

THE VIRIDIAN

STARTING OFF THE NEW YEAR WITH A

BANG

FOURTH EDITION
JANUARY 2024



THE VIRIDIAN

IN THIS EDITION

PHYSICS TRIP

PAVLOS BISMAL

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CLUB

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NEW YEAR'S PLAYLIST

DANAE KARTOUDE

THE VIRIDIAN

THE PHYSICS TRIP

GENEVA, DECEMBER 2023



ALEX THEODOROU 

BY PAVLOS BISMAL

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Before we jump into the new year, let's talk about
the physics department's trip in December 2023!

Between the 20th and 24th of December, a group of students and teachers visited beautiful Geneva, Switzerland, where they visited the biggest particle accelerator and the most incredible laboratory in the world, CERN.



What is CERN? What does CERN stand for, and what is so important about it that prompted a school trip?

The answer lies in almost 70 years of complex engineering, experimentations, predictions and of course, discoveries.

Now, to answer the first of many questions, what is CERN? It's French, meaning 'Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire', or 'European Council for Nuclear Research'. Despite the name, it is not a place to build atomic bombs and nuclear weapons, but a world-class fundamental physics research organization with the aim of uncovering and recreating how the universe was created, what the universe is made of, and of course, how it all works.



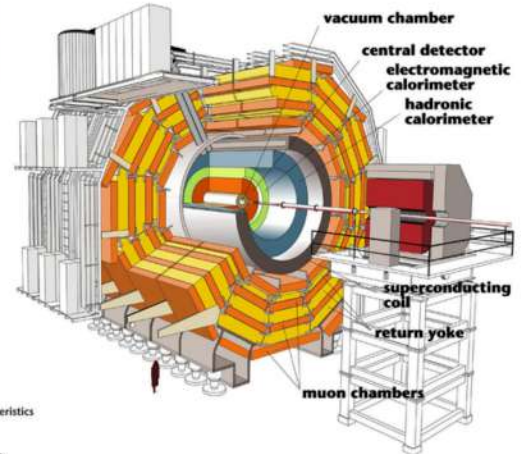
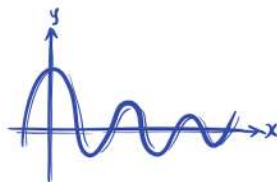
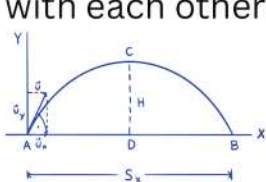
CERN started as only a small (628 metre long) proton synchrotron, or proton accelerator. Then, when this accelerator proved to be too small for the experiments taking place, a new Super Proton Synchrotron was built, with a circumference of 6.9 kilometres, but eventually, even this was too small. Finally, the Large Hadron Collider was born, the largest particle accelerator in the world, with a nearly 27km circumference. It is one of the most powerful laboratories in existence and has propelled science far further in its understanding of fundamental physics and the universe than we could ever had hoped for.

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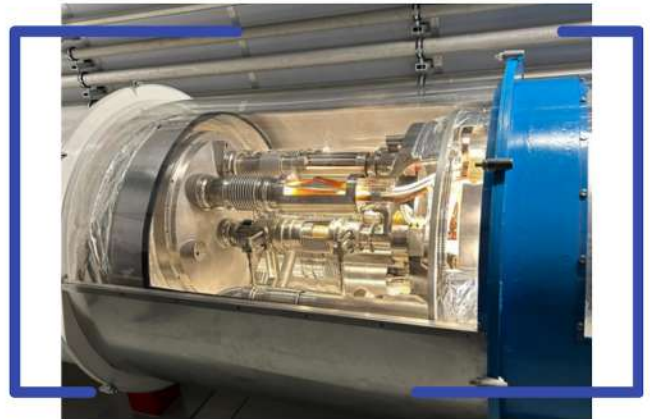
So basically, CERN makes protons go reeeally fast, but how, and more importantly, **why?**

It all starts in a can of compressed hydrogen, the gas is passed through a duoplasmatron which strips the Hydrogen of its electrons, leaving only a proton. Then, the protons are passed through a series of linear and circular accelerators, the proton beam reaches almost the speed of light, going up to even 99.99999896% of it!

Then, once it's passed through both the proton synchrotrons, the beam is split into two, going opposite directions and it is released into the Large Hadron Collider. Here, the beams are accelerated, using electric fields, and deflected in order to travel in a circular fashion using very powerful magnets. Finally, when adequate speed has been reached and all the sensors and apparatus are ready, the proton beams are made to collide with each other.



