

APRIL 9, 2020

AL NOOR – ABA NEWS



Dear ABA Community,

The Heads of the Oman international and private schools are now meeting weekly. Of course, it is a virtual meeting and we have much to discuss. From one colleague, I heard the most elegant description of the switch to online learning as a "profound, quantum leap forward for students".

This is yet another of life's skills.

Our teachers here at ABA have personalized online learning and captured an energy and creativity that is enviable. The preparation that goes into every virtual lesson takes about 6 times longer than a regular in-class lesson plan. ABA teachers report that they are working longer hours and putting in maximum effort to make this the best experience possible for ABA students - from K1 right through to grade 12.

We were thrilled to read the headlines this week in the Arabian Stories and be recognized for the outstanding work of the teachers here.

What we are all going through is hard. We would rather we were all together, back at school. Yet, as promised, there is learning going on and teachers are delivering the IB articulated curriculum, but on a different platform. Parents are our partners and students are the beneficiaries of creative solutions to a problem none of us could have foreseen.

To those in the community who celebrate the season, Happy Easter! Remember that Sunday is a school holiday. No online work on the 12th!

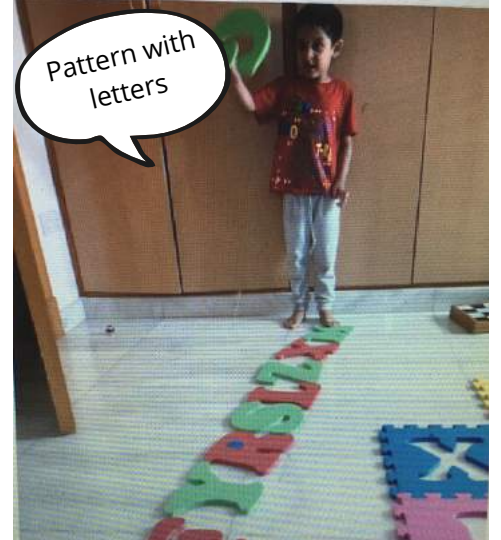
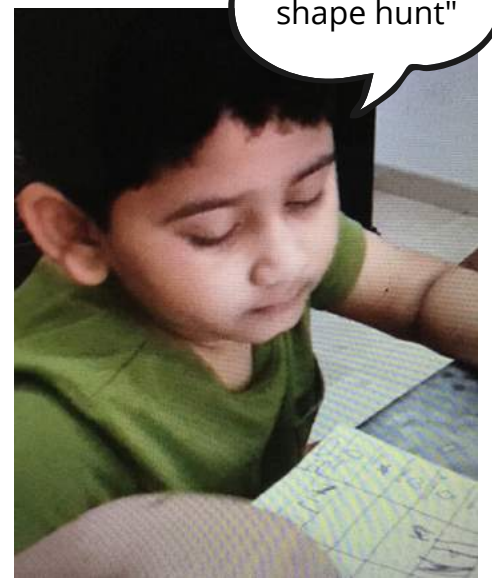
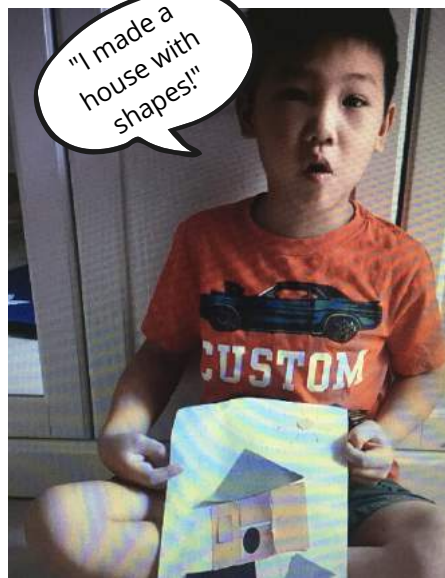
Stay healthy!

Dr. Susan R. Groesbeck
Head of School

[CLICK HERE](#)



ONLINE LEARNING: K2S



K2M: IMAGINARY DRAGONS



Students listened to the story ‘When a dragon moves in’ by Jodi Moore. They were asked to imagine the kind of dragon they would like to move in with them during this time. They were asked to apply creativity to consider size, pattern, shape and colour while thinking about features of dragons. Writing the name of their dragon next to their illustration was optional.

