

THE HORIZONS

Empowering Student Voices | Celebrating Ideas & Creativity



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DESIGNERS

- Newsletter design: [Maryam Shamseldin, grade 11](#)
- Cover/ opening image: [Abdur Rahman, grade 7](#)
- Closing image: [Amatullah, grade 5](#)

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Editor's Note

This month, we explore the transformative power of technology, leadership, and resilience in a rapidly evolving world. Our contributors have tackled some of the most pressing issues of our time, from groundbreaking innovations in artificial intelligence to the urgent challenges posed by climate change.

In this edition, Amreen discusses China's AI breakthrough, DeepSeek, emphasizing its potential to disrupt global tech dynamics. Aysha and Ruhaan explore AI's impact on education, balancing personalized learning with ethical considerations. Amreen also addresses the urgent need for climate awareness following the devastating Los Angeles wildfires.

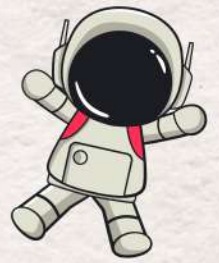
On a personal note, Shreya reflects on how extracurricular activities build leadership skills, illustrating her transformation from a "thieving mouse" on stage to a confident leader, highlighting the importance of passion and involvement in shaping our futures.

As you read through these thought-provoking pieces, we hope you're inspired to stay informed and to engage, reflect, and take action in your own communities. The Horizons Newsletter aims to provide more than just news. It's a platform for young voices to explore global issues, share personal experiences, and spark meaningful conversations.

Thank you for joining us this month. Here's to expanding our horizons together!

Warm regards,
Saanjh Balpande and Fadumo Omar
Editor in Chief and Managing Editor
The Horizons Newsletter





STEM STORIES...

CHINA'S AI REVOLUTION

BY AMREEN, GRADE 9

THE \$1 TRILLION DISRUPTION THAT CAUGHT AMERICA OFF GUARD

The news broke quietly at first—China had unveiled a new AI model, DeepSeek, a direct competitor to Silicon Valley's most advanced systems. But within hours, it quickly shook the tech world. The result? The U.S. stock market suffered a staggering \$1 trillion loss, a jaw-dropping realization that sent Wall Street and Silicon Valley into a frenzy.

For years, the U.S. had dominated the AI race, with companies like OpenAI, Google, and Microsoft investing billions into developing cutting-edge AI systems. These AI tools weren't cheap—most were locked behind paywalls, subscription models, and corporate licensing agreements.

DEEPSEEK'S LAUNCH

Then came DeepSeek. Incredibly powerful and efficient, but with one surprising twist—it was completely free. This changed everything. How could an AI model developed with a fraction of the budget of U.S. counterparts deliver the same level of performance, if not better? And how could it be free? The financial markets reacted with panic. Nvidia, the leader in AI chip manufacturing, saw its stock drop 17% in a single day, wiping nearly \$600 billion in market value. Microsoft and Google, heavily invested in AI infrastructure, each took multibillion-dollar hits. The Nasdaq plunged, and even promising AI startups found themselves in crisis as investors scrambled to reassess the future of the industry.

But the real shock? The cost—or lack thereof. China had reportedly built DeepSeek with a budget of just \$5.6 million—pennies compared to the billions spent by U.S. tech giants. This raised difficult questions: Had Silicon Valley been over-engineering and overpricing its technology? And more importantly, had it underestimated its biggest competitor?

For years, the U.S. had worked hard to block China's access to advanced chips and AI technology. But DeepSeek's success suggested that China had found a way to innovate without them. Chinese researchers had seemingly cracked the code for building powerful AI systems using more efficient algorithms and innovative techniques rather than relying on expensive hardware.

SILICON VALLEY

Silicon Valley, meanwhile, was in crisis mode. Executives at OpenAI, Google, and Microsoft faced an uncomfortable reality. Their premium AI systems, once seen as the pinnacle of technological advancement, were now being challenged by a free, equally capable alternative. If DeepSeek could provide world-class AI at zero cost, how could these companies continue to justify charging for their services?



So, what's next? Will U.S. companies adapt by lowering costs? Will they push for regulatory barriers against foreign AI models? Will this moment be remembered as a temporary market shake-up or a turning point in global tech dominance? Experts argue that the U.S. has no choice but to rethink its strategy. The AI race is no longer about who can spend the most— it's about who can bring the future to the world first.

