

# NOVA Times

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## Eye to Eye vs Eye to Screen: The Youth's Point of View

*By Vedrana Serafimovska-Miloshevska*

Life has just recently started to stabilize and settle down from the pandemic that corrupted our daily schedule. Although things are starting to slowly return back to normal, for instance, malls are opening again, cafes are working, parties are being thrown, and kids have returned to school, that does not mean that the aftermath from the pandemic has completely erased itself. There are still many protocols that we are meant to follow and obey on a daily basis, such as keeping our distance and wearing our masks indoors. All of these circumstances have made it extremely difficult for adolescents to maintain a healthy social life, as well as a good education.



*Image by Julia M Cameron via Pexels*

## Get a Jab to Get Your Life Back!

*By Jovana Vasilisa Jovanovikj*

At the beginning of 2021, the world finally started fighting the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic with its most powerful weapon – the vaccine. In an unprecedented triumph for the medical sciences, vaccines against COVID-19 were developed in the same year when the worldwide pandemic began, and their emergency use was granted in December 2020 by the national health care authorities. Immediately afterwards...

## In Turbulent Indigo: Romanticization of Mental Illness in Art

*By Borjan Nedelkovski*

In a self conducted survey, I inquired what people thought of when they first heard the name ...Gogh. In response, I often received answers like “A Starry Night” or “Sunflowers”, but what struck me was the frequency of answers such as “mental issues” or...

## Dare to Care: Changing the Dress Codes

*By Teodora Risteska-Daskalovski*

Whether it is in NOVA or in another high school, chances are that students encounter some form of a dress code. It is a difficult topic to discuss, especially, because it can be interpreted from different points of view. To be precise, it is quite the controversial topic when it comes to students. Some would like a dress code that is more inclusive and less strict, letting them wear what they feel comfortable in; while others feel as if it is not strict enough.

Students need rules, as they are important to help set an even playing field and help everyone be able to strive for success. Yet in some cases, they create invisible boundaries, which is why the student body of NOVA is debating a change in our school's dress code.

Because what do spaghetti straps and shorts have to do with our education? How can these be classified as distractions? They are clothes underaged students wear and certainly do not prompt the sexualization of children. The NOVA student parent handbook has a dress code section that entails the following: “adherence to a positive dress code models good citizenship and preparedness for a learning environment free of distractions”. Suggesting that clothing that reveals shoulders and knees is a distraction...

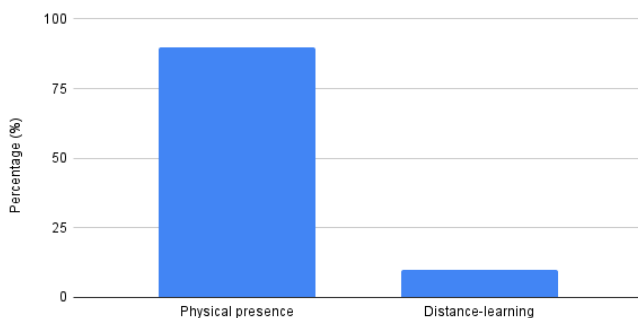
## Eye to Eye vs Eye to Screen: The Youth's Point of View

By Vedrana Serafimovska-Miloshevska

Life has just recently started to stabilize and settle down from the pandemic that corrupted our daily schedule. Although things are starting to slowly return back to normal, for instance, malls are opening again, cafes are working, parties are being thrown, and kids have returned to school, that does not mean that the aftermath from the pandemic has completely erased itself. There are still many protocols that we are meant to follow and obey on a daily basis, such as keeping our distance and wearing our masks indoors. All of these circumstances have made it extremely difficult for adolescents to maintain a healthy social life, as well as a good education. The classes that were once delivered face-to-face, were replaced with online classes making it quite problematic for kids and teenagers. Students had not been introduced to this way of teaching before the pandemic, and online learning was merely a tool for maintaining some sort of level of education during this pandemic. Nonetheless, distance learning classes had some advantages as opposed to physical presence lessons. Therefore, I conducted a few interviews gauging the students opinion, and collecting different responses in order to evaluate both types of educational learning.

The question posed was, ***“What is your opinion about online classes as well as physical presence lessons and which one do you prefer and why?”*** The information gathered shows that 90% of the students prefer physical presence over online classes, whereas 10% prefer distance learning classes.

**Do you prefer classes with physical presence or distance-learning classes?**



Courtesy photo

Firstly, even though most students came to an agreement that physical presence classes are preferable, there were some opposing arguments. One student claimed: *“I prefer online classes because of the freedom and the time management advantage it provides me with, meaning that I don’t have to wait half an hour to get to school, and another half an hour to get home which means I can go back to sleep right after classes.”* Having to travel back and forth may drain students’ energy twice as much as online classes do.

On the other hand, students stated that, while attending online classes their concentration levels dropped due to the presence of many different distractions. For example, students would be distracted by notifications



Image by Julia M Cameron via Pexels

and different noises or they would often find themselves feeling more tired than usual as a result of having their classes in bed. The support for this evidence lies in this statement that a high-school student recalled: *“Overall productivity drops when you are home because you have many other distractions and also you feel the comfort of your own home so you don’t really get in that zone of studying.”* This lack of concentration prevents students from being able to fully understand the theoretical concepts of the subject, resulting in students’ fear of being called up to answer questions, as well as taking advantage of the freedom the students are given by cheating on assignments and tests. Students mentioned that they view physical presence lessons as a far more productive way to learn. Furthermore, stepping foot in a classroom is viewed as a collaborative environment where there is an easier exchange of knowledge. *“I’m glad that we started going to school physically again because I participate much more in classes which makes me feel much better about myself and how much i’m capable of.”*

Additionally, each student stated that in person classes allow and encourage them to socialize with others and maintain a far more dynamic environment on a daily basis. Passing down the school corridor, you might often hear students complaining about school in the hallways and comparing it to a jail cell where they endure torture for 5 hours straight. But what they fail to realize is that until it’s taken away their best memories will be made in this so-called torture chamber. This pandemic, including all of the lockdowns and protocols we are meant to follow, is what made the students realize that even though they were expressing hatred towards school, they were subconsciously in need of it. *“It’s crazy how we used to see our school as a jail yet craved it once it was taken away from us, we came to realize that we were in fact living the best years of our lives without even knowing it.”* The students I interviewed reminisced about the many memories that this pandemic and online classes took away from them, such as the many times they would laugh so hard in class to the point where they would be kicked out by the teacher or about the many humorous conversations they would have during lunch. Having to be stuck behind a screen instead of living the best years of your life is the most heartbreaking feeling. ***“Without all these childish memories, is life really worth it?”***

