

Student Reporter

Fun and Creative Ways to Spend Time at the Park



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A creative and innovative way to spend a picnic is painting with your friends. [Source: Author, Heesue Joy Shin]



A collection of food planned for a picnic is always fun during the summer. [Source: Author, Heesue Joy Shin]

I’m sure everyone has gone to the park and done all the normal things one does when there, like running or just enjoying the fresh air. However, sometimes doing the same stuff gets repetitive and boring, leading you to want to do something new. There are many fun and out of the norm things to do while at the park with friends, as demonstrated in this article.

There are many fun activities to do when going to the park with friends. One thing to do together at the park is to plan a picnic. I re-

cently did this with my friend, and it was very exciting planning what food to bring and what things we should do. At the picnic, there were so many delicious things to eat, and it was interesting seeing and trying other foods that we both brought.

Making slime together at the park can be a fun and unique experience. Making slime is usually associated with kids, and you have likely made slime when you were young. As someone who was an enthusiastic slime-mak-

er, revisiting this activity was fun and nostalgic. Also, there are not a lot of supplies needed to make slime at the park. The necessities are glue, some kind of activator (you can use Tide, borax mixed with water, or contact solution), and a container to make the slime in. Some optional items one can bring are food coloring, shaving cream, or other add-ons. The more components you have, the more fun it is to play with your slime. In mine, I only added shaving cream, and I kind of wish that

I had brought more to put in my slime that would’ve made it interesting and unique.

Another creative pastime that we did was painting together. At the picnic, we painted on little wooden squares that you can get at any art store, which we painted as a little gift to give to each other. This is a nice and cute way to have a keepsake to remember the picnic, and gives you something to remember your friend. It’s a very fun and enjoyable way to pass the time if you enjoy painting and doing artistic things.

If you liked the previous idea of making something to remember the moment, the next activity is very similar. You can paint clothes with your friends, and it doesn’t have to be super complex to have it turn out pretty. All you need is a little bit of fabric paint and, preferably, a light-colored shirt. Then, you and your friends can paint your hands with the paint and put them on the t-shirt to leave a handprint from everyone. I painted my hand with different colors and made a gradient, which could elevate the quality of the design.

I hope this helped give you some fresh ideas on where and how to hang out with your friends this summer! Also, I hope this opens you to try new things in places that you commonly go to.

Student Reporter

The Beginning of An End



Yerin Park
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Undergoing major life changes is one of the most difficult challenges individuals can face, especially during youth, when emotional and mental resilience is still developing. One of the most significant early milestones in this journey is graduating from high school and transitioning into college, a shift that marks the beginning of greater independence, responsibility, and personal growth.

With the start of May, seeing seniors at Seoul International School becomes a rare opportunity as the graduation season is approaching. With their absence, the school seems quieter, and juniors have no one to look up to. Three weeks later, students could finally see all of their faces again, but only on a sad note, as it would be the last time. The entire graduation ceremony was a bittersweet moment, with juniors realizing that this was our future very soon. It was a sweet moment to see all of the seniors in their academic regalia with their future universities engraved on their caps, who were also once juniors, sophomores, and freshmen, and



The class of 2025 getting ready to turn their tassels, symbolizing their shift into alumni and soon-to-be college students. [Source: Author, Yerin Park]

who were uncertain about their future. Looking into their eyes, it was quite clear they were getting ready to face major changes in their lives.

After opening speeches from a few students and teachers, each senior was called to the stage to receive their diploma, as well as

announce their future college and major. During this sensation, ambivalent emotions surfaced in the air as some students put on the largest smiles, while others spilled tears. Many saw this as a long-awaited start, while others saw it as a saddening departure and a scary change.

Sitting in the audience with all my junior friends, I looked at their faces, recognizing similar ambivalent emotions. At that moment, I realized that next year, my classmates and I would be the ones getting our diplomas and graduating from high school. We would never be sitting in the same classroom, same lunch table, in the same country, and most importantly, having the same future awaiting us. Change not only comes with new starts, but departures.

As the ceremony came to a close and the seniors tossed their caps into the air, a wave of realization settled in: life moves quickly, and change is inevitable. But within that change lies the beauty of growth. Though the unknown can be daunting, it is also filled with possibility. Watching the seniors take their final steps in high school reminded us that while parting is painful, it also signals the beginning of something new. And when the day arrives, current juniors will carry these memories and the emotions we felt that day with us, ready to embrace the changes that lie ahead.