With global power dynamics at stake, the future of AI is no longer just about innovation. It's about open access, efficiency, and who controls the most vital technologies of the next generation. And China's extraordinary leap forward suggests that the traditional balance of power in the tech world may be permanently altered.

THE FUTURE OF AI IN EDUCATION – A MIDDLE SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

BY AYSHA RAFIQ AHMED, GRADE 7

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is a big part of our lives today. From smartphones to video games, AI helps make technology work faster and smarter. But one of the coolest areas where AI is growing is in education. In the future, AI could change the way we learn, teach, and study in ways we never imagined. Let's take a look at what that future might look like!



Personalized learning

Imagine if your schoolwork could be perfectly matched to how you learn best. Some students like to read, while others learn better by doing hands-on activities. AI could create personalized learning plans for each student based on their strengths and weaknesses.

For example, if you're really good at math but find reading hard, AI could give you more math challenges while providing extra help with reading. AI could even change the way homework works! It could offer hints or explain things in different ways if you're stuck. With this kind of help, everyone could learn at their own pace without feeling left behind.

Virtual Teachers and Tutors

One of the biggest advantages of AI is that it can help people anytime and anywhere. Imagine having a virtual tutor available 24/7, no matter where you are! AI could become your personal teacher, guiding you through lessons, answering questions, and explaining difficult topics. Even if you're not in school, you could use AI-powered apps or websites to get the help you need.

AI could also help teachers by grading assignments and providing feedback faster. This would free up more time for teachers to spend helping students one-on-one.

Smart Classrooms:

In the future, classrooms might look a little different. Instead of just a chalkboard or a smartboard, classrooms could be filled with AI-powered tools. These smart tools might be able to adjust the lighting or temperature to make the room more comfortable for learning. AI could also track how well each student is doing and make sure everyone is staying on track.

For example, if a student seems distracted or is struggling, the AI might suggest a break or offer new learning strategies. This could help both students and teachers stay focused on what's important.



AI and Collaboration:

AI could also help students work together in new ways. In the future, there might be AI programs that connect students from all over the world. You could work on projects with kids from different countries, learning about other cultures while solving problems together. AI could make this easier by translating languages in real time, so communication is always smooth.

Preparing for the Future:

With AI becoming such a big part of our lives, students will need to learn how to use it. Schools might offer classes on AI, teaching kids how to design and work with this technology. Knowing how AI works will be important because it will likely be a tool used in many future jobs, from doctors to engineers.

Conclusion

The future of AI in education is full of exciting possibilities! Whether it's creating personalized lessons, helping students with homework, or connecting people from all over the world, AI has the potential to make learning easier and more fun. As this technology continues to grow, students and teachers will work together with AI to create the best learning experiences possible.



SO, KEEP AN EYE ON AI—IT MIGHT JUST BE YOUR BEST STUDY BUDDY IN THE YEARS TO COME!

THE FUTURE OF AI IN EDUCATION – A HIGH SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

BY RUHAAN SARDANA, GRADE II

Introduction

AI in education is both a revolutionary tool and a double-edged sword. It brings innovative solutions for enhancing learning experiences and automating administrative tasks, but it also raises critical concerns. The recently concluded AI Action Summit in Paris endorsed the responsible development of AI, with trust, ethics, and inclusiveness as key themes in the discussion about using AI in education. Experts from government, technology, and education sectors emphasized the need for collaboration in creating a trusted AI ecosystem for all learners. The goal? To ensure that technology does not widen the already existing inequities in the world.

Safety and Security in AI Systems

One of the primary concerns raised at the summit was the need for AI systems that are both safe and secure. AI-powered learning tools must be reliable and free from bias to ensure fairness for students from all backgrounds. The summit emphasized the importance of strong regulatory frameworks to protect users as AI technology advances.



French President Emmanuel Macron stressed that safety must be balanced with innovation. He called for a unified global effort to establish guidelines that would make AI effective yet secure for students and educators alike.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

A major focus of the summit was ensuring that AI technologies are accessible to all learners, particularly underrepresented and disadvantaged students. Experts agreed that AI must not create educational disparities but instead work toward bridging existing gaps. Deliberate action is required to ensure equity in access to AI-powered learning tools.

