

# THE COURIER

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CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT!

MR. SPATAFORE

**Q: What is your favorite memory with Mr. Spatafore?**

**Mr. Brown:** My favorite memory is when Mr. Spatafore and I rode our bikes home from school, and he had a little "mishap" on the way.

**Mrs. Cadet:** So one of my favorite memories with Mr. Spatafore was in the spring of 2020. It was after school had shut down. I was one of the few people in the office who saw it coming. The day was March 13th, and I was trying to get all of our kids ready: get all the iPads ready, make sure everybody left the building. At some point he was like, "you seem very stressed out. Do you want to go home?"

I was like, "No no no, we have to get ready!"

Maybe a month later Mr. Spatafore said to me, "Man you were right, thank you."

It was really hard obviously, in that time period, not knowing what was up and what was down. However, that spring, a lot of others schools were scrambling to hand out iPads to kids, to figure out everything else. To see Mr. Spatafore step back and recognize that I had saved us some work, was truly meaningful to me.

Also, in that spring instead of a moving up ceremony, we had to put together a moving up video. It was like a movie of the class of 2020. The administration team put together a "goodbye" to the class of 2020, and Mr. Spatafore played the guitar. That was a lot of fun, too. Being able to sing lead while Mr. Spatafore played the guitar. I mean Mr. Brown and Mr. Eaton didn't sing very well, but it was a very fun and funny way for us to be able to say goodbye to the class of 2020.

**Mr. Eaton:** Before I got hired as assistant principal, I was in limbo. I was maybe getting the job, maybe not getting the job, but I was still a teacher here. So, I went to the staff meeting and I was wearing a hat.

The staff meeting ended and Mr. Spatafore was waiting in the main office for me. I walk in the main office with my hat on and he just gives me the finger, like come with me. He takes me into the back office. He says to me "The hat has got to go. We are not wearing hats. You are now in a new role and you have to get rid of the hat."

I'll never forget that as long as I live, and I've never worn a hat back to work since that day. That's one memory I'll never forget with Mr. Spatafore.

**Q: What is something you are going to miss about Mr. Spatafore?**

**Mr. Brown:** Highlands has benefited in every way from Mr. Spatafore. You will not find a more caring, hard working and intelligent person. White Plains has been lucky to have had him as an educator.

**Mrs. Cadet:** Mr. Spatafore is always very thoughtful. I'm going to miss things like the administrative team (before things got crazy) having lunch together 8th period. He was always really good about us sitting, meeting, touching base. He wanted us to stop and eat, and he was always offering me half of his sandwich. I usually didn't take it, but sometimes I would. I'm just going to miss that in him. He's always quick with a thank you card, or to share his lunch to make sure that you are taken care of.

**Mr. Eaton:** I'm going to miss Mr. Spatafore always being positive, always coming to work and being there for the students, his smile and just his presence around the building.

**Q: What are your well wishes for Mr. Spatafore's retirement?**

**Mr. Brown:** Mr. Spatafore, as you move on to write the next chapter of your life, I know you will apply all of the positive experiences and relationships you

have made all of these years in White Plains. We all wish you the very best and hope you will find joy and fulfillment wherever life's travels take you.

**Mrs. Cadet:** I wish that Mr. Spatafore has many years ahead of health and happiness and driving around in a drop top convertible. Blasting Beatles music with his wife. I hope that he gets to be a grandfather very, very soon so he can spoil those grandkids as much as he spoils his own kids. Even now, I am jealous!

**Mr. Eaton:** I would really like to thank Mr. Spatafore for being a mentor to me, as assistant principal. I wish nothing but the best for him and his family moving forward. He has always told me that he can't wait to be a grandfather, so I hope that happens really soon for Mr. Spatafore. I know he also said when he was done, he wanted to be an earth science teacher. Hopefully, he will be able to get his job as an earth science teacher. Again, I want to congratulate him for everything he has done for me and all the students in his career. He has probably reached the lives of over 100,000 students from the time he began to the time he retires. I want to thank him and wish him all the best.

# MS. CIOFOLO

# COACH ADAMS

It is a commonly accepted fact that school librarians are the best, kindest, most helpful people in the universe. There's no denying it. Ms. Ciofola, our librarian, is the best of the best. A couple of weeks ago it saddened us, as it will sadden many, to learn that Ms. Ciofola is retiring: this is her last year at Highlands.

We asked a couple students and teachers to share thoughts about Ms. Ciofola, and received tales of kindness, helpfulness, and times of laughter and support.

## Q: What is your favorite memory with Ms. Ciofola?

**Sanija:** When she catches me and my friends laughing and being loud in the library at lunch.

**Ms. Merrill:** I've known her for a long time, even when I used to teach at Eastview. I don't think I have a specific favorite memory. She's always ready to help me or another person in the building. She will drop what she's doing just to be of help.

**Ms. Lopez:** The endless conversations, book club: we start discussions about books, but then we get distracted and just talk about life and random things. She's really good at giving kids advice and info.

**Mr. Scullion:** Ms. Ciofola is always available to give kids advice and book recommendations and listen to their ideas. I was looking for a piece of literature a few years ago and couldn't find it. I mentioned it to Ms. Ciofola and by the end of that day, with very little information, she was able to not only find the story but also found resources to help with the story.

**Ms. Hart:** When I shared with Ms. Ciofola that I was going to have a baby, Ms. Ciofola got so emotional - she teared up, and it really showed how loving and maternal she is.

## Q: What is something you are going to miss about Ms. Ciofola?

**Sanija:** Her humor and Poppy, of course.

**Ms. Merrill:** She's so smart that I think I will miss her advice on lessons or books or resources or just having somebody to run ideas by. I'll miss that.

**Ms. Lopez:** Her willingness to always help people, her smile. She always has a smile on her face and she always greets people with a lot of enthusiasm. I'll miss doing the book club with her because she rocks.

**Eliana:** She always supports us no matter what, and is always there to share something.

## Q: What are your well wishes for Ms. Ciofola for her retirement?

**Sanija:** I hope she has happiness.

**Ms. Merrill:** I think all of the staff want her to relax, read, and enjoy time with her family. Also travelling and just having a chance to do things that you can't do when you're working.

Of course, everybody will miss Poppy! Ms. Ciofola, we hope you have an amazing retirement!

## Q: What is your favorite memory with Coach Adams?

**Coach Morelli:** My favorite memory with Coach Adams was when Coach Sette was here, and the three of us would eat lunch together. I also liked days when we would accidentally twin and show up in the exact same outfit. Those days were always fun. Really, any period teaching together. It's really nice to teach with people that you genuinely like and have a really fun time with. It just makes for a really good experience.

**Coach Armogida:** Multiple memories come to mind just because we've spent so much time together. Playing golf together, out of school, in school. Watching her teach. She's such a professional at teaching. Watching her coach basketball; her girls basketball teams have won sectional titles and won state playoffs. Also, watching her kids grow up through the White Plains School District. It's been some great memories together.

**Ms. Sherman:** When she used to coach varsity basketball, two years in a row her team went to state finals. It was exciting to watch and be part of her and her girls' success.

## Q: What is something you are going to miss about coach Adams?

**Coach Morelli:** Some things I'll definitely miss about Coach Adams are her dedication and her love for her students, and how she makes things as fun and as great as possible. She truly enjoys what she does and it just rubs off on everyone else. Her dedication to Highlands in general and all of White Plains is impressive.

**Coach Armogida:** Her friendship: just being able to see her everyday and talk to her. Her guidance. On an everyday basis, I know we will still be friends and she is local, but not seeing her everyday is going to be a huge change.

**Ms. Sherman:** She is a true professional in teaching and coaching. She is the kind of person everyone listens to and respects. She will always fight for students in her department even though she'll never get her temper high.

## Q: What are your well wishes for Coach Adams for her retirement?

**Coach Morelli:** I wish her a very, very happy life. We are still going to see her, but I wish her a very happy life with her two grandchildren that she is going to have now. Just spending time with her family, playing golf, and going to the beach and living everyday to its fullest. I hope she still comes back and visits us or we are going to show up at her house during our preps.

**Coach Armogida:** Many years of happiness and joy. Spending time with her family and her grandkids, and her other son is getting married soon, so many years of happiness together with her family. I hope to enjoy a couple more rounds of golf with her in the future, too.

**Ms. Sherman:** I'm extremely happy that she will get to enjoy spending time with her family and do all of her favorite activities on a more regular basis. She deserves this chapter of her life.

# MS. IACOBELLIS

**Q: What is your favorite memory with Ms. Iacobellis?**

**Ms. Hollingsworth:** The one year they sent me to Eastview, she was on my team and she was so kind and welcoming when I was brand new to that building. I could never forget her kindness.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Who can forget Civil War Day back at Eastview many years ago? Ms. Iacobellis and I were working at the food station where our students helped us peel carrots and potatoes to prepare a very basic stew – typical fare that the soldiers may have made back at the time. Only Ms. Iacobellis would pull out a jar of the most wonderfully aromatic Herbes de Provence from her trip to France for us to flavor the stew. I don't think that the soldiers enjoyed their meal nearly as much as the students enjoyed theirs that day!

**Baker:** Over the years that I've known Mrs. Iacobellis, I've always enjoyed our conversations. She is very insightful, thoughtful, and knowledgeable. She also has a lot of interesting stories to share about all of her experiences. We've had many laughs over the years.

**Barnes:** We had a team meeting about three years ago when I started in the building. I can't exactly remember the situation, but for some reason Mrs. Iacobellis and I ended up singing "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music, and ever since she has been my singing partner.

**Q: What is something you are going to miss about Ms. Iacobellis?**

**Ms. Hollingsworth:** Ms Iacobellis is one of those genuine, kind, and caring people that can be hard to find. I'll also miss talking Rangers hockey with her.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Teachers can be demanding, but I love to combat the stress by having a good laugh with my colleagues. I will surely miss Ms. Iacobellis' unexpected, hilariously clever jokes and remarks that sometimes bring me to tears.

**Baker:** Prior to holidays or after a colleague has accomplished something, she is always the first person in the building to send out well wishes and congratulations to the staff. I'm going to miss the way that she can bring people together and give our building a sense of community, just by sending out a few words.

**Barnes:** I'm just going to miss her kindness, Ms. Iacobellis does things for anyone no matter what. She always makes sure people are taken care of.

**Q: What are your well wishes for Ms. Iacobellis for her retirement?**

**Ms. Hollingsworth:** I wish for her to spend a lot of wonderful time with her family and new grandchild, but that she always remembers to check in with us and celebrate all of the Rangers Stanley cup.

**Mr. Sullivan:** Jane, I hope that you enjoy peaceful mornings with no alarm clock, afternoons filled with delicious lunches and catching up with family and friends, late nights watching your favorite sports, and safe traveling to all the places that bring you joy!

**Baker:** I want to wish Ms. Iacobellis a happy and healthy retirement. I hope she gets to relax and spend lots of time with her grandchildren. She will certainly be missed.

**Barnes:** In this next chapter of her life, I wish that all of the kindness and love that she has given to her colleagues, students, and family, can now be directed inward.

# MS. CRISTIANO

**Q: What is your favorite memory with Ms. Cristiano**

**Ms. Drabek:** My favorite memory with Ms. Cristiano is when she told me that her first grandchild was going to be born! She looked so incredibly happy. I will never forget the look on her face!

