

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION

ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



"The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone," 1872, by Thomas Moran. Oil on canvas; 83.8 inches by 104.8 inches. Smithsonian American Art Museum Lent by the Department of the Interior Museum.

ART EXPLORATION

Wild Majesty

Thomas Moran's paintings influenced Congress to declare Yellowstone our nation's first national park in 1872

ANDREA NUTT FALCE

There's a land of fire. It's a place of cutting rock, boiling mud, sulfuric stench, and otherworldly beauty. You may know it as part of America's backyard. This astonishing location is called Yellowstone National Park.

This year, Yellowstone is celebrating its 150th anniversary as the first national park in the United States. And while it's one of the most popular parks in the world, it remains a place of wild majesty. After the park was covered in deep snow for most of the year, this summer's tourist season was nearly thwarted by massive flooding that took down

trees, washed out bridges, and crumbled roads.

After an efficient rebuild, the park is up and running again in most areas. Due to the upheaval and uncertainty, however, many people canceled their travel plans to Yellowstone. The smaller crowd of visitors actually makes this a fantastic time to see a place like no other on earth.

The Whispered Rumors That Began It All

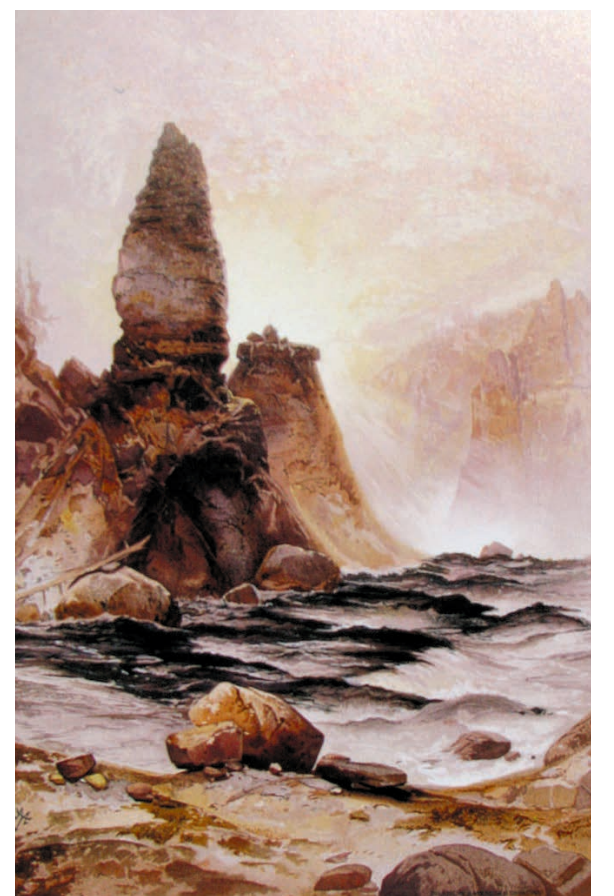
Yellowstone is as enthralling today as it was historically. In the early years of our budding nation, strange tales came back from grizzly trappers and Native American

traders about a steaming, roiling land.

A few years after parting from the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1806, mountain man John Colter came upon a region of fumaroles and hot springs not too far from what later became the national park. The implausible tales he told left such an impression that there's now a part of Wyoming known as Colter's Hell.

Though there was interest in further exploration of this truly wild part of the West, some described the effort as so difficult that it was akin to suicide.

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"Tower at Tower Falls, Yellowstone," 1872, by Thomas Moran. Watercolor and gouache over graphite on blue paper; 14.25 inches by 10.36 inches. Florian Carr Fund. National Gallery of Art.

DAN SIMONSEN/SHUTTERSTOCK



TOPGUN FOUNDER:

How the Elite Fighter Pilot School Got Started

Dan Pedersen and eight other young pilots had to rewrite the rules of aerial combat in 60 days and on a shoestring budget during the Vietnam War



COURTESY OF PALM SPRINGS AIR MUSEUM

► "We rewrote tactical aviation worldwide; it still is the standard," said Dan Pedersen, founder of the TOPGUN program.

MICHAEL WING

There's no doubt that fans of "Top Gun" were thrilled with Maverick's silver screen comeback. But beyond the exciting action of the film lies the very real and equally-impressive story of the school's founding and its original pilots.

The Navy's Advanced Fighter Weapons School (nicknamed TOPGUN) was spearheaded during the Vietnam War by Dan Pedersen, the "Godfather of Top Gun," now 86. It started from nothing—no classroom, no funding, no

mechanics or aircraft of their own—just a few top-notch pilots whom he hand-picked and a tight deadline.

Their mission? To reclaim air superiority from the Soviet-trained North Vietnamese, who knew how to tangle in the skies.

Pedersen's book, "Topgun: an American Story," sets out the backstory. The Hollywood blockbuster is "great public entertainment," but "very unrealistic about TOPGUN, how it existed years ago and as it is today," he told *The Epoch Times*.

Now 53 years on, TOPGUN is "still going strong," he noted.

As Maverick and Goose were tasked with taking on Russian MiGs over the Atlantic in 1986, Pedersen faced a grave situation in Vietnam: U.S. fighter pilots were being shot down and killed at a staggering rate.

One American was lost for every two enemies. The North Vietnamese were adept at pushing the limits of their vastly-outdated Russian MiGs in air-to-air combat—what fighter pilots call "dogfighting."

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ART EXPLORATION

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Dangerous mountains, untamed forest and beasts, heavy snowfall, Native American skirmishes, and, finally, the Civil War separated Americans from further exploration of the extraordinary lands in the vicinity of today's Yellowstone.

It wasn't until August 1871 that Ferdinand V. Hayden, head of the U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, led the first official scientific expedition to survey and explore the land that would later become America's first national park.

The Hayden Expedition assembled a team that, in addition to support staff, included: a meteorologist, a zoologist, an ornithologist, a mineralogist, a topographer, an agricultural statistician and entomologist, two botanists, a photographer, and artist Thomas Moran.

Of these, Moran made arguably some of the most lasting contributions to the exploration effort. In large part through Moran's images, Congress and the American public were persuaded of the unique value of the extraordinary landscape. Americans came to realize that it must be preserved.

Drawing Stories From the Wild

At the time that the Hayden Expedition set out, America was a young nation still reeling from the effects of the Civil War. Photography was relatively new. The public relied on newspapers and printed images to keep abreast of developments in the world. Moran's work was reproduced in print and inspired readers and leaders to better appreciate the spectacular nature of the United States.

Perhaps you can imagine waiting with bated breath, hardly believing tales of mud volcanoes such as Dragon's Mouth, which to this day can be seen seething and spewing, gulping and belching a near-constant flow of bubbling earth through a cavernously roaring throat. Modern explorers can feel grateful for the boardwalks now set to navigate such captivatingly treacherous scenes.

Castle Geyser, built like an oversized child's drip castle on a beach, stands out amidst a minefield of sputtering geysers



"The Great Blue Spring of the Lower Geyser Basin, Yellowstone National Park," 1875, by Thomas Moran. Chromolithograph; 8.25 inches by 12.31 inches. Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas.

"Hot Springs of the Yellowstone," 1872, by Thomas Moran. Oil on canvas; 28 inches by 42 inches. LACMA.

stretching as far as the eye can see. Its fury is mesmerizing. What must early viewers of Moran's sketch "The Castle Geyser" have thought as they gazed into the pictorial column of water amidst colors scarcely witnessed in nature? Even the geysers of Iceland pale in comparison with the magnitude of thermal activity visible throughout the wonderfully eerie area of Yellowstone.

Through Moran's effort and skill, the world received a humanized view of spectacularly unknown lands.

The Life and Works of Thomas Moran

Each lifetime is filled with opportunity. So it was, and especially so, for the early American explorers.