Click below to read

[What and how Kath Murdoch is learning during this unusual time.](#)

[What’s worth learning? A parent and teacher’s reflection upon this question during this unusual time:](#)

ONLINE LEARNING: K3

In K3, the students have been invited to create a book with rhyming words that they can find at home. [Click here to see an example.](#)

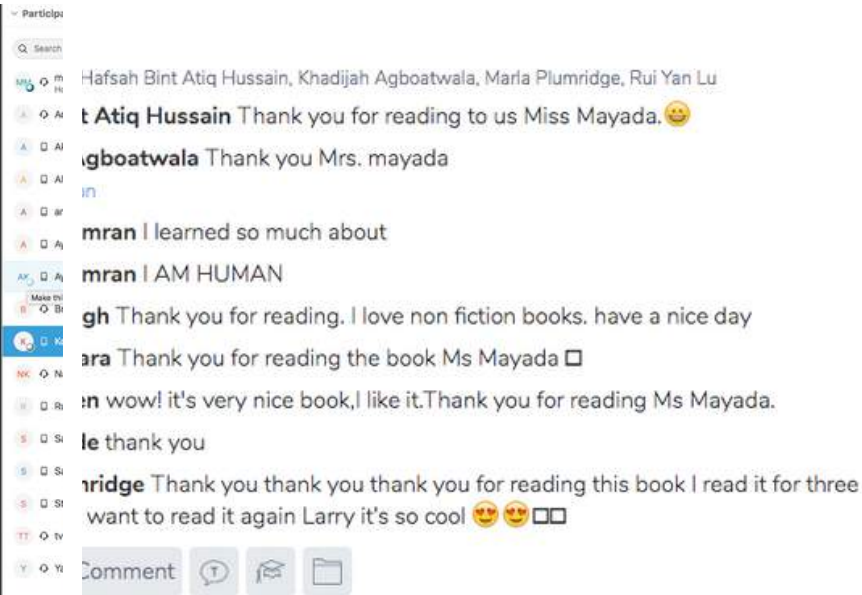
Looking for a game to play? [Click here to learn Making 10 game with cards](#)

ONLINE LEARNING: 2L SHAPE ART AND WEBEX MEETING

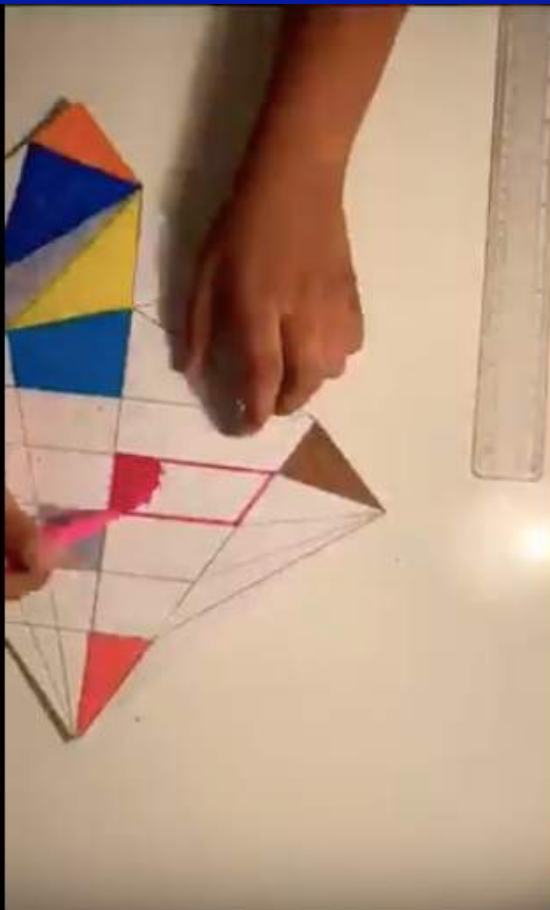


The students in 2L had a great first WebEx meeting with their teacher and friends. They were very happy to see each other and discussed a very important topic of "What they do at home that keeps them happy!"

Students loved online reading aloud by the teacher.