**Dr. DeLanoy:** My favorite memory of Ms. Cristiano is how welcoming she was when I first began working at Highlands. She was so friendly, checked on me often, and always asked if I need anything. Another favorite memory of Ms. Cristiano is when she talks about her grandchildren. Her face lights up and she has the best stories to share!

**Mr. Cronk:** While it is not a single memory, I have always appreciated her support of and advocacy for her students. She always saw the best in the students she worked with.

**Q: What is something you are going to miss about Ms. Cristiano?**

**Ms. Drabek:** I am going to miss Ms. Cristiano's wonderfully laid- back and positive attitude.

**Dr. DeLanoy:** I am going to miss her infectious smile!

**Mr. Cronk:** I will miss her good sense of humor and her positive attitude.

**Q: What are your well wishes for Ms. Cristiano for her retirement?**

**Ms. Drabek:** I hope Ms. Cristiano uses all her new free time to enjoy her family as much as possible, because this is the most important thing to her.

**Dr. DeLanoy:** I send the best of wishes to Ms. Cristiano as she retires. I hope she spends more time with family and gets to travel more.

**Mr. Cronk:** Congratulations! I wish her lots of time doing what she loves with those she loves.



# MS. O'CONNOR

**Q: What is your favorite memory with Ms. O'Connor?**

**Mr. Baldasaro:** My favorite memories with Ms. O'Connor are always centered around two of our favorite things: animals and books! Ms. O'Connor knows I love corgis and otters, and she has forever made me laugh every time I see an otter. Ms. O'Connor is a voracious reader! She has read more books than any other human that I know. I love talking to her about books and what she is reading.

**Q: What is something you are going to miss about Ms. O'Connor?**

**Mr. Baldasaro:** While I will certainly miss our lunches together and laughing, the thing I will miss the most is Ms. O'Connor's generous spirit. She is always so giving of her time to both students and teachers. Ms. O'Connor truly cares about the profession and the impact she has on students, and it has been a privilege to work with her for the last eight years.

**Q: What are your well wishes for Ms. Iacobellis for her retirement?**

**Mr. Baldasaro:** I hope that you enjoy SLEEPING IN, your time with family and grandchildren, traveling, and knowing that you have left a huge imprint on those blessed to know you at Highlands.

**Mr. Mulcahy:** I have had the pleasure of working with Mrs. O'Connor for more than 20 years. I actually taught her daughter years ago. I cannot give one specific memory because there are simply too many. I have gone on so many wonderful trips with her over the years. We've gone to Ellis Island, Lake Compounce, Spins on the Hudson, and The NY Science Museum in Queens just to name a few. Every trip has wonderful memories.

If I have any other fond memories, it would be all the Halloweens we've had together. As a team we have tried to dress together as one theme. Each year our team would have a different theme. Mrs. O'Connor has also been a TA in my classroom for at least 15 years (probably more) now. She has always been a big help by working with students whenever they have questions. I will miss her smile and laugh. Both always can help light up a room. Most of all, I will miss her friendship. I wish Mrs. O'Connor all the best in her retirement.



We will miss  
you all!  
Have a lovely, and  
RELAXING  
retirement.



**On Tuesday, May 24th**, an 18-year-old gunman snuck in a door that was propped open at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. He entered fourth grade classrooms and opened fire, killing 19 students and two teachers. Many others were severely injured. The police force, which responded to the crisis waited outside for about an hour before entering the building to stop the bloodshed. This left an entire hour in which a man with a gun was loose in an elementary school. This brings the number of school shootings in America since 2009 close to 300. The next highest country, Mexico, has around eight. Some blame this shockingly high number on loose gun laws; others believe that people would find a way to get guns illegally either way. No matter the cause, one thing is clear: this needs to stop. Gun violence in schools in this country has already taken too many innocent lives. Teachers should not be forced to give their lives in an attempt to protect their students.

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| <a href="#">Makenna Lee Elrod</a>              | <a href="#">Layla Salazar</a>          |
| <a href="#">Maranda Mathis</a>                 | <a href="#">Nevaeh Bravo</a>           |
| <a href="#">Jose Manuel Flores Jr.</a>         | <a href="#">Xavier Lopez</a>           |
| <a href="#">Tess Marie Mata</a>                | <a href="#">Rojelio Torres</a>         |
| <a href="#">Eliahna "Ellie" Amyah Garcia</a>   | <a href="#">Eliahna A. Torres</a>      |
| <a href="#">Annabell Guadalupe Rodriguez</a>   | <a href="#">Jackie Cazares</a>         |
| <a href="#">Uziyah Garcia</a>                  | <a href="#">Jayce Carmelo Luevanos</a> |
| <a href="#">Maite Yuleana Rodriguez</a>        | <a href="#">Jailah Nicole Silguero</a> |
| <a href="#">Amerie Jo Garza</a>                | <a href="#">Alithia Ramirez</a>        |
| <a href="#">Alexandria "Lexi" Aniyah Rubio</a> | <a href="#">Irma Garcia</a>            |
| <a href="#">Eva Mireles</a>                    |  |



## Monkey Pox

Written by Francis Fokoue

### Introduction

Monkeys to mice (just rodents in general) to people? Strange indeed. Rashes filled with large lesions and bumps all over your skin? Gross. Meet Monkeypox, the virus not spread by monkeys.

### Where is it spreading?

As of May 31st, monkeypox has emerged in twelve countries. These countries are Australia, Canada, Belgium, France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, and

the United States. This is excluding central and western African countries where the virus is most concentrated.

### Symptoms

The virus begins with the following symptoms: fever, muscle aches, backaches, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion and/or headaches. Soon after the initial infection, a rash starts from which lesions develop. When a person has such lesions, they have the most transmissible form of the virus.

### Transmission?

Monkeypox was seen in monkeys in 1958, however, the main animal source for the transmission of today's strain is rodents. Monkeypox is thought to transfer inefficiently from person to person, although it is spread through direct contact with contaminated objects, skin touching skin, and respiratory droplets. In addition, there are mounting concerns about the sexual transmission of this virus.

### What do we know?

Monkeypox is a DNA virus meaning that it replicates using its DNA. DNA viruses are more stable and less prone to mutations, they evolve much slower, unlike the Coronavirus which is an RNA virus, and can mutate quickly. Once more it has been stressed by doctors that the transmission is not highly effective. This virus originates from the west and central Africa where it is endemic. The west African strain is more forgiving than the central African strain as it has a 1 percent fatality rate. The central African strain has a 10 percent mortality rate. Monkeypox is an orthopoxvirus making it similar to Smallpox which was deadlier but was eradicated. The vaccine for smallpox is 85 percent effective against Monkeypox as of now. Monkeypox has only recently started spreading across the globe, following it, is a lengthy 21-day quarantine for those unfortunately infected.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, Monkeypox is not a virus to be left horror-struck about, according to numerous health officials. Simply exercise proper hygiene and handwashing, as well as refrain from coming into close contact with individuals who possess symptoms, and you will be fine.



## Enlightenment Upon Women's History Month & Successful Females

By: Ipsita Barnwal

February 1980. A time containing a rather prominent milestone, a testament of our society's constant amelioration. At this very juncture is where President Jimmy Carter proclaimed March 2nd to March 8th as National Women's History Week. Carter had gotten this bright idea from a weeklong celebration of women's history organized by the school district of Sonoma, California in 1978. This idea was adopted within communities, school districts and organizations across the country, eventually seizing Carter's attention, instigating his official proclamation to the country. In his declaration, he expressed his beliefs regarding women and their substantial influence in society. He conveyed how from the initial unfolding of civilization, it was imperative for both men and women to collaborate in order for the United States of America to be. He claimed that women were often overlooked, their involvement and contributions to the flourishing of their community's culture and history disregarded. Carter proclaimed that this was far from ethical, and that women and their exertions were just as much of a requisite than those of any man.

Thus, he specifically established this week in order to incentivize and encourage people to enlighten themselves and others upon the struggles and triumphs of women, as well as their strives for equality and justice. At the time, Carter was especially adamant in ensuring that people had knowledge of certain female leaders mentioned in his proclamation such as Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Alice Paul, and so on. He genuinely believed that apprehending and appreciating our nation's past to its full potential would assist us in understanding the exigency for utter equality among all. He went on to ratify the 27th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which was "Equality of rights under the law shall not

be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Six years later, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress, and with their success, were able to expand the weeklong event and make it the entire month of March, as we know it today.

## Female Role Models of the Past

The number of women that have made their mark on the world by the exceptional life they lead is certainly prodigious. By their stellar endeavors, history was created, and more notably, betterments to society were made, engendering it to be as we recognize it today.

## Katherine Johnson - Indelible Pioneer in the World of STEM

This African American woman left many marks on the world, and in outer space too. Too many to name, all impossible to forget. As a Black girl living in the South, Katherine Johnson had to put up with extensive amounts of segregation, including in the school system. The Black school only contained two rooms for seven grades, and Black high schools were not exactly convenient location wise. Johnson's family had to move to attend, which is common at the time. With her exceptional intellect, Johnson was able to graduate high school at just thirteen years of age and went on to continue her education at West Virginia State College. By the age of eighteen, she possessed a double degree in both French and math, graduating with the highest honors.



Later on, Johnson landed a job at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), where she performed as a female computer who fulfilled all of the calculations for the male staff working as engineers. In this time period, the United States was involved in a cold war with Russia. Both nations were in arduous, demanding competition to produce aircraft for their country's security. Although indirect, there was discrimination against black people, especially black women, at NACA. There were two divisions of computers, separated by race. One for black women, and the other for white women. More was expected out of black women who were being hired as computers – black computers had a requisite of a high GPA and college degrees, while white women were not expected, nor required to have these. Johnson also dealt with segregated rules for things such as the bathroom and cafeteria. Just two weeks after Johnson started at her new job, she was singled out by her boss as one of the sharpest computers they had, as one of the male engineers was sought assistance. After catching an error in a set of calculations of his with ease, Katherine Johnson remained a part of their team, advancing from her position as a computer.

Katherine continued to work assiduously, day and night. She was present after Russia had introduced two satellites into orbit, and NACA turned into what we know now, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). America's new objective was to have Americans enter space, and Johnson invested copious hours in her work, even when that meant having to leave her daughters by themselves and compromising her time spent with them. Johnson was committed to determining how exactly an astronaut was to be sent into orbit around the Earth. One of the pivotal issues was figuring out where the spacecraft would be landing. But even so, Johnson volunteered to calculate the path, delivering a final report, the first of its kind authored by a woman. Two years later, in 1962, Johnson was requested to do the work that she would ultimately be most known for. John Glenn was in arrangement to be the first American to orbit the planet, and with the immense help of Johnson's calculations, he was able to do so successfully three times around, with a safe

landing on Earth. Johnson was also a significant collaborator in helping NASA figure out how to launch a spacecraft into the orbit of the moon, and how to connect an orbiting craft with one that was landed on the moon. In July of 1969, the United States was able to land on the moon.