Moran was born in Bolton, England, in 1837, but he died an American immigrant in Santa Barbara, California. The Moran family emigrated to Philadelphia when Thomas was 7 years old. The young Moran worked first as an apprentice to a wood engraver, then as an illustrator, where he was greatly influenced by the works of his older brother, Edward, and the British painter J.M.W. Turner.

Moran worked hard, creating images for magazines and carving out some success as a fine artist. Not necessarily the most naturally talented of 19th- and 20th-century artists, Moran nonetheless made a name for himself through effort and cour-



age. Venturing into the unknown, he faced enormous challenges in applying his artistic skill to uncharted scenes. It's a classic story of American opportunity and grit.

Although Moran lived for most of his career in New York City—a great center for the American art community at the time—he traveled West frequently, often as a guest of the railways. He saw and painted Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, the Colorado River, and what later became Zion National Park. He gained notoriety depicting pristine scenes of the West in paint.

Most of his paintings also admit a fascinating historical nature. For example, the piece titled "The Great Hot Springs" presents a view of several little figures before an array of splendid pools. The figures probably include Hayden, photographer William Jackson, Moran himself, and a Native American guide.

Moran included the presence of Native Americans as adventurers accompanying the Hayden Expedition not only in his paintings, but also in his journals. Once, he mentions a tribal member of the party who shot three of the five deer slain that day for food. The figure from "The Great Hot Springs" may have also been the mysterious person in headdress depicted in "The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone," a monumental painting which he sold to Congress for \$10,000—an

Through Moran's images, Congress and the American public were persuaded of the unique value of the extraordinary landscape.

unheard-of sum at the time. That fee secured Moran's position as a painter of acclaim, and he repeated the prestigious feat with the sale of "Chasm of the Colorado."

What Moran was selling was a tremendous view of American adventure, spirit, and accomplishment. Today, Moran is not only famous for his interpretive views of the American West, but for all the attributes that his work embodied.

Painting the American Spirit

Having recently returned myself from an all-too-brief but deeply impressive excursion through Yellowstone National Park, I can only imagine the fortitude that it took to hack a path through the formidable landscape with its shocking pitfalls.

Though my husband and I found ourselves charmingly sheltered by the Old Faithful Inn at night, by day we still encountered six grizzly bears, including a mother with two cubs! We accidentally slid down scree hills just to be startled by boiling sludge at the bottom, and found ourselves closer to bison than we would have hoped. We watched in awe as geysers blew and prismatic pools of bacteria oozed.

I made sketches on paper and in my head, and wondered at the feat of backpacking and hacking trails through such unexpected and untamed wilderness while toting an easel

or cleaning one's brushes with turpentine, then needing to wash your hands. It seems, to me, that determination and awe form the ground of Moran's paintings.

Moran produced more than 1,500 oil paintings and 800 watercolors in his lifetime. Many were field sketches later finished in the studio. Once, when he couldn't accompany an expedition through the uncharted Grand Tetons, his fellow explorers thought so much of him that they named Mount Moran after him.

I was able to see the Tetons this summer, too. Between mountain lakes, bear claw marks scarred high into the trees, and wolves in pursuit of moose, the Tetons make a breathtaking backdrop for an excursion into the unique beauty of a great nation, just as Yellowstone does.

In case you can't make it out West this year, you can still get transported. Great paintings offer eye- and soul-opening views. America has been truly blessed. The American spirit and our unfettered West may yet inspire art and awe.

Andrea Nutt Falce is a happy wife and mother of four. She is also a Florentine-trained classical realist artist and author of the children's book, "It's a Jungle Out There." Her work can be found at AndreaNutt.com

TOPGUN FOUNDER: How the Elite Fighter Pilot School Got Started

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The Americans were training aviators to use equipment, sending them into battle, and expecting to see victories.

"We lost 11 guys in 17 days," Pedersen said of his stint on the USS Enterprise.

They would go to dinner and see empty chairs at the table.

Mentored by World War II ace Eugene Valencia, Pedersen, then 31, was called to turn the tide. He picked eight elite fighter pilots—all in their 20s—including his right-hand man, Mel Holmes, and set about literally rewriting the book on air combat at the Naval Air Station in Miramar, California. It was experimental, serious, and dangerous.

"We were given 60 days," he said. "This was a graduate school. ... This had to be something we knew would win."

"When TOPGUN was formed, in the beginning, all of us had made two combat cruises on carriers to Vietnam. It was very serious what we were doing."

Nobody was going to furnish them new planes with greater capabilities; instead, they relied on what they had: the F-4 Phantom, a "great airplane" with "two very reliable high-powered engines," according to Pedersen.

"I've flown that plane 2.47 mach. ... At that point, the airplane would come apart due to heating," he said.

Pushing the F-4 to the very threshold, they outlined new tactics.

"We all had opinions because we had been out on different carriers at least twice. And one of the guys had been shot down twice," Pedersen said. "We were motivated, man."

They flew the airplane the way they en-



TOPGUN instructors in 1969 with the names of Pedersen's original eight in bold print, along with their call signs.

Back Row (L-R): Jerry Kinch, Dick Moody, Peter Jago, Tom Irlbeck, Darrell "Condor" Gary, Ross Anderson, Jerry "Ski" Sawatzky, Sam Vernallis, Don Sharer, Jim "Hawkeye" Laing.

Front Row (L-R): Joel Graffman, Steve "Rebel" Smith, Mel "Rattler" Holmes, Hank Halleland, Dan "Yank" Pedersen, Vern Jumper, Jim "Cobra" Ruliffson, John "Smash" Nash, J.C. "Mississippi Two-Five Thousand" Smith (not in photo).

visioned their new tactics to prove what worked.

Knowing MiGs, he also knew how to beat them. One new maneuver involved rocketing straight upward, in full afterburner, right to zero airspeed. This would foil the enemy.

"There's not a MiG pilot in the world that's going to follow you through that aura," Pedersen said. "It'll go up to 40,000 feet like that. And there's nothing in the MiG stable airplane that's going to be able to do that."

That fits into a comprehensive "flying in the egg" tactic, traversing a colossal, verti-

cal circuit culminating in an apex upside-down at the "top of the egg," the enemy fully visible below, then swooping down from behind for the kill.

"If you can't get a good shot, you pull off," Pedersen said. "If you missed, you went right straight vertical again, right straight up and upside-down on the top of the egg."

"While you're down there shooting, the other guy, your wingman, is up on top, keeping track of the fight, watching out for others."

You could wind up tangling with two, three, or even six enemy planes in one dogfight.

Within weeks, they were ready to rejoin the war. A tight nucleus of new, cutting-edge know-how was dispersed throughout the U.S. military, and by the war's end, that kill ratio of 2 to 1 became 24 to 1.

What made this comeback successful was the pilots' "pushing the envelope," exceeding safety limits set by the manufacturer. The F-4 could do way more than first thought.

"The safety factor that was built into that airplane was fairly large," Pedersen said. "The airplane was capable of a whole lot more than we had been flying it the first five years of that war."

The North Vietnamese were adept at pushing the limits of their vastly outdated Russian MiGs in air-to-air combat—what fighter pilots call 'dogfighting.'

So what did top brass think of them shattering safety protocols?

"Success speaks for itself," Pedersen said. "When you win to that degree and you go to 24-to-1 kill ratio, nobody would take us on."

"We actually won the air war in Vietnam; who's going to argue with you? Nobody in Washington is going to make an argument."

The world now has "Top Gun: Maverick." It's also seen breathtaking new advancements in aircraft technology, with the F-35 and its vertical takeoff and landing and the stealthy-capable F-22 Raptor. In the film, pilots fly the now mightily-respected F-18 Super Hornet.

Has all this new sophistication changed

the rules for dogfighting?

Pedersen says no.

"It only takes one bullet to bring you down, even today," he said. "Give me a gun and some heat-seeking sidewinder missiles, and I'll take on anybody in China or Russia right now."

