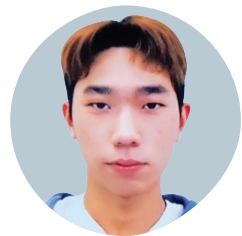


## Assistant Editors Column

## Hidden Books: Should Books Really Be Banned?



Thomas Lee  
Grade 11  
Cleveland High School



Stack of books required to read for my language and literature classes; half of the list consists of challenged or banned books. [Source: Author, Thomas Lee]

Literature is a pathway to different stories from our history and imagination with no constraints. As a junior in high school, I am exposed to a lot of books that consist of sensitive topics that students are not exposed to in previous grades. I started to read books like *The Bluest Eye*, *The Things They Carried*, and *The Great Gatsby* just a few months ago for a summer assignment in my AP Language class. However, novels like *Melissa* by Alex Gino, *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier, and *Animal Farm* by George Orwell were books I found off the shelves in the public library in elementary and middle

school. The commonality between all these books was either LGBT characters, 'sexually explicit' topics, or they had an offensive political viewpoint.

A broad spectrum of ideas in books has been challenged throughout the year, including racial issues, blasphemous dialog, encouragement of "inappropriate lifestyle," violence or negativity, and political bias. Books are usually banned by states in the United States by the local and state authorities who look to see and consider if the book is appropriate for the growth and the curriculums

of students and schools. Parents may view some books as inappropriate in specific cultures and belief systems and have the right to censor books that oppose the virtues of their family heritage. One of the most common and generic reasons is cursing and morally offensive behavior that may be harmful to the psychological growth of their child.

However, banned books can be the most important component when learning about topics that are undervalued or hidden from the public. These topics are often very close to reality and essential to learn in order to plant a sense of reality and expand perspectives of world view during a child's growth. Banned books and characters are often a way for a person to relate or cope during their lives. Banning such books can lead to a conservative mindset or unawareness of sensitive and historical subjects one must have to function in society. In Kansas, the famous *Charlotte's Web*, by E.B. White, was banned from school libraries

because the plot consisted of talking animals and death. Death is a natural occurrence. 'Death' should not be associated with a negative connotation all the time because death is a part of the cycle of life, and it is what every human being goes through. If books are banned for such reasons, the variety of book selections will be extremely small and possibly limit their child's creativity and imagination and the development of common sense.

Reading and analyzing books helps me to acknowledge and feel compassion from the perspective of a fictitious individual that may have a completely different background and history. How else would I be able to feel the pain and emotions of Pecola Breedlove and the cruelty of American history? How else would I experience the story of Melissa, a transgender person who acknowledged her identity of herself at a young age? While some people may see a reason for banning books, we must ask ourselves if it's for the best.

## Student Reporter

## Fall Foods in Koreatown



Alexis Choi  
Grade 10  
South High School

Pumpkin spice lattes, cinnamon apples, oh, and pumpkin spice lattes. Did we mention pumpkin spice lattes? It is that time of year again; autumn has finally arrived, meaning people are beginning to incorporate fall ingredients back into their diets. Spices, squash, apples, and everything pumpkin are making their reappearances, slowly taking over the menus at many restaurants.

However, it can be boring to always order the same squash soup or pumpkin spice muffin. Rather than the typical fall foods, why not try something different this year?

Koreatown in downtown Los Angeles is a wonderful place for individuals to experience autumn foods in a completely new form. Korean cuisine is becoming increasingly popular with the general public, and Koreatown's variety of both traditional and modern restaurants makes it a hub for unique seasonal menus. Here are some restaurants in Ktown with delicious autumn menus to try out and get in the mood for the new season!



Try out unique fall dishes, such as this sweet pumpkin seafood tteokbokki at Cafe Scent! [Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

If you combine one of the most popular autumn flavors with one of the most popular Korean foods, you get the Sweet Pumpkin Tteokbokki from Cafe Scent on Wilshire Boulevard. It is a unique menu for those who would like to taste an exotic dish that fits the autumn theme. Cafe Scent also has a diverse menu, including other seasonal dishes such as pumpkin seafood rice, pumpkin mixed green salad, and sweet potato almond pizza. With the perfect fusion of Korean and American flavors, as well as a lovely display of flowers, this cafe is highly recommended for those who would

like to experience modernized cultural foods with beautiful scenery.

