

4TH YEAR & Graphic NEWS ROOM Design

Fantastic Fourth Year

By Lauren Boyle, Saul Sheedy, Sophia Hayden, Lara Perrey, Emily-Faye Xantho, Alessia Garcia

Covid-19 has impacted everyone in almost all aspects of life, and school was no exception. All students' lessons took place online for large parts of the year. This removed typical social interactions that would normally occur at school. The Institute students were very privileged that their teachers were fully equipped to teach all our classes to us online.

However students struggled with online school. We interviewed our fellow 4th Year students and everyone preferred being in the school to online learning. It was mainly because they struggled to concentrate being online all day and they missed their friends. When they returned, they appreciated getting to see their friends within The Institute's familiar campus.

The pandemic made 4th Year very different than the typical 4th Year at The Institute. One of the main issues with virtual learning



according to the majority of those we interviewed was the lack of social interaction. Students went from seeing each other every day to seeing their friends names on a screen and of course they couldn't meet their friends outside of school time either.

4th Year, is the first year at The Institute, a year to make friends, work on social skills and mature – and we felt that virtual learning made all that very difficult. We were very thankful that restrictions lifted and we got to go back to school for some of the year. 4th Years at The Institute have a huge head start and advantage in the academic spectrum, from studying

compulsory subjects like Maths, English, and languages, to joining 5th Year choice subjects. 4th Year students are permitted to try out new 5th year choice subjects every term and get a sense of their subject preferences, strengths, and of course get a head start on learning the curriculum. There is great freedom to try out different classes and extracurriculars and a general feeling of respect and independence. "The Institute really prepares you for college. We have more independence. Everyone is here to do well and it is a great environment to work in," reports 4th Year student Lucy.

Cont. Inside on Page 3

OUR EDITORS



Helen Hart



Keelin Collins



Blathnaid Vaughan

WE are three 4th Year students who are in both the Graphic Design and Journalism classes. This gave us an insight into all parts of the newsletter from creating the written content to putting it together in InDesign. Thank you to all the contributors, we hope you enjoy it - and have a great Summer!

Independence is very important to the students we spoke to; not having to wear a uniform is not just about wearing what you want, it is about being trusted to dress yourself like a young adult.

It is nearly ten years since entrepreneur Bill Cullen made headlines branding Transition Year as a “doss”, yet the notion still lingers with some people despite the huge growth in popularity of this “gap” year. According to The Irish Times there were just 27,000 pupils doing 4th year in 2009 when the outspoken businessman suggested it should be “scrapped” – today that number is close to 45,000. We are not surprised, as despite completing this year in a pandemic, we still found it to be extremely beneficial. “Covid really pushed our academic limits, but I felt assured that The Institute was still providing the highest quality of education,” says student Emily-Faye.

The Institute is not only an opportunity to make headway on what can seem a daunting Leaving Cert curriculum, but also a chance to develop skills beyond the academic environment. Whenever restrictions allowed, many of our 4th Year students attended courses hosted by the Dublin Barista School, which gave them a chance to learn professional coffee making. A group of students were involved with an after-school Irish Sign Language course, providing the ability to better communicate with hard-of-hearing individuals.



We were also very fortunate to have continuous first-aid lessons available in our 4th Year programme this year, taught by the Institute’s sports director Brian Gegan. Our varied curriculum from Yoga and Irish dancing to Graphic Design and Drama continued throughout the year.

Even though we would have much preferred to be physically in school, we were very grateful to be in a school where everything humanly possible - went ahead online. Which meant we could still work towards things like our Gaisce bronze awards, Cambridge IGCSE exam and French DELF exams, and it felt like even more of an achievement to meet goals and targets amidst a pandemic.

We appreciated all the more when we did get a chance to do normal day trips or activities. We went on a day trip to Causey Farm. This was the second week of term so it was very beneficial in cementing friendships. It was very different considering, we had to wear masks and socially distance as much as

possible, but we still had a great time. All of the students jumped into the bog, which was like a trust building exercise, as many found themselves stuck and pulled out by their peers. It was great fun and helped us get comfortable with each other.

