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ONLINE SOURCE

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Ride into book-battle  
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### *Conquer School with Main Character Energy!*

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Don't be a mean girl  
ONLINE SOURCE



# The Spectrum

◆ *e cineribus et ad astra* ◆

SEPTEMBER • VOL. 41, BACK-TO-SCHOOL ISSUE

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

www.thespectrumabrhs.com

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Your Back-To-School experience but make it ~spicy~ tunes

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The front of our school  
MILENA ZHU / Spectrum Staff

## The Spectrum: AB's Best Club (Unbiased Opinion)

By OLIVIA HU '22, JASMINE WU '22, AND REBECCA ZHANG '22  
*Spectrum* Chief Staff  
News Article

As I opened up Drive to edit articles this morning, the most refreshing breeze tickled my nose. Finally, this was it: the hallucinatory scent of fresh ink, drifting from a copy of *The Spectrum's* Back-To-School issue, which had fallen from a locker door in a forlorn yet graceful state. Alas, it was all a dream, a fantasy, a memory I had never lived.

But I was suddenly struck with a realization—my reverie was no pipe dream, but rather a glimpse into the future and the odyssey that awaits us this year, at *The Spectrum*.

So yes, we're printing! And you're holding the newest issue of *The Spectrum* right now.

#### *Who We Are*

Anyone can find a home in *The*

*Spectrum*, united under the goal of informing, entertaining, and... snacking. Standard newspaper issues cover everything from love advice to Indigenous history, aiming to amplify perspectives and provoke thought amongst students.

Every Thursday afternoon, we gather in room 152W for one of *The Spectrum's* trademark productivity sessions, characterized by collaborative brainstorming and randomly deep thoughts. The section editors, our ever-present guides, provide feedback and (thanks to COVID) offer one-on-one meetings through Zoom. Writers can use Thursday meetings to build on analysis, reorganize paragraphs, and spend quality time with their editors. And on most days, you can spot Ms. Hammond, our lovely advisor!

#### *The Writing*

In a months-long process, writers sign up for articles, write outlines, and draft over and over with

support from their section editors, allowing them to build on existing skills and receive feedback.

Students can write for any section: Mainspread, News, Op-Ed, or Off-Topic. In Mainspread, writers can explore different styles while connecting to the issue's theme. The News section features articles about the AB community from school news to town events. Look towards Op-Ed (Opinions and Editorials) for opinions on both local and global topics. Lastly, Off-Topic houses an eclectic mix of articles, ranging from song rankings to quirky guides to relatable, student-drawn comics!

Our newly established Bits Team, or Breaking In The Spectrum, publishes weekly news articles, keeping our community informed and connected. On a larger scale, the Reporting Team works year-long to research, interview, and craft a comprehensive feature on relevant topics like housing or the legacy of Indigenous people.

#### *Non-Writing Sections*

*The Spectrum* also hosts a variety of non-writing divisions with Layout, Publicity and Finance, and our podcast, *Off The Spectrum*.

Those with an eye for aesthetics can join Layout, where editors can learn to format the newspaper, maintain our website, or create graphics for social media. In the Publicity and Finance division, members work behind the scenes with local businesses or hold fundraisers to fund *The Spectrum*, building people skills, and they manage social media in collaboration with layout.

Recently, *The Spectrum* started a podcast to share our personal thoughts and discussions in a separate format. Members will have opportunities to interview, edit, and live out their ASMRist dreams.

Whether you think cereal is soup or that a hotdog is a sandwich, we welcome you! Fledgling writers, word masters, and all—there's a place for you!



# Intro

## Letter from the EICs

By JASMINE WU '22 AND  
REBECCA ZHANG '22  
Editors-in-Chief

After the chaos of the past two years, we leaped into summer, hoping that our senior year would bring more certainty. But then the Delta variant crushed our souls.

Like the melodramatic teenagers we are, we slumped through four stages of grief—denial (COVID is gone! Everything is fine!), anger (The wall will never recover from the hand sanitizer chucked at it), bargaining (If everyone wears five masks, can we be free?), and depression (The pandemic will

never end...)—before reaching the fifth: acceptance.

This year remains uncertain—but that's okay. Here at *The Spectrum*, we will try to make the best of whatever comes our way. Rest assured that *The Spectrum*, epic icebreakers and all, will continue on, beginning with this Back-To-School (BTS) issue—our first printed issue in a year! So even if this year isn't what we expected, we're excited to continue giving you riveting advice in the form of BTS articles, and we look forward to working with y'all this year.

To be or not be; to school or not to school; to join us or... just kidding, you don't have a choice. :)

## Back-To-School Bops

By NAKISA RAZBAN '23  
Off-Topic Editor  
Mainspread Article

On my first day of high school, I remember walking into ABRHS and seeing the endless possibilities awaiting me. Unfortunately, my thick class syllabuses quickly knocked me into reality. This brutal awakening marked the first of many high school milestones I had the pleasure (or pain) of experiencing. Music got me through my fair share of cry—I mean cram—sessions, and several songs precisely describe the epic highs and lows of Back-To-School season! In addition to relating the songs to my experiences (because yes, the world revolves around me), I will review them on a few different aspects: how musically interesting they are, the music video (MV), and finally, how accurately they portray the high school experience.

To commence your high school journey, we have the classic High School Musical song “We’re All In This Together.” It’s in C major, giving it a very upbeat feel. You’re immediately brought into a state of trance-like joy, whether you want to be or not, which mirrors the experience of entering the building freshman year: all the ambassadors high-five you and everybody seems super happy to have you there! You haven’t yet seen your teachers in their “vacation is approaching, and we are five units behind” mode, and

you are blissfully unaware that taking five honors classes and joining fourteen clubs is physically impossible. This song sets false expectations for high school, as the MV’s depiction of everybody collaborating and having a good time is far from reality. High schoolers lifting each other up? We’re too sleep-deprived for that. It’s a fun song, but I’m still waiting for my choreographed flashmob, smh.

After taking off the rose-tinted glasses you wore for the first day, you get into the groove of high school life with Taylor Swift’s “You Belong With Me.” In the MV, Taylor looks out of her window at her neighbor/crush with whom she interacts through handwritten notes. It’s a simple concept that portrays an innocent high school love story. However, I do have a bone to pick with this song—during the football game scene, the marching band seems to not only understand what is going on on the field but also... CARE? The inaccuracy is revolting. Thankfully, Taylor’s trademark storytelling makes up for this faux-pas. With simple phrases such as “‘cause she doesn’t get your humor like I do,” we immediately understand the relationship dynamic: “I know you better than she does.” Taylor also mixes country instrumentals with a pop beat, which gives this song a “small-town romance” feel while keeping it contemporary and relatable.

