



A Bookosmia publication

OPIONATED

An e-book compiling the best newspaper columns written during Bookosmia's experiential 'Be2a Journalist' workshop.



**Hey everyone!
Your best friend,
Sara here!**

This is a very special e-book compiling the stunning opinions of some of the most articulate young writers in the world post their experience of being trainee journalists for a weekend.

During the experiential 'Be a Journalist' workshop conducted by Bookosmia, they learnt how to separate fact from fiction, do research, investigate and to never trust everything they read on social media!

COLUMNS NOT TO BE MISSED!

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This isn't a Disney movie - learn self defence and be your own hero

BY MEGHNA GIRISHANKAR, 16 FROM MUMBAI



I go for Karate classes, till date not knowing what to hope more for: to become better at self-defense or for people's behaviour towards women to change.

If only life were a Disney movie where a hero always steps in to save the day! Lamentably, in reality, you need to learn to fend for yourself.

A hero will not always be there to protect you, for Disney already signed up majority of them!

We live in a society where it is not safe for women to step out in broad daylight, let alone beyond dusk. The reportings of the atrocities against women - the Nirbhaya case or even the recent Hathras case - on page one are only testimony to this.

The most obvious and sensible solution to this problem would be to fix its root - people's attitude. Prevention is always better than cure, right? Wrong!

Apparently, there is a very long way to go for such a change to materialise. But how long is very long? For how long do women have to travel with one finger over the call button with 100 dialed on their phone and the other lingering over the pepper spray nozzle?



Not knowing precisely how long necessitates learning self-defense.

In fact, the New Delhi Police force has come to terms with this and has provided more than 1200 women with such classes, encouraging them to battle crime against women.

It at least teaches you how to ward off threats. But that's not all; there's much more to it. It makes you disciplined - one of life's most sought after virtues. And while you're at it, you don't even have to worry about scheduling out time to shed those extra pounds. Self-defense takes care of that too.

However, critiques don't quite agree with self-defense's efficacy. Even if one does end up becoming a Karate or Taekwondo black belt, what vouches for their safety?

According to them it is easy to defend an attack when you are anticipating one, such as simulations during training. However, an unpronounced strike by multiple people simultaneously would probably throw one completely off guard.

So, they believe capital punishment is the solution.

But is it really?

Taking the lives of people is surely not the only way to solve the matter. A more effective solution would be to counsel perpetrators by offering rehabilitation facilities - it is corrective rather than preventative. In Martin Luther King, Jr's words, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."



Calling for an upheaval of people's mindset might take long, but we can at least try to speed up the process.

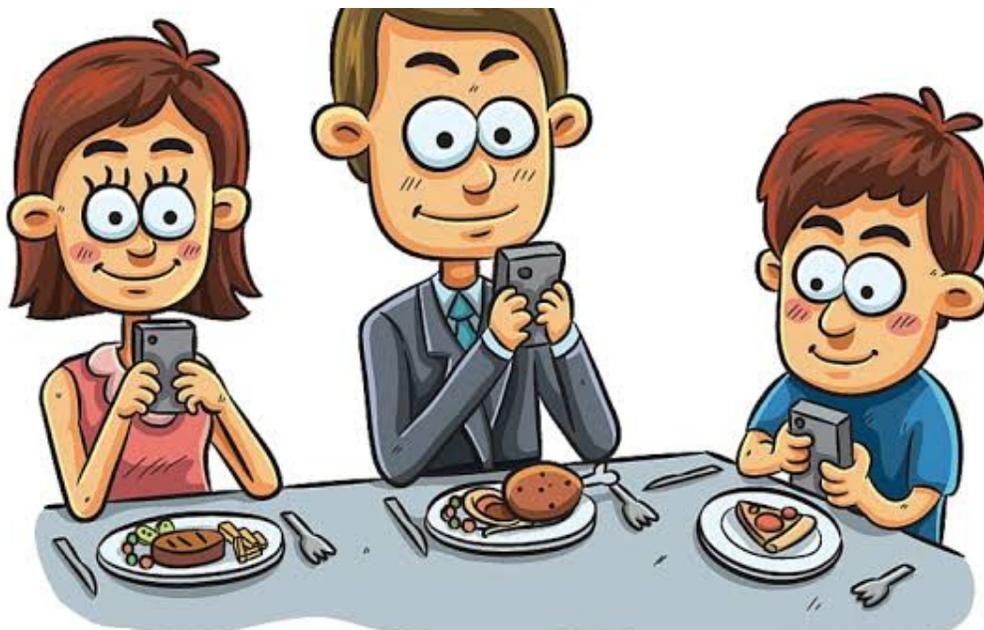
All that is needed is a bit of hope and a bit of courage. When the two meet, amazing things are bound to happen. And I can already sense it!