# Pilot Programme for Medical Abortions in North Macedonia Signals “Milestone in Medicine and Legislature”

By Adora Limani

In 2019, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia announced that a new draft law on abortion had been adopted and submitted to the Parliament. This law signaled a significant turn-away from North Macedonia's past restrictions on abortion, as the old law passed in 2013 made it substantially more difficult for women to obtain abortion services. If abortion services were not obtained on time, women were forced to continue with their pregnancy, and doctors who performed abortions were penalized. The new law, which was passed in 2019, abolished many administrative barriers, such as obligatory counseling and a three-day waiting period after counseling. It also increased the legal time limit for abortion from 12 to 22 weeks. Moreover, it opened the way for the introduction of medical abortions for the first time in the country.

Medical abortions were only available on paper until very recently, as the form of abortion is currently being piloted by HERA (Health Education and Research Association) and the University Clinic for Gynecology and Obstetrics in Skopje. Following the Ministry of Health approval of the National Clinical Guidelines for safe abortion in December of 2020, they began implementing the medical abortion initiative at the beginning of this year with the goal of strengthening public health's capacity to provide this form of health care. For the first time, clinical practices for medical staff providing medical abortions were included in the national guidelines, which are in line with revised WHO criteria. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health has set aside \$10,000 from the Preventive Programme for Mother and Child to purchase abortion pills for the pilot project at the University Clinic, demonstrating the commitment to ensuring that medical abortion is integrated into comprehensive abortion care. In April of 2021, medical abortions became available to patients at the Clinic for Gynecology and Obstetrics in the Medical Centar in Skopje as an alternative method to

terminating a pregnancy. The room used for informing and advising women about medical abortions at the Clinic was renovated as part of this project, thanks to a donation from the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Patients were given brochures, and healthcare providers were instructed on how to go through with the treatment.

NOVA Times was able to sit down with Katerina Ivanova, a peer educator on comprehensive sex education and a part of HERA Youth, to discuss the success of this new form of abortion in Skopje and what this could possibly mean for reproductive rights in North Macedonia. “The way I understand the concept of a medical abortion is that it is the easiest and most accessible way to have an abortion through a couple of pills” Ivanova explains, “This means medical abortions are a milestone in medicine and legislature, because it puts women in a better position concerning their health and reproductive rights”. Unlike mechanical abortions, medical abortions only require patients to take a few pills. First, the patient is given a pill called Mifepriston, which they take at the clinic. Then, they are given four other tablets to take home called Misoprostol, which they take 24 hours after the first pill.

Medical abortions can be performed up until the twenty-second week of pregnancy. If the abortion is performed before the twelfth week, then the patient does not even need to spend any time at the hospital and would be ready to return to work or to other obligations a day or two afterwards. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability for women to access abortion care without needing to stay at a hospital or have constant contact with doctors is especially important. “With this kind of abortion, women will spend less time in hospitals and have a much easier experience. Medical abortions allow for the abortion to be less time consuming, much more discreet, and women also don't feel that it is as “operative” as a mechanical

abortion. This, in turn, makes the abortion much easier psychologically for women. The discrete nature of medical abortions alleviates the stress of judgement or shame for women as well” says Ivanova. “Women in North Macedonia already live hectic lives, with work piling up on top of other duties. Medical abortions allow for much more flexibility and freedom.”

Medical abortions also show great efficiency and safety. They have a 95% to 97% rate of efficiency, and only a very small percentage require further medical interventions. “There are little to no known side effects of the pill, and there are many cases where a medical abortion would be much easier and safer to perform than a mechanical abortion. For instance, if a woman has a tilted uterus, or a wounded uterus due to past trauma, then having a medical abortion is ideal.” Ivanova explains. “Obviously, women should discuss what type of abortion is better for their health and body with a gynecologist, but both mechanical and medical abortions are safe when done properly, legally, and by professionals. In North Macedonia, women actually tend to choose medical abortions over mechanical abortions, most likely based on the discreet nature of the pill and the stigma surrounding abortion in the country, as well as its efficiency.”

80% of all abortions performed in EU countries are medical abortions. Based on this form of abortion's social and medical advantages, this statistic might become similar in North Macedonia quite soon, too. “Right now, medical abortions are only available in Skopje, since the pill first has to go through a pilot phase in a smaller surrounding. However, an Austrian organization has already agreed to fund the expansion of the pill to every city in Macedonia. I'm very confident that because of its success, and also the fact that there is already funding, the pill will be available in other cities in North Macedonia very soon.”



## Get a Jab to Get Your Life Back!

*By Jovana Vasilisa Jovanovikj*

At the beginning of 2021, the world finally started fighting the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic with its most powerful weapon – the vaccine. In an unprecedented triumph for the medical sciences, vaccines against COVID-19 were developed in the same year when the worldwide pandemic began, and their emergency use was granted in December 2020 by the national health care authorities. Immediately afterwards, mass vaccination campaigns started all over the world. According to the WHO, at least 13 different vaccines are being administered and distributed around the world, the most widely used being Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca, Moderna, Johnson-Johnson, NOVavax, Sputnik V, Sinopharm, Sinovac, and CureVac (starting by the end of this year). Mass vaccination is currently the only way humanity can fight against the virus and stop the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic.



*Image by Gustavo Fring via Pexels*

Initially, most countries started vaccinating the most vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and individuals with chronic health conditions. Afterwards, the vaccination gradually continued with the immunization of the other age groups. As of now, according to the WHO, 46.5 percent of the world population has received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 6.48 billion doses have been administered globally so far and close to 24 million doses are now received daily. The most developed countries in the world (OECD members) have vaccination rates of above 50% of the population. Unfortunately however, only 2.5% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose.

However, the process of vaccination is accompanied by a global upheaval. Anti-vax movements are becoming more numerous day after day. The demonstrators protest against mandatory vaccination and vaccine mandates present in some countries (various government-enforced restrictions prohibiting the entrance of unvaccinated people to public spaces, such as theatres, restaurants, shopping malls, etc.).

