



Pierce Stays Together

by Lila H.

Recently, you may have heard about some of our students going to a different school. In truth, the plan was still undecided until recently. So why was everyone talking about moving and splitting up?

The shortage of classroom space makes it a little crazy going to school at Pierce. Pierce students have almost all had lunch at a ridiculous time, had gym in the auditorium, or had Conservatory in an art or Spanish classroom that is free for that period. Some kids have their world language class in a different classroom depending on the day of the week. Pierce's Principal and the School Committee recognize our problem of overcrowding and have been looking for a solution to this issue. One possible solution that was presented in the last few months was moving some of the younger grades to a new campus on Clark Road. After a long and bumpy road, it seems that this may not ultimately happen, but is worth understanding what the fuss was about.

The School Committee has just leased space from the Maimonides School on Clark Road. It is approximately a 5-10 minute drive from Pierce School, and a 10-20 minute walk. The new space includes 16 classrooms, two playgrounds (one geared towards early childhood), a library, and a computer area. It also has a small cafeteria, a multipurpose room for PE, and some office space.

Both the Historical and Main buildings at Pierce are crowded, and many on the School Committee were suggesting that some of the younger grades could move to the Maimonides campus to lessen the strain on the Pierce buildings. According to Principal Miller, the space is more suited to younger grades; it was originally a lower school, and therefore doesn't have some of the necessities for middle schoolers, such as science labs or large gyms. According to Principal Miller, 2 Clark Road would have been a temporary plan, given that the lease is only for five years.

However, it was not easy to decide which grades should go. The options were just Kindergarten, K-1, K-2, or none at all. It was a long and confusing process. Principal Miller explained, "While the School Committee voted on grades K and 1 going, we asked them to re-open the decision and consider grades K-2 attending at Clark Road. Then the School Committee also wanted the possibility of just Kindergarten to be considered." To add to the complicated story, a recent survey showed that many respondents (Pierce parents and teachers) would prefer not to move at all.



More grades moving would mean more logistical issues, but it also would free up more space at Pierce. "Specialist teachers will travel between the Pierce main campus and the 2 Clark Road campus. The Administrative Team along with the teachers that are required to travel, to the extent possible, will also work to create a schedule that limits the amount of traveling our teachers need to do," said Principal Miller. Some teachers who would have been affected by the move told me that though there may be positive benefits for the Pierce community as a whole, there are also challenges that would make it hard to be separate from the rest of the school. On the other hand, moving more students would open up much more space at Pierce; with about a third of the students gone, it would free up the cafeteria and the auditorium and the gym.

As of January 26th, the school committee has decided not to send any Pierce students to Clark Road. According to Principal Miller, "they voted to keep the Pierce Community together...They also voted not to renew the lease of the Loft at 62 Harvard Street." The loss of the loft will be offset by the gain of the Sperber Education Center, which is right next to Pierce. Now, the classes that "move" will only be moving a small distance.

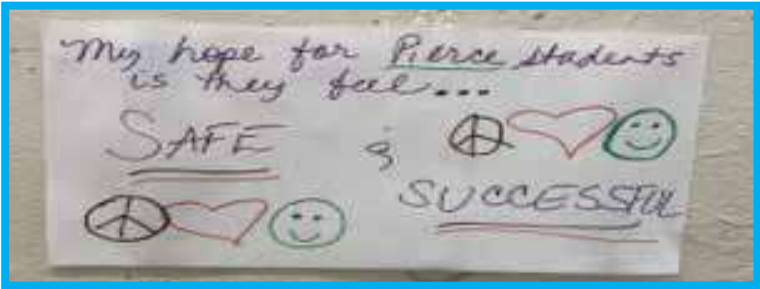
It will take some work and creativity, but we will still have enough space for our growing school and all the things we value about Pierce.

Pierce Through The Eyes Of The New

by Valentina C.- P., Suyon L., Maria S. de B., and Sophie Z.

Imagine coming to school. It's your first day. You're new. Everyone else knows each other. Before you know it, it's recess and you have nobody to play with. Sad, isn't it? That's why we decided to interview new kids to see how they felt about all of the challenges they have to face when coming to a new school. We thought this was a good idea because it's important to know about people's feelings and whether they like our wonderful school.

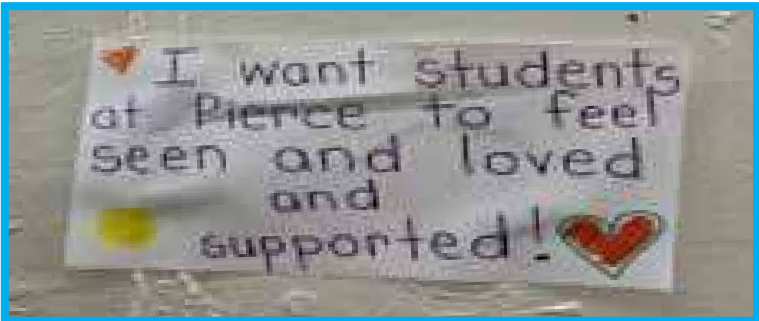
The first question we asked was "How do you feel about Pierce so far?" A student from 5VW said that they like Principal Miller, their friends, and the subjects. A 5G student said that they like Pierce, but will need more time to love it. We think that most students who are new would also say the same. A student from 5R said that it's nice that she's made some friends and also had fun in class too. We are glad that all the students we interviewed made at least one friend! The last student we interviewed was a student from 5A. They said they liked the math homework and had fun during recess.



Overall the new students we interviewed like Pierce. We were happy not to hear any big complaints about Pierce which means the school has been doing a good job welcoming all the new students this year. The only not so positive aspect some of the new students mentioned was the noise level. We hope that new students will love this school as much as old students do! So next time you see someone who is new, go talk to them. You might make a new friend.



We also asked, "Are there any things that people who've been here for a while could improve on?" A 5R student who we talked to said that she thinks that there should be more interaction between students and teachers at Pierce. The majority of students we asked said that they wanted people to be less noisy. When we were new we also thought the noise level in the cafeteria was excessive.





The “Bee” in Brookline

by Noah H., Hanna K., and Adelyn S.

What was a dog doing at the Brookline High School on Sunday, November 17 2020? Why were there so many nervous looking kids and parents? And what in the world was this event?? Well, you might have heard about the fifth-grade Spelling Bee. This was the big day.

The Spelling Bee has been going on for 33 years, since 1988. It was started by the Brookline Education Center (BEF). The official website is: <https://brooklinefoundation.org/spelling-Bee/>



Last Round.

A Spelling Bee is a competition where competitors try to win by spelling the most words correctly., The words get more and more difficult to spell over the course of the Bee. You can ask the judges to repeat the word, to use it in a sentence, or to give you the definition. You must say the word, spell it, and then repeat the word for it to count. This year the Spelling Bee was won by Astrid Young from the Heath School. Last year, the winner was current Pierce 6th grader Owen Bergstein. (Lilah Friedland, also a Pierce sixth grader, placed third last year). The winner of the BEF Spelling Bee wins a personal medal and a trophy for the school. Also, they get a picture with the judges and with Cuddly Bear, the police golden retriever dog. And of course, they win bragging rights.

Many Pierce 5th graders took part in the Bee this year, including Noah Harwin one of the writers of this article. Some of the Pierce students who participated in the Bee were Maria Soares de Brito, Abhinav Shankar, and Ruby Bhambi . We decided to interview these contestants to see what they thought of the town-wide Spelling Bee and compiled their answers below. We also interviewed Owen Bergstein, last year’s winner.

Interviews with this year’s participants

Penguin Post: How did it feel to take part in the Spelling Bee?
Maria: I was nervous and kind of proud to be part of it. And also scared of messing up!
Ruby: I was nervous and excited at the same time!

Penguin Post: Was it your first Spelling Bee?
Maria: Yes
Ruby: Yes

Penguin Post: What word was hardest for you?
Maria: Pamphlet
Ruby: Thorough

Penguin Post: What did you think was the hardest word of the whole entire Spelling Bee?
Maria: Probably the winning word, quintessence
Abhinav: I thought it was quintessence.
Noah: I thought it was quadrilateral

Penguin Post: What word did you get out on?
Maria: Pamphlet
Ruby:Thorough
Abhinav: Industrial
Noah: Delicious

Penguin Post: How many rounds were you in for?
Maria: Four out of seven.
Ruby:: Two out of seven rounds
Abhinav: Four out of seven
Noah: Five out of seven

Penguin Post: What was your first word on the Spelling Bee?
Abhinav: Honey

Penguin Post: How did it feel to be up on the stage?
Abhinav: Oh, only like there were hundreds of people watching my every move!
Noah: I had been up on stage before, and I don’t have stage fright, but I was a little nervous at the beginning.

Interview with Owen Bergstein (Last year’s winner)

Penguin Post: What word did you win on?
Owen: Supercilious

Penguin Post: How did it feel to be in the last round?
Owen: Excited and a little bit nervous because there were only three of us in the last round.

Penguin Post: How did it feel to take part in the Spelling Bee?
Owen: Fun. I did not know about it before. My dad just said that there was a Spelling Bee that I could take part in! Then I was nervous and excited like I said before.

Penguin Post: What happened after you won?
Owen: After people took photos of me, I did an interview for the Brookline Tab, and I got a medal and a gift card.

Penguin Post: How did it feel to win?
Owen: It was very surprising because I thought I was going to get out in the third or fourth round, but to be in the eighth round was amazing.

The Spelling Bee was a thrill for all spelling fans in Brookline. Many students loved it and wish there was another Bee that they could participate in. We think there should be a Spelling Bee every year for students in fifth through eighth grade. Maybe the Brookline Education Foundation will read this article and agree!



Participants at the 33rd annual Spelling Bee.



this paper

The Robot Invasion of Brookline

by Akash D.-H. and Abhinav S.

This fall, we were part of FLL teams with some other kids from Pierce and Runkle. All the teams worked towards the FLL competition in December. What is FLL? Read on to find out!

First Lego League (FLL) is an international robotics competition. FIRST is an abbreviation: For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. FLL is about constructing robots with legos, computers and motors, then programming these robots to solve challenges. Every year, there’s a different set of challenges, in line with a theme. This year’s theme was CityShaper: challenges that could happen in a city. Additionally, each team had to come up with an Innovation Project, an idea which would improve a challenge in the team’s community. The Innovation Project changes from year to year, but it is a designed solution to a problem that was found after interviewing experts in the community.

As part of FLL, you work in a team, consisting of 3-10 people. There are about 35,000 FLL teams worldwide. This year, Brookline had 13 FLL teams competing in this challenge (up from 5 teams last year). Brookline sent 7 FLL teams to States and four of those teams won awards at the State competition on December 14th, 2019.

So why were there so many new teams in Brookline this year? It seemed like there was a Robot invasion of Brookline this fall!

We decided to talk to a few Brookline coaches and team members. Brookline parent and long-time coach, Adam Rizika, and coach and Pierce parent Steven Intille have been involved with FLL for a few years and last year thought that it would be a great idea to have more FLL teams in Brookline. According to Intille, a group of former FLL coaches, some students from former FLL teams, and leaders at the Brookline Teen Center helped start the Brookline Robotics Initiative. The aim of this group was to increase Brookline’s participation in FLL.

Rizika and Intille both mentioned that the Brookline Teen Center (BTC) was willing to host the teams so that made it easier to start new teams. “We did advertising in all the schools, posted flyers, and posted on social media, and got parents and kids together who were interested... We also tried to get more parents who were willing to coach” said Intille. Adam Rizika added “Next thing we knew, there were 16 teams!”

One of the main challenges was inexperience. “Our hope was that previous FLL team members and coaches would help the different teams to feel more comfortable with what they were doing.” said Rizika. Many of these new teams

were mentored by high school students. Members of the “Brookline Bot Boizz,” a Brookline First Tech Challenge (FTC) team (FTC is a similar competition as FLL, but for older kids), mentored some of the younger teams and also did outreach to encourage the formation of new teams. According to Rizika, next year, the Brookline Robotics Initiative plans to expand to 20+ teams.

