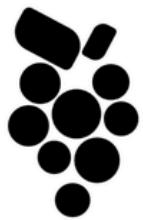


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THE
Grapevine



New Beginnings



ISSUE 1

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THE GRAPEVINE

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What is “The Grapevine”?

Welcome, CRGS;

During my earlier times at this school (i.e. Years 7–9), I always looked for clubs and opportunities around the school to contribute to during my abundance of free time, in order to increase my span and depth of knowledge in different aspects of life, whether it was reading, classics, or engineering; however, I found this extremely difficult. There were barely any supracurricular opportunities presented to KS3 students back then, making myself and my other fellow students find it difficult to indulge ourselves in them, and hence limiting us from opportunities to enrich ourselves and mould ourselves as wonderful all-rounders ready to get into top universities, then jobs.

Unfortunately, this scarcity also seems to be unable to satisfy the needs of promising and gifted students who crave the need for constantly pushing their intellectual boundaries and thoughtfully exploring the outside world as well as their own school. This problem was one that I found especially hard-hitting and major, and as I got into Y10/11, this had to be solved.

That is why we are introducing this journal; “The Grapevine”. For lower school students, by lower school students. Journalism is an art that will not only improve your writing and research skills for useful subjects like English and the humanities, but will also enlighten you with new knowledge in different aspects of professionalism, push you to question and reflect on news that is happening around you, whether it is in the school, the country, or the wider world. As Sir Francis Bacon said, “ipsa scientia potestas est.” This journal will not only gift you knowledge, but will also give you news of various opportunities, whether that is new or established lunchtime clubs or recruitment for supra-curricular competitions; give you valuable life, as well as academic advice (mostly from KS4 students), and pass you that extra sudoku or UKMT question, which will hopefully broaden your knowledge span, news awareness, and aid you in your journey navigating secondary school, because let’s be honest, it can be harrowing and imposing sometimes.

This is our first edition, and we will be printing editions every half term. You will never lose your interest in reading our journal editions, and I can guarantee that you will be yearning for more from this journal — because helming this ship of a journal is a talented, diverse, promising, and intelligent editorial team, led by Editors-in-Chief Henry Hawke and Lucas Lachasseigne, who you’ll hear from on the following page. (Mr Jasper and I had the pleasure and privilege of reading editorial team applications, however found it extremely difficult to pick out the team itself.) The editorial team will introduce themselves in greater detail on the next page; the journal will not only be safe, but thriving in these hands for the future.

Other than that, from what I have seen from the articles in this upcoming pages, you are in for an interesting and thought-provoking read this time around. So, I hope you all have a wonderful and fulfilling 2026! (You will hear the aims and future plans of this journal from the Editors-in-Chief on the next page.)

Yours sincerely,
 Yuvan Ananda Arasu
 Junior Prefect
 Lower School Council Lead

Editors in Chief's Notes



Lucas Lachasseigne:
Editor-In-Chief

Hi! I'm Lucas, in 10G, and I am one of the two Editor-in-Chiefs at the Lower School Student Journal. The subjects I take for GCSE are Geography, History, Computing and Triple Science, as well as the core subjects. I love participating in group

discussions, as well as swimming and cycling. Most of all I enjoy taking on new challenges, whatever they may be – and launching the journal certainly comes with its fair share of difficulty! We are all very excited to share with you what we have created, and we hope you are just as excited to read it as well! This edition is the first issue of the Grapevine, and if you find it interesting, stay on the lookout as more will be coming soon!