The anti-vax movement is also well-present and vocal in the Balkans. These countries, although late with procuring vaccines, followed the vaccination model of the developed world. But because of the low initial turnout, governments rapidly opened the vaccination process for anyone who wants to be immunized. Unfortunately, due to irrational rumors, misinformation, and gossip on social media, the immunization of the

Balkan populations ground to a halt. Currently, the Balkan countries have a disappointing vaccination rate of around 30 percent of their populations, with the exception of Greece (58%), Slovenia (50%), and Turkey (55%). Bulgaria, despite being a full-time member of the European Union, is at the very bottom of the region with only 19 percent of its population fully vaccinated.

In Macedonia, the current vaccination rate is about 36 percent. However, after the strong start at the deployment of vaccines in the country, our vaccination rate is currently moving with an unacceptably low speed. Low vaccination rates in Macedonia not only demonstrate the strength of the anti-vax movement in the country, but also the mistrust of Macedonian citizens in the health-care system and government institutions. Therefore, Macedonia still experiences a high daily infection rate (approximately 500 cases a day), hospitalizations, and deaths (approximately 20 deaths per day). According to the COVID-19 tracking of “The Financial Times”, our country is among the infamous top twenty countries in the world in relation to the death rate caused by COVID-19, which is a worrying signal. These numbers create uncertainty, so the people legitimately ask the question: When will the normal life return back to Macedonia?

Though Macedonian schools have started the school year with in-person presence with universities still following the distance learning model. Our school was again the pioneer in the Macedonian educational system. NOVA was the only school in the country to

actively promote full vaccination and even opened its own vaccination stand to facilitate the immunization of the school community. All these endeavors were organized by the NOVA Nurses team and the NOVA COVID Crisis Management Team. The efforts taken by NOVA to protect its school community – students, teachers, staff members and parents. led to partial normalization of the daily school activities according to academic programs. From a students perspective, it is beautiful to see the full hallways, classrooms and other premises beaming with life, noise and laughter. Currently, over 90 percent of the faculty and staff at NOVA and over 50 percent of students in the upper grades of the high school (grades 9 to 12) are fully immunized. Hopefully, these numbers will improve further.

So, when can we expect the full normalization of our lives? Denmark, with a vaccination rate of 74 percent, has lifted all restrictions, including the mask mandate. The Danish people have returned to normality, experiencing full stadiums and concert halls, full coffee bars and restaurants, full theaters and opera houses, full museums and art galleries. In Denmark, everyone can finally enjoy seeing and greeting beautiful smiling faces, not covered by masks, at any open or closed premises.

The message therefore is “Get a jab!” to get our lives back.

## Dare to Care: Changing the Dress Codes

By Teodora Risteska-Daskalovski

*This article talks about the dress code and why the students are asking for a change. It covers topics of victim blaming, inequality and freedom of expression.*

Whether it is in NOVA or in another high school, chances are that students encounter some form of a dress code. It is a difficult topic to discuss, especially, because it can be interpreted from different points of view. To be precise, it is quite the controversial topic when it comes to students. Some would like a dress code that is more inclusive and less strict, letting them wear what they feel comfortable in; while others feel as if it is not strict enough.

Students need rules, as they are important to help set an even playing field and help everyone be able to strive for success. Yet in some cases, they create invisible boundaries, which is why the student body of NOVA is debating a change in our school's dress code.

Because what do spaghetti straps and shorts have to do with our education? How can these be classified as distractions? They are clothes underaged students wear and certainly do not prompt the sexualization of children. The NOVA Student-Parent Handbook has a dress code section that entails the following: "adherence to a positive dress code models good citizenship and preparedness for a learning environment free of distractions". Suggesting that clothing that reveals shoulders and knees is a distraction is simply untrue. My fellow classmates and I should not be held responsible for the distractions of other students for merely wearing warm weather clothing that is appropriate in any other social setting, such as spaghetti straps tops that expose the shoulder and shorts that go above the knee.

While these rules may seem gender neutral, these restrictions are specifically aimed at womens' and girls' fashion. For example, male shorts are usually long enough to touch the knee while girls shorts tend to go above it. Finding shorts that do go below the knee is nearly impossible with girls' fashion. It's also mostly girls that wear skirts and spaghetti straps shirts (specific appendices in our school's dress code), which is yet another inequality regarding the dress code. Not to mention, it is made from a male perspective furthering the distinction between male and female students. As a result, girls are significantly more likely than boys to be targeted for dress code violations.

The dress code also promotes a form of victim blaming culture among teenagers and preteens. What is victim blaming? Victim blaming is when one blames the victim of some kind of provocation for the crime the perpetrator committed. Dress codes teach young girls, starting from an elementary school level, that their bodies are objects, consequently when and if they get sexualized, they are at fault. That kind of influence on young kids is incredibly damaging and dangerous because it alters their life values and how they will act around similar situations in the future. It also institutionalizes a patriarchal system of gender relations.

Another part of the NOVA dress code states the following "Students who are dressed inappropriately may be sent home to change their clothing or be issued with appropriate clothing to wear for the day"; it openly says that our education will be disrupted as a result of not adhering to the dress code. While it's important for set rules to be respected, the right to education should be above all and shouldn't be held against us, especially for something as mundane as ripped jeans.

In the months of August and September which is when we start our school year, temperatures rise above 35 degrees celsius. The current

### Dress Code

The purpose of the NOVA dress code is to maintain a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment for all community members. Adherence to a positive dress code models good citizenship and preparedness for a learning environment free of distractions. NOVA students must abide by the dress code every school day. Parents will be notified in advance of special occasions on which the dress code is waived or modified. The NOVA dress code, in general terms is described as follows:

At school, students are expected to dress for professional learning.

- Clothing with any inappropriate decals or messages are not allowed (i.e. drugs, alcohol, sex, inappropriate or offensive language, etc.).
- Shirts which bare midriffs, pants/jeans with holes, above the knee short skirts, short shorts or athletic type shorts in SS
- Revealing tank tops are not allowed to be worn.
- Hats and headwear should be worn only outside, not in class, unless for religious or cultural reasons.

