

Student Reporter



Jonathan Kim

Grade 10
Culver City High School

Boy Scout Camping Experiences for Troop 173



During Troop 173's overnight camp, scouts walked across the beach rocks near San Pedro, sharing experiences along the way. [Source: Author, Jonathan Kim]

The spring season has officially arrived. With the pains of the short winter days and weather now out of the picture, spring is that time of the year for heading back outdoors to make new, fresh experiences. From March 26-27, my Boy Scout troop, Troop 173, held an overnight camp at Cabrillo Youth Center near the shores of the Los Angeles Harbor in San Pedro.

Our troop arrived around 10

a.m. on Saturday the 26th, in which we began setting up our tents for the 17 total scouts and numerous adult leaders that were attending. Following this process, those who needed to cook meals as part of the necessary requirements for advancing up in Boy Scout ranks prepared lunch for their fellow scouts and adult leaders. These meals included a choice between two different types of sandwiches, with a selection of numerous types of chips

and other snacks.

After lunch, our troop visited the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium where we were able to see a variety of sea animals, ranging from seahorses to sharks, and also touch marine invertebrates in a touch tank exhibit. After spending approximately 30 minutes touring the aquarium, we spent another 40 minutes walking across the rocks along the shore, visually and aromatically taking in the beach itself. These group experiences helped to create a troop-bonding atmosphere in which all scouts, some with nearly five years of experience while others only on their second day of scouting, could become closer during the troop's first individual overnight camp in 2½ years.

The troop bonding experiences were only strengthened as we engaged in other activities, such as playing an informal football game

and fun, yet competitive games of Jokgu, the Korean sport that can only be described as volleyball but using one's feet, not hands. Although the majority of these games were played solely for entertainment purposes with no rewards to the winning teams, it was the competitive experiences that ultimately made playing Jokgu one of the highlights of this camp.

To end the camping trip on Sunday morning, it was only fitting to have one last Jokgu game, this time with real stakes on the line. The losing team would be responsible for carrying all of the equipment and gear to the cars prior to leaving, while the winners would be exempt from this duty. While one team had to ultimately lose and accept the punishment, it was in no bad taste; it was all part of the rewarding experience of being at camp together for Troop 173.

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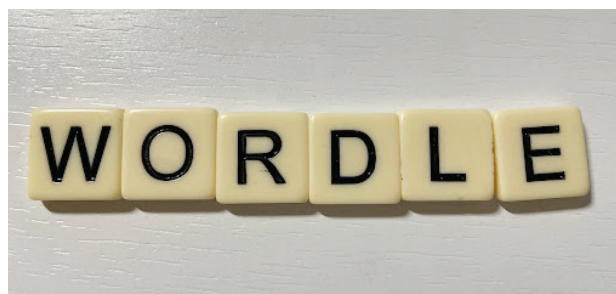
Andrew Chung

Grade 10
Los Osos High School

What Is Wordle?

Today's generation is currently living in a completely modernized world of technology. This means that a wide variety of entertainment that has been provided is linked with devices, a big one being video games. The popularity of these games have continued to increase throughout the years as, especially children, find them extremely fun. However, despite many video games being a distraction for students, there are some that are actually not as bad, and in fact educational. Recently, a game that goes by the name, "Wordle," has become very popular, especially among teens. Significantly, it is one of the first educational games that has had a big player count all across the world.

Wordle is a daily game that contains the task of guessing a five-lettered word. However, the way that players can guess this word is quite interesting, to say



Wordle has become widely popular over the past month, encouraging students to challenge themselves with an education game every single day. [Source: Author, Andrew Chung]

the least. It was created by Josh Wardle, a software engineer with the initial goal of creating a simple word game for his partner to play. The game gives the player up to six chances to guess the correct word, and they can do this by entering multiple five-lettered words. In any word, if there are letters that are highlighted yellow, it means that the correct word contains that certain letter, but it is not in the right spot. If a letter is highlighted green, that means that the letter is in the word that is trying to be

guessed and is in the correct spot. When a letter is highlighted gray, that means that the letter is not in the five-lettered word at all. The game is accessible on the New York Times website, which updates every 24 hours, making it a free challenge that anyone can do if they please. Although this game may not seem like much, it has caught the attention of hundreds of thousands of players, who tend to play every single day.

