

Student Reporter

## The Rush Before Club Rush



Nicole Lee  
Grade 12  
Oxford Academy



My partner and I, as the OA's Inter-Club Council Commissioners, felt great amounts of relief and appreciation for such a successful Club Rush Week. The joy that comes with planning an event is truly unforgettable.  
[Source: Nicole Lee, Author]

As the school year progresses, the next step in enhancing students' experiences and levels of opportunities at Oxford Academy is introducing the clubs. With a total of 85 clubs on campus, Oxford Academy takes great pride in the exploration of culture, STEM, and the various interests the students may have. With that, as the week of Club Rush comes by, the quad is buzzing with music, colorful trifolds, and students darting from one table to another, busy either signing up for a club or encouraging sign-ups for a club. However,

what most people don't realize is that this isn't the only span of time that requires all of this bustling; It's also the few weeks before the event. From the endless days of planning, constant chains of emails, and countless Google Forms and Sheets, the event ultimately brings our campus together through its bustling activities and exhilarating energy.

As an Inter-Club Council Commissioner and Associated Student Body member, it was my responsibility to coordinate Club Rush thoroughly. Although I was initially

afraid to plan such a large event, I knew that I had to start somewhere and organize every step along the way. With a partner at my side, we started brainstorming ideas on what the central theme of the event would be. This allowed us to consider what kinds of decor and publicity we wanted to base the event on. Once that was planned, we started to gain more confidence when creating the next steps, which included communicating with all of the clubs and planning a table layout. Numerous emails were sent to hundreds of students and advisers, along with

constant reminders of incoming deadlines and preparations. It had been a while since I had to engage in such wide outreach, and it was truly a refreshing moment.

However, even with extensive preparation and careful planning, conflicts are inevitable. Several technical issues arose as we facilitated large Club Executive Board meetings in front of hundreds of students. Additionally, students, whether they were Club Presidents or Secretaries, were consistently contacting us, claiming mistakes in the table layouts during the actual event. While my partner and I were able to find solutions, I have to admit there was distress that came with it. Needless to say, event planning is not easy, and it is essential to place appreciation for not just the events but also how they came to be as well. Coordinating for other students requires great amounts of patience and leadership, and this accounts for anyone who is interested in engaging in such acts.

Looking back, planning Club Rush wasn't just about organizing an event – it was about learning how to lead, adapt, and bring people together. And seeing the results of such is what makes it all worth it in the end.

Student Reporter

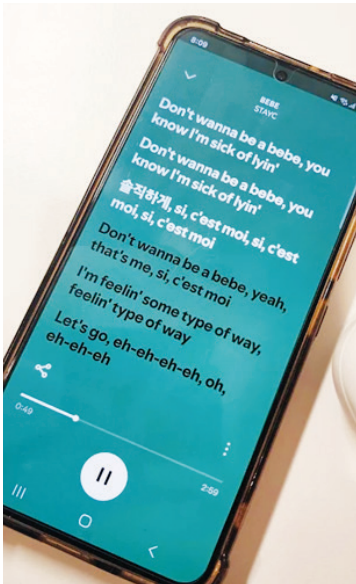
## Will Spotify's New Update Prompt Previous Users?



Kaylyn Yu  
Grade 11  
Chantilly High School

As I began my workout, I hit play on one of my top hype songs, "like JENNIE," but sighed in exasperation as another song from JENNIE, "You & Me," turned on instead. I enjoyed both songs, but I had specifically wanted to listen to the prior one at the moment. This aspect of Spotify free had always annoyed me, on top of all the other limitations, but the most recent update changed everything.

On September 15, 2025, Spotify released a new update with enhanced features, especially for free users. The upgrade includes the power to choose whatever song you want without any shuffling. This was the biggest improvement, with the knowledge that the ability to pick a certain song was previously a premium perk. Another enhancement is lossless audio for premium users and higher-quality audio for standard users. Essentially, Spotify Lossless provides a clearer music experience with original data and a high-fidelity format. Standardly, Spotify free had a sup-



The new Spotify update enables free users to view full lyrics for songs, a feature that was previously limited to premium.  
[Source: Author, Kaylyn Yu]

pressed audio quality of 160 kbps, but it was increased. Custom transitions and playlist covers, as well as other conveniences, have been

created for paying clients as well.

