

Student Reporter

My Experience as a J Student Board Reporter



Claudia Shin
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Writing articles for JSR has taught me more than just writing skills..
[Credit: Author, Claudia Shin]

I first became a reporter with the JSR when I was in 8th grade. At the time, my only experiences with writing had been through a school environment where my papers were being graded and written about a prompt that I had no say in. These experiences taught me the foundations of being a writer: how to write an introduction paragraph, what a body paragraph is, and the structure of

a conclusion. However, what my schooling lacked was the freedom to write about what I wanted to write about.

Two years later, I am now a 10th grade student and assistant editor with JSR. My 8th grade self had no idea what these two years would bring about, but JSR has been a place for me to document my life as I was living through it. Finally being able to write about what I want to write about, my published articles range from new hobbies I have acquired and new things I have experienced to issues I care about and events I participate in. The numerous articles I have written and published as a part of JSR have taught me many things about writing and general life lessons that have been beneficial for me in all other aspects of my life. As a member of JSR, I write a new article every three weeks. Creatively, this has taught me how to

always be looking for inspiration and ideas on what to write my articles on. When everything was locked down after the COVID-19 pandemic started, I was stuck at home and was unsure of what my next article would be about. I started thinking out of the box and leaving my comfort zone, which was mainly writing about going to new places and events. During this time I wrote about what some would consider “mundane” or “normal,” but I tried to make these topics interesting and something that people would want to read about. I wrote about house plants, my vinyl record collection, hiking, and more.

As a writer, my experience in JSR has taught me the valuable lesson of how to collect my thoughts and cohesively write an article on a deadline. This is incredibly valuable for me as a student. I am able to type out a couple of hundred words pretty smoothly thanks

to JSR. I would consider this to be the most applicable skill I have learned as a reporter. JSR has also, overall, improved my writing. If practice makes perfect, JSR is the best way to get better at writing. The edits that I receive on all of my articles help me to improve upon my mistakes and make my articles more engaging.

To anyone that has an interest in journalism, growing their skills as a writer, or learning valuable life lessons, I would highly encourage you to apply to be a JSR reporter. This is the perfect program for students who are seeking a way to creatively express themselves while also experiencing a system and schedule that imitates a real job. Applications are available to all interested high school students (grades 9-12) and J-JSR applications are open to all junior high students (grades 7-8) on the J Student Board website at jstudent-board.com.

Student Reporter

Is Individual Action Enough to Mitigate Climate Change?



Jonathan Kim
Grade 10
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In December 2015, the landmark Paris Agreement was agreed upon by 195 countries and the European Union, setting the stage for rapid climate action to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. What followed since then is the continued debate surrounding effective methods to address the climate issue.

The belief that personal responsibility through limiting one’s own “carbon footprint” can significantly mitigate the effects of climate change has become popularized in the mainstream climate narrative. “Stop using plastic straws! Take shorter showers! Invest in solar panels!” These are just some of the common advice we’ve all heard over the years. However, how true is this notion? The issue of climate change is more nuanced and complex than many adhering to this current narrative seem to give credit. For example, in China, the greenhouse gas emissions produced when building two

meters of asphalt road is similar to creating a gasoline car, according to one study published in the NIH. Simply buying an electric car or just investing in other similar individual actions are beneficial, but won’t truly mitigate the issue if roads or other infrastructure continue to be built the same way.

According to the Washington Post, a drastic change can only be achieved with major governmental action through implementing carbon taxes and investing in renewable energy infrastructure, among other



Both individual and collective action must be taken to address climate change, which, if not mitigated, could severely damage vital ecosystems like the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook.
[Source: Author, Jonathan Kim]

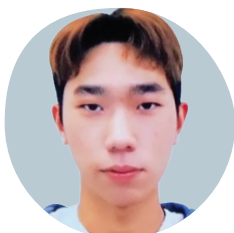
structural changes. Putting the responsibility and guilt on individual people to solve the climate crisis is not only a false notion but an irresponsible one. One report released in 2017 revealed that 70% of the world’s greenhouse gases produced over the last two decades can be allocated to 100 fossil fuel companies. This also explains why the term “carbon footprint” was coined in 2004 by an oil company called British Petroleum, whose goal was to place the blame on individuals and away from the primary contributors like themselves.

However, this does not mean that everyday people are exempt from any responsibility. It’s not that personal action doesn’t matter, but rather that it is not the complete solution. We should continue to make individual changes to our behaviors to become more sustainable, while at the same time understanding that this is not enough. Voting in people and policies targeted towards creating meaningful change while holding politicians accountable to pass major environmental laws and regulations is just as necessary.

The pursuit to solve this climate crisis will not be easy. It will require collective and constant effort to ensure that major changes must be made on the large scale of this issue, by pressuring the most responsible using one’s voice and ballot, while also not forgetting the importance that the individual should still play. Therefore, this idea that personal responsibility is not enough is not a message of complacency, but rather a message of action.