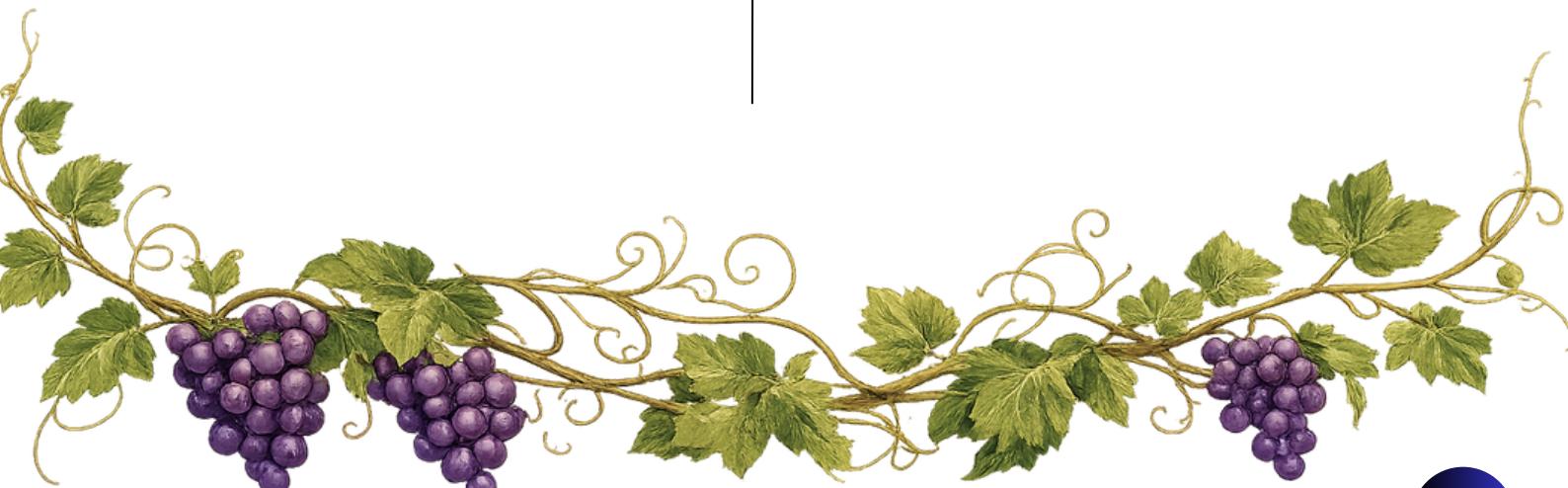
Yours Sincerely,
Lucas Lachasseigne, Editor-In-Chief

Henry Hawke:
Editor-In-Chief

Morning! I'm Henry Hawke, I'm a proud member of 10S and one of the two Editors-in-Chief at The Grape Vine. I study Geography, History, and Latin at GCSE, subjects which strongly reflect my desire for good GCSE grades. The Grapevine is not simply a publication to me, but a commitment. I care too much about its quality. I believe this school journal should be thoughtful, ambitious, and willing to represent a wide range of perspectives while maintaining high editorial standards.

Alongside my editorial work, I am actively involved in building RevisionPookie.com, an online revision platform designed to help students learn more effectively through clear explanations, intelligent tools, and structured content. This reflects my wider interest in combining creativity, technology, and education to produce something genuinely useful. As Editor-in-Chief, I promise to give my soul to this journal and to deliver the highest possible standard of writing, design, and leadership for its readers—now and in the years to come.

Yours Sincerely,
Henry Hawke, Editor-In-Chief



The Ball and Phone BAN

Special News Opinion by Shriyan Kar

Okay, let's be real. When the school announced the big changes, less phone time and a tighter policy on balls, everyone was a bit stressed. It felt like they were trying to ruin lunch. But, after a few months in the Lower School, the Large Close feels... different. It's louder, yes, but in a good way. It turns out, giving up the screen was actually about getting something way better back: real life.

Before the no-phone policy, I was that kid. You know the one: lunch bell rings, head immediately down. I'd find a corner and dive straight into YouTube videos or whatever was trending. I honestly thought I was relaxing.

But here's the truth: I was a social zombie. My social life was totally flat. I never talked to anyone new. In fact, I never talked to more than half the people in my year. I'd walk into an afternoon lesson feeling drained, not rested, and my brain felt fuzzy. My focus in subjects that needed real effort? Gone.

The school's aim wasn't to punish us; it was to fix that. They wanted us to get healthier and talk to each other. It was about making us look up and realize there were actual human friends, not just avatars, all around us.

