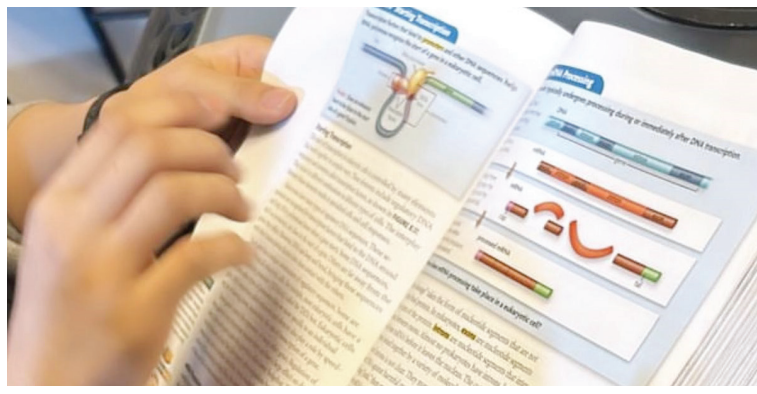


Student Reporter



Sujin (Maria) Kang
Grade 12
Korea Liberal Arts School

How to Use Your Senior Year Wisely



Tutoring biology to my peers is a way I can give back during my senior year.
[Source: Author, Sujin Kang]

Senior year is the busiest but also the drowsiest time of high school. Of course, seniors are stressed and exhausted with college applications and coursework. Yet, towards the second semester, we may get so “used to” everything in the school that we no longer get intrigued by new things. Expecting to depart and leave for a new environment, seniors may get senioritis towards the end of the school year. However, senior year is also a perfect time to give back to the community and help others with our experiences;

As a senior, I’ve decided to keep myself engaged and dedicated by tutoring my younger peers.

Ever since my sophomore year, I have been assisting younger students in subjects like Biology, helping one of my tutees elevate his grade from C to A+. Tutoring was a meaningful experience as it allowed me to watch others improve through my help: I observed students gradually discover an interest in subjects and improve their grades. Tutoring has always been

an opportunity to give back what I received and help the younger community adapt to the school. Thus, I decided to continue it in my senior year as well.

This year, I started tutoring new students in a personalized and focused way. These freshmen are unfamiliar with the environment and often struggle to adapt to their studies and the community. So I decided to help them feel more comfortable with rigorous courses and also widen their social circle by interacting with seniors. I scheduled tutoring for Literature, History, Biology, Earth Science, Latin, and Research Paper courses by spending an hour during night study halls.

While tutoring, I try not to “assume” prior knowledge from my tutee or expect him or her to understand the correlations of information without my help. That is, I explain concepts from A to Z in detail, connecting them to other

information so that the student not only memorizes the information through true understanding but also sees the bigger scope of the knowledge. Also, I try to keep my tutoring engaging by “story-telling” information so that the tutees can naturally remember the information rather than trying to memorize it. For instance, I would teach my students about ionic bonds by comparing them to “two people coincidentally falling in love while they only met each other to trade used items (electrons).” These methods worked effectively and helped my tutees improve academically and become punctual with their assignments as well.

Tutoring has been my method of taking initiative during my senior year while contributing to the community. However, I encourage other seniors to find ways to be involved as well. Though senior year may be a monotonous part of high school, it can also be an opportunity for seniors to do something memorable and positively influence the community before their departure.

Student Reporter



Tiffany Park
Grade 9
Northwood High School

New School Year, New Freshmen!

It has been approximately a month since the Irvine Unified School District started its new school year of 2024 to 2025. A new school year also meant new freshmen at Northwood High School located in Irvine, California!