In 1980, a decade after founding TOPGUN, Pedersen became captain of the aircraft carrier USS Ranger and was in command of 5,000 sailors with an average age of 19.5 years. Numerical superiority in easily serviceable jets far outstrips the technological superiority of ultra-expensive weapons that are hard to maintain, he said.

"Sometimes, a \$300 million airplane isn't the answer," Pedersen said. "I personally like to have eight or 10 lightweight fighters that are maintainable; you got to be in the 98 percent reliability."

"The 'magic missiles' [of today] ... somebody's making a lot of profit off this stuff. I tend to believe in simplicity. Having flown the MiGs, which were an older generation, the guns work 98 percent of the time."

The legacy of TOPGUN today is as important as it was in Vietnam. They continue to train the top 1 percent of fighter pilots, who pass their knowledge on to their squadrons—with a great deal of confidence. Their results speak for themselves.

"We rewrote tactical aviation worldwide; it still is the standard," said Pedersen, who gives credit where credit is due—they were all young mavericks, as TOPGUN still is today. "Not just me, but my eight guys and some senior people who made me bullet-proof—that's a pretty risky thing to do, something like this in 60 days."

"So when we pulled it off and the kill ratio is 24 to 1, I wanted to make sure the story is told accurately."

Share your stories with us at emg.inspired@epochtimes.com, and continue to get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for the inspired newsletter at TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter



(Above) An architect's rendering of Hands 4Life's soon-to-be-renovated orphanage, repurposed into an intergenerational home in Honduras.

(Left) Hands 4Life founder and CEO Stacy Shewey (R) with co-founder and CCO Meghan Fox.

Bringing Together Orphans and Seniors Without Family Under One Roof

An organization seeks to build intergenerational homes in developing countries

DAVE PAONE

When one hears the word "orphan," it's easy to conjure up images of characters from Charles Dickens's "Oliver Twist" or the comic strip "Little Orphan Annie." All children living "the hard-knock life."

But what about senior citizens who have no family?

Stacy Shewey has come up with the idea of having both groups live in an assisted community together, where the old can impart their wisdom to the young.

Beginning Hands 4Life

Shewey was an executive director for an assisted living facility in Jacksonville, Florida. "Hated that job. It was the worst job," she told The Epoch Times.

"They were all about the bottom line."

After she resigned, a friend told her that he was very connected and could find her a job pretty much anywhere she wanted. She said to him: "I don't want just any job. I want a job where I am making a difference in people's lives on a daily basis."

Shewey calls the increasing number of elderly who have no one to care for them an "aging crisis," particularly in developing countries.

"Right now, 60 percent of the world's elderly live in developing nations," she said. "By 2050, it will be up to 80 percent."

She and her family had been missionaries in Haiti and had witnessed true poverty firsthand.

Now, Shewey feels that there are enough charities and programs in the United States to help the elderly there, so she's decided to take her charity to poor countries. Additionally, she feels that there are plenty of charities to help the children in these countries, but none for the elderly.

Shewey was raised in what she calls "an intergenerational home," with her grandparents living downstairs. Her grandmother was born in 1910, so Shewey heard her stories from the Great Depression. "Their stories of the past influenced who I am today," she said. "From a young age, I learned the importance of that relationship."

In 2019, Shewey, along with Meghan Fox, founded Hands 4Life, with the intention of bringing orphaned children and family-less seniors together in one facility.

As a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit, it has a board of directors, a treasurer, and a secretary.

Building in Honduras

A few years ago, Hands 4Life partnered with a church in the United States that owns property in Honduras. Hands 4Life is now leasing this property and is repurposing the buildings. One of the buildings will be a "career workshop," where the seniors can teach the children a trade such as woodworking, jewelry-making, and metalworking.

Additionally, the organization is building a new dormitory.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for Sept. 19, and the target for completion is one year—although, that's dependent on fundraising.

Hands 4Life has an architectural firm, an interior design firm, and a construction company (all in the United States) that are donating their services to the construction and renovation of the buildings.

Pastor Ruben Rodriguez runs House of Mercy, an orphanage and church in Honduras that houses eight orphans aged 6 to 17. There's also one elderly woman who lives at the church.

House of Mercy and Hands 4Life have partnered in the development of the campus.

'New Community of Life' in Nigeria

Rev. Theodore Ihenetu was born and raised in Nigeria and ordained as a Catholic priest in 2015. Currently, he's the executive director of operations of Hands 4Life Nigeria. And he just loves old people.

"Oh, so very much! So very much!" he told The Epoch Times in a video call from Nigeria.

In partnership with Hands 4Life, Ihenetu ministers to lonely seniors and orphaned children. In addition to this, he works at a facility for elderly and retired priests.

Ihenetu refers to the pairing of orphaned children with seniors as "a new community of life."

"The love and respect for older persons is a sacred duty."

Rev. Theodore Ihenetu, executive director of operations, Hands 4Life Nigeria

He said that Nigerian society traditionally treats the elderly with reverence.

"The love and respect for older persons is a sacred duty," he said.

But in more modern times, he says, the youth of the nation "look at older adults as a leftover generation."

Ihenetu hopes that Hands 4Life will counteract this.

The pairing of the two groups in Nigeria has begun through community outreach, but the actual facility where they'll live hasn't been built yet.

The Nigerian campus is Hands 4Life's latest project, and Shewey estimates that it will take about three years to complete.

The Future

Shewey has high hopes for the futures of the orphans in her care.

"We're rewriting their narrative," she said. "Instead of being kicked out of an orphanage at 18—that's when the human traffickers are waiting for them and that's when the gangs are waiting for them—we are raising them as our own children."

This may include sending them to college.

Shewey knows that just building more orphanages isn't really solving the problem. The charity's goal is to open a new campus in a different developing nation every three years. Ultimately, her aim is "empowering the people to take care of their own."

How to Help a Loved One Struggling With Depression

Depression is a mental illness that affects millions of Americans today, but there are a number of things you can do to foster healing

GREGORY JANTZ

Depression is a worn-out word these days. Sports fans are “depressed” after their team loses. Much news reporting is criticized for being “depressing.” The blogosphere and social media sites are clogged with every conceivable cause of and cure for depression.

As happens with most overused words, the real meaning of this one is fast becoming vague and abstract to many people, although not to the millions of Americans who suffer from the all-too-real effects of emotional depression every year.

As a mental health expert of 35 years, I understand firsthand how deep the cavern of depression can go and how dark it can get. That’s because I have experienced depression myself and have helped thousands of people climb out of that dark hole and back into the light.

Chances are, you have someone in your life weighed down by depression. I say this because the condition affects a wide swath of our society. Analysis by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) shows that an estimated 21 million adults in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in 2020. That represents 8.4 percent of all U.S. adults.

NIMH defines a major depressive episode as “a period of at least two weeks when a person experienced a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities, and had a majority of specified symptoms, such as problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, or self-worth.”

Amid this troubling news, here’s the good news: While rates of depression are high, so is the possibility of healing. With proper medical guidance, healthy choices, and a helpful support system, anyone struggling with mental health difficulties can regain stability and joy.

It Helps to Know

That’s where you come in. If you want to help someone to overcome depression, you can step in to be part of the solution. Begin by understanding a few important facts:

Having the occasional ‘blues’ is different from suffering from depression.

Everyone experiences feelings of sadness from time to time, but depression goes far beyond just feeling down. Depression drains a person’s energy, hope, and motivation, sometimes making it hard to get through the day. Depression can affect every part of a person’s life—from work life to love life and everything in between.

Depression isn’t all ‘in your head.’ We’ve all heard it before: “Depression is all in your head! Just give it time.” Or, worse, “Snap out of it already!” This kind of advice is rarely loving or helpful. Depressed individuals are caught in the grip of something larger and more tenacious than that. For those suffering from clinical depression, no amount of glib advice is going to make it “go away.” The fact is that depression is real, painful, and frightening.

