is important to take a deep breath, calm down, and maybe try out a few of the following tips.



<http://executivesecretary.com/from-a-stress-mess-to-stress-less/>

The first thing you should definitely do, and this has helped me countless times, is to write a to-do list of all the things you have to do, and mark how important they are. Also, be sure to check off the things you have already done, so you gradually feel less overwhelmed. The next thing you should do is to just pick one thing from the list, and get started on that. It doesn't have to be the most important one, but just the fact that you start doing something can help to motivate you to do more, and getting started on something is better than doing nothing.

If you have been studying for hours and feel as if you can't continue on for any longer, then just close your books, drink cold water, grab a snack, and call a friend. You can also go for a walk to get some fresh air, which can actually help your studying later on. If it's too dark to go outside, just put on your favorite tv show and try not to think about anything for a while. But be careful, because one episode can easily turn into five.

One of the most important ways of dealing with stress is getting enough sleep. It helps to fight stress as well as depression, and gives you much more energy, therefore boosting your academic performance. Try not to study right before you go to sleep, because the only thing on your mind will just be the study material, which could make it harder to fall asleep. Instead, take some time to unwind, to fall asleep faster.

To sum up, these were some of my tips for dealing with stress that have helped me many times, but they may not work for everyone. Be sure to find out what works best for you, and don't forget to take some time for yourself.

SOFIA JELIČIČ

## FLAMES OF UNITY

Australian bushfires have taken over the world media in the past three months. Horrendous stories along with frightening facts have spread, such as that over 18 million hectares have burned in this year's Australian bushfire season, which has not even ended yet, and a billion animals have been killed or will soon die due to the loss of their habitat. Almost 3,000 families lost their homes and 29 people lost their lives. However, as usually, most of the news forget to pass on the hopeful and heartwarming acts that have been happening all around our planet to help and ease this crisis.



[https://www.boredpanda.com/australian-firefighters-animals-calendar-2020/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=organic](https://www.boredpanda.com/australian-firefighters-animals-calendar-2020/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic)

Let's take a look at some of these uplifting moments, starting with the marvelous heroes who have been putting up their own lives in danger to save others; Australian firefighters. Since the start of the fire season, the Rural Fire Service has been recruiting volunteers and each day around 3,000 of them are fighting for the lives of other people. The volunteers not only arrived from Australian regions but from all around the world, such as several firefighter teams from California or Europe. Overall, the New South Wales RFS has 70,000 volunteer yet trained members. Interestingly enough, firefighters have also participated in raising charity money against the fires through ways even such as posing for charity calendars with endangered animals.

Further more, people found the importance of helping even through extraordinary yet charming means, such as knitting warm pouches for saved animals and their offsprings. Those who did not feel indifferent to the events of bushfires, but felt shame that they could not come personally and help themselves with taking care of the animals in danger, came up with the amazing idea of creating hundreds of homemade pouches and blankets to keep the saved animals comfortable. It was all started by a young lady in England and spread worldwide even to families in Singapore, enhanced by the people's enthusiasm and devotion to supporting.

Interest in providing aid and encouragement emerged even from well-known celebrities. Top tennis players who were preparing for the Grand Slam tournament, Australian Open, prepared a money-raising exhibition precedently to the championship. This awe-inspiring and joyous event helped to raise almost 5 million Australian dollars, with the power to inspire others and additionally raise awareness of how important it is to help even through simple things.

I could name many more approaches people chose to help and the one thing that links them all together is their devotion and euphoria in all their actions. It is peculiar and kind of ironic to see the greatest unity among our world's population in times of crisis, but if tragedies such as the Australian bushfires are the events that awake society's solidarity, then "let's have more of them!"

MICHAELA RENDLOVÁ



<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/06/world/australia/help-australia-fires.html> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/ten-impacts-australian-bushfires>





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