Detector characteristics
Width: 22m
Diameter: 15m
Weight: 14500t



There are millions of collisions and the thousands of detectors and sensors at CERN take millions of 'photographs' and recordings of information in order to analyse the data once the experiment has been completed. These collisions recreate extremely high-energy, high-pressure conditions which are akin to those occurring at the Big Bang, and so we can see how matter behaves, what matter (or anti-matter for that... matter) is produced and can see how various fundamental forces and mechanisms act at such extreme conditions.

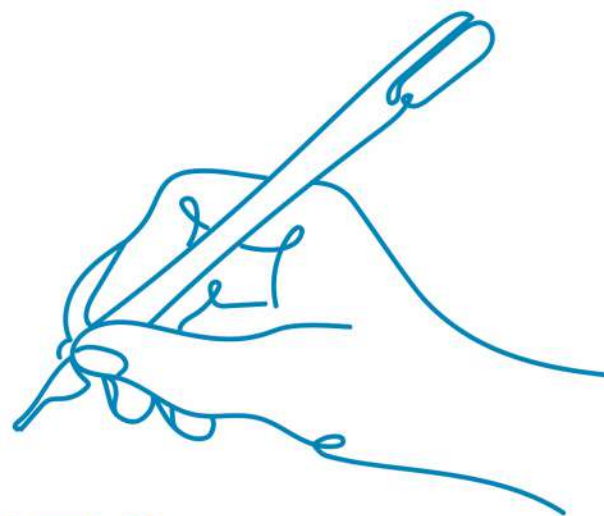
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Overall, CERN has been more than a good investment in humanity: it has already helped discover over 50 hypothesised particles in the past decade alone. One of the most notable particle discoveries would be that of the Higgs-Boson, also known as **'The God Particle'**. This discovery significantly helps us in understanding how our world works and is a testament to the brilliance and usefulness of such institutions and organisations.

Ran by scientists from over 100 countries, and funded by governments all across Europe, CERN is a prime example of cooperation and goodwill, showing that no matter what occurs in the world, the progression of science and our understanding of the world we live in is by far the most important matter at hand.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CLUB



**CHANGING 2024
ONE LETTER
AT A TIME**



BY STYLIANA AVRAAMIDOU

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With the start of 2024, we inevitably begin to consider our New Year's resolutions and ways in which we can improve ourselves with the coming year. Whilst some promise that they will adopt healthier habits such as eating homemade meals more often, others try to change their mindset by becoming more optimistic and saying that the glass is half full rather than half empty. Meanwhile, an inspiring group of Y9 students: Michaela Constantinou, Stephanie Theocharides, Emily Adams and Niki Neocleous have selflessly taken upon themselves to help our community by serving justice to those whose voices deserve the opportunity to be heard, at a time when they have been mercilessly silenced...

This opportunity was presented to the Y9 students when Mrs. Kaccoufa introduced the Amnesty International Club to our school, enabling the Y9 students to participate in the Write for Rights Campaign. Essentially, the Write for Rights Campaign is a campaign which tries to combat the abuse of human rights worldwide by bringing justice to criminals, changing oppressive laws and freeing prisoners who have been wrongfully persecuted.

Annually, students from all over the world send letters to Amnesty International, defending a case which they are passionate about, with hopes of restoring harmony in a world that is devoid of peace and justice. For instance, Nikki and Michaela are currently writing a letter to the Prime Minister of Australia about Uncle Paul and Uncle Pabai, who are relentlessly fighting to save their ancestral lands, whilst Emily and Stephanie are writing to the General Prosecutor of Kyrgyzstan defending Rita Karasartova who is facing 15 years in jail for peacefully protesting.

Each year,
over 10,000 letters
are sent to Amnesty International, and we wish the best of luck to the Y9s and applaud them for their courage and compassion when embarking on such a daunting but rewarding task.

So, whilst we navigate the path upon which we will embark in 2024, we must also be mindful of the path that will construct not only a better future for us, but for all. Writing one letter out of thousands separates the Y9s from being one of millions of people who refuse to make a change. If one letter can change lives, one can only imagine what one New Years resolution can do...

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What is your favourite new years tradition and why?

Ending up after dinner in New Division and seeing familiar faces.