THEY ALSO FOLLOWED A TEACHER TUTORIAL TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL SHAPE ART DESIGNS



NEWS FROM THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our Middle School students have had to make rapid adjustments to how they learn due to the enforced school closure. Since then our students have had to familiarize themselves with Webex, learn in isolation from their friends and teachers and adjust to completing all their work online. To support this new expectation, the Middle School team has been exploring multiple avenues to equip our students for this new way of learning. Yet, nothing can replicate the sound of children talking in the corridors or the buzz of discussion in a classroom environment. For some of our learners, this off-site learning is also trauma-filled. A trauma that emerges from the unfamiliarity of this new way of engaging with teachers and peers and the harsh reality that we are in the middle of a worldwide pandemic which has cost lives. Additionally, while handling this new reality, our students have to contend with spending more time in their homes than they normally do and engaging in sustained learning activities in this environment. An environment that was more normal for social interactions. Forced off-site learning is a mindshift for students.

The shift is more evident in students' life but this change is also required in the lives of teachers, administrators and parents. How do parents adjust to having their children at home all the time? How do teachers who thrive on the social connections in their classrooms function in this new 'world'? How do administrators and school leaders support colleagues? The reality of this is that we all need to make serious adjustments and fast.

Parents will have to understand that their role has shifted remarkably. From the physical act of dropping children at school to occasionally checking in on their learning, to now being their monitor at home. This is a new domain for parents and a role that had been allocated to teachers in the past. So how do parents become an agent of learning while maintaining their distinct roles as moms and dads? And what exactly are these roles? In order to address this role complexity, the MS team has been deliberate in keeping parents abreast of the expectations for students. ([MS Online Learning!](#)) This sharing of communication is intentional. The purpose is to remove the potential for an information gap between what students know and what parents know. Yet learning off-site is still a major challenge for adults.

Our students are adjusting. Over the past few weeks, we have maintained regular contact with our Middle School students through a range of planned advisories. We have experimented with advisory groups, Year level groups and mixed small groups. In this way, we have endeavored to diversify how we connect with students but also provided an opportunity for them to interact with others. For example last week, we (Ms Anthony, Ms Bowin and Mr Barker) shared our own story of resilience with each year level. This was to align with the discussions and [activities](#) that students were engaged in with their advisors, but we also wanted to ensure that there was a face-to-face engagement for students. This week to diversify the engagement, we created small mixed groups and held discussions on how they were finding the new expectations. For the most part, students felt this was a positive development. We all have to figure out ways of working.

A brief search online reveals that parents in this new relationship with their child can support them effectively if they do two important things. First, it is important that you provide a clear routine for learning for your child. From getting up in the morning, to ensuring that your child is online, and on task. The setting of routine is critical for students' success, schools thrive on this. Yet in the home situation, this may be more challenging. Parents will have to insist on this. Secondly, identifying and facilitating a clear workspace for your child. Students need designated work spaces in order to succeed in this new arrangement. This could be a space in their room or in a communal space like the living room. Where it is located may not matter, but how it supports learning will. Ensure that the space is clear, and importantly quiet and away from distractions such as the television or conversations.

So at the moment our students are off-site, and online. Learning is in full swing, and students have clearly adjusted well. The adults are certainly showing resilience as well. However, be mindful that our students when in school, walk around from class to class, engage in play during breaks and are involved in numerous after school physical activities. It is now important to consider how you support your child's physical well-being in this time of limited activity. One thing you could consider is group physical workouts or completing one of the workouts provided by our PHE department on [Vipers TV](#). Plan a circuit with your kids and engage in physical play to ensure that your child remains in shape.

The COVID-19 has shifted our conception of school enormously and has had many negative effects on many families worldwide. Yet, we can seek the positives that emerge from this new arrangement if we open our eyes to the opportunities. Our students are putting the [IB Learner profile](#) in action by being risk-takers, inquirers, and open-minded, our parents are more knowledgeable risk-takers and our teachers are exemplifying our mission to be caring, confident, lifelong learners. As we face this challenge, please remember that we are learning everyday how we can be better people and how we are all connected in a common humanity. So while we are off-site, stay connected, be online, take time outs to unplug and importantly, keep in shape. Work on being in shape, physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally.