Student Reporter

How Your Beauty Products Kill Innocent Children



Thomas Lee
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Makeup is an essential tool used by more than 100 million women. Makeup products help consumers feel comfortable presenting themselves to the public, starting from a young age until they become older. Users are able to express themselves with various types and varieties of makeup, from foundation to mascara. Social media platforms like Youtube, with numerous channels of beauty gurus, and TikTok, with easy makeup tutorials, elevated the popularity of beauty products to the younger generations. However, little did they know that children on the other side of the world live in dread and horror because of their makeup.

Mica. This special ingredient is one of the most popular elements used by several companies to make makeup sparkly and glittery. India and Madagascar,

as well as numerous countries in Africa, are correlated to extreme child labor, killing multiple children every week. Even though the mining sites are kept secret, investigators were able to find many children, as young as 4 years old, in vacant undocumented lots. Here, children go deep inside a hole, dig deep through the ground, and come up with a basket full of gravel and mica. They sift the rocks through a net to trap the micas and sell them to people that will ship them overseas. They repeat these steps hundreds and thousands of times every single day in the scorching hot summers as well as icy cold winters. They work in fear that debris will collapse and kill them deep inside the mines without anyone noticing on site. In addition, these children are not able to rest even a day because they will starve if they do

not work to get paid.

This is indeed an illegal act, but there are no alternative ways for these children to keep themselves full at night. All children in these towns are exploited like this, making less than a quarter a day, due to government corruption and exploitation of natural resources. The Indian officials are well aware of these situations occurring on all sides of the country, yet there has been nothing done to resolve it. On the other hand, the people and companies, like Estée Lauder and Lush, have funded or created organizations, such as Kailash Satyarthi Children’s Foundation, to help search for alternative income sources without involving children.

My only hope is to publicize this critical issue and for people to con-



A high school student carries these makeup products in her bag to school every day.
[Source: Author, Thomas Lee]

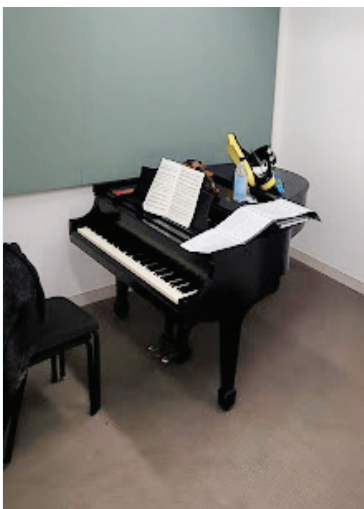
sider taking action. Before we buy makeup products, we can easily take 30 seconds to search up which companies do not use mica, test on animals, and are cruelty-free. What will you do to stop this brutality?

Student Reporter



Suhh Yeon Kim
Grade 11
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Virtual v.s. In-Person: Inequities in Auditions



A student musician notes his frequent use of a practice room for audition recordings.
[Source: Author, Suhh Yeon Kim]

Since the COVID-19 shut down in March of 2020, various orchestras across the nation paused in-person rehearsals and live performances. For statewide ensembles such as the California All-States Orchestra, or the SCSBOA Honors Band and Orchestra, the pandemic led to annual events being

held online through platforms such as Zoom. “Instead of live rehearsals, we had short workshops by different conductors and professional musicians,” recounts Sarah Park, participant of an All-States Orchestra. Meanwhile, for regional orchestras that hosted a more frequent and regular rehearsal schedule, the COVID-19 situation often meant that the program would have to entirely stop. The Colburn Youth Orchestras, for example, prematurely ended its programs in early March 2020.

One thing was common throughout most musical programs: auditions were transitioned to an online platform, with students submitting videotaped performances or recordings in lieu of in-person evaluations. For many, this change was helpful, as students did not need to deal with the stress of visiting various audition sites or face the anxiety of live performances. “I used to drive 2

hours each time for my orchestra auditions,” expresses Anne Cho, a high school student from Orange County. “It was draining and I had to arrange with my family members to have someone drive me.” For musicians like Anne, online auditions were a breath of fresh air, as students could easily submit their recordings with the click of a button. “Plus,” adds Joseph Park, a high school student, “I can record as many takes as I want, then choose the best one out of them. I don’t need to worry about making mistakes or getting nervous.”

However, the new platform of online auditioning brings new challenges as well. “I didn’t have any equipment to properly record my auditions,” notes Angela, a junior high school student in Los Angeles County. “Meanwhile, some of my friends were able to easily book expensive recording rooms and enhance their audition submissions.” As Angela re-

counts, the spread of virtual music auditions raises the question of equity and accessibility amongst student musicians. Since the online audition platform allowed for much freedom in finding various methods to record performances, disadvantaged students were faced with hardships in accurately portraying their abilities compared to students that were more financially comfortable.