Saketharama Kollimarla, a junior in high school, stated his thoughts as a free user. "I have free Spotify, and the new update lets you play the song you want instead of shuffling. The Spotify update is pretty good because I can actually listen to the songs I want now. For example, if I click on an album, I can listen to the songs in order."

Even though Spotify, without charge, still contains undeniable restrictions like ads, limited skips, and a daily limit on on-demand plays, this update was a significant decision on Spotify's part. Being able to enjoy whatever music we opt for is a decisive factor for some people. Although the desktop version of Spotify allows people to select any song, mobile devices have never had this feature.

This brings up the question of whether this choice would cause premium users to switch to the

standard plan due to the added benefits. Spotify is known to have grown expensive in the past few years, and there are many people who do not want to incur additional costs for the premium experience.

Khang Truong, a junior in high school, shared his opinion as a premium user, "I am currently using Spotify Premium, and I would not change back to the free plan. The premium benefit is still good for me, including no ads. I have a family plan for Spotify with my friend, but it doesn't really cost that much." Even if some people do alter their plan for a costless option, the increase in people's interest in Spotify free may encourage more listeners to choose to play music through Spotify.

Overall, whether Spotify users choose to alter their position between free and premium, I am very excited about the added perks and hope to enjoy my music even better than before with my free plan.

Student Reporter

## Fires in the Neighborhood: Staying Calm



Rachel Choi  
Grade 10  
Orange County School of the Arts

Recently, residents of my neighborhood in Orange County, California, awoke to see the blazing of smoke and hear the piercing wails of sirens. A fire had broken out only a few streets away, forcing families to make quick decisions about evacuation and safety. While firefighters responded swiftly to contain the blaze, this incident served as a sobering reminder of how suddenly disaster can strike, and how crucial it is to remain calm even amid critical moments.

According to fire safety experts, the natural human response—panic—is, counterintuitively, one of the most hazardous reactions to a fire. It often leads to poor decision-making, wasted time, and even greater risk. Instead, preparation and presence of mind are key. "The difference between panic and calm can be the difference between life and death," one local firefighter explained. "Knowing what to do before a fire breaks out makes it easier to stay focused when it happens."

So, what does staying calm in

a fire look like? Proper handling of the situation begins long before the first flame appears. Families are encouraged to create a fire escape plan that identifies two exits from every room, a designated meeting spot outside, and a clear set of roles for each household member. Practicing this plan regularly strengthens crucial memory, ensuring that in the heat of the moment, everyone knows exactly what to do.

Additionally, during an active fire, experts recommend several simple but vital steps: keep low to avoid smoke inhalation, check doors for heat before opening them, and never return to a burning building for belongings. Just as important, try to control your breathing. Slow, steady breaths help calm the nervous system and keep your mind clear enough to follow the steps you've practiced. Neighbors also play a critical role. In last week's fire, several families checked in on elderly residents to make sure they evacuated safely. Acts of community support like these reduce panic and remind



Smoke cleared, but the damage to the cars destroyed in a local fire highlights the importance of preparedness.  
[Source: Author, Rachel Choi]

people that they are not facing danger alone.

Even after the flames have been extinguished, proper emotional recovery is just as essential as physical safety. Fires can leave behind anxiety, especially for children, so creating space to talk through the experience helps restore a sense of nor-

malcy. The recent fire in my community ended without major injuries, thanks to the swift response of firefighters and the level-headedness of residents. Still, it serves as an urgent reminder: preparation, communication, and calmness are the most powerful tools we have when disaster arrives at our doorstep.



Student Reporter

Running: A Journey I Didn't Expect to Take



Grace Song  
Grade 8  
Lexington Junior High School



After training for Lexington Junior High's cross country meet, I started making better time than I ever thought I could, and was feeling more confident for the match. [Source: Author, Grace Song]

If you had asked me a year ago whether or not I liked running, I

would have responded, "Absolutely not." To me, running was a sport I was simply not good at. Whenever we had to run during P.E. classes in school, I would always be the last one, barely making it in time. However, this all changed when I discovered cross-country running.