The MS Team!
Megel, Kathleen and Claire



COVID-19 AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

As we continue to adjust to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, families of High School students will be feeling concerned about the implications of this situation for university admission. As one would expect, the effects will vary depending on the application cycle.

What does this situation mean for the Class of 2020?

In my recent communication with Grade 12 students and parents, the following points were highlighted and are worth reiterating here:

- Following the cancellation of DP exams, the [IBO](#) has announced its intention to award certificates and diplomas (based on coursework and other school data) by July 5. Students will be able to use these qualifications for admissions purposes.
- As ABA students are still participating in online learning, they will still be able to present a complete High School transcript including grades for Semester 2.
- Admissions decisions have been delayed for some institutions but as staff continue to work remotely, these will be available shortly.
- Many universities have extended the deadlines for replying to offers. Seniors should make note of the dates by which they need to confirm their acceptance and make any necessary deposits.

What Can Younger Students Expect?

At this time of year, when the college search process for Grade 11 students starts in earnest, the options of campus tours and visits from university reps are no longer available. Still, there is no need to panic.

- Students can conduct their college searches using their Unifrog log-in as well as via application portals such as [UCAS](#) (UK), [OUAC](#) (Canada) and the [CommonApp](#) (USA).
- Visit the websites of universities of interest as many offer online tours and there are amazing platforms such as www.campusreel.org which provide an experience similar to that of a campus visit.
- In response to the cancellation of some tests such as [SAT](#) and [IELTS](#), universities have shown remarkable empathy for students in the way they have responded. Many US institutions, for example, have adopted an [SAT-optional](#) policy and some are now accepting online tests such as [Duolingo](#) as proof of English proficiency.
- With the social distancing measures that are currently in place, extra-curricular experiences will be limited. In light of this, students should document in detail those activities they have already completed, ensuring that they also reflect on what they have gained from their involvement. The 'global crisis' also presents a unique opportunity for students to show their innovativeness and aptitude for independent learning by exploring activities they can engage in remotely. The previously shared database of summer and online enrichment experiences is a great place to start looking.

As always, students and parents can continue to reach out to the Counseling team with any queries. Remember to access updates via the relevant University and College Counseling Google classroom for each year group as well as our Instagram page: [aba_collegecounseling](#). Hopefully with this information, college admission is one less thing for you and your families to worry about. Continue to stay healthy and well!

- Denise Barker, University Counselor

VIPERS SWIM TEAM

Delivering a Swim Squad programme without water.

Our V1/Mesac squad have been working through their online strength and conditioning programme. For our top athletes the idea has been to maintain as close to the time at task activity as we were completing before lockdown, enabling us to stay in shape. I have been trialling some concepts to see which works best. We have used some software to allow us to create some custom programmes for our swimmers, including videos, descriptions of the exercises and some progressive and periodised programming. The goal here is to have the athletes take some responsibility for their own performance and growth mindset. We surveyed the kids via whatsapp to ascertain what equipment they have at home, if any, and then using this information created common programmes that each athlete can use to improve their general strength and conditioning. Each week, these programmes change. They include a workout for Dumbbells, Barbells, bodyweight and TRX. There is also an abdominal workout.

I have also asked them to download a running app which will allow them to go ahead and run around their estate (if safe to do so), logging key information which is then submitted to us for analysis. We are asking these young athletes to complete a logbook showing their resting heart rates in the morning, along with pre run HR, Post run HR, distance ran, time of the run and average Pace per KM. As we progress with this, running sets will be introduced to impact all energy systems thus ensuring that they are staying as cardio fit as they can.

As we progress through the weeks, the young athletes will do an overhead squat assessment via video link to put together some specific flexibility work along with chatting through on a 1-2-1 basis some video footage that we have taken of them as they were racing to see if we can pick up on some adaptations we can make when we return to the pool. More to follow on this. Next week there will be a chat about nutrition, goal setting and race planning to give a little more insight while we have this useful time to reflect, adapt and move on to focus for the next season.