Ethical Considerations

Another key discussion point was the ethical use of AI in education. Concerns over data privacy, algorithmic biases, and misinformation must be addressed to ensure AI benefits both students and educators. AI developers must work with ethical principles in mind, designing systems that promote fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Regulatory Frameworks and International Standards

The summit also highlighted the importance of building international standards for AI in education. Without standardized guidelines, different countries might adopt fragmented approaches to AI implementation, creating inconsistencies in education quality. With globalization making educational institutions more interconnected, the need for universal AI policies is greater than ever.

Additionally, as AI technologies become more advanced, the call for strict regulatory frameworks grows louder. Policymakers must work together to ensure AI is used responsibly in classrooms while safeguarding students' privacy and data security.

Preparing Students for the Future Job Market

One of the most significant impacts of AI in education is its role in preparing students for the workforce of tomorrow. The summit emphasized that students must be equipped with skills relevant to an AI-driven economy. Adaptability, critical thinking, and digital literacy are essential for thriving in an increasingly automated job market.

Schools can play a crucial role by integrating AI into the curriculum, helping students understand how to work alongside AI tools rather than compete with them. By focusing on real-world applications of AI, students can gain hands-on experience that will give them an edge in future careers.

Conclusion

The discussions at the AI Action Summit in Paris serve as a reminder that while AI holds immense potential in transforming education, it also brings significant responsibilities. AI should be seen as a tool to assist educators rather than replace them. By fostering collaboration among governments, educational institutions, and tech companies, AI can be harnessed to create inclusive, secure, and effective learning environments. The journey ahead requires purposeful innovation—where AI enhances education while maintaining ethical standards. If done right, AI in education will not just be a futuristic concept but a transformative reality that benefits students across the globe.

TOYOTA'S \$6.5 MILLION GRANT: Driving future of stem education



Innovation and education go hand in hand, and Toyota is proving just that with its latest commitment to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. In a remarkable initiative, Toyota has announced a [\\$6.5 million](#) grant to expand access to STEM learning for students across the United States.

This investment focuses on [hands-on learning](#), [robotics programs](#), and [career readiness initiatives](#) aimed at preparing students for the rapidly evolving fields of engineering, artificial

intelligence, and sustainability. By fostering [curiosity](#), [problem-solving skills](#), and [technological expertise](#), this initiative ensures that the next generation is equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Empowering Future Innovators

Toyota's grant will support:

- **Robotics & Engineering Programs** – Schools will receive funding to launch robotics teams, coding workshops, and hands-on engineering projects.
- **Mentorship & Career Readiness** – Students will have opportunities to connect with STEM professionals through mentorship programs and internships.
- **Curriculum Development & Technology Access** – The grant will provide schools with updated materials, interactive learning tools, and technology labs.



Promoting Diversity in STEM

A key focus of Toyota's initiative is [bridging the diversity gap](#) in STEM fields. Women and minority students remain underrepresented in technology and engineering careers. This funding will help schools create inclusive STEM programs that encourage [equal opportunities for all students to explore, innovate, and lead](#) in science and technology.

Investing in the Future

Toyota's \$6.5 million grant is more than just an investment in education—it's an investment in [the future of innovation](#). As industries shift toward automation, sustainability, and artificial intelligence, the students of today will become the [leaders and problem-solvers of tomorrow](#).

At [International Schooling](#), we believe in the power of STEM to transform learning and shape the future. With initiatives like Toyota's, we are one step closer to ensuring that [every student has the tools and opportunities they need to succeed in a world driven by science and technology](#).

What This Means for Students

For students passionate about STEM, this initiative opens new doors to [learning, collaboration, and real-world applications of science and technology](#). Schools and educators will have access to more resources, and students will gain [critical thinking and problem-solving skills](#) that are essential for the future workforce.

CURRENT EVENTS: THE WORLD AROUND US



UPDATE

The Los Angeles Wildfires of 2025: A City Under Fire

BY AMREEN, GRADE 9

A Disaster Unfolds

What started as a small brush fire in the Angeles National Forest quickly escalated into a monstrous blaze that ravaged the heart of Los Angeles, leaving entire neighborhoods in ruins and forcing thousands to flee their homes. Within a week, the fire had spread uncontrollably, engulfing nearly 100,000 acres and causing widespread devastation throughout the city.