And seriously? **It worked.**

Now, instead of staring at a tiny screen, I'm talking about the latest test, arguing about football (even though we can't play it!), or just laughing about something stupid. I've made so many more friends real, actual friends just because I was forced to put the phone down. And my brain? It feels sharper in class. I'm actually developing skills in new clubs instead of just watching other people be good at things online. The goal was better communication and health, and honestly, it feels amazing!

The ball policy change was maybe the toughest pill to swallow. Everyone loved that intense, messy, high-energy game in the Large Close.

It wasn't banned to be mean; it was banned because someone almost always ended up getting hurt. The goal of the change was plain old Health and Safety. High-speed games in crowded areas are a recipe for injuries, and the school has to look out for us.

THE GRAPEVINE

“You need to disconnect to reconnect”

Our Takeaway: Even though we miss the free-for-all, the aim was safety. And now we have to be way more creative with our energy!

The biggest positive shift is how much better our friendships are now. We have to interact. There's no easy escape route back to a screen.

The school wanted us to have better focus, and forcing us into face-to-face time gives us a proper brain break. You need to disconnect to reconnect, right?

Before

Half-listening to a friend while checking notifications

After

Full on debates about games, movies, or lessons.

It turns out, actually having time with your friends in person is way more relaxing than trying to manage a social media stream.

The new rules are giving us the space to concentrate on the real reason we are at CRGS: academics.

My personal skills development since the phone ban has been crazy. That time I used to spend glued to my phone? I now spend on logic puzzles, reading, or just planning out essays. The school's aim was always to give us the best chance to succeed, and that means protecting our downtime so it actually refreshes us.

Final Thought: Yeah, it was annoying at first. But the Lower School is the CRGS Launch Point. The changes aren't about taking things away; they're about giving us a better, safer, and friendlier environment to start building our foundations here. We're sharper, we're talking more, and we're all the better for it!



Sports Throughout The Ages

Habeeburrahman Mohammed

For much of human history, and certainly in the eras of classical western civilisation, sport has played an important role in society. The Oxford Dictionary defines sport as an “activity that you do for pleasure and that needs physical effort or skill, usually done in a special area and according to fixed rules.” In this article, we look at sporting events throughout history to gauge the significance of sport in our modern-day society.

The origins of sport can be traced back to the earliest days of human civilisation – sports such as javelin throwing, running and swimming would have conceivably been survival necessities in the wild world of our hunter-gatherer ancestors.

One of the most famous (and quite possibly the most famous) sports events is the Olympics. Even before the ancient Olympic games, it was evident that sport was common in the Mediterranean region. Sport competitions were often held to honour the deceased, a tradition seen in classical Rome too. The Olympics were one of four large sport events known as the Panhellenic games, initiated as religious events to honour the classical Greek deities. This was very much evident in the Olympic games for at the beginning of each Olympic game the ancient Greeks sacrificed one-hundred oxen to Zeus - the patron deity of the Olympics. The locations of the Panhellenic games were considered sanctuaries by the ancient Greeks and Greeks from most - if not all - city states travelled to participate and spectate. In order to ensure the safety of both spectators and competitors the Greeks observed an Olympic truce. This being said, the Olympic games were hardly politics-free. The often-warring city states used Olympian victory to assert dominance over each other.

Sports Throughout The Ages

Habeeburrahman Mohammed

The Olympic games were revived in 1896 and held in Athens almost one and a half millennia after the original Olympics had faded out of existence. In 2024, the Olympic games were held in Paris, France with over ten thousand competitors partaking. The event lasted over ten days and sold 9.5 million tickets – some even costing thousands of euros.

Sport played a part in politics in other parts of the classical world too – Rome and the Romans are famous for their chariot races and gladiator fights. The games were often sponsored by the rich. Emperors and other politicians hoping to climb the political ladder or to gain and retain public support often organised sport events to please the masses. Juvenal criticised his Roman peers for giving political support in return for only “panem et circenes” - bread and circuses. Chariot racing arenas from Roman times had a box for statues of deities to observe the games and, like the Greeks, the Romans also sacrificed animals as a formal religious observance before the events.

