

EDITORS COLUMN

Before You Watch XO, Kitty



**Thomas Lee**  
Grade 11  
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XO, Kitty is the latest Netflix show that is recommended to anyone interested in American RomCom and K-Dramas. [Source: Author, Thomas Lee]

Dominating all over social media since the release, XO, Kitty is undoubtedly one of the most popular Netflix shows today. Since the day the first teaser poster was released, viewers from all around the world have anticipated the release date of the spin-off series. The show attracted many viewers, with more than 72 million hours watched on the first day of release, and continued to appear as one of the top 10 series in 90 countries. Despite the impressive number of views, the

show did not fulfill the high expectations of the viewers built from the previous series, To All The Boys I've Loved Before.

Written and directed by Jenny Hong, this romantic comedy series focuses on the main character Kitty Song Covey, who travels to South Korea in order to discover and embody the roots of her mother, who had attended the same international school she was accepted to. With help from

her new friends in KISS (Korean Independent School of Seoul), she develops her identity and relationship with her long-distance boyfriend Dae. Some characters interacted with Korean celebrities, and K-pop was heard in every episode, including SEVENTEEN's "HOT", "VENOM" by STRAY KIDS, "The Weekend" by BIBI and 88rising, and "What You Waiting For" by Somi, which attracted many K-pop fans to watch the show. XO, Kitty is also one of the only American shows filmed in Korea, with the majority of the cast being Korean actors, which takes a part in expanding diversity in the American film industry.

In South Korea, Korean netizens shared their negative view in reviews, saying that the plot and scenery reinforce the stereotypical East Asian and Korean characteristics in the form of an American 'high teen' show. Many expressed their concerns and disbelief in the portrayal of Koreans being lactose intolerant. Koreans enjoy cheese

in many of their dishes, including one of the most famous street foods, tteokbokki. They believed that nothing about the country or the people was properly represented and feared this series would be used to form misconceptions used against Koreans. Some have also joked that they finally understand how the French felt with another Netflix show portraying a foreign culture, Emily in Paris.

However, Korean international schools have extremely distinct characteristics from public schools that the majority of Korean students attend. As a former international school student myself, the portrayal of an international school was quite accurate, as these schools embody the Western culture more than the home country of the campus. For that reason, I recommend XO, Kitty to anyone who is looking for a light love story of teens or is interested in Korean culture, but not as a prime source to educate or understand Korean culture.

Student Reporter

The Fallout of Fast Fashion



**Sarah Kim**  
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It's chic, cute, and cheap...but it's deadly to the environment. Can you guess what this is? The answer is fast fashion. More recently, fast fashion companies, including Shein, H&M, Zara, and others, have been increasing in popularity. These companies have the majority of their customers aging from 18-24, and the main targeted customers are women or people in the female group. Fast Fashion is cheap and affordable; therefore, companies that sell this type of clothing tend to go after younger adults who have jobs. Although the products that are sold may appear attractive or enticing, they have large and bad impacts on the earth.

Fast fashion requires the use of mass amounts of water, energy, and usage of non-renewable resources at an alarming rate. The fashion industry ranks 2nd in the consumer industry of water, as it



A dress from the fast fashion brand Shien is cute and trendy but has negative impacts on our environment. [Source: Author, Sarah Kim]

needs around 700 gallons for one shirt and 2,000 gallons of water for a single pair of jeans. The industry is also a large polluter, especially in the process of textile dyeing, as

the dyes are poured into streams or rivers.

These companies of fast fashion use synthetic fibers, including polyester, nylon, and acrylic, which can take centuries to biodegrade. These synthetic textiles also end up in the ocean. According to The True Cost, people use 80 billion new clothing annually, which is 400% more than the numbers twenty years ago. Every year, the average person now produces about 82 pounds of textile waste. One incredibly harmful textile is leather. To raise livestock, there is a massive amount of water, food, and land put into it. The most toxic part is the chemicals used to tan leather. They are not biodegradable and can contaminate sources of water.

The energy used in all this is also very intense. It requires great amounts of petroleum, which re-

leases acids. Cotton, an item that is used largely in clothing, is not healthy for the environment when being generated. The pesticides used to produce these types of clothing are not only harmful to the environment but dangerous to farm workers as well, as it brings up health risks to employees in the fields.