For residents in the affected areas, it was a nightmare. Fueled by record-high temperatures and strong winds, the fires tore through parts of Los Angeles with frightening speed. Streets once bustling with life were now choked with smoke and ash. Iconic landmarks like the Hollywood Sign became barely visible through the haze. Thousands of families found themselves without homes, and businesses that had stood for generations were reduced to rubble in mere hours. The city, accustomed to wildfires in the past, had never seen one this destructive.

Financial & Environmental Toll

The economic impact of the fire was immediate and staggering. Early estimates suggested that damages could exceed \$20 billion, affecting homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure. Insurance companies issued catastrophic warnings, while the stock market reacted with uncertainty. Real estate companies saw their stocks plummet, while shares of homebuilders and insurance firms experienced a sharp decline as the full extent of the damage became clear.

Beyond financial losses, the environmental impact was equally devastating. Wildlife habitats were destroyed, and the city's already poor air quality reached hazardous levels. Hospitals reported a surge in patients suffering from respiratory issues due to the thick smoke lingering over the region. Experts warned that the long-term ecological consequences of the wildfire could take years, if not decades, to fully recover from.

A Climate Wake-Up Call

This disaster highlighted the increasing vulnerability of Los Angeles to climate change. In the last decade, the city had experienced a series of increasingly severe wildfires. However, the 2025 blaze was seen by many as a tipping point—a stark reminder that the city's infrastructure was ill-prepared for the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events.

California's governor, along with local officials, declared a state of emergency, calling for additional firefighting resources from across the state and beyond. Firefighters, many of whom had already been battling blazes for weeks in other parts of California, were stretched thin as they fought to contain the flames threatening the city. Evacuations were ordered, and shelters quickly filled as residents sought safety.

Challenges in the Response Effort

Despite the best efforts of emergency responders, the response to the wildfires was not without challenges. Power outages were widespread, complicating evacuation efforts and leaving many without basic necessities for days. The city's already congested freeways became gridlocked as residents attempted to flee, creating chaotic scenes on the roads. Emergency services were overwhelmed, revealing the gaps in the city's disaster preparedness plan. Critics argue that Los Angeles had failed to implement sufficient wildfire prevention strategies despite repeated warnings from climate scientists. Others pointed out that urban expansion into fire-prone areas had made the city even more vulnerable. The need for better forest management, stricter building codes, and improved emergency response systems became clearer than ever.

As Los Angeles begins the long road to recovery, discussions have emerged about the city's future approach to wildfire prevention. Will the government invest in more aggressive climate adaptation strategies? Will better infrastructure and emergency planning help mitigate future disasters? Experts suggest that traditional methods—such as firebreaks and increased firefighting resources—are no longer enough. The city must take proactive measures, including improving early warning systems, strengthening urban planning policies, and addressing the root causes of climate change. For now, Los Angeles is left to pick up the pieces. But the real question remains: Can the city adapt to the unpredictable weather patterns that climate change is forcing upon it, or will it continue to be caught off guard by future disasters? The wildfires of 2025 have left a lasting mark on Los Angeles—not just in terms of physical destruction, but in how they've forced the city to confront the harsh realities of an uncertain future.

GENERAL WRITING: REFLECTIONS AND REALITIES



FROM CLUBS TO CAREERS: HOW EXTRACURRICULARS BUILD LEADERS

BY SHREYA MAHARAJ CHETTIAR, GRADE 9

Businessman and former White House Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles once said, "Leadership is the key to 99% of all successful efforts." But what if I told you that developing leadership skills as a student can be as exciting as playing basketball or building a robot in a coding club? Yes, you heard it right! Building leadership skills can be both fun and fulfilling, and it often begins with extracurricular activities. These vibrant environments provide a unique playground for growth, where the seeds of leadership can sprout in the most delightful ways.

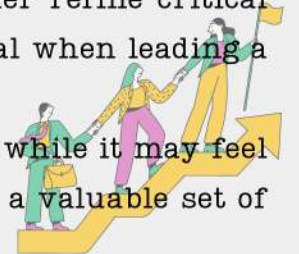
Beyond the Classroom: Leadership in Action

Think of extracurricular activities as an accelerated course in leadership, minus the boring lectures. Research conducted by professors at the University of Idaho shows that extracurricular activities are a significant predictor of student leadership, and involvement in these activities enhances students' learning experiences and contributes to their leadership development.