It is also worth looking at sport played in the Americas. One particularly interesting example is Ollama (also spelled Ulama). Ollama traces itself to the time of classical Aztec civilisation and was banned during Spanish colonial rule due to its strong associations with Mesoamerican religion, which contrasted sharply with the Catholicism of the Spaniards.

The game did survive in parts of central America where Spanish influence was less prominent but most of the customs surrounding it have become subject to speculation. Ollama is currently undergoing a revival, with people of Mesoamerican ancestry seeking a revival in their culture and identity. Like sport in other parts of the world at the time, Ollama seems to have had religious significance, representing the “battle” between day and night or good and evil. Some have also theorised that Ollama was a way to settle political disputes without actual war or violence, stating that the less politically centralised a region was, the more ballcourts it seemed to have.

THE GRAPEVINE

“Sport has the power to change the world!”

Following the collapse of the classical world and the onset of the dark ages, medieval Europe entered an age of political and social change. The sports played changed with the social landscape. The rich enjoyed equestrian sports and hunting while the poorer members of society engaged in wrestling, curling along with early cricket, football, golf and predecessors of many modern sports. In some areas, archery was mandatory - in 13th century England, laws were passed to ensure that all able-bodied men owned - and practiced archery with - a longbow.

One of the most iconic medieval sports is jousting. Jousting involved two mounted knights charging towards each other and attempting to score points by shattering their lances on their opponent's shield or helm. The victor often took the loser's armour and horse which would be ransomed for a small fortune, although this was not the only prize offered at jousting tournaments. Jousting tournaments were condemned by the catholic church as they were often dangerous to the competitors. Many knights accidentally killed each other. Henry the Second (of France) died when another knight's lance pierced his visor and Henry the Eighth (of England) was injured in a jousting match which led to a decline in his health.

Sport practiced by the poorer classes seems to have been much more disorganised. Compared to the sports of richer members of society, many more players were involved. A sport often referred to as “mob-football” was played between teams of unlimited sizes, sometimes entire villages, all trying to move a ball (potentially the inflated bladder of a pig) to the opposing team's goal. This would probably have resembled some sort of “capture-the-flag” type game. The large number of players meant that participation was potentially dangerous.

In 1863, the Football Association was founded. Following the industrial revolution, changes in transport such as railway lines, allowed teams from all over the country to play against each other. The Football Association sought to standardise the rules of the sport to facilitate competition between teams across the country.

Life As A CRGS Student (#1)

Taheem Hossainn

Introduction

If someone had told me a year ago that I would soon enter the gates of CRGS every single morning, I wouldn't have believed it! But here I am – now integrated into school life, juggling homework, scrambling for tests and doing everything I am expected to do.

I realise that I probably haven't introduced you to myself, so here I go. To start, a bit about me: I'm Taheem! I, obviously, go to CRGS and am in Year 7 (fresh out of primary school!). I'm the kind of person who can spend hours, and I mean hours, buried inside the Harry Potter series, but I'll drop everything to embrace my computing skills!

The first term at CRGS has been exceptionally exciting, but at the same time, kind of overwhelming, especially for a child fresh from Primary School. As someone who was the top of the school at their Primary School, it hits hard when you realise that you're surrounded by people who are just as driven as you and you become an average student in your class.

Walking into the form on the first day, I wasn't sure what to expect. Contrary to my expectations, everybody was surprisingly really welcoming! It wasn't long before some conversations started forming, and using that as the basis, friendships were formed.

Main Events & Moments

Last term, the autumn term, had its fair share of events – some funny, some stressful and some unforgettable... Here are some events that we have participated in:

The Big School Camp - The Big School Camp was one of the most exciting parts of the term, packed with activities like fire-skills and shelter-building. We spent the day trying new challenges and laughing with each other. By the end, it felt like our whole year group had grown much closer.