To stop fast fashion from having even more detrimental impacts, you can wear clothing for longer amounts of time, avoid buying clothing from fast fashion companies, buy more durable clothing, and buy pre-owned items, perhaps from thrift stores or from family members. With the help of the world, we can save workers' lives, help the planet thrive, and create an overall healthier community for everyone to live in. Solving fast fashion is a step closer to a happier and hearty planet.

Student Reporter

Website Making Over the Summer



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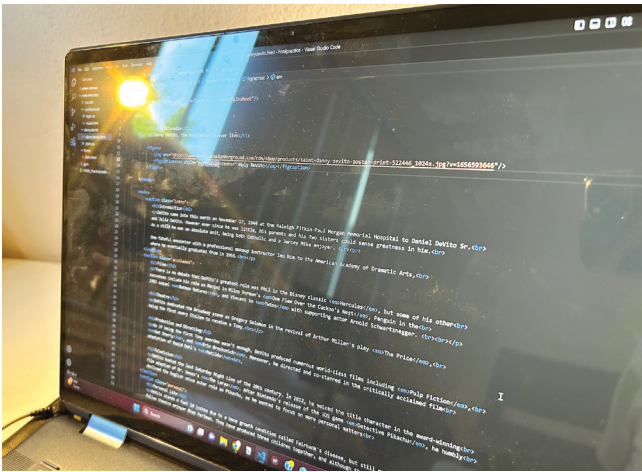
Now that school is starting to finish up and finals are over, have you ever wondered what to do over the summer? For most students right now, summer means online college courses, internships, or perhaps even a summer job. However, the summer is also a great time to start a new hobby without the stress of school. That's where website making can come in.

My website-making frenzy started when I began applying for a coding teacher position. The prerequisites for the job involved experience in JavaScript, HTML, and CSS, which are three coding languages used to build websites from scratch. HTML creates the backbone structure of the website, CSS styles elements to make them aesthetically pleasing, and JavaScript adds more advanced functionality to the website.

Right now, there are many courses all over the Internet that offer coding tutorials free of charge, but I picked Codecademy to start learning these website-building

languages. Although some of the content is paywalled, Codecademy does its job of teaching the basics of JavaScript, HTML, and CSS. The lessons are interactive, and anyone can jump right into the course without prior coding knowledge.

The great thing about website building is that there is essentially no limit to what you can put on your website. Although the only downside when you first start learning is that your website exists as an HTML file and not in a public server, it is nevertheless amazing how HTML can create practically anything. This almost unlimited creativity can be daunting, though, especially if your only exposure to website building is through platforms like Wix or Google Sites. However, I find it far more gratifying to build one from scratch. As the website designer, you have complete artistic freedom to create your own website elements and place them anywhere you want.



Learning how to make a website may seem like a boring thing to do over the summer, but is actually incredibly fun! [Source: Author, Jacob Kwon]

My first project was a celebrity fan page website of Danny DeVito made with basic HTML. This was before I learned CSS, the website element styling language, so you can guess how terrible it looked. Nevertheless, it was fun creating a Wikipedia-style fan page about DeVito with some images sprinkled around and fun facts about his life. Small projects like these, no matter their presentation, are a great way to practice HTML, and I can confidently say I've improved a lot through this.

The great thing about website building is that it can be an extension of your other hobbies. That way, you don't think of website building as simply having to learn programming. If you are into fitness, why not make a blog informing users about healthy lifestyle choices? If you love photography, why not create a website showcasing your best works? Website making can be fun, and with the summer around the corner, it's a useful and entertaining skill to have.



Student Reporter

## Growing Pains: Reflections on Insecurities



Rachel Chung  
Grade 10  
Archer School for Girls



Social media is a big influence on an individual's insecurities.  
[Source: Author, Rachel Chung]

Oftentimes, it's easy to want to blend into the crowd and resist the fact that what you see as your flaws are a part of your identity. From a young age, children are taught to express themselves in a way that makes them feel unique and comfortable in their own skin. They wear patterned leggings simply

because they like the colors of the stars on them, or they wear superhero capes to school because it makes them feel like one. But they fail to realize, at the age of 6 years old, that soon they will enter a new world where their lives are taken over by social images and self-consciousness.