An autumn ingredient that is extremely well-known in Korean culture is dotted gizzard shad, a fish that in America is actually more often used as bait and not for human consumption. However, in Korea, there is a saying that the taste of this fish can make a daughter-in-law who left home return (Translation: it's delicious!). One restaurant where individuals can fully enjoy the taste of this Korean fall staple is DGM Sashimi House, where you can have grilled gizzard-shad grilled or sashimi. These menus are seasonal, so they may or may not be available unless one visits during the autumn months. For those who would prefer a more affordable version of gizzard shad sashimi at a place as comfortable as home, it is recommended to visit the Hannam Chain Supermarket in Los Angeles.

Finally, one of the most traditional Korean autumn dishes is braised beef short ribs or galbi-jjim. Although meat is an ingredient abundant all year long,

other seasonal ingredients such as autumn chestnuts, dates, pine nuts, and fresh fall radishes add a special touch to the dish that can't be tasted otherwise. There are many restaurants in Koreatown that sell delicious galbi-jjim, but the place that uses traditional methods and autumn ingredients to create classic tastes is Jook Hyang, located on Olympic Boulevard. Jook Hyang also adds wild pine mushrooms to its braised short ribs, making them even healthier and more delicious! Other seasonal dishes at Jook Hyang include steamed abalone or jeonbok-jjim.

Overall, these restaurants are just a few out of countless sites in Koreatown and Los Angeles that boast delicious autumn dishes. Of course, there is nothing wrong with being an apple pie lover or drinking Starbucks pumpkin spice lattes every day. But broadening one's horizon of food and tasting autumn from different cultures can make the season more enjoyable. Next time you're craving something fall-y, or are visiting Koreatown, it's highly recommended that you stop by one of these restaurants!

## Student Reporter

## Transitioning from Healthy Trends to Healthier Lifestyles



Audrey Park  
Grade 9  
Northwood High School

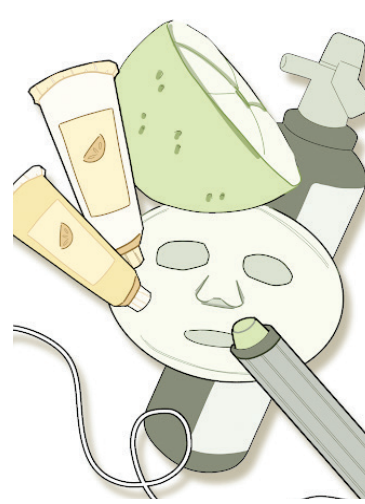
A young individual aiming to enhance their physical appearance enters a cosmetic store, navigates through aisles of full coverage makeup, and eventually arrives at their intended location—the skincare section.

The abundance of skincare products and hair serums being incorporated into beauty routines may be apparent to those who are aware of current trends. Of course, there is no mistake in believing that these practices are based on social media recommendations. Individuals a few years ago would be surprised to see that currently, a majority of youth who regularly use cosmetics share similar interests with dermatologists. In fact, the decision to place dermatology products next to makeup was set forth in 2018 and was heavily influenced by the development of 'self-care' trends. Today, the incorporation of self-care elements in makeup routines has be-

gun stunting the normalization of unhealthy beauty standards; more specifically, methods to emphasize the potential of natural beauty have circulated around skincare and haircare.

Personally, I started putting these recommendations into practice to maintain the health of my hair. Helpful advice towards reaching this goal of healthy hair has been uploaded on several social media platforms through videos and clips. Because a diverse group of individuals have the ability to share their own experiences with haircare, it hasn't been difficult to find hair products that would be most beneficial for my own routine. More simply put, browsing through this category of media can expose you to recommendations directed toward a wide spectrum of hair types.