What inspired you to become a teacher? (without revealing your subject 😊)

I wasn't meant to be a teacher, it so happened by accident really. As for my subject, I liked digging up stuff in my garden when I was a kid.

What is your most memorable new years celebration?

Istanbul 2016. While celebrating New Year's, there was a massive terrorist attack on one of the biggest nightclubs.

What is your favourite genre of music? Favourite artist or band?

Rock (any kind: classic, hard, metal, indie). Pink Floyd and the Black Keys.

Do you have any new years traditions for good luck in the new year?

Wake up as late as possible.

Are there any activities or hobbies that you indulge in out of school?

Futsal and Padel tennis

Do you believe in new years resolutions? If not, how so?

No. It's just another revolution of the Earth around the sun. There is no "new you" 😞

What is your go-to comfort food around the holiday season?

Veloute pumpkin soup

Submit your guesses at the link on our story



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BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAK

THE EPSTEIN SCANDAL

WHY IS IT SO BAD THAT
**PRINCE ANDREW &
BILL CLINTON**
VACATIONED ON EPSTEIN ISLAND?

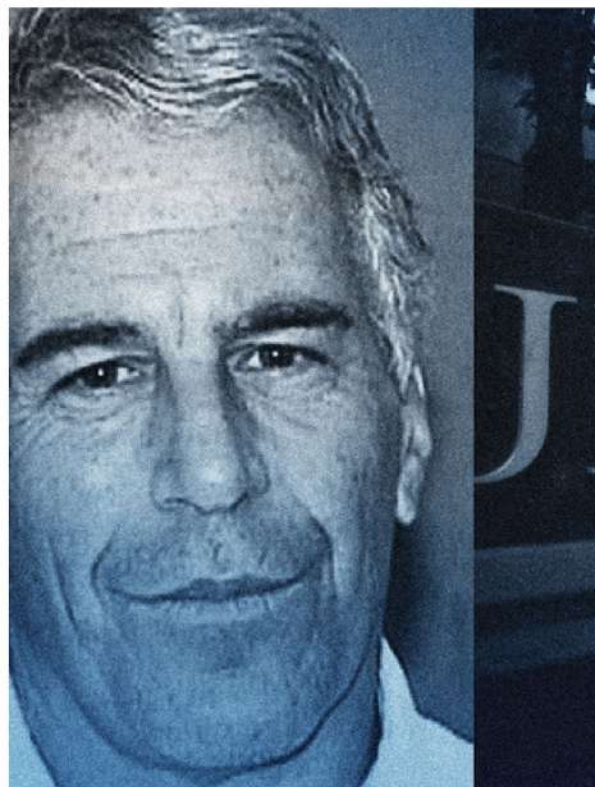


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BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAK

A new year has come but people never fail to remind us that regardless of new beginnings, there will sometimes never be closure. The release of Jeffrey Epstein's uncensored documents has been amongst the most shocking revelations of the new year with celebrities being exposed and accused left and right. But what exactly is the story behind these documents? Why's it so bad that Prince Andrew and Bill Clinton vacationed on Epstein Island?

Jeffrey Epstein was a money manager accused in 2007 of sexually harassing underage girls in his home, an accusation which landed him in jail for only 13 months. However, in July he was charged with human trafficking and taken into custody with the possibility of 45 years of imprisonment. This case made headlines especially after Epstein pleaded not guilty to any of the charges, claiming that the girls were consensual participants who lied about their age. In 2019 he was convicted again and this time, while awaiting trial, Epstein died in a New York prison, allegedly by suicide. Since then, women have spoken out against him, mentioning his privately-owned island, Little Saint James (LSJ) in the Caribbean. The women have continued to make shocking allegations, the most surprising revolving around Epstein's "collection" of friends.



The "list" which was recently unveiled is not exactly a list of clients or co-conspirators as many have assumed. The document is pulled from the 2015 court case filings against Epstein's associate Ghislaine Maxwell, detailing information that was largely already known. However, the havoc of media has led to misinformation and false accusations. The documents detail the figures involved in Epstein's circle and accounts of the abuse experienced. Political figures and celebrities were mentioned in these documents with Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Prince Andrew featuring prominently. Amongst the accused is illusionist David Copperfield who asked a girl whether she was being paid to recruit new girls. Harvey Weinstein was also convicted of many wrongdoings in relation to Epstein.