Following your casual flirtation

## Conquer Back-To-School 2021 with Main Character Energy!

By GRACE CHAI '23  
Mainspread Editor  
Mainspread Article

### Introduction

Butter-yellow daisies bloom in a ceramic pot. Snowy cream decorates fluffy pancakes bathed in the golden hour glow. Lofi beats drift in the breeze, rustling the pages of an open textbook as a student diligently takes ~aesthetic~ notes.

No, this isn't a figment of your imagination. It's the latest trend that has infiltrated the Internet: being the main character in your life. Basically, being a protagonist involves getting your life together and romanticizing it—enjoying life to the fullest.

While preparing for Back-To-School (BTS) season isn't anything new, main character aspirants take BTS optimism to another level. Instead of getting organized by purchasing copious amounts of stationery (nothing I'd ever do, of course), they work on their psyche and set out to conquer the year—and not let it conquer them.

However, procrastination often quashes people's aspirations a few weeks (or months, if they're lucky) later. If that happens, how can you maintain main character-esque confidence and positivity while staying realistic and kind to yourself? I have two words for you, my friend: read on.

### Practice slow living.

Romanticizing your life may initially seem odd—even counterproductive—but taking time to savor life is refreshing amid all the BTS hubbub. As a busy teenager, days often feel rushed and blur together, but by just appreciating small moments, you can cherish daily life more. Hone in on the sweetness of watermelon as you relish that succulent bite; admire the sunset as you drive home from school; bop to your favorite tunes as you read *The Spectrum's* latest issue: watch your black-and-white day burst into vibrant color.

### Support others.

Even with your new apprecia-

tion for life, it's sometimes hard to maintain a sunny attitude when you watch your best friend, family member, or classmate reach new heights. But we stan a supportive community here at *The Spectrum*, so hey, if others are doing awesome things, you should cheer them on like the mature person you are.

While you should definitely set goals for yourself (own that main character confidence!), letting others shine is one of the most main character-y things you can do, in both school and life. Applauding someone else's success isn't synonymous with putting yourself down; it simply means offering congratulations and understanding that you're on your own journey.

### Do what sparks joy.

In terms of personal journeys, it's easy to neglect hobbies when school consumes most of your waking hours. But make time for things you enjoy, because when you reflect on high school years later, you might as well reminisce about the positive memories. Bake cookies,

rage against the school system into different avenues. Some of us produce music or play sports, and some of us write angry articles for the school newspaper (what kind of a loser would do that?).

Finally, as a senior, you reminisce while listening to Conan Gray's “Little League.” The title shows Conan holding on to the “Little League” of childhood as he reaches the end of high school. This track conveys the joy of making great memories with your friends in school as well as the uncertainty of life after graduation. The song and MV feel very

coming-of-age, and the chorus is super catchy. I love the low electric guitar playing underneath the vocals; it adds a lot of texture while still allowing the vocals to shine. It's nostalgic and bittersweet in the best way possible.

High school is a special four years, which is why artists write so many songs about it. Music helps us feel understood and realize that we aren't alone in our high school experiences. So whether it's your first Back-To-School at ABRHS or your last, let these tunes power you through today and the rest of the year!

you powered through a rough day—that's some real main character energy, my friend.

Apply these tips, and you'll find that Back-To-School you has never had a brighter future. Go crush that school year!



Be this character  
ONLINE SOURCE

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*e cineribus ad astra*

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# Back-To-School

## Classical Music for Dummies: A Guide for Beginners

By GEORGE JI '23  
Spectrum Staff  
Off-Topic Article

Interested in classical music but don't know where to start? Here is the perfect guide for you!

I'm often asked, "George, how is your skin so smooth?" I always reply, "It's because I only take cold showers." But it's also because I listen to classical music.

Though you might not know them by name, you've probably heard classical pieces before. From the unforgettable *bum bum bum buum* of Beethoven's Fifth to Mozart's instantly recognizable Serenade No.13, some of the most iconic music today is classical. Whether you want to update your playlist or see what real music is like, this article is for you!

Listening to classical music is more than a hobby. Studies show

that listening for extended periods can decrease stress, reduce pain, and increase brain activity. Given these benefits to mental acuity, does classical music actually make you smarter?

While most experts agree that classical music and other genres provide similar benefits, classical enthusiasts argue that listening to classical pieces will increase intelligence if done correctly. And many of these so-called experts criticizing classical music don't even listen to it.

Based on my own experience, classical music provides perks beyond the expected. For example, listening to Mozart for thirty minutes allows me to see through walls. Within an hour, I can read minds. Keep in mind that I'm a seasoned veteran and that your results may vary. However, for said results, here are my tips:

*01 Remain expressionless while listening.*

Showing any joy while listening to classical music is a telltale sign that you're a fake fan. When in the presence of other classical enthusiasts, refrain from showing emotion, and do not make sudden movements. This signals to them that you are similarly cold and lifeless, and thus, a person capable of enjoying classical music.

*02 Classical music is best experienced live.*

A recording simply cannot capture the nuances of each note, nor can it ever reach the highs and lows of each movement. For this reason, I recommend that beginners attend a live concert. There's nothing wrong with occasionally listening to the recorded version online; just remember that what you're hearing is inferior in every way.

*03 Search for emotion within each composition.*

Many classical pieces are meant to evoke certain feelings or ideas, and tapping into them can heighten your appreciation for any given composition. An experienced listener should weep when the music demands it, and they should explode in rage when the melody does too.

Beyond your listening technique, your experience also depends on what you listen to. And for recommendations, there's only one person I trust: me. For the classically illiterate, here are my suggestions:

*01 Nocturne in F Minor - Frederic Chopin*

Melancholic, suspenseful, and calm all at once, listen to this when you're feeling like the tragic villain.

*02 Sarabande - George Frideric Handel*

Perfect for pondering important yet somber ideas (e.g. the death of reason in the modern age, the fragility of love, the significance of life in an uncaring universe, etc.).

*03 The Lonely Genius in C Major - George*



Assuming you've memorized all your teachings by now, it's time for you to become a classical music lover yourself. Like a baby bird leaving the nest, spread your wings, fly, and begin your new life as a classical music enthusiast.