Meghna is a dedicated student and ensures that she stays on top of her assignments. She loves to read books and writing is something she enjoys doing as well. Economics is her favourite subject at school and she wishes to pursue a career in the same field. As for extra curricular activities, she does karate and is currently a brown belt.



Get off that phone and grab a book!

BY SATVIKA SURI, 13 FROM BANGALORE



Now wherever you go, everybody's nose is buried in their phones. From schools to shopping, payments to food, literally everything is done on phones now.

An average person spends almost nine years of their life on their phones!

If this continues, we will have to be surgically separated from them. We all know the disadvantages and negative effects of too much screen time, but still don't stop. If one can spend so much time on their phone, an hour for a book shouldn't be that hard, right?

Of course, because of this pandemic we have no other option but to switch to e-mode.

But now as everything goes online, we must be more careful about how long we spend in front of our screen. Today, we think the solution to every problem is a phone.

A child is crying, give them a phone. If you are hungry, order online. If you wanted the day's news, read the e-paper. Honestly, even books are read online now.

Everything is being done on the phone.

But none of us have an idea about how badly it affects our eyes. And most importantly our brain. The light/rays emitted damage our eyesight and also interfere with our sleep cycle. This may lead to eye problems and insomnia.

And of course, there will be problems in socializing and communication. In kids, this may lead to low performance in academics and lower thinking rate.

The interaction between parents and children has also reduced so much. It has negative effects on both kids and adults.

Secondly, we have social media. Sure, connecting with people is necessary. But now people are stuck taking selfies. Honestly, if anyone goes missing, it is going to be impossible to find them because of all the filters in every photo of theirs.

And once someone gets you your dinner, instead of eating it, people click pictures with it. How does that satisfy hunger?

We have forgotten the fact that food is for eating and not for taking pictures. While we connect, getting addicted to social media is very disadvantageous. It decreases emotional connection and people are ignoring family members and friends for some unknown internet user.

Books, on the other hand, are like an escape. They let you travel without moving your feet. One can never have too much of a book time and there is no need to worry about a reading-overdose.

The advantages of reading are endless. It enhances one's vocabulary and helps them learn new things. Books help reduce stress and helps sleep. And honestly, we could all use a little stress busting.

Plus, for internet addicts, I can assure you unlimited battery life and data storage in books. Books are immune to viruses and there are absolutely no pop-up ads (unless someone interrupts you).

If ever a zombie apocalypse starts, the zombies might destroy the internet. No worries! Books don't need the internet or Wi-Fi! And you might be able to kill a zombie or two with a sizable book

Books are not only amazing for reading, but they add as a beautiful home décor too! They look amazing on your walls and nightstands (and chimneys and doors and roofs and couches and floors. Books look good everywhere).

They are like televisions in your head. When you are reading a good book, the whole scene just forms in your head and that feeling is like no other.



George R R Martin summed up book-reading the best-
“a reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one.”

I am not against technology. But in today's world, we aren't using technology, the technology is using us. So, we must limit our screen time and adopt better practices.

Satvika is a 13 year old from Bangalore who loves reading books and drawing.



Is Taylor Swift on her way to be the next 'queen of pop'?

BY SUHANI KHEMKA, 12 FROM KOLKATA



Is Taylor Swift, the celebrated singer on her way to be crowned the next 'queen of pop'?

As the star releases her 9th studio album 'evermore' as a continuation of the 8th album 'folklore', she gains over 141 million followers on Instagram.

She also gained 34 million followers on Spotify being the #22nd most streamed artist with over 41 million monthly listeners.

She is the holder of 10 Grammy awards, 32 American music awards, 23 Billboard awards, 11 MTV music awards, 8 country music awards and many other awards. She surpassed Michael Jackson in American music awards (AMA) who won 24 AMA's.

Her Netflix original documentary 'Miss Americana' was released on 31st January 2020 which showcases her struggles in life and that she is a deserving artist.

The artist has recorded many hit singles and music videos.

She deserves the title of 'queen of pop' after all her creations in music and song-writing.

Many of her songs like ME! shake it off, bad blood, etc have hit the Billboard top 100. She stands by her view and supports what she thinks.

Full of determination and dedication, she is also a true believer who believes in herself. Many youngsters look up to her and her music.

