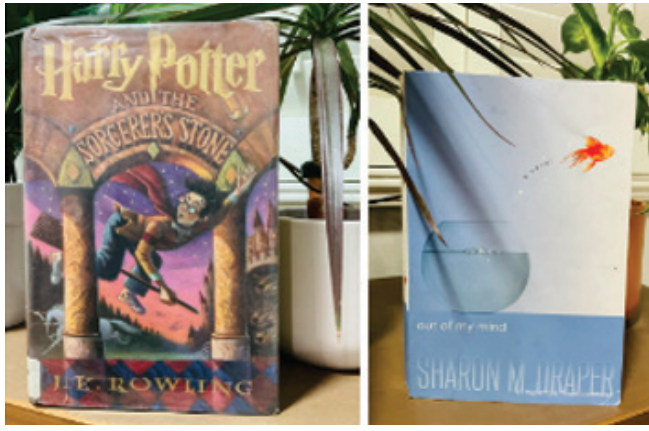


## Student Reporter

## How Does Each Type of Genre Affect One's Mind?



Hyunseo Stella Ahn  
Grade 7  
Mesa Verde Middle



Books can come in many different genres, each one helping you develop yourself in a different way. [Source: Author, Stella Ahn]

The first thing that a student learns in school is reading and writing. These subjects are a main part of living because everything around us is based on reading and writing. When a customer walks into a restaurant, the first thing they see is a menu board, which is needed in order to figure out what they will order. When people go shopping, they need to know what something is called and have to be able to read the names and tags on the items that they are looking for. However, even though reading and writing are used for everyday purposes, they can also be

used for entertainment. Reading a book can help expand the mind and even make the brain think about scenarios that people don't normally think about. Every time a person picks up a book and starts to read it, they think along with the storyline, allowing the reader to escape reality and enter the "book world." This is why reading different genres can affect a person's mind and thoughts in more ways than it seems.

For instance, reading a fantasy novel can get one's mind into a more creative mode, which can

lead to more ideas and thoughts about a subject or an opinion. Reading Harry Potter, by J.K. Rowling, can expand the mind to think about what wizards can achieve with their magic spells and what unicorns can do with their magical blood. Everything in these fantasy books can't entirely be true, given the fact that they feature fairies, mermaids, and other mythical creatures, or sometimes have a connection with magic. Reading fantasy novels can have some downsides, too. Reading fantasy instead of nonfiction can affect how someone behaves in a moment of stress or importance. Although reading fun and easily comprehensible text can be easy on the mind temporarily, when it comes to real-life problems, it could be hard to come up with a solution for that given moment. Reading fantasy books, as well as an equal share of nonfiction or realistic fiction, can be a great way to balance thoughts and ideas.

Another example is reading realistic fiction. Sometimes, life can seem boring, but jumping into

another person's shoes for a while can really help one to understand what other people's perspectives of something can be and how others can have similar or different problems. Reading Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper can show how it feels to be a kid with special needs. Realistic fiction also gives us a different perspective of what we see; for those who are affected by these issues, it can show them that they are not alone and that there are others who can relate. Sometimes figuring out how some people feel in different situations can help those who do not relate by showing them what makes others uncomfortable, preventing issues in the future. Realistic fiction books are types of reading that can expand the mind a little bit more and also spark creativity and imagination throughout the brain.

Overall, reading different genres of books can help with many different things, like understanding others, having an imagination, and sometimes just reading to feel better about something or to distract the mind.

## Student Reporter

## The Importance of Solar Energy in California



Ethan Chang  
Grade 12  
Stockdale High School

Over the last 20 years, the state of California has begun to rapidly grow its use of solar energy in an attempt to limit the use of fossil fuels, with the decline of solar costs and support from many local communities. Today, California ranks as the highest solar-producing state in the U.S., with 27% of solar energy used for the state's electrical generation. Much of this high usage of solar energy is attributed to the state government's policies incentivizing solar panels and a general standard that at least 60% of California's energy needs to come from renewable energy sources by 2030, with an ambitious 100% conversion by 2045.

California's journey to its widespread acceptance of solar energy began in 1991 with the construction of the 354 MW Solar Energy Generating Systems plant in San Bernardino County,

one of the largest solar facilities in the world for its time. Actions towards supporting solar energy increased in the mid-2010s, with the construction of the 550 MW Topaz Solar Farm and the Desert Sunlight Solar Farm in 2014. A year later, the 579 MW Solar Star facility went into operation. All three solar facilities mentioned were considered three of the largest photovoltaic solar facilities in the world, skyrocketing California's solar energy usage and the growth of solar-based companies like First Solar. This effort for solarization was further supported, with California leading the U.S. with the Million Solar Roof Initiative, a plan that resulted in the installation of over 230,000 solar panels on the roofs of Californian citizens. In December 2017, the California Public Utilities Commission approved allocating one billion dollars to incentivize owners of



Many homes in California can be seen with solar panels, helping to reduce the use of fossil fuels. [Source: Getty Images]

multifamily buildings to install solar panels, with the plan of adding 300 megawatts of solar energy by 2030.