Johnson continued to work vehemently at NASA for the next seventeen years, ensuring that all three of her daughters went to college and graduated from it. She went on to tutor students and advocate profusely for improved access to STEM education for young Black females. In 2015, she was rewarded with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2017, a movie centered around her life was released, and it was called "Hidden Figures". In the same year, NASA named its new computing facility after her. Despite the obstructions that were set in Katherine Johnson's path, she was able to do what she did best with unprecedented accomplishment and become the phenomenal woman she was.

### **Florence Nightingale – "The Lady with the Lamp"**

Florence Nightingale's legacy is one of considerable heroism, a story of true leadership, a lifelong devotion to an altruistic lifestyle. From a noticeably early age, Nightingale was an active philanthropist. She dedicated much of her time and effort tending to the needs of the ill and poor, neighboring her and her family's estate. By the time that she was sixteen, Nightingale became assured that nursing was what she was destined to do, her divine purpose. Unfortunately, when Nightingale approached her parents fervidly with the news of her ambitions, they did not return the same enthusiasm as she did and were disapproving and forbidding to say the least. Part of culture during the Victorian Era was for a young lady of Nightingale's social class to marry a man of means and pursuing a passion such as the one that Nightingale wished to pursue was considered lowly, menial labor by people of her social stature.

However, this was not a hurdle that Nightingale was not capable of leaping over. When she reached the age of seventeen, she repudiated a marriage proposal from a man by the name of Richard Monckton Milnes, considered "suitable" for her. She attested to her rationale for why it was that she turned down the offer, advocating for



set on getting to pursue what she always believed to be her true calling.

In the early 1850s, Nightingale voyaged to London where she was hired as a nurse in a Middlesex hospital. Within just a year of being employed at this hospital, Nightingale was promoted to the superintendent due to the imposing work she exhibited. Nightingale was significantly tested when a cholera outbreak surfaced. Nightingale decided to make it her aim to revolutionize practices of hygiene, which would do a noteworthy job in reducing death rates at the hospital. She worked vigorously to guarantee the success of her efforts. Later, in October of 1853, the Crimean War was embarked upon. In late 1854, Nightingale was requested to tend to the sick and fallen soldiers in Crimea. Nightingale acted as competently and promptly as she could and congregated a team of nurses. She then sailed to Crimea with them a few days later. What awaited them when they reached Crimea was nothing like what they had anticipated. The environment was far from even adequate, and soldiers were dying left and right from battle wounds, more so from diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

Consequently, Nightingale went straight to work, making sure the hospital was uncontaminated, and the soldiers were cared for. She would travel through the lightless hallways in the evenings carrying a lamp while she ministered her patients. This is how she acquired the title "the Lady with the Lamp". Moved by her endless compassion and consoling, people would also call her "the Angel of Crimea." The work Nightingale did, reduced death rates at

her claim that it would become a hindrance in the attaining of her life's goals. Despite all the condemnation that she was receiving, Nightingale decided to enroll as a nursing student at the Lutheran Hospital of Pastor Fliedner in Kaiserwerth, Germany in 1844,

the hospital by a staggering two-thirds. Not only did Nightingale vastly enhance the hospital's sanitary conditions, but she also created a variety of services for patients which served the purpose of improving the stay that patients underwent at the hospital. For example, she instituted the manufacturing of a service where patients with special dietary requirements and restrictions were cooked food that was pleasurable for them to consume. She established the concept of laundry as well, so that patients would have access to materials such as clean garments and bedding. She even introduced a classroom, as well as a library that patients would be able to go to, serving as entertainment and intellectual stimulation during their hospital stay.

Based on her time spent in Crimea, Nightingale wrote Notes on Matters Affecting the Health, Efficiency and Hospital Administration of the British Army, a report consisting of eight hundred thirty pages. It was written as an analysis of her experience at Crimea, and proposed reforms for other military hospitals which were also in appalling condition. Her report would spark a comprehensive amending and restructuring of the War Office's administrative department, and the establishing of a Royal Commission for the Health of the Army in 1857. After the Crimean dilemma was resolved in the summer of 1856, Nightingale returned back home, and was greeted by Queen Victoria, as well as rewarded for her work with an engraved brooch called the "Nightingale Jewel" and \$250,000 from the British government. Nightingale was able to take this additional support to go even further to create change, and do things such as employ researchers, create visuals such as "Nightingale's Rose Diagram", fund hospital establishments, and she would even create a school of her own, named the Nightingale Training School for Nurses. This not even being everything Nightingale has accomplished in her lifetime; it is clear she made a stark difference with her efforts. Thanks to Nightingale, nursing became a much more respected and reputable occupation, an honorable one at that, and created momentous change in the medical industry in myriad ways. Her work, life-changing for so many, definitely made her deserve her acknowledgement as the pioneer of modern nursing.

### **Female Role Models of Today**

The female role models that we have as fantastic leaders in our world today are crucial to the development of our society, as with their involvement

comes notable differences. These leaders are some of the people keeping our world spinning in the current day, and the examples they set are likely to be the footsteps that our future leaders walk in.

### **Greta Thunberg – Tiny but Mighty Environmentalist**

This youthful leader is truly an inspiration to many and took on quite the salient responsibility of turning mere anxieties about the planet into a much more serious calling. Thunberg first realized that this was something she had to pursue, something that had to be further prioritized when her primary school teacher showed her class a video of what the effects of climate change looked like. The extreme weather, starving polar bears, and melting ice affected Thunberg in a way that it affected none of her classmates, and she fell into a deep depression when she turned eleven. She stopped speaking almost entirely for several months, and became so malnourished that she was nearly hospitalized, later stunting her growth. Thunberg remembers the striking confusion she felt through this period, claiming how she could not have a handle on how such a threat could exist, without being any sort of precedence in the slightest. She recalled the bit of denial she experienced as well, saying “that can’t be happening, because if that were happening, then the politicians would be taking care of it”. When she came to terms with the fact that this was not at all the reality she lived in, minor changes were first implemented in her household, by Thunberg’s family to abide as well, in an effort to provide Thunberg with comfort, and start to make a difference one step at a time by reducing their emissions. The family mostly terminated their meat intake, installed solar panels in their estate, began growing their own produce, and even gave up flying as a mode of transportation. Slowly, Thunberg started to get back to her normal self, and began to eat and talk again. Thunberg was diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, a form of autism spectrum disorder, a development disorder. This information served as a

prime explanation as to why Thunberg had such a powerful reaction to being enlightened upon climate crisis. Thunberg asserted that in a way she was grateful for her diagnosis, as there were advantages to the way her brain worked in her opinion.

Thunberg’s actions started to acquire lots of recognition when she skipped school and embarked upon a global movement in August of 2018. She would spend her day to day camping out in front of the Swedish Parliament holding her well known sign with bold, black letters reading “Skolstrejk för klimatet” (School Strike for Climate). She would often sit alone, aside from a few journalists who would come by to speak with her. The quantity of people that accompanied her grew gradually. A couple. A few. A dozen. Hundreds. Thousands. This gave birth to the “Fridays for Future” movement, where protesting would take place every Friday until Sweden aligned with the Paris Agreement. Striking was something that made Thunberg feel alive, and brought her true happiness, and this seemed to be true for lots of others in one way or another, as soon, people worldwide were beginning to strike as well. People were taking action left and right to do something about the abuse that our planet goes through. In a matter of months following this event, Thunberg had addressed heads of state at the U.N., met with the Pope, sparred with former President Obama, and even instigated four million people to join her in the global climate strike on September 20th, 2019, marked down as the largest climate demonstration in human history. Thunberg has successfully created a worldwide attitude shift and has persuaded a multitude of leaders, from mayors to presidents, to make valuable commitments regarding climate change. For example, after speaking with Parliament and demonstrating with Extinction Rebellion, a British environmental group, the U.K. passed a law requiring that the country make an endeavor to



eventually eliminate their carbon footprint. Despite the hurdles Thunberg encountered, she was capable of things that mattered a lot through her fervent passion for the world and the environment.

### **Sonia Sotomayor – Hispanic History in the Supreme Court**

Throughout the course of her life, Sonia Sotomayor had a great deal of encumbrances to combat, which she eventually overcame with impressive resiliency. To name a few, at only seven years old, Sotomayor was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, and typically when one got diagnosed at an age of considerable prematurity for such a disease, they were not expected to survive anywhere past the age of fifty. Furthermore, Sotomayor grew up having an alcoholic father who had passed away when she was nine, and a mother who was frequently absent in her life, especially due to Sotomayor’s late father. Sotomayor’s mother also possessed a lack of affection towards her daughter, thus the relationship that was sustained between them was quite complicated, as she tends to express in the book she wrote, titled “My Beloved World.” In this book, Sotomayor discusses the many struggles she faced throughout life, which ultimately shaped her as a person and lead her to where she is today.

Despite the fact that she was rather intellectual and perseverant, Sotomayor’s family lacked the knowledge and financial resources which would have aided her in her path to success. Her parents were incapable of fulfilling the task of giving Sotomayor her insulin shots, so she decided to do so herself, even when she was barely capable of performing the task. In an interview she once had, Sotomayor claimed

how being diabetic drover her in a way “that perhaps nothing else might have to accomplish as much... as early as possible”, as she was living with the belief that her lifespan was significantly shortened.

Moreover, Sotomayor was also discriminated against at her time studying at Princeton. Being a woman, a minority, and a recent admit into college, she encountered an abundance of hostility in her direction.



Along with that, her grades in her classes were falling short. However, she did not let that be an obstruction in her path, but rather something for her to address and utilize as motivation to do better. She studied a bountiful amount of grammar and vocabulary over her summer breaks, and later graduated Princeton with honors. Later, Sotomayor moved on to become the first Hispanic and Latina Supreme Court Justice in America. Sotomayor did not let any of the adversity that faced her derail her path to Washington, DC.

### **It All Comes Down to You**

Innumerable females dot our world like stars dot the night sky, ubiquitous in their presence. Given these points, it is clear that the success, leadership, courage, resilience, and love possessed by females have the same paramountcy as those of any males that have come to see the light of day. It is because of men and women alike that our ever changing, flourishing society has its amendments, ultimately making our world the way it is. Learning about the fruitful historic exertions of women, as well as the doings of direct influence that are being made by women in our world today, is advantageous in assisting one in recognizing, and furthermore appreciating the efforts that afforded them, and others, the opportunity and enhancement that lies within our world today.

It is exceedingly valuable for our youth to be able to acknowledge and appreciate what women have done for our world in the past and today, as our younger generations are the leaders of tomorrow. The minds of our youth are like soft, impressionable play-doh. Everything going on around a young individual, all of what they see, hear, and are a part of, has the capability to affect the way they think, the way they view the world, and the way that they take action. In my opinion, young people have the astonishing potential to take the circumstances that are set before them, evaluate, and by putting their extensive imagination to the rest, they are able to brainstorm, innovate, and change. And to me, that is truly a wonderful, beautiful thing that can be used for the benefit of the world. I hope that this article was practical in aiding you and others to reflect on this March, and in providing another slice of knowledge and mindfulness that will help build an even better future for everyone, abundant with justice and appreciation, and opportunity for all.



# PRIDE MONTH

## Conversion therapy. What is it?

Conversion therapy is a type of “therapy” used on people in the LGBTQ+ community to “convert” them into being straight and cis. (Cis: someone who identifies as the gender they were assigned at birth). Conversion therapy is a very harmful process and many survivors of conversion therapy have spoken out against it.

