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NOW WITH
FREE
POSTER.

ANY IDEAS?

NEW ARTICLES?
THINGS YOU WANT TO SEE?
WANT TO JOIN UP?

EMAIL:

17126742@SHREWSBURY.AC.UK

- CAM

17126291@SHREWSBURY.AC.UK

- BRAD

OR

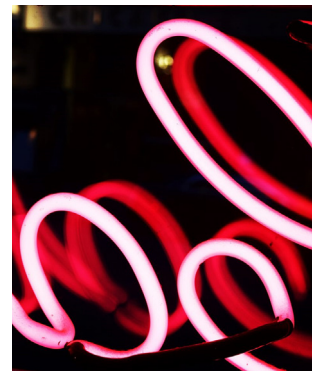
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- RONIA

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THANKS KAREN!

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HOW A FACEBOOK ADVERT CHANGED MY LIFE

BRAD JONES

No, this is not one of those ‘Dudley Mum takes secret pill to look 20 years younger. Doctors HATE her’ kind of adverts. This is an advert that got me to America for free.

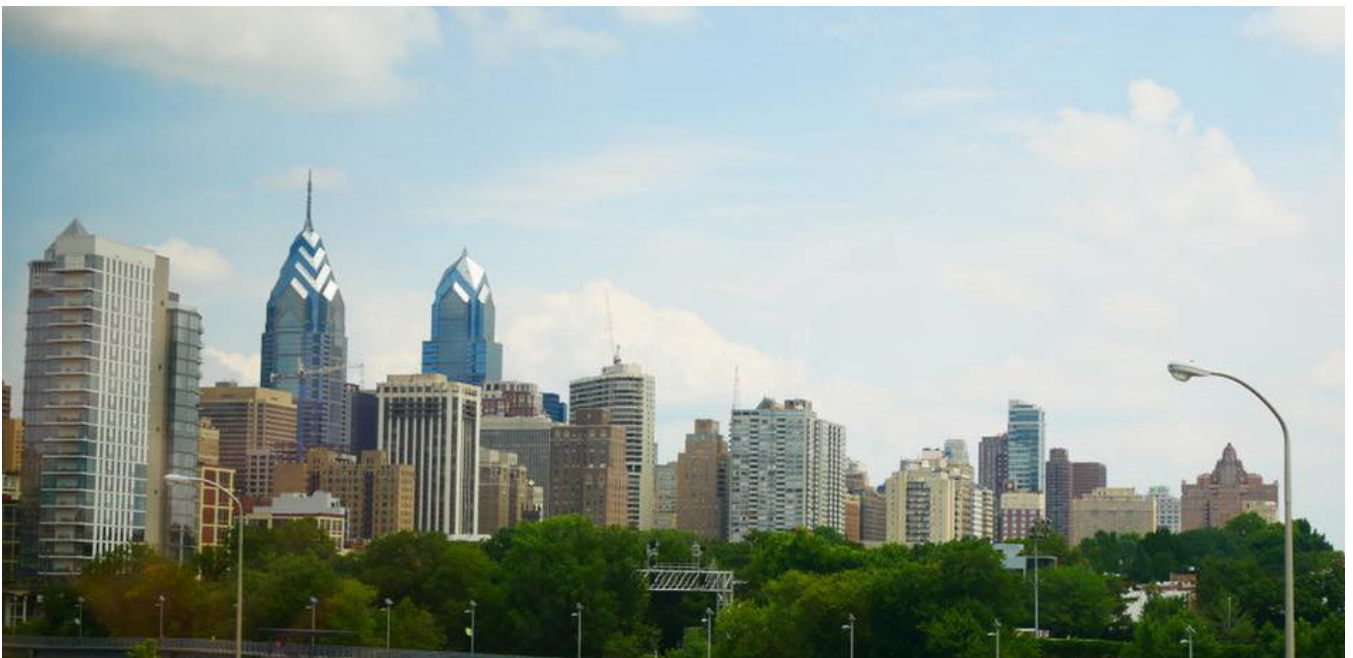
Facebook spies on us. We all know it. This is pretty terrifying, especially when the realisation dawns on you, like it did for me after Facebook suddenly started trying to sell me a holiday in Bali after it'd overheard me quizzing my friend about her trip to the island. Coincidence? I think not. You'd think I would have deleted my account and thrown my phone in the ocean after this gross invasion of my privacy, but I didn't. Like most teenagers, I need social media to function as much as I need oxygen to breathe, so Facebook wasn't going anywhere.

And I'm glad it didn't.

Thanks to Facebook's espionage, an advert promising to get me to the US for free started making a recurrent appearance on my timeline, intermingled with the various self-deprecating memes and senseless dark humour. I imagine it heard me complaining to Mum that America had better pancakes than this miserable little island, but I can't be sure. Regardless of its source, I initially dismissed the advert. I assumed there'd be a \$2000 application fee or some kind of child-sacrifice involved. Nothing in life is free – or at least that's what I thought.

One night, during a good ol' procrastination session, I decided to click on the advert just for something to do. Maybe the scam would be so funny that I'd actually LOL rather than just type it whilst emotionlessly staring at my screen. To my great surprise, it wasn't a scam at all. This was an advert for the Sutton Trust US Programme.

For those of you who don't know, the Sutton Trust is a celebrated and prestigious charity, which champions the cause of the working class and other downtrodden folk. They're especially renowned for their work in education, with their Summer Schools for underprivileged Sixth Formers being what most people know them for (keep an eye out for a college email with details on those).





The US Programme is not a Summer School. It's so much more. It's the gateway to US higher education for British state school pupils (and a free trip to the US – but more on that later). After watching videos of beaming students raving about their experience on the programme, I decided to apply. I'd only ever abstractly considered university in the US, but I thought I'd give the programme a shot.

To my complete and utter surprise, I got in – or at least I'd been selected as a finalist.

I'd completely forgotten that I'd applied. I never expected to make the finals, since only 10% even make it that far, so I'd erased all memory of the somewhat novel application process from my mind (even the someone-please-gouge-my-eyes-out-with-a-spoon-cringey video presentation I had to submit). It was thus a bitter-sweet surprise being woken up at the unholy hour of 8am by my mother with the news.

A month or so later, I found myself at the first part of the programme – the 3-day April residential, which was held at LSE in London. It was here that my journey really started. Whilst I'd researched university in the US as part of my application, the testimonials from former students and presentations from the staff leading the programme really opened my eyes to choices I never knew I had. And I was enchanted. US universities, or schools as I've now learned to say, were everything I'd been looking for. Flexibility to study what you want? Check. A strong focus on residential life and extra-curricular activities? Check. Quidditch (yes, really)? Check. I left the residential knowing that the US was for me.