Furthermore, it was evident that I was making progress when a tex-



Using hair care and skin care products in one's beauty routine is all a part of maintaining good hygiene and self-care. [Source: Author, Audrey Park]

turizing spray helped my styled hair maintain its shape so that I wouldn't need to apply additional heat, or when the serum I used was successful in retaining the moisture of my hair. I've also experimented enough to learn that all this extra attention is most beneficial before and

after washing your hair. While these methods are vital in my routine, the bare minimum of maintaining hair care is not to damage your locks: a goal that can be attained by using a heat protectant before drying wet hair and trimming the ends every other month. This goes to show that even the bare minimum of self-care can protect your hair from heat exposure and structural damage.

Despite all of this, trends related to enhancing the physical appearance is one of the most common reasons why insecurities and high beauty standards exist in the first place. Unfortunately, it is possible that the cycle of temporarily accepting new trends and dismissing them for the next may have an effect on the most beneficial ones. This goes to show that any excuse to exercise self-care is necessary. Ultimately, the youth of our generation should prioritize a positive self-image to foster healthier lifestyles.



Student Reporter



Angel Song

Grade 8  
Walter Reed Middle School

## Why PSAT Testing?



Items that are necessary for the PSAT and a PSAT study guide.  
[Source: Author, Angel Song]

In some Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools, PSAT testing for eighth-grade students begins in October. For Walter Reed Middle School, testing for all eighth graders will start on October 12, and students will get a chance to assess their abilities through this exam.

First, what is the PSAT? It stands for Preliminary Standardized Admissions Test, which was first ad-

ministered in 1971. It is divided into two different levels: one for eighth through ninth grade students and the other for tenth and eleventh grade students. The exam's difficulty depends on the student's grade level, with it increasing as students make their way through school. For applicable students, this exam is also referred to as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which gives them a chance to receive a scholarship through the National

Merit Scholarship Program. This test, in general, aims to prepare students for the upcoming Standardized Admissions Test (SAT) for college. The main goal for Walter Reed Middle School is also to check their students' academic skills and room for improvement, as well as prepare them for high school and, eventually, college. This lengthy test is comprised of four main sections, with reading comprehension, writing and language, and two mathematics sections, one with and the other without the help of a calculator. Some colleges are choosing not to require SAT scores in their applications, so this test may be optional; however, SAT testing has been a way for students to show college admissions how proficient they are at academics. Students at Walter Reed will take the 8/9 version of this test, considering that the students doing so are in eighth grade.

Considering that this is a test, many believe it is definitely worth preparing for it. There are many

methods to prepare for this exam, such as CollegeBoard resources that appear on their website. The PSAT is part of the assessments that CollegeBoard provides, and therefore, many resources and helpful tips are located on their PSAT page. Another option is Khan Academy, an educational nonprofit organization that assists many students with schoolwork and extra education. They also provide practice problems and practice tests for each version of the PSAT exam.

Many students choose to take the PSAT for different reasons. These can include preparation for the SAT, a scholarship opportunity via the National Merit Scholarship Program, or a general evaluation of their skills and improvements. Students in eighth grade at Walter Reed Middle School will be taking this exam on October 12th as a way to assess their proficiency in the areas that will be tested on the exam. Hopefully, we all do well.

Student Reporter



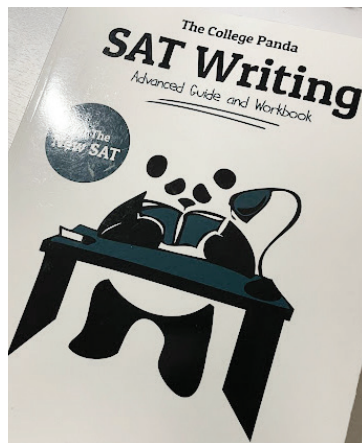
Andrew Chung

Grade 11  
Los Osos High School

## Final Draft - My SAT Experience

The notorious term "SAT" is one that makes shivers go down spines. It's one that makes people mentally drained and makes everyone feel a new sense of anxiousness and anticipation. The Scholastic Aptitude Test is one that is nationally used for college admissions in the United States. It is administered by College Board and is presented to all high school students throughout the country to take. It consists of a math, writing & language, and reading section. From there, the perfect score that one can achieve on the SAT is 1600: an 800 on the math portion and an 800 on the reading/language and writing portion.

