

## Student Reporter

## My Experience at Head in the Clouds Festival



**Katherine Cha**  
Grade 11  
Herricks High School



Selfie taken in a crowd at Head in the Clouds festival.  
[Source: Author, Katherine Cha]

It was hot, the sun on my back with no shade nearby to take cover. I had no room to myself, people crowding together to try to get closer to the stage. At one point, I

almost passed out because of the heat. But was it worth it? Most definitely.

In late August, my best friend and I took a flight to California from New York with VIP tickets to a festival called Head in the Clouds, which had artists from 88rising attending. To put it simply, it was the most fun I had all summer. Months prior to this, my friend and I spent hours on FaceTime picking out our outfits, choosing a makeup style, deciding on our hair, and much more.

When I was finally on the plane to California, it was completely unreal. I was taking my first vacation without my family, and it was with my best friend. Looking forward to this festival for so long

almost made it feel like a dream when we finally landed. We spent the night at a hotel, unable to sleep from excitement for the day ahead.

It finally hit me that I was there when I saw the massive stage and all the people who had shown up. My best friend and I rushed forward and somehow managed to get the front spots. We stood there for hours, waiting for the first artist to start their set, making sure to keep our spots. Sure, it was exhausting, and our legs were hurting badly afterward, but we didn't regret it at all. We were so close to so many of our favorite artists, including Hojean, MILLI, Chung Ha, Jay Park, Keshi, and Joji.

On day two of the festival, by some miracle, my friend and I

were able to be in the front row again. When I say I was ecstatic, I mean it. On this day, we were able to see Warren Hue, BIBI, Rich Brian, and Jackson Wang. Warren Hue's and Rich Brian's set was something that can't be described completely in words. But what was truly magical was the finale when they had the entire crowd, which was big enough to fill the entire field, sing Midsummer Madness together in unison. I felt the most alive at that moment, with people waving their phone flashlights and singing the lyrics we all knew by heart.

Yes, I got sunburned. Yes, my entire body was aching afterward. But that festival was the best thing I've done in a while, and I will never forget it.

## Student Reporter

## National Teacher Shortages Threaten Schools



**Chase Kim**  
Grade 10  
Yorba Linda High School

America is facing a teacher shortage crisis. Classrooms across the nation have been short-staffed, leaving districts scrambling to find educators. Some districts have switched to four-day schedules, some are asking veterans and college students to teach, and one district in California even built an apartment complex to provide teachers with low-cost housing.

Experts say that the shortage is the worst the nation has ever faced. Dan Domenech, executive director of the School Superintendents Association said, "[he has] never seen it this bad." Domenech calls the teacher shortage the most pressing issue that school districts currently face.

Many states report thousands of unfilled positions across all of their districts. The Houston area, for example, reported 2,236 vacant positions among its five school districts. In California, mounting pressure means that



The hours of school libraries have been affected by staff shortages. Here, students enjoy the last period of the library's general-use time.  
[Source: Author, Chase Kim]

17% of K-12 classes are taught by teachers who are not properly credentialed for the classes they teach.

The teacher shortage has also disproportionately affected lower-income areas, perpetuating educational inequality. According to The New York Times, "the need for teachers is driven by a complicated interplay of demand and supply in a tight job market. Salary matters, and so does location." Simply put, suburbs receive more job applica-

tions because of their location and higher pay. Suburban areas aren't experiencing nearly as bad teacher shortages as low-income and rural areas.

The result? Richer, suburban areas fare well, while low-income and rural areas suffer. Educational inequality was already a prevalent issue before the pandemic, and the recent teacher shortage threatens to widen the gap between educational equality in low and higher-income areas.

For these areas with teacher shortages, it means students don't receive the same attention, school weeks may be cut to just four days, and the teachers that districts can get are often inexperienced. Coupled with "pandemic learning loss," students without adequate guidance can quickly fall behind their peers. The looming effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are often credited with causing the shortage. Experts point to many pandemic-related factors: low pay, teacher exhaustion, and a sense of undervaluation in the teaching community.

School districts are still struggling to find solutions. Domenech said, "...necessity is the mother of invention, and hard-pressed districts are going to have to come up with some solutions." So far, districts have tried outlandish ideas, but the answer to the teacher shortages seems much simpler: Give the teachers greater value, higher pay, and respect.

## Student Reporter

## David, the Best of the Sight &amp; Sound Theatre Productions



**Aerin Park**  
Grade 10  
Enloe High School

Religious films and plays are generally considered to be "boring" and "bland." The outright religious component of these films is also a factor that limits the approachability due to the lack of interest from atheists or people of other religions. However, some religious films are well-made and have an engaging story, attracting audiences from diverse backgrounds.