Depression often has a stigma attached.

Despite the prevalence of depression, many people feel ashamed or judged because of this condition, as if they should “just get over it,” have more faith, or practice positive thinking. Worse, many depressed people feel deeply flawed at their core, falsely believing that their emotional struggles make them different from others or even inferior.

Many sufferers receive no treatment.

Among those battling depression in 2020, nearly 54 percent of adults with any mental illness and 36 percent of adults with a serious mental illness received no treatment of any kind, according to the NIMH analysis. Untreated depression frequently leads to other major health problems, as well as to a sharp increase in suicidal ideation. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 60 percent of people who have died by suicide had suffered from a mood disorder, including major depression.

If you want to demonstrate care and concern for a depressed loved one, here’s how to start.

Recognize the Signs

According to NIMH, symptoms of depression include the following:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, and being “slowed down”
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms

Those struggling with depression may experience a few of these symptoms or all of them. For many people, symptoms are severe enough to cause noticeable problems in day-to-day activities, such as work, school, social activities, or relationships.

Be There

Sometimes, we genuinely want to



help someone who’s struggling, but we feel awkward or inadequate. We’re afraid our words will come across as trite or shallow, so we don’t say anything. But just being there—present, available, reliable—is often the greatest gift that we can offer. Being physically present, even if you don’t say anything, powerfully demonstrates that you care.

Help Your Loved One to Engage Socially

Healing from depression almost always happens with the support and care of other people. The problem is that struggling people tend to isolate rather than socialize.

According to the American Psychological Association, numerous studies show that social isolation not only robs you of the help that others have to give, but also has serious physical and mental consequences in itself—including an elevated risk of anxiety and depression. Volumes of research on depression confirm that social isolation can be the most lethal condition of all for someone who has fallen into hopelessness and despair.

However, that points to an obvious and readily available remedy: connectedness. Social support is key for maintaining mental health, and it’s a solution as close as the near-

Every person on earth needs encouragement, and those who are hurting need it all the more.

Coffee with friends or a book group at the library, for example, provide opportunities for connectedness.

est neighbor, a coffee meetup with a friend, or the library book group. Opportunities abound to be connected to others.

Encourage your loved one to start small by connecting once a week with someone who feels safe. Or, give an invitation for a casual gathering at your house. Start somewhere, and watch as a social support system grows into a solid source of strength.

Offer Encouragement at Every Opportunity

When it comes time to express your support, don’t worry about saying something profound or poetic. Just speak from the heart, assuring the person that you care: “I won’t pretend to know exactly how you feel, but I want you to know that I’m here, and you can count on me.” Every person on earth needs encouragement, and those who are hurting need it all the more.

Show Support in Tangible Ways

Some of the most potent expressions of care fall under the heading of “actions speak louder than words.” If your loved one is hurting, drop off a meal, run errands, bring flowers, get the car washed, arrange for a housecleaner, or send a gift card to a favorite restaurant. A small, tangible gesture can have a big impact during hard times.

Be a Listener, Not an Advice-Giver

One of the most vital ways to support your loved one is to listen. Be fully attentive and encourage the other person to talk as much as he or she needs to. When your partner tells you about a tough day or a big setback, he or she is likely not asking you how to solve the problem. What the person probably wants is to process emotions and explore concerns by verbalizing them. What most people want is understanding, compassion, and empathy—not advice.

Through your acceptance, affirmation, and attentiveness, you can communicate that you’ll be there when the person needs someone to lean on.

Help the Person to Get Moving

Scientists have found that regular, moderate exercise decreases overall levels of tension, elevates and stabilizes mood, improves sleep quality, and boosts self-esteem. In fact, research shows that regular exercise can be as effective as antidepressants at increasing energy levels and decreasing feelings of fatigue.

That’s because exercise increases the release of essential chemicals and hormones that bolster brain health and mood. These chemicals include serotonin, a natural mood stabilizer essential in combatting depression, and endorphins, often called “feel-good” chemicals because they act as a pain reliever and happiness booster.

This is a practical way that you can help: Encourage your loved one to establish an exercise regimen. Better yet, arrange regular times to exercise together, for mutual support and accountability.

Guide Your Loved One Toward Professional Help

Your support can be essential in helping your loved one to overcome depression, but, most often, the struggling individual will need the expertise of a trained professional to ensure their safety and implement a treatment plan.

A certified counselor or psychologist, especially one trained in depression recovery, can offer a tailored approach to achieving health. Such a professional can uncover any physiological causes and recommend a regimen that will restore well-being.

Gregory Jantz, Ph.D., is the founder and director of the mental-health clinic The Center: A Place of Hope in Edmonds, Wash. He is the author of “Healing Depression for Life,” “The Anxiety Reset,” and many other books. Find Jantz at APlaceOfHope.com

An analysis by the National Institute of Mental Health shows that an estimated

21 MILLION ADULTS

in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in 2020.



Although taking notes with a laptop in the college classroom has become commonplace, studies show that it’s detrimental to learning.

EDUCATION INSIGHTS

Packin’ a Laptop? 5 Tips to Minimize Your Risk of Self-Sabotage in the Classroom

While the evidence mounts against using laptops in the classroom, for those who do bring one, several practical measures can help mitigate the risk of undermining your academic success

MATTHEW JOHN

If you’re among the growing ranks of people who harbor doubts about the perks of new technologies in the classroom—such as personal laptops—congrats! Depending on the extent to which you dial back your tech use, you’re likely to be rewarded with increased focus, a stronger memory, deeper learning, and higher achievement.

Forget what Big Tech or gearheads might be telling you. The wealth of carefully conducted, independent research on computers in the classroom is a much better guide. Follow the research and you, your child, or your students will reap the rewards (as will your wallet).

But when it comes to the laptop, dilemmas quickly arise—especially within the context of college.

Laptops aren’t only ubiquitous on the campus scene (translating to a “keeping up with the Joneses” effect), but are often, admittedly, a necessity. Increasingly, college instructors include online activities in class such as polling and asking students to look up real-time information. Meanwhile, computer labs aren’t nearly as convenient or inviting as they may have seemed, say, a couple decades ago—before the mobile revolution. Students today expect to be able to plunk down and hash out a paper anytime, anywhere.

So what’s one to do, given the double-edged nature of the laptop and its likely penchant for biting the hand that feeds it?

Based on a survey of the academic literature from the past two decades, conversations with colleagues at several institutions, and my own observations as an instructor, I have several suggestions.

Keep It Out of Class

This comes with a big caveat: if you can. The risks of simply opening up a laptop during class are legion. Studies have found that students with an open laptop will waste, on average, around 40 out of every 100 minutes in class because of being off-task or distracted.

The cost to academic achievement is real and measurable, regardless of how intelligent, motivated, or interested you are in class. Research reveals that the pitfalls of using in-class technology prove more powerful than a student’s good intentions.

For many, the simplest way to boost learning is by simply leaving that laptop behind. Park it in the dorm, if you can. Or at least zip it deep into the recesses of your backpack before class. Keep the temptation to use it out of sight, out of mind.

Make a conscious decision before class starts that you won’t take it out, no matter what ensues—be it boredom, a sudden impulse to check your email, or the pull of headline news that you glimpse on a wayward classmate’s screen.

Don’t Justify It With Note-Taking

It’s becoming the norm to take class notes on a laptop. But like so much else in today’s

world, just because everyone is doing it doesn’t mean that it’s a good idea. Well-designed, peer-reviewed research studies have found that taking notes on electronic devices is detrimental to learning.

Sure, you can crank out more words per minute by keyboard than by pen-and-paper, and there’s convenience aplenty in the ease of functions such as copy-and-paste.

