The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the people are safe, and the believer is the one from whom the people’s lives and wealth are safe.

Sunan An-Nasa’i
On November 30th at Oxford High School in Michigan, a fifteen year-old boy named Ethan Crumbley shot and killed four people and severely injured many others. A few days before the shooting, his parents bought him a gun as an “early Christmas present,” despite his young age. He then posted a photo of it to social media with the caption, “Just got my new beauty today,” showing his already-formed attachment to the gun.

According to an article written by Christine MacDonald in the Detroit Free Press, on November 29, 2021, the day before the shooting, he was caught looking up ammunition on his phone during class. His parents were contacted by the school, but no response was received. His mother simply texted Crumbley, “LOL I'm not mad at you. You have to learn not to get caught.” On the day of the shooting, Ethan’s teacher found a concerning note on his desk with extremely disturbing drawings and writing. He and his parents were called to the school’s office and were advised to let Crumbley stay home for the day. His parents refused this suggestion and sent him back to class without checking his backpack for any weapons, defying the norm in this situation. An article in the New York Times stated that the shooting began at 12:51 p.m. Half an hour later, when news broke out of a school shooter and his parents realized Crumbley’s gun was gone, his mother texted him, “Ethan, don't do it.”
Due to his heinous actions, he was charged as an adult with acts of terrorism, first-degree murder, and gun violence. This case brought attention to America's gun laws. At her news conference on December 1, 2021, Oakland County Prosecutor Karen McDonald called for stronger gun laws, saying, “If the incident yesterday, with four children being murdered and multiple kids being injured is not enough to revisit our gun laws, I don’t know what is.”

The abuse of the Second Amendment right to own guns in America has gotten out of hand. Gun laws have been broken numerous times, which led to many casualties and conflicting viewpoints. On January 20, 2020 in Virginia, gun-rights activists rallied together to protest against stricter firearms laws. They fail to realize, however, that many gun control laws are responses to mass shootings, like the San Bernardino shooting in 2015, according to “U.S. Gun Policy: Global Comparisons,” published by the Council on Foreign Relations.

Some arguments claim that stricter gun control laws would leave people defenseless in the face of external harm and danger. Others disagree and state that without stricter laws, gun violence would increase each year, including murders, accidents, and school shootings. No matter a person’s perspective on gun laws, the fact that many innocent lives have been stolen does not change. More actions are being taken, though, to protect people from gun violence, and hopefully in the coming years, there will be solutions to the decades-long problem of abusing the right to own guns.

- Umaiza Sohail
Education plays an essential part in the progression of humanity, our individual growth, and our intellect. The information we obtain in school can be utilized in our higher education and builds a foundation for our careers. Our knowledge is considerably affected by the schooling system from which we receive it. The structure of the schooling systems in the modern world has significant flaws, the most overlooked of them being the concept of homework.

The inventor of homework, Roberto Neveils, designed it as a punishment for his misbehaving students. It is now a mandatory grade in most school systems. A Stanford research article mentions:

56 percent of the students considered homework a primary source of stress, according to the survey data. Forty-three percent viewed tests as a primary stressor, while 33 percent put the pressure to get good grades in that category. Less than 1 percent of the students said homework was not a stressor. This study proves that homework puts unnecessary stress on students at home. Excessive homework leads to stress, which increases counterproductivity. Students go to school for seven hours a day during which they are expected to continuously learn. As this is the case, it should not be mandatory for students to also learn at home. Home should be a place for a child to fulfill their own needs by doing what they want and resting after a long period spent learning. Seven hours should be more than enough time spent to learn.
THE HOMEWORK DEBATE: PART ONE

A CNN story claims, “Research showed that excessive homework is associated with high-stress levels, physical health problems and lack of balance in children’s lives.” Homework is shown to be disruptive and unhealthy in most students’ lives. Most people may argue that homework is a way for teachers to assess the students independently, but classwork and quizzes already accomplish this task efficiently. People also may view homework as a way to practice what was learned in class. However, as an alternative to doing assignments at home, students should be told to go over what they did during class. Learning during the class period and briefly reviewing the learned material should be enough time to gain required knowledge. As such, the benefits of homework are very clearly outweighed by its disadvantages.

-Maheen Riaz
Advice to Relieve Stress

Whether related to school, work, or home, stress appears in the lives of everyone. Many of us facing challenges are dealing with burdens of testing and the numerous tasks being laid upon us. Sometimes the stress of these tasks overwhelms us and ends up ruining our day. Though stress is difficult to avoid, we should strive to find healthy ways to cope with stress. To avoid bad days due to tension, let's discuss some ways to deal with stress.