She holds an important place in the music industry and is famous all over the world.

Her songs describe personal experience and are written in pure poetic-lyricism.

Being an entertainer, singer, song writer, she also expresses her political views and stands by woman's rights.

Her songs beautifully describe her personality and her perfection in vocals, composition, lyrics has gained her such a large fanbase on different social media platforms.



The artist has been releasing hits after hits after she entered the musical world though she had started her singing and songwriting journey since she was a young teen.

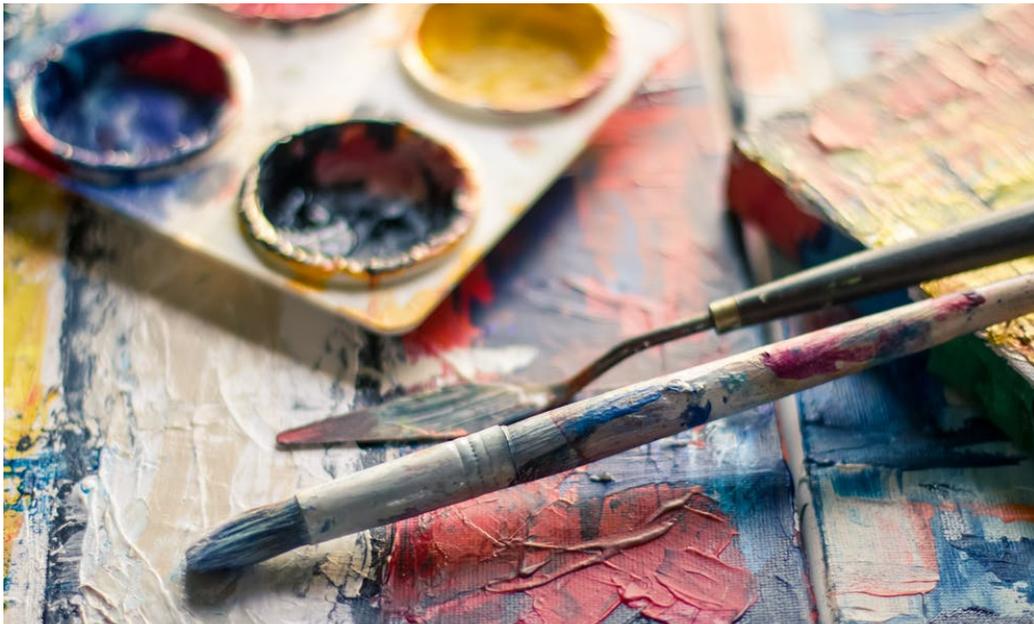
She is a really deserving artist and is entitled to being called the 'queen of pop' after all her great creations in the music industry.

Suhani has great enthusiasm for writing, reading, baking, traveling, and listening to music. Her favorite book series are Harry Potter and Sherlock Holmes. She is a student of Word Munchers.



Why it's time to take hobbies seriously

BY SAHAJ PATEL, 15 FROM VADODARA



Hobbies play an important role in our life and give us a chance to enhance it. It allows us to de-stress while simultaneously remaining mentally active.

For example, a person studying medicine, can, in their free time, relax with other hobbies. It can be drawing, reading, dancing, or even starting their own class!

Having hobbies we enjoy doing, help in improving our health and lowers the risk of depression or dementia. Our life has become a rush. It does not matter if you are an adult or a teenager. The frustration of hectic life can be solved by having a hobby that you can do whenever the stress gets to you.

Not everyone needs to have a hobby to do away with their stress. Some people find peace in little things.

Be it a fluttering butterfly, a funny story, twinkling stars, or simply resting their muddled head in their bed.

However, it makes us more interesting to talk to. We have more stories or experiences that we can share with others to fill up the awkward gaps in conversations.

We might even end up cultivating an interest for our hobby in the other person's mind.

They do a whole lot of good to people who are short tempered or impatient. They develop patience in order to build our skills.

Hobbies can also ultimately affect our social life for the better. It is a great way to meet new people having the same interests as we have and develop a bond with them.

Hobbies do not, always have to be done in groups. You can also do your hobby alone.

If you are someone who does not find it easy to make friends, then hobbies give you company in a friendless life.

When we are really good at the activity that we do, we begin to feel good about ourselves which boosts our confidence and increases our self-esteem.

We feel proud of our accomplishments. They also are an excellent way of eradicating boredom.

They give us something to do with the free time we have and feel excited about it. As we spend more time doing our hobby, we develop new skills and improve on them.