## Guide to Getting Things Done

By TINGHAN WANG '24  
Spectrum Staff  
Mainspread Article

High school is overwhelming. After last year's chaos, our return is bound to be bizarre. Beyond ever-changing COVID-19 guidelines, high school's typical challenges—such as organization and motivation—present equally annoying obstacles.

Breaking the cycle of unproductivity is difficult, but you're here and ready to get your life together! And who better to dispense sage advice than someone who has made all these mistakes before?

### Prioritization

Back-To-School season comes with a mountain of homework and unfinished (or unstarterd...) papers. Long to-do lists seem overwhelming, but that's where priorities come into play. As assignments flood in, strategize: rank each by their point worth. For example, if Chemistry has less total points, then a twenty-point Chemistry assignment may be worth more than a twenty-point Latin assignment. I sort by due date, number of points, and strictness of teachers, but you'll discover what works best for you. You can also schedule tasks

so you finish difficult work before sports practice and wind down with a more enjoyable subject afterward, completing the same amount of work in half the time.

Say you've got your prioritized list ready. It won't be much use if you forget about it, will it? Visibility is key! Try writing the most important list items on a sticky note and leaving it on an item you'll use often, like a water bottle, or perhaps your phone.

### Motivation

You've prioritized your work now, which is arguably the easiest part. Studying is arduous with meager instant gratification. So how do you muster up the motivation to finish all those tasks?

Breaking work down into bite-sized pieces can help you get started. The Pomodoro study method has gained popularity recently, and with good reason. It claims that humans can only focus on a task for a set amount of time, so we work better when we take breaks or switch subjects. Experiment with study and break times to see what works for you; maybe you easily bore of one subject and can move on to another with renewed focus, or perhaps you have

to stand back from your desk for a quick stretch.

When taking a break, exercise self-control! If you pick up your phone right after promising yourself, "just five minutes!," you'll never stop scrolling through social media. Instead, take a quick walk, hydrate, or call a friend—someone who'll let you know when time's up.

Getting things done happens one step at a time, but hey, persistence works!

Another tip: make sure to acknowledge your accomplishments lest you find all the joy sucked out of you. Recognizing your successes is an excellent motivator because it supports a cycle of positive reinforcement that makes you go "huh, I can do it," creating the desire to aspire higher. It's not bragging—it's self-empowerment.

There you have it! A guide to productivity written by a disorganized procrastinator for disorganized procrastinators. Prioritization and breaks will create miracles since both account for that annoying human tendency to get overwhelmed by the big picture. Chin up! You've done five days a week before... a long time ago... but still! Coming back won't be all that bad.

## Test-Optional Schools?

By MAY HONG '23  
Spectrum Staff  
Op-Ed Article

With more test-optional schools due to COVID-19, administrators and students alike wonder whether we should continue these policies. Because standardized testing disproportionately disadvantages economic and racial minorities, schools should remain test-optional to narrow academic achievement gaps, incrementally rectifying America's racist past.

Standardized testing was developed to uphold white supremacy. Eugenicist Carl Brigham created the SAT, for example, to "prove" the intellectual superiority of white people and warn against incorporating non-white genes into American society. Through such "measures of intelligence," white supremacists reinforced oppressive power constructs that continue to influence disparities today. According to the Brookings Institution, on the SAT, 59% of white students satisfy the "college readiness math benchmark" compared to only 21% of Black students.

Stereotypes lower the exam performance of racial minority students on the SAT. In an experiment by the APA, when SAT proctors implied that Blacks are academically inferior to whites before the test, Blacks performed worse. However, when no stereotype was enforced, Blacks performed equally as well. These findings reveal the threat of stereotypes: negative myths—such as the belief that Black people are genetically inferior—distort a student's impression of themselves, creating self-doubt and stress.

Unfortunately, some minorities combat not only systemic racism, but also classism. The average white American household is nearly ten times wealthier than the average Black or Latino household. Because poverty and race are correlated, an alarmingly large population suffers from this double-disadvantage.

Systemic disadvantages harm low-income households. When comparing the highest and lowest household income brackets, the wealthy scored 400 points more. While SAT costs may seem insignificant for wealthy families, it can be unaffordable for poorer students. Wealthier students can also retake the test, increasing their advantage, as familiarity with the SAT format tends to improve performance. Low-income students, on the other hand, do not have the same flexibility.

Further, wealthier students typically live in districts with more funding and access to resources. With better teachers, students more effectively learn the skills tested on the SAT. Wealthier schools also tend to offer practice material such as the PSAT, in which students who have taken it twice score 200 points better than those who have never taken it. Lastly, SAT tutors can cost up to \$100 an hour, which is only accessible for higher-income students. On average, tutors improve SAT results by 70 to 300 points. Because of unequal distribution of these privileges, keeping standardized testing sustains economic divides.

Eliminating standardized testing will be beneficial, as studies suggest that prioritizing school grades over test scores in the admissions process makes minorities stronger applicants. Researchers saw a 10-12% increase in minority enrollment in a pool of one hundred test-optional schools. Given the benefits of eliminating standardized testing, permanent test-optional policies are an essential step towards equality.

America prides itself on being "the land of opportunity" where freedom is accessible for all. Maintaining classist and racist systems that disadvantage certain populations contradicts America's foundational principles; we must eliminate this discriminatory system to rectify decades worth of policies that have degraded minorities and low-income communities.

## The Best Back-to-School Playlist

By EMILY XU '23  
Chief Copy Editor  
Off-Topic Article

Whether you're a freshman new to the whole ~high school experience~ or a senior with crippling senioritis, everyone wants to start their year off on the right foot. You might ask, "Emily, how might I start my year off on the right foot?" Well, with my handy dandy playlists, you can set the tone for how you want the year to go!

After spending a bulk of my summer vacation watching movie after movie of the general "high school coming-of-age drama rom-com angst hurt/comfort" category, I've officially declared myself an expert of its corresponding music genre. If that isn't up your alley, I've also included a throwback pop playlist, a lo-fi study playlist, and a fun extra playlist. Happy listening!

Scan the Spotify codes (using the Spotify app) to listen now!