Student Reporter

Afternoon Tea Dreams: LA’s Best Spots



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The bustling and trendy Los Angeles is a city with a surprising variety of high-quality, dreamy spots to have a spot of tea as a classy afternoon pick-me-up. Whether you’re in it for the warm and buttery scones, the artfully layered sandwiches, or just the excuse to sip something warm out of delicate china, there’s no shortage of a wide range of price points and valuable places to enjoy a proper afternoon tea around the city and some of them might surprise you.

For a more casual setting, in Santa Monica, Ye Olde King’s Head is a no-frills, all-flavor approach to British tradition. Inside this cozy Irish pub that is also a restaurant, you’ll find sturdy teapots, house-made scones, and a menu that sticks to the classics. It’s casual, comforting, and just a short stroll from the beach. Afterwards, there is a gift shop and bakery you can check out before taking a stroll down the bustling shops along the promenade to digest.

For a more luxurious and decadent experience, the Peninsula Beverly Hills has continued its legacy of indulgent, high-quality afternoon tea for generations across the globe. Tea is served in the Living Room, with live harp music and a three-tiered spread of elegant treats. The setting is

plush, the service precise, and the outdoor lighting perfect for special event photos.

A few blocks away, the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills additionally leans into old-school glamour. Think white-glove service, towering floral arrangements, and sweets so delicate they almost seem too pretty to eat.

For a spot in downtown Los Angeles, the Biltmore’s Rendezvous Court brings the drama, with high ceilings, ornate woodwork, and a tea service that feels like a scene out of a black-and-white film. For a side of grand history and ballroom ceilings with Daring, this is the spot.

Tucked into the lush green hills, Hotel Bel-Air offers a more secluded experience. Tea is served in a garden-like setting where swans glide through nearby ponds. It’s quiet, elegant, and makes you forget you’re minutes from Sunset Boulevard.

Over in San Marino, the infamous hard-to-book Huntington Library’s Rose Garden Tea Room recently reopened after a lengthy renovation. The setting, which is surrounded by blooming roses and sprawling lawns, is as much a draw as the tea itself. Afterwards, guests can stroll around the Huntington and explore the beautiful architecture and art as well, for an



Afternoon tea at the Getty Center consists of both savory and sweet light bites, in addition to a tea selection and scones. [Source: Author, Sora Ju]

afternoon of indulgent sights.

Similarly, at the Getty, afternoon tea comes with sweeping city views and a modern twist. It’s a relaxed way to cap off a visit to the museum’s galleries and gardens, and a solid choice if you’re

looking for tea without too much fuss.

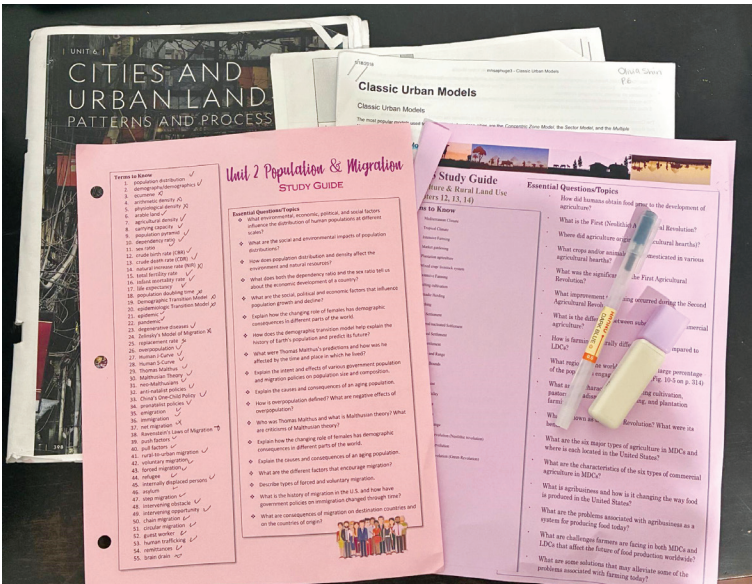
L.A. has a tea service for every occasion and budget, whether you live on the west side or the east side. Just be sure to book ahead!