Luckily, I made it past the finals and into the programme. I became a fully-fledged member of Cohort 7. I was shook. I had to sit down after reading the congratulatory email. Not only would I now benefit from the expertise, inside knowledge, contacts and guidance of the staff at the UK-US Fulbright commission (the admissions wizards who run the programme in partnership with the Sutton Trust), but I was also going to the US. For free. I couldn't believe my luck.

There was just one more hurdle to overcome before my trip of a life-time: the ACT – one of the admissions test required by some US universities. This is an essential part of the programme, which students sit in June in preparation for any potential applications in October. It's nothing like anything we do here in the UK. It's mostly multiple choice, but don't let that trick you into thinking it's easy. It's not. You have to demonstrate competence in maths, science, reading, English and writing. This is something I never could have done by myself (I'm allergic to numbers), but with the support organised by the Fulbright staff and the crutch which is the Cohort 7 group chat, I got through more than okay.

Finally, it was time. After a dash home from the family holiday in Rhodes and a quick power nap at home, I was on my way to Heathrow Airport. I'd never been to America, or even left Europe, so I was full of anticipation. Despite running on approximately 3 hours of sleep, I was absolutely buzzing.



At the airport, we were treated like VIPs. We had our own check-in desk and Virgin Atlantic even put on free ice-cream for us (to everyone else's delight but to my disgust. It was 10am. Ice-cream is not a breakfast food.) The luxury treatment continued on-board. The captain congratulated us students for our work over the loud-speaker. Yes, we were in economy, but it was Virgin economy. For anyone who's ever flown with Virgin, you know what I mean. I felt like royalty.

Admittedly, by the time that we landed at JFK, I was dead. I don't sleep well on planes, period. It was in a dazed stupor that I allowed myself to be marshalled through US customs. Even the heavily-accented, slightly threatening border guard who took my retina scan couldn't drag me out of my sleep-deprived haze.

I had never been so glad to see a bed by the time I arrived at the dorms of Benjamin Franklin College, Yale, my home for the next week. After wolfing down New Haven's 'famous' pizza, I fell straight asleep.

The next week would be the best of my life. There's simply no other way to put it. Whether I was visiting a campus or hitting the mall, the entire experience was just indescribable. It consolidated my desire to study in the US and helped me forge some of the strongest friendships I've ever had. The people I met and the stories I heard during my week in the US truly changed my life.

Coming back from the US was without a doubt the most depressing journey of my life. I didn't want to leave. I would have given anything just to see one more campus or dine at Yale for one last time.

I watched the New York skyline sink below the clouds as I said my farewell to America.

But the story doesn't end there. Going to the US is just one part of two of the US Programme. 'What's part 2?', I hear you ask. Part 2 is time to apply.

So I now find myself in the position of having applied to a university in the US, after months of hard work on the ACT and my application, with the Fulbright team at my side every step of the way.

If you're interested in joining the next cohort of the Sutton Trust US Programme, then you can find all the information at: us.suttontrust.com. Applications for current Year 12's are open now. If you have any questions about exactly what the programme entails, then please reach out to me at 17126291@shrewsbury.ac.uk - I don't bite!

A really important thing that anyone even remotely curious about studying in the US should know is that you CAN afford it. This programme is all about students from low-income backgrounds. If there's a will, there's a way.



NEW YORK CITY

TILLY PREATER AND ALEXANDER TOMPKINSON



What did we do?

On Monday, we got up early and sleepily stumbled to the Abbey Foregate at 4:30AM, possibly the hardest part of the trip. Here, we exchanged tired grunts and got on the coach to travel to Manchester Airport, where our flight departed at 10:35. After 7 hours and 15 minutes in the air, we dragged ourselves with dead legs through the crowded airport, where we took a coach through Queens to NYC. The tour guide on-board had the thickest New York accent I've ever heard - it was almost like he was speaking another language. Outside the windows, there were flocks of people interlaced on streets bordered by towering buildings, in an ensemble of fuss and bother. We definitely weren't in cosy little Shrewsbury anymore. After dropping our stuff off at the hotel, we embarked on a short sightseeing adventure where we explored the radiant Times Square with its shops, bright lights, and ubiquitous

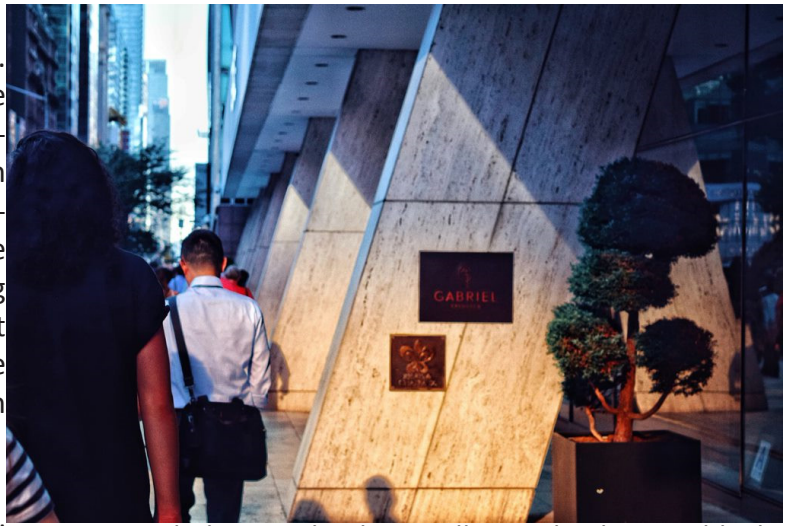
signs! We all approached the red staircase and looked in the shops while dodging the mediocre Spider Man scammers charging \$20 for a picture. We also visited the Grand Central Terminal where people were entering the colossal hall from different tunnels on all sides, everyone coming from different places and heading to different places on unique journeys. To finish the first exhausting, yet exciting, day on a relaxing note, we went to find places to eat before returning to the hotel. Kirsty was adamant that we were to have NO STREET FOOD, so my group found a burger restaurant that offered a wide range of Fanta flavours that don't exist in England, such as pineapple – and even a totally new and addictive drink called Sunkist. They charged a hefty amount for burgers, but when they arrived they were near impossible to finish, much bigger than the ones back home.

On Tuesday, after the tiring journey the day before, it was inevitable that we would have to get up early the next morning. Which we did. For the duration of our stay, every morning we went to get breakfast at a traditional American cafe where we could stuff our faces with Pancakes for an extra \$5 or stick to a bowl of fruit and toast...I think most people went with the pancakes. Our jaws dropped when we received the highly stacked, bacon infested mess and the large bottle of maple syrup sitting on our tables lured us into the American doom (which I think we were all okay with, because the pancakes were amazing).