Conversion therapy has been banned in many countries, including Brazil, Samoa, Fiji, Taiwan, Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Malta, Germany, Spain, Australia, At least 20 states in America, Chile, India, Canada, France, and New Zealand. Several bills have been introduced to preserve the practice of repeal the bans on conversion therapy across the United States.

Conversion therapy has been discredited time and time again. It has been discredited by every major professional association that deals with mental health. The belief that someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity can be changed, or “fixed”, is not based on medical or scientific evidence, according to the American Medical Association.

Throughout a lifetime, the estimated cost of conversion therapy adds up to almost \$100,000 per person. Affirmative therapy has been shown to save more than \$40,000 per person. In total, conversion therapy costs were estimated to be



more than \$650 million per year, and the issues connected with that economic issue were \$8.58 billion. In total that is \$9.23 billion. If LGBTQ+ youth were given affirming therapy, the estimated amount saved would be nearly \$6.19 billion over their lifetimes.

In 2021, more than half a million LGBTQ+ youth in the US alone were at risk of undergoing conversion therapy. Many countries have been working to ban, or have already banned conversion therapy. Other countries unfortunately don’t hold the same viewpoints. The UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has failed to fully ban conversion therapy. In the UK, it is legal for a transgender person to go to conversion therapy.

One way to combat conversion therapy is by contacting your state representatives and letting them know what you think about it. This is useful in states where they are trying to undo the ban. I hope you found this article helpful and informative.



## Pride Month

Written by Lucy Wright

### What is Pride Month?

Pride Month is a month commemorated to the LGBTQ+ community. Pride Month celebrates and pushes towards equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. Since 1999, June has been declared as Pride Month in the US. Pride Month has been a great opportunity for awareness and acceptance, and it helps us recognize the impact that LGBTQ+ people have had on the world. It is important for us to be aware and accept the LGBTQ+ community, and all its great accomplishments.

### History of Pride Month

The first pride parade was in 1970, on the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. In the early morning of June 28, 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn (a gay bar). Police entered the bar and tried to identify people. They started harassing, discriminating, and assaulting the patrons. This quickly became violent, and the riot had started. On June 28, 1970, thousands of people marched from the Stonewall Inn to Central Park, chanting “Say it loud, gay is proud.”

This was called “Christopher Street Liberation Day.” The first pride month was in 1999, when President Bill Clinton declared June as “Gay and



Lesbian Pride Month.” From 2009-2016 President Barack Obama declared June as, “LGBTQ+ Pride Month”. Pride Month is a great time to learn more about the LGBTQ+ community, and their struggles.

### Pride acceptance

Pride acceptance has grown immensely over the past several decades. In the 1950’s and 60’s America did not welcome the LGBTQ+ community. Same sex relations were illegal, and gay and lesbian bar raids were common. On June 26, 2015, same sex marriage was legalized in all 50 states. In several states, LGBTQ Americans are protected from discrimination in employment, housing and more. We have made great strides towards equal rights, but we are not done yet.

### Celebrate pride

People celebrate pride all around the world. From parades to monuments, commemorating members of the LGBTQ+ community, and their accomplishments. Countries all around the world have dedicated a month towards the acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. On June 26th, 2016, President Barack Obama officially designed the Stonewall National Monument. This was the first national monument in the US that commemorates the LGBTQ+ community.

There are many ways to celebrate pride, especially in June!





# The LGBTQ+ Flags and their Meanings

By: Anonymous Fruit

## LGBTQ

LGBTQ, what does it stand for? The letters stand for, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning. Of course there is the extended version being, LGBTQIA+ but it may be confusing as this is when letters can be reused for more than one flag. This article will not include all flags as there are a lot. More than 100, and some being of very close definition.

## Umbrella Terms

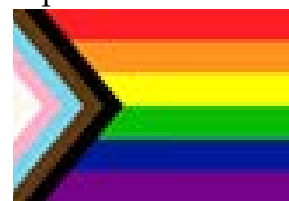
Umbrella terms can be things such as the word "Queer". Queer can be used to describe anyone part of the community. This includes people who are non-binary and or of different genders than the ones they were assigned at birth. The community is not just for those who like same sex, but those who have changed their identity (gender) at some point in their lives. Another great example of an umbrella term is the trans. Trans can just connect to anyone who transitioned from one gender to another, or in some cases, to no gender. A very commonly known umbrella term is "Gay". It does not mean the same as queer. The umbrella term "gay" specifically highlights people who are attracted to the same sex. And with cases like bisexual and pansexual, it also can be directed towards them because those people do in-fact like the same sex. Another term that may not be as well known, but certainly valid, is "ace". Ace just highlights those people who have little to no attraction towards anyone, whether heterosexual or homosexual attraction. Heterosexuals do not count as people who are ace. And all of these terms fall under the umbrella term queer.

## The Flags and what they Represent

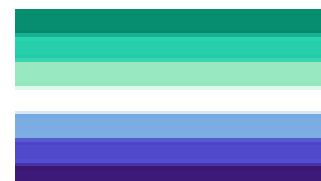
Let's start off simple with the "Pride Flag". The pride flag is the flag that is used in majority of the community or the best neutral flag. This was not the original flag though, as



the original flag made in 1978 consisted a pink on top of the red. Although this was changed into the flag you see above. Although in 2018 this flag was changed again but now to what we call the "progress flag." The progress flag below was made to include people of color (the black and brown colors added) and the trans community (pink, light blue, and white). It is now being accepted worldwide and you can see people start to use this updated version. Both flags are valid and just fine.



Now onto the "gay flag." This flag is used for men who are attracted to men. Although a lot of people use the word "gay" as a neutral term, it is actually specific towards men.



The next flag is the "Lesbian Flag". This flag is used for Women who are attracted to Women.



The "Bisexual Flag." This flag is used for members of the community who feel they have an attraction to both sexes. It doesn't matter what sex/gender the person themselves are. The pink symbolizes attraction to the same sex, blue symbolizing attraction to the opposite sex and the purple symbolizing attraction regardless of sex. This can also be shortened to the "Bi Flag."



The "Pansexual Flag" also known as the "Pan Flag" is used by those that have an attraction to all genders. The pink symbolizing attraction to women, blue for attraction to men and yellow for the attraction of non-binary people. Just like bisexual, it doesn't matter what gender/sex you are. Although it is not the same as the bisexual flag. Pansexuals love all, whilst bisexuals are restricted only to women and men.



Now for those who are transgender/trans. Trans has nothing to do with attraction. It is for people who go from one sex to another. As an example, a man transitioning into a woman. It is very important to acknowledge that every person needs respect, whether you like them or not. So please try to call them by their respective pronouns and or name if they decide to change their name. Now for trans there are some important terms to know. The abbreviation known as "MtF" stands for, "Male to Female". And for the other way around it would be, "FtM," standing for, "Female to Male". This is rather important as it can tell you what the other person now identifies as. If people who are trans are fully ready, they can take a surgery to fully transition their bodies. For a very long time they will take medication for swapping their hormones with the hormones of the opposite sex. This is a very long process, and it takes a lot of preparation.

On the topic of gender, let's move into non-binary. This is their flag. Majority of people who go by non-binary, end up changing their pronouns. They normally change their pronouns to "they/ them" but in certain cases, they change them into something called "neopronouns". Now this article will not be explaining neopronouns as it a very controversial topic and as well as it is confusing to explain. If you would like to know more about them, do your own research with time and patience.



Keeping with the topic of gender, this is the "gender fluid" flag. People who identify as gender fluid are people who feel more feminine on one day, whilst the next day they feel more masculine. And then feeling like they are non-binary on the day after that. These people also tend to change their pronouns but sometimes they prefer using a combination. Such as, "she/they, he/they, he/she/they" this helps people know what they are comfortable with being labeled as. So it is important to ask for pronouns.



Now although this is a pride article, it is important for the "straight ally" flag to be here too. Allies have helped people of the LGBTQ community in many aspects. In the case someone was kicked out of their home because they are "different" there have been allies who have helped them by taking them in. Allies just make life a lot better for people of the community. Both in safety and support.



## Important

The straight flag is not a pride flag. That is something that has to be made clear. Being straight is the norm. People aren't kicked out of their houses because they came out as straight. People aren't hated on and have their opportunities thrown out the windows because they are heterosexual. People who are straight have not had the fear to tell their loved ones that they like someone of the same sex and or they don't feel as though they are their sex assigned at birth. People of the LGBTQ community have to fear the fact that they may lose many people over their lives, people who they love, because of the fact they are different. So the straight flag will not be included in this article.

Throughout the article I have used the words, sex and gender. Now you may be wondering, what's the difference? Sex, is male or female. If you are still the same sex as you were when you were born, then you are cisgender. Cisgender just means you are the the same gender since birth. But if someone does a full transition, their sex can be changed. Now gender. Gender is more of a behavioral thing. It involves behavior, expressions and social constructed roles. Gender can be used to describe people who are non-binary. Non-binary is not a sex. It is a gender. This is just a brief, more simple explanation. For more info, it would be best to research.

Now it is important to respect everyone. Some religions do not allow for people to accept people in the LGBTQ. Although respect can go to a good extent. Basically, just have some human decency. Everyone deserves respect until you have a reason for why they don't. If you don't agree with people of LGBTQ, then don't interact with them. You can just leave. You don't have to cause any problems or make a big deal. More than likely, they aren't the ones to cause problems that we see on TV about these huge protests and arguments. They are just trying to defend themselves, so just ignore them if you don't like it.

Now to close it off, enjoy pride month!

# Common Sexualities and Genders

Angela Bediako and Eliana Lieber

## Introduction

Hey, my guys, gals, enby pals, and all other genders. Happy Pride Month! Pride, as most of you know, is a month celebrating LGBTQ+ people. I won't go in depth about the history of the movement leading up to now; there's another article for that!

## LGBTQ+:

There are a few acronyms used to represent this community. There are LGBT+, LGBTQ+, and LGBTQIA+, but for the rest of this article, we're going to be using LGBTQ+. The definition of LGBTQ+ from Merriam Webster is "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity)," but those five letters only show a fraction of what the LGBTQ+ community is, which is why we have the plus sign.

LGBTQ+ doesn't begin to represent all the sexualities and genders one can identify as. These five letters show how a fraction of the LGBTQ+ community identifies. We are going to discuss some of the most common sexualities and gender identities. These are only some of the common ones. There are hundreds and maybe even THOUSANDS of sexualities and gender identities, but I'm only going to talk about a few.

## Sexualities

### Being Gay/Lesbian

Let's start with the fact that being gay is, by definition, "a person who is homosexual (used especially of a man)." It is usually used to express people who are both gay and lesbian. In simpler terms, if a man is attracted to only men, then he is gay, and if a woman is attracted to only women, then she is a lesbian. People do not get to choose who they are attracted to. People do not choose to be gay, lesbian, transgender, or queer, just like how people can't choose to be straight or cis. It is never okay to judge someone based on who they're attracted to or how they identify. Choose kindness, not homophobia or transphobia.

### Bisexuality, Pansexuality, and Polysexuality

As well as being attracted to one gender, many people identify as bisexual, pansexual, or polysexual. These people are attracted to more than one gender.