Students who are dressed inappropriately may be sent home to change their clothing or be issued with appropriate clothing to wear for the day. **Commonly accepted standards of modesty and neatness will ensure that student dress and appearance is appropriate and non-offensive in our multicultural setting.**

According to the NOVA Student-Parent handbook dress code forces students to wear uncomfortable clothing in this weather, such as pants and long shirts. So how can we make sure that students are comfortable as well as able to express themselves through the dress code? I have created a survey regarding the dress code and consulted multiple students regarding this topic and received similar responses, specifically regarding the ripped jeans and shirt problems students face daily. Students wish for a dress code that allows ripped jeans, shorts and shirts that are worn for summer and may expose the shoulders, which again, are not inappropriate in any other social setting. The alteration of the dress code, making it less misogynistic and more focused on a healthy learning environment, is certainly accomplishable.

So what can the school do? The school can listen to the students and change the dress code by taking their opinions into consideration. Based on the responses that I got from the survey, I would say that the inclusion of ripped jeans, spaghetti strap shirts, shorts and skirts as school appropriate wear, would make most of the student body happy and create a better learning environment. I know that it would be a demanding change and a big issue to tackle but by listening to the students, the school can truly show that it cares.

*The views expressed in this opinion article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of NOVA Times. If you want to reply to this article, write an email to [lp14699@nova.edu.mk](mailto:lp14699@nova.edu.mk) or [ek14343@nova.edu.mk](mailto:ek14343@nova.edu.mk).*

# Social Media and Its Influence on People Around The World

By Galena Kuzmanovska

Social media platforms have entered our daily lives by enabling us to communicate with our family and friends, and to actively participate in social events through online applications and networks. Some may argue that social media positively affects users, while others think that social media platforms have a negative impact on our lives. While both are true, it is quite obvious that social media prevails and is present in almost every aspect of our life.

Preceding the infamous pandemic, social media, even though frequently used, was not a necessity for everyone. Now, even those who tried to steer clear of social media platforms have had to use them for their education and, let's face it, entertainment during the lockdowns. After coming back from distance learning classes and walking into the school, I noticed so many of the students sitting on their phones rather than communicating with friends they hadn't seen in real life in so long. That is when I realized how addicted and needy we are to upkeep with what is happening in the online world. This is precisely why it is the time to question the influence of social media.

The main point in favour of social media is its ability to spread information. Social media has become a source of learning for many. You can find documentaries, news channels, ebooks, and general information from online sources. Many schools and their educational systems now use social media to gain the attention of their students, and to teach them in an easier way. Finding out information on any topic you want and researching things you are

interested in is extremely easy, but social media platforms can often make this challenging. The broadcasting of personal opinions and subjective views have often become mixed with credible and factual sources. Through platforms like Instagram and Twitter, it is very easy for a person to post any information they would like, whether true or false, and influence a large audience. Posts like these could not only be filtered as incorrect, and occasionally be classified as propaganda, but they could also be offensive or inappropriate to post online. Social media is arguably the biggest cause of misinformation about important areas of life, such as the COVID vaccine or political issues around the world.

Social media also has a huge influence on our mental health. Some of the positives are that it allows us to stay connected to our friends, which brings us happiness, while also being an outlet for creativity. It helps people with talents showcase them online and even gain confidence through the added exposure. On the topic of making connections, online platforms also make it easier for introverts or those with social anxiety to communicate and socialize with others<sup>[1]</sup>. Many people I know have been more easily able to express themselves online, and it has affected them positively. We also see a lot of accounts on platforms like Instagram which promote mental health and help you to see yourself in a better way<sup>[1]</sup>. However, cyberbullying has become a huge issue in a world of technology, and platforms which allow us to connect with random people have sparked harassment online. It is estimated that up to 43% of teens have been bullied online,

and this statistic is bigger in cases of teens that are a part of the LGBT community, or multiracial<sup>[2]</sup>. We can attain more proof of the negative impact of social media on our mental health through a study done that correlates the amount of hours online to laziness and overall happiness of a person. This study shows that the more a person uses Facebook in a day, the less satisfied they are with their lives and the less happiness they have<sup>[3]</sup>.

While social media helps promote social change, allows you to communicate easily and is a source of entertainment, there are many negative points. Not only can it kill our productivity, but it also creates false expectations and propagates unreliable information.

Social media platforms are nonetheless thriving with engagement and usage through users around the world. In 2018, nine out of ten 13-17 year olds use social media, with 71% of them having more than one platform. 85% of high-school students use YouTube, while 72% use Instagram and around 32% use Twitter<sup>[4]</sup>. We cannot stop using social media just because it may have negative effects because it is implemented in lives and must be consistently used. However, I believe we should all know the consequences of using social media and how to manage them.

*The views expressed in this opinion article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of NOVA Times. If you want to reply to this article, write an email to [lp14699@nova.edu.mk](mailto:lp14699@nova.edu.mk) or [ek14343@nova.edu.mk](mailto:ek14343@nova.edu.mk).*

## How to Identify Bad Science – Part 1

By Stefan Nikolaj

*Within the IB and MYP programmes, particularly in the scientific subjects, using external sources and studies is an essential part of completing assignments. However, even though most students know how to cite a book or a study, critical evaluation of research and studies themselves is sadly not a skill that's taught in school. That's why in this article, and its upcoming second part, I'll share with you some tips on how to effectively filter out bad research from your sources and what to pay attention to when looking for a study.*



### How do you find a study in the first place?

Just like Google is the first place most people go to find general information, Google Scholar is where most students go to find scientific studies and information. Google Scholar is just like the Google search engine, but curated by algorithms to attempt to give you only reliable studies and research as a result. Just like the regular Google search engine, it looks for keywords and related concepts, but operates on all scientific fields at once, as opposed to field-specific search engines like PubMed (for medicine). This makes Google Scholar, in my opinion, well suited for high-school students, who don't yet require the highly specialized and focused research that a university student would need. It's still important to note that Google Scholar is curated by an algorithm, so it can't differentiate what's true and what's false, which is what the next step of filtering found research deals with.

### Filtering found studies

After you've found that study whose abstract description appears to perfectly support your point, it's time to do some preliminary filtering. Like with books, you should judge the study by its cover – in this case, by its authors, publishers and citations. Google Scholar provides a very easy way to verify the authors' standing in their particular research field, where they studied and what they are working on now. Overall, it's important to look at an author's number of citations – more citations means that the article is more highly valued by other researchers and use it as a source. If other researchers are using your chosen study as a source, then chances are, it's a good study. This applies to most papers, but there are exceptions where authors have been caught faking citation numbers or padding them with meaningless studies, or groups of authors citing each other to improve their numbers.