SCHOOL DAYS (DAZE)



2000s



LOFI



BTS



ONLINE SOURCE

# Back-To-School

## A Silenced Narrative—Legacy of the Indigenous in MA

By NEHA VIJAY '21, PRISHA DAYAL '21, SOPHIE ZHANG '22, ADI RAMAN '23 & BELLE HU '22 AND RIYA SHAH '22  
Spectrum Staff  
Reporting Team Article

### Introduction

According to Nipmuck legend, the Earth was once an expanse of never-ending water. Giant Turtle swam in this ocean, carrying Eagle, Owl, Crow, Deer, Fox, Turkey, Muskrat, and Beaver on his back. One day, the Creator transformed into a Hare and joined the animals. He sent Crow to search for brown earth to build an island, but Crow returned empty-handed. Other animals searched, but each failed. Only Muskrat succeeded, emerging from the water with precious sand cupped in his paws. From this, the Creator forged land, animals, birds, and humans. Muskrat preserves the memory of the world's creation by building his house in its shape, a dome, and the Nipmuck people emulate the same dome-shaped homes.

Thousands of years later, their legacy leaves only a few artifacts, projectile points, and tool fragments, stored in the Acton Memorial Library. Today, only 0.1% of Acton's population is of Indigenous descent. What occurred in the Nipmuck story between then and now? How can our community grow from their past?

These questions surrounded the core of Acton-Boxborough's mascot debate last fall. Many questioned whether our mascot—the Colonial—symbolized patriotic freedom or genocide and racism. On October 15, 2020, the school committee ultimately voted to retire the mascot, citing that it failed to represent Acton-Boxborough's diverse student population.

This year, The Spectrum's Reporting Team decided to investigate the Indigenous history that many, in our district and our nation, currently grapple with. We re-evaluated the influence of race and racism on our school curriculum and sought new perspectives to understand our town's past.

### History

The Indigenous people of Massachusetts trace back to the Paleoindians, who moved to New England following the final ice age's conclu-

sion. Eventually, the Paleoindians diverged into distinct groups cited as Native-American tribes. Massachusetts officially recognizes six tribes, including the Nipmuck tribe, or "freshwater people," who lived in the central plateau of Massachusetts. The region encompassed the modern-day Worcester and Middlesex Counties, near today's Acton. Living in scattered villages tied by alliances, the Nipmuck depended on hunting, gathering, and harvesting for sustenance. Despite their wandering nature, they planned carefully. While the Nipmuck lacked a developed system of government, they led peaceful lives. Today, the "Nipmuck Nation" is among New England's largest Indigenous communities with nearly 600 members, but the tribe is not yet federally recognized.

Artifacts from seasonal hunting and fishing have been found in Acton at the Pine Hawk site. In the late 1990s, Massachusetts commissioned a land plot survey in South Acton for a new sewer plant. At the site, surveyors discovered thousands of artifacts indicating human habitation spanning over 7,000 years. The Friends of Pine Hawk, a local group dedicated to preserving Indigenous artifacts, was formed to publicize the findings at the Pine Hawk site. The group is advised by descendants of the Nipmuck Nation, such as Rae Gould, the Executive Director of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative at Brown University. Today, the Friends of Pine Hawk displays replicas in the Acton Memorial Library, but the dig site has been covered by holding tanks and sewage plant construction.

Robert Ferrera, founder of the Friends of Pine Hawk, describes the abundance of artifacts in the area as more "than you would ever imagine." For example, some fields in North Acton have large, circular stone piles, and there is a growing consensus that these were built by Native Americans to pay respects when a family member died. Ferrera declined to share further details to prevent damage to the sites.

### Issues Faced

Massachusetts is not immune to the widespread marginalization of Indigenous communities, who experience invisibility, erasure, and

socio-economic inequality. Fortunately, organizations including the North American Indian Center of Boston (NAICOB) foster cultural resilience and strive to empower Indigenous communities. To do so, NAICOB created an online platform to spotlight Indigenous artist, educator, and speaker voices. The Board of Directors President Jean-Luc Pierite is the grandson of the last chief of the Louisiana Tunica-Biloxi tribe and sustains traditions by volunteering with the Tunica-Biloxi's Language and Culture Revitalization Program. Isaac Daniel Moore, another board member, grew up in the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation and developed an early passion for studying Cheyenne culture. He focuses on cultural preservation and oral history.

Addressing the pandemic's impact on Indigenous communities, NAICOB offers vaccine appointments, distributes free PPE supplies, assists with unemployment claims, and performs weekly wellness check-ins. NAICOB's Department of Employment and Training offers job training and counseling, while their Timothy Smith Network (TSN) Computer Technology Lab provides computer training.

Similarly, the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness (MCNAA) works to dispel misconceptions about Indigeneity by educating the public, preserving cultural traditions, and helping Indigenous peoples meet their basic needs. Their Cultural Arts Program includes Indigenous Pow-wows (spiritual gatherings), art showcases, craft-making presentations, and dance exhibitions. Additionally, their Spiritual Assistance and Cultural Enrichment Program helps families stay connected to their culture. For families in need, the organization funds necessities such as food and heating, and for Indigenous college students, MCNAA provides financial support.

Indigenous communities are undoubtedly underrepresented in national media and policy-making. NAICOB reports that the 2010 Census undercounted Indigenous peoples by 5%. Their error slowed funding for Indigenous communities and manipulated the eligibility of Indigenous communities for early education programs, housing, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance



Map of Pine Hawk Site  
EMILY HILTUNEN / SPECTRUM STAFF

Program (which provides food budget benefits for those in need), and Medicaid (which provides healthcare to low-income individuals).

Further, voter suppression persists among Indigenous communities. Indigenous people must travel long distances to polling stations, which lack adequate language assistance and often refuse tribal IDs. The Native American Voting Rights Coalition, a nonpartisan organization, reports that 2020 state redistricting in Utah created a non-Indigenous voter majority inconsistent with the large Indigenous population. Redistricting also split Indigenous reservations into voter districts, preventing half of tribal members from voting for a Yakama Nation citizen. Moreover, in a town with a population of 1,200, Indigenous South Dakotan voters had one polling site with no early registration or voting, whereas a non-Indigenous community with twelve people total had its own polling station.

Sadly, this oppression has far-reaching consequences. Dr. Susan Faircloth, a member of North Carolina's Coharie Tribe, recalls the segregation within her community. Until the 1940s, Indigenous students had to identify as Black or white to be sorted into segregated schools; otherwise, they were forced to attend boarding schools. There, they were isolated from their language and customs, provoking a trauma that continues to haunt Indigenous communities. Further, many homogenize all Indigenous groups, erasing Indigenous cultures and ignoring nuances between, for example, Athabaskan students in Alaska and Ojibwe students in North Dakota. Ultimately, society may have made progress, but much remains to rectify the extensive trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities.