Leading up to competitions, teams prepare, build and program a robot, work on building their teamwork and create a solution to a design problem in their community. The FLL teams meet every week for around three hours. Abhinav’s FLL team “Bots R’ Us”, for example, met every week for three hours at the Brookline Teen Center. Akash’s team met at a teammate’s house. During the meetings, team members often got into disagreements, but in the end came up with a solution. During the actual competition, they made a lot of points and had fun. Abhinav liked the emphasis on learning teamwork skills. He also liked coding the robot, and playing around with it. Akash stated that his favorite part was at the competition during the robot runs. Rather than scary, it was actually very fun.



Team Bots R’ US at the FLL tournament in Revere

In an FLL competition, a team is judged in four categories: the Robot Board, Robot Design, the innovation project, and teamwork. The Robot Board is a measure of how well your robot completes missions across a board filled with challenges; basically a measure of the programming involved. Robot Design looks at the strength, stability, and creativity in the actual physical robot. The innovation project is a presentation of the proposed solution to a problem found in the community. Finally, at the competition, you are given a challenge in which you must demonstrate effective teamwork in working together to complete it.

If legos, robots, coding, and taking part in competitions sound good to you, you should join or start an FLL team! If you are interested, send an email to Stephen Intille at S.Intille@northeastern.edu. You can also be part of an FLL team next season. See you at the next FLL competition!

My Trip To China

by Annie S.

Imagine this: You’re getting out a pack of crackers to eat as a snack and suddenly a monkey comes charging at you. This happened before my eyes when I was in China this summer. It was not my first time in China, but I visited some places for the first time. There were lots of beautiful places filled with history. I heard many interesting facts and, of course, had a funny interaction with a hungry monkey.

I went to many places in China with beautiful views. One place I went during my trip was Hangzhou. There, the Xi River (West River) is an important part of China’s history because an ancient Chinese Emperor ordered a replica of it to be built in the Summer Palace. It is a beautiful sight, and you can go on tours on hand-rowed boats on the river. From our boat, we could see water lilies and sculptures that were in the water. I learned that three of the sculptures on the Xi River are printed on the back of the Chinese 1 ¥ bill that is still used today.

I also went to Shenzhen, which is an example of the more modern part of China. The city is more like New York, with tall buildings and bright lights. I learned that Shenzhen is one of the largest electronics producing cities in the whole world, and there are so many things that you can get there.

The other place I went to was Zhangjiajie, China, where I went to camp for a week. It is a beautiful place with uniquely shaped mountains, lakes, and rivers, as well as really cool caves. I went into one natural cave that looked so beautiful. Zhangjiajie was the first national park in China and is also where the movie *Avatar* was filmed; if you go there, you can see where parts of the movie were filmed. You can also climb and take pictures on some sculptures. I saw many beautiful sights everywhere and also had lots of fun.

Funny and surprising things may happen while you are in China. For example, when I was exploring with my camp in Zhangjiajie, a monkey was sitting in front of us posing while we took pictures. We were chatting with each other, when the monkey suddenly charged forward and stole a pack of crackers from a little girl. The monkey knew enough to take the crackers out of the packaging and stuffed them right into its mouth. This experience was very surprising and funny, though I do feel bad for the little girl whose crackers were stolen by the monkey. When you travel, even if you think that sights are boring, other things that you see might make you laugh and cheer you up!

In conclusion, China is a great place to have fun, and I definitely had fun during my stay there. There are great views and funny experiences, but you can still learn a lot if you go there just like I did. So the next time you want to go on a vacation, consider China, and if not, I hope you can still experience it by reading this article!



This is what the mountains in Zhangjiajie looked like. They are not shaped like other mountains, but they are still fun to climb and explore.



This is what the natural cave I explored with my camp in Zhangjiajie looked like. The stones took many years to take its shape, and some parts are still forming.



This is the monkey back in its spot and getting ready to eat its crackers. It was ripping off the packaging without even looking!



this paper

Do you Really Know your Crossing Guards?

by Iza B. and Riley J.

When you wake up and walk to school you may say “hello” to your crossing guard. They say “hi” back and help you cross the street safely. That’s as far as the conversation usually goes. But do you ever wonder about them? Every morning at 7:30, across town, the crossing guards come to their posts, and they are there again in the afternoon. Rain or shine, day after day, they work hard so we can cross the road safely. But what do they do after school? What do they do in their spare time? And what is their favorite ice cream flavor?

Well, we interviewed two crossing guards, Hank Hryniewicz (Her-na-wits) and Christine King to see how they would respond. Hank mans the intersection at Cyprus, Washington, and School Streets and Christine works at the crosswalk on Washington Street, near Town Hall. Here is what they had to say.

Penguin Post: How long have you been a crossing guard?
Hank: I’ve been a crossing guard for 5 years. Before, I was working in the newspaper business for 30 years.
Christine: I have only been working as a crossing guard for 3 months.



Hank

Penguin Post: What do you like to do after/outside your job?
Hank: I like to ride my bike and cook. I recently started cross-country skiing. After and in between crossings, I write out tickets.
Christine: I have a second job. I like going to the movies and going out with friends.

Penguin Post: What’s the worst weather you have worked in?
Hank: The rain because the drivers are always in a rush.
Christine: So far it’s been the rain, but I’m not looking forward to the snow and ice.

Penguin Post: What inspired you to become a crossing guard?
Hank: I had been working at a desk job for 30 years and becoming a crossing guard was a great opportunity to get outdoors.
Christine: My dad and my uncle are police officers. They thought it would be a great idea if I joined the Brookline Police Department.



Christine

Penguin Post: What do you like best about the job?
Hank: Definitely the people. It’s great watching the kids grow up.
Christine: The people.
Penguin Post: What changes have you seen over the years?
Hank: Over the years I have seen more distracted drivers on their phones. Also just last year the scooters came to Brookline, so there were more people zooming around.
Penguin Post: And most importantly: What’s your favorite ice cream flavor?
Hank: I like them all, but I would have to say peppermint stick.
Christine: Mint chocolate chip, but the green kind. Not the vanilla and chocolate chip type.

Overall, learning about two of the crossing guards of Brookline was very interesting and fun. Turns out, you can learn a lot about your crossing guards by just having a simple conversation as you safely cross the street on their watch. All in all, next time you see your crossing guard, start up a conversation, and you could learn something new about the wonderful and fun people who keep us safe.



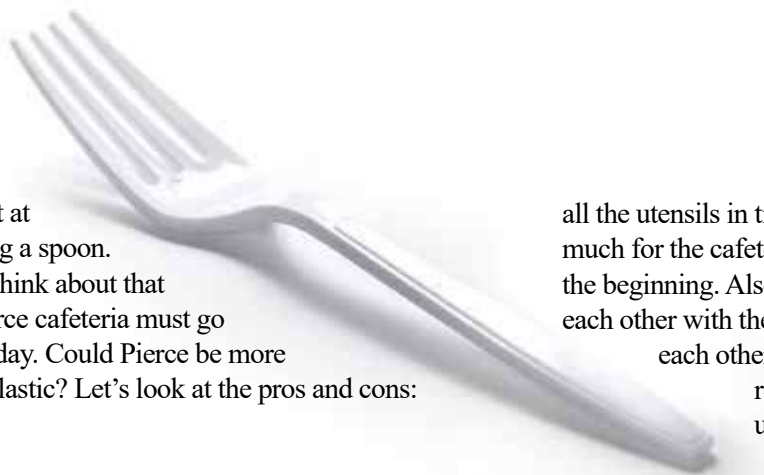
Every Fork Counts

by Elliott M.

Picture this: as you reach for your yogurt at lunchtime, you realize you forgot to bring a spoon. So you pick up a plastic spoon. Do you think about that spoon after it leaves your hand? The Pierce cafeteria must go through hundreds of plastic utensils per day. Could Pierce be more sustainable if we used metal instead of plastic? Let’s look at the pros and cons:

In Favor of Switching to Metal
There are several reasons we should use metal instead of plastic. First of all, each plastic spoon, fork, straw, etc is only used once before it is thrown into the trash. Once it is in the trash, it is shipped off to a landfill or incinerator. There, it can sit for hundreds of years before it biodegrades. The worst part is that some of these plastic utensils end up in the ocean where marine life can choke on them. On the other hand, metal spoons just need to be washed and then can be used again. Also, moving to metal utensils would help save money over time because instead of having to buy new utensils every time we run out, we can reuse the metal utensils. Getting metal utensils instead of plastic is one way to make Pierce more sustainable today.

In favor of keeping plastic
There are some negatives to consider before we switch to metal. For example, washing



all the utensils in time for use at lunch time for the whole school may be too much for the cafeteria staff. Buying metal spoons may cost the school a lot in the beginning. Also kids might do stuff they shouldn’t with them - like stab each other with them. For all you know kids could steal them and hurt each other behind the teachers’ backs. Altogether, there are many reasons why we should not quickly jump to using metal utensils.

How popular is the idea?
To figure out how students might feel about having metal instead of plastic utensils, I conducted a survey with 20 people writing for the Penguin Post. 15 wanted metal 5 wanted plastic
Clearly, among some groups of students, there is interest in trying something new.

So, in conclusion, metal utensils may have some drawbacks, but so do plastic ones. We could explore efforts to recycle the plastic utensils or move towards compostable plastic. My survey with a few students, however, does indicate that there is excitement about trying something new.

Join The Fight:

The Environmental Club Needs You In The Battle Against Climate Change

by Lilah F. and Sophia W.-S.

While you have probably heard the term “climate change,” you may not know exactly what climate change is or what you can do about it. The Pierce Environmental Club is helping deal with this crisis and has some ideas.

First, let us give you some background on climate change. You might think climate change is a natural phenomenon, but in reality, humans have caused these changes all on their own. Through our activity, we humans produce and release harmful gasses into the atmosphere; this traps the heat that is coming from the sun, warming up the earth. Climate change refers to this warming. As the earth warms, animals who live on frozen tundra such as penguins and polar bears are losing their habitat. Additionally, as the glaciers melt, ocean levels rise, which could one day flood and damage the land we live on all over the earth.

As you can see, people need to stop the disaster of climate change! There are many groups that are trying to help save the planet and educate people about the problem. Here at Pierce School, one such group is the Environmental Club. Environmental Club is a club for middle school students who want to teach people about climate change and who want to make a difference. The club meets during 6th and 7th grade lunch and recess in Profe Rose’s Spanish room. It is run by Pierce parent Michael Blanding, Pierce parent Rebeca Salguero, and eighth-grade social studies teacher Ms. Lattin. The Environmental Club is working on climate change presentations and has helped organize the Pierce climate strikes (see below for an interview with Ms. Lattin).

Because of the importance of climate change, the Pierce Environmental Club is trying to educate and help members in the Pierce community know what they can do to slow the effects of climate change. You can:

- Cut down on your plastic footprint.
- Use greener energy.
- Compost.
- Sign a petition so we will learn about the climate crisis in school.

We would like to tell you a little bit more about all of these initiatives.

Plastic is terrible for the environment. It is made from oil deep within the ground. In order to drill for this oil, people have to cut down forests, which is bad because forests help decrease carbon dioxide, one of the gasses that keeps heat in the atmosphere. Chopping down trees also removes habitat from tons of animals that rely on them for homes. Discarded plastics also are often eaten by animals, which makes them sick and die. Additionally, most plastics take thousands of years to biodegrade, which means all plastic ever made is still on earth! The best thing you can do is avoid buying single-packaged snacks, plastic toys, plastic bags, and plastic straws.

Oil is a type of fossil fuel that many of us still use for electricity. Fossil fuels are non-renewable sources of energy, so they will someday run out. In the meantime, they cause air pollution, among other things. If you want to help stop the climate crisis, change your electricity! Brookline residents can pay a little extra for all of their electricity to come from renewable sources, which are better for the environment. If switching energy sources isn’t the right thing for your family, conserving electricity is another way to help. Turning off lights when you leave the room can save lots of energy.