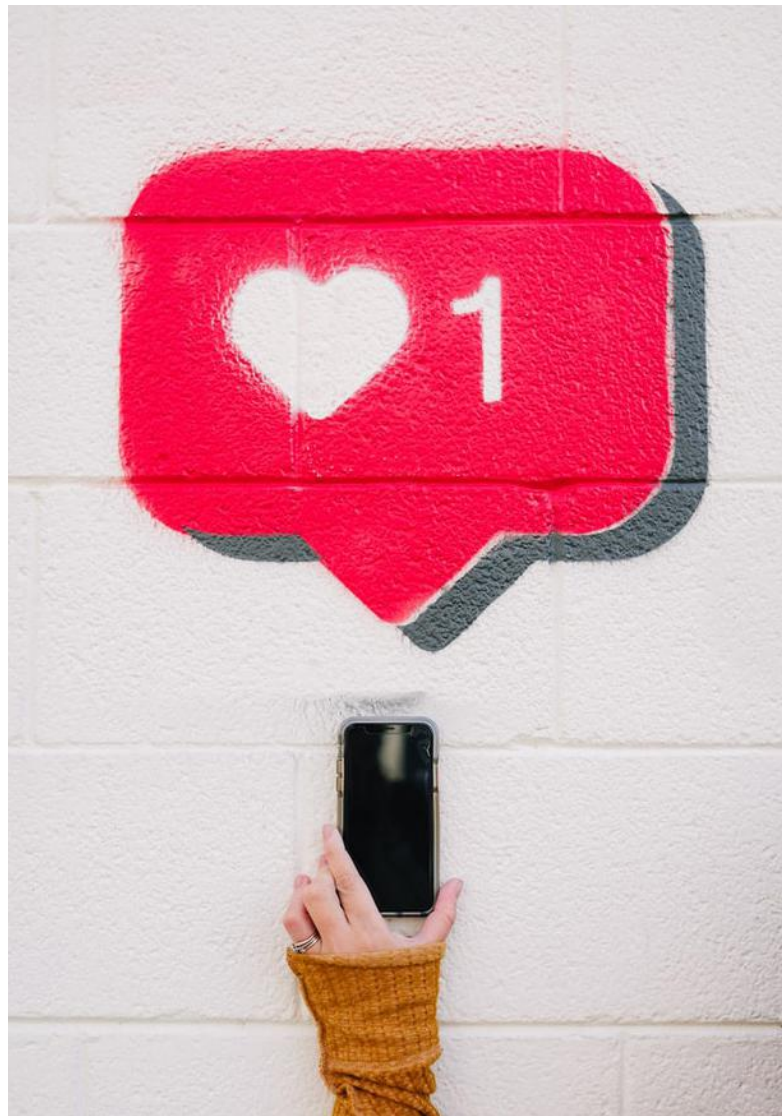
Later on in the year around Christmas time, the year group went to the Light House Cinema. From the students we spoke to the highlights of the year varied greatly, from the cinema trip to Creative Writing class and barista training to business class. However we feel that all 4th Year students who are drawn to the school, share a commonality – the desire to learn and question. It was a 4th year like no other, with circumstances shifting, in and out of lockdown, events being organized and cancelled.

We know that even though it was a challenge, we are all the better prepared for 5th Year because of it. And despite the challenges we have found it to be, a “Fantastic Fourth Year”.

SOCIAL MEDIA

HOW DOES IT IMPACT TEENAGERS?

By Jodi Flynn and Lucy Collins



Social media is a big part of most teenagers' lives today. We interviewed a group of our peers to find out whether this part of Generation Z's lives is good, bad or somewhere in between. Not surprisingly, 100% of students we interviewed told us that they use social media daily. Their average use comes in at 4.5 hours per day, ranging from 2 hours to 7 hours per day. The most used platforms are Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok and VSCO, WhatsApp and Twitter. The majority of interviewees said that they rarely post, only posting once every few months.

We feel there are many positives associated with social media, such as the ability to communicate with others quickly and easily through images, messages, voice calls and video calls. This ability was particularly useful during the lockdowns. It provided a way for people to stay in touch with friends and family who weren't part of their "bubble". Many students also mentioned the positive influence that social media had on their personal style, clothing, choices, hair, makeup, music taste etc. They found lots of things they liked through social media platforms. Through Instagram shops, TikTok "hacks" and other various suggestions, social media pushes students' style to

"48% of Generation Z say that social media makes them angry, anxious or depressed"

blossom and helps them find new ways to express themselves. The students we spoke to found that social media can be empowering. Mia Hiney says it helps her "communicate with friends and learn new things." Activism has also become a lot bigger on social media recently, which is extremely important for spreading information about major issues quickly and effectively. This information can raise awareness, empower people and even save lives.

On the other hand, there is much research that reveals that social media has its fair share of negative effects on young people. All of the students we questioned reported that they post for themselves rather than for others and that the amount of engagement they get on a post doesn't bother them in the slightest. However, there is a chance students do not know just how much social media impacts them. According to High Impact Youth Training Solutions, "teen social media statistics have revealed...most believe their social media use has either a neutral or a positive effect on them." Their research reveals something different: "Social media and mental health research has found a correlation between social media use and increased social anxiety, feelings of isolation and feelings of envy and loneliness. Some have deemed that