Recently, I watched a video of a 9-year-old girl begging her mother for mascara because all of the other girls in her class were wearing it. When the mother asked why she wanted to be like the other girls, she had a defeated look on her face as she said she felt like an outcast from the other girls in her grade. Although when the mother was in school, young girls did not wear make-up, things are different now. Our world is actively changing the nature of 9-year-olds from the age of princesses and pirate ships to caring about how they look in the social eye.

In my life, I had found that blending in was a simple solution to hide the insecurities that hung over my head every day. Unfortunately, this seems to be. It's a process that everyone undergoes, yet it is still a process that makes one feel desolate in their struggle to accept themselves.

The world we live in praises the lives of models and celebrities, convincing us that what we see is real and the entire truth of it all. Social media also acts as a catalyst, causing some to get caught in an echo chamber of comparison and a lack of acceptance for themselves. In addition, it capitalizes on one's insecurities by advertising products that offer a quick fix to any problem you may seem to have.

People conform themselves to what they see on the front page of a magazine or on a billboard on the drive home. By doing this, you

suppress your true self and try to replace it with something strategically crafted by movie writers and photographers. This hinders one's ability for self-expression, and you lose the feeling of what it's like to be your true self. But how can we feel comfortable being ourselves in a world with standards impossible to reach?

The unfortunate news is that there is no step-by-step guide that one can follow in order to alleviate the burdens that society presents to us. What we can do is support and lift each other up when we put ourselves out there, and hope others follow suit. We can respect our differences and the stories that make us independent, all while accepting each other and building a community with people even across the continent. Until then, keep wearing your polka-dot leggings and your superhero capes.

Student Reporter

## The Evolution of the Republic of Korea's Military



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The military of the Republic of Korea has undergone multiple periods of restructuring and modernization under several administrations since its creation on August 15, 1948. Founded on the basis of the Korean Independence Army, the ROK army, navy, and air force were established under the supervision of the U.S. as a counterpoint to the Korean People's Army established under Kim Il-Sung and the Soviet Union. However, the army created for the ROK government was largely a police force meant to enforce law and order, not to fight wars.

This largely passive role played by the ROK military changed with the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950. The northern invasion of the south exposed the weaknesses of the ROK military, being ill-equipped with hand-me-down U.S. weapons and general unpreparedness for open conflict. By the time an armistice was established to prevent further conflict, the ROK military suffered a total



Collection of antique Korean War equipment at the War Memorial of Korea Museum, Seoul.  
[Source: Author, Ethan Chang]

of 150,000 military casualties. Following the war, the U.S. attempted to support South Korea with a joint-military partnership in order to train Korean soldiers and manufacture weapons, but it did not solve the ROK's main problem of over-reliance on U.S. weapons and imports. The military continued to play a largely constabulary role in South Korea until the overthrow of the interim government of South

Korea with the military dictatorship of the strongman president, Park Chung-Hee. Under his administration, Park intended to transform South Korea into a self-sufficient military power that could rival its hostile northern neighbors. One such policy was sending 320,000 troops to fight in the Vietnam War to help improve combat efficiency for the ROK military.

Park's policy coincided with the U.S. withdrawal of the 7th Infantry division from South Korea under the Nixon Doctrine, which stated the U.S. would only assist in the development of allied nations but not fight wars for them. The result was an expanded process of developing indigenous tanks, infantry, artillery, and aerial designs to replace the continued use of old American equipment, a policy that was expanded following the economic boom of the 1980s. This led to the creation of several state-of-the-art weaponry, such as the famed K2 Black Panther and the Raycolt KLTV transport vehicle. Many of

these weapons are highly sought after by foreign nations due to their reputation for efficiency, accuracy, and sophisticated designs.