On the first morning, students biked and walked through the concrete floor of Wolf Trail, the entrance to the school, and some got dropped off at the parking lot. What welcomed the students back was the Northwood High School’s marching band and cheer team. Led by the drumline playing the cadence, over 200 students marched to the rhythm throughout the whole school. When they arrived at the center pod of the school, the band played the Northwood Fight Song conducted by drum majors, Michael Lei and Erica Zhou. The rich melody of the brass instruments and the beautiful harmonization of the woodwinds echoed through the school, marking the start of another academic year.



Northwood High School Marching band performed their cadence on the football field.
[Source: Northwood High School official Instagram, @nhs.twolves]

The freshman came to school full of excitement in their eyes. It was very easy to identify them during the first two weeks. Some had their eyes sparkling with excitement, and others stopped to look at their map, trying to find where they needed to go next. Lots were amazed by the size of the school and the new facilities they had access to. Freshman student Katherine Chu said, “Northwood High School is so big! It’s so much bigger than I thought it’d be!” Because of the size of the school, many students got lost in hallways.

Thankfully, the teachers were understanding and excused tardies for the first two weeks. Another freshman at Northwood High School, Aubrey Lee, describes the difference between 8th grade and 9th grade, “Northwood High School is approximately two times larger than its feeder school, Sierra Vista Middle School. I feel like the difficulty and the amount of homework skyrocketed compared to 8th grade. Now I know why my sister said high school is the real deal.”

The freshman may all be in the same grade level but that doesn’t mean they’re all the same. There will be the workaholics filling their schedule from 0 period all the way to 8th. At the same time, some will take the 5 mandatory classes and an elective they were forced to choose. Some students will take advantage of their new phone policy and play games during lunch, break, and tutorial, while some will continue to relax with their friends.

Time has now passed and the new students are getting used to their new school. It is now rare to see people running around with maps in their hands. The school has become a lot livelier as every single student, from freshman to senior, and even the teachers, has fully returned from their long summer break. Though lots are suffering from this week’s heatwaves, they seem happy to be back at school. As the hot California sun lights up the Oak trees and students’ voices and laughter fill the air, Northwood High School is back to normal.

Student Reporter



Sander Im
Grade 12
Rise Kohyang High School

Hardware Maintenance: Computers Need Cleaning Too

Maintenance of hygiene is a beneficial practice anywhere. Whether it is a house, kitchen, or laboratory, a clean environment has various long-term upsides. This is true for computers as well; they can be thought of as a small house of electronics and circuits. Such an intricate machine, unfortunately, is forgotten in routine cleanings. But, why is it important to have a well-maintained computer?

It’s important to understand that movement releases heat as a by-product, and a computer processing information follows the same principle. Computers are notorious for releasing large amounts of heat, requiring a dedicated cooling system for certain hardware. The heat inside hardware is inevitable, but higher temperatures place additional stress on the computer and gradually lower its performance quality. In the worst cases, internal heat forces

the computer to shut down in an attempt to prevent any damage that may be caused because of this.

Other factors can also affect the heat that circulates. Dust accumulation, for example, is a common cause for computers being abnormally hot. The reason is that dust on hardware helps retain heat instead of allowing dissipation. This is worsened by cooling components such as fans becoming less efficient. Luckily, heat retention from dust can be solved by consistently cleaning the interior. The main method is directly accessing the hardware by opening one of the side panels. A standard case will have removable screws for the panel; be careful if the panel is glass. There are several ways to clean the internals, but the easiest is using a cloth to remove dust. A warning when you do opt for this is preventing static electricity from building up. While most modern hardware is resilient

to a static shock, you should prevent any uncontrolled release so that no circuits break.

Other common methods involve using air, but they do require spending money on specific equipment. The cheapest option is using cans that release powerful air, but this will require multiple cans for long-term usage. The alternative is using a hair dryer or buying a dedicated duster that uses electricity. This approach can be more efficient in the long-run, but make sure that you use cool air instead of hot for the dryers.

Now, the next question is the frequency of cleaning your computer, and it varies in each household. Some houses may contain more dust, and that affects how often you need to sweep the internals. A good starting point is once every month or cleaning whenever you notice an excess of dust.