Life As A CRGS Student (#1)

Taheem Hossainn

Odeon Theatre - Back in December, we had a trip to the cinema as a treat for completing our first term. It was an extremely fun experience as we watched Elf! and we were treated to delicious snacks. The aroma of popcorn was lingering in the air and by the end of the movie, we were all in the festive spirit.

Our First Assessment – I vaguely remember our first assessment, but I do know that it was definitely stressful. This was also the time when I realised that sleep is important (how did I not know that?!) and revising the night before is not really the best strategy. However, I still excelled at that assessment.

Getting Lost In The Corridors – Yes. And yes, I got lost more than once.

Realising That The Canteen Is A Fight To Get Through – In my Primary School, we did not have any of this! As I continued through the weeks, I realised that, as I said before, the canteen is a fight to get through, and you have to do all of your things in less than an hour!

But honestly, these moments are what makes CRGS unique. They symbolise the unity of the school and showcase its excitement. But the thing that I have realised the most is that there is always something waiting for you at the next bell...

Looking Ahead

If this term has taught me anything, it's that CRGS is demanding but enthusiastic at the same time – and they provide a lot of opportunities. I'm still adjusting to the pace that things go here (it's hard), but I'm still enjoying it.

This article was the start of the “Life as a CRGS Student” series, and I hope you enjoyed it! Hopefully, by the time the next article is published, I'll have found better ways to organise my homework... or maybe not. But either way, I'll still have a story to tell.

Until then, happy new year (PS: we are like 2 months late, its past NY)!

Do Mock Exams Really Matter?

Ameen Wahid

Every year, many students across the country are dismayed at the mention of **mock examinations**. They are often lightly dismissed as simply ‘practice tests’, or something to survive and get through rather than to take seriously. However, this attitude seriously underestimates the real value of mocks. In reality, mock exams are one of the most important and best ways students can prepare for their final exams, but also success beyond school life.

Primarily, mocks provide a **reality check**. Many students believe they understand a subject until they are truly tested under harsh timed conditions. Mocks expose gaps in knowledge that revision alone may conceal. This can be uncomfortable; however, it is far better to discover and unfold weaknesses in mock exams than in your real exams in the summer. By highlighting what needs improvement early on, mocks give students a clear direction for focused revision.

Secondly, mocks build **exam resilience**. Knowledge alone is not enough to succeed; students must also manage time pressures, stress, and unfamiliar questions. Sitting a full exam teaches students how to pace themselves, how to recover from difficult questions, and how to stay focussed for long periods of time. These essential skills cannot be attained from merely textbooks alone – they are developed through experience, and mock exams provide that experience in a relatively low-risk environment.

Furthermore, mocks also **aid teachers to support students** more effectively. When teachers analyse mock results, they can identify common misunderstandings and adjust lessons accordingly. This means that mocks do not only benefit individuals, but entire classes. They turn assessment into a tool for learning rather than just a measure of performance.

Do Mock Exams Really Matter?

Ameen Wahid

Finally, mocks teach an **important life lesson**: failure is not the end. Many students perform worse than expected in mocks and feel massively discouraged. However, this setback can be overcome if handled correctly. Learning to reflect, adapt, and improve after disappointment is a skill that extends far beyond exams, into university, work and life in general: when you fall once, you stand back up and try harder.

To conclude, mock exams are not a waste of time or unnecessary stress but are an opportunity – **an opportunity to learn, to improve, and to grow**. If students shift their mindset and treat mocks as stepping stones rather than obstacles, they will be far better prepared for their final exams and the challenges that come after.

"Mock exams... are an opportunity - an opportunity to learn, to improve, and to grow



German Christmas Markets Trip

Luka Golubovic

Have you ever been on a coach for fifteen hours? Does it seem utterly implausible? Well, a group of forty Year Eights had to brave this fatigue and zip their way to Germany! But when it finally appeared outside their windows, the tiredness faded into the excitement that buzzes when you're somewhere else.