Pierce is now composting, which is great, but you can do the same thing at home! If you have a garden, you can have a collection bin in the garden and when it has decomposed, dump it on your garden to use as great fertilizer. If you don’t have a garden, the Teen Center has a collection bin. Composting helps save things from landfills, and it makes amazing soil, so composting at home is something you can do every day to help.

Some eighth graders have made a petition as part of their civics project. This petition advocates for students in middle school and elementary school to officially learn about climate change. This is important so that more kids can help solve this problem. Kids should know about this issue as it will affect their futures. Signing this petition at <https://bit.ly/BrooklineCC> will show your support for climate action.

Though the climate crisis is a formidable problem, everyone can make a difference, and the Pierce Environmental Club might be just the thing to help you get started on fighting back. If you are interested in joining the club, come into Profe Rose’s Spanish room during sixth grade lunch and recess/seventh grade lunch, which is at 11:20. We are always looking for more people to join the important cause of fighting climate change!

A Conversation With Ms. Lattin

To get some background, we interviewed Ms. Lattin, the eighth-grade social studies teacher, about her perspective on climate change and the Pierce Environmental Club.

Penguin Post: Why did you decide to help out with the Pierce Environmental Club?

Ms Lattin: I think that our planet is the most important thing that anybody has. Making sure that we are living sustainably is the most important thing we can do.

Penguin Post: How long have you been helping out?

Ms Lattin: The Environmental Club started last year.... But I’ve been volunteering for environmental causes outside of school for many, many years... I love the fact that new sixth graders came into the Environmental Club this year. The seventh graders right now are the ones who started it, and they were super passionate, but it’s great to have new students joining it. Every year we need to bring more kids in.

Penguin Post: If there was one thing you could change about the Pierce Environmental Club, what would it be?



Pierce students on their way to the climate strike.

Ms Lattin: I would get like two hundred students involved. I think we need a lot of people. Spread the word. We all need to get involved. We all have to work together to fix this problem. It’s not up to somebody else, it’s up to each of us. That’s the thing I would magically change: Everyone would care and want to be involved.

Penguin Post: Do you make your classroom environmentally friendly, and if so, how?

Ms Lattin: That is a really good question. I try to. I try to put as much as I can on Canvas, so not use paper. I try to turn out the lights when I can. I teach kids about re-

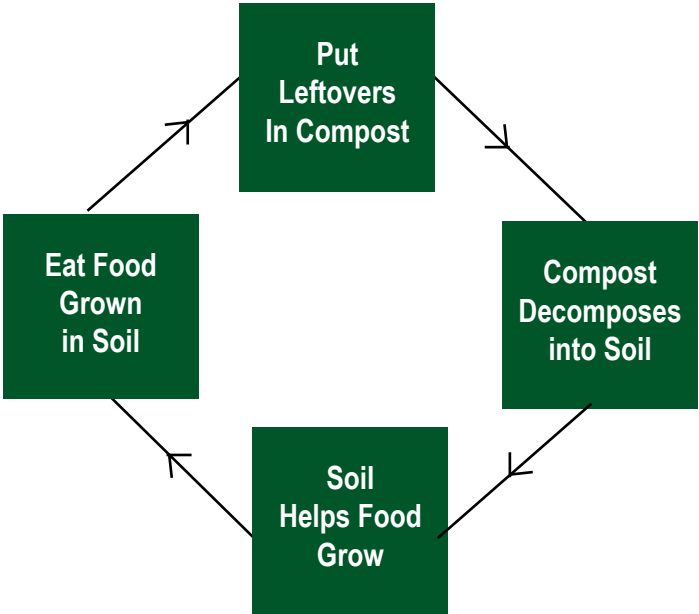
cycling, and I show them which bin to use. You know how stretch plastic can be recycled at stores? I collect stretch plastic from the kids so I can take it to the store to recycle. I would love to teach kids about snacks, and all the single-packaged snacks that they bring in and throw away in the trash, and I would love to teach them to buy big bags and pack their snack at home...My own food is always in reusable packaging. I have some plants in there to help clear air, and make it green.



On Fridays at the cafeteria, I look forward to getting some pizza, but along with it, there’s also a lot of stuff that I don’t want to eat. I put that at the share table, and put the pizza on one of the reusable trays. I eat what I like, but what do I do with leftovers?

You must have heard the word ‘composting’. So, what is composting? Composting is taking food scraps and decomposing them into soil for plants and food to grow again. Composting is reusing: we get new soil to grow new food. It is decayed organic matter that you mix in a pile until it turns into fertilizer that makes plants grow. Almost anything from the ground is compostable.

Composting impacts the environment. It reduces greenhouse gas emissions. When food in your trash goes into a landfill, it emits methane into the air. Composting prevents this, and doesn’t let food go to waste. It therefore is a great idea to compost our food.



At Pierce, we now have the share table and a composting program, making our cafeteria more environmentally friendly. I interviewed Melissa London, a 6th grade science teacher. We talked about how we made our cafeteria greener. She started a composting program for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at Pierce.

Penguin Post: Is the share table effective, and what happens to the food left over on the share table?

Ms. London: Before we started composting, the older students would put their unwanted food into the trash. Now that we started composting, kids are very good about composting and putting things on the share table. I’ve also noticed kids taking things from the share table and eating them if they like it and are hungry, which is great because they’re eating perfectly good food and not putting it to waste. When the share table items are not taken, I take them back to the cafeteria. Since they’re untouched, the food can be reused. If it’s in a plastic container, it can be reused and put into the next lunch. The cafeteria can save on some food. We have saved a lot of food by stopping it from going into the trash.



Signage at the Pierce cafeteria.



Signage in Pierce cafeteria.

Penguin Post: Why did you start the composting program?

Ms. London: I always do an environmental program every year. A few other schools started a composting program, and I thought it was a brilliant thing to do at Pierce too.

Penguin Post: How successful has it been?

Ms. London: Last year we started with just the sixth graders as a pilot program, and it seemed that the students really enjoyed sorting and rescuing food from the trash. Those sixth graders have now become seventh graders. I am training new sixth graders. It’s been successful. We are talking with Ms. Miller about expanding the program to other grades. We have been collecting data, and from September, (till the time of this interview at the end of November), we have rescued almost 1,000 pounds of food. We have also rescued 2400 compostable trays.



Composting Bins at Pierce.

Penguin Post: What was the effect of the program on students, teachers, and cafeteria staff?

Ms. London: Students are now more aware of what is recyclable and compostable. Students now learn about food and how it biodegrades. Preventing food from going into a mix with plastics and metals and other things is important.

Penguin Post: Any plans for compostable utensils?

Ms. London: The cafeteria had some compostable cutlery, but

I think it was fairly expensive. Recently I’ve noticed the cafeteria has gone back to using single-use utensils. It would be good to discuss going back to hard plastic trays that get washed and metal forks and knives and spoons, which we used to have. Single-use plastics make up 40% of the plastic waste. The downside is that somebody needs to wash the reusable utensils. Also, there’s an expense to buying disposable trays, compostable trays and cutlery. As a teacher, when a student asks me, “Ms. London do you have a spoon for my yogurt?”, I give them a metal utensil if they need one. So they use them, rinse them and put it back. I’m trying to reduce my plastic footprint with these solutions. [End of Interview]



Food that is composted is weighed and logged.

It looks like composting at Pierce has been a success, though it has room to grow. If the program is expanded to the whole school, think of how much food we would save. By composting and separating our food, we can all contribute towards a greener future.



The Music Man Came To Pierce

by Iza B., Lila H., and Riley J.

This fall, the Pierce seventh and eighth graders produced a play called the “The Music Man.” It is a classic Broadway musical from 1958 (a movie adaptation was made a few years later). Pierce students worked hard to give us this play, and the effort was clearly seen through the acting, singing, props, and dancing. The play was so much fun to watch. In this article, we interview some people involved in the play and talk about what we liked about it.

The story of “The Music Man” centers on a man who tries to get a small town excited about a band. He turns out to be a criminal who is only interested in people’s money, or so it seems at the beginning. It is a love story, a story about a town becoming a little more accepting, and, most of all, a story about music.

We spoke to some people who were in the play and asked them a few questions about their experience.

Penguin Post: What character did you play?

Fenno: I was one of the barbershop singers.

Itamar: I played the Constable.

Penguin Post: What was it like? Did you enjoy it, or not?

Fenno: I enjoyed it a lot. It was really fun and I made a lot of friends.

Itamar: Yeah, I liked the play and the music.

Penguin Post: Was it hard? If so, was it worth it?

Fenno: It was hard but worth it .

Itamar: I agree.



We spoke to Phil Schroeder, the producer, to get a sense of how he felt about the show. Phil said that, although he originally wasn’t a fan of the musical, after learning a bit more about the writer and the history behind it, he decided to give it a try. In the end, he says, “I loved working on this show. I love the variety of music our kids got to sing, and especially the 3 and 4-part harmony songs.” Overall, the plays at Pierce are a source of pride for Phil. He says, “it’s a really fantastic program that is unique to Pierce. No other Brookline school has a program like it.”

Overall we thought that the play was well written and fun to watch. Both casts delivered a beautiful performance. The set design crew made a beautiful backdrop, and it set the scene. The tech crew was great and their work helped the play go smoothly. The students who participated in the play did a great job staying in character and, as an audience member, you could really see that they put lots of emotion into their acting. Phil says, about the actors: “I am constantly amazed by the students we get in this program and how much they grab onto it and won’t let go. They do amazing things with courage and fearlessness, and the directors and I love working with them.” Watching the play from the audience, we could not agree more.



The Cornet cast.



The Cornet cast.



The Trombone cast.



The Trombone cast.



The Trombone cast.



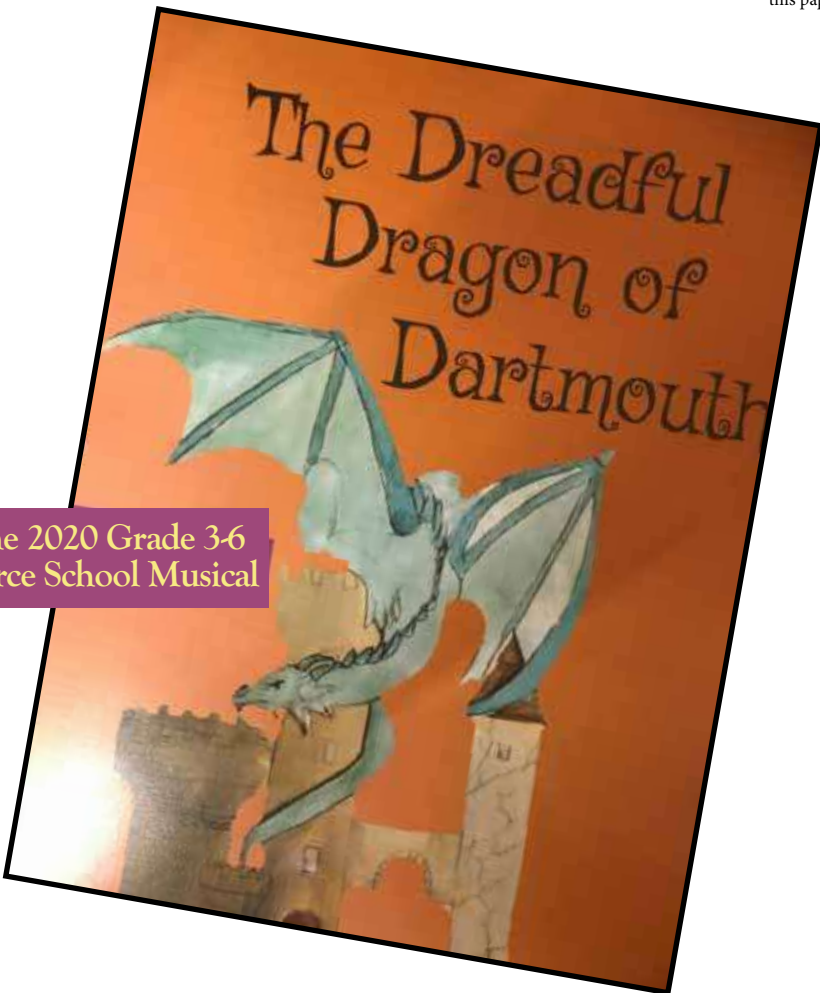
The Dragon is Coming

by Charlene J.