I recently took the SAT on October 1st, and it's safe to say that it was truly an intriguing experience. I wasn't sure what to expect,



SAT preparation books and other resources are constantly being made to teach students how to master the test!  
[Source: Author, Andrew Chung]

as this was my first time taking the test (although I had done some practice on it prior), so a sense of nervousness crept on me the second I sat down in my assigned chair. When I was handed the test booklet, my heart began

pounding, and my palms became sweaty. It was a feeling I'd never had before when taking a test; it felt like hours before the actual testing would commence. However, when I actually started taking the test, it wasn't as bad as I thought. The nerves suddenly started to go away, and my hands weren't shaking as much. I was able to maintain myself and slowly start to put my entire focus on the test in front of me, and at that moment, I realized that I would be able to finish. It still felt very nerve-racking at times, especially during the breaks in between the sections, as my emotions caught up with me but went away again every time I had to focus. I almost felt a feeling of comfort by the end, as I felt like I had done my best and that I would be okay no matter what the end result turned out to be.

I learned that the SAT wasn't as bad as our society made it out to be. With it no longer being mandatory for several colleges in America, I definitely had a lot less pressure than students who took it before COVID-19 hit. But, that being said, I still felt extremely nervous, like there was a weight on my shoulders. In fact, after the actual testing process came to a close, I felt like I could definitely have a shot at doing significantly better if I started practicing frequently. Ultimately, I truly did gain a lot after just a few hours of testing. I learned that anything I put my mind to always would become something that was within reach, and that even something as notorious as the SAT was something that I could excel in if I told myself I could.

Student Reporter



Rubie Choi

Grade 11  
Torrance High School

## Ways to Improve Your Vision

What causes bad eyesight? Poor vision is caused by prolonged screen time, low water intake, lack of sleep, genetics, and health problems such as diabetes, strokes, and migraines. Millions of people all over the world suffer because of poor eyesight. However, there are a myriad of ways to improve your vision, which start with building healthy habits or wearing eyewear to protect your eyes.

A few methods that the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends to improve vision is to eat a variation of vegetables, like spinach and kale, utilize the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet in front of you for 20 seconds) to decrease the stress on the eye, and attend annual eye exams with an ophthalmologist. I personally use the 20-20-20 rule whenever I study for tests because the routine relieves my eyes after a long period of constantly reading and writing small words, which strain my eyes. You can also try to do eye exercises that engage the eye mus-

cles, which may temporarily delay the need for glasses or contacts.

Another way to improve your vision is to get glasses, contacts, or Lasik surgery. Glasses are prescribed to patients after eye exams and are curated to fit the patient's eye level. You can also get blue light glasses. Although currently there is no evidence that these prevent your eyes from worsening, they are definitely used to prevent eye fatigue, headaches, and insomnia. It is also encouraged to wear sunglasses while conducting outdoor activities. The UV rays that the Sun emits can damage your eyes severely. The rays cause cataracts, which is the gradual clouding of the lens of the eye, which can also exacerbate the worsening of your vision. Although cataracts mature steadily, once they have fully expanded, the vision becomes blurry. You can also get contacts. There are two types of contacts: soft lenses and hard lenses. Soft lenses are put on during the day and are made of silicone hydrogel. Once intact, they



My glasses that I use on the days that I don't put on my dream lenses the night before. There is a definite difference in my vision on the days that I do put on my contacts and the days that I don't.

[Source: Author, Rubie Choi]

modify the rays of light that pass through your eyes right onto the retina. Also, soft lenses allow oxygen to flow through the contacts, which is comfortable and a great way to maintain eye health. Hard lenses, or dream lenses, are put on while you sleep and are made of a rigid gas-permeable plastic that is thick. These lenses also allow for oxygen to reach your cornea while still preserving the eye shape. I have put on dream lenses for 7 years now and have seen a gradual increase in my eyesight. However, contacts will only work if you wear them every day and take good care

of them. Lastly, you can also get Lasik eye surgery. Generally, people who are older than 21 years old are eligible for the surgery because the shape of the cornea of anyone younger can still change. A specific type of laser is used to correct the dome-shaped tissue in your cornea to permanently enhance your vision.

Your eyes are the part of your body that enable you to see your loved ones and enjoy the nature around you. Therefore, it is very important to take care of them and have good vision.