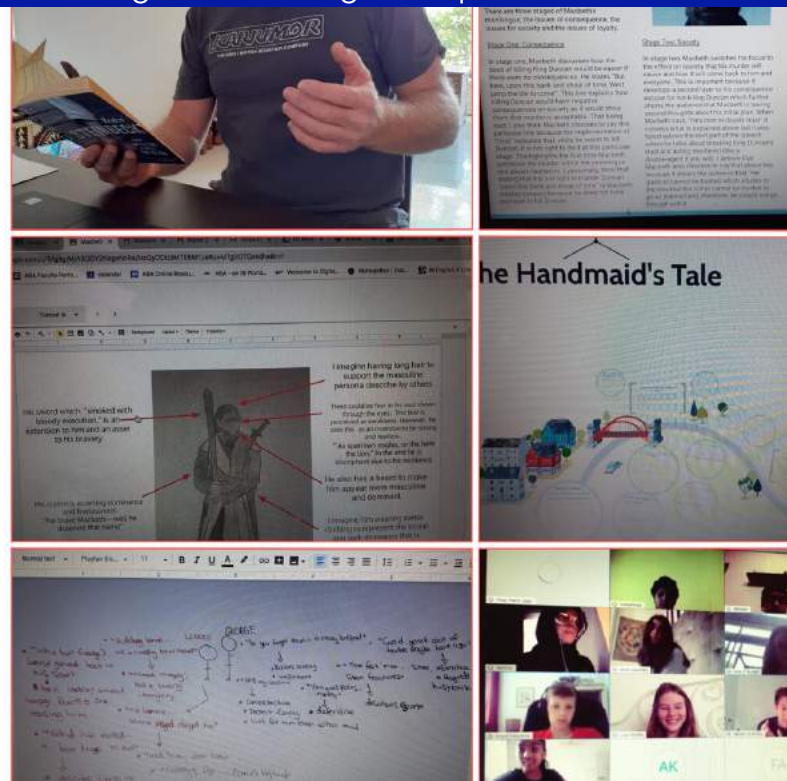
V5-V2 SQUADS

We've all been adjusting to the new normal caused by social distancing and quarantines as a result of COVID-19. For our Vipers swimmers, it's been a challenge to find ways to continue to train despite not having access to swimming pools. Yet, our swimmers are up for this challenge and keen to maintain their swimming strength and working their swimming muscles. The Vipers are receiving 3 times a week strength and conditioning workout related to swimming. We are swimming on land. We are so proud of their commitment and their Vipers spirit.

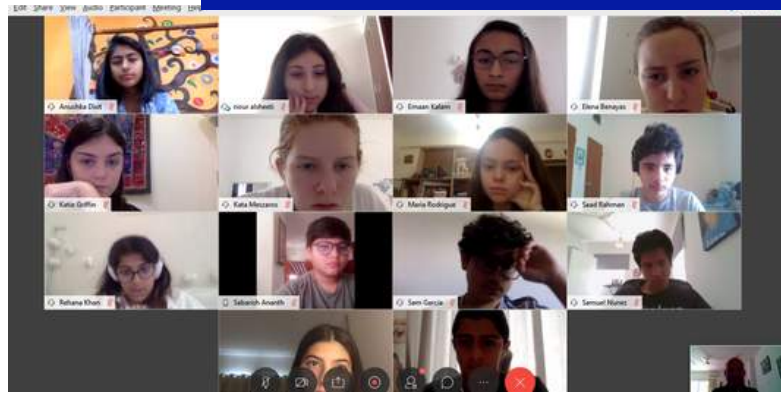


ONLINE LEARNING: HIGH SCHOOL

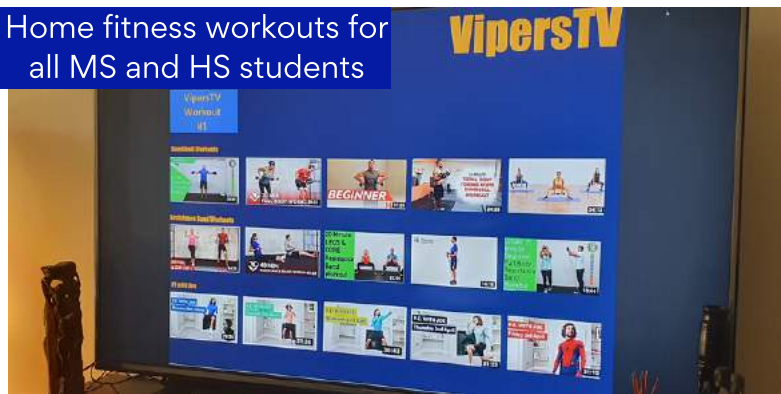
Mr. James reading to his students and other online learning from the English department this week



Mr. Monclar Grade 8 listening work



Home fitness workouts for all MS and HS students



Language Team Meeting



MS & HS Lang + Lit department reacting to a surprise visit from a gecko at their meeting!