One of the reasons why Wordle

has become so popular is the fact that everyone has the same task every day. This means that it's very easy to compare results and have fun with friends with something as simple as an online game. Not only this, but it's not very time-consuming at all. It doesn't require the most attention and it's something that people can complete with just 5-10 minutes of their time, which is a huge reason for the game's success. In fact, it has become so popular that strategies of guessing the daily word as fast as possible have been exposed. This includes the best word to start off with, or even inputting all different kinds of words to limit the number of vowels and consonants that could be used. All of this occurred for what was initially supposed to be a small game for one person, and it's amazing to think of how much it's grown over the past month all around the world.

Student Reporter



Minseo Kwon

Grade 9
Portola High School

Knots Berry Farm or Disneyland?

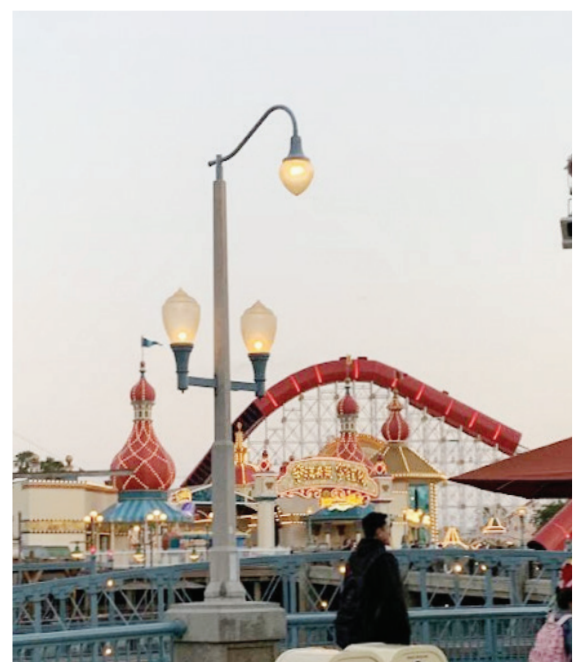
Teenagers living in Southern California live near two of the greatest amusement parks, Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland. The two different parks bring great attention from students who are looking to hang out with their friends and have a good time during their school breaks. While there is constant debate about which park is superior, there seems to be no correct answer as the parks are extremely different. Knott's Berry Farm contains several of the scariest and most thrilling rides, meanwhile, Disneyland is a theme park with many areas to sightsee and take pictures.

Knott's Berry Farm is the place to go if you are looking to ride riveting and exhilarating rollercoasters, such as Silver Bullet or Xcelerator. Many of the rides in the park go at extreme speeds and are full of twists and turns. While there are kid-friendly rides as well, most are rollercoasters that should be ridden

with caution.

One of the most popular and well-known rollercoasters at Knott's Berry Farm is the Ghost Rider. This coaster is not made of steel or metal, but wooden planks. The bumpiness and speed of the ride make fans go crazy. However, the one downfall to this ride is the painful wait time. If you do not arrive early, it takes at least two hours before you can experience this glamorous rollercoaster.

Disneyland is known for its trademark title, "The Happiest Place on Earth." For younger children, this place is full of entertaining and exciting theme rides. From the Little Mermaid to Peter Pan, Disneyland has all of the most famous movies created into fun attractions. Under the hot sun, the rides are pleasant as you sit through the life story of a Disney character. However, in contrast to Knott's Berry Farm's rollercoasters,



Disneyland has amazing views full of lights during the evening. [Source: Author, Minseo Kwon]

there are not as many thrill rides. Disneyland has the aesthetics of a park that Knott's does not have, attracting families to come and take photos for memories. Not only does Disneyland have its main park, but they also have Califor-

nia Adventure. This park contains thriller rides such as the Incredicoaster, Guardians of the Galaxy, and Radiator Springs. Visitors can enjoy both parks when visiting Disneyland and get the best of both worlds.