Bisexuality is being attracted to both males and females. People who are also attracted to nonbinary people can classify as bisexual. Being bisexual does not mean that you equally like boys, girls, and nonbinary people. Most people who identify as bisexual have preferences over which gender they prefer.

Pansexuality is being attracted to all genders. Genders don't just include male, female, and nonbinary. There are hundreds of different genders that you can identify as and can feel attracted to. Being

pansexual means that they feel attracted to all genders. As I said with bisexuality, pansexual people can have preferences over which gender they prefer.

## Genders

### Intersex

Someone who is Intersex is defined as someone who doesn't fit the gender binary of male or female physical traits at birth. Someone may have both or neither. The traits don't necessarily have to be visible. For example, someone who is intersex may appear female physically, but they may have hormones that typically define males.

### Transgender

People who are transgender are people who identify as a gender other than their birth sex.

The first thing to know is that sex and gender are different. Sex is what a person is defined as at birth, based on chromosomes and other physical characteristics. Gender, on the other hand, is what someone defines themselves as. It can be what they were assigned at birth, if so, then they are considered Cisgender, or Cis, but it isn't necessarily. One who doesn't fit into this last statement is considered transgender. Every trans person's experience is unique.

Let's also speak about gender expression. The way you express your gender (meaning the way you dress, things you like, makeup you wear, and other things) doesn't mean you are a certain gender. For example, some things are seen to be more feminine, such as makeup, dresses, and nail polish, but wearing or doing any of these things doesn't necessarily mean you are a girl! It doesn't mean that you are gay! It means that you are you, that you are happy and expressing yourself the way you want. No matter how you choose to express yourself, you are valid. Your gender is valid.

### Pronouns

Pronouns don't equate gender, and gender doesn't equate pronouns. Usually, girls use she/her pronouns, but a girl may be more comfortable with they/them pronouns. The most common pronouns are She/Her, He/Him, and They/Them, though countless others are used. Many people also use multiple pronouns, such as He/they. Depending on the person, they may use the pronouns interchangeably, or they may use different pronouns in different situations. Some people also use neopronouns. Neopronouns are pronouns other than She, He, They, and It.

It may seem daunting to ask somebody for their pronouns, but it is important information to know to make sure that everybody is comfortable. If you need clarification, ask. If you have questions, ask. Don't be embarrassed.

### Nonbinary and Genderqueer

Being nonbinary means, in simplest terms, that a person does

not feel that they fit in with the gender "boxes" set for each gender. They feel that their gender falls outside of the gender binary. Instead of using pronouns such as he/him or she/her, they use pronouns such as they/them or ze/zir. Nonbinary people can choose to represent as transgender, and many of them do. However, if you are nonbinary, it does not necessarily make you transgender. Non-binary also includes those who believe they are bigender (a mix of male and female) and agender (they don't identify with any identity or gender).

Being genderqueer is very similar to being nonbinary. When you are genderqueer, you feel that you also have no predetermined way to describe your gender.

### Genderfluid and Agender

Being genderfluid is when a person's gender is, as said in the name, fluid. Drifting from one gender to the other. It does not necessarily always go from male to female. Genderfluidity can be on a spectrum of genders including but not limited to male, female, non-binary, agender, bi-gender, tri-gender, demi-girl, demi-boy, etc. a genderfluid person's gender can change daily. They cannot control what gender they identify as on one specific day. They deserve respect no matter their gender.

Someone who is Agender, (Agender, not a gender, quite the opposite actually) doesn't define as any gender. Some may not have words to explain their gender, not care about gender, not want to label their gender, consider gender to be a social construct or other things. People who are Agender may identify as Genderqueer, Non-binary, Trans, or other genders that they feel fit them in addition to Agender.

### Queer and Questioning

Sometimes, you don't need labels. Queer is an umbrella term, for the whole community. Some people choose to solely identify as Queer. They feel that that is the identity that represents them best. They may also just not know who they are. Haven't figured themselves out yet. That's called Questioning. When you don't know who you are. Some people never question it. They just know. But for others, it takes longer, some never figure it out.

Society puts such stress on labels. It's not always that black and white. Don't be afraid to not label yourself. Don't be afraid to not fit into that little box over there. You are you. You don't need everything to be solved. Sometimes, not everything has an answer. No matter what, you are valid. You can love (or not love) who you want, be who you want, and appear as what you want. You are you, and that's all that matters.

## Conclusion

We know this only scratches the surface, and there is so much more information not stated, but taking the time to learn is the most important thing we can do. Happy Pride!

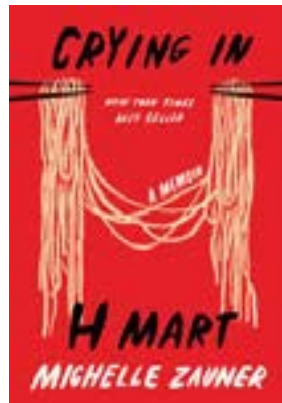


# MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Some of My Favorite Books as of Now (and why) Olivia Tuzel

I think I read a decent amount, at least for my age. To me, books are the embodiment of everything that is within the range of "peachy keen". I rarely come across a book that I cannot stop thinking about months after finishing it, but when I do, I make sure to carve a little cove in my heart that is reserved solely for that piece of art. I do not throw full five-star ratings around like candy, so the books that are labeled as "one of Olivia's favorites" deserves to be shared with others. Here are some of my all-time favorite books, and why they are so alluring (in no particular order).

### #1. **Crying in H Mart** by Michelle Zauner



**"Ever since my mom died, I cry in H Mart."**

Even though I completed this book at the beginning of January, I am still carefully engraving it into my soul. Ever since September 2021, when I had skimmed through the first chapter of **Crying in H Mart** in an online preview, I have been impatiently waiting to soak in the words this book holds. Surely, I could have read it digitally, but the first page of **Crying in H Mart** was already enough for me to conclude that this was going to be a stellar memoir. So, I had no choice but to struggle through time until I could get my hands on a physical copy that I can proudly display on my bookshelf. There are absolutely NO regrets about waiting for more than three months just to be able to grasp onto this astonishing, poignant, heart-wrenching writing piece.

**Crying in H Mart** revolves around the life of

Michelle Zauner (aka the author). She writes about how it was like to grow up as biracial, along with the struggle to maintain her Korean culture as she blooms into a young adult. Growing up, she felt as though her relationship with her mother was far from flawless and perpetually felt overwhelmed by her mother's perfect and clean life. However, when her mother passes away from cancer, grief is a brick that is thrown at Zauner as though she were a glass window. As she goes through the process of piecing her life together, she realizes that her mother's life grew to be a sense of comfort in Zauner's own life.

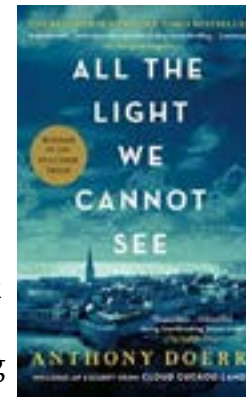
**Crying in H Mart** discusses the weight of how it is to lose somebody you love, along with the empty ache that permeates in the seemingly choking air afterward. Flashing back between the process of swallowing the grief, memories of her childhood, and how it was like to see Zauner's mother change throughout her battle with cancer, this memoir beautifully tells the tale of a woman who discovers herself and her culture through the death of a parent.

### #2. **All The Light We Cannot See** by Anthony Doerr

**"Open your eyes and see what you can do with them before they close forever."**

I recall being so speechless after finishing this novel that I could not even muster the motivation to write a full, lengthy review for it on Goodreads. Typically, when I complete a **really good book**, I put all my effort into writing a review that does it justice. Yet, I just felt like staring into space without bothering to wipe my tear-stained cheeks.

**All The Light We Cannot See** takes place during WWII, rotating between the POVs of two lives. Marie-Laure is a French sightless girl who is forced to flee her home with her father after the Nazis take over Paris. She and her father resort to



the unusual home of her great-uncle, where the sea crashes against the moss-covered walls protecting the homes from harm. However, the daughter-father duo carries a crime with them. Marie-Laure's father, previously a worker at a Museum of Natural History, has taken an extremely valuable and minacious jewel that is said to wreak havoc amongst people.

On the other hand, Werner Pfennig is an orphan living in Germany who finds intense fascination with things that many deem as dull. Due to a forbidden radio station, Werner discovers his talent for building meticulous machines and is recruited into a Nazi program that has one desire: to track down the resistance. However, as time passes, he cannot help but wonder if being a part of this program is what he really wants to do in his life.

**"Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another."**

This line was from the original book description, and I couldn't have said it any better. **All The Light We Cannot See** is the book that **will** become a well-known classic in the years to come. There is so, so much more I would like to say but I cannot say anymore without spoiling anything or bursting into tears.

I thank the friend who encouraged me to pick up this masterpiece in a little bookstore in Poland, otherwise, I probably would not have set my eyes on it. Now, this story wraps around my soul like an unbreakable string. If you are trying to decide whether you would like to read this novel, **JUST DO IT!! TRUST ME ON THIS ONE!!!**

### #3. **If He Had Been with Me** by Laura Nowlin

**"I wasn't with Finny on that August night, but my imagination has burned the scene in my**



**mind so that it feels like a memory."**

How can one love a book as much as they hate it? Yeah, I'm not too sure either but it's the case I have with this romance. I stayed up until three in the morning to finish this novel and was an emotional wreck for a week after. Every time I thought I was getting over this story, my mind trailed back to it and the need to let out a guttural sob would resurface. I certainly do not regret sacrificing sleep for the sake of this book, but let me tell you, having to suppress tears and/or silently cry after finishing a sad book is one of the greatest pains a reader can endure.

**If He Had Been with Me** is one of those "childhood friends to lovers" sort of trope that results in the utter destruction of one's soul. For as long as they can remember, Autumn and Finn have been two halves of one soul. They have been neighbors since birth, their mothers are best friends, they celebrated all holidays together, and just had an unbreakable bond that ruled everybody but themselves out of the picture. That was until one day when everything changed. As they entered their high school years, the two grew apart, but they could not avoid one another forever. A weighing feeling begins to envelop Autumn and she cannot help but wish that things could go back to the way they used to be, or if they should go beyond that.

My reading experience for **If He Had Been with Me** was a mess: one moment I was frustrated, then I would be sulking, then I was giddy. It was an endless cycle. I had such mixed emotions that I would end up ranting to my ceiling about the book, expecting it to respond. Nevertheless, I adored so many things about this story, way too many for me to list. If you are looking for a sad romance, this is

perfect for you. Anyway, I should probably inform you that I sobbed. **A lot.** Although I am a reader that cries about nearly every book for nonsensical reasons, this was a full-on bawling and weeping session. At this point, I've come to accept that all the tears that trek down my face when reading books are enough to make up for a skincare routine.

**\*this is not a PG book, it can get spicy\***

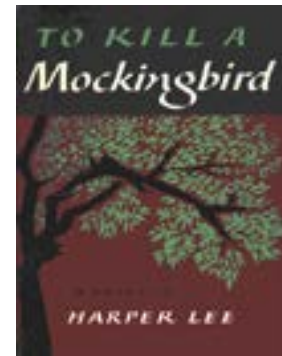
#### #4. To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

**"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."**

I finished this classic sitting on a rug in front of a fireplace that had been sheltering a nearly burnt-out fire. My cat was also sleeping next to me... and it was 2 am. Yes, I was having a "hot girl moment", and **To Kill a Mockingbird** deservedly witnessed me in my prime. I remember thinking, "I am so grateful for whoever placed this book in the lonely Little Free Library. I would probably be reading this for the first time in a stuffy English classroom in high school if it weren't for whatever genius let go of this stellar book." So, if you are the person who willingly placed this fine art into the Little Free Library, I love you. I am literally about to get down on one knee for you.