There are inexpensive options to use when cleaning your computer; compressed air to quickly blow dust off hardware.
[Source: Author, Sander Im]

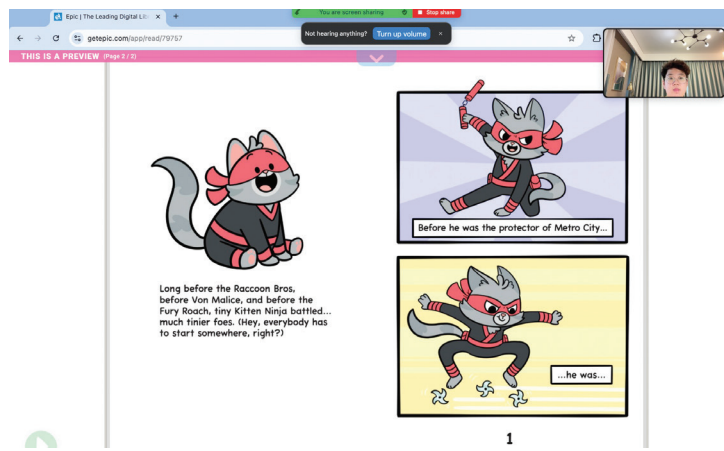
Computer maintenance is much like any cleaning, a chore. However, if you are aware that you use computers frequently, a quick cleaning can help prolong the longevity of your hardware.

Editors Column

Teaching English to Guatemala Students



Hajoon Song
Grade 11
International School of Beijing



I use many aids when teaching English, especially when both tutor and tutee have different native languages. Changing up material helps keep things fun. [Source: Author, Hajoon Song]

I recently had an opportunity to tutor Guatemala students in English as a community service experience. I heard that Guatemala has very limited access to English education; students tend to learn English that is significantly easier than the contents of a different country. I used an online meeting app to tutor, and the face of an 11-year-old

girl, Cathy, appeared on my screen as I connected. There were many challenges and rewards of tutoring.

At first, communicating with Cathy was the largest problem that I encountered when teaching her English. In Guatemala, the native language is Spanish,

which I do not know at all. Since Cathy did not have a great understanding of English skills at first, it was challenging for me to understand Cathy whenever I tried to teach her basic English words and grammar. So, I relied on the Spanish translator, images, and body language to help Cathy out whenever she was confused about my lesson.

During the English Lessons, I tried to make the session as fascinating and fun as possible. I knew that Cathy would not focus well if I just focused on teaching as much information as possible. We played word games, sang English songs, and read simple stories together. I used a lot of visual materials to act things out and to break things down step-by-step. Cathy's favorite interaction was always the conversation practice/acting, which took place at the end of the class.

Cathy said that her main goal for this tutoring was that she wants to go to the United States after the lessons and speak English fluently. We would discuss her day, interests, hobbies, and current events. I was astonished at how quickly Cathy's conversational English skills improved. I could see that she had the confidence to speak.

Tutoring Cathy has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my tutoring life. Her unique energy and enthusiasm to learn and her progress each week was amazing. We have become good friends, checking in on each other's lives beyond just the lessons. If you have the chance to volunteer to tutor English, I highly recommend you do it. The impact that you can have, even from thousands of miles away, can be very regarding if you meet an amazing tutee.

Student Reporter

Balancing Cell Phone Use in California Classroom



Abigail Ro
Grade 9
Yorba Linda High School

In an era where digital devices are omnipresent, schools across the United States are grappling with how to manage the ideal balance within classrooms. While states such as South Carolina and Louisiana have instituted bans against phones in classrooms, California's approach remains more flexible, reflecting the state's diverse educational environment.