After breakfast, our already overwhelmed selves headed down to the subway where we met some very interesting New Yorkers who decided to tell us the 'do's and don't's' of life before going to The School of Film and Acting to do a cinematography workshop. This involved trekking into the nearby park and learning to use different focus points and positions of the camera. I learnt a great deal from this, because I realised that in the makings of a movie, it's not always the actor's fault when they're onto Take 184 and still haven't got it quite right. Creating a scene with friends was a fun experience, because I saw what they're like behind a camera (not pretty).



Coney Island was our next destination. The vibrant colours, flashing lights and the sounds of screaming patrons on rollercoasters got us all in the mood. Beaming with excitement, and enthralled by the adventure ahead, we were let loose for a couple of hours to explore. But be warned, taking your shirt off for the log flume will result in you being left behind and made to ride it alone. We also had the chance to go on a photography walk whilst we were there.



Up next, the highlight of the trip for me, Ellen's Stardust Diner. The long line of impatiently buzzing faces outside its doors was an indication of how good this was going to be. Once settled in our seats, the waitresses and waiters began singing as we gormlessly ate with grinning faces. We sang along and are proud to say that SSFC started waving phone lights as the sad song was sung. The first to join us were the accountants sitting across from us, and soon after, the whole diner. This spectacularly incredible but exhausting day ended with relaxing free time in Times Square, provided we returned to the hotel by eleven.

On Wednesday we had our pancakes and were given the option to go on a photography walk or to go to a recording studio. The photography walk allowed us to explore more of bustling New York, travelling through the busy city to find Central Park. I had always imagined a simple area of green, but it had gorgeous flowers, a lake, beautiful views of the city buildings and some very interesting people! (like deceivingly friendly monks who charge \$20 for a bracelet). We then got the privilege of meeting the understudy of 'Jafar' from Aladdin who elaborated the life of 'showbiz' which sounded exciting yet unpredictable! Soon after we got involved in a stage combat workshop with the most unlikely of men. He was a very inspirational man with a tendency to make us all laugh as we learnt to attack our friends – in a painless manner.

Our day continued with a trip to The Museum of Modern Art, a place filled with beautiful work that you can't find anywhere else. We got to see the ingenious contraption which held our bags, where we entered our number and our bags would appear on a conveyor belt (which to me, was very exciting) While there, we had free time until it was time to see Aladdin, so my group decided to take advantage of this time and go shopping. Shoes were our chosen item to search for and we

ended up aimlessly travelling a shocking 30 blocks to a shop that sold DocMartins (totally worth it) but soon after arriving, we got a message from the group leader saying we had to be back earlier than originally planned...this meant only having 10 minutes to enjoy the shop's beautiful creps and speed walking/running back to the hotel, not having time to admire our new buys or try a million outfits on before leaving for the theatre. What a nightmare. Watching a Broadway musical was pretty damn cool, and what kind of show would it be if we didn't purchase the 'Aladdin' cups consisting of a yummy un-fizzy lemonade – refreshing our minds after a busy day as we relaxed and enjoyed the show.

On Thursday, we got up early and congregated in the hotel lobby at 8:15, which proved to be a struggle. We then went to The Morning Star Café and this time I tried pancakes with sausages and syrup... safe to say I'm not a fan. We returned to the hotel to pack up our stuff and the best way to describe that would be the scene from Home Alone where the family are getting ready to leave. At 10:00 we got to NBC Studios for a tour, where we got to see American talk show host Jimmy Fallon's show room for 'The Tonight Show' and learnt about its history and how it's travelled across America, along with the fact that the seats in the audience row have the same leather as Ferrari seats! We also explored the SNL set and saw all the countless cameras required to capture the skits they perform. We also visited the journalist memorial which showed a few of the many journalists who've died while reporting stories and news for NBC, through war, cults, and other tragic circumstances. One of these journalists was David Bloom, who was known for being eager to report a story and received numerous awards for his work and commitment, covered events such as 9/11, Washington sniper shootings, Hurricane Andrew, and even the Iraq War, but sadly due to his excessive time in cramped armoured

vehicles, he developed a fatal blood clot that led to his death in 2003. At the end, we got to film our own talk show, where I took on the role of Jimmy Fallon (I'm a big fan of his) as the 'host', with Connah Dixon as my 'special guest', and Meg Griffiths as the 'Narrator', introducing everyone and acknowledging people like the band etc.

After getting lost in the shopping centre and mindlessly wandering through shelves of Friends merch and expensive fragrances and perfumes like Dior, my group finally found each other and went to get pizza (where I decided to be adventurous and healthy and try a veggie wrap... BIG mistake) before returning to the hotel to board the coach, where we waited anxiously for the notorious college band Nadir to eventually show up. Thankfully, with Chris' directory help, they arrived in one piece. We got McDonald's at the airport and prepared for a sleepy overnight flight.

On Friday, we landed in Manchester 10:00AM. Some people felt well refreshed after a long 7-hour

nap on the plane, others felt dead after 7 hours of not being able to sleep. So, our group of half-awake and half-asleep students shuffled on over to the coach where we drove back to the Abbey for 1PM to be picked up and taken home.

Overall, it was an incredible, unprecedented and definitely unforgettable experience. The city truly does never sleep as even under the onyx sky at night, the city is lit with uncountable shades of glowing yellow and warm orange, from every window, car, and street light. The staff were all more than brilliant in both looking after us all and managing to cope with 40 lively teenagers, which they did along with enjoying the city themselves! It was a hugely successful trip where fortunately there were zero incidents of food poisoning from the dreaded ominous street food, and I'm sure I speak on behalf of everyone who participated on this epic adventure when I say it was thoroughly enjoyable. It's something I highly recommend it to any students thinking of taking part this year!



MY SUMMER

volunteering

RONIA STAGG

My summer began with playing video games and watching YouTube videos, which quickly became boring, so I decided to volunteer at my local charity shop - the British Heart Foundation. I was so excited because this was an opportunity for me to meet new people and have new experiences.

When I worked in the summer holidays, I served customers on the tills, rotated clothes and priced them; since the school term has started, I continue to work on Saturday mornings doing the same till work, pricing and rotating.

Working there has taught me to be open to new experiences. I'm always quite nervous to try something new, but I knew that volunteering would ease me into trying different things. I've never worked with customers before, so being on the till helps me be more confident with talking to strangers.

Getting along with the people you work can be the difference between liking a place and hating it. Luckily, we get on well together as a team and like to joke around, but we do also take our jobs seriously. We've also planned for a Christmas meal in December, which I'm excited to be a part of!

I've had so much fun working there so far and chatting with the people I work with, and I'd recommend volunteering to anyone who is thinking of doing some. It's a great way to meet new people, and it also gives you experience and a reference for when you start looking for jobs in the future. Not only that, but it also looks great on your personal statement!



HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA **IMPROVE** STUDY SKILLS?

JASMINE COCANNON

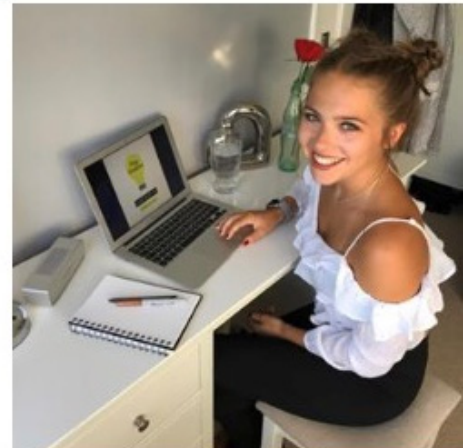
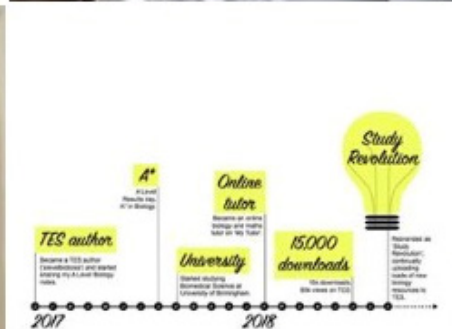
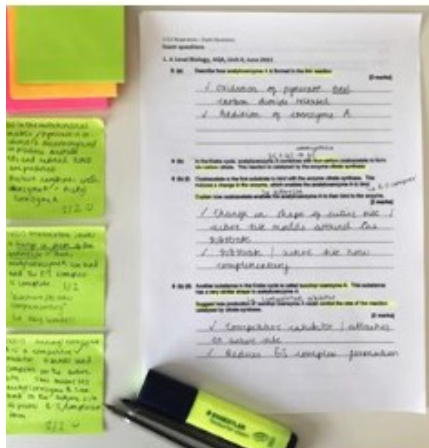
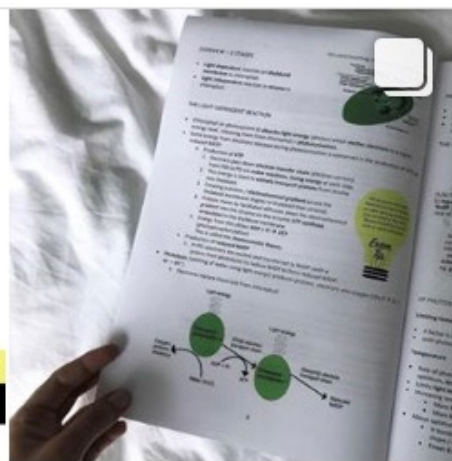
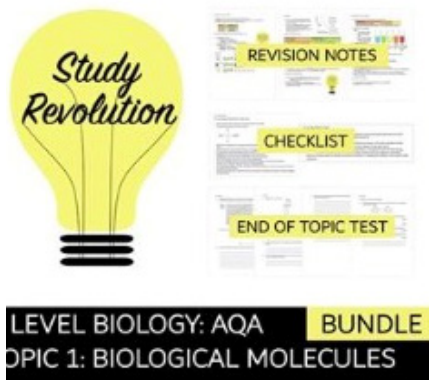
SNAPCHAT

With the latest update of snapchat you can create group chats consisting of a maximum of 16 people. This update also allows us to share and export revision notes in the form of a photo - meaning you can produce and share mind maps, generalised notes, and mini tests. This gives us the opportunity to transfer information learnt in the lesson and keep up to date with tasks. What makes snapchat different however is that it focuses on sending or '**snapping**' pictures which are only available for a certain amount of time... so once it has been viewed, it disappears, unless the receiver screenshots it. This could be effective for some quick testing on knowledge, as you could share revision notes and see how many can be remembered when you're not directly copying them. This way of revising is more interesting than conventional methods and it is an easy yet effective way help you study. Let's face it, we're all on snapchat most of the time anyway, so we might as well make the most of it.

INSTAGRAM

This particular socialmedia platform is dominated by posting pictures and categorising them using simple **#hashtags**. By uploading examples of your revision methods, you could be inspiring other people to become more motivated in their own subjects and to enhance their learning styles. Everyone is different, and students present their work in different ways. By showing off your independent revision on Instagram, you could not only be inspiring others, but also benefiting yourself. Along with this, on Instagram there is an option to enter a 'speciality' in your bio (eg. Public figure, makeup artist, sport). By frequently updating your account with pictures of your revision, you could become an ambassador for either the education sector on Instagram, or even just set a trend and become a 'public figure' due to popularity from this unique way of exporting notes!





FACEBOOK MESSENGER

This social media platform shares many similarities to Snapchat. Facebook Messenger creates an opportunity for users to be in a group chat consisting of a maximum of 150 people, this is a significantly higher capacity of people compared to Snapchat. It is also a more popular platform, which widens the chances of all classmates having access to Facebook. There is also an option to join / create a conference call so you can clarify or debate on topics face to face... well, voice to voice!

IMESSAGE

Similarly, iMessage allows iPhone users to create group chats, FaceTime individuals and call and text other users. One way in which iMessage is seen as an advantage is because of its unique "GIF's". These GIF's highlight the unlimited effects and responses to particular conversations; it shows an image / video of a funny scene - either from films, TV shows, music videos or just popular people! These typically funny images are seen from trending feeds online, this futuristic way of communicating is more interesting and creative than typical texts.

PINTEREST

By visually understanding mind maps and generalised notes, which are presented using colour coordinated notes and images to enhance the chances of remembering notes. On Pinterest you can create multiple boards which are ordered into subjects (eg. English, psychology and business). There are multiple examples of revision notes for A level standard ... these can either be physically copied and memorised or printed and placed in a visible area such as a bedroom / classroom. By repeatedly seeing these posters and copying the information it should be effective on your revision

*'What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,-
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.*

*What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds.'*

- Anthem For Doomed Youth, Wilfred Owen

WILFRED OWEN

HANNAH BEST

Wilfred Owen is a famous poet known for his many great poems that he wrote in World War One such as 'Exposure' (which some may remember from GCSE English Literature) and 'Dulce et Decorum Est'. His poems are particularly powerful because he chose to give an honest portrayal of war and life in the trenches. He rejected the gender stereotypes of the time and conveyed great humanity and emotion in his poetry, disregarding the widely held views about glory and honour that were held at home. Viewed as unpatriotic and even blasphemous by some at the time, 100 years on, his poetry is regarded as some of the greatest literature from the First World War.