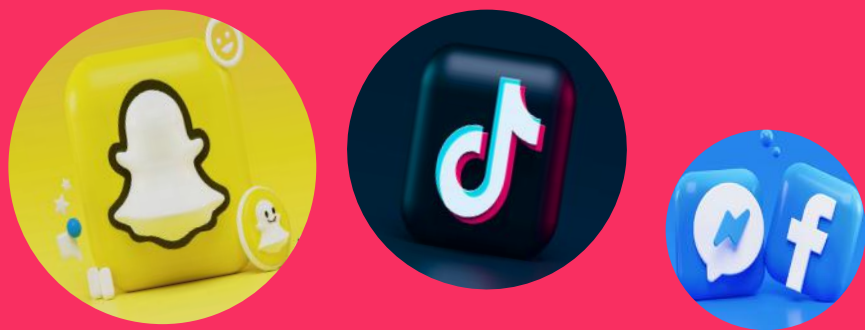
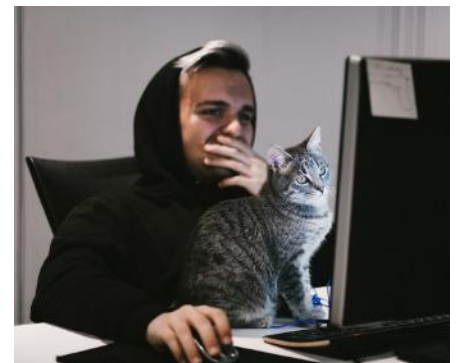
the measures of popularity created by social media such as friend counts and "likes" have contributed to a rise in depression." According to businesswire.com "48% of Generation Z say that social media makes them angry, anxious or depressed".

There were negative effects mentioned in our interviews, so students do have some awareness that social media is not always good for them. Students reported important negative issues such as lowering self-esteem and comparing one's life to public figures, Instagram influencers or even friends. This can make them feel as though they're not good enough or that they don't have enough "fun", which can negatively impact confidence and mental health. "Social media can be addictive, you can lose track of time" reports Sophia. Mia reported negatives such as it being "a waste of time, causes overthinking and can negatively alter your perception of yourself."

Another point that was mentioned from our fellow 4th years was the level of toxicity present in different communities. Though it is great that people can interact with others with similar interests, online fights and cyberbullying can result in people being unwilling to put opinions out in the open or say anything that could

result in them getting "cancelled." This can also have a hugely negative impact on mental health as it causes a lot of anxiety and worry when it comes to discussing interests or giving opinions. Research shows that young people are much harsher online than they would be in person. Social media can also spread misinformation, false news or dangerous information very quickly.

Despite the negative effects, it would seem, if young people have anything to do with it, social media is here to stay - 85% of those interviewed said that they could not, and would not, live in a world where social media was not present!



The Sounds of Lockdown

By Blathnaid Vaughan, Naoise d'Art, Mia Hiney, Keelin Collins & Tadgh Leahy

As we all know, Covid-19 took many things away from us during lockdown. From little things, like being able to go to the shops, to much bigger things, like our joy and happiness. "I feel like since lockdown the atmosphere around the world has plummeted" says Sophia, a student we interviewed.

People have found different ways of trying to cope with everything they are missing. To escape from feelings of depression and loneliness, students tried new things or turned to the simpler joys of life. We found that 4th years felt listening to music was extremely helpful in these strange times.

For some people, it was the most effective way of coping with lockdown – "it was the only thing getting me through lockdown", reported Tadgh. Music gave

the 4th year students we spoke to the motivation to exercise, do school work or to just do chores around the house. "I truly feel like music was the best thing for me, to help me get through these lockdowns" said Naoise. It seems music definitely was a way for students to access some form of happiness during these difficult times.

Over lockdown, many students' music taste changed. They reported broadening their music choices and moving away from the modern day music they had been listening to. Their listening started to stretch back in time, especially to the 80s music genre. They had the time to find a musical style that they never thought they would have liked before lockdown. Over 80% of the people we interviewed said that they started to expand their music taste in lockdown and 45% started