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BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING BREAKING

Some of the documents withhold disturbing information regarding the crimes themselves, with one document recounting that twelve-year-old girls were sent to Epstein as a birthday present by deceased model agent, Jean Luc Brunel. The second batch of documents recounts detailed information on the recruitment of the girls with most women, having the common thread of being lured to perform massages, which progressed to sexual acts, to Epstein himself and other members of his circle, all influential, powerful, and wealthy men. Ghislane Maxwell was involved in the recruitment of girls, and she is currently serving a 20-year sentence. The real villains of the story, however, are the hundreds who let Epstein and his circle run all these criminal activities, simply because it was convenient.

Despite the abundance of evidence and the endless convictions, **no true justice has been served for the women who suffered under the influence of Epstein.** The unequal power dynamic between a well-known, likable, vastly wealthy man, and vulnerable young women is ultimately what has deprived these women of justice this whole time.



These new documents have done well to re-shed light on the case, but now the world holds its breath as we await the whole truth. Clinton, Prince Andrew, and Trump have all denied the allegations, and no one has been jailed with ties to the crime ring, reminding us once again that maybe the justice system is also quite flawed.

Who knows what would've happened if Epstein lived? Maybe he would've finally been convicted, maybe he would've walked free. That doesn't matter though because he is dead. What's left, however, are his loose ties with certain powerful people who over and over prove to us that money is the solution to making problems go away.

These underage women were exploited for the benefit of entertainment on a Sunday afternoon, for men who've never been told "no" in their lives simply because they waved a couple dollar bills.

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IT'S ME, HI, I'M THE PROBLEM



BY EMILY KYRIAKIDES

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Corruption. Arrogance. Incompetence.

These are words most people instantly associate with politicians and the general contemporary political field. While the refreshing feeling of the new year may temporarily relieve the burden of the mistakes of the past, this year is no different in terms of its plummeting potential for political excellence. Incidences of deceit and manipulation are becoming all the more common, adding fuel to the fire that is burning a hole in the unfolding tapestry of modern politics.

Corruption, and its detrimental aftermath, is increasingly causing younger generations to become dissuaded from politics, viewing the field as hopeless and incapable of contributing to beneficial change. And as the world expands, challenges inflate, easily addressed problems become decade-long struggles, and the need for compromise is replaced by a stubbornly egotistical lust for individual domination. History has made it difficult for the public to place their complete trust in their political leaders, and has created a version of politics laced with suspicion and doubt, thus making it a breeding ground for incapable leaders and dishonest policy makers. As a result, democracy is being endangered by lack of active participation and substantial involvement, causing the disassociation and alienation of the public from politics.

Transparency. Campaigns. Understanding.

Inevitably, these words enter the equation and scramble the deck of political cards on the table. The unsuspecting voters' murmur is dulled, pacified by promises they will never see coming true. And, more often than not, nothing seems to change. It is at this point where people start losing faith in the system and surrender to its inevitability, convincing themselves that they have no power and no say. We convince ourselves that campaigns are propaganda and that new policies are masked attempts for reelection. And when new personas are elected, the prescription for unfulfilled promises is renewed once more. And some of us pretend to understand, others spend years muttering curses under our breaths, thinking that nothing will ever change.

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Trust. Accountability. Progress.

Especially in contemporary society, it is much easier to complain. To blame the politician, or the congressman, or “the one in charge”. We sit in our homes, watching speeches being recycled over and over, aching for hints of progress, agonised by the implied impossibility of a better outcome to a hopeless situation. And we relieve ourselves from any responsibility, as if the person on the screen has been automatically put there by the mechanical hand of history. It is exactly at this point, however, where we must simply, relearn how to deal with problems. We must recognise that nothing is truly capable of surviving in the long-term unless strong foundations are placed now, not by nameless politicians or “the person in charge”, but by all of us, as a society.

“No man (or woman) is an island”-only a collective effort will eventually bear fruit, and thus provide new-found hope for a better and brighter future, outlined by a fierce passion for progress rather than cynical persistence of incapability. We therefore need to try, all of us, to simply do better; to brush aside selfish hesitations and prioritise our future’s present.

Only through this, do we stand a chance at change.

Only through this, can we truly make a difference.



 **In the meantime... JOIN SENCON 2024! (Y9s-13s)**

For the very first time, our school is organising a conference on the **24th of February 2024!**

Centred around the topic of elections and voting, it will be a day of debate and discussion, featuring guest speakers and sparking conversation around five controversial yet highly important topics surrounding electoral processes.