Student Reporter

Final Exams, Both The Good and The Bad



Olivia Shin
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Study materials and late-night cramming sessions are frequent during finals week. [Source: Author, Olivia Shin]

Last-minute projects, tests, and final exams are crammed into the last few weeks of school. A student can only hold so much stress and work that they are capable of. As final exams are held in the last week of the school year, students are working up to the last days. Much of the stress can be negative for the students. Final exams not only promote immense amounts of worry, but also focus on cramming and memorization instead of

learning. As students are expected to know the material presented in class, instead, they overload themselves by cramming in as much memorization of the material as possible in the week leading up to finals. During the finals week, getting in that last-minute cramming is crucial to students. This leads to immense stress and pressure. According to the Honor Society, “Finals week is often synonymous

with stress (...) The constant juggling of studying, revising, and managing time can leave them feeling overwhelmed and mentally exhausted.” As students have their final exams during the last weeks of school, stress to complete enough studying and cramming information overtakes a student’s mental health. Final exams also do not always test a student’s true understanding of the subject. Some students may have maintained a high grade in the class but do horribly on tests. Final exams pressure students and cause them to rush rather than properly show their actual comprehension of the class material. However, final exams do come with a necessary reason, which is to stimulate long-term retention of information. As scores may not always reflect a student’s understanding of the subject, it does give them a way to reflect back on the material and practice their retention of knowledge. Studying for final exams also increases skill development through time management and critical thinking skills. According to Psychology Today, “The experience of preparing for finals is a quintessential opportunity for mastering time management and project management.” As students have up to seven

classes to study for exams, time management is crucial. Studying in advance practices the necessary skills to get other assignments done on time, on top of studying for final exams. Critical thinking skills are able to enhance problem-solving and improve analytical thinking. Through this, students can dissect information and draw specific conclusions to improve test scores. Harvard University’s Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning states, “Well-designed exams allow students to demonstrate what they have learned in a course, and can reinforce students’ understanding. As with any type of assessment, instructors should align their exams with the concepts and skills that are most important in a course.” From this, students are able to relearn the most important concepts of the class and subject while also participating in the necessary skills that will be helpful not only in the final exam but also in other assignments and projects. Final exams have both good and bad when it comes to benefits and disadvantages. Final exams can produce essential skills throughout the studying process but can also cause extensive stress and jamming in as much information to the last day.

Student Reporter

Faith and Healing at Home on the Green Pastures



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Tucked quietly behind unmarked doors in Orange County, Home on the Green Pastures (HOGP) is far more than a shelter; it’s a sanctuary for renewal. For over three decades, this nonprofit has served Korean immigrant women and children impacted by domestic violence with dignity, care, and compassion. What began as an emergency shelter has become a comprehensive transitional housing program, offering not just a place to stay but also the tools necessary to rebuild lives. The women who arrive at HOGP often face challenges such as language barriers, financial hardship, and unfamiliarity with community resources. Many have endured years of abuse without recognizing what they’ve been going through. HOGP provides education, empowerment, and empathy to these people. Survivors are gently reminded that the abusive treatment was never their fault. They are met not with judgment, but with a holistic support system designed to restore agency, independence, and hope. Each day at HOGP is grounded



A place of refuge, renewal, and hope for every woman and child seeking a new beginning. [Source: Home on the Green Pastures]

in rhythm and reflection. “QT,” or quiet time, and Bible readings bookend the day, providing moments of peace and grounding. Participation is always voluntary, and spiritual care is offered as a source of healing, never imposed. Residents are also equipped with practical skills, such as parenting classes, financial literacy workshops, and one-on-one job training, tailored specifically for those navigating the U.S. workforce for the first time. Recognizing that recovery requires a network of support, HOGP partners with trusted community organizations to expand their services. These

partnerships offer legal aid, therapy for children, employment training, and mental health support, ensuring that every woman and child receives comprehensive care. Still, there are some challenges that come with the work done at HOGP. As a faith-based organization, this nonprofit does not receive federal funding, making it reliant on individual donors, foundations, and community generosity. Economic fluctuations directly affect their ability to serve the growing need. To raise awareness and support, HOGP engages in Korean-language media outreach, hosts educational events, and organizes a large annual fundraiser every October, featuring keynote speakers and performers who bring light to the cause. The mission of HOGP is clear: not only to provide safety, but to nurture resilience. The journey is difficult, but the impact is undeniable. Every donation, volunteer, and act of support works toward giving someone a second chance. To join in this life-changing work or make a contribution, visit hogp.org.