Sometimes, as is the normal incremental progression of science, the study's claim was rejected and replaced with a newer, more substantiated claim. That is why it's always worth to also take a glance at the year of publication, which Google Scholar allows you to do easily, and attempt to find a newer study on the same topic and similar levels of notability.

Another important factor is the publisher. Generally, if you recognize a publisher's name – often a large and respected university – that is likely to be a good study, since credible publishers want to keep their reputations unstained. However, some publishers will also use famous names to their advantage, as is the situation with the APA – whose acronym can stand for the American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association or American Psychoanalytic Association (even though this is being changed recently), all of which have different levels of trustworthiness. If you're unsure, just look up the publishers, and if they are generally controversy-free and notable enough to be cited by others, they're good enough.

Now that you've established that the study doesn't come from a disreputable source, comes the hard part – looking at the methodology of the study itself to figure out if the research process is legitimately constructed and the conclusion is reasonably deduced. The methodology will be covered by the second part of this article, as this involves a lengthy approach within statistics and critical thinking.

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**Publications**

TITLE	CITED BY	YEAR
Basic performance measurements of the intel optane DC persistent memory module J Izraelevitz, J Yang, L Zhang, J Kim, X Li, A Momenpoor, Y Z Sak... arXiv preprint arXiv:1903.05714	278	2019
Failure-atomic persistent memory updates via JUSTDO logging J Izraelevitz, T Kelly, A Kall ACM SIGARCH Computer Architecture News 44 (2): 427-442	153	2016
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### [book] Darwin's Influence on Ruthless Laissez-fair Capitalism

J Bergman - 2001 - [icr.org](https://www.icr.org) - Institute for Creation Research?

A review of the writings of several leading "robber baron" capitalists shows that many of them were influenced by the Darwinian view that the strong eventually will overcome the weak. Their faith in Darwinism helped them to justify this view as morally right and ...

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**Iowa Loop Tour**  
Nov 19 - Nov 21, 2021  
Dr. Jim Johnson will speak on biblical creation, apologetics, and history at different venues throughout Iowa between the

**News**

**Flood Explains Mysterious Crab in Amber**  
A team of evolutionary scientists from the U.S., China, and Canada recently found a complete tiny crab in amber.<sup>1</sup> Publishing in Science Advances, the team determined that the specimen was a member of Eubrachyura, a category of "true crabs" based on living animals. Found in Myanmar in rocks claimed to be 99-100 million years old, the crab was smaller than a human fingernail.<sup>1</sup> But the

Courtesy photos

# In Turbulent Indigo: Romanticization of Mental Illness in Art

By Borjan Nedelkovski

In a self-conducted survey, I inquired what people thought of when they first heard the name Van Gogh. In response, I often received answers like “A Starry Night” or “Sunflowers”, but what struck me was the frequency of answers such as “mental issues” or “the ear”. All in all, four out of ten people mentioned Van Gogh’s sickness as an immediate response to his name. When elaborating, eight of ten people talked about Van Gogh’s illness, all painting him as a “tortured” soul whose turbulent life ended too soon. The replies were even more staggering than when the same question was posed about Virginia Woolf or Sylvia Plath. Seven out of ten immediate reactions included mentions of their mental illnesses and untimely passings. The results I gathered are reflective of other online discussion forums. An average of eight out of ten answers include mention of the artists’ disorders. However, the myth of the tortured artist is not new. For centuries, we have been presented with the image of the struggling artist, their genius unknown, their gift invisible to the world until it was too late. Many highly revered artists have suffered from mental illness and, though their illness had a great influence on their identity, there is always the question of are we discrediting them by attributing their success to their sicknesses? Are they rightfully credited or is their success being taken away from them? Would “A Starry Night” or “Lady Lazarus” still exist in all their grandeur if Van Gogh or Sylvia Plath did not suffer from any mental disorders?

While it is okay to point out the connection between artists and mental illness, there is, now more than ever, this pseudoscientific trend of accrediting creativity to mental illness and vice versa, or even proposing the idea of embracing mental illnesses, such as depression. For many reasons, this can be not only counterproductive, but detrimental, as it often discourages people who need help from seeking it. They are guilted into thinking they would be giving away the very thing that separates them from others and makes them special, blurring the line between the person and the illness and entertaining the idea that the artist’s work is synonymous with their pain. It is true that art can be hard. It forces the artist to lay down all of their cards, to expose themselves and ask if they are good enough, if what they have is worth it. They are forced to go through life letting the sun shine through them, a blade of judgement always in their eyes. It can be isolating to watch yourself move through life from above, from clouds of



Image by Google Arts & Culture via Wikimedia Commons

objectivity, but the border between creativity and mental illness must be upkept. The idea that artists are predisposed to mental illness and that they should refrain from treatment is not only destructive to the artist, but incredibly stigmatizing. In fact, a recent 40-year study of about 1.2 million people found no correlation between artistic occupations and psychiatric illnesses, with the exception of bipolar disorder, which was only a small 8%. Yet we are made to believe that without Hemingway’s alcoholism there would be no “The Old Man and the Sea”, or that without Virginia Woolf’s depression there would be no Mrs Dalloway. And, though it cannot be denied that artists’ issues do shape their identity and affect their work, that does not mean that their work would be any less impactful had they been properly treated, or had their mental health been better in the first place. Van Gogh himself felt that he would be able to do much more had he not had to suffer from his illness, writing, in one of his last letters: “Oh, if I could have worked without this accursed disease – what things I might have done.” So yes, artists are shaped by their mental health. They are also shaped by their friends, the town they grew up in, books that they read. Seeking treatment would have affected their work just as much as moving to another country or marrying a different person would have. Though artists should be able to

express and communicate their mental illness in the work, the work itself should not be attributed to the illness.