Finally, most orchestras announced their return to in-person rehearsals and live performances in the 2021-2022 school year. At the same time, however, the majority of music programs found ease in facilitating online auditions - and decided to keep the newfound methods for assessing students. Although there are some positives with the new platform of online auditions, important questions regarding inequities in virtual auditions present a dilemma that must be addressed.

Student Reporter



Audrey Park
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Beverly Hills High School

There are many students with a dream of becoming an ambassador and promoting their country’s name internationally. These dreams can be easily realized from an early age with the Korean organization, VANK.

VANK is an acronym for the Voluntary Agency Network of Korea. As its name suggests, this organization’s primary purpose is to spread information about Korea to the world. Founded by Park Ki-Tae in 1999, it is now a government-funded group with 120,000 South Korean members and 30,000 international members.

Most who are part of VANK are high school or university students, though there is no age limit to join the organization. Members of VANK can participate in various activities. For official members, ‘Cyber Diplomat’ and ‘World Changer’ are the two



Material kit for Ambassador for Friendship in Asia activities
[Source: Author, Jessica Kim]

main activities, which start with a month of education in which members learn about the organization and its role. Even non-official members can participate in activities hosted by VANK’s numerous campaign sites, such as ‘Cyber Dokdo Academy’ and the ‘Global Academy of History and Diplomacy.’ There are also many ambassador activities VANK operates through the ‘Global Vil-

lage Leader School’, including the ‘Ambassador for Friendship in Asia’, ‘Youth Minister for Public Diplomacy’, and ‘Ambassador for Korean Cultural Heritage’. Those that don’t have the time to participate in such campaigns and programs, can always show support for the cause by following VANK’s social media accounts on sites such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Naver blog.

I completed the Cyber Diplomat and World Changer courses when I was in middle school, and this became the start of my continued activities with VANK. The most recent ambassador activity I participated in was the Ambassador for Friendship in Asia. After getting accepted to the position, I received a kit with VANK’s promotion materials and a certificate. Using the kit and links VANK sent me, I started my research on various parts of Asian culture

and made my own promotional media, such as pamphlets, videos, and Powerpoint presentations. After completing numerous activities as an ambassador, I learned a lot about not only Korea but also other countries in Asia, like Singapore and Taiwan. The experience gave me an opportunity to realize future dreams of a future in the international PR profession and a mission to cultivate a world with more acknowledgment for various world heritages.

Due to COVID-19, many in-person activities have become hard to attend. Instead of stressing about the lack of those available, I recommend joining VANK and engaging in promotion programs. As a member or participant of VANK you can gain knowledge and a broad viewpoint of international society as well as contribute to the meaningful purpose of promoting Korea to the world!

Student Reporter



Harmonia Kim
Grade 11
New Covenant Academy

A New World to Experience

With all the confined time in our homes during quarantine, most of us have lost the ability to know how to actually enjoy new experiences outside and create new hobbies.

With COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, we have even more freedom to enjoy things we couldn’t do before. One special activity we can experience now, and even build as a hobby, is visiting museums.

During the pandemic, as I, just like everyone else, had to stay in quarantine for nearly a year, spent an uneventful and repetitive time at home. I lost my passion for the hobbies I had enjoyed before and forgot how to actually have fun during the rare outings I had. As the severity of the pandemic lessened and restrictions on outdoor activities were lessened, I wandered every time I went outside, unaware of how to enjoy what I was doing.

However, as I was searching for an entertaining experience, I stumbled upon the world of museums. They first came upon me when I was scrolling on TikTok, and a video introducing the Academy Museum popped up. I was slightly interested, but visiting a museum was something I’d never thought about before, especially since I’d only visited them as a young child for field trips. In fact, I’ve held a strange stereotype about museums being boring and uneventful. So, I considered for a long time whether or not I should go.

I visited the museum’s website to see what I would possibly experience if I went, and I continued on to see how much the tickets would be, blindly placing them in my online cart. And to my surprise, the tickets were free, which I figured out only after pressing “Place Order.”

After realizing there was no op-



Outfits worn by Academy Award winners are showcased at the Academy Museum.
[Source: Author, Harmonia Kim]

tion to cancel my order, I was left with tickets and no choice but to go visit the museum. At first, I was pretty confused about what I should do, but I soon changed my mind and realized that this was a new opportunity.

Nonetheless, this visit to the mu-

seum broke my stereotype of boring museums and opened up a new pathway to a hobby I will forever enjoy. After my visit to the Academy Museum, I ventured deeper into my interest by visiting the California Science Museum, and the Petersen Automobile Museum, and I plan on going to the Immersive Frida Kahlo Museum, along with many others.

Finding my new hobby of visiting museums has allowed me to experience new worlds without having to travel far, and has given me the opportunity to learn and open my view on various diverse areas of the world. For example, I learned about making movies, how a baby is born, and how cars are built, all at different museums. Visiting museums creates new experiences that anyone can enjoy, especially thanks to the various types of museums for different interests, and I encourage everyone to try one day.