By the modern era, the periods of restructuring, modernization, and self-sufficiency had paid off for the ROK. South Korea stands as one of the largest and most powerful standing armed forces in the world, with a reported personnel strength of 3,600,000, alongside a large arsenal of advanced indigenous weapons supplied by one of their defense manufacturing companies such as Hwanha and Hyundai. South Korea also plays a key role in supplying friendly nations, like Poland, India, and Turkey, with modern armored vehicles and artillery pieces to counter possible incursions from their hostile neighbors. As for military activity, aside from guarding from the north, South Korea has engaged in several peacekeeping operations around the world in accordance with the United Nations, such as in Lebanon, Somalia, and South Sudan.

Student Reporter

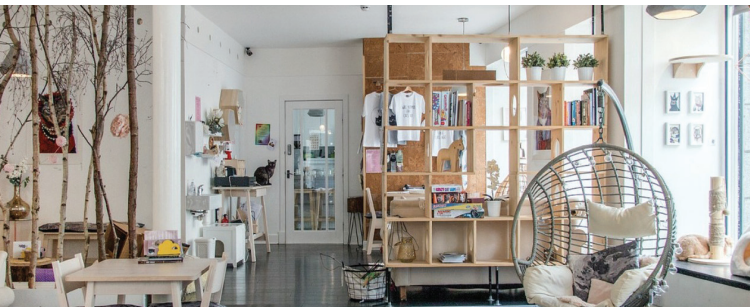
## Visit These Brew-tiful Cafes in Korea



Alexis Choi  
Grade 10  
South High School

This summer, tickets to South Korea are worth more than 2,000 dollars. Despite the soaring fares, many people have planned summer trips to Korea. In the past years, there has been an increasing number of tourists, attracted to the vibrant mix of modern and historical culture, and tasty cuisine. On top of this, another remarkable aspect of life in Korea is the abundance of charming cafes, all decorated with distinct interior and exterior features. Though the country is known for many things, many people are not aware of the extensive cafe culture; from cat cafes to trendy, themed ones, these cafes will make the airfare worth it!

The first cafe is one that most people probably recognize from aesthetic photos in their Instagram feeds. Located in Seoul, Greem Café is a must-go for everyone who enjoys unique and eccentric designs. The word greem means "artwork" in Korean, which is a fitting name be-



Korea has many cafes that are both aesthetic and delicious!  
[Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

cause the entire cafe is a work of art. From tables and chairs to the light fixtures, the cafe's interior is dominated by bold black ink, which gives its visitors a breathtaking experience of a two-dimensional world. Inspired by the popular drama series W, the cafe makes it seem like stepping into an unfinished comic, and the lovely pastries and coffee adds to this unforgettable experience.

The next cafe is Thanks Nature Cafe in Mapo-gu, Seoul. Korea has numerous cat and dog cafes, where visitors can enjoy a cup of coffee in the company of fluffy creatures. However, Thanks Na-

ture Cafe boasts what may be the fluffiest animals in the world: sheep. Two adorable sheep welcome visitors into the cafe, which has a warm, wooden interior and is decorated with many cute sheep items, such as fluffy dolls and figurines. Visitors can choose from the wide array of toasts, waffles, and hot drinks and relax while spending time with the friendly sheep.

Also located in Seoul, Cafe Onion Anguk is considered to be one of the most famous cafes in all of Korea. Found in Anguk, it's the perfect place to stop by on the way to visit Gyeongbokgung Palace. While the previous cafes were trendy and modern, Cafe Onion's

unique point is that it is housed in a Hanok, a traditional Korean house. With its classic roof tiles, authentic wooden interior, and low tables, the visitors sit on floor cushions as seen in historical K-dramas. The cafe is famous for its lavish selection of fresh bread and pastries, its signature item being the Pandoro, a fluffy bread topped with a mountain of powdered sugar. Although it may be crowded due to the sheer number of tourists stopping by on their way to nearby historical sites, Cafe Onion is the perfect place to get the full experience of Korea's mix of traditional and modern culture.

These are only a few of the picturesque cafes spread throughout Korea. Although drinks and desserts are undoubtedly essential aspects of cafes, many focus just as intensely on the overall experience that both locals and foreigners get from their visits. Designed to be places where people can enjoy, relax, and linger, cafe-hopping is a must for those visiting Korea!