Why are there kids in the cafeteria dressed up in funky clothing? Why are kids singing randomly on top of tables? What’s going on in the Pierce auditorium? Well, let me tell you: Phil Schoeder, the producer of all the plays/musicals at Pierce, is creating a brand new musical called the Dreadful Dragon of Dartmouth.

The new play is a comedy set in Dartmouth, England in the year 1550. There is a castle in the middle of the town where a man and his dragon used to live. The man died, but the dragon is still there, so the towns-people think that the castle is cursed. A young man named Palumon is given the secret of how to control the dragon from the ghost of the dragon’s old owner. Over time, Palumon learns to be friends with the dragon, and therefore, he can control it. Phil says “Medieval people did not think much of comedy or fun, which makes the play funnier, given how serious they took themselves... There will be many fun characters including the King of England herself (yes, that was correct).” He adds, “One interesting question the play raises is how important our beliefs are in determining our happiness or sadness. If we all decided that Pierce School was cursed, would believing make it so?”

When you really think about it, what happens behind the scenes of a play performance truly involves a lot of hard work and team effort; there are months of practicing, organizing, coordinating, dressing, memorizing lines, and so much more. Before any of that, the words need to be written down. Phil says that he is now in the middle of writing the play.



The 2020 Grade 3-6
Pierce School Musical

Rather than picking another Disney show this year, Phil decided to produce his own ideas this time. The idea for the play started a year and a half ago, according to Phil, when he was working with a few Pierce kids and they decided to write a play together. Phil gave them an assignment to write a play about a 10-year reunion of the greatest musical Pierce ever did, called “The Dreadful Dragon of Dartmouth.” A lot of funny ideas came up about what the dragon play might have in it, and he couldn't stop thinking about it, so when he decided to write a play for this winter, these ideas came easily.

Phil says writing a play for 5th and 6th graders is fun and hard at the same time; he loves watching them discover the play and make it their own, but it is challenging to create a great story with fun characters to hold the kids’ interest. In his writing, Phil says he hopes to teach the actors and audience something about their world. He says, “I love fairy tales that deal with the believable parts of being human--like love, fear,.. and the desire to be better--but I also like the idea of fantastical elements like dragons that never really existed, but people tell stories as if they did.” Though a story may be pure fiction, it’s always rooted in the truth in some way. Phil adds that the nice thing about being at Pierce is that he had lots of kids reading for him as the play was in progress, and they gave him valuable and insightful feedback.

With all of this thought going into the play, it promises to be an enriching and exciting one to watch! If you want to enjoy the full story with rich music, acting, and performing, come to see the play yourself and show up on March 12-15th in the Pierce auditorium.



Kalina Ivanov, grade 6, in rehearsal as the imaginary ballerina.



Sammy Treistman, grade 6.



Tony Lee, grade 6, who plays Bechler.



Awesome Books To Read

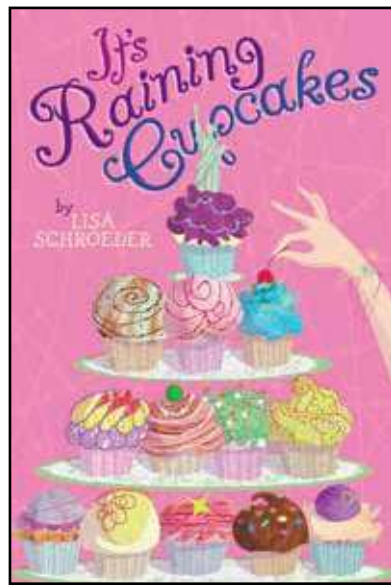
by Lilah F. and Annie S.

Do you have nothing to read at home? If so, take a look at our top book recommendations. We have listed a variety of books, so you can find something that fits your interest. We found these books in different ways, including picking them up off the shelves from the library, getting recommendations from friends, and from summer reading lists. We hope you can find a book that you will enjoy from our list. Happy reading!

Annie’s top 3 books

It’s Raining Cupcakes
By Lisa Schroeder

It’s Raining Cupcakes by Lisa Schroeder is about Isabel Browning, a girl who wants to be able to travel and leave her tiny town. She enters a baking contest so she has a chance of being able to leave. But she is not sure if she can win because she has a few problems she does not know how to solve. You might be able to relate to Isabel’s desire to explore. This book was a great read, and I think that anyone who wants a good book to read should try it. Hopefully you will like it.



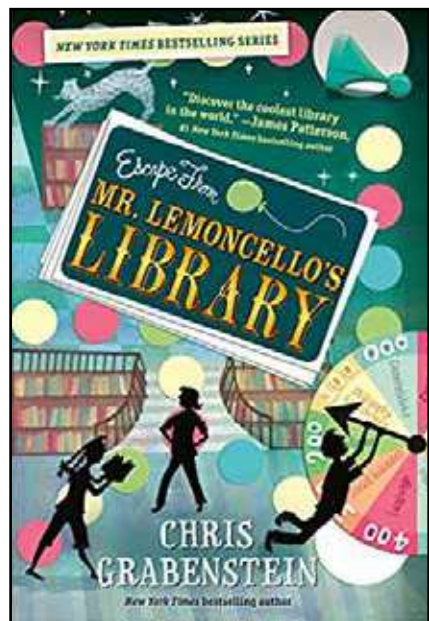
Lunch Money
By Andrew Clements

Lunch Money by Andrew Clements is about Greg Kenton, who has only ever wanted to earn money. When he is in 7th grade, he sells comic books at school, but soon his annoying neighbor, Maura copies the idea. Greg gets mad, but then realizes that Maura’s books aren’t too bad and that he could make some money with them! They start working together, but not long after they start, a big problem comes up. I like this book because it is a great story about enemies turning into friends.



Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library
By Chris Grabenstein

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library by Chris Grabenstein is about Kyle Keeley. After he gets grounded from playing video games, he gets to sleep over in the new library that his favorite gamemaker, Mr. Lemoncello, designed. He hopes that during the sleepover he would be able to play games. While there, Kyle figured out that the sleepover itself was a game: a hard one where he has to use all of his knowledge to win. Kyle faces many challenges and every step he takes, it becomes harder. This book was a page turner for me. I really enjoyed it, and I hope you will like it too.



So now you’ve seen our book recommendations. If one intrigues you, try to find it at the library or wherever you get books. Maybe it will become your next favorite read! We hope you read at least one of our book recommendations since these are such great books!

Lilah’s top 3 books

Ban this Book
By Alan Gratz

This is a great realistic fiction book about a girl named Amy Anne who loves books. When her favorite book gets banned, Amy Anne, who’s normally quiet and unwilling to share her opinion, decides to rebel along with a few friends. This story is about the power of books, standing up for what you believe in, and finding your voice. *Ban this Book* is an amazing and, at points, hilarious story. Read this book!



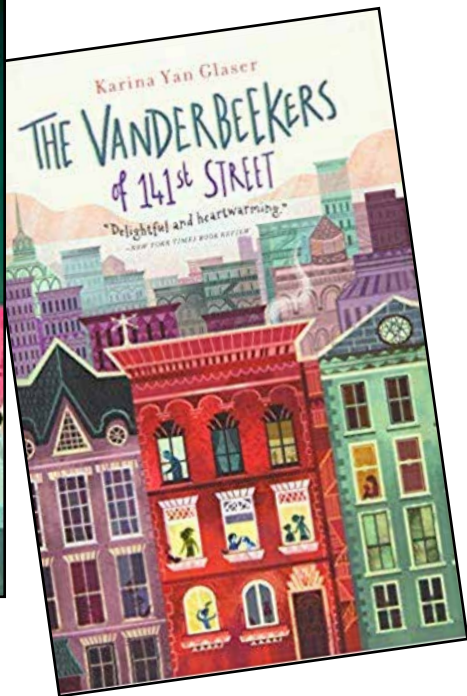
The Girl Who Could Not Dream
By Sarah Beth Durst

This is a thrilling fantasy about a girl named Sophie whose parents own a shop where dreams are mixed, bought, and sold. When Sophie’s parents are kidnapped, she must use her unique power of bringing dream animals and people to life to save them and the dream-making equipment. Sophie, along with her new friend Ethan, a unicorn, some ninja bunnies, and her dream-pet Monster, must investigate the mysterious Mr. Nightmare and battle against powerful dream-monsters who seem to be brought to life by someone who has the same power as Sophie... A wonderful, original story. This book made me laugh, and it made me cry. I highly recommend it!



The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street
By Karina Yan Glaser

This realistic fiction story is about a big, funny, and unique family called the Vanderbeekers. When their landlord, Mr. Beiderman, announces that they will be evicted from their beloved brownstone, the five kids, ranging in age from almost five to twelve, work together to try to change his mind. This is a funny, heartwarming book about the importance of family, love, and always sticking together, no matter what. You should read it!





The Game That Changed The World

by Aedan R. and Yancheng Z.

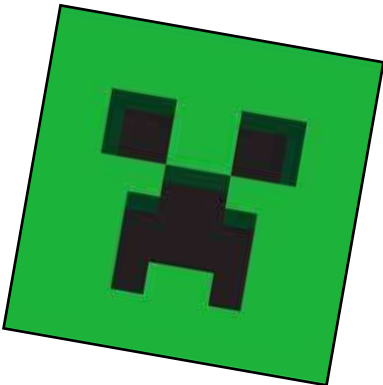
Towering walls, extravagant lighting, and a modern and luxurious space fill your vision. You think about all the great things you are going to build to make this magnificent base even better. Then, your friend joins and you start building a farm together. You barely notice time passing until your mom calls out that it’s time for dinner. You finally look up from your computer and close down Minecraft for the day.

Minecraft is a sandbox-type game, meaning a game that allows you to explore using your imagination. In Minecraft, no matter what age you are, you can find something that you will enjoy. From your own single-player world to a realm where you play with your friends or a huge server with tens of thousands of players, Minecraft has something for everyone. And if it does not offer what you would like to see, you can add to it on your own.

You can play Minecraft in many ways. The original and default game mode of Minecraft is survival mode. In survival mode, you collect resources, build and craft things, and try to stay alive. Hardcore mode is survival mode, but you only get one life. Not only that, the game is set permanently to the hardest difficulty level. On the other hand, there is creative mode. Creative mode provides you with infinite resources, instant breaking of blocks, and the ability to fly around, risk-free. Most people use creative mode to test things before building them in survival mode.

In addition to the normal worlds created by the makers of Minecraft, players have the option of playing adventure maps. An adventure map is a specially created world that a mapmaker has made for other players to come and experience an adventure. Almost all Minecraft adventure maps are made by other regular Minecraft players.

At a price, Minecraft is available on almost all devices, and has a huge team behind the scenes developing and improving the game everyday. There are one to two major updates each year, bringing in features that people may have requested, or completely new features that are a surprise. According to Quora, Minecraft has over 91 million players from all over the world, representing different religions, cultures, races, and genders.



Recently, Minecraft developers took the game to the next level with two new games based on the original, called Minecraft Earth and Minecraft Dungeons. Minecraft Earth is like Pokemon Go, but better. You can complete adventures in your local park, create and breed mobs, build whatever you want, and still play with your friends. And the best thing, it’s fully interactive, so anything that you make can be interacted with. In Minecraft Dungeons, which has yet to be released, you can use powers, get armor, and play with your friends in the adventure dungeon-based game.

Minecraft is a game that lets you take your mind off of other things in life. In Minecraft, you can build whatever you want and interact with people from all over the world. It is possible to create anything in Minecraft. If you are not satisfied with what exists in-game, you can add in things yourself with a mod or add-ons. Minecraft mods, or add-ons, as they are known on the Bedrock Edition, are independent, user-made modifications to Minecraft. Thousands of mods exist on the internet, and you can usually download them for free. People have even managed to video call real-life users using Minecraft!