One great therapeutic way to deal with stress is taking a shower. Something about cleansing yourself physically allows you to cleanse yourself mentally, which in turn relaxes you instantly. Hot showers, specifically, have been found to help reduce stress and anxiety more than other showers. The hot water increases your body's temperature and relaxes your muscles, allowing you to be ready to take on the day.

Another great way to deal with stress is to journal it. Though this might seem cliche, journaling has been found to be a great way to cope as it reduces stress by serving as an escape or emotional release for negative thoughts. When you journal your thoughts, worries, and anxieties, you see what's causing you stress, and you see how some of your fears or worries could be less worrisome than you originally thought. This can help you feel more clear afterwards, thereby allowing you an escape from your mind. Once you see it down on paper, you'll be able to organize your thoughts more effectively.
ADVICE TO RELIEVE STRESS

Another way to deal with stress is music. This coping mechanism is used often by many. Music can have a profound impact on your feelings and body. High tempo music can help you feel more alert and concentrated while slow, relaxing music can quiet your mind and make you feel soothe whilst releasing stress of the day. Stress often causes high blood pressure, but when listening to slow music, your blood pressure can decrease allowing you to have a more relaxed experience and manage your stress in a much more efficient manner.

The best way to deal with stress, though, is forming a deeper connection with Allah. To do this, you must detach yourself from the outcome. Try not to think of the tragedies that may come as a result of the particular stressful situation you are under, and trust that Allah will help you throughout the process. However, this does not mean that you should rely on Allah to fix your issues for you while you sit idly. You must do your part and trust that Allah will take care of the outcome. Understand that, in life, there are going to be things you can and cannot control so just focus on the things you can control. Do as much as you can and leave the rest for Allah.

Whatever you are stressed about, you can now overcome. Stress and bad days do not undermine any of your previous successes; it is only a step towards bettering yourself and creating more achievements. Just take a step back from life, appreciate it for what it is, be grateful and proud for everything you have accomplished, and keep calm. Work hard and your hard work will pay off at the end, InshaAllah.

- Javeria Imran
The Folk of the Air trilogy written by Holly Black consists of three books: *The Cruel Prince*, *The Wicked King*, and *The Queen of Nothing*. As supplements, Black wrote two other books that focus on the side characters; although they do not add on to the series, they add more depth to the characters, so readers are encouraged to explore these stories as well. The Folk of the Air series tells the story of Jude, a young girl who lives in Fairie, a world infused with magic. As a child, she was stolen from the mortal world and is now forced to live in a world that fails to accept her. All the creatures of Fairie shun mortals like Jude and treat them as though they are servants. Throughout the story, readers are exposed to the harassment Jude faces due to the prince of Fairie and his friends. To free herself from this harassment, Jude undertakes tasks, attempting to demonstrate that she isn’t the weak, helpless human the prince belittles her for being. This task of refuting a long-stating belief is more difficult than she originally believes. Throughout the story, readers are taken on a journey of this girl who must fight people she trusted, resist magical temptations, and break curses in order to prove herself to those who believe her to be weak due to her origins. Her detailed break from societal beliefs and her rise to power is a must-read for anyone who loves adventure, action, and magic.

- Afrah Aktar
"How shall I spend this wonderful Winter Break?" you might be asking. I have the answer to your question: explore new passions. It's never too late to try something new. Perhaps you'll discover a new hobby, interest, or passion. Winter break is the perfect opportunity to try something new and step outside of your comfort zone. Trying new foods, learning something new, or finding something that piques your curiosity are all excellent ways to accomplish this.

During the break, you, naturally, have a lot of free time, which you can use to gain a new skill. You may, for instance, take advantage of the opportunity to try new foods. You might be able to do something you've never attempted before. You may also try learning something new to expand your knowledge, such as learning a new language, or you could pick up a pencil and write to stir your imagination. You could also try going out and exploring the world around you. If your family wishes to travel out of the city for the break, you could explore the numerous scenic areas Oklahoma has to offer. If going out of the city is not a possibility, you could always take a walk at a park and explore its trails. No matter your situation, nature is all around you, giving you the ability to explore it whenever, wherever.

Ultimately, whatever you choose to do, try to make the most of your Winter Break. It's good to be open to new things every now and then.

I hope everyone has an amazing Winter Break!!

- Emaan Ali
The Deep Sleeper

During the 18 days

WAKE UP! Break is over!

It's finally break. Now I CAN SLEEP IN!

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Toba Ishwait