But the ease of manipulating digital text comes at a cost. Precisely, perhaps, because of its expediency, the information and ideas handled on screen imprint less deeply in the mind. All that speed comes at a cost. Easy come, easy go.

Opt instead for the tried-and-true, centuries-old approach of writing by hand, and you’ll likely be glad at exam time.

If you want to record your instructor’s lecture, buy a simple recording device, ask your professor’s permission (most will be happy to oblige a conscientious student), and plant it on the table or lectern at the start of class. You’ll get a far superior audio recording to anything your computer could capture.

Separate the Social From the Academic

College students can take a cue from most high-achieving professionals, who learn to create space between their work and personal lives, by creating clearer boundaries between their social and academic lives.

It begins with the laptop. This is the key battleground.

A simple—but immensely beneficial—way to create boundaries between the social and academic worlds is to utilize the “accounts” feature offered by any modern operating system. Set up one login account designated for your social and everyday life, and one for your academic life. Two accounts for two different “you’s.”

The “social” one would be where you have your instant messaging app, an email client for communicating with family and friends, your web browser with all of your go-to news and podcasting sites, your music collection, and so on. Purchasing a present for your sister’s wedding? Got a Zoom call scheduled with your best friend from high school? This is where you log in.

The “academic” account is where you do your business as a college student. And “business,” it is. With the costs of college tuition having soared to where they are, it’s no trivial pursuit. Time is money, and the stakes are high. You want to be focused, efficient, and at your best when writing a paper, doing research, or applying for an internship. You want to keep this account streamlined and purpose-driven, and limit your bookmarks to school-specific purposes.

Skip the Spotify lists, limit yourself to your student email account, and avoid any apps that don’t have bearing on your academic self. The point is to strip away the distractors that you otherwise must fend off every time you open your device—forcing you to waste precious, and finite, mental energy.

You must have a clear and conscious purpose for opening your laptop. Anytime, anywhere.



Setting up two accounts on your laptop, one for social purposes, and the other for academic work, serves to delineate necessary boundaries.

Either you control the device, or it controls you. The stakes really are that high.

The more focused you make this academic account, the more it will become your own tidy, academic “world.” You want it to be a distinct environment unto itself. You’ll be reminded immediately why you’re there and what you should be doing.

But isn’t this going to be a hassle, always having to log in to one account or the other? Yes! And that’s exactly the point.

Every time you log in, you should have to think about why you are doing so. A laptop (or the internet) mustn’t become a refuge for boredom or a means of escape. That’s exactly how addictions form. Which brings us to our next tip.

Don’t Open Without a Clear (and Good) Reason

No matter how well you set up your laptop, things are going to spiral in the wrong direction if you don’t form one critical habit of mind. Namely, you must have a clear and conscious purpose for opening your laptop. Anytime, anywhere.

This insight comes courtesy of productivity guru Cal Newport (himself, interestingly, a professor of computer science), who explains that anything less than this practice will result in mindless, addictive tendencies. Be it your phone, your tablet, or your laptop, if you reach for it without a clearly defined reason, you are likely feeding some unconscious habit. Much like a hit with an addictive substance, each log in makes the craving only stronger, the habit harder to break. Search up “internet addiction” and you’ll see just how real the problem is for millions today.

Newport even suggests that you establish set times when you allow yourself to go online, and only do so then for a set amount of time. This helps you to develop vital “executive” functions in the brain, such as self-control. Either you control the device, or it controls you. The stakes really are that high.

And in the context of college, it’s your future—as well as your mental health—that’s on the line.

Know Yourself

All of this, of course, is predicated upon your ability to self-reflect and be aware of your device usage. You must be brutally honest with yourself here. And willing to do some reflection—at the end of a laptop session, or at the end of the day or week. Take stock of how you’re doing, and who’s owning whom.

A journaling habit—with paper and pen, mind you!—can be your best friend here. You and your well-being are worth the small investment that a weekly journal entry entails. It could set you on the path to success not only in college, but in life.

Follow the above five tips and you’ll be well on your way to winning in the classroom as well as beyond.

Matthew John is a veteran teacher and writer who is passionate about history, culture, and good literature. He lives in New York.

Good Reading Is the Cure for Gullibility

ANNIE HOLMQUIST

The other day, a friend of mine posted on social media a picture of her three children, sitting in the living room, each with a nose in a book. She was having a proud mom moment, noting that she couldn't believe the day had finally come when all her children were able to read on their own. And they were actually doing it. Now, the trick is to keep those kids reading into adulthood. But that may be harder than it sounds.

According to a Pew Research Center poll from 2021, 23 percent of American adults didn't read a book in the previous year.

That number was a little better in a Gallup poll this year, which showed that only 17 percent of Americans didn't read a book in the preceding year. However, the poll also showed that the average number of books read by Americans had dropped drastically between 2016 and 2021.

Given the stagnating performance numbers in U.S. schools, that statistic shouldn't surprise us. The Nation's Report Card currently places eighth grade reading proficiency at 32 percent—which means that more than two-thirds of students heading into high school can't read proficiently.

If American students aren't learning to read very well when they're young, then why would we expect them to as adults?

Such deficiencies in literacy are alarming, not only for the state of our children, but also for the state of the nation, which some of those children will one day lead.

Calls for more money to remedy this situation will undoubtedly break forth. But those calls are simply another step in the vicious cycle we know as the education system. Twentieth-century journalist Malcolm Muggeridge explains this cycle in his essay "The Great Liberal Death Wish":

"There was, it seemed to me, a built in propensity in this liberal world-view whereby the opposite of what was in-

Through good books and conversations, parents can ensure their children aren't easily gullible.



BIBA KAYEWICH

tended came to pass. Take the case of education. Education was the great mumbo-jumbo of progress, the assumption being that educating people would make them grow better and better, more and more objective and intelligent. Actually, as more and more money is spent on education, illiteracy is increasing. And I wouldn't be at all surprised if it didn't end up with virtually the whole revenue of the western countries being spent on education, and a condition of almost total illiteracy resulting there from. It's quite on the cards."

Muggeridge is likely right that education spending will continue to rise despite poor results, but it's those poor results that should give us pause. Is it possible that the failure of the education system is actually purposeful? Twentieth-century author and thinker Albert Jay Nock thought it was.

"Our system was founded in all good faith that universal elementary education would make a citizenry more intelligent," Nock writes, "whereas most obviously it has done nothing of the kind." After students reach the middle-school age, Nock explains, education can no longer be developed—but it can "regulate what intelligence one has."

But the education system doesn't regulate at a high academic level; it regulates at a low one.

"If it had done nothing to raise the general level of intelligence, it had succeeded in making our citizenry much more easily gullible," Nock writes, describing the education system as one that conditions a child to take "as true whatever he read in his schoolbooks and whatever his teachers told him," eventually bowing to the "crude authoritarian or fetishistic spirit which one sees most highly developed, perhaps, in the habitual reader of newspapers." He has no need, no incentive to expand his mind through books, whether from authors who hold similar mindsets or those who hold views directly opposite to his own.

So we find ourselves with a population that neither reads nor thinks, but simply does whatever authorities and media outlets say to do.

But even as we descend ever more into such a state, there's still hope. There's a segment of the school-age population receiving an education that develops a love for reading beyond the textbooks that are plopped in front of them. That population is the homeschool crowd, which, last I checked, has risen to more than 10 percent of the population. Those students have teachers who want them to learn and grow and expand their intelligence so that they will be not servants of the system, but leaders.

Of course, not all parents are in a position to homeschool their children, but that doesn't mean those children are doomed to the life of an automaton, in servitude to the state. Parents who give their children good, solid books—not fluff—who read out loud to them, who gently lead them on to higher and better thinking through questions and conversations about the things they read—these parents will slowly pull their children above gullibility. And the fewer gullible citizens this nation has, the better off we'll all be.

This article was originally published by Intellectual Takeout.