WORLD BOOK DAY

World Book Day is coming up soon - April 23rd! Our librarians want to create a movie for ABA to watch and celebrate together on that day. Will you help?

Please take a photo of your child(ren) EITHER (choose 1):

- with a favorite book OR
- dressed up as a favorite book character OR
- A "shelfie" (selfie in front of their book case at home)

Please share the photos by **April 20** so we can share the movie on April 23rd. You can add them to this [Google Photo Album](#) or email them to Ms. Park (middle and high school librarian) directly at cpark@abaoman.org. **(copy and paste)**



Note - any photos you share will be shared within the ABA community and/or on social media. Thank you for the support!

Next week we will share some other fun book-related resources and ideas for celebrating World Book Day.

- Mara Hakim and Courtney Park, ABA Librarians

NHS 'PHONE CARD DRIVE' FOR OIG WORKERS!

Upholding the principle of community service, ABA's National Honor Society (NHS) launched a massive 'Phone Card Drive' to support workers who've dedicatedly taken good care of our school campus all year round.

A whopping 767 OMR worth of phone cards, with validity up to 2022, were collected in the month of March. Over 36 workers from OIG and GDS, as well as our ABA security staff, benefitted from this remarkable campaign.

Around 220 OMR worth of phone cards were distributed among workers this week to help them stay connected to their anxious families back home, especially at this time of the pandemic. The remaining cards will be distributed next term.



Huge shoutout to the students and parents for their earnest participation and generous contribution, as well as to elementary classroom teachers and secondary advisors for helping with this thoughtful initiative.

Very big thanks going out to the kind hearts at NHS!

It feels like it has been ages since we reached out to you - doing so now feels good; so what if it's electronically! Well, digital is the need of the hour! We hope you are well, safe and making most of the time with families and digital learning.



MAKING MOST OF THE TIME

Giana helped wash her bicycle so we could bring it inside. We put the stabilizers back on it and put them inside a pair of my shoes. DIY spinning bike! Sometimes she does spinning classes, but we also make her pedal if she wants to watch tv. It has definitely helped her burn some energy!:) Courtney

Increasing speed? Multitasking? Or maybe both?!!

While we wait for the situation to get better, some of us are trying to make the most of it... We are pretty sure you would have walked in on many innovative ideas during this time. Here are a couple we got to know about! Do share your experiences, email PTACom@abaoman.org / PTAChair@abaoman.org

In case you are wondering what do with your kids during this time, a Zoom webex with the other class parents may help all. Download the app at <https://zoom.us/download>

Enjoy some witty situation specific fun and music with “The Holderness family music” [here](#).

MINISTRY OF HEALTH APP

Ministry of Health, Oman has launched an application “Tarassud” to keep track of live updates on Coronavirus. The app can be downloaded from Google playstore or iTunes.



CHARITIES IN OMAN

You may find use of some information on charities being currently run in Oman. Please look at the following page for more information.

www.donate.om

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REGISTRAR

We miss you!
If you have friends who want to enrol for next year, send them our way!

Please contact the Registrar with any updates regarding your own situation.

REGISTRAR@ABAOMAN.ORG

SCHOOL HOLIDAY

Our school is closed on Sunday, April 12th.

Classes will resume on Monday, April 13th.

Please keep safe and enjoy the time with your family.



JUST A REMINDER OF WHAT PHYSICAL DISTANCING IS...

NO MEANS NO!

NO gatherings with friends

- even if you sit/stand 6ft apart
- even if you keep it under 10 people
- even if you have all been quarantining
- even if you are symptom free
- even if you are young
- even if it is for a "quick glass of wine"
- even if you're bored, lonely or stir crazy
- even if it is outside/at a park/for a walk

NO gatherings with family

- even though they're family
- even though you miss them

Do pictures help?!

Do colors help?!

WHAT will it take for you to understand?!

STAY HOME