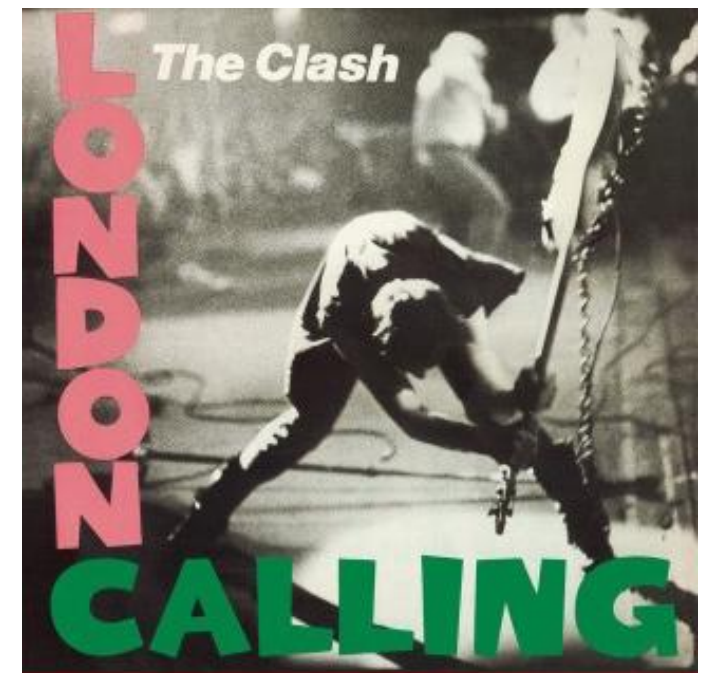
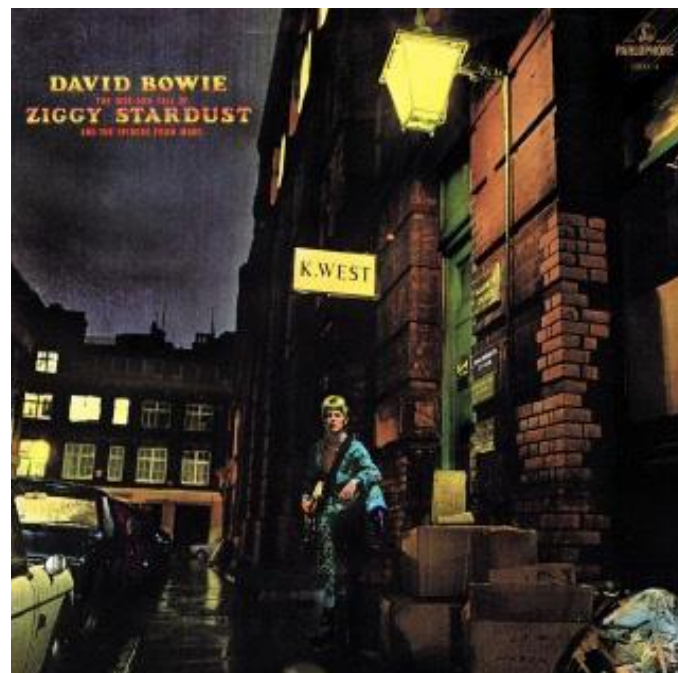
" It was the only thing getting me through lockdown "

to listen to 80s music. From artists such as The Clash, David Bowie and Spandau Ballet, there was a clear indication that lockdown led us down different musical paths and led some of us back in time. Further research backed up our findings. According to an article in vice.com titled "Pandemic Brain Changing Your Taste in Music? You're Not Alone" a poll revealed lockdown had a huge affect on people's listening habits in general. Some "listeners gravitated to loud, aggressive, and fast-paced music during the pandemic... [others] instead went to ambient, jazz, and soothing instrumental music. It's important to listen to music that matches our state of being in tempo, in rhythm, in frequency, in volume, and in lyrics," said Pouranfar. "Sometimes people who are anxious listen to intentionally calming music but it just makes them more anxious. It's because the music doesn't match where they are emotionally right now." Pouranfar said "the sweet spot is finding music that directly mirrors your mood and body and then gradually changing what you listen to in order to improve your emotional and physical state."

Whether their tastes changed or not – it was clear from our interviews that music was a big help to most 4th year students during lockdown. Many students downloaded apps during the pandemic to listen to music more effectively. They used to listen to music on the standard apps on their phones, however, since lockdown, a lot of students bought the highly popular app, Spotify. Over half the people who downloaded

Spotify had also purchased Spotify Premium. "I just found there was a wider variety of music to listen to and discover on Spotify without having to search for it online myself," says Mia Hiney. Students reported that if it wasn't for music, their style, attitude and mental health would have been worse during lockdown. "I feel like without music, lockdowns would have been more difficult", states Keelin. Overall, music helped most of the students we spoke to during lockdown and shone a light in these dark times.

We were glad to hear that students were tapping in to this simple pleasure and were somewhat aware it was benefiting them. According to a medically reviewed article on verywellmind.com, "Music can be a source of pleasure and contentment, but there are many other psychological benefits as well. Music can relax the mind, energize the body, and even help people better manage pain..... The psychological effects of music can be powerful and wide-ranging." The lists of benefits from music in this article is great news for students as listening to music not only reduces stress and depression, it can improve memory, cognitive performance, motivation, endurance and performance. With all those benefits, from something so enjoyable, it is clear our relationship with music is an important one. According to theschooloflife.com, "in our relationship to music we're seeking the right soundtrack for our lives" and all we can say is, our soundtrack to lockdown was an interesting one.



LOCKDOWN

COULD THE PROS OUTWEIGH THE CONS FOR OUR 4TH YEAR STUDENTS?

By Jack Keaney and Eoin Jones

We have spent the last few weeks researching this topic and interviewing our fellow 4th year students, to see if they felt there were any benefits to lockdown and if so, could they make up for the cons?

Lockdown is not a word we associate with anything positive. It makes most of us think of confinement, restriction, isolation, the pandemic – and before the pandemic – maybe prison!