Annie Holmquist is the editor of Intellectual Takeout and the online editor of Chronicles Magazine, both projects of the Charlemagne Institute.

According to a Pew Research Center poll from 2021, 23 percent of American adults didn't read a book in the previous year.

Sharpening the Ax: Applying Diligence to Your Life

Use the upcoming season to focus on self-improvement and becoming your best self

BARBARA DANZA

Abraham Lincoln famously said, "If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first four hours sharpening the ax."

As summer dissipates and autumn calls us back to routine, the time is ripe for revisiting our habits, levels of diligence, and the ways in which we plan and prepare for the work ahead. In short, how we sharpen our ax.

In order to live to one's fullest potential, diligent care must be given to the aspects of life that impact everything else. There are always improvements to be made in each of these important life categories, and consistent attention to them ensures that you're prepared to show up, do well the work you're meant to do, and handle the challenges that inevitably come along.

So as you pack away your bathing suits and sip your pumpkin spice latte, consider each of these and what you can do each day to improve. Here are a few simple suggestions.

Physical Fitness

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your level of physical fitness? If it isn't a 10, what can you do to improve? (If it is a 10, what can you do to maintain that?)

Rather than revamping your entire diet and exercise regimen starting tomorrow, what small changes can you make to improve? Maybe, you'll schedule a walk before breakfast, or place a grocery order of only clean, unprocessed foods.

Mindset

The thoughts that we think have a huge impact on our lives. Nobody communicates with you more than you do—what are you saying to yourself?

How can you improve the quality of your thoughts? Are you hindering your progress in some areas with negative thinking? Are you weighing yourself down with judgments of others, complaints, or self-criticism?

Aim this season to recognize the quality of your thoughts. Then, practice nurturing more positive thoughts as time goes on.

Financial Fitness

Summertime can lull us into a lax state when it comes to financial fitness. With the new season, reinvigorate your resolve to work toward your financial goals. Whether you're working your way out of debt, saving for a home, starting a business, or getting ready to put your kids through college, evaluate your financial state and take a step toward progress.

A simple way to jump-start improvement is to utilize automation. Schedule a regular payment to tackle a debt each month (or twice a month), or send a specific amount to savings to reach a particular goal. Did you know that if you put \$27.40 in savings every day for a year, you'd have \$10,000?

As you afford more attention to your finances, you may find yourself mastering your budget, preparing for larger expenses, and investing wisely for your future.



RAWPIXEL/GETTY IMAGES

Practice a skill or try a new hobby. You might be surprised at how you rise to the challenge.

Relationships

Personal relationships have taken a hit over the past couple of years. What can you do to improve this area of your life?

Reach out to an old friend, send someone a card, schedule a visit, or simply give an extra hug to someone at home. The key is to put some focus on your relationships and aim to incrementally improve them.

Intellectual Development

Continual learning can improve your life in unpredictable ways. Replace an hour of television or phone scrolling with read-

ing. Practice a skill or dabble in some new hobbies. You may be surprised at how your mind rises to the challenge.

Spiritual Development

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, focus on your spiritual life and your understanding of the biggest questions that you can conceive. Seeking wisdom, calming your mind, experiencing inner peace, and aiming to comprehend the fundamental meaning of life are worthwhile endeavors deserving of your diligent attention.

J.H.SMITH/CARTIOPHOTOS



The hillside of the magnificent Main Fountain Garden gently drops like an amphitheater toward the explosive fountain, which is raised like a stage. The amphitheater-like setting is symmetrically arranged as a formal garden composed of smaller fountains, ponds, boxwood shrubs, and Linden trees.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

The Fabulous Fountains of LONGWOOD GARDENS

JAMES HOWARD SMITH

An explosion of water thrusts high into the sky, then another and another and another as a fountain at Longwood Gardens performs a beautifully choreographed dance. Industrialist Pierre du Pont purchased a small farm at Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, in 1906 to preserve an old-wood arboratum of the previous owners, the Pierce family.

Over the next 20 years, he envisioned and

built beautiful fountains to grace the estate in what he called a "Fountain Theater." The Open Air Theatre debuted in 1914 for performing arts shows. Today, fountain displays delight audiences before and after the main performances take place on the stage.

Since 1914, several more garden fountains have been constructed. The five-acre Main Fountain Garden is the center display at Longwood. This was inspired by the great fountain at the Chicago World's Fair in

1893. Another, the Italian Water Garden, is found in a clearing within a 200-year-old wooded grove, planned as if coming upon a secret garden made by an ancient culture. Inspired by the Villa Gamberaia, near Florence, Italy, the garden was designed and constructed from 1925 to 1927 and is formed in an open geometric plan that projects a refined, peaceful atmosphere.

Longwood Gardens is a place to watch majestic fountains spring to life. The 1,077-acre destination is recognized not only for

its innovative fountain displays, but also for its meadows, woodlands, conservatory, and gardens that take horticultural design to a new level. The site has brought people together in their leisure time and given them a place to contemplate and enjoy the beauty of nature.

James Howard Smith, an architectural photographer, designer, and founder of Cartio, aims to inspire an appreciation of classic architecture.



J.H.SMITH/CARTIOPHOTOS



COURTESY OF GRACE KHMELEV



J.H.SMITH/CARTIOPHOTOS

1. This classical composition deep in a wood grove defines the Italian Water Garden, where the central, circular fountain becomes the focus, emphasized by the circular grass border. The four surrounding basins then frame the centerpiece with a rectangular form. The centrally aligned, semi-circular pond in the background then becomes a secondary focal point, drawing attention with the tallest fountain at times throughout the fountain sequence. 2. The stage wall at the Main Fountain Garden is decorated with sculptures and urns made of limestone, set into arched niches, and elegantly ornamented with French Baroque details. The uplifting effect aims to elevate the performance experience. 3. Similar to a fireworks display, rolling choreographed fountain performances ignite the space during the evening at the Main Fountain Garden.



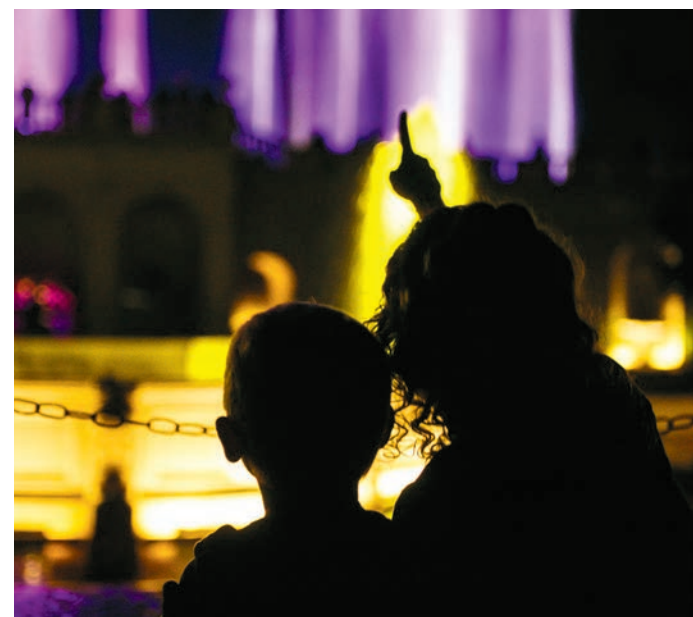
COURTESY OF GRACE KHMELEV



J.H.SMITH/CARTIOPHOTOS

The Open Air Theatre was inspired by a visit to the "teatro di verzura" ("theater of greenery") at the Villa Ginanneschi-Gori in Siena, Italy. In both, the garden forms the theater. Tall hedges become the walls and hide the side stage, forming theater "wings" for the performers to emerge from.

This epic fountain centerpiece of the Main Fountain Garden is animated with sculptured fountains rising up from the formal boxwood gardens. The raised stage is centered around the three arched loggia, an outdoor room that opens to the garden.