These are just some of the things you can do in the endless possibilities of Minecraft. From just playing with your friends to creating your own Minecraft maps, Minecraft offers everything you can imagine. Personally, it has helped us relax when we have been under stress. We think that Minecraft is the best game ever made.



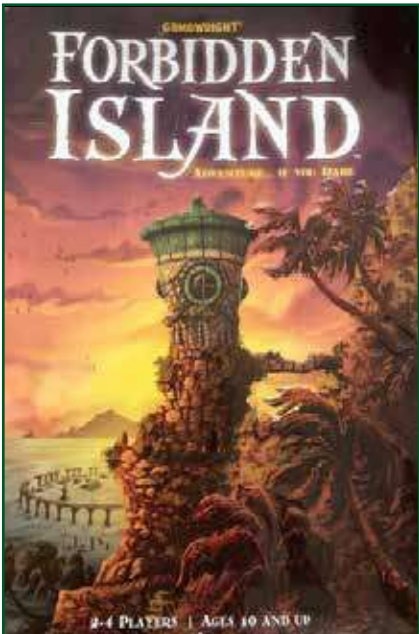
Forbidden Island: the Game of Adventure and Treasures

by Akash D.-H. and Hannah F.

Forbidden Island is an enjoyable board game that is cooperative and involves strategy. In this game, 2-5 players are trapped on an ancient, cursed island. In order to escape, they must find and rescue four ancient treasures: The Earth Stone, The Chalice of Water, The Crystal of Fire, and The Statue of the Wind. The catch? They have to do this and escape before the island floods.

The group of players pretend to be explorers on the island. Each player picks a role (for example, Pilot, Engineer, Explorer, Diver, Navigator) who has a different ability or power. For example, the Diver can move through spaces that have already been flooded, and the Explorer can move and shore up (de-flood) diagonally instead of just the adjacent squares like everyone else. The players then move around the island, finding and collecting the “keys” (cards) to the artifacts, and try to stop the island from flooding completely. Each turn, more of the island floods, and the players have to work to keep it dry. Once all of the treasures are recovered, provided the island is still unflooded, the players must meet up on Fool’s Landing and get off the island.

Forbidden Island is fun for many reasons. The first is that it is a cooperative team game, meaning that the players are not opponents, but playing together. This makes it more fun because when you finish, if you win, then everyone will have won, and everyone can participate in the screaming with joy, which is much better than just one person winning and the other players feeling frustrated.



The second reason is that it is a strategy game, instead of it being all luck. If you are somebody who has trouble in luck games such as Chutes and Ladders or Candyland, you will have a better time playing Forbidden Island. It is the players who decide how they are going to get all four treasures and lift off from Fool’s Landing; cards or dice do not decide what they do.

We think you should play Forbidden Island, but don’t stop there! Two other fun, cooperative strategy games are: Forbidden Desert and Pandemic. Forbidden Desert is similar to

Forbidden Island, and Pandemic is a strategy game in which you must cure four diseases and save humanity.

We think Forbidden Island is really fun, and we hope you will like it too.



Dungeons And Dragons In Brookline

by Miles A.

When you go to Brookline library’s Tween Room, you see people doing lots of stuff: reading, doing homework, chatting, playing games. Some of them may seem like they are just sitting at tables talking and rolling dice. But in reality, they are fighting an army of half dragons.

If you like drawing, story telling, and fantasy, you should try playing Dungeons and Dragons. Dungeons and Dragons is a role playing game (RPG) where a group of people pretend to be imaginary characters to go on a series of adventures called a campaign. Your character could be almost anything, even a part dragon, elf, gnome, dwarf, half orc or a rare extinct race known as a human (Just kidding! Humans are most of the population). Based on what the Dungeon Master - the game leader - says, you roll a bunch of oddly shaped dice to have an adventure.

If you want to learn to play, you have a couple of options. There are groups at the library that meet on certain days or you could get the Player’s Handbook to read and see if you are interested. There are other books as well that can be helpful: *Monster Manual* can be helpful to explain the creatures involved in the adventure, and the *Dungeon Masters’ Guide* helps when dealing with magic items and building home-made adventures. The Starter Set is also recommended to start an adventure; it is the basic rules and the outline to an adventure called Lost Mines of Phandelver. The adventure is simple and teaches people the basic skills they will use later.



Here are some tips for new players:

1. You don’t need to be good at fighting to help your group. You could be a sneaky rogue who can pick locks and talk to enemies to convince them to do something for you. Or you could be a cleric and use your healing magic to cure disease and give allies hit points when they take damage.
 2. An adventure can be more than “kill the bad guy”. You could convince the bad guys that what they are doing is wrong. Some campaigns revolve around mystery: find out who is planning to assassinate the king, for example. Sometimes there are adventures where the only solution is to poke the evil villain with sharp objects. Try to be creative. I know from experience that being creative makes the game more fun and makes everyone improvise.
 3. Make neat stories. Have you ever been with friends and had nothing to talk about? If you played Dungeons and Dragons recently, you could talk about how it went.
 - 4 Let the Dungeon Master be in charge of the rules. The Dungeon Master can change some rules but do nothing to others. Remember the Dungeon Master makes the story, and you change it with your decisions.
 - 5 Watch videos on how to play. Seth Skorkowsky’s Dungeons and Dragons Youtube videos are good, in my opinion.
 6. Look for a trustworthy person to be the Dungeon Master. They should probably know the rules and have run a game before. The groups that play in the library, as well as the library-sponsored groups, are usually good for beginners and welcome new players.
- So. If you are looking for a new adventure try joining a Dungeons and Dragons campaign next time you are at the library after school.



FICTION PAGES



Duck the Dragon Set Some Homework on Fire

by Miles A.

Students at Pierce School may not know how close they came to being doomed. Under a secret hatch in the library floor, thirty printers are hidden in a top-secret vault. Their job is to print homework all day long, all year long. They have been printing since 1900 and have been planning to flood the library with homework before taking over the school. They will give students too much work to have any fun and paper cut any student who resist. At least, that was their plan before their plot was foiled. This is a minute by minute account of what happened.

12:00 pm. All was going according to plan. The printers had almost finished printing enough homework to fulfill their destiny and subject the students to their dominion. Three. Two. One. Go!

(Meanwhile, for no reason whatsoever, Unit A teachers decided to let the students out for recess a few minutes early).

12:01 pm. 300 pages flew out of the hatch. The printers imagined all the people in unit A having to sit inside to do all of this homework instead of going out to lunch or recess.

12:02 pm. Because the students were all out of the library, Duck the Dragon was flying around the top floor. Duck the Dragon is 1,700 years old, equivalent to 18 in dragon years. Before coming to the library, he had been living in Pierce Park. One day, while eating strawberries and watching people playing tag and debating if they would be scared of a mythical creature, he was found by some 7th and 8th graders. They decided to pay him to help them get rid of homework. He is saving to buy a high-quality cave to live in and to go to some sort of dragon college, so he agreed. And yes, his name is Duck, as in the bird.

When Duck saw the homework flooding into the library, he flew down to the tables. From the middle of the library, he shot a line of fire at the pages of homework. One hundred and fifty pages were set on fire and quickly fled to the side. The pages that were still exiting the hatch (and therefore escaped the line of fire) had time to fly out of the way. The burning pages were destroyed, but the others tried to paper cut the dragon to death. Duck used his claws to cut a lot of them until they started finding openings in his scales. All seemed lost for Duck.

On top of the heating system above the library is a colony of fire-breathing goats. (They have been there a long time. Long story). At that moment, many of them came down and attacked the homework. The goats started breathing fire. All 300 homework pages were destroyed.

The goats ran down the hatch and headbutted the printers until they stopped working. I interviewed the goats and had the following conversation:

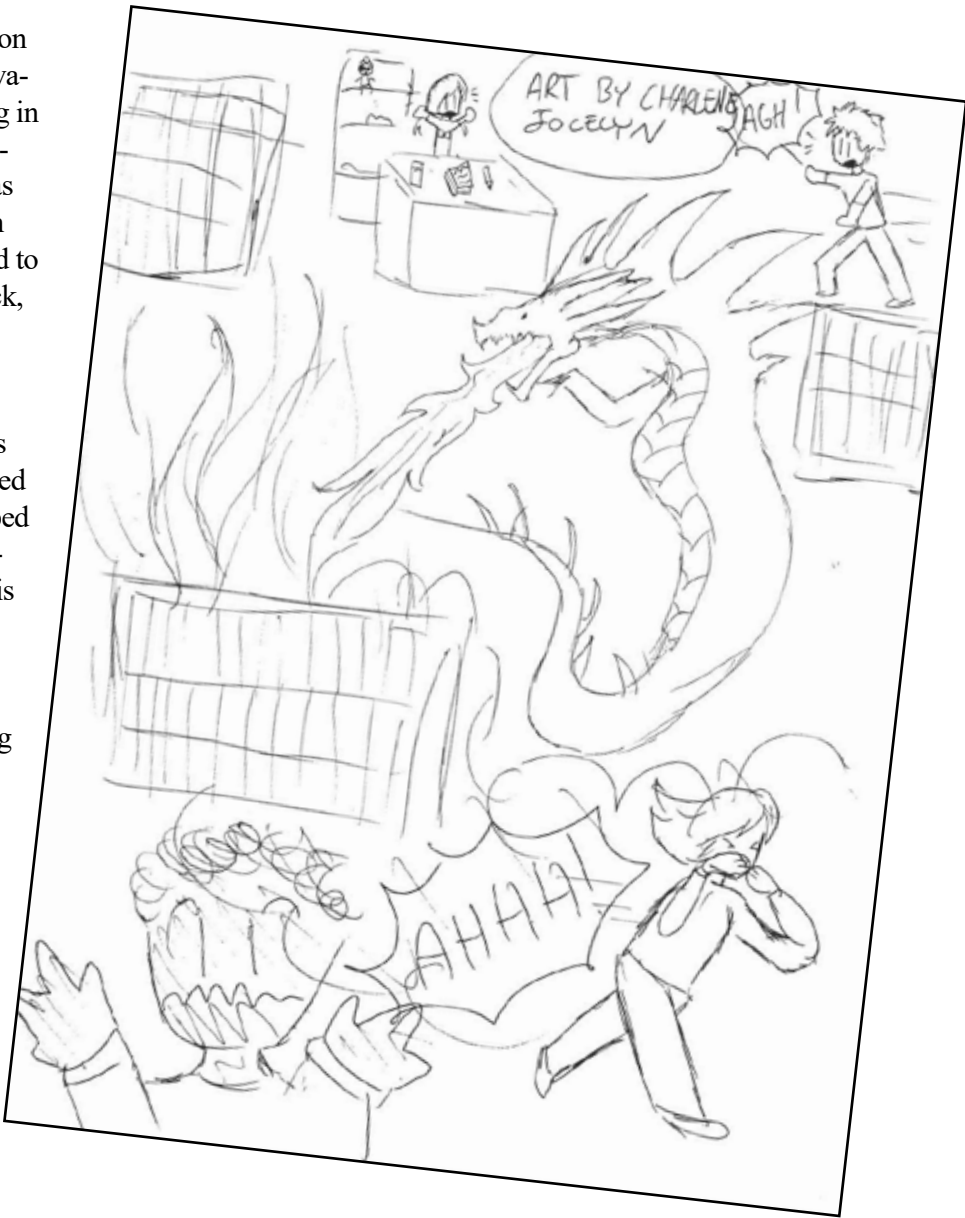
(me) “So, what are your future plans?”
(goat) “BAHHHHH!”
(me) “I’m sorry, what was that?”
(goat) *Steals notepad*
(me) “Hey! Give that back!”
(goat) *Eats notepad*
(me) “Nevermind, you keep it.”

Then I interviewed the dragon.