An example can be taken of the people, who during the lock down period of this pandemic, made home-made items, like cards, bookmarks, candles, dream catchers et cetera and then sold them when the lockdown was lifted to make some extra income.

New hobbies also allow us to gain new knowledge and nothing feels better than feeling wiser!

Hobbies have a way of enriching our life. No matter what the hobby is, we are always exposed to new ideas.

It helps in forming new opinions and looking at life from a different angle. When we have good hobbies to fill up our free time, we are less likely to spend our time on negative activities.



Lastly, hobbies are not only for our external satisfaction. They also have a way of providing us with spiritual bliss.

Energy flows through the body making us feel energized, which is, after all, the very reason we take up a hobby.

Sahaj Patel studies in grade 10. She has a love for writing and reading. Her hobbies are drawing and public speaking. She is a student of Young Orators.



Come over for an arm-chair trip to the Swiss Alps

BY PRABHGEET KAUR, 11 FROM KOLKATA



Did you know the shape and size of the ice caves in Swiss Alps change every year? In case you are wondering what an ice cave is, here's a virtual tour from the comfort of your home!

It is an ice cave that forms naturally on a high altitude glacier in Swiss Alps. It has a rounded ceiling made of thick ice just as a huge blue vault of the 'ice cathedral'.

The height of this ice cave differs year to year. It is about 20 meters long with the rounded ceiling made of thick ice about 5 meters high this year.

This time, the interior of the cave is quite flat and pretty accessible.

Organizers say that the ice cave can be reached on foot in 15 minutes from chairlift at Glacier 3000 above the resort of Les Diablerets, but at your own risk!

Also known as Mill, the cave forms through a siphon effect.

The cavity fills with water from the snow melt, forming a lake every spring and summer. In autumn, the plug disappears and the water drains leaving the cave.

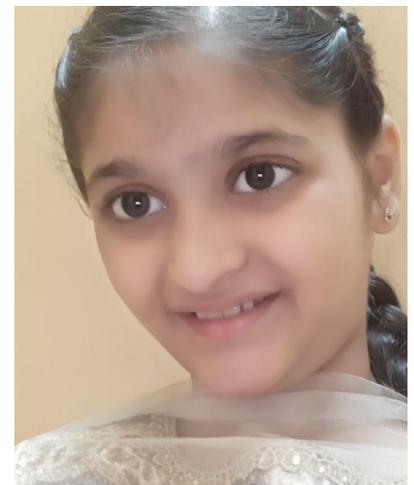
Helen Tromp living near the ice cave claims, " It is a gift of nature and is rare. It is so eye catching and magnificent. Inside the cave looks like a whole new world."



Tourists feel mesmerized each year, standing under the incredible blue vault. I know what you're thinking. Travel in the times of Covid?

But if there is one thing we have learnt in the last year, it is that we can make the best of any situation. Yes, that means even arm-chair travel to these beautiful places!

Prabhgeet is an enthusiast reader and is a keen writer who loves to pen down her thoughts in the form of poetry and stories. She aims to be a successful writer in life.



Why is this workshop relevant? Why should youngsters learn about journalism?

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"It is the age of information. Social media platforms have turned each one of us into a 'Citizen Journalist'. This is immense power in every individual's hand. That is why it is important to understand what journalism is and how professional journalists do their job as the watchdog of democracy. This workshop introduces youngsters to the basics of news gathering, sourcing information, fact checking inputs, editing, news writing and other such skills associated with being a media professional. More than that, it teaches them to treat every bit of information with responsibility. Whether a youngster goes on to become a journalist or not, the way the person looks at news and processes information will undergo a big change.

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KR GURUPRASAD
Former sports editor of DNA.

Author of 'Going places-India's small town cricket heroes' published by Penguin.

Journalism experience of over 16 years.

Appreciation for the workshop pouring in from some of the best journalists in the country.

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"Opinion is the medium between knowledge and ignorance," said Plato. In the post-truth world that we live in, it is imperative for a mind, more so a young one, to distinguish fact from fiction and form strong truth-based opinions. It is, therefore, heartening to see the young aspiring journalists and writers honing this crucial craft through their columns in the 'Opinionated' ebook published by Bookosmia. What is also encouraging to see is the range of issues being covered by these young writers. It is evident that there are some brilliant thinkers and writers ready to unleash their potential, and use facts and truth to be the voice the world badly needs to hear.

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**Vinay Umarji
Chief of Bureau,
Business Standard -
Ahmedabad
Senior journalist with over
15 years of experience**

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