HISTORY

Born in 1893 in Oswestry, Owen graduated from the Shrewsbury Technical School in 1911. He began writing poetry when he was 15 and enjoyed music. Owen spent time as a religious assistant to Reverend Herbert Wigan in Dunsden, Oxfordshire, helping to care for the poor and the sick. Ironically, his time there caused him to reject religion and the Church of England due to the way they failed

to help the less privileged. He spent two years in France teaching and tutoring. He came back to England in 1915, and in December 1916 left for France again when the war broke out.

WAR

Like every soldier, Owen had some terrible things happen to him in the war. He experienced shellshock (now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) after heavy fighting, and so was sent to the Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh to try and recover. It was here that he met Siegfried Sassoon, another war poet who had similar views to Owen – they both wanted the war to be ended. Sassoon encouraged Owen to continue with his poetry and introduced him to literary figures. Both eventually returned to the trenches. Owen was awarded the Military Cross for leading his men to safety.

Owen was killed on the 4th of November 1918. His parents received the news on the 11th of November 1918, Armistice Day.



JACK CROCKFORD

FAKE NEWS

AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM IT ONLINE

President Donald Trump is obsessed with ‘fake news’. His Twitter account has over 250 tweets mentioning it, and he frequently depicts the ‘failing New York Times’ as the ringleaders of attacks against him. **President Trump is wrong.** He tends to call ‘fake news’ against publications that simply write negative and critical articles against him. Yes, it is true that the New York Times publishes damning stories about Trump and his administration. As a liberal minded newspaper, they also likely enjoy finding incriminating information about the Trump White House, but they are not simply making these stories up as Trump suggests. Every story

they publish is fundamentally based on facts and evidence, and their record 125 Pulitzer Prize wins reflects their impressive journalistic integrity.

‘Fake news’ is still a problem though, especially online. Facebook admitted that during the US presidential election, over 3,000 Russian-funded advertisements were distributed across the platform, spreading misinformation to aid the Republican Party.

Alex Jones and his outlandish conspiracy theories were going viral, prompting Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to pull his misleading ‘InfoWars’ content.



Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump

The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!

4:48pm · 17 Feb 2017 · Twitter for Android

CHECK PRIMARY SOURCES

No matter how reliable you think the news site you are reading from is, look at the primary sources. Find a text document of the report that was supposedly leaked. Find the video of the person speaking with context. If you can't find any primary sources, doubt the story.

DIVERSIFY YOUR NEWS OUTLETS

Even if you have favourites, try not to rely on one news source. Every news source has biases and conflicts of interest. News owned by mega-corporations are going to have a common bias that small, independent news organisations won't have. Conservative media will have a different bias to liberal media, who will have a different bias to think tanks who are advocating toward both parties to adopt certain policies. Going to different sites is good as you get to hear different interpretations on the same topic and you are able to make up your own mind.

TRY TO AVOID NEWS OUTLETS THAT INCENTIVIZE SENSATIONALISM

News outlets often rely on advertising which pays more when their websites get more clicks and shares. This means some sites (I'm looking at you BuzzFeed) go out of their way to write their headlines and articles in such a way that makes the stories seem far more important, dangerous or sensational than they actually are. By prioritising loaded language over accuracy in their headlines, they prevent your ability to process intellectually.

USE FACT CHECK SITES

Websites such as Snopes and Full Fact are great websites that allow you to fact check the validity of stories trending in the news. They are all independent and non-party affiliated. Politifact is my personal favourite.

REMEMBER BETTERIDGE'S LAW OF HEADLINES

Betteridge's law of headlines states: 'Any headline that ends in a question mark can be answered by the word no'. Although not always literally correct, it is a useful rule to follow when consuming news. For example, see this National Geographic cover.

THE FUTURE OF OUR NHS

HANNAH BEST



Understaffed, underfunded and about to crack, the National Health Service is the jewel in Britain's crown. In dire need of reform, the NHS struggles more and more every year, a victim of its own success. Only recently, the Accident and Emergency Department in the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford had to close overnight. It's clear that something has to change- but what are the problems and how can we solve them?

The most obvious problem is funding; like everywhere else, the NHS is in desperate need of more money. If we continue the way we currently are, the NHS will have a £30 billion funding gap by 2020, clearly indicating that some sort of reform is needed. Lack of beds, lack of staff, lack of equipment- the majority of issues facing the NHS are due to underfunding. The problem is, NHS spending in the long term has risen, but the growth of the rise has slowed in recent years. This, paired with the ageing population and the increasing standards that are expected, means that there are not enough resources to continue a sustainable, much needed service. If we want our NHS to stay, the funding needs to change- but finding the money to put into

it is another problem.

The NHS is also chronically understaffed, although it's not hard to see why. 12-hour shifts caring for the lives of others is a big responsibility. Dealing with distressed relatives is an everyday occurrence, and the pressure from above to care for patients without the capacity to do so is frustrating. The pay is a big issue- many choose to work for agencies instead as they provide a higher salary. Agencies are independent from the NHS and provide staff at short notice to fill gaps. This means staff can be placed anywhere, losing the specific knowledge that comes from working in a consistent environment. Whilst agency staff are just as good as NHS staff, it creates difficulties as staff won't always be familiar with the wards they are working on. In addition to this, spending on agency staff costs the NHS about £3 billion yearly, causing caps on agency staff levels to be implemented in 2016, which can only be broken where there is risk to patients' safety. 99% of trusts breached the cap- another example of the unsustainability of our current system.

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

We could follow America and privatise- a great business opportunity as healthcare is always needed, and an easy way to solve the funding problems. A privatised business would probably find it easier to attract more staff with a nice fat pay-packet. The main problem with privatisation is that it is essentially penalising those that are old or sick (or both). Even with safety nets put in place, it can be difficult for those who don't quite meet the requirements for government financial support. If you don't have health insurance you will still get treated in an emergency, but will then have to cover the whole cost of the bill yourself- not something people want to be worrying about while trying to recover.

One country that seems to have hit the nail on the head in terms of healthcare is Australia. Medicare was established in 1984 and combines state and privatised care for universal medical cover. Most of the funding comes from central government, with taxpayers contributing 1.5% of their income to Medicare (2.5% for higher earners). Individuals pay a certain amount for prescriptions; if the price goes above this amount, the state pays the rest. Most people are covered for 100% of in-patient care and about 75% of GP charges. Those with lower incomes or welfare benefits pay only 1/6th of the fee. To make up the shortfall, most people

have insurance. However, for people aged 65-69, the government reimburses 35% of these charges, and 40% for the over 70s. These refunds are popular because age is the only consideration- wealth and income aren't taken into account. On top of this, if citizens go to private hospital, Medicare repays what the treatment would have cost in a state hospital. Why does it work? Essentially, the young and healthy make up the cost for the old and sick. It doesn't struggle with the delays our NHS is so overwhelmed with but doesn't target those more in

need of healthcare like a private system does. Australia is 1/3 lower on potentially preventable deaths than the UK- if that isn't an incentive for reform, nothing is.