But this isn't just an abstract idea—many of the world's most influential leaders started honing their leadership skills through extracurriculars. For example, former U.S. President Barack Obama played basketball in high school, even winning a state championship in his senior year. Playing basketball helped Obama develop teamwork and strategic thinking—skills that later proved invaluable in his presidency. Similarly, former Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern credited her school debating

experience as a key factor in her leadership development. Debating helped her refine critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and empathy—traits that became essential when leading a nation.

So, if you still think joining the school play is a "stupid idea," remember this: while it may feel like fun and games (and maybe a little stage fright), you're actually building a valuable set of leadership tools for your future.



From Thieving Mouse to Leading the Way

When I was five years old, I joined a drama club because I loved acting, and I still do. I fondly recall my first role as the thieving mouse—a small but memorable part that was pure fun! Unbeknownst to me, I was also learning valuable leadership skills.

Rehearsals taught me that leadership isn't about dictating; it's about listening and responding to your team. When our lead actor panicked over a missing prop (ironically hidden in his backpack), I discovered the power of rallying a team. We regrouped, shared a laugh, and brainstormed solutions, demonstrating both leadership and crisis management.

By the time I was twelve, I was writing, directing, and acting in my own play—a testament to the leadership growth I experienced while simply having fun. And you can too! Extracurricular activities not only cultivate leadership, but they also allow students to explore their passions.

The Power of Participation: Inspiring Others

Ultimately, extracurricular activities offer students a powerful blend of enjoyment and growth. They provide a space to explore passions while simultaneously cultivating essential leadership skills that pave the way for future success.



From research and real-world examples to my personal experiences, the evidence is clear: extracurriculars are a secret weapon for developing true leadership. Because true leaders don't just give orders—they empower others, embrace teamwork, and even laugh at their own mistakes.

As John Quincy Adams wisely said, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.” As students, we have countless opportunities to build these skills through extracurricular activities such as clubs, sports, and community service.

Whether organizing an event or simply participating in a bake sale, every experience is a step toward becoming a better leader. So, dive in, embrace the (sometimes chaotic) fun, and remember: true leadership is measured not just by achievements, but by the inspiration and laughter you share along the way.





The Art of Procrastination

BY AZMAH ALOMARI, GRADE II

Procrastination. I like to think of it as an art, not a flaw. People love to complain about it, but let's be honest—procrastination is often the precursor to brilliance. Look at every inventor, artist, and visionary throughout history. Sure, they “worked hard,” but who's to say their breakthroughs didn't happen when they were avoiding something more boring—like writing that last paragraph of a research paper or doing laundry (not that I'm speaking from experience)?

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF AVOIDANCE

I'm not talking about the kind of procrastination that leaves you paralyzed with guilt, staring at the ceiling and wondering where your life went wrong. No. I'm talking about the productive kind. The type where you tell yourself you'll work in a bit, but first, you decide to reorganize your entire room, or suddenly get really into your 12th re-watch of that show you swore you'd never finish. If anything, it's a lesson in time management, right? The more you don't work in that assignment; the more time you have to perfect your procrastination technique. It's about honing a craft.

For example, last night, I was supposed to finish a five-page essay by midnight. But before I could even consider starting, I thought to myself: “I should really clean my desk.” A small detour. But then, it was a slight glance at the window, and—what's that? A bird? I need to look that up. It's like an entire web of distractions unfolds every time I try to sit down and focus. But the more I delay, the more I get into the flow of avoiding. There's an art to it, really.

PANIC-FUELED PRODUCTIVITY

Let's not forget the most “classic” form of procrastination—the panic-fueled productivity. You know the one: 11:45 PM, the deadline is breathing down your neck like a velociraptor, and suddenly, every single brain cell is firing. There's no better time to crank out your best work than when you're on the brink of disaster.

Is it healthy? Probably not. Does it work? Well, I'm still here, aren't I?

WHY DO WE DO IT?

The real question, however, is why we keep doing it. Sure, the rush of last-minute success feels exhilarating, but at what cost? Every time I find myself procrastinating, I'm reminded of something bigger: It's not always about the task at hand. It's about how we deal with pressure, how we avoid facing discomfort by distracting ourselves with anything but the obvious.

But maybe that's the point. We're always looking for something to escape into, and procrastination is just one version of that. It's a form of rebellion. A tiny revolution against the endless demands of deadlines and expectations.

CONCLUSION

In the end, procrastination is a paradox—a chaotic comfort that, at its best, leaves us with a sense of accomplishment that's somehow more earned than just doing the thing on time.