States with school cell phone bans have the goal of minimizing distractions and enhancing student focus. However, educators like Mr. Gregory Walls, a science teacher at Yorba Linda High School, YLHS, believe such a ban may not suit California's classrooms. He believes that the ability to tailor rules to the specific needs of students and the dynamics of each school is crucial. "Students and classes vary in California. As a teacher, I like setting my own rules for my students," Walls explains. He acknowledges that while phones may be distracting, they are no more than tradi-



Students working on classwork assignments during Mr. Walls' class, all without their phones out. [Source: Author, Abigail Ro]

tional distractions, such as passing notes.

Additionally, when Mr. Richard Cadra, a teacher at YLHS, highlights the importance of cell phones in emergencies, he notes that "banning cell phones entirely is not the best solution because, in the event of a school emergency, students will not be able to call or text for help." His concern demonstrates a consideration of safety

and communication.

Undoubtedly, cell phones change classroom dynamics over time. Cadra observes that students now often arrive quietly and focus on their screens before class begins, contrary to when students came into [his] classroom 20 years ago. They were energetic and talking with their classmates." When positively looking at this shift, phones provide instant access to informa-

tion, which can enhance learning. On the other hand, they offer approaches to online distractions such as games and social media.

To manage these challenges, teachers like Mr. Walls and Mr. Cadra use various strategies. Mr. Walls requests all students put their phones away during lectures and tests to minimize opportunities for lost focus. Mr. Cadra, recognizing students' busy lives, asks for respectful phone use, allowing quick communication but encouraging students to put phones away promptly. "I ask that my students are respectful with their phone usage and quickly take care of any pressing needs," Cadra explains.

In California, teachers are finding that balancing the benefits and distractions of cell phones requires thoughtful, adaptable strategies. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, so will the approaches to managing cell phone use in the classroom.

Student Reporter

Should Teenagers be Allowed to Carry Guns?



Kaylyn Yu
Grade 10
Chantilly High School

For centuries, the United States has been proud to be represented as a 'free' country. The severity of restrictions on the possession of firearms is considered relatively loose in the U.S., but there are still certain rules that should be followed to maintain safety in communities. One established guideline is that children under 18 years of age should not possess these weapons, save for a few exceptions. Carrying any kind of weaponry, including guns, has become more common for teenagers within the last decade. Many people feel safer and assert that a protective device could avert them from danger in hazardous situations. Although being cautious of such risky circumstances is not necessarily wrong, it could become controversial if the weapons induce more damage than security. Self-defense is not always the grounds for weapon use among teens, and it can be easier to cause

violence if one has such a destructive weapon on them.

On the night of Chantilly High School's first home varsity football game, a fight was initiated in a town center nearby at around 10 pm. Many students were involved, and one teenager pulled out a gun, which was thankfully not fired. The commotion resulted in the police's involvement in the case; to investigate and settle the situation. As the football game had ended shortly before the disturbance, many teenagers were present at the site to enjoy food or hang out with friends. The number of people in the location revealed how impactful the consequences would have been if the gun had been used. The incident was resolved soundly, although it unsettled numerous people in the area.

A high school student who had

been on the site with fellow classmates said, "It is concerning that teenagers are casually walking around with firearms and are willing to shoot another person. Someone could have actually been seriously hurt or even killed, and I'm glad that the police got involved to stop it." They stated their opinion on the idea of minors with guns: "Minors are not mature enough to properly use a firearm, especially without adult supervision. Teenagers are known to be exceptionally reckless and not think about the consequences of their behaviors, which is why having them use a weapon that can cause serious injury could cause harm to many people."