[More info!](#)

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BOOK CLUB

BY SOPHIA DOMBO

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Happy New Year everyone! Welcome back to your favourite literary round-up. This month, in honour of the well-meaning, though invariably ill-fated, New Year's Resolution, I bring you recommendations based off the most cliched, overused new year bucket list items. Hopefully a little reading will help you fulfil those 2024 goals with a little more ease...

If you want to challenge yourself

The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov



It's long. It's very long. But! Oh joy, there's a but, it is stunning. This is what I classify as a satisfying book. Finishing this book and going back to the first chapter to piece every clue and sentence you thought didn't make sense together is so delicious. Bulgakov depicts Soviet life in the 1930s through such an honest lens that the novel was censored and couldn't be published during his lifetime, making our access to this book now truly invaluable. The story is bizarre and verging on magical realism but is firmly a classic and a beautiful piece of historical fiction that, although is a feat to get through, will make you feel so proud and so glad that you did in the end.

“Love leaped out in front of us like a murderer in an alley leaping out of nowhere, and struck us both at once.”

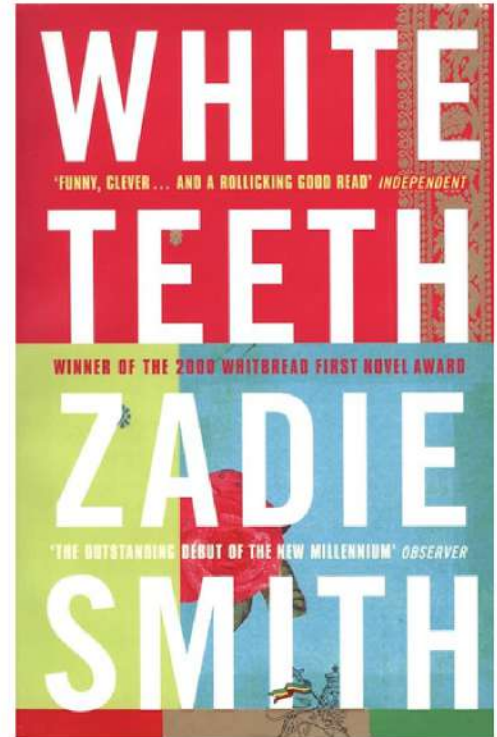
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If you want to understand/appreciate your friends and family

White Teeth by Zadie Smith

For anyone wanting to grow closer to their family, Zadie Smith's family saga is an odyssey, at four-hundred-and-forty-eight pages, of challenging yet undying love. It isn't often that I read a book with so many characters and feel that they have all been so well developed that every chapter feels full and bursting with life and passion, regardless of whose perspective I am reading from.

Smith manages to not only create three-dimensional, real, and beautiful characters, she also intertwines every relationship with so much thought that the end of the novel has no loose ends, no underdeveloped tropes, no misleading chapters, and no unfinished business. Despite my constant disapproval of anyone achieving great things near or around my age, I can begrudgingly admit that Smith's writing a story this entirely fantastic at just twenty-three is as close to literary perfection as one might be able to come. It is a heartwarming, hilarious, and at times tearjerking read, that is definitely new year resolution approved.

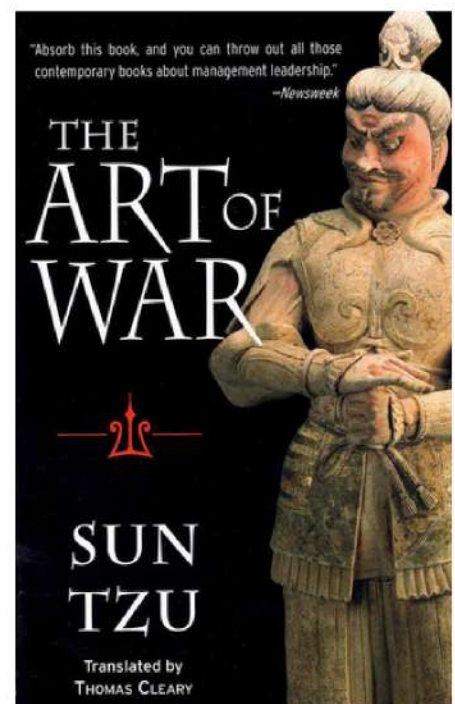


Having said all that:

If you are now reassessing your goals and how to achieve them

The Art of War by Sun Tzu

I kid you not I have read this book seven times. Why would I do that, I hear you ask. Honestly because there is just nothing like it. The writing in this book feels less like words and more like ancient, universally comprehensible symbols. It is incredible, and possibly the apex every self-help book futilely tries to reach. I highly recommend you read it at any point in your life, but especially in times of trouble or unease, once exam season hits, when things start to feel insurmountable, this book will hold your hand and get you through it. PS: the Spotify audiobook version is also fantastic, and, as with most things, I'm neurotically particular about audiobook quality so you can trust that I will not lead you astray.