### Mascot Debate

In July 2020, members of the student-run organization Acton Boxborough Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ) denounced the Colonial mascot, calling for its retirement. ABSEJ created a petition for its removal, which argued that this symbol was rooted in remnants of racism and oppression, making it a problematic figure to unite students over. Another petition countered with an argument for maintaining the current mascot, explaining that it symbolized patriotism and had longstanding ties to the town and district.

On September 17, 2020, ABSEJ

presented to the school committee, explaining that the mascot was divisive and lacked representation for the student body's racial and ethnic diversity. Over the next month, the school committee invited community members to express their opinions on the issue; over 700 students and adults weighed in.

Ultimately, the committee voted unanimously to retire the mascot, a decision that addressed the cultural misrepresentation and appropriation that Indigenous communities face. While schools and sports teams across the country still have mascots that are racist towards Native Americans, this step significantly furthered equity in our school community.

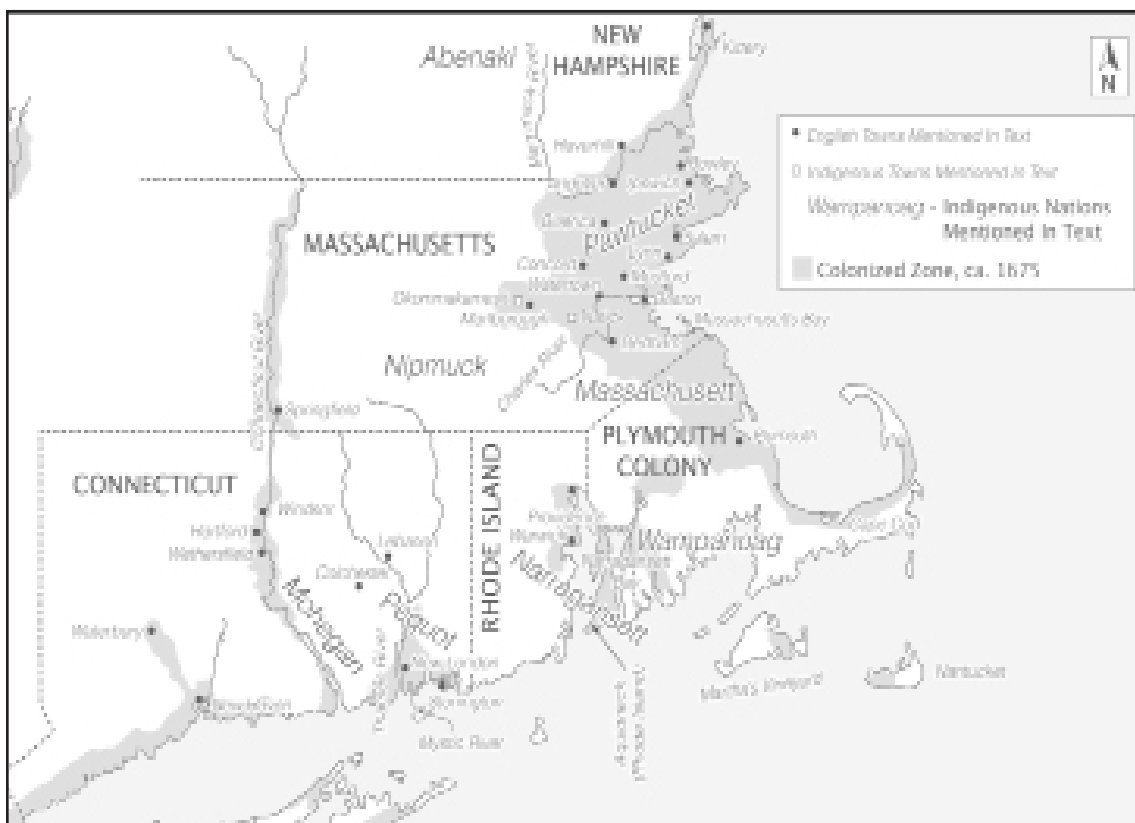
However, the school still fails to address systemic problems regarding race and diversity. As hate crimes have become increasingly prevalent at the high school, deeper changes become increasingly necessary to create a safe environment for all students; examining and restructuring our social studies curriculums to incorporate discussions about racism and other critical social issues would help our community move forward.

### Improving Education

As many students agree, the ABRHS curriculum insufficiently covers the history of Indigenous people in Massachusetts and Acton. Since it fixates on the implications of conquest, students feel that the culture and history of Indigenous people—absent their relationship with colonization—is lost. A 2020 AB graduate said they "never felt there was time or space in class to learn more about Indigenous people" and that this incredibly diverse group of people was "treated as a side note."

Students note the high school's history classes are often superficial and lack perspectives from those involved. Similarly, some argue that lessons are tokenistic at times, especially in the US History classes: the narrative begins with Indigenous people's relocation but soon abandons Native American history as the curriculum moves on to white advancements. As such, students are pushing for the Social Studies Department to take a well-rounded approach to teaching the history of Indigenous people.

David Green, ABRHS Social Studies Department Head, explained that the Massachusetts Department of Education assembles a flexible history topic guide that should be



Map of the early Indigenous people in New England  
ONLINE SOURCE



# Back-To-School

covered from kindergarten to 12th grade. At ABRHS, department leaders organize lessons based on state-issued frameworks. The department emphasizes outreach, so when new classes are introduced, various groups offer feedback before units become official.

The available history classes reflect the framework requirements and strive to create a fuller world perspective. While an AP World History class would further these goals, a current course must be removed for a new class to be added. Mr. Green explains that “every department is allotted a certain number of classes to be offered” based on population, graduation requirements, and enrollment. With this restriction, appeasing all students when removing courses becomes challenging.

Interestingly, ABRHS requires two years of American history but only one of world history because “if social studies departments have four years of required core courses, then there is little room for any meaningful electives,” according to Mr. Green. International Relations, Psychology, and Economics would be compromised if a second year of world history was introduced. Still, the history department does delve into world history beyond the homonymous class. International Relations focuses on related topics in China, the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia, and the Genocide and Conflict Resolution course covers the Holocaust as well as the Rwandan, Cambodian, and Armenian genocides.

Although Mr. Green acknowledges that further studies of Indigenous culture and world history are missing, he finds himself juggling

accessibility concerns. He comments, “I think one big problem is that AP classes don’t always feel accessible to people. It doesn’t help us to add another AP class that’s simply going to perpetuate the very concern that many people have.” AB is often labeled as a “pressure cooker” where AP classes can feel overwhelming and unmanageable. Mr. Green, and the history department as a whole, question if adding another AP class will advance a more well-rounded history education.