There are so many problems with the NHS that this article hasn't even scratched the surface. Yet, for all of its flaws, the NHS should not be undervalued. Everyone at some point in their lives will need it and many have been grateful for it, but if we want to keep it, we need to change it. Plenty of reform options are available- but continuing to pretend everything will be solved with a bit more money is not the right answer.



MERITOCRACY YAY OR NAY?

NIA WILLIAMS

A meritocracy is a system that rewards excellence, allowing people who possess favoured qualities to gain the highest places in society. British sociologist Michael Young originally coined the term in 1958, having used it in his satirical dystopian novel, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*. In a speech in 2016, Prime Minister Theresa May described her vision to create a ‘truly meritocratic Britain’ through education. Meritocracy seems to be a core value of most Western democracies, including Britain’s, since it is viewed as a means towards greater equality. However, there is frequent debate over whether the UK is actually meritocratic, and whether it is something to be aspired towards or avoided completely.

Meritocracy is a seemingly attractive idea, which places value on a person’s innate abilities as opposed to societal advantages such as wealth. In theory, a true meritocracy would allow anybody to aspire to and achieve the best jobs and positions in society, ultimately dismantling the current system of discrimination in terms of opportunity and education. This is probably the most influential reason for politicians to advocate for a meritocratic society. In order to satisfy the needs of the people, it is pertinent for the government to create policies that they feel will reduce the equality gap in Britain; in Theresa May’s case, that means lifting the ban on the opening of new grammar schools, for example. A meritocracy appeals to politicians in the way that it seems to be the most obvious way of establishing a better society.

Meritocracies are not only present in politics; they are also used in business organisations. In this case, a meritocracy is the most effective and efficient way of managing employees - by rewarding hard work and talent (both of which being beneficial for a company’s success), the employer can align the organisation’s goals with those of the workers, who will subsequently want to achieve better results. This is an example of a form of meritocracy which is efficient and productive for everyone involved.

It could be said that the UK is already meritocratic; this is most evident in schools, where students are

told to work hard for the best grades, so that they can go to the best universities and get the best jobs and so on. The government has and continues to push social mobility as an ideal aspiration- encouraging people to move up the class system. It is also a popular view that those in the top positions deserve to be there, that respectable and virtuous qualities have allowed those few to rise. It is certainly a belief that provides a lot of comfort to some.

However, this theory can be disputed basic on the simple fact that a true meritocracy requires an equal playing field for people living in it, and the UK does not have this. It is a fact that class, race, gender, and even your accent and name can affect the opportunities you receive in life, among other factors. Reni Eddo-Lodge, journalist and author of *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People about Race*, explains in this following excerpt from her book how white privilege is automatically a boost in life: **“The insistence is on merit, insinuating that any current majority white leadership in any industry has got there through hard work and no outside help, as if whiteness isn’t its own leg-up, as if it doesn’t imply a familiarity that warms an interviewer to a candidate. When each of the sectors I mentioned earlier have such dire racial representation, you’d have to be fooling yourself if you really think that the homogeneous glut of middle-aged white men currently clogging the upper echelons of most professions got there**

purely through talent alone. We don't live in a meritocracy, and to pretend that simple hard work will elevate all to success is an exercise in wilful ignorance."

In addition to this, Owen Jones explains in his book, *Chavs: the demonization of the working class*, how a person's class can have a similar impact: "Being born into a prosperous middle-class family typically endows you with a safety net for life. If you are not naturally very bright, you are still likely to go far and, at the very least, will never experience poverty as an adult. A good education compounded by your parents' 'cultural capital', financial support and networks will always see you through. If you are a bright child born into a working-class family, you do not have any of these things. The odds are that you will not be better off than your parents."

Other examples include the ominous glass ceiling for women, and general prejudice against disabled people, members of the LGBT+ community, and people with mental health issues.

It would therefore be delusional to say that everyone in the UK has a fair and equal chance in life. Consequently, it is impossible for a meritocracy to be present in the UK, as privilege plays such a large and influential role in giving 'leg-ups' to

those who bear it. But at the same time, despite the noble intentions of meritocracy, it may not even necessarily be a step towards true equality.

Creating a world in which merit allows any person to succeed sounds almost utopian, until it's turned on its head. On the opposite side of the spectrum, those people with less valued traits will ultimately be left behind. The most intelligent and skilled will rise, but people who can't perform at the same level as them, or the people who display aptitudes in other fields that aren't viewed upon with the same prestige, could end up living in poverty and squalor – a prospect which is far from utopian. A meritocracy does not address the issue that those living at the bottom will not be able to exist anywhere near as comfortably as those at the top. The meritocracy does not solve the hierarchy; it only gives it another meaning. While a meritocracy can be alluring on the outside, it has the same potentiality as communism to be exploited and corrupted, with disastrous effects.

A synonym for meritocracy is 'axiocracy', meaning 'rule of the worthy'. The problem with 'worthy' is that the definition of what is or isn't 'worthy' is different for each person, and the prospect of a society based on what one person or a specific group of people believe makes someone 'worthy' is a truly sinister one.

And so it is possible to appreciate that, to some extent, the core ideas behind a meritocracy are desirable, but the solution to inequality in the UK is far more complex than anything a single political doctrine can come up with. It's imperative to destroy systematic discrimination, while at the same time enabling anyone, at any level of society, to have a good quality of life. This can't be achieved completely with a few policy changes and quotas, but it does help. And if this society is serious about forming true equality (which it should be), a good way to start might be to throw 'meritocracy' out the window altogether.



SARAH SNIDALL HOLMES

I just want to tell you a story

**I was paying for me
lunch the other week**

And there was two tills or..

CASH REGISTERS.

next to each other and

They had Halloween cookies for sale at this particular place

Yeah like pumpkins and zombies

and there was a

one that looked particularly tasty.

So I said can I have one of those ghost cookies as well?

And just as I said it the lady next to me at the adjacent cash register also said

Oh, can I just. Can I have have a ghost cookie as well please?