Crowded markets, sky-high towers, stunning museums... Two days wasn't long, but it didn't need to be to explore Germany's fascinating culture and cuisine. When you're baking a schnitzel or stuffing your face with pretzels, you have the Germans to thank! And, in typical Year Eight fashion, they devoured not only those, but snacks like candy apples and miniature pizzas. I wish I was there!

Of course, markets weren't the only highlights of the trip. Have you heard of Cologne Cathedral, scraping the sky with its 157-metre height? That's 523 steps! Still, the view was breath-taking. I'm not sure how many can say they've achieved such a feat; the photo taken up there will probably outlive everybody's phone batteries.

Another unexpected highlight was the sports museum because—while many find them dull—interactive sections and intriguing topics livened the whole place, glass cages aside. A popular activity was trying to lift a 70kg weight, and despite the effort from everybody, only one person managed to do so... He'll let me know when he becomes a future athlete.

Finally, towards the end of the trip, there was a football match on the roof! It sounds like a set-up joke, but no—it actually happened. Chaos! Competition! Passion! It was all there. You could ask some attending Year Eights what it was like; I don't think we'll ever get the chance to relive it.

Two days. Two days of burning curiosity, forty students new to the world, seventy kilograms to lift, and seventy more experiences to share—lasting inside jokes and newfound connections to share. This was a trip they'll never forget.

The Jack Petchey Files

Henry Hawke

The Jack Petchey speak out competition is a chance for students to talk about things they feel strongly about and maybe convince others that their cause is something worth fighting for. I talked to two separate contestants – each seeking to persuade people to believe in their passions as much as they do.

Interview With Giulio Valleriani

Q: Could you please talk to me about your speech please?

A: So, my speech was originally a ‘who are you’ speech that I did and got through to the next round. I’ve decided not to do that one, heading to qualify for the regional finals. Instead a speech about a good person.

C: Ooh nice.

A: Uhh yeah.

Q: I recall quite liking your speech why did you feel you needed to change?

A: Umm. I think it just better suits it, instead of being about who someone is, everyone has a community that comes together to try and make better versions of themselves.

Q: What’s your greatest motivation for making it into the next round?

A: Uhm money? No no.

Q: How much money is the reward?

A: I don’t know. It’s two grand for the finals. If you win the finals.

Q: What’s your actual motivation for it?

A: Because no one else rejected it.

C: Okay.

The Jack Petchey Files

Henry Hawke

Q: Do you want to give us an excerpt of your speech, or should we wait until when is it February 2nd?

A: The 8th Or 7th I can't remember. And no, I don't want to give an excerpt.

Interview With Ashaan Nagra

Q: Ashaan, do you want to be interviewed?

A: What? What for?

C: The lower school journal.

A: *Unintelligible noises*

Q: Have you done anything recently of note?

A: Of importance?

Q: Yes.

A: No¹

Q: You haven't? Anyways, how's Jack Petchey?

A: Yeah it's alright.

Q: How's your speech? What's it about?

A: It's a motivational speech.

Q: What topics does it cover?

A: What huh? My speech is about how failure isn't all bad and leads to success.

Q: Could you give us an extract of that speech?

A: I talk about some athletes like Michael Jordan, Albert Einstein. People that don't give up. And I use a nice quote: 'Failure isn't the opposite of success, It's part of it'.

Q: Anything Else?

A: No.

Q: Thank you for doing the interview.

A: Thanks.

¹Big let down

Clubs, Societies & Events

Abir Chowdhury

Astronomy Club: (Date to be decided)

Soon to debut at CRGS is the all-new Astronomy club, led by our very own News Editor, Shriyan Kar! If you are fascinated by asteroids, comets, and the beginning of the universe, this is the club for you. Weekly presentations and activities are conducted in a fun and engaging way. Come and interact with like-minded individuals, keen on expanding their knowledge beyond that of the known universe!

Book Club: Tuesday Lunchtimes in EN1

Book Club brings together students who share a love of reading. Weekly gatherings provide a space to discuss a wide range of texts, from modern novels to older favourites, allowing members to share all their thoughts.