J.H.SMITH/CARTIOPHOTOS

The fountain performances illuminate, uplift, and inspire the young and old.

8-Year-Old Chats With Astronaut Over Radio

Space radio enthusiast Isabella Payne had the call of her life from the International Space Station

EPOCH INSPIRED STAFF

An 8-year-old space radio fan from Kent, England, had just gone to bed when her dad woke her and dragged her to answer a call—from outer space. The voice of young Isabella Payne crackled to life. On Aug. 2, she was heard by Dr. Kjell Lindgren aboard none other than the International Space Station (ISS). Microphone in hand, Isabella told Lingren her age. “His voice instantly changed from normal to joyful,” Isabella told CNN. “You could hear his smile.”

Isabella and her dad have been space radio fans for a long time. He recalled her sitting on his knee, watching ‘all the launches, all the space station events, all the space walks’ together.

Over the radio, Lindgren replied, “It’s so great to chat with you; thank you for getting on the radio and saying hello.” Isabella told the media outlet, “I was elated when I heard his voice. I thought it

was a dream.” Isabella’s dad, Matthew Payne, 42, shared the exciting communication on Twitter. Lindgren responded: “I’ve had a lot of fun using the #ARISS amateur radio station #NAISS on the @Space_Station to talk with ham radio operators all over the world. I’ve even (unofficially) worked stations on all continents! But this may be my favorite contact so far. Thanks Isabella and @m0lmk!” Lindgren’s Twitter post was shared by his 68,000 Twitter followers.

Matthew, an amateur ham radio enthusiast from Broadstairs, England, learned through communities that Lindgren was using the ISS radio. For a couple of weeks, the dad started listening—until, one evening, he heard the call. ISS astronauts, during their downtime, occasionally use their onboard amateur radio station to call schools on Earth. Matthew has helped students greet the space station. The timing has to be just right, when the ISS is directly overhead.

“They’re only in the sky above us for 10 to 15 minutes,” he told CNN. “We want as many people as possible down here to have that kind of experience.”

Matthew, who has had his amateur radio license for 22 years, said conversations with ISS have to be kept short; they state the user’s call sign and may end at times with a quick thank you and goodbye.

In April 2016, he helped students contact British astronaut Tim Peake aboard the ISS. The dad said it was “amazing” to see Isabella make contact with Lindgren.

Isabella and her dad have been space radio fans for a long time. He recalled her sitting on his knee, watching “all the launches, all the space station events, all the space walks” together.

After radioing Lindgren, Isabella was contacted by several media agencies and even exchanged emails with NASA. Her interest in space has inspired future ambitions to work for the space administration as a com-



Matthew Payne and his 8-year-old daughter, Isabella, from Broadstairs, England.

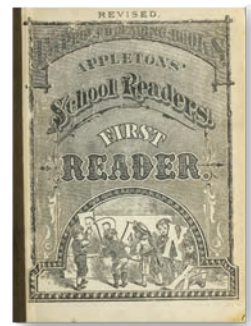
munications specialist.

“I want to talk to the astronauts and say, for example: ‘Good morning, Sam,’” she told CNN. “‘Is everything still floating around up there like it’s supposed to?’”

Share your stories with us at emg.inspired@epochtimes.com, and get your daily dose of inspiration by signing up for the Inspired newsletter at TheEpochTimes.com/newsletter



Astronaut Kjell Lindgren.



Appletons’ School Readers were used from the 1880s until the early 20th century.

‘Appletons’ School Readers’: An Alternative to Educational Malaise

While literacy rates in America continue to drop, a 19th-century primer series exemplifies the standards that modern textbooks should aim for

ANDREW BENSON BROWN

A little more than a century ago, education in America followed a very different vision than it does today.

A few years back, I encountered a vintage relic in a used bookstore that, for a mere \$6, opened my eyes to how much we have lost. “Appletons’ Fifth Reader” is the last volume in a 19th-century textbook series that emphasizes tradition, patriotism, and good taste.

Books that teach the basic elements of reading have a history dating back at least to Martin Luther, who wrote the first primer in the German language during the early days of printing. During much of the colonial period in America, the anonymously authored “The New-England Primer” was used to instill Puritan values in children. After the Civil War, an educational boom brought a demand for new textbooks.

The “Appletons’ School Readers” series was the most successful publishing venture within this competitive market.

Teaching Literary Excellence

Launched in 1877, the series was the brainchild of William T. Harris, a school superintendent in St. Louis, who later rose to be-

come the U.S. commissioner of education, and Andrew J. Rickoff, a superintendent in Cleveland and former president of the National Education Association.

Modeled on the style of the earlier, popular “Eclectic Reader” series by William McGuffey but altered to fit the “melting pot” ideal of the late 19th century, the “Appletons Readers” strove to bring children the best literature in the English-speaking world. They were widely used from the 1880s until the first decades of the 20th century.

While “Appletons’ First Reader” has simple, illustrated lessons for young children that involve identifying letters through sounds and arranging them into words, phrases, and sentences, the content becomes more difficult as the series progresses. The “Second Reader” contains elementary stories and poems; the “Third Reader,” more advanced ones.

The “Fourth Reader” has introductory lessons in logical analysis, as well as excerpts from such classic authors as Herodotus, Longfellow, Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Benjamin Franklin, and Louisa May Alcott. This text would have been studied by a child between the ages of 10 and 12; the equivalent of a fifth or sixth grader. Excerpts are broken up into digestible chunks and followed by questions that test comprehension.

The “Fifth Reader” was meant to be read by adolescents between the ages of about 13 and 15. It contains poetry by Milton, Shakespeare, the Romantics, and Tennyson; excerpts from Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, and Hawthorne; writings from the Founding Fathers, such as George Washington’s “Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior”; and verses from the Book of Psalms. Contributing author Mark Bailey, whose official job title was instructor in elocution at Yale, included his own essays with a classic feel, such as “Intelligent Reading” and “How to Render Noble Ideas,” which is full of advice on public speaking.

Dumbing Things Down

What’s striking is how much more sophisticated these old primers are compared to the mass education textbooks we’re familiar with today. What happened between then and now? The short answer is: John Dewey.

While lecturing on educational reform around the world in the 1920s, the famous pragmatist philosopher visited Soviet Russia, which had overhauled its own pedagogical system following Lenin’s revolution. Dewey was highly impressed with the Marxist methods of indoctrination he had encountered there. In a 1928 essay published in “The New

Republic,” he made excuses for the poverty and persecution that he saw, while also hailing the “population cultivation” in aesthetics and the “nobly heroic” efforts of the “educative struggle.” He espoused that “there is no country in Europe in which the external routine of life is more settled and secure.”

After returning from Soviet Russia, Dewey began promoting his ideas on progressive education inspired by the Soviet model, emphasizing equality in the classroom, learning through doing, and an immersion in the present.

Though Dewey’s observations may strike a modern reader as utterly absurd, he successfully implemented sweeping reforms in public schools based on his principles. A century has now passed, and it’s hard to see the outcome as anything but an unmitigated catastrophe. Dewey’s presentism bias led to a simplification of intellectual content that we continue to see today.

What’s striking is how much more sophisticated these old primers are compared to the mass education textbooks we’re familiar with today.

Curricula are built around an ever-changing set of contemporary authors, and it’s increasingly unlikely that students from different graduating classes will have read the same books—while the old stuff gets thrown out, no one can agree on what to replace it with.

This trend worsens the more elite that institutions become. In 2020, the same Yale that once employed Bailey as an instructor of elocution eliminated a survey course in Western art due to diversity concerns. Oxford has proposed to remove Homer and Virgil from its classics program. Ivy League schools no longer even require SAT scores for admission, emphasizing instead an applicant’s community service activities.