To some extent, the AP curriculum, which the College Board sets, produces a surface-level dive into the history of Indigenous people and other people of color. The history department must then attempt to balance teaching the requisite information for the AP exam and exploring the cultures of Indigenous people and others around the world.

Mr. Green adds that although high school classes minimally cover Indigenous people’s cultures, elementary schools include their traditions and architecture, agriculture, clothing, and other topics untouched by colonialism. He hopes that high school classes will expand upon this information, elaborating that “we see opportunities in the USI curriculum to do that.” Regardless, Mr. Green currently does not see a clear way of replacing the present curriculum content with a more in-depth focus on Indigenous culture when many students are already overworked. Again, the question of accessibility resurfaces, and Mr. Green must consider whether additional readings and resources on Indigenous people should be integrated depending on the course’s intended depth and difficulty. Because the incorporation of

Indigenous people’s history is just beginning, Mr. Green feels that more work must first reach out to students and Indigenous people to inform students in an optimal manner.

Outside the high school, local groups are trying to create a more well-rounded perspective of Indigenous history and culture. Friends of Pine Hawk has been working to educate people about Indigenous culture. The group has recently formed a subcommittee with former teachers and hopes to share its research with the high school. Although a significant amount of their information comes from Indigenous people, Friends of Pine Hawk notes that some Indigenous people “don’t like to advertise themselves” and emphasizes that they are not obligated to educate others.

ABRHS clearly needs greater emphasis on Indigenous history independent of colonialism. Focusing mainly on white expansion undermines the rich culture of Indigenous people. Although the implications of colonization persist, other facets of Indigenous history are ignored, creating an imbalance. This conflict raises the question: why is the College Board AP curriculum itself limited? Even history classes not at the AP level must adhere to state guidelines that do not offer many opportunities to learn about Indigenous people. With a greater focus on Indigenous culture at the high school just beginning, the history department hopes to use student feedback to find a balance between what they are required to teach and what truly needs to be learned.

## Conclusion

The legacy of Indigenous people

has the potential to become an impactful voice in our time. Many organizations have taken initiative in assisting Native American communities. They educate others, preserve cultures, and provide support in their mission. The MCNAA and NAICOB are only two examples of many awareness programs across the nation. In our own community, students have taken measures to educate themselves and incorporate change, as seen in the mascot’s remov-

al. ABRHS also hopes to bring change within education and to introduce new ideas into the history curriculum.

Ultimately, Indigenous history contains far more details than our research includes, and we acknowledge that we can only provide an external perspective. So while we tried to accurately represent these topics, we can only begin to scratch the surface of the complexity that constitutes Indigenous identity and history.



Archaeologists digging for artifacts in PineHawk in Acton, MA  
ONLINE SOURCE

## Stonefield Farm: Preserving an Era

By ADI RAMAN '23  
News Editor  
News Article

Look around town as you head into school: the longstanding Quill & Press has been closed, replaced by Middlesex Savings Bank. The Kmart shut down permanently, leaving an empty lot. You may even notice new housing developments pop up around town. Needless to say, Acton is changing. The change that will have the largest implications, however, is the conservation of Stonefield Farm, a 51.5 acre expanse covering Acton, Maynard, and Stow. Brothers Carl, Mike, and Paul Simeone run the farm, which their Italian immigrant parents originally developed in 1929. After choosing to retire the farm, the brothers wanted to ensure that its next occupant would not simply construct housing. Fortunately, the nonprofit organization Boston Area Gleaners (BAG) purchased the property with the town’s approval, setting a precedent in balancing Acton’s residential and natural elements.

Founded in 2004, BAG pursues food equity and accessibility. They give food they “glean,” the action of gathering produce for which they are named, to communities in need. BAG’s acquisition of the property for \$2.8 million became official during a town meeting on June 21. Acton voters agreed to put \$1.2 million from Community Preservation Funds towards this price, and two other nonprofit groups, Acton Conservation Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees, aim to raise at least \$50,000. The non-

profit will pay off the cost that remains over time.

The organization eyed the property primarily because Stonefield Farm has access to Routes 2 and I-495 for efficient produce transport, and the location is ideal to connect with local farmers. Furthermore, the fields will mainly be used for vegetable cultivation, but the property as a whole is diverse, containing woodlands that neighbor the Assabet River Trail and wetlands that help with flood mitigation.

As BAG settled into Acton, *The Spectrum’s* reporters asked Paul Franceschi, the organization’s Outreach Coordinator, about its plans. BAG acknowledges that the property was once the homeland of people from the Nipmuc, Massachusetts, and Pawtucket tribal nations. Franceschi elaborates, “Our first step on this as we come to Acton is research and educating ourselves about indigenous history, indigenous food sovereignty, and the history of this land—and there are knowledgeable folks in the area that we’re connecting with as part of that process.”

In addition, BAG started establishing roots in the community. Maintaining their partnership with Acton’s Cucurbit Farm, a relationship that existed before the move, BAG “also ha[s] a connection to the newly forming Assabet Co-op Market in Maynard and hope[s] to partner with them when they’re open.” Franceschi emphasizes collaboration in BAG’s mission and anticipates connecting with more local businesses. Said collaborations will remain in eastern Massachusetts, as BAG “want[s] to focus on collec-

tively supporting the local food system here as best [they] can.” Currently, the nonprofit is connected to a wide network of farms and food programs, and they are motivated by their concern of spreading themselves too thin.

The property’s purchase and conservation reflect town government ideals: to continue Acton’s development while maintaining its signature natural features. Local businesses and natural beauty enriches residents’ environment. In addition, when an organization moves into a population, they benefit from interacting with the established community. BAG’s willingness to communicate and collaborate with residents and businesses alike will make them invaluable. Moreover, the nonprofit’s mission of fighting food insecurity presents opportunities for residents to volunteer in their programs. The move-in is a symbiotic relationship that preserves Acton’s natural wonders while allowing the community to actively support something worth fighting for.

For more information about Boston Area Gleaners, scan the QR Code below:



## Tik-ing the Tok: A Guide

By AVNI MISHRA '23  
Spectrum Staff  
Off-Topic Article

With short, attention-grabbing videos, TikTok has millions of users. The app features “sounds”: song clips or audios that creators often lay over videos of them doing anything their creativity conjures. The more a sound is used, the more recognizable it becomes, allowing songs to blow up on the app. To acquire TikTok stardom, a writer must create a song with attributes that users are likely to incorporate into their videos; these qualities are danceability, lyrics, and overall catchiness.