**To Kill a Mockingbird** takes place in Maycomb, Alabama, where it seems as though not much happens. However, from the eyes of Jean Louise (also known as Scout), her hometown is not as dull as it seems. Adventures can be found everywhere, especially when a new boy named Dill moves in for the summer. When her father, Atticus (who is a very well-respected lawyer), begins to defend a person of color named Tom who allegedly assaulted a white woman, the town casts dirty glances.

**To Kill a Mockingbird** is an outstanding bildungsroman (bet you didn't know that was a genre) story that explores morals and meanings that Harper Lee was able to effortlessly tackle.

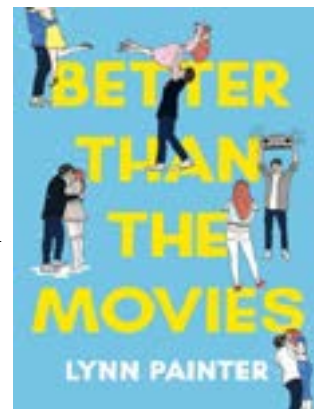


Growing up with Scout, her brother Jem, her father, and the town feels so personal, it is almost as if you are a member of the neighborhood itself. By the end of the story, you feel like you have just witnessed a breathtaking coming-of-age tale that no author can ever recreate.

I'm not going to lie, but some concepts that lie within **To Kill a Mockingbird** are not crystal clear to me *yet*. I reckon that is because I am still young, so I want to reread this classic repeatedly until I fully digest all points that Harper Lee wants readers to comprehend. Despite that, this classic perfectly encapsulates the feeling of a distant summer memory wishing to be fulfilled once more.

#### #5. Better Than the Movies by Lynn Painter

**"Enemies to lovers – it's our trope, Buxbaum"**  
I thought that I was an innocuous person. After I read this young adult rom-com, that statement became a lie. When this book manages to be brought up in a conversation, you will catch me going feral. Like, foaming at the mouth type of feral.



Growing up, Liz Buxbaum has always found herself clashing with her next-door neighbor, Wes Bennett. From foolish pranks that Wes has performed to pester Liz, to the ongoing "battle of the parking spot", the two have never been at peace. However, when Liz's childhood crush, Michael, moves back to town, she is left with no choice but to make peace with her annoying neighbor. To strategically connect back with Michael, Liz must form a deal with Wes. If he succeeds in helping Liz get closer to her forever love once more, Liz will give up the parking spot (infamously known as The Spot) for Wes. However, as the two work together, Liz comes to realize that Wes isn't too bad after all, and maybe she has got her eyes set on the wrong prize.

**Better Than the Movies** is fantastic. It has **THE PERFECT TROPE** (enemies-to-lovers \*wink wink\*) **AND HAS THE PERFECT PLOT.** All the characters are loveable, along with the relationships they share with one another. There are so many great things in this story, from the events that occur throughout the book to the fact that Liz's cat's name is literally "Mr.

Fitzpervert". Lynn Painter did an astounding job of tying a multitude of moments within the plot to make the friendship that slowly starts to take place between Liz and Wes seem so natural and not rushed at all.

**Better Than the Movies** has made me swoon, uncontrollably giggle, and even unleashed a fierce urge to skim a couple of pages ahead due to the tension the air occasionally held. This is just the fluffiest, most gush-worthy romance novel ever, so I reckon that it is a perfect summer read. I have absolutely no complaints, so frankly, I can write a whole essay about the history between Wes and Liz if I were asked to (but don't ask me, because I hate writing essays).

Well, take it as a gift that you were introduced to some of Olivia's favorite books. I wish that I could write about my other favorite books, but my indecisive self cannot decide which one should be "put in the spotlight" last. So, here are the rest of the books that I would just love to pamper if I had the chance:

- Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
- The Poppy War by R.F. Kuang
- Gilded by Marissa Meyer
- The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea by Axie Oh
- A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman
- The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

To all the non-readers out there (I realize as I type this out that it would be very unlikely for a person who does not read to read an article about books), I am going to be an optimist and hope that you will eventually want to pick up a book, even if it is once in a blue moon. I know that my life would absolutely suck if I would not have the opportunity to come across worlds besides my own. Who knows, maybe you'll feel the same once you discover the beauty of living in a story that does not belong to you.



### Cereal Rankings

By Nicholas Bucaj and Jacob Cohen

In 1863, a medical sanitarium worker by the name of James Caleb Jackson discovered that by drying graham flour dough, and then breaking it into pieces, you could make mildly appetizing grain cakes that could be eaten at breakfast. These cakes, however, were extremely hard, and thus had to be soaked in milk the night before to be edible in the morning. Jackson called his invention "granula."

Some years after the original granula was created, a surgeon in a different sanitarium, John Harvey Kellogg,

created a biscuit made of oats, corn, and wheat. Some confusion arose, as Kellogg called his creation granula as well. After Jackson sued, Kellogg changed the food's name to "granola." John's brother, Will Keith Kellogg, also worked at the sanitarium, and the brothers would continue experimenting to come up with a healthier breakfast food, one that was more wholesome and nutritious than meat, which at the time was more commonly eaten for breakfast.

The brothers began boiling wheat, rolling it out into a sheet, then grinding the wheat. This led to mixed results, and the Kellogg brothers kept experimenting with this method in an attempt to perfect it. In 1894, the brothers left a pot of wheat out by accident, but decided to roll it anyway. The grain did not roll out into a sheet like the previous attempts, but instead split into hundreds of flakes, which the Kellogg brothers promptly toasted, creating the blueprint for modern cereal.

W. K. Kellogg saw that his brother wasn't going all in into their new endeavor, so he bought John out, and began selling the toasted corn and wheat flakes. Over time, other cereal brands would emerge, such as Post. Post started when C.W. Post, a man from Texas who was visiting the sanitarium that the Kellogg brothers worked at was so amazed by the new product the Kelloggs had created, that he opened up his own health resort nearby, and began selling a smaller version of Jackson's granula, and a new corn flake. The two products were called "Grape-Nuts" and "Post Toasties," respectively.

More innovation to cereal came in the early 20th century, when the Quaker Oats company acquired puffed-rice technology. Soon after, the highly nutritious wheat and grain flakes became less popular, and puffed cereals, such as Cheerios, Rice Krispies, and Trix became household names. These new puffed cereals had less fiber, but had loads of added sugar, making them especially popular with children. The transition from the health-focused origins of early cereal brands, to a more marketable, sugary breakfast treat, caused cereal companies to become the billion-dollar food corporations we know today.

Cereal is deeply rooted in a rich history,

filled with out-of-the-box thinkers, masterful innovators, and cunning business magnates, all working to cement their names in history, and create the ultimate breakfast food.

In honor of cereal history, we have decided to rank 43 different cereals, using the basic tier list format of S++ through F.

### S++ Tier

- **Shaq Edition Frosted Flakes:** Shaq. Dr. O' Neal. Diesel. Big Shamrock. Superman. The Big Aristotle. Wilt Chamberneezy. The Big Shaqtus. The list goes on. Shaquille O' Neal is known by many names. Widely regarded as one of the best basketball players of all time, it's no surprise that Shaq would have his own cereal flavor. Performing in various commercials alongside Tony the Tiger, O' Neal has already become synonymous with the Frosted Flakes brand and Kellogg's as a whole. Shaq is also a huge supporter of Mission Tiger, a program led by Kellogg's to ensure that every child has access to school sports. To display Shaq's support for Mission Tiger and Frosted Flakes, Kellogg's gave Shaq a limited edition flavor, featuring cinnamon basketballs in addition to the classic frosted corn flakes. The box art has also been redesigned, and now features Tony the Tiger spinning one of those cinnamon basketballs on his finger, as the NBA Hall of Famer's gigantic head stares at the feline mascot in awe. Frosted Flakes are already one of the best cereals, and everyone loves Shaq, so having this cereal in S++ is a no-brainer.






### S+ Tier

- **Rice Krispies:** Rice Krispies are an example of what cereal should be. They are an exciting texture that wakes up the mouth and with a simple yet pleasing flavor they are easily one of the best.

- **Frosted Flakes:** The default kind of Frosted Flakes is one of the most versatile, well rounded cereals. They are the best cereal to eat without milk, and are just as good with milk. They have the perfect amount of frosting, to the point where it's sweet, but not overbearing. They have an immaculate crunch to them, and the flavor they turn the milk is just heavenly. The only gripe I have is that they don't taste all too great when they're soggy, but at that point, the flavor of the milk will make up for any lost flavor on the flakes themselves.

- **Cookie Crisps:** Everyone loves chocolate chip cookies so why not put it in a cereal? Cookie Crisps does this well by having good cookies that pair great with milk and they don't have the hassle of a regular sized cookie.

- **Honey Nut Cheerios:** Another classic cereal, Honey Nut

S++							
S+							
S							
A							
B							
C							
D							
F							

Cheerios are an improvement over regular Cheerios in every way. Whereas the original Cheerios are a bit lacking in both cereal flavor and milk flavor, the hint of honey they added fixed all of that. The honey infused milk is delicious by the end of your bowl, and the slight bit of sweet from the honey sort of kickstarts the puffed grain, and adds that extra punch of flavor that you'd typically want from your cereal. This is probably the second best cereal to eat without milk just behind Frosted Flakes, hence it's position in the S+ tier.

- **Reese's Puffs:** Reese's Puffs are like Cocoa Puffs, but with more variety and flavor. They take the beloved Reese's taste and put it into a cereal and when paired with milk it is just so much better. They also have a rap in their name because they are so good.

- **Raisin Bran:** Raisin Bran is a sleeper cereal, one that typically goes under the radar of most cereal connoisseurs, and I just can't fathom why. My best guess is that there is a negative stigma from young children: because it is healthy,

Raisin Bran is somehow bad. This of course, is a farcical statement. While yes, the bran flakes themselves are somewhat lacking in the flavor department, the sugar covered raisins more than make up for it. Another complaint I often see is that there is a complete lack of milk flavoring from Raisin Bran. This is true. There is very little milk flavoring. However, I'd argue that this is better in the case of Raisin Bran, as the lack of bold flavors allows you to taste the milk, raisin, and bran in each spoonful, letting you feel the individual flavors, whilst also seeing how they blend together. Due to the more subdued flavors present in Raisin Bran, it takes some getting used to, but if you stick with it, you will experience some of the best cereal on the market.

- **Fruity Pebbles:** When you think of good cereals one of them that comes to mind is fruity pebbles. They are the great texture of Rice Krispies mixed with a sweet fruity flavor and the Flintstones on the box.