While the idea of the tortured artist traces back to the Romantic period, when people such as Edgar Allan Poe sought to portray the artist as a divine supercreature; it is now more relevant than ever. The idea that the artist must sacrifice themselves for their art stems back to the belief that they are a medium unimportant without the art itself i.e. art prevails. When the artist is gone, art prevails. And so the artist is deemed unimportant, detached from the art. The only important thing is how much of themselves they gave. By doing this, we are accepting, even welcoming, the artists’ struggles as part of the art. Their illness becomes a source of creativity and their own wellbeing becomes but a minor cost in the great pursuit of art.

*The views expressed in this opinion article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of NOVA Times. If you want to reply to this article, write an email to [lp14699@nova.edu](mailto:lp14699@nova.edu).  
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## The Met Gala: A Lexicon of Silencing Voices

By Kalina Gocevska

*This article addresses the lack of coverage in the media about the BLM protest that occurred outside the 2021 Met Gala. It contrasts the privilege of the attendees with the struggle and inequality the BLM protestors faced.*

After a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the famous Met Gala returns on the September 13, 2021. The theme - "In America: A Lexicon of Fashion". While the world's most beloved pop stars, Hollywood actors, and even politicians indulged in luxurious food, fashion, and each other's company, another, less glamorous aspect of American culture was on display right outside the museum. A large group of Black Lives Matter protestors was being tackled to the ground and arrested right at the doorstep of the Metropolitan Museum of Arts while protesting to defund the NYPD.

The return of the Met Gala, an event that has been a staple of pop culture since the late 1940s, received no shortage of publicity and documentation. Newspapers, online forums, and of course, the public were excitedly discussing the show stopping designer pieces donned by all the prominent public figures who attended. However, barely anyone had heard about the Black Lives Matter protestors that night risking their safety to spread their message. It comes as no surprise that the media wanted to quickly sweep the protests under the rug, so that the public could all go back to enjoying the shiny outfits of their favorite celebrities, instead of stopping to think about the serious issues our society faces.

It seems the elite were eager to go back to normal as the situation with the global pandemic seems to be calming down. All attendees walked the red carpet without masks, as those would distract from their lavish attire. They had the privilege to forget about the pandemic for a night and pretend the last couple of years never happened, unlike the staff at the very same event who had to

wear masks, as well as the billions of people seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis. It's jarring, to say the least, to see the wealthy minority so quickly disregarding a tragedy that has disproportionately affected people of color and the working class. It is perhaps even more concerning that many people failed to at least



Image by Teen Vogue

acknowledge this inequality.

Among the attendees of this year's Met Gala were multiple political figures as well as celebrities who have advocated for the Black Lives Matter movement before. A rather memorable appearance was that of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

who decided to make a political statement, wearing a white gown declaring "Tax the Rich". While she didn't pay for her ticket or her dress, she definitely enjoyed the company and privileges of the very people she claims to be fighting against. This is not the first case of performative activism we've seen lately. Only a few months ago, celebrities were posting black squares and infographics in support of Black Lives Matter, but since then, the conversation around the movement has subsided significantly. How can they reap the benefits of being recognized as advocates and activists, while they enjoy their full-course meal at a \$30,000 table, turning a blind eye to the people in the streets relentlessly fighting for their rights? It makes you wonder whether the \$35,000 per ticket could have been put to better use, for example, reforming the corrupt justice system or helping the people who have been struggling during the pandemic.

It is devastating to see the message and demands of BLM protestors and advocates be traded in for a night of extravagance and indulgence dedicated to the world's elite. After all, wasn't the theme of this year's Met Gala supposed to celebrate American history and culture? Seeing the media repeatedly choose to focus on celebrities rather than people fighting for their rights really highlights the irony of this year's theme.

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mk or [ek14343@nova.edu](mailto:ek14343@nova.edu).*

## Arts Featurette

### Why is having a hobby important?

By Anja Nikolovska

*Having a hobby can help us grow as a person, improve our mental health, increase our confidence, release our creative side and boost our motivation. Everyone should find time for a hobby they enjoy and love doing.*

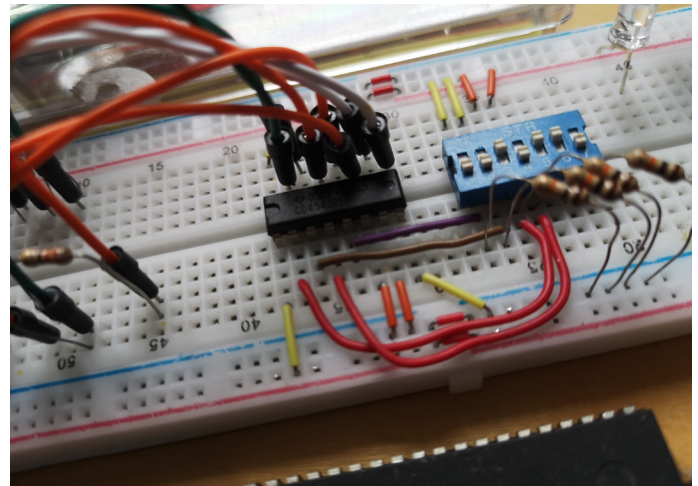
# Arts Featurette

As students, we spend most of our time focusing on homework and assignments, therefore sometimes we can find it hard to make time for ourselves. I think that often we are under too much pressure from school that we forget to think about relaxing and having a break, and yet finding hobbies we enjoy doing, will definitely benefit us in the long run.

Different hobbies can provide different benefits, such as gardening, reading, painting or drawing (that are relaxing), allow us to express ourselves and help us spend our free time effectively; they can also make us take our minds off all the things we are worrying about and calm us down. Some hobbies can also increase our confidence and help us grow as a people. Every time we draw, cook, dance, volunteer or do a certain hobby, we learn new things about a certain skill set and improve in it. The steady improvement in a hobby, which makes us realize that we are good at it, boosts our self-esteem and motivates us to do it more often.

Other than that, hobbies also give us a chance to enter and explore our creative side. The more we do a hobby and the more interested we become in it, the more new skills we learn from it. I think that the skills we learn from these hobbies can also affect our creativity in other aspects of life. Artistic hobbies, such as drawing or origami, are ideal for creativity development.

In my opinion, another really important thing is also that through hobbies you can spend time with your friends or meet new people who have the same interests as you. Meeting people that you share interests with will give you a chance to compare your experience with them and learn something new from them, such as hobbies where teamwork plays a key role i.e. team sport, volunteering, robotics, etc.