This kind of occurrence shows the devastation a gun could cause to innocent beings—not just minors, but all people. Teenagers should be aware of the harm they could bring



Teenagers' brains are not fully developed, impairing their decision-making skills when handling weapons like guns. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

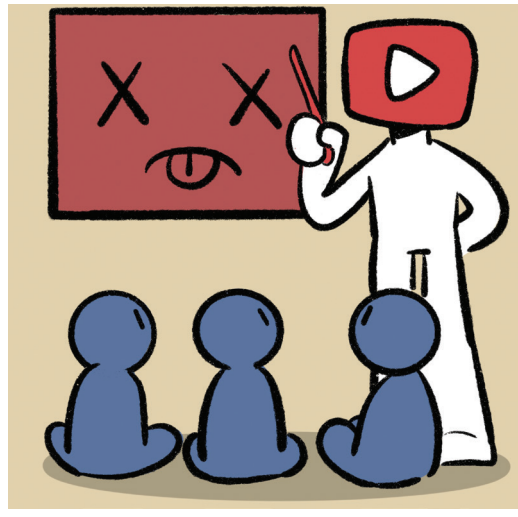
upon others, and make decisions accordingly. The concept of minors with firearms should be taken more seriously and heeded properly around the country.

Student Reporter

The Dangers of YouTube Kids



Chloe Je
Grade 9
Orange County School of the Arts



The inappropriate content on YouTube Kids seems to glamourize violence and other disturbing actions; it can be a horrible role model for your children.

[Source: Author, Chloe Je]

In this day and age, more children at younger ages are given access to the Internet. However, not everything online is safe for younger audiences to see. Many parents have given their children YouTube Kids, a sub-platform of YouTube, advertised as a content platform for youth that filters out inappropriate videos. Unfortunately, it has only become more

evident that YouTube Kids may not be the ideally safe platform for your children.

When creating an account for a child, the parent or guardian is asked to select one of two options: one where the child can only watch hand-selected content or one where they have complete access to the YouTube

Kids' selection. Most parents trust the YouTube Kids filter and choose the second option, the one that may lead to a dangerous rabbit hole.

One of the most commonly found dangers of YouTube Kids are videos that fall under the genre of Elsagate. Deriving from the popular Disney movie, Frozen, these videos utilize fun and familiar kids characters in dangerous, violent, and often extremely disturbing situations.

These Elsagate videos come in different shapes, sizes, actors, creators, and animations, but the money is common throughout all of this type of content. These videos rake in lots of views and turn out to be a very profitable idea. This twisted business has also found loopholes to get past filters and parents. These clips often start off fun and lighthearted, but slowly dive into darker aspects to fool unaccepting parents who may have tried taking a sneak peek at these episodes. They also label their episodes with words like "kids," "nursery rhyme," or "educational," to fly under the radar. The same creators are also found to have multiple channels to work under, so if the vid-

eo gets reported, then it will appear in the algorithm again, just minutes after, under a different channel.

Not only is there a large business working under YouTube's filters, but some videos also slip through by accident. On YouTube Kids, there is a large section of the videos dedicated to PG gameplay. However, many content creators have used these character models to make animations, which don't always end up being appropriate. For example, a popular YouTube show, Skibidi Toilet. While the original show itself cannot be found on YouTube Kids, many remakes, or other content including these characters can be found. These characters often promote gun violence and disturbing behavior. Overall, while YouTube has managed to clear up its feed ever since, most children don't actually use YouTube Kids, but rather the main platform where other targeted videos still thrive. While there is no direct solution to this evolving problem, it is best to wait until the children have matured more. Let's keep the growing generations safe from the harmful side of the internet.

Student Reporter

The Journeys of an Artist



Olivia Lee
Grade 8
Richardson Middle School

Pinkfong, the media company behind the internet-famous song and video Baby Shark, is a stepping stone to personal career opportunities. Despite being a key contributor to the viral sensation, Stella Yoon, an artist who creates animations for children at Pinkfong, sought her journey as a content creator for children.

Yoon fell in love with children's books in her mid-20s. She admired the pictures and little writings that were so well thought out. As she explored new children's books, she began to collect them as well. Yoon was so immersed in the process, that she decided to try it out. She wanted to create original children's books that would inspire others. Therefore, she chose to work at the Samsung Publishing Company.