And I said to this lady serving me

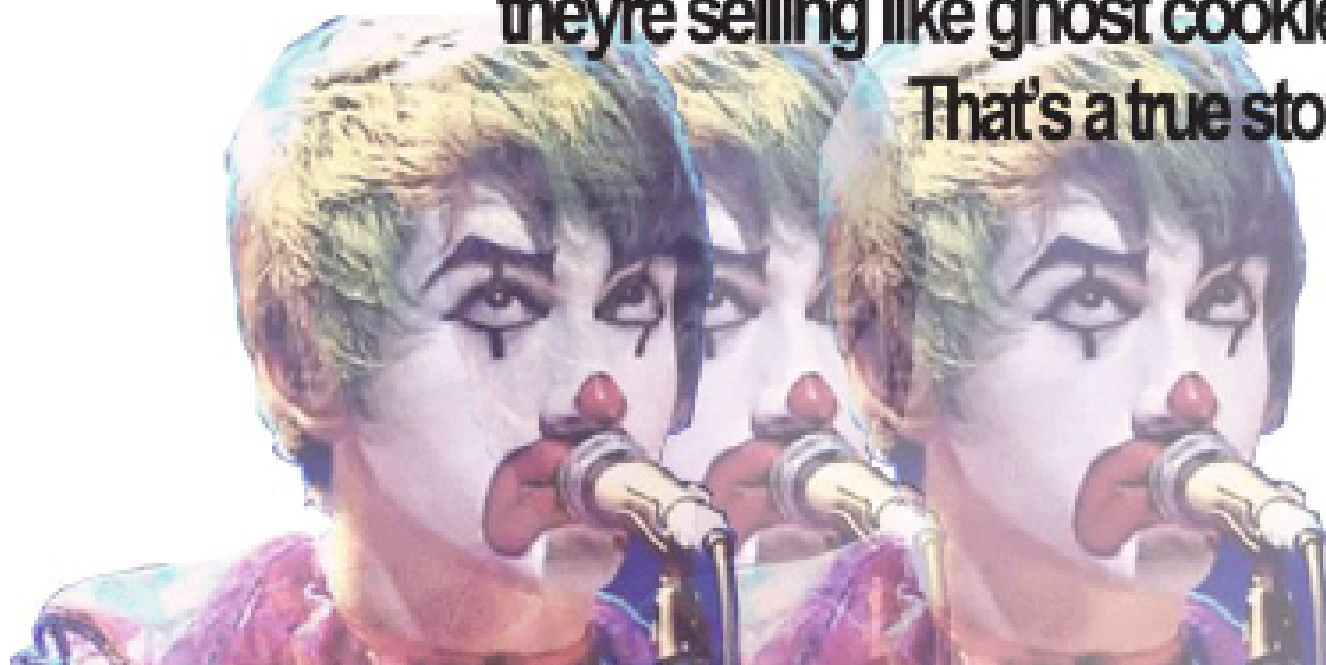
Wow you could say they're selling like ghost cookies

And she said what?

And I said you could say

they're selling like ghost cookies

That's a true story



WOMEN IN STEM

ALLISON BIRCH

STEM is a term used to group together Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Over the last four years, there has been a lot of progress in the number of women entering STEM fields in the UK. This increase may have been a result of the changing of attitudes towards women in STEM in recent years, yet the UK is still far behind the top five countries for women in science. These are Thailand, Armenia, Tunisia, Azerbaijan and Trinidad and Tobago. In all these countries, researchers are at least 50% female.

COMPARED TO 2014, IN THE UK THERE ARE NOW

- * **104,000 more women working in STEM**
- * **47,000 more women working as ICT professionals**
- * **12,000 more women working as professional engineers**
- * **6,000 more women working as science and engineering technicians**
- * **15,000 more women working as STEM managers**

Is this a reflection of more girls being encouraged into STEM fields? To try to find an answer to this, I asked several of my female peers. Many of them were studying more than one STEM A Level and concluded that while there is still a huge discrepancy between the number of boys and girls in their groups, none of them were the only girl in the class.

Some of my peers feel they may have to work harder at times to prove themselves, and this is something I found very relatable. However, all my female peers agreed that they felt listened to and were given the same respect as the boys in their classes. Many found they were criticised for their choices more outside the classroom. People have asked why I would put myself through studying Physics, and some of my peers were asked if they think they will be able to cope doing multiple STEM subjects, yet few boys faced these questions.

I have had the opportunity to meet women who want to go into STEM careers. These women are motivated, have an obvious passion for the STEM

A Levels they have chosen, and are clearly determined to succeed in those plans despite the competitive nature of these male dominated fields.

Personally, having a career related to STEM has never been a dream of mine, but I have always had a definite idea of what I would like to do. I want to study English at university and the last six weeks have helped me decide what I need to do next in order to succeed with my goals. They have also enabled me to develop new skills and meet incredible people.

I started the year taking four A Levels and I didn't expect to love all four. I had to make one of the hardest decisions I have ever made; dropping Physics to focus on my other three A Levels because the other choices are more relevant to my future. I now know exactly where I want to be this time in two years and I think doing the first part of Physics A Level has helped me see this. There was a lot of work right from the start with Physics, but I think it was worth it and I'm so glad I kept all four A Levels initially.

Women in STEM fields are innovators, and hopefully, with more female students studying STEM subjects past GCSE level, the UK will one day have equality in its STEM occupations. I think it is important to encourage women into STEM fields because everyone should have the chance to succeed in STEM.



MENTAL HEALTH

and

WELL BEING

IZZY CLARKE

Throughout life, we are taught to look after ourselves, to eat, wash and to care for the physical necessities. Often, we are not taught about looking after our wellbeing or our state of mind. The pressures of life, college, socializing and working can seem overwhelming, and it's easy to start to feel lost.

Self-care and self-compassion are cornerstones in learning to improve your overall health. When I say 'self-care' I don't mean *Lush* bath bombs and doing a face mask every other day, I mean allowing yourself to come to terms with the idea that you're not a terrible person and you do deserve to treat yourself. By practicing certain steps and developing new habits, you'll be able to change your mindset and focus on healing the relationship you have with yourself. Loving yourself and having a good relationship with yourself does not mean you are a self-centered and self-involved person. In contrast, it deepens our ability to care for others. Pointing compassion inwards towards ourselves increases our empathy for other people.

MORNING

One of the best ways to improve our wellbeing and mental health is to have a regular morning routine. It doesn't matter what the routine is, it's just important we have one. Studies show that we are our most productive in the morning, so ideally, we should aim to do most challenging tasks in the in this time. To start the day off, wake up early, but at a comfortable time. I'm not suggesting you wake up at 5 a.m. but waking up before 9 o'clock is thought to improve our diet, mental capacity, and overall mood. Waking up naturally can also help improve our mental state. Many of us fuel ourselves with caffeine and sugar throughout the day, which make us think we're not tired when in fact, the stress of everyday life has left us exhausted. When we let the natural rhythm of our bodies wake us up, we feel alert because we are ready to stop sleeping. When an alarm forces us to wake up, we feel groggy, as we may have interrupted a deep stage of sleep. Maybe don't try this on a weekday to start with, as your body will let you sleep until its fully rested and you may have to be somewhere on time.