*Courtesy of Stefan Nikolaj*

Lastly, having a hobby doesn't have to take a lot of your time. Majority of us spend our time mostly focusing on school or other obligations we have, and of course, that is important, but since having a hobby takes up only 1-2 hours a day it's not that hard to make time for something you enjoy. We all have the same routines every day, and adding something new to our daily schedule can add fulfillment and joy to our lives.

Consequently, knowing how hobbies can help us improve in our life, I think that we should all find a hobby that makes us feel relaxed and confident in what we're doing. At the same time we should learn something new from it, improve every time we do it, and most importantly, enjoy it and feel happy.

## Why is YA Popular With Adults?

*By Andrea Karchicka*

Are young adult (YA) books read actually by teenagers? Well, not exactly. First, let's define what YA books are. YA books are essentially fiction books intended for 12-18 year olds. Some examples are *"Harry Potter"* the series by J. K. Rowling, *"The Fault In Our Stars"* by John Green, *"The Book Thief"* by Markus Zusak, *"They Both Die At The End"* by Adam Silvera, *"Six of Crows"* by Leigh Bardugo, etc. However, what makes these books be classified as young adult fiction? Well, the plot is seen through teenagers eyes and it describes their lifestyle, emotions, struggles etc. People usually think that if a book is categorized for a certain age, that older readers aren't supposed to read it. And yet, despite all these hurdles young adult fiction has a very big audience, far beyond its "intended" age range.

Studies show that over 55% of YA books are being bought by adults. However, an argument can be made that buying books is different from reading them. I agree, many parents buy books for their teenagers. Yet, in a survey 78% of the adults reported that they buy the books for themselves. So, why do YA books have an audience that includes adults as well, which seemingly transcends the "young adult" age range?

Here are a few reasons:

- Fast plots

The plots in YA books tend to be quick and to the point. From the first page, they have a clear message that they are trying to send. Different authors have different strategies of how to write a book with a fast plot, but the most used one is the one-hour plot strategy. This is an effective strategy in which you get the reader's attention (no matter the age).



*Image by Loren Javier via Flickr*

- Nostalgia for adults

YA books evoke nostalgia for adults. Many adults go back to reread some of their favourite teenage books such as *"Twilight"* the series, *"The Perks Of Being A Wallflower"*, *"Percy Jackson"* the series, etc. Many adults grew up with these books and by reading these novels for a second time, they experience the emotions that they felt throughout the book the first time that they read it.

- Relatable, interesting and fun content

YA books have many genres such as romance, adventure, fantasy, humor, mystery, science fiction etc. The diversity of genres allows readers to choose their preferences. Every reader has a different genre that they tend to favour. Readers also consider YA books as a 'safe space' for them, as it often lacks controversial topics or difficult language.

- The influence of social media (Booktok, Bookstagram, BookTube, Goodreads etc)

These days, social media has a big influence on the fame a novel or entire genre could have. By promoting a book on each of the previously mentioned apps, novels gain fame and popularity and most of these novels tend to be YA. Currently, the most famous books circling on

social media are *"It Ends With Us"* by Colleen Hoover, *"Beach Read"* by Emily Henry, *"We Were Liars"* by E. Lockhart, *"A Good Girl's Guide to Murder"* by Holly Jackson, *"One Of Us Is Lying"* by Karen McManus, *"The Song Of Achilles"* by Madeline Miller, *"Love And Other Words"* by Christina Lauren, etc. Readers tend to use social media apps to find the next book that they want to read.

In conclusion, genres may have a certain audience that they aim at, but that doesn't mean readers who are above that age range will not read the books in said genre. In the last century, the boom of YA, due to it being fast-paced and easy to read, has led many adults to venture into the genre. YA has transcended its name and become a genre for all readers to enjoy.

## Six of Crows: A Tough Read ... Until Chapter 3

By Jovana Vasilisa Jovanovikj

For my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, I got a book called "Six of Crows" by Leigh Bardugo. Everyone told me that the book was awesome, just my type of novel and that I would really love it. Intrigued, I opened the book, read the first two chapters, and quickly closed it. I was confused and I wondered why it was recommended to me, as it seemed that the book had no plot, its characters were all over the place and I wasn't able to understand the setting.

Consequently, "Six of Crows" stayed on my shelf for three years. Throughout the years I would force myself to open it and read it again and again, but to no avail. The novel accompanied me on every single vacation, school trip or swimming competition, but I still hadn't moved beyond the cursed second chapter. If someone were to ask me what happens in the first two chapters of Leigh Bardugo's book, I could probably recite the whole chapters by heart.

However, the corona pandemic finally locked me at my home, with the "Six of Crows" staring at me night and day. Not able to withstand the pressure anymore, I finally dedicated myself and I read the third chapter ... the fourth, the fifth ... not even realizing that I read the book in a single day. I was blown

away! I forced my father, the original culprit, who gave me the book, to buy the whole series and everything else written by Bardugo. At long last, I have had the burden of reading the book of my mind and have discovered another fantasy world to get lost in.

"Six of Crows" is an action packed, gruesome thriller set in a magic world lost somewhere between late 18th century Europe and the present day. Although a fantasy world, packed with magic and impossible scenarios, it greatly resembles contemporary times with themes about inequality, drug abuse, unethical scientific research, lucrative and egotistic businessmen, racism, cruelty, and prevailing crime. The book follows the impossible mission of six misfits, selfishly looking for money, but unintentionally saving this fantasy world from the brink of catastrophe. The book starts in the imagined city of Ketterdam, located on the island of Kerch. This bustling port is run by avaricious merchants and cruel gang leaders. Kaz Brekker is a small-time crime boss of the Dregs, with an unlikely gift of miraculous escapes, abundant information about his enemies and fellow gang members, and is always two steps ahead of his enemies (and his friends). He is disabled and uses a staff with a crow's head as an ornament to help

with walking.

One night, after the regular "returning from the brink of death after completing a successful deal", Kaz is kidnapped and brought in front of the powerful merchant Van Eck. The magnate tasks Kaz to liberate the eccentric scientist Bo Yul-Bayur, who has created a powerful drug which amplifies the magical skills of the Grisha (magical folks in Bardugo's world). The scientist is imprisoned in the Ice Court, an impregnable fortress prison of the Fjerdan government. In return, Kaz would receive thirty million krunas, a pretty large sum of money in the world of the "Six of Crows". Our good ol' Kaz, mesmerized by the lure of such a large amount of money, accepts the offer and recruits five other misfits for the impossible quest.