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ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH

THE JOY OF REWATCHING
TV SHOWS AND MOVIES

BY NATALIE HICKMAN

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Why do we like to rewatch the same movie and tv show over and over again? Possibly is it finding comfort in familiarity? Nostalgia? Diving deeper into the storyline and finding a different characteristic of characters?

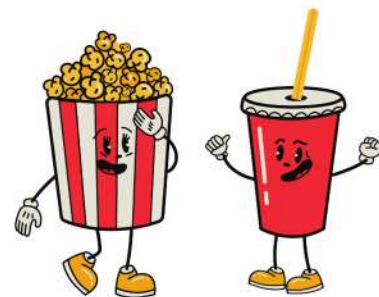
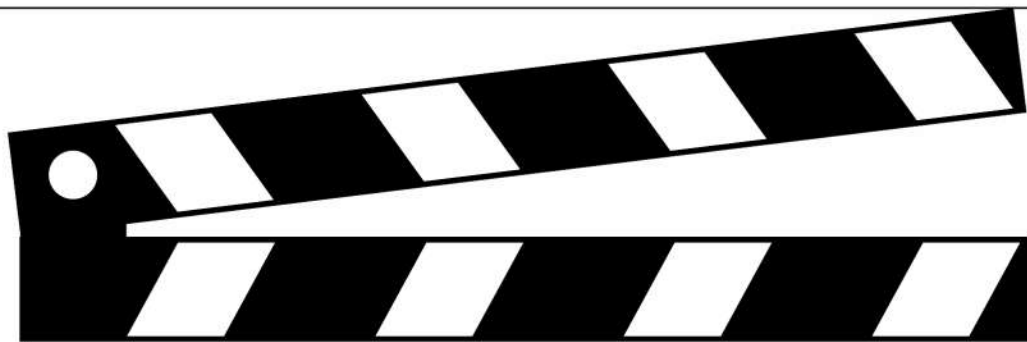
To begin with, many take pleasure rewatching their favorites as they know what is going to happen and hence can predict the emotional rollercoaster they will experience. For many this can act as a safety blanket, and even aids the regulation of their emotions. It also gives the viewer a sense of control. It has been discussed between many psychologists that patients with anxiety specifically, like to rewatch, as the calm feeling which they experience is described as 'experiential control' that allows them to emotionally regulate.

It can also allow many to reconnect to memories they might have lost. For example, watching an old classic can allow the older generation to relate to their childhood, in an age where everything around them has changed so rapidly that their past has become indistinct within the magnitude of technology. This nostalgic reminiscence that media can bring allow many to reconnect to specific emotions and memories that they may want to connect to. Likewise, when rewatching a TV show you become more aware of the details and hence can perceive the more minute information adding to the overall experience and the character's profile.

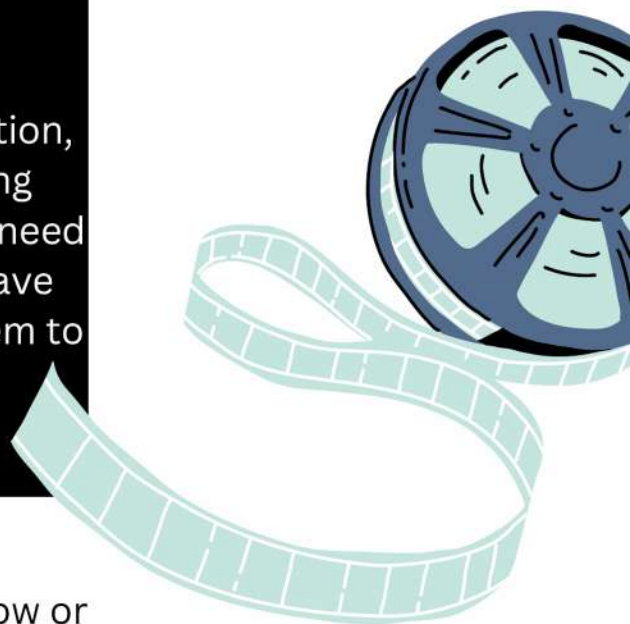
However, many viewers don't enjoy the repetitive task. It is mainly because they know what will happen. Watching a horror movie with a lot of jump scares the second time round may not be so amusing as you know when you are going to get scared. Hence, for the adrenaline junkies this activity won't cut it. Yet, it can definitely help if watching an educational show, as research has shown that repetition leads to long lasting changes in synaptic strength, so in normal English, it makes the information travel faster from one neuron to the other. So, during active recall your brain picks up the answer faster due to the strengthened neurons.