Although utilizing solar energy to help move away from fossil fuels and combat climate change is a noble goal, full installation still has problems that need to be sorted out, particularly housing affordability with the added cost burden of needing to use solar panels. The

U.S. Census Bureau in 2017 has already shown that at least 37.8% of California homeowners with mortgages are burdened with housing costs that often exceed 30% or more of the household income. Nonetheless, better economic decisions and competent leadership could help stabilize and successfully prepare California to become an example to the United States of how to run a state on sustainable energy.

## Student Reporter

## Season of Festivity



Derrick Ahn  
Grade 11  
Oxford Academy

Winter is the darkest time of the year. A leafless landscape, swept with pale white sleet and snow. Many associate winter with loneliness, nostalgia, and death, so why is it also affiliated with festivity?

There is no one definitive reason as to why the celebratory feelings of the holiday spirit exclusively belong to winter. This cold season pays homage to Thanksgiving and hosts two big holidays: Christmas and New Year's Day. In fact, Christmas is such an integral holiday that it has spin-offs such as X-mas Day and Christmas Eve, a holiday reserved to celebrate the day before Christmas!

From a traditional aspect, the Gregorian Calendar, or the modern calendar, has December, the month that officially ends the year, followed by January, symbolizing new beginnings. The winter sol-



A Christmas tree can be decorated with baubles, Christmas lights, and ornaments. Gifts can be placed underneath, an insignia of festivity! [Source: William Warby]

stice celebrates the reversion of the daylight hours and happens to be the shortest day of the Sun's appearance. Cultures such as the Ancient

Romans engaged in a festival, celebrating the rebirth of the year, one predecessor of the New Year's Day we have currently.

Christmas has traditionally been a time of rest and observance of the year's end. It also allows for many get-togethers and motivates communal activities and the communal spirit, harnessed especially in winter pastimes. Gifts are often exchanged during such holidays to express the gratitude we have for each other, which contributes to the jolly atmosphere. The memories we make along the way invoke nostalgia in many occasions, and thoughtful reflections can add to the sentimental, heartwarming pang.

2023 surely has been an unconventional Christmas, a Christmas we haven't experienced before. Many can state that the usual spirit was absent. And I'd have to

agree. With the ripples still that the COVID-19 pandemic caused, Christmas has lost its livelihood and may have killed the phoenix, the phoenix that is festivity. A winter without festivity is unprecedented, and winter would rather be a nameless season than to be the winter we all know. Where would be communal warmth when there is no hearth? A pinecone without a pine tree? Most importantly, what would winter mean to you?

A season of festivity is what transitions everyone into a new year — a new year filled to the brim with unexpected twists and surprises. Without festivity, we would not be able to frame our memories or conserve them. Therefore, society needs to value the festivity that winter brings, to value the joyful memories we can look back on and reminisce in the next Christmas that follows.



Student Reporter

## Equity Club



Seah Kim  
Grade 10  
Apex School



Learning about the different types of biases can help us from continuing to have them in the future. [Source: GettyImages]

You've heard of the word "equity," but do you really know the difference between equity and equality? You probably didn't dive into it too deeply, maybe thinking it's the same meaning as equality. What if I told you equity is the opposite of equality? What if I told you the word is important enough that a school district made a dedicated policy and club based on it?

Before beginning this school

year, I was invited to be a part of a small, unknown, maybe a little skeptical orientation recommended by my history teacher. I was told it would be the first year where ideas were put into action, the North Carolina Wake County Board of Education making a district-supported club based on equity and its definition. When I attended the orientation, the crowd wasn't big. It wasn't a lecture or a class, but more casual, like a club gathering.

We did activities, read articles, and shared experiences. I learned many types of biases in our society, such as unconscious bias, confirmation bias, conformity bias... They don't seem like everyday vocabulary, so we regard them; however, in our daily lives, we can easily spot them. It is more comfortable to be around your ethnicity or the same race. You might compliment someone's accent, which wasn't a compliment in their view. The world is diverse, making it very difficult to have a neutral perspective. However, it becomes a bigger problem when different traits are seen as barriers and limit resources.

The definition of equity is narrowing the gaps and eliminating factors such as racial predictability and disproportionality. Providing the necessary requirement for each individual to bring the best out of a student in school while equality is being the same,

even if the starting line is different. Schools do their best job to advocate kindness and equalness, however, there is a social gap the adults can't quite intercept. The invisible line between different races, genders, or age plays a slight but definitely effective role. The equity club strives for students to be involved so they can make the change themselves, changing the atmosphere physically. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to be a part of the club for too long due to transferring schools; still the same district but one without the club. I am planning to start a club in my new school however, having firm beliefs it could improve the school for the better. Not just in North Carolina, sharing this information and idea will influence others to change the school's implicit and explicit biases themselves. It can be awkward, and being different from the crowd is people's greatest fear, but we can do it.