(me) “So, uuuhhhh, what’s your name?”
(Duck) “Oh, Duck.”
(me) “Ok. Why did you destroy all of the homework?”
(Duck) “I am getting paid 20 dollars for a page set on fire by people who just don’t like homework. Also I need money to buy a nice cave to live in.”
(me) “So what are your plans for the future?”
(Duck the dragon) “Destroy the homework that is hiding in the Pierce tunnel. Then I want to get elected president.”

End of interview.

Duck the dragon later added that he wanted to make the first school day of every month a day with no homework. While still saving for college, he can be found on the top floor of the library.





You Probably Shouldn't Be Here

by Theo S.

Hello. Before you proceed, a quick disclaimer: this is not normal. Nobody is normal. If you read this article, you may be disturbed. This is on purpose. You don't know who I am. I know who you are. It's a strange cycle.

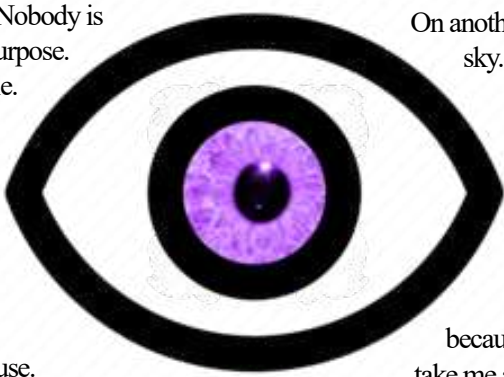
You probably shouldn't be here.

To start things off, I have been asked to read this for you.

The new staff elevator is off limits to everyone. Even the staff. The staff should never go into the new staff elevator. The staff elevator is for the angels. They're everywhere. They're in your house. They're in your room. Beware of the angels. Run from the angels. They're always behind you.

Thank you.

We have a new student today. His name is Chris. He is in the twelfth grade. There is no twelfth grade. Chris does not exist. Never look him in the eyes. He doesn't have them.



On another note, students have claimed to see strange lights in the sky. Try not to look at the lights. If you see the lights, the old woman with the hood will come. Cyle, the custodian, went missing today. He looked at the lights. Do not look at the lights.

And for the last time, never talk to the ghosts in the gym.

You may wonder why I keep my identity a secret. It is because I fear the men wearing the black suits will come and take me away. Do not trust them. They are always watching.

If you see someone with short, dark brown hair with blue tips wearing a green overcoat, do not follow them home. Do not ring the doorbell. Too many people have bothered me today.

I will see you again very, very soon.

The Legend Of The Locker Monster

by Jem B.-J.

Has something extremely simple ever seemed nearly impossible? All year long, this has been a problem for the sixth graders in Ms. Woogmaster's class. Every day, while kids in other classes open their lockers with ease, 6W has trouble. No matter how many times they try, the lockers refuse to open.

"It took me five tries just to open my locker once! At this rate, I'll never get to class on time," said one student as she sadly watched everyone else open their lockers with no trouble at all. A classmate's younger brother, who is himself small enough to fit into a locker, one day proposed an explanation. "Have you ever heard the legend of the locker monster?" he asked.

There was once a small child who was bullied by the bigger kids in the school. Even worse, the leader of the bullies was his older brother who called him Little Monster. Everyone knew what was going on, but no one, absolutely no one, liked to disagree with the big brother and his gang of bullies.

It was the last day of school. The little brother should have been happy with that. But he wasn't. Less school meant more time being with his older brother and the gang. Bad days--and his summer would be filled with them.

As he walked through the hall, he heard his older brother call out, "Hey, Little Monster, come over here!"

Having no choice, he did so. But when he got to him, his older brother threw him into the locker. "Have a nice time," he whispered.

The older brother waited for the younger brother to come out. He waited for what seemed like a long time. When nothing happened, he got curious, and he opened the locker to let his little brother out. To his surprise, his little brother was not there! He was nowhere to be found!

But the next year, students started noticing that the lockers wouldn't open. Sometimes open lockers would seem to slam shut again. It became clear that the younger boy had not vanished, but had become a ghost haunting the lockers. And the older brother? He stopped bullying other children, disbanded his gang, and spent his time opening other kids' lockers for them when they had trouble.

After hearing this story, 6W student Lilah Freidland said, "This makes perfect sense. It's the revenge of the locker monster!"

News of the locker monster spread, and nearly everyone agreed that the locker monster must be real!

After weeks of pushing and pulling, and trying every possible way to outsmart the lockers, we discovered a solution. All you have to do is get someone else to kick your locker before you open it. It works, we reasoned, because the kicking noise scares the locker monster, and it goes away.

Here's an added tip: once you get the door open, put a pen or pencil in the handle. That way, your locker will never really close, and the problem is solved (unless someone removes it). You also give the locker monster some a break from all the kicking (after all, his big brother was the bully, not him).

There are, however, locker monster skeptics. Some claim that the locker monster does not exist, and the reason why the lockers don't open is that they are old, and they've just gotten rusty (But does rust really stop a locker from opening?). For the kids who have locks on their lockers, one student offers that maybe they aren't entering the right combination (But why would your locker not open three times in a row? That seems like too much unless there is a locker monster).

Overall, in my opinion, evidence definitely points to a locker monster. Some people may say it does not exist, but the kids of 6W know better. If there isn't a locker monster, then what's causing our problems?





SPORTS
PAGE

Play Ball: Boston Red Sox 2019 Report Card

by Finn C.

On October 30th, 2019, the Washington Nationals completed a World Series championship at the end of an exciting journey: a comeback wild card win against the Brewers, a five game division series against the dominating Dodgers, a championship series sweep of the Cardinals, and finally a power-pitched, seven-game World Series win against the 107-win Houston Astros to win their first World Series in franchise history. It was one of the most exciting and action-packed World Series of the decade. Meanwhile, the reigning World Series champions, the Boston Red Sox, whose 108 wins were a franchise high in 2018, in 2019 failed to make it into the postseason, failed to have a winning record at home, and failed even to have a winning percentage over .520, despite having the highest payroll in the MLB at the start of the season. It was very disappointing. But I have high hopes that the Red Sox will be back to their winning ways to kick off the 2020's.

Here is a report card for (most of) the Red Sox players of 2019 (information and pictures below are from Yahoo Sports, Baseball Almanac, Wikipedia, the Runner Sports, CBS Boston, Bleacher Report, the Boston Herald, the Boston Globe, blog Red Machine, NESN, Bosox Injection, UPI, Over the Monster, and WRUF):

 A+ Need I say more? Despite minor struggles at third base, Devers was a beast at the plate, batting .311 with 201 hits, 32 home runs, 54 doubles, and 115 RBI; a huge breakthrough season for him, earning him an easy A+. Not convinced? You're crazy.	 A+ The X-Man easily had the best season of his career in his sixth year with Boston, fully unleashing the power hitter within. He had career highs in homers (33), RBI (117), and doubles (52), while batting .309. He also won 5th place in the MVP voting.	 A+ In a typical season, J.D. Martinez hits 35-45 homers, gets tons of RBI, and bats over .300. In 2019, he had a typical season. He hit 36 homers, collected 105 RBI, batted .304. He has been amazing in his two years with Boston, being a key part of their 2018 World Series win.
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 A The 26-year-old Red Sox starter probably had the best pitching performance on the team in 2019. With a team-best 19 wins, 203.1 innings pitched, and career best in strikeouts (213), ERA (3.81), and innings pitched (203.1), he is coming through as a very likely 2020 ace.	 A In his first four years with the Red Sox, Vazquez hit 10 home runs and batted in 82 runs. In 2019, he hit 23 homers and knocked in 72 runs. This is one of the biggest turnaround seasons that I have ever seen. He redid his swing during the 2018 offseason, and has since been homering on a regular basis.	 A In his five years with the Red Sox, Mookie Betts has been one of the best players in baseball. In 2019, the 2018 AL MVP won his 4th gold glove award, his 3rd silver slugger award, and 7th place in the MVP voting. He batted .295 with 29 home runs, 80 RBI, 176 hits, and an MLB high 135 runs scored. Despite not giving as many clutch hits as he was expected to, Mookie Betts is still my favorite MLB player.
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 A The primary closer for the Sox in 2019, Brandon Workman had an amazing breakout season. In the 71.2 innings that he pitched, Workman posted a spectacular 1.88 ERA and a .123 opponent batting average, while striking out 104, collecting 16 saves, and allowing only 29 hits, 15 runs, and 1 home run.	 B+ JBj had a decent season on the plate, batting .225 with 21 home runs, 62 RBI, and 111 hits, but struck out 155 times, about once every 3 at bats. Despite offensive inconsistency, his fielding was masterful, as he made no errors the entire season. He made many amazing catches throughout the season, including scaling the wall against the Orioles, robbing Trey Mancini of what would have been a walk-off homer.	 B+ Despite injury early in the year, Brock Holt had a pretty good season. He played in 87 games, batted .297, hit 3 home runs, and batted in 31 runs. He has been on the Sox for 7 years, hit for the cycle twice, and won two World Series. Unfortunately, the Brockstar may be subject to trading due to free agency during the 2019-2020 offseason.
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 B Michael Chavis, the 23-year-old rookie from the PawSox, came in to pinch hit for his first at bat against the Rays in April, and hit a double. His season continued much like this, hitting 18 home runs and batting in 58 runs. Despite this, he batted only .254 and struck out 127 times in 347 at bats. A shoulder injury against the Royals on August 6th left him on the injured list for the remainder of the season.	 B- After being a hero in the 2018 postseason, veteran Cy Young winner David Price had a bit of a down season, going 7-5, while posting a 4.28 ERA and striking out 128. He pitched in 22 games, and suffered an injury late in the season, and was on the IL for the remainder of it. Hopefully in 2020, Price will come through like he did in 2018.	 B- Reliever Marcus Walden had a pretty good season, especially looking at most of the other Red Sox relievers. He went 9-2 with a 3.81 ERA and 76 strikeouts in 70 games. He started off the season spectacularly, having a 6-0 record early in the season. His performance, however, dipped later in the season, as he finished with 4 blown saves.
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--- Continued on next page ---

Play Ball: Boston Red Sox 2019 Report Card - Continued

Andrew Benintendi-LF  C+ Let's face it: Andrew Benintendi did not do so great this year. He batted only .266, hit 13 home runs, and collected 68 RBI. He also scored only 72 runs and struck out 140 times. In 2018, Benintendi went 4 for 5 in his first career World Series game, becoming the first ever player to do so. We hope that Benintendi will come through in 2020 as the fast, hard-hitting, fielding star that we saw in his first two seasons.	Rick Porcello-SP  C+ 2016 Cy Young winner Rick Porcello had a pretty wild season. He had a career worst ERA of 5.52, and went 14-12 in the season, but to be honest, he did okay when he actually pitched. A big part of that was because whenever he gave up a bunch of runs, the Red Sox offense would usually have his back. He was traded to the Mets in the offseason.	Colten Brewer-RP  C Acquired from the Padres prior to the 2019 season, reliever Colten Brewer did perfectly horrible at first, but was solid after the All-Star break. He finished the season with decent numbers: 4.12 ERA, .277 opponent batting average, 52 strikeouts. Could be a solid middle reliever for 2020.
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Sam Travis-1B/OF  C After being benched for most of 2018, the young Sam Travis got a good deal of play time in 2019, much better than last year. He only played in 59 games, but has been hitting a good deal better than in his first two seasons. He has gotten a home run swing, similar to that of Christian Vazquez, and had a hot streak in July. He finished with 6 home runs, 16 RBI, and a .215 average. He is a good prospect for future years.	Matt Barnes-RP  C- Even though he had a career high strikeout number, Matt Barnes had a bad season in 2020. He had a decent 5-4 record and 3.78 ERA. Though he did have a career best 4 saves, he had a career worst 8 blown saves. A lot of career highs and lows for Barnes in 2019. In mid-season, he was demoted from closer to middle reliever.	Marco Hernandez-2B  C- After consistently switching between the minors and majors for the last three years, Marco Hernandez played a career high 61 games. He also had career highs in average (.250), hits, (37), runs (18), RBI (11), and home runs (2). Those are not very notable career highs, yet Hernandez is definitely a prospect to look after in 2020. With a shortage in second basemen, he could be used more commonly.
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Chris Sale-SP  D+ Named by my mom as "Chris Fail", the Red Sox "ace pitcher", 7-time all star Chris Sale had the worst season of his career, going 6-11 with a 4.40 ERA with 72 earned runs in 25 games. At the end of the season, he began to show his old self, but was injured in August and would not play for the rest of the season. Hopefully, in 2020, the all star, strikeout king Chris Sale from his previous years will show himself.	Sandy Leon-C  D The Red Sox backup catcher had a down year playing in only 65 games and batting a horrible .192, with only 5 home runs and 19 RBI. His best season was in 2016, when he batted .310 with 7 home runs. He was traded to the Indians in the offseason for minor league prospects.	Chris Owings-2B  F A 6-year vetrean from the Diamondbacks, Owings played in 26 games with Boston in 2019. In 45 at bats, he batted .156 with only 7 hits, one home run, 5 RBI, and struck out 23 times. He was released at the end of the season, and is now a free agent.
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Gorkys Hernandez-OF  F A veteran outfielder acquired from the Giants in September, Gorkys Hernandez did pure awful when he was with the Red Sox. In 49 at bats, Hernandez batted .143, collected only 7 hits, and 2 RBI. As you may guess, he is off the team roster for 2020.	Andrew Cashner-SP  F Acquired from the Orioles at the trade deadline, and having one of the best seasons of his career, Andrew Cashner suddenly imploded. In 25 games played, Cashner went 2-5 with a 6.20 ERA, and did so bad that Alex Cora demoted him to be a reliever.	Eduardo Nunez-2B/3B  F Eduardo Nunez easily had the worst season of his career in 2019. He batted only .228, collecting only 38 hits, 2 home runs, and 20 RBI in 167 at bats. He did so bad, in fact, that the Red Sox kicked him off of their team roster in July.
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To sum it all up, 2019 was a dark year for the Red Sox, who had only 84 wins in the whole season. But the team could be looking up in 2020. Here are some of my hopes for the Red Sox this new decade:

- Mookie Betts stays with the Red Sox.
- Chris Sale actually does good again, like in 2018.
- Andrew Benintendi stops striking out so much.
- If he stays with the Sox, Jackie Bradley Jr. actually hits consistently for once in his career.
- Michael Chavis goes the whole season hitting home runs, striking out less, and avoiding injuries.
- Xander Bogaerts, Rafael Devers, and J.D. Martinez hit as awesome as they did last year.
- Brandon Workman continues dominating.
- And of course, the Red Sox win the World Series.

The Top Stuff you need to know about Basketball

by Cole H. and Khalid T.

You might think the sport of basketball is just about a ball and a basket, but it is not that simple. Basketball, like any team sport, depends on players, their chemistry, and their effort. 26 million Americans play basketball according to Wikipedia; this is more than any other team sport in America. A lot of people also watch the National Basketball Association (NBA) and follow the NBA players' careers. Let's take a look at some of the hottest teams and players in the league.

In the Western Conference, The Los Angeles Clippers are the new powerhouse after picking up players in the off season. Their lineup includes last year's NBA Finals Most Valuable Player and former Toronto Raptor, Kawhi Leonard. The rapper Drake was one of Kawhi's biggest fans last year and cheered as he hit his now famous last second shot that bounced on the rim four times before going in. This shot took Toronto to the NBA finals! The remaining starting five players for the Clippers include Lou Williams who brings tenacity, Motrezal Harrell, the "big man" who dominates in the paint, and finally Paul George, an All Star who is a tremendous passer and can score from anywhere on the court. The final starter holds his own as well.

The Utah Jazz is the second best team in the West. They have exceptional players including former rookie of the year and slam dunk contest champion Donovan Mitchell. Rudy Gobert is their defensive weapon and brings height. Although they do not have as many stars as the other teams in the West, the Jazz are a fantastic team and have a chemistry that makes for success.

Finally, the third place in the Western conference is held by the LA Lakers. Their team includes LeBron James, who is arguably



the best player of all time, (although others believe that title belongs to Michael Jordan). James was joined this year by Anthony Davis, one of the best all around players in the league and by Dwight Howard, who is also known as 'Superman' because of how he flies when dunking the ball. The remainder of the team is made up of very talented players who play a big role in making the LA Lakers unstoppable as the season progresses.

In the Eastern Conference, there are some excellent teams as well. Our very own Boston Celtics have had shockingly good performances. Their starting lineup is silent, but deadly. They have a crazy good point guard Kemba Walker who is known for contributing to good team chemistry. They have a small forward, Jayson Tatum, a former Duke basketball star who is young, but plays with poise and is humble. Finally Gordon Hayward, a former Butler player under Coach Brad Stevens, has fully recovered from his broken ankle and contributes on the floor every game.

The Miami Heat have also had a surprisingly good start. Although they have no superstars on the team, they have one of the best records. Their top players include Gordan Dradgic, Bam Adebayo, and Jimmy Butler (an NBA All-Star last year) and last, but not least, Justise Winslow, a former Duke phenomenon, one of the most athletic players in the league.

Although the season is approaching the half-way point, and anything can change, the Clippers, Jazz, Lakers, Celtics, and Heat are the top teams in the Western and Eastern Conference and the ones that should potentially compete for the championship this Spring. Of all the teams we reviewed, we think the LA Lakers are the team to beat and have the best chance to win it all this season. We are going to enjoy all of the action the rest of the season and hope you do too.

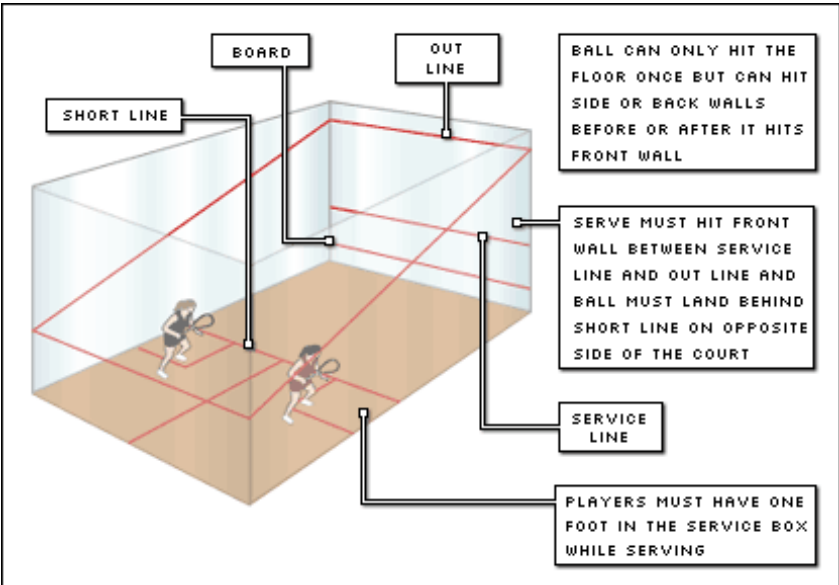
What Is Squash?

by Abhinav S.

Do you like racket sports and fast-paced action? If so, you should play squash.

Squash is a game that originated in England at Harrow School in 1830 (Wikipedia). I play squash at the courts at Boston University with my dad and sometimes with other kids with whom I take classes. Once a month there is a round robin at the squash courts at Harvard University where young players from all over Massachusetts, at all levels, play against others at their own level.

The best description of the rules of Squash I saw, was at the BBC sports (British Broadcasting Corporation) website*. Here is a picture from the website followed with a brief description of the rules:



Play begins with a service. Who serves first is decided by the spin of a racket. The server continues serving until losing a rally. Then, the opponent becomes the server. To serve, a player stands with at least part of one foot on the floor within the service box. For a service to be good, it is served directly onto the front wall above the service line and below the out line, so that on its return, it reaches the floor within the back quarter of the court opposite to the server's box (USSquash.com). See picture above if any of the terms do not make sense.

A return is good if the ball is returned onto the front wall above the board (also called the tin) and below the out line, without first touching the floor. The ball may hit the side walls and the back wall (or sometimes both) before reaching the front wall.

The rules can get a little complicated, but the idea is to keep a rally going. Whoever wins the rally gets one point. Whoever scores 11 points first wins the game.

If you're still reading, great job! You now know the basic rules of squash. All you need now is some balls, a racket, and protective eyewear, and you are good to go. Let's play soon!



*http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/other_sports/squash/4748522.stm

Me at the round robin.



pages

What is your spirit animal?

by Zoe P. & Sabrina P.

Remember to count your points and answer honestly; the answers labeled 4 points are not always better.

Chocolate or Vanilla?

- A) Vanilla 4 points
- B) Chocolate 2
- C) Neither 3
- D) I prefer strawberry 1

Favorite color?

- A) Blue 1 point
- B) Purple 2
- C) Red 4
- D) Rainbow/Other 3

Favorite food category?

- A) Savory foods 2 points
- B) Candy/desserts 4
- C) Vegetables/fruit 1
- D) Everything else!!! 3

Favorite season?

- A) Summer 4 points
- B) Fall 3
- C) Winter 2
- D) Spring 1

Favorite book genre?

- A) Fantasy 2 points
- B) Realistic fiction 3
- C) Mystery 4
- D) Non-fiction/other 1

What's your dream pet?

- A) Dog/Cat 1 point
- B) Unicorn/pegasus 4
- C) Dragon 2
- D) Other 3

If you could wear only one kind of shoe for the whole year, it would be....

- A) Sneakers 3 points
- B) Boots 2
- C) Flip flops 4
- D) Flats 1

What would your superpower be?

- A) Invisibility 1 point
- B) Flying 2
- C) Super strength 3
- D) Shapeshifting 4

Where would you want to live?

- A) Beach 2 points
- B) Desert 4
- C) Forest 3
- D) Mountain 1

Pick an instrument to play...

- A) Piano 1 point
- B) Saxophone 4
- C) Flute 2
- D) Violin 3

If you could, you would ride to school in...

- A) A limo 2 points
- B) A horse drawn carriage 1
- C) A sports car 4
- D) A train 3

You have...

- A) 1 best friend 1 point
- B) A lot of friends 3
- C) No friends :(2
- D) A couple of friends 4

At recess you would rather...

- A) Play four square 4 points
- B) Play football/soccer 2
- C) Play on the structure 3
- D) Other 1

What is your dream job?

- A) Doctor 4 points
- B) Teacher 3
- C) Chef 1
- D) Other 2

What is your favorite school subject?

- A) Math 3 points
- B) Science 2
- C) ELA 4
- D) Social Studies 1

YOUR SPIRIT ANIMAL IS A:

(14 - 21 Points) Sloth!

You like to go with the Flow, and you're mostly chill. Most of the time you are a good friend and very supportive. People enjoy being with you because you are so laid back in life.

(22 - 30 Points) Shark!

You are tough and stand up for yourself and others. You are very bold, and you can be curious with your big brain. You are strong and aggressive when it comes to challenges.

(31 - 40 Points) Ant!

It might sound a little disappointing, but ants are very hard workers. Also this means you work well with a group of people. You have a strong soul.

(41 -56 Points) Cheetah!

You are swift and cool. You are very adventurous even if you might have a bad attitude sometimes. Otherwise, you work hard to help friends and like to get things done in the fastest possible way.

Don't worry if you think your result doesn't match your personality, or if you just don't like it. Remember the quiz is just for fun!