Dancing is one of the most popular genres of content on TikTok, attracting the app’s biggest stars like Charli D’Amelio. Songs that users can easily choreograph a dance to have massive appeal.

Lyrics are also a huge part of a song’s potential. Simple directions and one liners can be used to create a wide range of content. For example, users pretend to wipe a mirror to the beat of “Wipe it Down,” and cut to a clip of them in a different

outfit, just to switch back on the next beat. Lyrics are also used to create memes, including with the song “Hello Baby”’s one liner, “Boombaw that’s how you fix that.”

The last aspect that increases a song’s chances of success is its general catchiness. Mindlessly listening to the same snippet hundreds of times can wedge songs into the back of our brains until you have to find it.

In addition to song composition, a famous star associated with the song often boosts it. Established artists like Doja Cat have frequent hits. Charli D’Amelio posted a video of her dancing to the song “driver’s license” by Olivia Rodrigo: the TikTok star’s inclusion of the song helped it gain a billion streams on Spotify.

Ultimately, there is no exact formula to follow to guarantee success on TikTok. Many times, songs that don’t “fit the bill” still find themselves gaining massive popularity. If there is one thing I’ve learned from using Tik Tok, it’s that understanding exactly how Gen Z’s interests work is a fruitless endeavor.



Tik-y-Tok-y Wow-y  
ONLINE SOURCE



# Back-To-School



Sikh kirtan display  
ONLINE SOURCE

## An Intro to Sikh Music

By GRACE CHAI '23  
Mainspread Editor and Columnist  
Op-Ed Column

### Author's Note:

Dear reader,

Before delving into Punjabi Sikh music, I want to share my thought process behind this article. I first learned of Sikhism because of a horrific shooting several months ago at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis that resulted in eight deaths, including four Sikhs. The Sikh Coalition, an advocacy group, urged authorities to investigate a biased motive, and on July 28, the Indianapolis Metro Police announced that the shooting was not motivated by anti-Sikh bias. Nevertheless, the Sikh Coalition maintains that pain persists for the victims' families and the Sikh community, given the history of hate crimes against Sikhs. Ignorance often encourages hate, so I wrote this article as a window into Sikh culture and their beautiful musical tradition. Keep an open mind, and you might just learn something new.

Also, visit the [thespectrumabrhs.com](https://thespectrumabrhs.com) version of this article to listen along as I explain the music theory/performance aspect of Sikh music.

### History of Sikh Music

In the 16th century, Sikhism originated in a region of northern India known as the Punjab, and music quickly became an integral part of Sikh worship. While many religions have used music as a form of worship, including Christianity with its monastic chants, Sikh music distinguishes itself with its foundational role in *gurdwara* (Sikh place of worship) services. It isn't simply a prelude to a scripture reading, prayer, or sermon—it is the worship itself.

A typical Sikh service consists of *ragas*, songs conveying a certain musical mood or color, which compose the *kirtan*—the singing of the *Guru's* hymns (Sikh *Gurus* were spiritual teachers who shared wisdom under divine guidance). *Kirtan* means to praise, celebrate, or glorify, and it is said to be the highest form of devotion to link one's soul to the Divine Essence, or God.

### The Sikh Music Tradition

Sikh music's roots can be traced back to the Vedic scriptures about six thousand years ago. It involves fixed compositions in which musicians sing the notes in time but may also improvise and interpret the *raga* freely.

Performances often center around a vocalist, accompanied by stringed and rhythmic instruments. Like how an artist brushes base colors on a canvas before adding details, a stringed instrument, such as the *sarangi*, produces a low hum or drone that the rhythm and melody build off of. Next, a percussionist adds a beat using drums like the wooden *jori*, and the singer joins in, pouring brilliant colors into the song and completing the colorful masterpiece.

Within the piece, vocalists use techniques such as *gliding*, or smoothly sliding from one note to another; and *vibrato*, a fluctuation in pitch, to create rich, lilting sounds. As the vocalist glides smoothly from one note to another, anticipation builds to a climax, which dissolves as they land on the original note. *Vibrato*, used on longer notes, creates warmth in the melody, which complements the metallic tones of the percussion instruments. All in all, the combination of the various musical *timbres*, or textures, makes for an ethereal listening experience.

### What makes Sikh music unique?

It is hard to describe the feelings that Sikh music evokes, but Alain Danielou, a French musicologist likened it to a visual example: a delicate thread. Danielou explained that Eastern music, including Sikh music, is like a thread that “unwinds and rises and falls imperceptibly, but which in every tiniest portion evokes a world of feelings and sensations.” This description reflects the passion of the notes as the imaginary thread traces intricate patterns in the air, its melody swelling and tapering off.

Many cultures produce emotional music, but Sikh music is especially exquisite because of its authenticity. It is not meant for virtuosic displays of musicianship or self-gain; all Sikhs sit on the floor during services, the hymns convey feelings of love and devotion, and the musicians play to worship and serve their community. It is simply raw, real music reflecting the spirit of Sikhism, which promotes peace and equality.

In conclusion, Sikh music is not just another “non-Western” subgenre of music to be lumped together with South Asian or Indian music; it is a living part of a diverse culture, and it deserves to be respected and listened to, just as Sikh people should be treated with respect.

Yours in solidarity,  
Grace

## A Senior's Advice to Underclassmen

By Sydney Pascal '22  
Spectrum Staff  
Mainspread Article

A new year of high school is daunting, no matter what grade you're entering. But it doesn't have to be. If you manage your resources and responsibilities, it can actually be fun! With the failures and triumphs of the last three years behind me, let me, a rising senior, offer some advice on overcoming each new school year's hurdles.

First, don't overwork yourself. After years of trying to pack my already full schedule, this is my biggest takeaway. Balance between work and play is crucial, and it's something I regretfully neglected. While you should work hard, take breaks to prevent burnout. Investing time into unproductive work sessions can never yield better outcomes, and the cycle of attending school, doing homework until you pass out, and returning to school leads to longer, draining work sessions. With ABRHS's rigorous academics, you need to police yourself to avoid this unhealthy routine. So schedule in frees, take electives you enjoy, and opt for less rigorous

classes. From personal experience, it's hard to recover from burnout, but taking time to relax is not only an antidote but a preventive measure. Even though work is important, your health should always come first.