However, from interviewing many of our peers and listening to their lockdown experience, we found that there were some benefits. The main pros, that students reported to us were:

- That they had a lot more time in general as they did not have to travel to school and could not do their normal activities.
- This extra time meant that they had more time to study.
- They also had more time to do things they wouldn't normally be doing "I learned how to cook" reported 4th year student Sofia Garavan.
- They had much more family time and in some cases have gotten closer with their families.

- Some students we spoke to reported becoming fitter and healthier during lock-down as they had more time to run and walk. Many completed the 5k challenge and cut junk food out of their diet.
- They had more free-time to relax and enjoyed having time to watch TV shows and games they might not have gotten time to watch otherwise.
- Finally some students reported that the extra time meant they read more during lockdown.
- And it wasn't just all about time – we learned to appreciate things a lot more. They reported more appreciation of the simpler things they could do and also more appreciation of what they had missed when lockdown was lifted. "I appreciate going to class and my friends more" said 4th year student, Rameen.

Our further research backed up the benefits 4th year students reported. Psychologist Amanda Gummer says "Never before, in modern history, have so many parents spent so much time in one place with their children." And "The simple pleasures in life are being rediscovered too - a family walk has become a precious time". A study on theconversation.com, of 3000 people in Scotland backed up some

of our findings "More than half the people surveyed reported: being more appreciative of things usually taken for granted (reported by 83% of participants), having more time to do enjoyable things (by 67%), spending more time in nature or outdoors (by 65%), paying more attention to personal health (by 62%), doing more physical activity (by 54%)".

“ I APPRECIATE GOING TO CLASS AND MY FRIENDS MORE ”

The main cons students reported from lockdown were:

- Getting easily distracted from their work, and not getting as much work done during the school day, as it is harder to concentrate online than when in the classroom. "I found it harder to study over lockdown because there were too many distractions"



said Isaac, another 4th year student.

- Feeling restricted - not being able to leave their 5km radius, meant they could not visit their favourite venues and places on the weekend.
- Missing their usual hobbies, and activities.
- Sports were cancelled, which is a very important part of people's life. "I miss the competition of playing sport" reported Emily
- Boredom - Students have found this quite difficult and they often felt bored, spending long hours at home not doing a whole lot!
- Students really suffered from a lack of communication with classmates and teachers. Most students missed interacting with their friends in school. Lack of connection has meant that students suffered mental health issues. Some students reported feeling a little depressed over the situation.

We were not surprised to find that there is much evidence to support the negative impact of lockdown reported by students. According to The Mental Health Foundation "the evidence on the direct impact of lockdown on mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in the UK" was that..... "Overall, studies point to increased levels of distress, worry and anxiety". A detailed study published by frontierin.org on the affects of lockdown on Italians, showed that "their psychological well-being was strongly impaired by the lockdown. The level of anxiety tripled, in relation to the pre-pandemic period, and 30% of males and 41% of females declared to have severe levels of depression."

From our research and interviews, we felt it was clear that the cons far outweigh the pros. Even though we all had more time, we struggled to use it productively. More time to

study for example – didn't always mean extra work got done as many of us found it hard to concentrate. Even though many students enjoyed the feeling of the extra time, lie-ins and not having to commute – the affect on their mental health overall, was too high a price to pay. Despite this, we could always look on the bright side, as Rameen says "Lockdown was difficult, the cons outweigh the benefits but it was a good experience to have" and it is true that we learn a lot from new experiences and challenges.



Reading: A dying pastime for teens?

By Benjamin Mc Namara Pedersen, Isaac Cui Sun, Rameen Fatima & Riain Mac Donald



Teenagers these days read less. Based on our findings, that much is clear — the question lies in what causes this? As technology progresses and experiences exponential improvement and growth, not only teenagers, but the populace as a whole finds its attention turning to more modern mediums of information and entertainment.

The non-profit Common Sense Media shows a clear decline in adolescent reading time over the years. Today nearly half of seventeen-year-olds say they read for pleasure just twice yearly — compared to reading almost daily, just forty ago. Jim Steyer, CEO and founder of Common Sense Media says: “First of all, most children now have access to e-readers, or other smart electronic devices like phones and tablets...,” he claimed

in his interview with Common Sense. “I start to see it in our 10-year-old, as well, because he is... reading [less and less], and [is] more and more attracted to some of the digital media platforms that he has access to, and that he did not have access to when he was, say, 6 or 7 years old.”

This is reflected strongly in our own interviews, which were carried out meticulously among fifteen to seventeen year olds. Sophia finds “reading hard as social media affects my attention span”. “I just have too much stuff to do,” said another student.



“Why read when I can get something else out of the way?”

Another student Lucy, lamented the lack of reading they did, saying “I feel like I should be reading more...”. Mia Hiney in 4th year reports “I enjoy it, it broadens the mind and helps me understand people better”. It seems students do want to read more, and they understand the benefits, but there is just so many other things that they have to do, that they like doing, or that they get distracted by. There is school, study, hobbies and of course all manner of social media, TV and online distractions.