Student Reporter

## Experience in UDLA



Lindsay Seon  
Grade 12  
Fairfax High School

Throughout my high school years, I've dedicated my weekends and free time to serving my community alongside the Unification of Disabled Latin Americans (UDLA), a non-profit organization that strives to help those who are physically challenged. They help create a safe and loving environment for the disabled to gain their confidence. I have actively participated in many of the events hosted by UDLA, including tasks such as handwriting letters to the elderly, cleaning the streets of Koreatown, and spreading awareness about disabilities.

When I first joined UDLA, I was feeling nervous and unsure about my role. However, as I continued to participate in more events, I knew that what I was doing was making a positive impact on other people's lives. Through



At the Korea Town Beautification event, mic holder Ruben Hernandez, UDLA founder, explained the goal of cleaning the streets together to make a better environment for everyone.

UDLA, I was able to meet amazing people like Ruben Hernandez, the organization's founder. "Together, we conquer the mountaintop," UDLA founder Ruben Hernandez said. I find this quote highly motivating. It conveys the true message that alone, one cannot make a significant impact in

the community. However, when working with a team, tasks can be accomplished more efficiently.

At one point, we organized an event to clean the streets of Koreatown as a way of serving our community and setting a good example for others. This event also aimed

to raise awareness about the abilities of disabled individuals. As a team, we spent hours cleaning the streets and sidewalks, picking up trash until we'd covered the entire neighborhood. Apart from cleaning the streets, we also encouraged others to volunteer and take part in the event. Overall, this event had a positive impact on our community and everyone involved.

I continued to help out whenever I could and eventually worked my way up to becoming President of the UDLA's Los Angeles Branch. Although helping out in some of these events was tedious, the satisfaction of witnessing the joy on people's faces in my community is what kept me motivated. All the hard work that goes into these events is worth it when I see the smiles on people's faces.

Student Reporter

## Lion's Pride: Fairfax's Finest in Gaming



David Kim  
Grade 11  
Fairfax High School

High school culture is constantly changing, with trends coming and going at lightning speed. However, there is one form of entertainment that has stood the test of time and continues to captivate the hearts and minds of students at Fairfax High School. We're talking about video games, which have created unique subcultures within our large school. Among our school community, the top five most popular video games, according to a survey of 50 students, are:

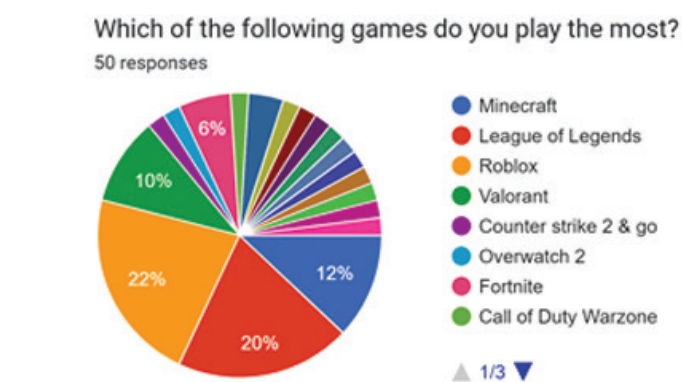
1. "Roblox"
2. "League of Legends"
3. "Minecraft"
4. "Valorant"
5. "Fortnite"

A survey was conducted among students who are interested in video games, and it revealed that many of them have a strong preference for certain types. This is not surprising, as these games are popular worldwide among many gamers. This data reflects that our school's gaming trend is in line with the global internet gaming trend.

Based on the data, it appears that the majority of Fairfax students who play video games prefer "Roblox," an online game platform that lets players access games created by other users. This game is popular among different age groups and continues to be favored to this day. Its appeal may be attributed to the fact that it's free to play and offers thousands of games that are mostly free of charge.

Coming up second, "League of Legends" has been a massively popular game for the past decade. It is a team-based strategy game where two teams of five powerful champions battle to destroy the other's base. The game provides a unique isometric perspective, allowing you to control your champion and work with your team to defeat your enemies. It became popular due to its free accessibility when it was first released in 2009.

Third, "Minecraft," one of the most popular games in the world, was first released in 2011 and is still



Many students at Fairfax High play video games, with the majority favoring Roblox and League of Legends. [Source: Author: David Kim]

favored by many gamers today. Its unique gameplay style with simple mechanics allows players to freely express their creativity and unleash their imagination. This simple block game revolutionized the gaming industry by offering endless possibilities and caught the attention of gamers worldwide.

Moreover, Valorant and Fortnite are highly popular games among the Fairfax community and gamers worldwide. Valorant is a first-person shooter game that involves two teams of five battling

each other until one team reaches the winning score. On the other hand, Fortnite is a third-person shooter game that has gained immense popularity among young gamers. In this game, up to 100 players compete against each other to be the last person or team standing.

Overall, the Gazette's survey shows that Fairfax students enjoy playing nostalgic games that have stood the test of time while also keeping up with current gaming trends.