The main reason I disliked running was that I believed I merely wasn't good at it. Watching people pass me during miles and ending up in the back only lowered my self-confidence. Every time we had to run a mile, I would tell myself that this time I wouldn't walk, that today I would push through. However, time and time again, I fell short. It reached a point where I simply could no longer deal with being last anymore.

When cross-country season rolled around at Lexington Junior High School, I decided that

this year, I would push myself and grow. I didn't know if I would fit in or if I could handle the running, but I knew I had to try. During the first few practices, I ended up at the back of the group, panting and clutching at my side stitch. I often wondered if I belonged there, but I also gained an inspiring new feeling: determination. As I started running more, the feeling of achieving something I previously thought was impossible kept me coming back to each practice.

Soon, we had our first cross-country meet at Oxford Academy, where Lexington Junior High, Dale Junior High, and Oxford Academy competed. Before the race, group members and I walked around the route to familiarize ourselves with the terrain before running on it. Next, we spread out, stretched, and the anticipation sank in. During this moment, I felt helpless and

nervous, just like I had before I joined cross country. However, this time, I had people around me to rely on and reassure me. One of the most rewarding aspects of cross country is that it is not an individual sport, but a team sport. In cross country, you can rely on your teammates to push you, cheer you on, and stick by your side. During the race, I made sure to push myself and ended up getting a record time against all my prior expectations

Cross country has been an invaluable experience that taught me progress comes from hard work and persistence. There have been plenty of days I wanted to quit, but being surrounded by teammates who care for me and seeing my improvement has kept me going. Now, running is not something I dread, but rather, something I look forward to because it presents an invaluable opportunity to improve upon myself.

Student Reporter

Club Rush Forges Connections at Beverly Hills High School



Caroline Lee  
Grade 12  
Beverly Hills High School

On September 11, 2025, Beverly Hills High School hosted its annual club rush during lunch. Having gone through the process of competing with the many other eager students to create an organization at the club summit, the 72 participating clubs excitedly set up their booths to explain their organization's goals with posters and eye-catching tri-folds. Additionally, to comedically catch the attention of others, one student was seen taping the flyers of multiple clubs to their shirt. In hopes of forming connections, many clubs also offered snacks. For instance, the Korean Language and Culture Club brought Korean snacks to share their culture and cuisine with the foreign student body.

The clubs offered to students varied, with some being recreational, like the Badminton club, where students are given a chance to enjoy a fun game, three times a week with their friends, or cultural, like Club de Español and Eastern European Union. Others used their club to teach, like the SAT Prep Club, a club where students share the tips and tricks they've acquired to better prepare others for the exam. Another prominent type of organization was based on careers, like the Youth Invest-



Students explore their interests and sign up for the multiple clubs offered during the Beverly Hills High School club rush. [Source: Author, Caroline Lee]

ing Club and the Medical Science Academy. Furthermore, clubs like Paws for a Cause and Interact serve the community through volunteering or fundraising, while Science Olympiad and DECA encourage students to compete in annual competitions.

Serving as one of the first larger events at the beginning of the school year, club rush brings a sense of unity to the student body, especially for freshmen who can learn more about the programs and student body culture offered at the school, as well as the student body culture.

Before lunch ended, club leaders were given 15 minutes to set their tables, and with the dismissal bell, students came rushing onto the patio. Representatives of each club yelled over their friends in a friendly competition in hopes of promoting their own club. Although some students took a beeline for tables they anticipated they would see, others took their time, scanning each booth with friends to see if any piqued their interest. Throughout the event, students were seen sharing meaningful conversations about the purpose of their clubs and what would en-



Club leaders work together to create fun and interesting ways to promote their clubs before the club rush held during the lunch break. [Source: Author, Caroline Lee]

tail at each meeting. Students of the school's broadcasting team, also known as KBEV, actively interviewed others to share their excitement for the day, while others took photos to commemorate it.