One student claimed that she does try to read but “quickly loses” interest. Many students say that concentration, or lack thereof, plays a big part in the lack of enjoyment reading brings them. Social media is engineered to pull people into a cycle of endless feedback and stimulation. Young people are

more used to their environment interacting with them than actively interacting with their environment, which is something books ask of them endlessly.

While many people find this comforting and use it as a form of escapism, it is too much effort for others. The latter seems to be turning into the majority in recent years.



Schools can actually have a negative effect on how much students read in their spare time, by enforcing reading of a fixed curriculum - which can be a reason why students don't read recreationally. It can put them off reading for pleasure even, in their spare time.

When young people do not enjoy the books they have to read for school, from an early age they connect frustration and boredom with reading— reducing their incentive to read in general. Assigned reading, is a negative experience for some students and as one student commented,

“It feels like homework, and no one likes homework.”

According to The International Reading Association's adolescent literacy position statement “adolescents deserve access to a variety of reading material that they can and want to read..... choice plays a huge part in the pleasure of reading” We feel a solution to the negative impact assigned school reading can have on some students reading habits – is to offer reading options on the curriculum for students to pick

from. Students have such different tastes, books are not a one size fits all, the students we interviewed were reading such a wide variety of genres and book types from Harry Potter and Animal Farm to Michael Collins. Emily-Faye feels strongly that “Everyone is good at reading and everyone can enjoy reading – they just haven't been given the right book yet”

Although there are definitely things that can be done to encourage young people to read more, overall it seems that teenagers are reading less because they have so many newer, shinier, devices and interests to indulge in. With technology constantly evolving, one cannot help but wonder, if reading printed books will become a strange quirk in the future?

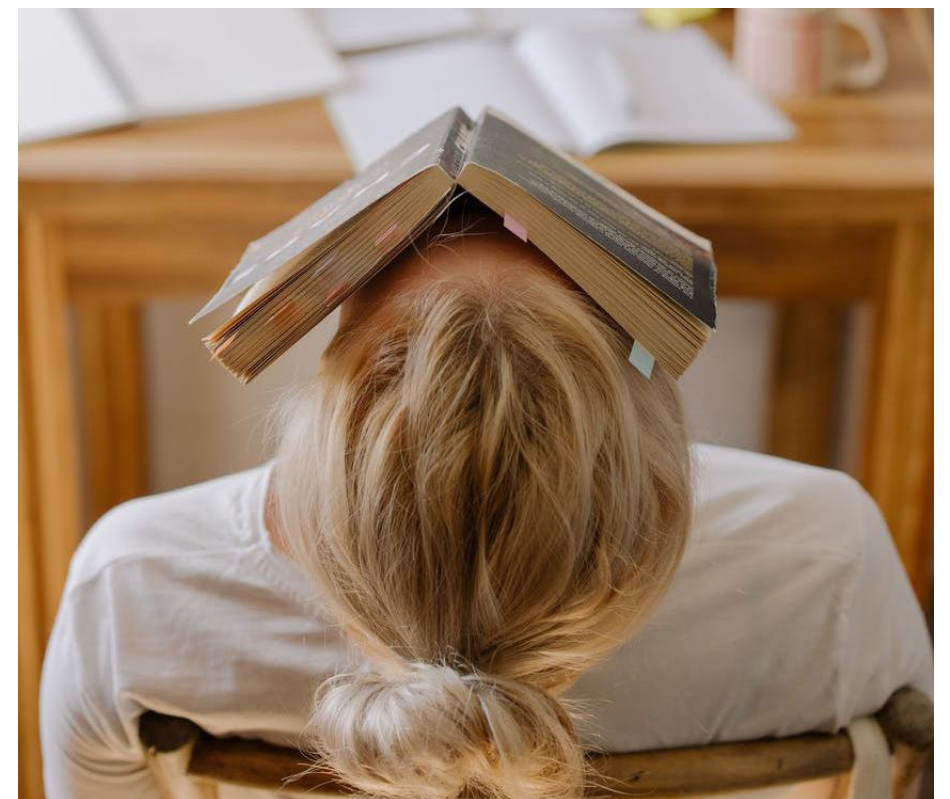


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3D EFFECT TUTORIALS

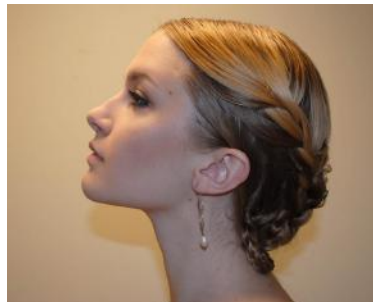
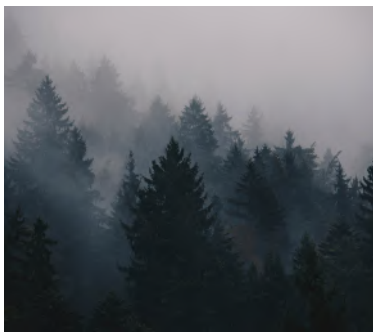
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DOUBLE EXPOSURE TUTORIALS