But perhaps one day, I'll be brave enough to stop running from my responsibilities and tackle

the beast head-on, without the elaborate game of avoidance.

Maybe I'll even do my laundry without “forgetting” about it. But then again, where's the fun in that?

CREATIVE WRITERS SECTION

UNLEASHING IMAGINATION

THE TIMEKEEPER'S GIFT

BY FAKHIR AHMED KHAN, GRADE 11



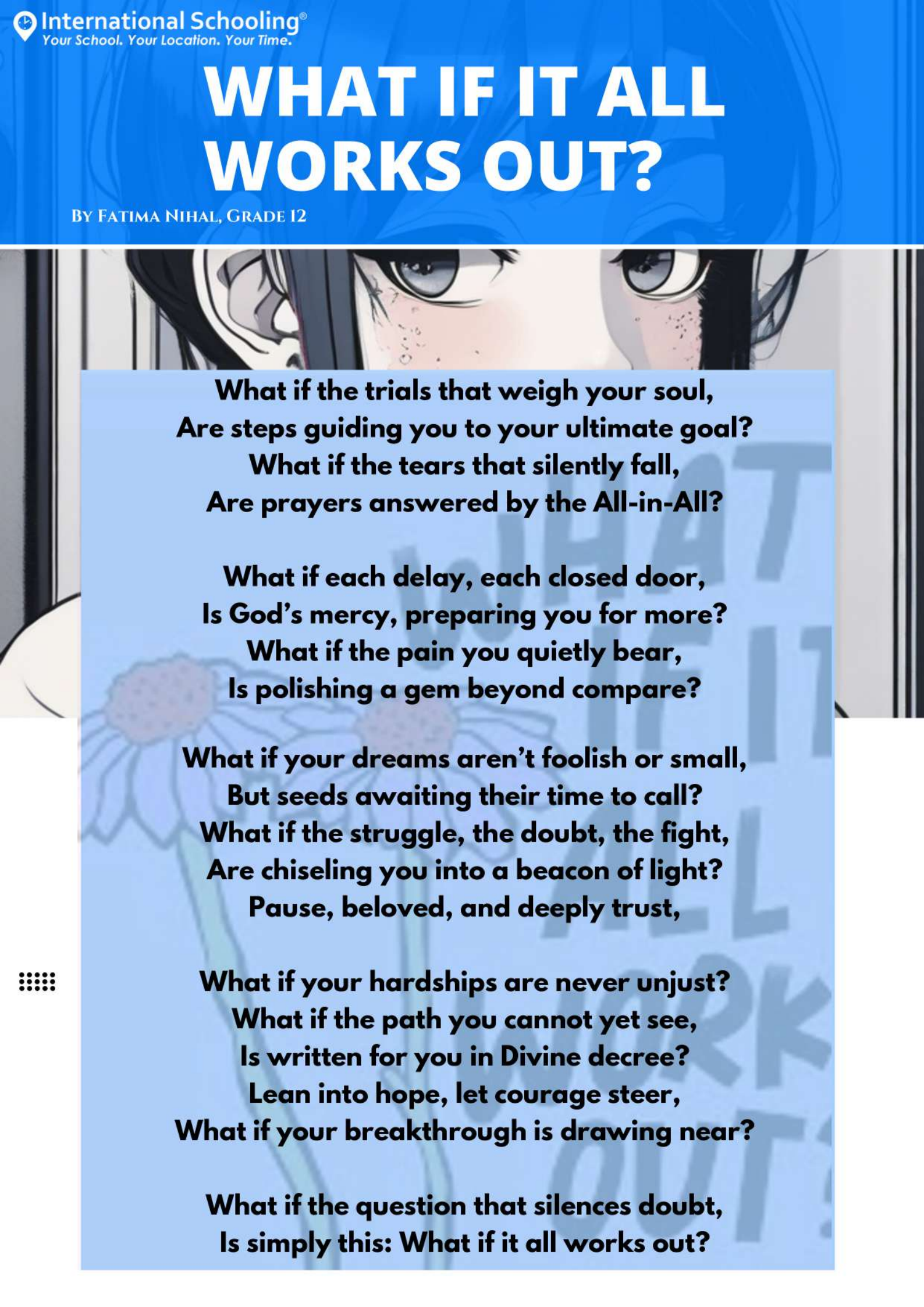
Ethan always felt like he was running out of time. Deadlines loomed, and the days slipped through his fingers like sand. One evening, while wandering aimlessly, he stumbled upon a dimly lit antique shop filled with clocks of every shape and size. A frail old man behind the counter handed him a golden pocket watch and whispered, "This can pause time, but every pause has a price."