As the event came to an end, many club leaders left satisfied with their hard work as their sign-up sheets were filled, while others were excited to attend the first meetings for clubs they registered for. Most importantly, however, the Beverly Hills High community was brought closer as students had an opportunity to connect with others they hadn't known shared the same interests and goals.

Student Reporter

Student to Student: How to Ace Your SAT!



Ellie Kim  
Grade 10  
Portola High

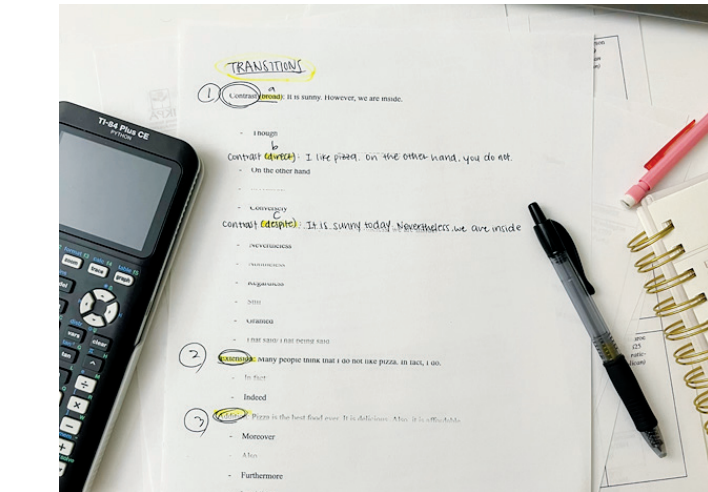
The SAT is an intimidating topic for most high school students, but it is a test that all inevitably face. In fact, thousands of students took this exam on Saturday, September 13th, 2025, and thousands more will do the same in October. As one of the students who took the September SAT, I was lucky enough to walk away with a 1560. Here are four tips that helped me approach the SAT with confidence.

Firstly, I practiced test-taking strategically. The SAT isn't just about how well you know the concepts; it's about how well you can take the test under a time constraint. With time limits that don't leave the average test taker with much room for breathing, it's better to prioritize easier questions, such as shorter grammar questions, and skip the harder and longer questions, saving them for later. It's not realistic to expect not to get any questions wrong for the average test-taker. Therefore, it's better to just abandon some questions and spend more time on the ones you are more likely to get correct to maximize your score.

Another tip to keep in mind

is to use all the tools at your disposal. In the case of the reading/writing section, this means maximizing context clues. If you've never seen any of the answer choices for a vocabulary question, then start by trying to think of words you do know that look even a tiny bit similar to the words given. For the math section, this means utilizing the Desmos graphing calculator. Do what calculations you can, but try to make the most out of the graphing calculator, as it's a useful tool you're meant to use. Not only does it save time, but it also ensures accuracy by helping visualize graphs and check calculations.

Another tip that applies specifically to reading/writing questions is talking yourself through the answers. Most likely, for longer comprehension or inference questions, the choice comes down to two very similar-looking answers. The way to get to the correct answer from there is simply to talk to yourself: why each one might be right or wrong, paying attention to specific words in the answer choices. This helps to clear your thoughts and spot any contra-



Notes, pens, a calculator, and a laptop—a student's desk is all set up to study for her SAT! [Source: Author, Ellie Kim]

dictions to the passage in the answer choices.

Finally, the most important tip I have to give for acing the SAT is to prioritize sleep. Just like your SAT, it's difficult to perform your best when you're not feeling your best. If you're lacking sleep, you're probably going to be tired, making it more difficult to concentrate and think clearly. If your SAT is right around the corner, the best way to prepare is to get all the sleep you can.

Although it feels incredibly rewarding to ace your SAT, colleges look at so much more than just this score. In fact, the SAT can measure your critical thinking and calculation skills; there are also so many qualities that it can't measure, like your creativity, kindness, or determination. So, while it's worth it to try your best, the SAT isn't something to obsess over. Aim high, try your best, and just be proud of all the progress you make along the way!