Riddles & Jokes

by David L., Tony L., Aedan R., Isaac Z., and Yancheng Z.,

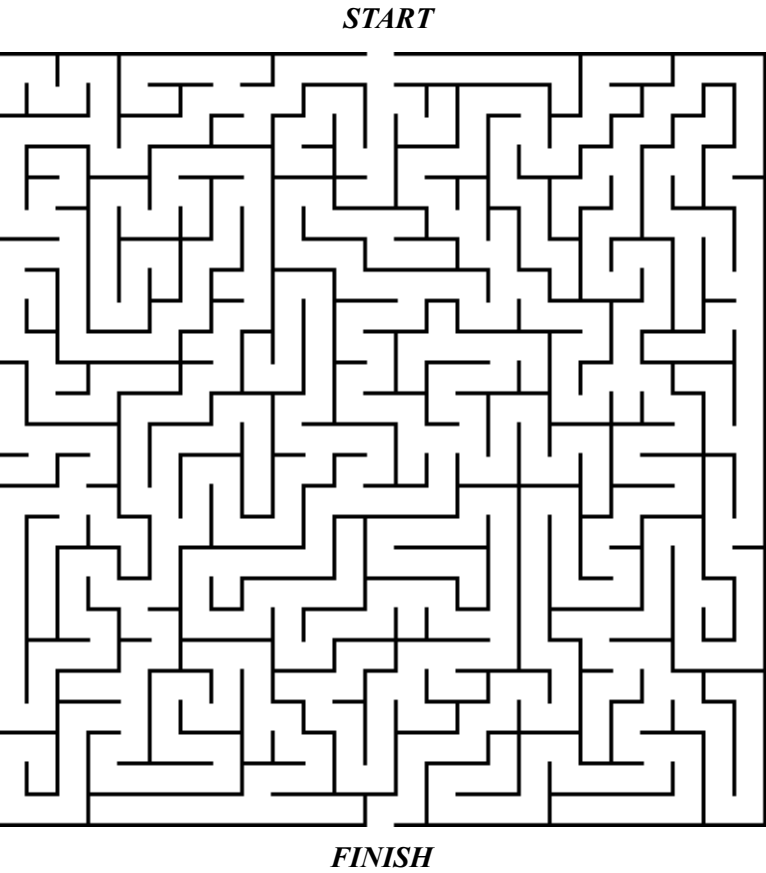
Riddles:

- 1. An eight-letter word can have a letter taken away, and it still makes a word. Take another letter away, and it still makes a word. Keep on doing that until you have one letter left. What is the word?
- 2. When does Christmas come before Thanksgiving?
- 3. What is it that when you take away the whole, you still have some?
- 4. A chicken says, "All chickens lie." Is the chicken telling the truth?
- 5. How many seconds are there in a year?
- 6. I am a word of six; my first three letters refer to an automobile; my last three letters refer to a household animal; my first four letters is a fish; my whole word is found in your room. What am I?

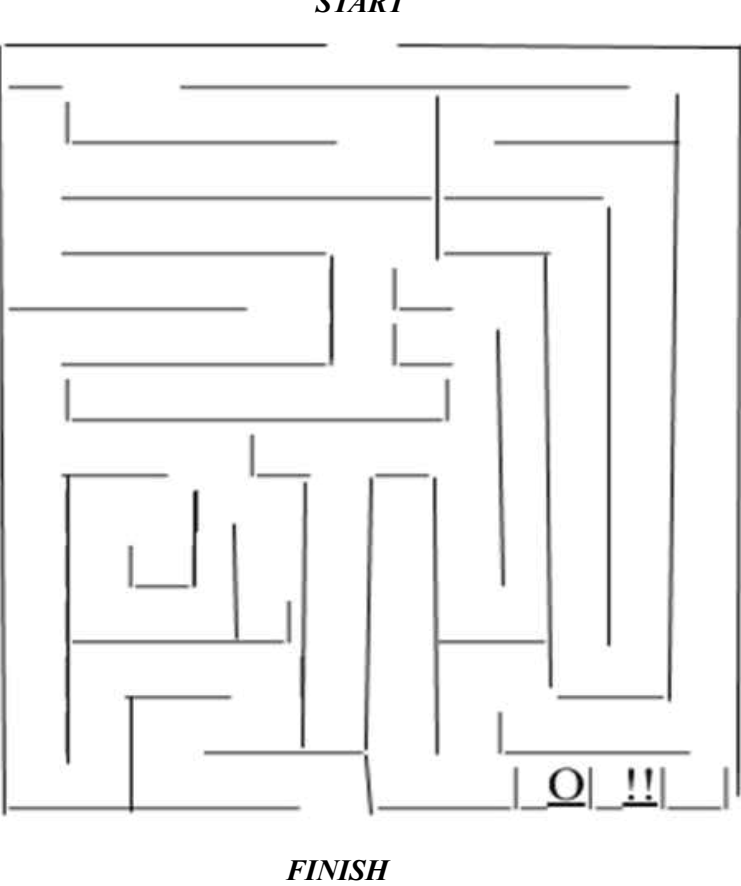
Jokes:

- 1. Did you know that you shouldn't tell a tree a riddle?
- 2. Why do exterminators hate having fun?
- 3. Why did Tom throw his clock out of his window?
- 4. Why did Bob eat his money?
- 5. What is a fish's least favorite day?
- 6. The exterminators failed to kill the serial killer flies. Who did?

Maze 1



Maze 2



Word Search

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

- Pierce
Community
Science
Green
- Pride
English
Brookline
School
- Penguin
Recess
Social Studies
United States
- Math
Lunch
Massachusetts

Sudoku

1						4		7
	7	8				3		
				9	1	6		
				2				
				4	7			1
3	6						8	
	2	4		6		1		
	8	5				7		
			4					



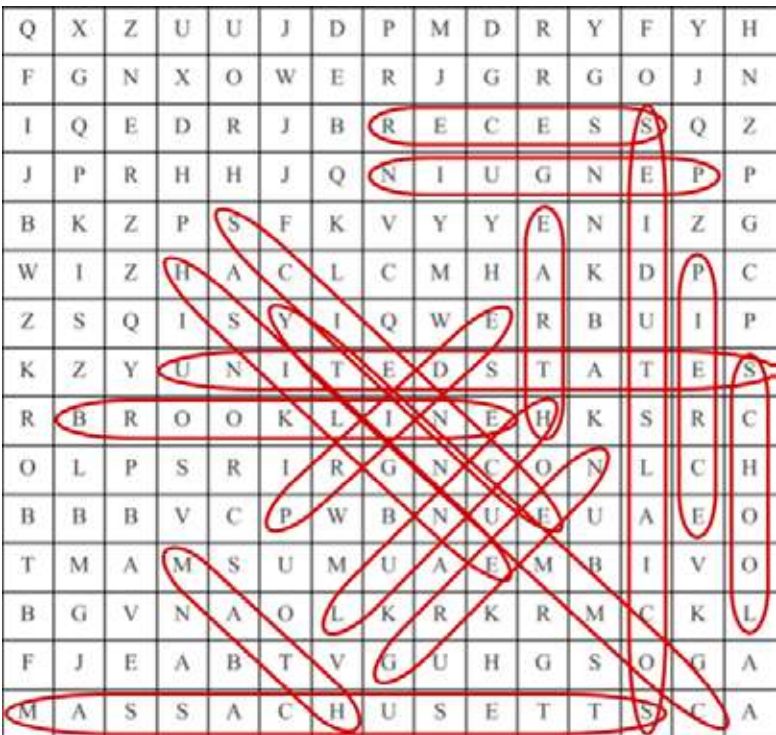
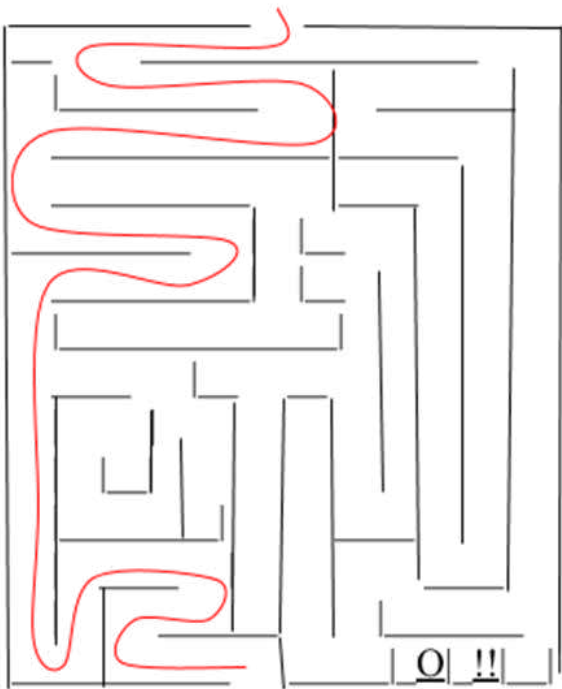
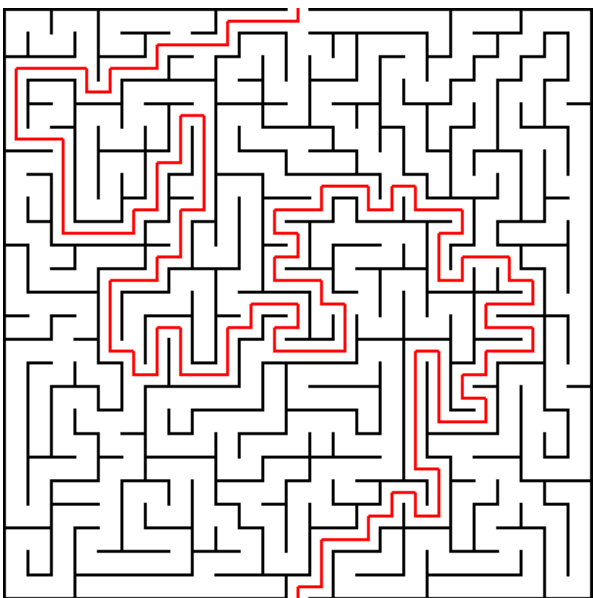
Fun Pages Answer Key

Riddles and Answers:

- 1. The word is starting! starting, staring, string, sting, sing, sin, in, I.
- 2. In the dictionary
- 3. Wholesome.
- 4. Chickens don't talk
- 5. January 2nd, February 2nd ... December 2nd.
- 6. A carpet

Jokes Answers:

- 1. It'll leave them stumped!
- 2. Because time FLIES when you're having fun.
- 3. Because he wanted to see time fly.
- 4. Because his mom said that it was for lunch.
- 5. Fry-day
- 6. The SWAT Team



1	9	6	2	8	3	4	5	7
2	7	8	6	5	4	3	1	9
5	4	3	7	9	1	6	2	8
4	1	9	8	2	6	5	7	3
8	5	2	3	4	7	9	6	1
3	6	7	5	1	9	2	8	4
7	2	4	9	6	8	1	3	5
9	8	5	1	3	2	7	4	6
6	3	1	4	7	5	8	9	2

Meet The Pierce Penguins

by Tiana L., Char J., and Viola S.,



Meet Flippy. He loves his favorite green, black, and white hat. He also likes to play video games.



Meet Flappy. He likes to play with his friends and play soccer.



Meet Floppy. He is smart, tall, and he flops over a lot (he's pretty clumsy). He loves to sleep, read, and draw.



What Do People Want? (And How Do I Ask Them?)

by Sophia W.-S.

Have you ever had a question and wondered what other people think about it? Next time, think about using Google Forms. As an example, this is a survey about whether people prefer the Pierce School library/Unit A to be open or closed. I made a Google form to collect this information and then asked all my fellow writers at Penguin Post to answer the questions. I also asked them about their favorite day of the week.

Should Pierce renovations close off Unit A into classrooms?

Open: 24.4% (10 people)
Closed: 14.6% (6 people)
Don't want Pierce to be renovated: 56.1% (23 people)

What is your favorite day of the week?

Monday: 51.4% (19 people)
Tuesday: 2.75% (1 person)
Wednesday: 2.75% (1 person)
Thursday: 2.75% (1 person)
Friday: 18.9% (7 people)
Saturday: 21.6% (8 people)
Sunday: 2.75% (1 person)

From this data I found out that the majority of people I surveyed from Penguin Post don't want Pierce to be renovated and certainly not in a way that closes the library into individual classrooms. I also found out that the majority of these people's favorite day of the week is Monday.

In conclusion creating and sharing a Google form is a quick way to get answers to whatever questions you might have.

Advertisement



Paper Cut Finder



Thank you for reading Penguin Post!

The Penguin Post wishes everyone a happy and healthy spring.

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