Ethan's heart raced with excitement. At last, he had control over time. He used the watch to finish schoolwork effortlessly, steal quiet moments for himself, and stay ahead while the world remained frozen. But soon, an unsettling change took hold—his reflection in the mirror revealed dark circles under his eyes, deepening lines on his forehead, and streaks of silver threading through his hair. His limbs grew heavy, and an unshakable weariness clung to him. Though no one else aged, he did.

Panic surged through him as he sprinted back to the antique shop, his breath ragged, his legs aching. But the shop was gone, as if it had never existed. Despair settled in his chest like a stone. He gripped the watch tightly, staring at the device that had granted him stolen moments at the cost of his youth. With a heavy heart, he locked the watch away, vowing never to use it again. As he sat by his window, watching the sunset paint the sky in hues of gold and crimson, he understood—time wasn't meant to be controlled but cherished. It moved forward for a reason, and every second, fleeting as it was, held value beyond measure.

WHAT IF IT ALL WORKS OUT?

BY FATIMA NIHAL, GRADE 12



**What if the trials that weigh your soul,
Are steps guiding you to your ultimate goal?**

**What if the tears that silently fall,
Are prayers answered by the All-in-All?**

**What if each delay, each closed door,
Is God's mercy, preparing you for more?**

**What if the pain you quietly bear,
Is polishing a gem beyond compare?**

**What if your dreams aren't foolish or small,
But seeds awaiting their time to call?**

**What if the struggle, the doubt, the fight,
Are chiseling you into a beacon of light?**

Pause, beloved, and deeply trust,

What if your hardships are never unjust?

**What if the path you cannot yet see,
Is written for you in Divine decree?**

**Lean into hope, let courage steer,
What if your breakthrough is drawing near?**

**What if the question that silences doubt,
Is simply this: What if it all works out?**



THE FINAL SPARK: A THOUGHT TO PONDER

Vengeance Lurks Beneath the Waves



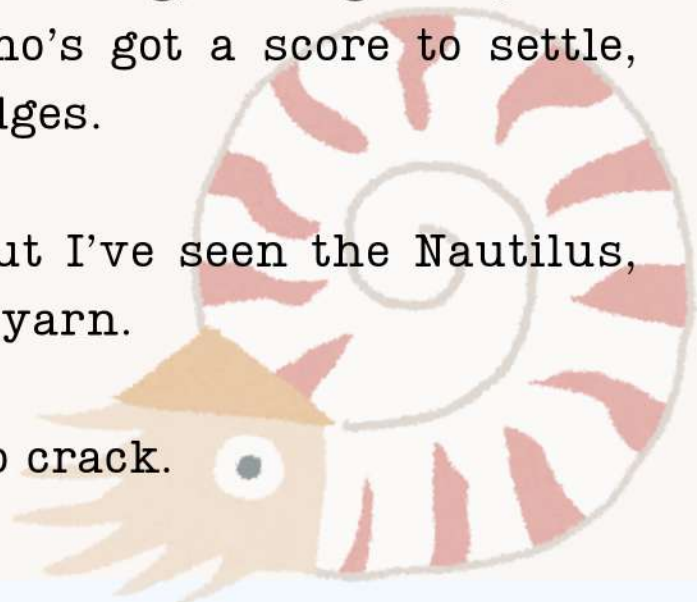
BY YASMEN AS MHANNA, GRADE 10

People laugh off the Nautilus, thinking it's just a sea tale, but I've seen it. Arronax does not seem to be aware. Little does he know, it lurked, concealed away from word.

Captain Nemo's alive, brewing up revenge. He's got a plan, but it's both mysterious and conscientious. There's this manuscript, a captain's log or something, listing everyone trapped inside the Nautilus. Nemo's got a score to settle, and that log's a record of his grudges.

They can doubt all they want, but I've seen the Nautilus, and it's more than a fisherman's yarn.

It's real, and something's about to crack.



Thank you Berry-Much!



Thank you for reading our newsletter—you're truly grape, and we a-peach-iate your support!

We hope it was a fruitful read!

See you in our next edition