The club encourages students to read more widely and develop confidence in expressing their views. Above all, it brings a genuine enjoyment of books and conversation, making reading a shared and social experience.

Classics Society: Wednesday 1 p.m. in CLA1

Classics Society offers students the opportunity to explore the ancient world in an engaging way. It brings together students who are interested in Greek and Roman history, mythology, etc, as well as those who are simply curious to learn more. Meetings encourage open discussion, allowing students to share ideas, debate famous stories and historical figures, and explore how classical themes still influence the modern world. The society creates a friendly space where students can deepen their interest in classics, build confidence in discussion, and enjoy learning beyond the classroom.

Sports

CRGS is proud of its varied and inclusive sports programme. With sport being a popular part of school life for many students, the school provides numerous lunchtime and after-school clubs where students can improve, have fun, and enjoy playing the sport they love. More information can be obtained from the sports office.



Scan me to look
at posters!

Puzzles & Games

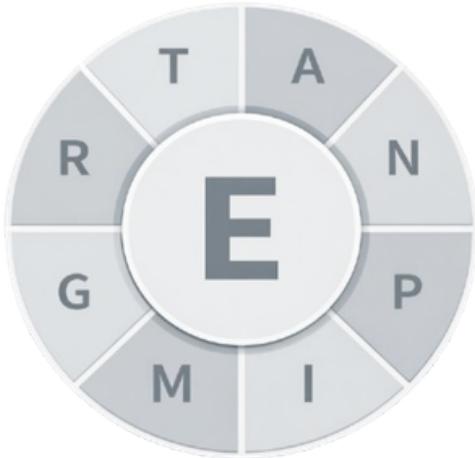
Manas Sriram

Classic Sudoku (5 Points)

	3		8					
9		5	6			7		
				9	3	2		
8		6	5					
	4				3			
4	7	2	3		6	9	5	
	1	9	4	8	7		6	
3	6	8	2	5	9		1	

Word Finder

Find as many words as possible in the circle below. The same letter cannot be used twice, and double the points for using the letter in the middle! Try and find the 9-letter word that uses all the letters shown. Note that only the single highest-scoring result will be credited (e.g: if you get 12 words and the 9-letter word you will only be credited 5 points). Scoring is shown below:



5 Words - 2 Points
10 Words - 3 Points
Find The 9-Letter Word - 5 Points

THE GRAPEVINE

“Every puzzle has a solution.”

Maths Puzzles

Easy (2 points for correct answer)

Author: UKMT

Jokers always lie.

Clowns always tell the truth.

A group of four, each of whom is a Joker or a Clown, make the following statements about each other:

P says, “Q always lies”;

Q says, “R always lies”;

R says, “P always tells the truth”;

S says, “Exactly two of P, Q and R are Jokers”.

How many of P, Q, R and S are clowns?

- A 0 B 1 C 2 D 3 E 4

Medium (3 points for correct answer)

Author: UKMT

The shaded region in the diagram, bounded by two concentric circles, is called an *annulus*. The circles have radii 2 cm and 14 cm.

The dashed circle divides the area of this annulus into two equal areas.

What is its radius?

- A 9 cm B 10 cm C 11 cm D 12 cm E 13 cm



Puzzles & Games

Manas Sriram

Hard (5 points for correct answer)

Author: COMPOS Outreach Program - Department of Physics at Oxford University

A pedestrian walked one third of the total distance at speed 2 mph, the second third at speed 3 mph, and the remainder of the distance at the speed that is equal to the average speed over the entire trip. Find that average speed.

Cryptic Cipher

Can you decrypt this Caesar Cipher (a type of encryption where all the original text is shifted by ‘x’ spaces in the alphabet) below? If so, you will receive a handsome **reward**.