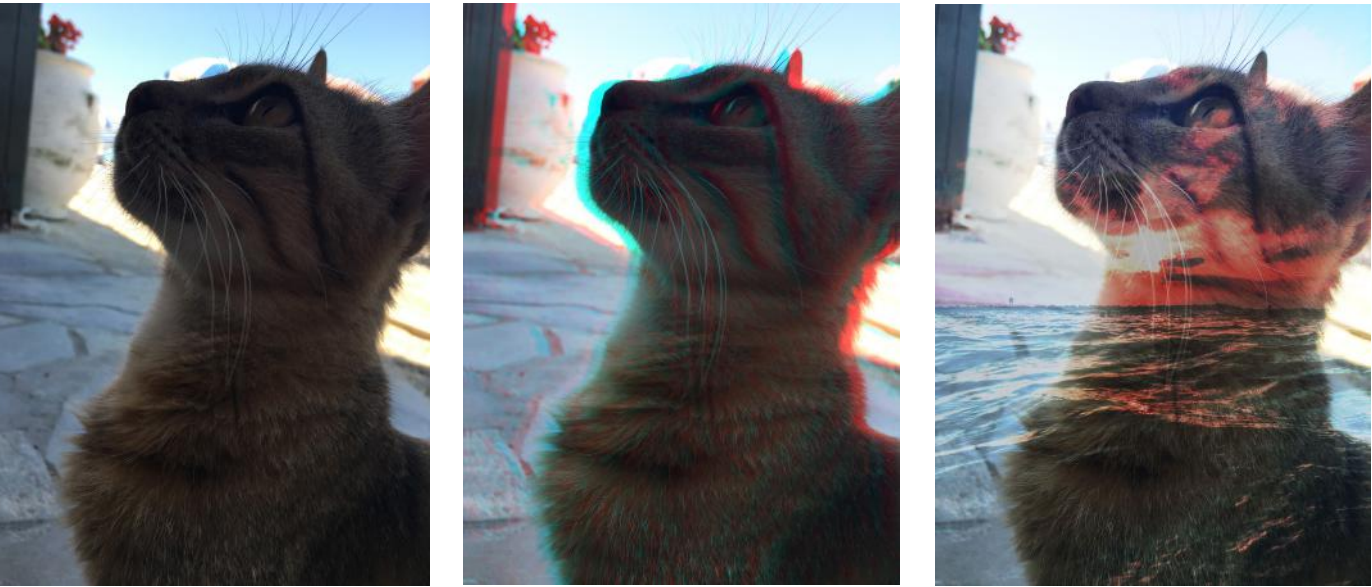


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SOME FUN WITH OUR OWN PHOTOS

Helen Hart -Original on the left, creations on the right



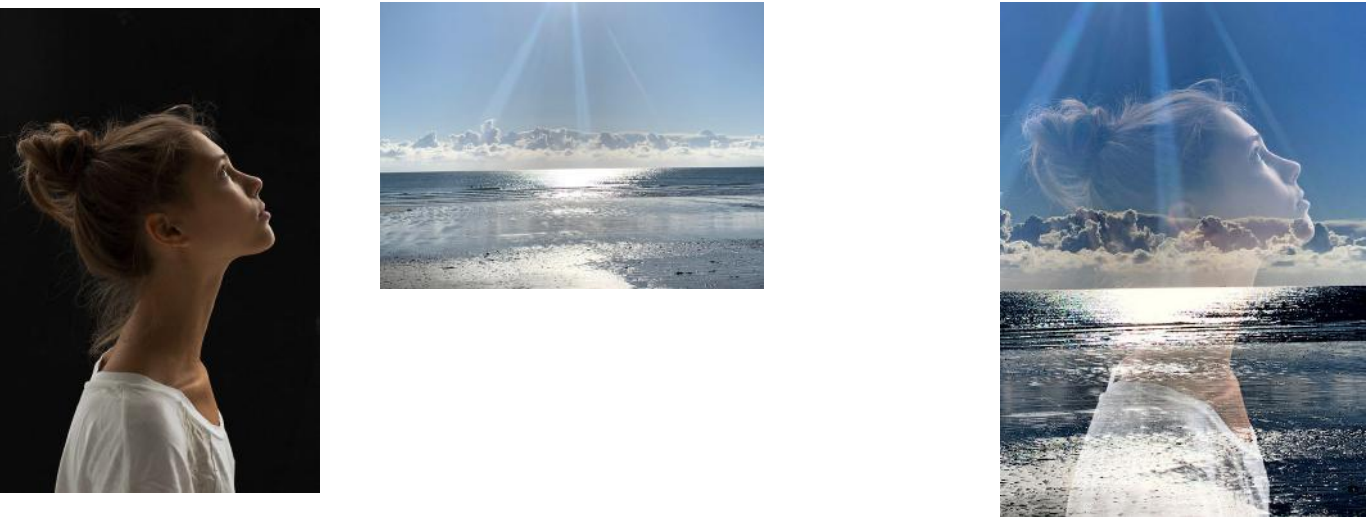
Keelin Collins, Originals on the left, creation on the right