Low Numbers of Big Words

Every 10 years, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducts an international survey to assess literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills. The OECD defines literacy as “the ability to understand, evaluate, use, and engage with written texts.”

According to OECD’s most recent assessment of adult competencies (conducted 10 years ago), more than half of U.S. adults

scored in the “below basic” literacy range, reading at lower than an eighth-grade level. Only 12 percent of adults can read at the highest literacy level—which is actually a combination of the two highest groups, as not enough respondents scored at the highest level (2 percent) to make demographic generalizations. The criteria for scoring in the “proficient to high” range involve making complex inferences, applying background knowledge appropriately, interpreting subtle truth claims, and synthesizing information from complex texts. And yet, though few can read proficiently, everyone is going to college. According to the Census Bureau, almost 38 percent of Americans held a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2021. Is higher education alive and well? Not quite. More than two-thirds of these students graduated with only basic literacy skills. Only a small proportion of the rest can comprehend dense texts of the sort excerpted in “Appletons’ Fifth Reader”—a book once read by nearly every adolescent in America.

A Better Way to Learn

Progressives today take it for granted that they’re more enlightened than all the people who lived before them. Traditional wisdom is backward, they say; the past is full of ignorant racists, and we are better than them. The trends and statistics summarized here, though, expose this judgment for the arrogant fallacy that it is. Despite technological advances, Americans in the 21st century are less enlightened, in many ways, than they were in the 19th.

In our time, Dewey is lionized as a pedagogical genius, while few people remember primer authors such as Harris, Rickoff, or McGuffey. It’s these men, though, rather than Dewey, who deserve our commemoration for helping to elevate the nation’s standards of culture. Their influence can best be seen today in the homeschooling movement.

While “Appletons Readers” and other series like it are long obsolete in the public sphere, they remain popular (and cheap) resources for many parents looking for an alternative to the intellectual and moral stagnation that characterizes mainstream education. A parent could hardly do better for their child’s language development than teaching them literature and traditional values from one of these “archaic” books.

Andrew Benson Brown is a Missouri-based poet, journalist, and writing coach. He is an editor at *Bard Owl Publishing and Communications* and the author of “Legends of Liberty,” an epic poem about the American Revolution. For more information, visit Apollologist.wordpress.com



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Autumn Fires

By Robert Louis Stevenson

In the other gardens
And all up in the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over,
And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

“
Life starts all over
again when it gets
crisp in the fall.”

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD (1896-1940),
AMERICAN WRITER

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

WHY DO BIRDS FLY SOUTH IN THE FALL?

BECAUSE IT’S TOO FAR TO WALK.



SERGEY URVADNIKOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY BOGDAN FLORESCU/THE EPOCH TIMES

FANCY CHICKEN BREEDS

There are many varieties of chicken, some of which are egg layers, and some of which are raised for their meat.

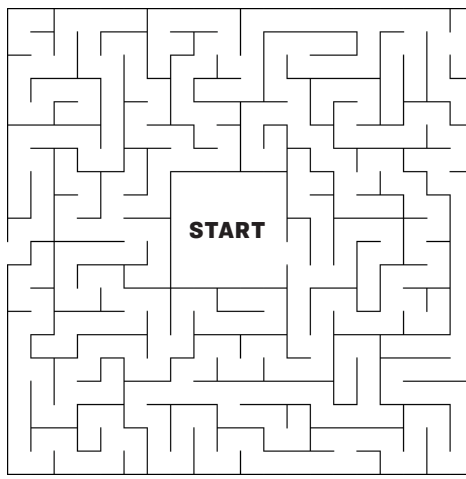
A third group isn’t raised for food, but for show. They are called fancy chickens, and they have a wide range of colors, feather patterns, sizes, and temperaments.

SILKIE
Silkies are feathered literally from head to toe. Oftentimes, their eyes are completely invisible, as are their feet, which have five toes (most chickens have four), two of which are feathered. They are stout and downy, with black skin, black eyes, and black combs and wattles. They are quite docile and friendly, making them very good pets, though they aren’t used for eggs or meat in this country. Their docile temperament and tendency to go broody (a broody hen is one that sits on eggs in the nest box, instead of just leaving them) makes them great mothers. Some chicken-keepers keep a few silkies for exactly this purpose, making them not just a showy fancy chicken, but a functional, utilitarian bird.

POLISH
The Polish chicken is a very old breed, appearing in Renaissance paintings in Italy and the Netherlands. Their main claim to fame is their large crest. This crest can impede their vision, which can cause them to be flighty and nervous if someone approaches. Their egg production is around 3 to 4 per week, which was considered a good number for an egg-laying chicken in the Polish chicken’s heyday, during the centuries following the Renaissance. Interestingly, the crest can differ between roosters and hens. A rooster’s plume is more untidy, while the hen’s crest is much tidier and arranged like a ball, as if she spends the morning in the chicken coop with a hairbrush.

AYAM CEMANI
These chickens originate from Java, and every single part of them is black, including their skin, comb, organs, and bones. Some Javans prize this chicken for so-called magic blood. It’s extremely rare, and it’s thought that less than 3,500 exist in the entire world. Because of this, they are very expensive. For one chick, the price is \$50, while adults can cost hundreds of dollars.

AMAZING ESCAPES!



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, -, AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one “unique” solution but, there may also be “equivalent” solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) + 1 = 28 and 1 + (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

4	9		
36			
3	8		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1

6 × (8 - 3 × 7)

Medium puzzle 1

4	12		
24			
3	11		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1

8 - 7 + 11 × 21

Hard puzzle 1

11	36		
60			
10	14		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1

91 - 96 - 01 × 11



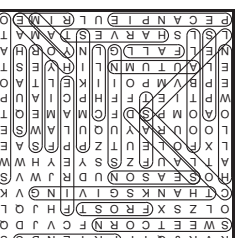
WHEEL BARROW PUMPKIN CACTUS BRIDGE SPARK PLUG
BUCKET GHOST GHOST CANDLE PENN BOWL
CARROT FLASHLIGHT

HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: Fall is a Wonderful Season

K	V	R	J	Q	T	P	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	U
S	W	E	E	T	C	O	R	N	F	C	V	J	D	Q
O	L	Z	S	X	F	R	O	S	T	F	H	J	L	
C	T	H	A	N	K	S	G	V	I	N	G	V	K	
H	O	S	E	A	S	O	N	U	D	R	J	W	V	S
A	T	L	A	U	F	Z	S	S	Y	E	H	W	W	
L	X	F	O	L	E	U	T	Z	P	P	F	S	A	E
L	O	O	U	R	A	Y	U	Q	L	A	W	A	S	E
Q	A	O	M	P	S	D	F	C	M	A	M	E	Q	T
W	P	T	I	E	T	F	F	H	P	C	I	A	U	P
E	P	B	V	M	P	O	I	I	K	E	L	T	A	O
E	L	A	U	T	M	N	L	H	Y	E	S	T		
N	E	L	F	A	L	L	G	L	N	Y	O	R	H	A
L	S	L	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	A	M	A	T	
P	E	C	A	N	P	I	E	U	L	R	I	M	E	O

- Apples
- Autumn
- Chill
- Colors
- Fall
- Family
- Feast
- Fireplace
- Football
- Friends
- Frost
- Halloween
- Harvest
- Home
- Leaves
- Pumpkins
- Rime
- Salad
- Season
- Squash
- Stuffing
- Sweater
- Sweetcorn
- Sweetpotato
- Thanksgiving
- Yam



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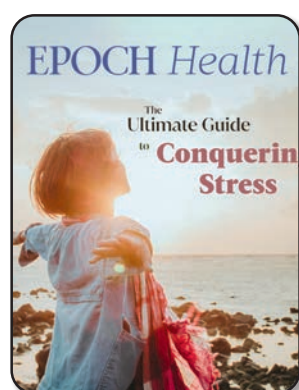
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