A very good example of successful religious media is David, produced by the Sight & Sound Theatre. This theatre is known to wonderfully stage stories from the Christian Bible, attracting even non-Christians to their annual musical productions. David is performing from March 12th to December 31st, 2022, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The musical is said, by many audiences, to surpass previously impressive Sight & Sound works, continuing the theatre's legacy of fabulous Christian musicals.

David presents the entire life of

King David, including his most infamous story of "David and Goliath." The musical is divided into 2 sections: before and after being pronounced king. The first section begins when King David is a little boy. The scene then shifts over to his teenage years when he defeats Goliath and returns from war with great glory. During this part of the musical, the emotional complexities of not only David but also the other characters are thoroughly expressed to the audience, adding an element of drama. The story progresses into David's adulthood, which emphasizes his tight, new friendships. David's kingship, sins, repentance, and death are all included in the second section of the musical.

As mentioned before, David was considered to be one of the best Sight & Sound musical productions by many of its viewers. Sara Park, an audience member of David said that "As a Christian, I was able to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout this musical. The different 4D effects, like the snow,



The house of the Sight & Sound Theatre filled with people waiting for David to start.  
[Source: Sara Park]

made me feel like I was experiencing the scenes first hand." This experience that Sara had comes from a few different aspects of David. The first and most important is that the producers of this musical were sincerely committed to their Christian faith, which could be felt through every part of the musical. The second aspect is that David shows the full story of King David's life. It not only focuses on his infamous encounter with Goliath or when he is crowned king but also goes on to transparently show his sins. This allowed for the scene of King David's repentance to be included, which was one of the emotional climaxes of the musical. This

scene represents the core topic of the Christian faith, and this beautiful representation caused many people from diverse backgrounds to feel moved.

The main reasons that David had such a great review from the audiences were the strong storytelling of King David's life and the commitment of Sight & Sound Theatres to the content of the musical and how those contents are designed to make the audience feel a certain way. David wonderfully demonstrates the potential that religious films or plays can have to inspire people when presented in a well-thought-out manner.



Student Reporter

Preparing for a New School Year



Jiseong Yoo  
Grade 9  
Sunnyhills High School



Isn't there always so much to pack before school? Physical things aren't the only thing you have to prepare for school; there is much more.  
[Source: Author, Jiseong Yoo]

As summer comes to an end, so is the break for students and teachers, and slowly, the school year is beginning. Realizing that it is soon time to start classes, students and teachers prepare for the new school year in countless different ways. Stores are filled with school supplies for students and teachers to find new, fun, and effective ways to teach. Not only do students and teachers prepare for the new school year, but

parents also helped prepare alongside students. Buying new clothes and school supplies, parents are just as busy. So, I interviewed a few people to find out specific ways people prepared this year.

When asked what you do in order to be prepared for the school year, one student replied, "I am a student going into 11th grade, and I prepare for school by studying for

my classes and getting into my daily routine. I am also preparing by taking AP tests and doing college tours for UCLA."

A teacher replied, "I am a 5th-grade teacher, and I prepare by attending workshops and sending emails notifying parents about certain events during the school year. One thing that I make sure to do before the year starts is changing the past lessons and making adjustments to them."

Students, after a long break, might forget lots of things they learned during the past year, so as a refresher, they might prepare by reviewing or previewing subjects. Students also might prepare for the new school year by practicing a sport they want to try out for, a club they want to join, or studying for a class they want to take. Not only do students prepare physically by buying school

supplies or studying, but students have to mentally train themselves for the school year as well. Waking up early in the morning to get in the habit of waking up on time, or as quoted by a student, "spending much of the day just studying," are good things to do. On the other hand, teachers prepare for the new school year by modifying their lessons, setting up rubrics, buying materials for the class, and many more ways.

As a student, I am also preparing for the new school year. Going to tennis practice, studying for math class, and much more, like going to orientation. As the break is coming to an end, there are endless preparations that have to be made in order for the year to be as smooth as possible—although having fun during your break and keeping the balance while preparing for the new year is also important.

Student Reporter

A Disappointing End to the Los Angeles Weeknd Concert



Ellie Yun  
Grade 11  
CAMS High School



The Weeknd explaining the situation to a shocked audience.  
[Source: Author, Ellie Yun]

On the night of September 3rd, my friend and I anxiously waited for the appearance of Abel Tesfaye, also known as The Weeknd. I was ecstatic to watch my all-time favorite artist, especially because it was my first concert after quarantine. As sweat dripped down my forehead, I could not take my eyes off of the empty stage as others around me scurried to their seats. Finally, the lights dimmed, and the long-awaited music began to play – the concert had started.