Student Reporter



Audrey Park

Grade 8
Sierra Vista Middle School

Picking up “Media Fasting”



Adults of the “Media Fasting Challenge” place their devices in the middle of the service tables to pledge their participation. [Source: Jason Park]

The immediate thought after putting down your device is to pick it up again. So, having more than a month’s worth of that momentary intermission seemed incomprehensible when it was first proposed to me. Between the transition of Covid-19 and the Omicron variant, my service group pitched the

idea of media fasting, where the vast capabilities of our electronic devices would be inaccessible for 100 days.

Because technology retained some of the most significant value in the past years, I assumed that giving up the pandemic equivalent of communication and business would be impractical. However, the beginning of Omicron made this opportunity more feasible as a result of a decreasing dependency on our electronics. While practices like media fasting are common for religious purposes, my friends have participated in a digital detox for the benefit of personal health and have noted “a sense of self-control.” An interview with Mahi Gandla, who frequently takes time off social media, reveals her motives for a break: “Over the pandemic, I couldn’t find time to use my phone for any productive means, because I generally felt obligated to

connect with my long-distance friends. Once in a while, I like to stop shouldering that weight and go without my message apps for a good week.”

I wasn’t able to experience this self control until I actually put down my phone. Although media fasting didn’t seem ideal and caused uncertainty, the amount of free time it provided initiated my next line of action. This convenience diminished the mindless hours of bingeing that I had anticipated and guided me into helpful discussions with service members and pastors. The most potent suggestions encouraged good management and a routine, an aspect of “fasting” which I have been able to explore as a result. Intermittent fasting demonstrates that the diverse human palate can ease into any diet with a routine. My church bulletin collected research from Verywell Mind’s “What Is a Digital Detox?” to reveal that in-

termittent fasting can be sparingly implemented in recurrent digital abstinence or a social media detox, where one’s focus is on reducing the use of social media. Only a few days into my suitable routine did I realize how much self-control was required to sustain a streak and overall stability. With the pandemic equivalent of communication and service untouched, I became grateful for the at-hand resources I already had access to.

The remainder of the Media Fasting Challenge served as a tool to break free from the dependence on electronics that Covid-19 had established. All the more, this experience has demonstrated that dropping obsessions are necessary despite initial inconveniences. It felt like only a day’s worth of fasting for me to pick up the in-person resources I lost and to put down the device that would’ve burdened me in future pandemics.

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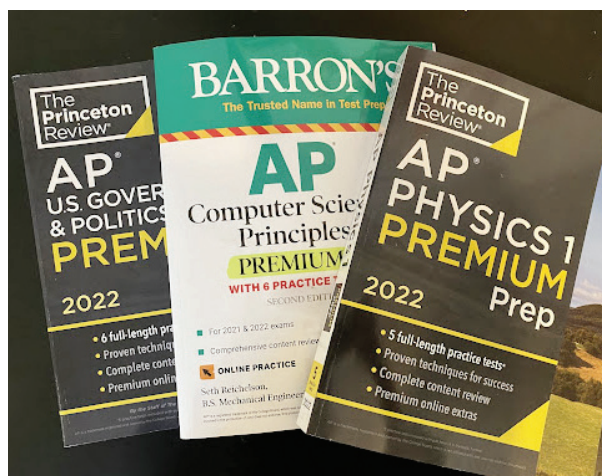
Claudia Shin

Grade 10
Granada Hills Charter High School

A Student’s Opinion On The SAT And Other Standardized Tests

For many years, taking the SAT has been an essential part of a student’s college application process, but recently this has changed. Over the past couple of years, state schools, like the University of California and California State Universities, have decided to test blind or test-optional. Test blind and test-optional means that a school either does not look at SAT scores or does not require an SAT score submission. This decision has changed the perspectives of many students regarding the SAT. What was seen as an almost mandatory step in going to college is now seen as optional or unnecessary. This decision also raises the question: how valuable are standardized tests?