This project led the company to

partner with the Pinkfong Company to construct applications for the books. Furthermore, Yoon decided to work for the Pinkfong Company with her newfound joy in drawing characters. Yoon stated, "When I first started my job, there were only about 20 people in my station. There were developers, project managers, and designers. I was the project manager. I got to decide all the ideas for future projects and even down to small details like how the character moves."

Although working at the Pinkfong Company seems like a lot of pressure, Yoon thinks otherwise. She says, "There were so many exciting parts to my job. When I had just joined the company, the app store was a new concept, and barely any apps were released. The Pinkfong Company let us experiment with different ideas for



Many of Yoon's images; a gallery of her imagination.

[Source: Stella Yoon]

games, tools, etc. But, when I had my son, I decided to quit my job and do something that I was more interested in, drawing. When my son wasn't born yet, I would draw him funny cartoons and little characters to give him, and I have grown fond of it."

When asked where she gets all her creative ideas for new pictures, Yoon responds, "My art is based on ideas I get from traveling to many museums, exhibits, mov-

ies, and more that I get to experience with my son. I believe that my son has helped me to understand what I love to do and to deep dive into my hobbies, and to find what's right for me."

Anything can be considered art as long as you enjoy making it. Stella Yoon shows us that an artist's journey can be long, but patience and time have a way of showing you what you are meant to do.

Student Reporter

Weekly Flea Market on the Lower East Side



Ivy Jihu Kim
Grade 12
Yongsan International School of Seoul

Saturday mornings on the Lower East Side of Manhattan are often punctuated by relaxation and benevolence. Couples, friends, and families leisurely stroll after a delightful brunch, perhaps heading towards SoHo or back to their homes. My friend and I experienced a similar morning. After finding happiness manifested in the form of a banana babka decadent French toast and green shakshouka—made of baby spinach, chickpeas, poached eggs, dill, garlic yogurt, and Aleppo oil—we left Shuka as content as a baby duck. Our initial upset at having to arrive during their opening time due to fully booked reservations soon faded away, leaving only a luscious start to the day.

A few blocks away, we encountered a delightful array of flea market stands, each showcasing a unique collection of jewelry, home decor, furniture, kitchenware, and more. The first stand we approached displayed an assortment



A vendor at the Lower East Side Flea Market shows off his array of vibrant jewelry contrasted elegantly on fine velvet. [Source: Author, Jihu Ivy Kim]

of beaded necklaces and waist beads adorned with pearls, quartz, and other luminous stones. The second stand featured an eclectic mix of antique and modern rugs, alongside a small yet extensive collection of antique silverware. At the third stand, we discovered an exquisite selection of bracelets, necklaces, and rings, all carefully arranged on plush purple velvet, which warmly reflected the New York sun.

The stand owner introduced

himself as Aydın, originally from Istanbul, Türkiye. He shared with love that all his jewelry is handcrafted with gold and silver designed to last. His fondness for his culture was evident in the way he tenderly handled his pieces. Aydın invited us to try on different bracelets, and soon, we were adorned with so many that we couldn't possibly keep them all on. As we browsed the jewelry, he shared photos of his family back home in Istanbul. He spoke of the challenges of being away from his

city but added that he learned to find a home in this foreign land.

I found myself torn between a beaded quartz bracelet embellished with a vibrant blue evil eye and another of the same design in white, while my friend had her heart set on a delicate bangle featuring an evil eye charm. We left the market with our new treasures jingling on our wrists, pleasantly surprised by Aydın's generous discount, as we were his first customers of the day.

I have always found flea markets far from home to be particularly memorable, as the small purchases often come to encapsulate the essence of my trip. I know that whenever I look at my bracelet in the future, I will be reminded not only of my warm interaction with Aydın but also of the wonderful day I spent with my new friend in Manhattan. Our newly acquired pieces will come to represent the five weeks we spent in New Haven attending a local summer school.