Fionn Buckley - Originals on the left, creation on the right



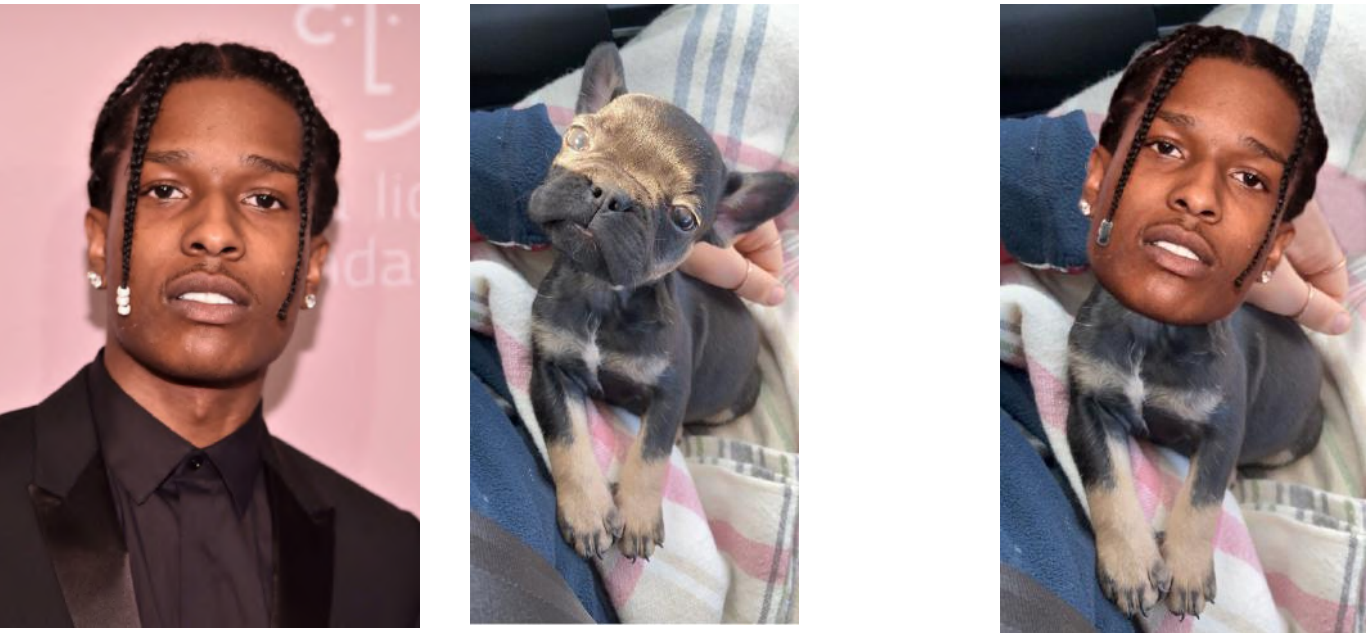
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Radu Mc Gill- Original on the left, creation on the right



Imogen O'Connor, Originals on the left, creation on the right



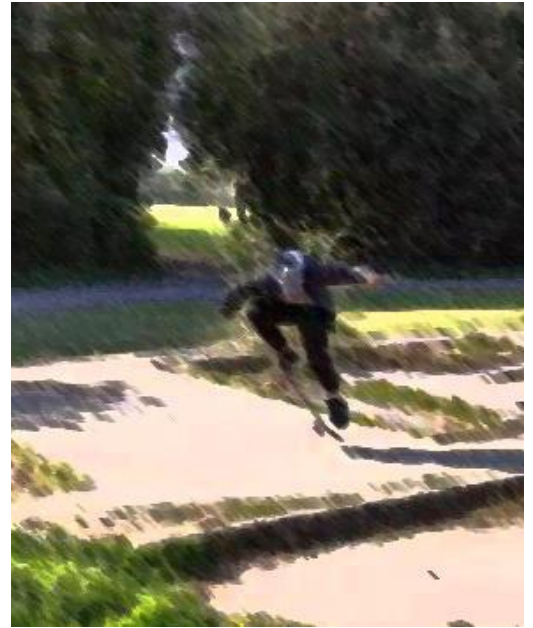
Isabella Cheng



Blathnaid Vaughan



Eoin Barker



Isabella O'Byrne - *Willow in Flight*



Sophie McCarthy - *Prince*



Holly Desmond



Sophie Elliott - *Chillin with Cillian*