Standardized tests, like Advanced Placement (AP) tests and the SAT, are both offered by the company, College Board. These tests are often an important part of a high school student’s education and college application. However, are these tests worth it?



AP review books that many students use to study for AP tests. [Source: Author, Claudia Shin]

AP tests come after a year of an AP class. These classes are equivalent to college-level classes and can count for college credit if a student’s score exceeds a certain level on the corresponding AP exam. A benefit of AP classes is that they can get students out of introductory-level college courses, giving them more scheduling room as well as a high school GPA boost (AP classes are 5 credits while standard classes are 4 credits). Additionally, AP tests and classes

show college admissions a student’s commitment to a more rigorous curriculum. Nonetheless, AP classes also come with a greater workload and more pressure than standard classes. From my experience with AP curriculum, I believe they are a great addition to a student’s schedule if they are willing to challenge themselves and are interested in the class they are taking. A mistake I have made is taking rigorous classes in subjects I am not very interested in.

While it is great to explore different subjects, I think that taking an AP course outside of my interests is too demanding.

My opinion about the SAT is that the decision of whether to take the test depends on the colleges a student hopes to attend. Since the SAT is still required for many private schools, for students that are considering attending these types of schools or a private school that still accepts SAT scores should take the test. The decision whether or not to study for the SAT and take the test should be made with thoughtfulness and research into what schools a student is planning to apply to.

All in all, standardized testing is an excellent way for students to challenge themselves and dive deeper into subjects of their interest. It also opens many doors for college options. Deciding whether or not to take AP classes or the SAT should be made considering all of these factors.

Student Reporter



Elie Kim

Grade 11
La Canada High School

La Canada High’s Wellness Center; A Place for Students

Many high school students undergo stress from various factors, including school. Especially after COVID-19 and quarantine, there has been an increase in mental health crises among students. Now that schools are back in person, different schools use different resources to alleviate some of the stress students receive.

At La Canada High School, in Southern California, a space was created called the Wellness Center. It is a quiet and calming space for students to receive support such as counseling and workshops and is located right next to the school library. It promotes an inclusive school culture and makes all students feel welcome. It is easily accessible, and it provides access to resources related to mental health such as therapy. Inside, there is an area to rest, tea, coloring

books, books, and other resources that can help students temporarily forget about all of their stress. As the space is connected to the school library, students can go to the library through the center and read a book to calm their minds. Mrs. Mumper, the Wellness Center office worker, states, “The Wellness Center is perfect for students to come and take their mind off from all their stress and assignments.” When students are feeling stressed or tired during class, they are allowed to go to the Wellness Center and rest or take a quick fifteen-minute nap. There are many students who go into the Wellness Center during break or lunch, sometimes even during class, to take a short rest and close their eyes. There are even two therapy dogs, Harrison and Rigby, both golden retrievers, who you can see in the Wellness Center or walking

around school. Petting the dogs brings many students happiness and joy. The therapy dogs also go and visit classrooms when teachers request them. Furthermore, the Wellness Center sent all students of La Canada High School a Google Form with questions regarding mental health. The form even had an option that allowed the Wellness Center to contact you with resources if they believed you could benefit from their help. The Wellness Center does its best to help students with their mental health as much as they can

Additionally, the Wellness Center runs many school clubs such as Peer Tutoring and Peer Support. For Peer Tutoring, teachers or students contact the Wellness Center to help students with tutoring in subjects they are struggling in, and Peer Support



The entrance to the Wellness Center, where students go to take a nap or calm their minds during stressful times. [Source: Author, Elie Kim]

promotes mutual respect, social connections, and mental health awareness. Overall, the Wellness Center is a great part of La Canada High, and the type of place all schools should consider having.