### S Tier

- **Froot Loops:** Froot Loops are one of the most iconic, recognizable cereals ever created. Everything about them just oozes style, from the logo to the box art, to Toucan Sam, the quintessential mascot. Thankfully, this cereal's greatness goes beyond the box. First of all, the smell. It's just incredible, and lets you know that you're going to have a good breakfast, before you even take a spoonful. The fruity flavor is great, and the loops themselves have a glorious crunch to them, one that has not been successfully replicated in any other cereal. However, in modern day, Froot Loops have fallen on evil days. In an effort to become more "consumer friendly," Kellogg's has massacred Toucan Sam's iconic design, and like Babylon, this gilded cereal has lost it's gold, revealing it's true colors. Alas, without the old Toucan Sam, Froot Loops are a shell of their former glory, and it has been truly saddening to see this cereal's fall from grace. Also, the loops themselves are a tad too big for my liking, and sometimes scrape the roof of my mouth. They still taste good, though.

- **Trix:** Trix cereal is great. It has the very simple yet common ball shape and the flavor of a fruity pebble. Where it lacks however is compared to other trix breakfast items like their yogurt which is just better in most ways.

- **Raisin Bran Crunch:** Like regular Raisin Bran, Raisin Bran Crunch gets slept on by many. However, I can see why people would criticize this particular iteration of Raisin Bran over the original. The main gimmick of this cereal, the thing that adds the "crunch," is a cluster of what I assume are oats, and there's a ton of them in each box. The ratio of raisins to oats is like 3:2, so there's a good amount of them. These oat balls don't really taste like anything, they're just there to add a crunch, so I can see why people don't like this. I personally think that the oats don't enhance the flavor of the original, but they don't make it taste worse. I think this cereal tastes good, but not because of the added oats, if that makes any sense, so it's going to be in the tier below it's non-crunchy counterpart.

- **Count Chocula:** Count Chocula is a classic Halloween cereal. It is the best out of all the monster cereals and it is clear why. It has a rich chocolate flavor that is unmatched compared to the others.

- **Franken Berry:** Franken Berry is one of the three "monster cereals" from General Mills, sold during the Halloween season. The only real difference between the trio of cereals are their flavoring. Franken Berry happens to be the strawberry flavor, although I'm not completely sure how the flavor of strawberry translates to Frankenstein's monster, who is typically green, but I guess nobody would want to eat mint flavored cereal. In terms of taste, it's pretty

much just strawberry Lucky Charms. I happen to like strawberry flavored stuff, so for me, this is better than Lucky Charms, which is already a pretty good cereal, if a little flavorless.

- **Cap'n Crunch Berries:** Cap'n Crunch Berries is a prime example of just right. It has both the original Cap'n Crunch cereal and the berries in a nice equilibrium, which is why it outclasses the original and Oops All Berries.

## A Tier

- **Cap'n Crunch:** I've never actually had Cap'n Crunch in cereal form, but one time, I went to a 7/11, and I got a Cap'n Crunch flavored slurpee, and it was pretty good.

Also, pretty much everyone else, including my co-writer, Jacob, said it was good, so I trust them.

- **Cheerios:** Cheerios are a classic cereal and are nice and simple. However, they are outclassed by Honey Nut Cheerios due to their simple flavor. Despite this, they are still a fantastic choice.

- **Lucky Charm:** Lucky Charms is a very popular and iconic cereal, and is especially popular with young children due to the copious amounts of sugar it contains. However, the older I get, the less I like Lucky Charms. The regular oat things are pretty bland and flavorless, almost like a plain Cheerio in a bunch of weird shapes. The marshmallows themselves, while good, have a strange texture, where it feels like they never get fully soaked in the milk. They seem to scrape against your teeth when they're dry, have an outer layer of slimy goop when they've been partially soaked in milk, and completely disintegrate once they soak in milk for a while. The flavors have a good balance to them, but the flavors themselves are not particularly interesting or creative. Overall, while still a good cereal, it just doesn't compare to the all-time greats.

- **Cocoa Puffs:** Cocoa Puffs are a great cereal due to their flavor, chocolatey residue, and their crazy mascot. However, they are still beaten by Reese's Puffs due to lack of flavor diversity.

- **Cocoa Pebbles:** Now, it has been a while since I've had either of the Pebbles cereals, but I still have vivid memories of eating them at breakfast, so I think I still remember the flavor and experience of them enough to properly judge them. Both Cocoa and Fruity Pebbles are made similarly to Rice Krispies cereal, utilizing rice as the main ingredient. I've always believed that rice cereal is just inherently less popular than corn or oat or wheat cereal, and that none of the largest brands of rice cereal ever really reached the popularity of something

like Cheerios or Corn Flakes. This doesn't make rice cereal terrible. In fact, I think a lot of rice cereals are great, but the lack of popularity with some of these brands compared to other conventional methods of cereal creation led to a lack of innovation when it comes to rice cereal. This is why the largest of the rice cereal brands, Pebbles and Rice Krispies, are nearly identical in all forms except flavoring. Cocoa Pebbles, are obviously the chocolate flavor of this base rice cereal template, and while good, they just miss the mark in terms of taste when compared to its counterparts within the genre. Chocolate itself, in my opinion, is hard to make work in cereal, although many brands have done it successfully, and is even harder to make work in rice cereal. Cocoa Pebbles are so light and airy that it is hard for the chocolate flavor to really stick. This changes after a while, when the milk turns chocolatey, but at that point you're left with a bowl full of soggy brown pellets that are swimming around in what tastes like unshaken Nesquik. This is another cereal that, while good, has a sort of flavor crisis, where it can't really provide a brand new and creative taste, so it tries to do a bunch of things to make itself stand out, but those things never really succeed.

## B Tier

- **Honey Bunches of Oats:** Honey Bunches of Oats are a prime example of too much in a cereal. The oats are just too much for the simplistic nature of Cheerios. They also take away from the honey taste.

- **Special K:** In a way, Special K is similar to Lucky Charms, in that it has pretty mediocre actual cereal, but an added thing to make it taste better. In the case of Special K, it has flakes, which I can't tell if they're bran or wheat or corn, and dried strawberries. Obviously, Kellogg's was trying to go for a "healthier" look by using a real fruit in its cereal. However, while this all sounds pretty good on paper, it doesn't work out that well in actuality. The flakes are utterly flavorless, and the dried strawberries have too much of a bold taste, to the point where it overpowered everything else. Now you might say, "How come you think Raisin Bran is so great, but not Special K? Aren't they pretty much the same thing?" And from this preposterous, ignorant, infantile, malinformed statement, I can tell two things: one, that you are not above the age of 11, and two, you know absolutely nothing about cereal. The reason Raisin Bran works but not Special K, is because of the

more subtle flavors that Raisin Bran possesses. The bran, raisin, and milk all work together perfectly to create one superb spoonful. In Special K, nothing works together. On their own, everything is just kinda meh, you know? Not bad, but not the best. There is too much dissonance between the flakes and the strawberries and the milk for the cereal to work as a whole, and thus each spoonful leaves you feeling like you purchased a subpar product. Furthermore, there is no milk flavor afterwards, and the flakes break down into a bunch of small grainy pieces that just kinda float around in the milk. Just a lackluster cereal overall, but has so much potential to become great, and is better than many cereals that will appear later on in lower tiers.

- **Chips Ahoy:** Chips Ahoy is like the knock-off Cookie Crisps. They just aren't at the same level as them and therefore are placed lower

- **Golden Grahams:** In all honesty, I think I've eaten Golden Grahams once or twice in my life, and all I can recall is it tasting like soggy graham crackers.

- **Cinnamon Toast Crunch:** Cinnamon Toast Crunch is a great cereal and for many people a favorite. However where it falls off is durability. When you pour a bowl of Cinnamon Toast Crunch unless you eat quickly it will soon turn to mush and nobody wants to eat that.

**French Toast Crunch:** I don't think I've ever had French Toast Crunch before, but I've eaten French toast, and I've eaten regular Cinnamon Toast Crunch, so I can at least infer. The issue with this cereal is probably the same as Cinnamon Toast Crunch in that it's a bit too sweet, and it tastes terrible when its soggy. Also, isn't French toast just toast with cinnamon on it that's made with eggs? Because then having two different cereals that are basically the same thing feels a bit unnecessary.

- **Krave:** Krave is similar to Honey Bunches Of Oats in that it is a cereal that simply too much going on. The chocolate inside just overtakes the outer shell and it becomes a very basic flavor.

## C Tier

- **Boo Berry:** The last of the trio of monster cereals, Boo Berry is just worse than Count Chocula and Franken Berry. Blueberry is already a kind of meh flavor, and that, coupled with the fact that it's the same actual cereal as the other two, Boo Berry just doesn't bring anything extraordinary to the table that would justify its purchase over another similar

cereal.

- **Corn Flakes:** Corn Flakes are similar to normal Cheerios where there is just a better version out there. They are completely outclassed by Frosted Flakes and it isn't even close.

- **Fiber Sticks:** Literally just sticks of bran in a bowl with milk. Nothing special, innovative, or delicious about this cereal. At least it's probably nutritious.

- **Wheaties** - Wheaties are a cereal that are similar to corn flakes, but not as good. There's nothing else interesting or remarkable about them.

- **Frosted Mini Wheats:** Mini Wheats are another cereal that gets a bad rap, but for Mini Wheats, it's easier to see why. The wheat itself is just abhorrent. Just a bunch of grainy, tasteless things that look like miniature bales of hay. There is absolutely zero milk flavoring, and the little bit of frosting on top, while good, is too little too late to save each sinking ship of a spoonful. The flavors just do not work, and what you're left with is a bowl full of cereal that tastes like cake frosting, on top of a Triscuit cracker, one that someone licked all the flavor and seasoning off, turned soggy from sitting in milk.

- **All Fiber One Cereals:** Any cereal made by Fiber One is a cereal that should probably be skipped. They are a company that is trying too hard to be healthy and then just ended up making a bad cereal.

## D Tier

- **Cap'n Crunch Oops All Berries:** This cereal is just atrocious. They took out all the regular cereal bits from regular Cap'n Crunch, and kept all the berries. It's a cereal full of only the berries. At that point, just eat Trix! It's like if Raisin Bran or Special K were only raisins and strawberries, respectively. It scares me. It scares me how a company could do this to such a beloved cereal. It appalls me how Quaker Oats could turn the lovable Cap'n and his classic cereal brand into such a twisted amalgamation of what once was, disfigured beyond recognition. The fact that stores still carry this sorry excuse for a product is beyond me. And we, the consumers, are also at fault. We allowed this evil and corruption to enter our homes, and enter our stomachs. We appeased Quaker Oats, saying to ourselves, "They couldn't possibly mess up that bad." But they did. They

did, and now we must suffer for our carelessness. Hopefully, as people become informed of just how bad this cereal is, Quaker Oats will discontinue it, and the world will finally be free of its presence. I don't actually know how it tastes since I've never had it (or any form of Cap'n Crunch for that matter) but I'll assume it's probably not great.

**-Sour Patch Kids Cereal:** Sour Patch Kids Cereal is almost an abomination, except for the fact that they aren't that bad without milk. However, with milk it is a disgusting experience to eat them.