As soon as you wake up, it's ideal to stretch. Morning stretching is important for your body to help

kick-start your energy levels and to help circulation. Morning stretching can provide you with the best start to the day, as it increases flexibility in muscles and joints. Not sure what you're supposed to do? There are plenty of online videos for morning yoga and stretches, but again I suggest you listen to your body and stretch out what feels tight and uncomfortable.

It's also a good idea to open your curtains and windows. Over the night, our rooms become stuffy. Doing both these things will allow for you to

SELF CARE FOR YOURSELF INCLUDES:

REGULAR PRACTICES OF SLEEP, BATHS,
AND EXERCISE
EATING A BALANCED DIET
MAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF
KNOWING YOUR BODY



feel more awake. If you find yourself wanting to crawl back into bed as soon as you've gotten up, make your bed. You're less likely to get back into it. Finally, I suggest reminding yourself of all tasks and jobs you need to do in the morning. Break down each task into smaller steps so time isn't wasted in the morning. Don't dedicate 15 minutes deciding if you want to wear a shirt or a t-shirt, think about it while you do something else, like brushing your teeth. Then, a sense of accomplishment is felt and this further fuels feelings of self-love. All this may seem quite intimidating, but all you need to remember is routine. Stick to it, and you'll notice your mindset change.

Time and time again we're told that 'breakfast is the most important meal of the day' or to 'eat like a king in the morning' and well, they're not wrong! In the morning, it's important to eat enough food so that you won't feel hungry and fatigued by noon. A healthy breakfast includes fiber, protein and healthy fat that gives you energy and makes you feel full. In contrast, an unhealthy breakfast can make you feel sluggish, which can then make you feel down for the rest of the day.

AFTERNOON

In the afternoon, it's time to take a moment for yourself. You've probably been up since 7 a.m. and by now your brain is beginning to get tired and you're losing lack of concentration. Around 3 p.m. it's a good idea to refuel your body with a snack. I like to take a good twenty minutes out of my afternoon to listen to some music and go outside. This can help center your mind as well as helping

with depression and anxiety. Most suffering from these illnesses spend a lot of time indoors. Going outside, although it may seem daunting, can lower stress levels and blood pressure. It may be a good idea to practice some therapeutic breathing exercises during this time, like the '7-11' calming exercise. Breathe in for 7, and then out for 11.

EVENING

The evening is where we need to be at our most peaceful. I like to do all work before I go home, so then I can switch off and focus on myself. Personally, I change out of my clothes and into something different, as well as changing my hairstyle and taking off any make up. This helps me leave the stress of the day behind. Like said before, routine is one of the most important things to remember when thinking about our wellbeing, especially when we're feeling low. Having a shower, even if you don't need one or feel like it, can really help sooth your mind. In the same way that a consistent morning routine is extremely important, an evening routine is too. It doesn't matter what it is, just make one and stick to it. For example, I eat before 8 p.m. every night. I then have time to myself for an hour before having a shower. I then do a skin care routine and head to bed. Although I don't sleep straight away, I'm resting my body and mind in a minimalist environment. I recommend reading a book in this time, as that is not too strenuous on the mind.

EXERCISE

The word 'exercise' makes some of us automatically complain. I hate sports. I also don't like generic forms of exercise. Personally, I don't want to go to spin class and I don't want to go for a morning jog. However, I realize the importance of regular exercise so I decided to go to a yoga class, and found that I really enjoy it. It's important to find something we enjoy doing, rather than forcing ourselves to do the work. On days when you aren't feeling your best, you're unlikely to go to the gym if it's what you dread most in life. You'll know if you hate what you're doing if you're having to justify your choices to yourself and others, as well as making excuses and procrastinating to avoid going to whatever class it is you had booked. Exercise has been proven to relieve stress, improve memory, help us sleep better, and boost our overall mood. You also don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap the benefits. Research indicates that modest amounts of exercise can make a difference.

If you can't think of anything you'd like to do, pick one from this list!

YOGA
CYCLING
CANOEING
HIKING
STAND UP PADDLE
BOARDING
DANCE
PILATES
MARTIAL ARTS
WALKING

in, there are loads of independent work-shops available. If you're too shy to phone up or suffer from social anxiety, you can find videos online showing you how to do these sports and exercises correctly. To add to this, it doesn't matter when you do your exercise. Many people believe that the morning is best, but in fact, your body adjusts to the times you prefer. If the thought of an unnecessary early morning does not appeal to you, try evening or night classes!

I'm sure for some of you reading this that the information given might mean a whole lifestyle change, and that could be unsettling. You can't expect yourself to automatically adapt to these changes,

so start small.

It is necessary to remember that you are important and caring for yourself mentally affects you dramatically. As exams and deadlines come closer, it's easier to fall into an unhealthy routine. By keeping up with some of the pointers in this article, you're

bound to improve your general and mental health.

YOU COULD TRY:

RE-ARRANGING YOUR
ROOM
CLEANING
PRODUCTIVE LITTLE
TASKS
CHANGING IN DIET
GET TO KNOW YOUR-
SELF TREAT YOURSELF
CONNECT WITH OLD
FRIENDS
MAKE NEW FRIENDS
GO OUTSIDE



HOTLINES

COURTESY OF IZZY CLARKE

Beam - Feeling the pressure to look a certain way?
If you are worried about your mental health, drop into Beam.

Open Mondays 1:30-6pm at Hollinswood Neighbourhood Centre, 7 Downemead, Hollinswood, Telford TF3 2EW

Thursdays 1-6pm at Palmers Coffee Shop, Belmont Church Claremont St, Shrewsbury, SY1 1QG
Or email AskBeam@childrenssociety.org.uk

Samaritans – Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to listen to anything upsetting, including intrusive thoughts and difficult thoughts of suicide and self-harm.

British Tel: 116 123

Welsh Language Line: 0300 123 3011

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Childline – Open 24 hours a day
Tel: 0800 1111

Website: <https://childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline/>

SANeline – offers emotional support and information from 6pm-11pm, 365 days a year.
Tel: 0300 304 7000

CALM – Specifically aimed at men suffering from distressing thoughts and feelings.

They're open from 5pm-Midnight, 365 days a year.

Tel: 0800 58 58 58

There is also a webchat service available if you feel uncomfortable talking on the phone

Switchboard, the LGTB+ helpline. - Available from 10am-11pm, 365 days a year.

All phone operators identify as LGBT+

Tel: 0300 330 0630

C.A.L.L. - If you live in Wales, you can contact the Community Advice and Listening Line for a confidential listening and support service.

Tel: 0800 123 737

Kooth – Free, safe anonymous online support for young people.

Monday-Friday 12-10pm; Saturday-Sunday 6pm-10pm

Website – <https://kooth.com/>