Immediately, all 70,000 audience members in the stadium jumped to their feet to cheer and chant Abel's name. My heart was beating out of my chest as it dawned on me that I would finally face my idol in real life. I will never forget that first moment when the spotlight revealed The Weeknd,

ascending out of the stage floor. Tears filled my eyes as the singer's angelic voice echoed throughout the stadium. As he moved from song to song, my friend and I sang along from the bottom of our hearts, although very off-key. Every time a new song started, I would

enthusiastically yell, "I LOVE THIS SONG!" Everyone around me was also having the time of their lives. Some were dancing with one another, and others were jumping up and down while singing their hearts out. Everything was perfect. I thought to myself, "Nothing could ever go wrong in this moment." That's where I was corrected.

It was only the 4th song in the set, "Can't Feel My Face," when something seemed off. Although I could hear the music playing, I soon realized that there was actually no one singing on stage. The Weeknd was nowhere to be found. The song came to an end, and Abel took to the stage as the stadium lights darkened. Everyone cheered outrageously, excited for what he had to say. However, Abel's first words were, "I don't

know what just happened when I screamed, but I just lost my voice." My smile faded, and my jaw dropped. The audience audibly gasped, and the stadium's mood immediately darkened. As he continued on, people had mixed reactions. Some were sympathetic and shouted supportive words, while others were the opposite and booed at him. My reaction, along with my friend's, was silence. As everyone exited the stadium, I was in disbelief and denial. All my adrenaline that had built up over the months leading up to this concert had been wasted. One concertgoer exiting the stadium noted that he was "so devastated and disappointed on how the night ended." Thankfully, however, The Weeknd has updated us on his socials, assuring us that his voice is okay. So now, the anticipation for his next LA concert begins.

Student Reporter

The Pomodoro Technique



Joan Huh  
Grade 10  
New Covenant Academy

Studying for hours at a time can be difficult for any student. It can also be hard to manage different tasks at once. Time management can therefore become a struggle, which is why people have made different study techniques to help stay focused. One of the most famous techniques is The Pomodoro Technique. Pomodoro came from Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. It actually translates to "tomato" in Italian because Cirillo used a tomato-shaped kitchen timer that rang after 25 minutes to improve his focus and break up his work.

My favorite part about the Pomodoro method is that it's pretty simple to use. There's no additional training or costs. It can even be customized to a person's liking. First, there should be a to-do list. The important tasks can be underlined to emphasize. Then, just set a timer, either vir-

tual or physical, for 25 minutes. The trickiest part is to fully focus on the tasks for 25 minutes without any interruptions. It may take practice to master this part fully, so don't worry if you fall short at first. Put all focus on using the 25 minutes as best as possible and avoid starting any breaks early. After 25 minutes, that's it! Enjoy a five minutes break and then repeat this four to five times. Finally, enjoy an extended break for 15-20 minutes. These break periods can be used as a lunch break or to spend a few minutes out in the sun.

People might ask why using the Pomodoro method is important. Well, the Pomodoro Technique helps practice self-discipline. It can emphasize time as a valuable asset because it allows people to make the most out of the time they have. Deadlines will be met, and that will improve confidence. One

of the main advantages of Pomodoro is that it helps prevent multitasking. Much research shows that the human brain just isn't capable of focusing on more than two things at one time. Multitasking can prevent one's workflow, and the Pomodoro Technique will counter that ineffective multitasking. This method is not hard to try, so anyone can tailor it to their needs to see what best fits their studying schedule.

I, personally, always use the Pomodoro Technique to finish school tasks. It's my favorite method since I'm usually prone to procrastinating when given lots of work. With the Pomodoro Technique, I am able to track my time and manage workloads with a list, which I used to track my tasks. Personally, the 25-minute session was long enough to get little work done but not so long that it felt overwhelming. It was surpris-



Setting time lengths for studying and then taking timed breaks is part of the success of the Pomodoro Technique.  
[Source: Author, Joan Jun]

ing how much I could accomplish in short bursts of focused effort. I personally increased my Pomodoro session to 35 minutes, as I thought that I needed more time to finish my work.

I highly recommend this method to students of any age who want to focus more on their work. It can be used for everyday tasks as well, so anybody can start it at any time.