EQPITCVWNCVKQPU QP FGETARVKPIVJKU EQFG. CU C
TGYCTF YG CTGIKXKPI AQW VGP JQWUG RQKPVU. AQWECP
EQPHKTO VJKU DA UGPKPI OG CPGOCKN (OA GOCKN
CFFTGUU ECP DGHQWPF CV VJG HTQPV QH VJGLQWTPCN)
YKVJ C RKEVWTG QH AQWTYQTMKPIU. YGNN FQPG!

CRGS Lower School Journal
Puzzles Submissions Portal



Credits

Founder

Yuvan Ananda Arasu

Marketing and

Clubs/Societies Advertiser

Abir Chowdhury

Editors-in-Chief

Lucas Lachasseigne

Henry Hawke

Puzzles Creator

Manas Sriram

News Editor

Shriyan Kar

Interior Layout Designer

Tejas Sriram

Front Cover Designer

Ted Sleigh

Website Creator

Taheem Hossainn

Daniel Ayandare

Journalists

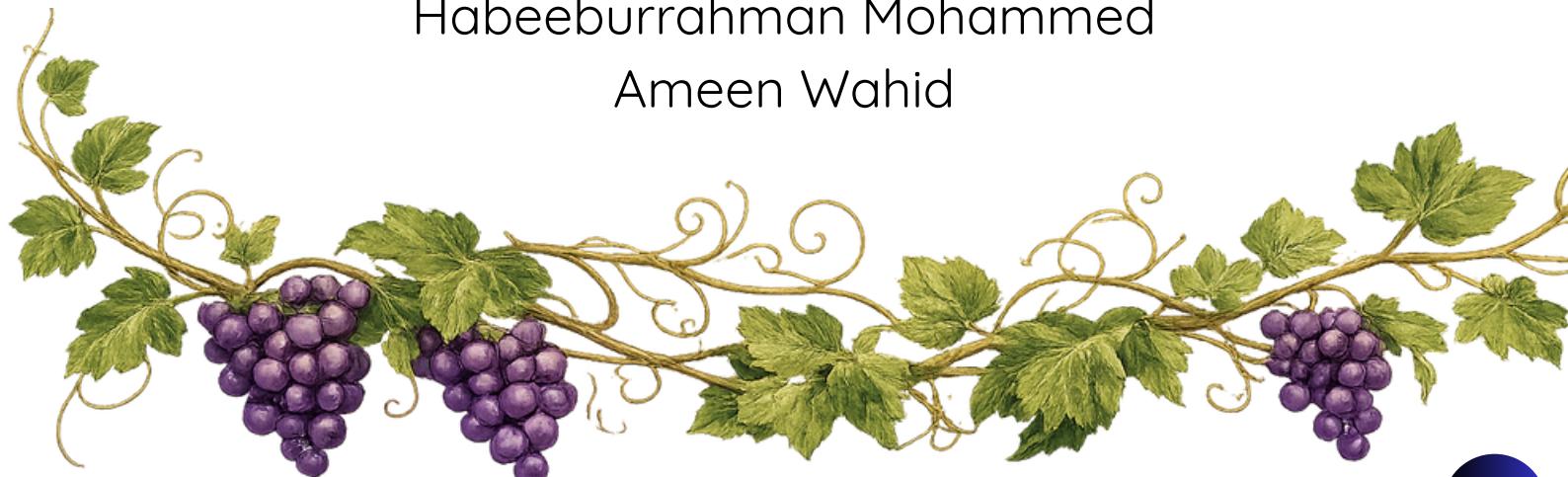
Luka Golubovic

Shriyan Kar

Taheem Hossainn

Habeeburrahman Mohammed

Ameen Wahid



Thank You For Reading The First Edition Of The Grapevine!

We hope you found this an exciting read, and you will also enjoy our next editions. In order to make the Grapevine the best it can possibly be, we want a broad range of topics and articles to feature in our magazine, and we are excited to announce that we are currently recruiting for this very purpose! Simply scan the QR code below and fill in the form. We would love to have more members to write articles and design the issues, so whatever your talents or interests, get in touch with us if you want to help out the Grapevine!

CRGS Student Journal Recruitment Form