**-Chex:** In a way, Chex is similar to Frosted Mini Wheats, where it's only component is a round, malformed piece of cereal that has no flavor. It tastes like nothing. There's no milk flavor either, because there's no flavor to begin with. It has a hint of corn or wheat or whatever it's made from, but that's it. It only exists to provide calories and fill space in your stomach. People don't eat Chex for enjoyment, they eat it for the sake of sustenance and nourishment. Now that I think about it, Chex would be perfect in a sensory deprivation chamber, provided you don't eat it with milk. You would feel yourself chewing and swallowing, but you wouldn't be able to taste anything. It barely even counts as cereal. It barely even counts as food. It's not even bad, as the taste has no negative attributes. You can't have negative flavor. Yeah, Chex is no bueno.

**-Multi Grain Cheerios:** Multi Grain Cheerios are just normal Cheerios but with worse flavoring and it tarnishes the Cheerio name, tainting it with the stain of "multi-grain."

**-Honey-Combs:** Honey-Combs are another cereal that I've had maybe once or twice in my entire life, and I had pretty much forgotten about it until now. It has a bit of sweet flavor from the honey, but it's just a boring and forgettable cereal. It doesn't even feel like a cereal, it's like someone took those kettle-cooked corn chips that they hand out on JetBlue flights, made it into a honeycomb shape, dumped it into a cereal box, and called it a day. Except they somehow made those delicious popcorn chips taste mediocre, which is unforgivable.

## F Tier

**-Jojo Siwa Cereal:** Jojo Siwa Cereal is an example of a bad celebrity cereal. It is basically identical to Lucky Charms, but worse.

**-All Denominations of Apple Jacks:** Apple Jacks. What an inherently bad cereal. It's literally just a

cut-rate version of Froot Loops. That's all it is if you get down to the core of it. But, unlike Froot Loops, where you taste the fruit, with Apple Jacks, you don't taste apple, and you don't taste cinnamon. All things considered, you don't taste jack (pun intended). It's all just a mush of sugar and incomprehensible artificial flavoring. And it just looks stupid. Their mascots are some freakish looking apple with no head, just arms, legs, and a face on a torso, and a cinnamon stick with a Jamaican accent. Nothing is interesting about these characters. Think back to all the classic duos in pop culture, both in real life and fiction. Bill and Ted, Turner and Hooch, Batman and Robin, The Rock and Kevin Hart. All instantly recognizable, famous characters and people. Nobody cares about the Apple and the Jamaican cinnamon guy. And the commercials just try to shower this dull duo down our throats, pleading with us to like these characters and buy their product. It's pitiful. And they try to "improve" on Apple Jacks by making new flavors and stuff. Apple Jacks Caramel. Apple Jacks Marshmallow. Apple Jacks Crashers (literally just a different shape). Who is going out of their way to purposefully buy Caramel Apple Jacks? I'll answer that one. Nobody. Apple Jacks is a pathetic excuse for a cereal, and should be eaten by nobody, except people that are literally starving to death.

**-Chocolate Lucky Charms:** Chocolate lucky charms are two flavors that don't go together, and it is evident that the people making it didn't even try to make it work.

**-Life Cereal:** Life Cereal is literally just multigrain Chex, but larger pieces. They took Chex, a garbage cereal to begin with, and made it worse. Not only that, but they also made the pieces larger. You get more of a terrible cereal. Who actually buys this, except to look like they're eating healthy? Oh, yeah, that's right; Nobody. Quaker Oats should just pull the plug on Life Cereal's life support already; the cereal's already on its last legs, and this is one brand that would be better off dead (cue humorous rimshot).

**-Good Friends:** Good friends is closer to a trail mix than it is a cereal. When eating cereal the last thing you would want is a variety of nuts and fiber. Also, the box art is strange and unappealing, just random shots of people hanging out together.

**-Pop-Tarts Cereal:** Why? Just... why? Who thought this was a smart idea. I want names. Everyone

involved with the creation of this cereal should be punished for their crimes against the good people of this earth. This cereal should not exist, but it does, and that angers me to an immeasurable degree. I hate Pop-Tarts cereal. I've never had it, and never will.

**WOW**, that was a ton of cereal. We've went through cereal from all over the world, some good, some bad, and a whole lotta mediocracy. As always, this list is fact, not opinion, and if you disagree, you're just plain wrong! Enjoy the rest of your meaningless and unfulfilling lives! Goodbye!

## Questions I've Vaguely Thought About in the Back of My Head but Was Too Lazy To Search Up Until Now Olivia Tuzel

There have been moments in my life where I wondered all sorts of questions but could not muster the will to open Safari and find an answer to them. Sometimes I get curious enough to search for an answer to my inquiries, other times I do not. This article will be full of answers to unusual questions some of us may have had before, others not. Maybe you'll end up learning something new.

### Why do skinless apples turn brown after being out in the open?

Turns out that apples can't handle oxygen. When an apple is cut into pieces (or, "injured" in terms of science), the plant tissue is exposed. There are enzymes called polyphenol oxidase (PPO) which shelter in the chloroplast that lies within the apple. The PPO begins to lose electrons since oxygen molecules are taking over (this process is also called oxidation). Therefore, it becomes brown. Somebody called the browning of the apple "edible rust," which is gross, but I guess it's true. I don't know about you, but when I see a brown apple, it automatically looks unappealing even if it was just cut a couple of minutes ago.

### What made it a custom in nearly every country to serve tea to guests?

Every person has their own definition and associations with the beverage tea. I think of Uncle Iroh from Avatar the Last Airbender when I find myself making tea, but obviously, not everyone knows who the wise man is. Tea "demonstrates personal morality, education, principle, and social status." Some individuals also believe that tea symbolizes enlightenment. I mean, you'd probably want to make a good impression on your guests so you may as well feed them respectable tea. Plus, it's good to have some type of liquid nearby in case you need to escape a dry conversation by taking a long sip. Tea drinking originally started in China, and as we know, it spread across the globe. So, bottom line is that other traditions just adapted to serving tea to guests because 1) It makes them look responsible and 2) It's just set as the right thing to do.

### How many generations need to go by for you to technically not be blood-related to a relative?

As we welcome more distant relatives into our family, our shared DNA slowly begins to chip away. Not only does generation play a huge part in this but the percentage of DNA is also important, and here's what I mean. Our DNA is made up of half of one biological parent's DNA and the other half of the other biological parent's DNA. Already then, you only share 50% of your DNA with each parent. You also share 50% of your DNA with a fully biological sibling, since you share the same parents. However, your cousin has different parents. So, because their mother is your father's sister, they share the same DNA, but your cousin's father has completely different DNA. By then, the percentage of shared DNA is 25%. You can imagine that the percentage becomes even smaller with second cousins, first cousins once removed, etc. At one point, that percentage is just going to become 0%. In terms of generation, you are legally related to somebody until four generations pass but you can still be DNA-related at five or six generations. After that six-generation mark, you aren't blood-related family anymore.

### Why do the bottom leaves on a tree fall off last?

Have you ever noticed how the leaves at the top of a tree are always the first to fall off in autumn? The leaves at the bottom stay for a long time before

they snap and drift away, so the tree kind of looks like it has a green-brown tutu around its bottom branches when the air is getting cooler, and the pumpkins are coming out. This phenomenon occurs due to the structure of the tree. When the roots gather nutrients and send them up through the trunk, the branches at the bottom are the closest so they will be receiving nutrients first. Meanwhile, the branches on the top are furthest away from the source. So, when the flow of the nutrients slows down or stops during autumn, the leaves at the bottom will be staying the longest because they still have those extra nutrients from being the closest to the roots. The leaves at the top can no longer access the steady flow of food, so they fall off.

### Who invented the inflatable tube dudes that stand outside car washes/car dealerships?

Thanks to the help of artist Peter Minshall, these tall tube people were given life. Also known as Air Dancers, Mr. Minshall had the genius idea to create these “dancers” for the 1996 Summer Olympics. Doron Gazit, his creative partner at the time, released the idea of the inflatables to the public. That is why we see them waving hysterically outside all types of stores.

### Why do stars seem to flicker from where we are standing?

If you have ever looked up in the night sky, (I would presume that you have at least once in your life), you may have noticed that stars do not just stay as white dots in the atmosphere. They happen to dim for a moment, then brighten up again, creating an illusion of twinkling. When the light from stars begins to filter through our atmosphere, the “lights path” is not straight. It begins to bend due to the different layers that the atmosphere of our earth has. Since the atmosphere also has different temperatures, densities, and even wind currents, the light from the star bends even more. So, from where we are standing, the bright hot ball seems to be scintillating because of the wonky path of the light the star emits.

If you have ever pondered these questions even if it was just for a split second, I hope that you now have answers. If not, well, you better learn how to be more curious. With this information, you can now blurt out “Have you ever wondered why apples turn brown?” to whomever you are conversing with, and if they bluntly reply with a “no”, you can teach them something new. In other words, this is an excuse to make you look distinguished and intelligent. :-)



# FAVORITE STUDENT QUOTES

**Eliana, 8th grade: “Aaaaaarrrrrrrgggggghhhhhhh” - Chewbacca**

**Miles, 8th grade: “Do or do not - there is no try” - Yoda**

**Cristina, 7th grade: “Be decisive. Right or wrong, make a decision. The road of life is paved with flat squirrels who couldn’t make a decision.” -Unknown**

**Stella, 7th grade: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel” -Maya Angeloua**

**Jacob, 8th grade: “Be yourself unless that involves criminal activity or generally immoral actions.” -Unknown**

**Nick, 8th grade: “I’m the product of 6 million years of evolution? Come on, man. I crawled out of a swamp yesterday.” -Peter Steele**

**Amanda 8th grade: “Sarcasm is the last string I’m holding onto.” -Me**

**Lucy, 8th grade: “One day, I’ll make the onions cry.”- unknown**

**Olivia, 8th grade: “Denying desire only made yourself vulnerable to those who were smart enough to see what you couldn’t acknowledge to yourself.” - Shelly Parker-Chan, She Who Became the Sun**

**Angela, 8th grade: “I am a man of many pies” -Francis Sylvain Fokoue Nkoutche**

**Esperanza, 7th grade: “When life gives you lemons, freeze them and throw**



**them at the people who make your life difficult” -Unknown**

**Francis, 8th grade: “Be worthy. Not in their eyes, but in yours.”**

**Saul 8th grade: “Man decides the criteria for beauty after the fact. So, I think eternal beauty lies in something ever changing...like life, for instance.”-Inio Asano**

**Dafne, 7th grade: “ I can’t think of a cool quote right now.” - me**

**Damian, 7th grade: “Quack.” - Damian Huaman**

**Maddie, 8th grade: “Remember the one thing to always do, make sure to SLAYYYYYYYYYYYYY.” - me**

**Charis, 8th grade: “Whatever you do, always give 100%. Unless you’re donating blood.” -Bill Murray**

**Sofia, 8th grade: “I feel like I should be a cat instead of a human” -Ms.Tschinkel**

**Diana Gaytan, 8th grade: “ Be yourself. People don’t have to like you, and you don’t have to care”**

**Ipsita, 8th grade: ““The soul should always stand ajar, ready to welcome the ecstatic experience.” – Emily Dickinson**



**To my lovely 8th graders:**

**Thank you for two years of fantastic writing, meetings that brought constant laughter and debate, and making my Thursday afternoons so much better. You make being the advisor of the Courier a joy. We will miss you next year! Come back and visit, and we hope to read your writing in The Orange!**

**Love,  
Ms. Tschinkel**