Kaz and his associates become the only hope for the salvation of the world, provided they don't kill each other first on the ship sailing from Ketterdam to Fjerda with the evil opponents not that far behind. Will they succeed in saving the world and winning their prize? Don't wait for years, like I did, to discover this fantastic and horrible world of Six of Crows.

## What Is the New Normal You're Hoping For?

By Galena Kuzmanovska and Vanja Estatieva

*NOVA Times is proud to publish the winning essay on an open call conducted by the school:*

The news and media have been going on forever about this new virus. Have you ever wondered whether the virus will wipe out the human population? Will humanity manage

to find a cure and save us all? There was so much false information and propaganda which was so easily spread through social media and advertisements online. We never

really understood any of it and the danger it brought before it came to our country. We used to see it on Instagram and casually swipe through the information, until we received



the email that changed our life. At this point, we were to attend online school as going on campus would be a threat. We could only go out from 12-3pm, and we had to wear masks and gloves. All of our life could be found on a small device and our dependence on the internet was greatly increasing. However, we were still unaware of the reality of it all. When we individuals think about the end of the world we picture wars, zombies, and revolutions. Before this pandemic, no one could have guessed that a virus, not visible to the human eye, would be the cause of death to a big part of our population. Something so small had the power to leave individuals on the streets, end companies, separate families, and end the life of millions. Everyone was frightened and theories started circulating regarding this being the end of the world. Then, we found ways to cure it, and we even have multiple vaccines that can immunize us against it. Now, we've reached a checkpoint, where we can finally freely walk around without masks. But, we've also reached a point where if you're 18 or above you must be vaccinated to enter a cafe or any closed space. For every step we take forward, we take two steps back. We've reached a place where whether you have had the virus or not matters more than who you are. Even if this is temporary, what will the new normal be?

As we mentioned previously, the virus slowly approached our borders, and with that our chance to see our relatives diminished. When the virus arrived, we lost touch with most of our relatives and friends. Having resorted to social media and technology as the main source for communication, we often stopped talking to some of our friends and the friendships were easily broken. Personally, both of us have also had trouble seeing some of our relatives. I, Vanja, had and still have trouble seeing my father who lives in Prague due to boundaries between borders and traveling. Everything I want to share with him I need the internet to do so, and this has limited our communication. My father didn't get to see me graduate from middle school, or celebrate my 15th birthday. When he did, it was through a small device, unable to hug me and congratulate me. Additionally, I, Galena, had trouble seeing my grandparents due to Corona and keeping safety precautions. My family and I couldn't celebrate birthdays with them and they also couldn't see me graduate due to the amount of cases. We hope that the new normal will allow us to be social, as it is in human nature to communicate and behave socially. We hope that we will be able to hang out in groups larger than just six, and that taking these actions will not put our life or anyone else's life at risk. The new normal will not require for us to have a vaccine against COVID or proof of immunization to pass borders and visit family members, or even for leisure vacations. The

new normal will allow us to visit our parents wherever they are without the need of a device and stable internet connection. How will this new normal affect our academic progress? We, as a community, have already adjusted to the safety rules to be healthy and hygienic, as well as keeping distance and wearing our masks. In NOVA, we are already following the usual schedules and attending classes in school. However, virtual classes and staying home gave students chances to be distracted all the time and even cheat on their tests and exams. Personally, for us, transitioning from 8th grade, online, to high school, in real life, was extremely difficult. It was challenging to keep up with what we were being taught, and it was hard to be focused during our classes. The new normal we are hoping for is an easier focus on academics, where we don't have to continuously wear masks and worry about our health. Our hope is to lead a school life where we won't have to fill out forms and measure our temperature every day, where we would be able to have field trips to museums and landmarks and to freely socialize with classmates without needing to keep a distance and constantly worrying.

The economy was also negatively affected when COVID started, due to restrictions in enclosed spaces. Some businesses that thrived on social gatherings like restaurants and cafes had to close and lose money, while other online companies, such as Amazon, were allowed to increase their prices due to the rise of online shopping. Around 114 million individuals lost their jobs in 2020, due to COVID. Many teens understand the difficulties some of their parents went through with less work and the money that they had been earning. This happened especially in businesses where the income depended on the number of people using this business, like restaurants, exchange offices, supermarkets, etc, the economy had fallen. People were left on the streets and this new virus was not the only problem people were trying to solve. Individuals were fighting hunger and mental illnesses caused by COVID. Others were searching for a new job or home, as they lost their old ones and faced challenges keeping their properties. Many were grieving for lost relatives or friends that this virus had killed. We hope that the new normal will allow individuals to grow their businesses again. We hope that even though businesses that have failed cannot be restored, people will have the courage, resources, and opportunities to build new ones. We would like this new normal to allow people to live life to their fullest potential and that humanity will be able to prevail from all the casualties COVID caused.

With COVID, positive change also occurred. One good thing is that many people realized the importance of being healthy. Before this pandemic, many people didn't upkeep basic sanitary needs in their community, and due to

this, the pandemic spread in the pace that it did. We hope that this can be kept and be normal, as it will help all of us, especially in the case if another outbreak happens in the future. Additionally, another good thing that this pandemic brought is that due to the quarantines and lockdowns, many cities got cleaner and climate change slowed down. Several studies showed that animals were returning to their natural habitats where they had previously fled due to the bad environment. We feel that it is very important for us to continue taking care of our environment in this new normal, as if we do not, even if the pandemic ends, other problems will initiate. In conclusion, we hope for the new normal to be like before, taking into consideration the good habits we have acquired during these uncertain times. Some of these include being sanitary and hygienic and keeping our environment clean. We hope that the restrictions loosen up and we can focus on rebuilding the community and our social behavior.

**About Us:**

NOVA Times is a student-run newspaper that allows NOVA high-school students to express themselves in the field of journalism.

If you would like to write for NOVA Times or raise a technical question, please contact either [lp14699@nova.edu.mk](mailto:lp14699@nova.edu.mk) or [ek14343@nova.edu.mk](mailto:ek14343@nova.edu.mk). If you would like to respond to a particular newspaper piece, write a letter to the editor by using the same email addresses.

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