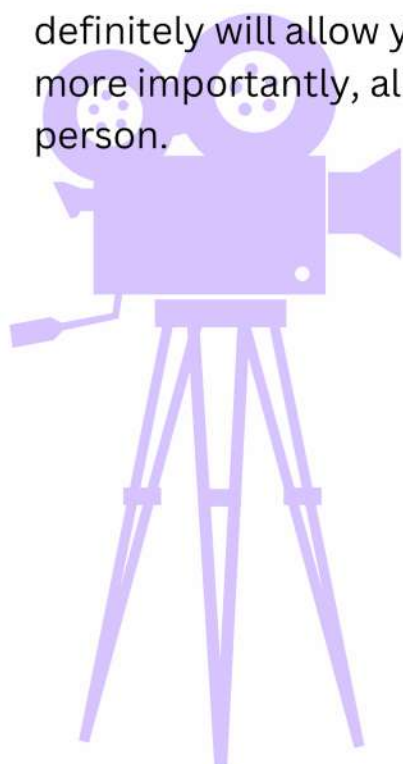
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Therefore, on a biological level, it increases their perceptual fluency as it lights up the same neuro pathways over and over, priming for activation, hence the brain processes it easier than something new (instead of processing fluency, which would need to create new pathways). Hence, for many who have busy lives, this repetitive behaviour will allow them to escape and null their whirring mind.



One could even go as far as to question why a show or movie is their favourite, and why they rewatch it over and over again. Is it nostalgic? Does the show avoid or exclude certain topics? By answering these questions one can see what triggers them (which can definitely be beneficial if discussed with a professional). This definitely will allow you to learn more about yourself, but more importantly, allow you to regulate yourself as a person.



It's healthy to rewatch tv shows and movies, it's self-soothing and regulates, so no need to drink a smoothy with a similar catchphrase, just snuggle up under that warm safe blanket and rewatch to your heart's content.

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JANUARY FAVES

BY SYNTHIA CONSTANTINO



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new year, new playlist



New year, new me, definitely new playlist.

As 2024 rolls in, we have once again compiled the very best additions to your playlist all with the common thread of new beginnings. Unfortunately, our usual music advisor, Ellie, is away this time, but not to worry, as we have all have tossed in our very favourite songs, all about moving on and starting fresh. Enjoy!



20 Something

SZA



Starting off strong but nostalgic with a track off SZA's Ctrl album. Regardless the somewhat sad lyrics, this song is always fun to play, especially when you're reminiscing about the past.

**GOOD FOR:
MAKING A ROOM
CLEANUP FUN**



Give Yourself A Try

The 1975



Give yourself a try, as its title suggests, urges you to look after yourself rather than putting others first, unless it comes to Matt Healey.

**GOOD FOR:
LOOKING OUT THE
WINDOW ON A LONG
ROAD TRIP**



Where'd All the Time Go?

Dr. Dog



Where'd all the time go... This song never fails to make us think of the endless movement of time and reminds us to cherish those around us.

**GOOD FOR:
LOOKING THROUGH
PICTURE ALBUMS**



Dog Days Are Over

Florence + The Machine



Florence and the Machine never fails to deliver an emotionally charged, scream-able song and Dog Days Are Over will always be my most cherished song about new beginnings.

**GOOD FOR:
DANCING AROUND
THE KITCHEN**



Landslide

Fleetwood Mac



An old classic, Landslide will have to be one of my favourite Fleetwood Mac songs. Also about the passage of time, Stevie Nicks reminds us of the past and the memories that it creates that just can't really escape you.

**GOOD FOR:
CRYING IN
YOUR ROOM**

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OUR TEAM!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!
DESIGNED BY ANTHI AND STELA

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'NUFF SAID. FOR NOW...