Student Reporter

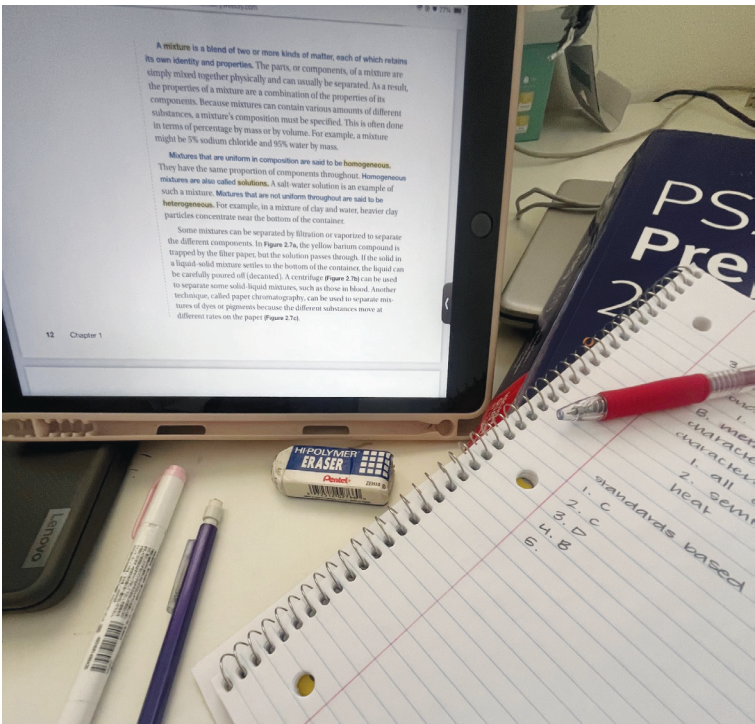
Making the Most of Summer Break



Kaylyn Wee
Grade 9
Ayala High School

The two months before the start of another school year can be spent in several ways. The time can be used to develop oneself and spend time alone for growth. Finding new interests or beginning new hobbies can be beneficial not only for self-development but also for a student’s resume. The summer break can be a time for a student to explore potential career paths or to begin building extracurricular experience. On the other hand, the extra time can be spent with friends and family, whether it involves fun, spontaneous activities, or going on a vacation. This summer can be spent in so many different ways and can provide many opportunities. During the school year, students are usually unable to have time to themselves to explore their interests. Not only that, they are unable to enjoy hobbies or sports. Because of this, during summer break, students usually spend most of their time on their interests. For example, reading, binge-watching shows/ movies, and painting. Students can also dive into other potential interests. These hobbies can be sculpting, hiking, solving puzzles, photography, and other activities. The two summer months can be a way for students to learn and thrive. Speaking of fun, summer

break can be a way to spend time with friends and family. There are many fun, simple activities that teens can do, like making matching t-shirts, making salads with any ingredients, and going swimming. Many are going to beaches, having sleepovers, taking pictures, and so much more. The summer can be a great time to get closer to people and spend time with friends. With family, vacations can be a perfect opportunity to connect. Beach days, road trips, or evening walks are simple ways for families to connect with each other. Whether staying inside or going on trips, the summer is a chance to spend time with those who matter. With the time for growth, students can build their resume and skills that can help them get accepted to colleges. They can join new clubs, sports, or new volunteering opportunities. As for academics, students could prepare for challenging courses and AP classes they are planning to take, ensuring stronger grades and showing academic dedication. Internships and part-time jobs develop responsibility and real-life experience. To go even further, creating small businesses or non-profit organizations can show creativity, passion, and a desire to make an impact. Being active and engaged



If students are taking challenging courses or classes in the upcoming school year, it is highly recommended to do a little preparation during the summer break. [Source: Author, Kaylyn Wee]

during summer break can prepare students for college success. Summer break offers students a window of time to grow personally, socially, and academically. Students can pursue hobbies and pastimes, build relationships with their loved ones, or prepare

for the upcoming school year and their potential future. Everyone should take advantage of their summer break and ensure they are using it to be productive. By doing this, students can enjoy their time off, but also set themselves up for success.