Time management is key to finding free time. I'm sure you've heard a teacher drone on about the importance of scheduling your time, but SERIOUSLY! Time management skills are crucial for high school. Effective time management looks different for everyone, so figure out what works best for you. For those who are getting started, schedule your non-negotiables (e.g. school) and desired tasks first so you can determine what can reasonably fit in your schedule. Make adjustments and strategize from there, whether it's using a paper planner to jot down tasks or changing your schedule to give yourself more time.

Apart from managing your time, get to know your support system: the ABRHS staff. Specifically, familiarize yourself with their teaching styles, which may not work best for you. If you're struggling in a class, don't be afraid to email your teachers for help. I've never had a teacher opposed to helping their

students. If a teacher or class isn't working out for you, though, talk to your counselor. Dropping to a lower level isn't something to be embarrassed about; teachers and counselors want to make sure school is a place you can thrive. Further, building a relationship with your counselor is important because they can give you advice to make your high school experience as smooth as possible.

Lastly, school has a lot more to offer than homework and tests. Join clubs and sports teams! You can join clubs no matter what grade you're in, and once you get past the awkward introductions, every club is a welcoming place to connect with others who share a common interest. ABRHS offers many groups of passionate people to get involved with, and if you're looking for a place to start, *The Spectrum* is always looking for new perspectives and ideas to enhance our newspaper!

All in all, high school should be a place for mistakes, growth, and fun. A new year may feel intimidating at first, especially after last year's strangeness, but everyone is in this together. Let's make this a great year!

## The Reflections of a Rising Senior

By CHRISTINE YUAN '22  
Spectrum Staff  
Mainspread Article

We live in a fast-paced society, and high school in particular is a time of rapid development. Students have plenty to look forward to, like receiving their driver's license and planning life after graduation; each school year brings those milestones closer. While I've always loved the novelty of Back-To-School season, as a senior, this nostalgia-packed time presents an opportunity to reflect on my high school experience. So, looking back at previous years, let's see how far (or not far...) I've come.

### Buying School Supplies

For me, August 2018 heralded the long-awaited high school supplies shopping! With my arsenal of mechanical pencils, pastel highlighters, and patterned notebooks, I was ready for anything freshman year might throw at me. Looking back, though, I may have gotten a bit carried away with purchasing supplies... on the bright side, I won't need to buy a planner in 2029, since the calendars match. Hopefully my adult self appreciates fourteen-year-old me's taste in covers.

Although I still love a good stationery run, I mostly anticipate stocking up on supplies... of tissues this year. We've all heard the classic “Wow, this is our last third Tuesday of the year :(” joke, but as a current senior, I can confirm that the devastation is real. And while I'm always tempted to pick up more journals (can anyone really resist that 49¢ price tag?), maybe I'll fill those old math notebooks first. After all, new beginnings aren't as meaningful if you never see them to the end, right?

### Constantly Getting Lost

What's a freshman's most-asked question? I imagine it's along the lines of “How do I study for my classes?”; “When's lunch?”; or maybe “Bro, I'm running on two hours of sleep rn wbu?” Well, mine was, “Sorry, where is the nearest staircase?”—I couldn't find my way to the second floor if my life

depended on it. Even after I finally grew accustomed to the building layout, I once went upstairs as usual and emerged feeling disoriented for a solid two minutes. What happened that day is still a *mystair* to me...

I'm proud to report that I can now locate staircases on my own, although I occasionally waltz through Lower West believing I'm on the second floor. This development, unfortunately, doesn't mean I've stopped getting lost. When I check my inbox, walls of college advertisements loom everywhere I turn... and then I stumble into my promotions tab. Alas, there is no escape!

### Senior Celebrations

Early in my freshman year, I noticed how seniors often participated in strange activities: pelting each other with water guns during band camp, bringing in pets, and arriving at school dressed like Mario or Spongebob. As my friends and I laughed at their antics, I imagined our own senior year. What superlatives would my classmates get?

Would we pull off a hilarious prank? Would I... dare I think it... skip school?

Fast-forward a few years, I've observed that the senior celebrations are concentrated around the times we're most fixated on our future, college or otherwise. Senior portraits and dress-up day occur in the fall as many of us feverishly assemble applications. Meanwhile, spring events like prom (fingers crossed?) and graduation turn our gazes back to high school after we commit to colleges or other prospects. Intentional or not, I appreciate this design! As I contemplate the future, these events ground me in senior year, reminding me to enjoy it while I can.

Throughout high school, I constantly thought about what would come next. However, while it's good to plan ahead, it's also important to enjoy the present! Whether you're a frosh or have more experience under your belt, take some time to savor Back-To-School season and look forward to all that high school has to offer.



What a creative graduation cap!  
ONLINE SOURCE

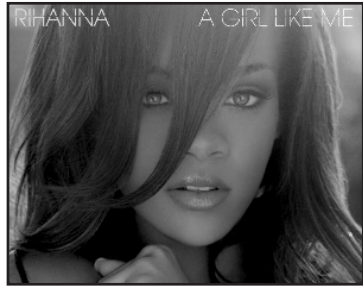


# Back-To-School

## A Comprehensive Review of Rihanna's Album Covers

By ADI RAMAN '23  
News Editor  
Off-Topic Article

Rihanna has ventured into the film, fashion, and business worlds, solidifying herself as a 21st century icon. Although she hasn't released an album since 2016—much to her millions of fans' dismay—her work has taken the world by storm, with each release defining an era and marking milestones in her career. Today, let's take a walk down memory lane and rate all of Rihanna's standard edition album covers out of 5. With the rules laid out, we'll get started in FourFiveSeconds.



*A Girl Like Me*

The font used in *A Girl Like Me* is much more visually appealing and professional. Once again, it's not a bad photo, but I keep staring at that single distracting pearl on her neck. Is that dumb? Probably, but it speaks to how this cover lacks the thought her future covers possess. 3/5.



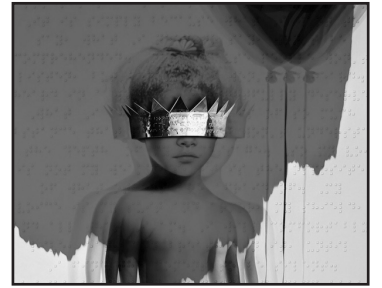
*Rated R*

The edgy hairstyle, finger jewelry, striking makeup, and black and white filter resemble a captivating sketch. The pose is intriguing but vulnerable all at once. *Good Girl Gone Bad* was the start, but *Rated R* takes the cake for a cover that hooks you in before you even press play. 4.75/5.



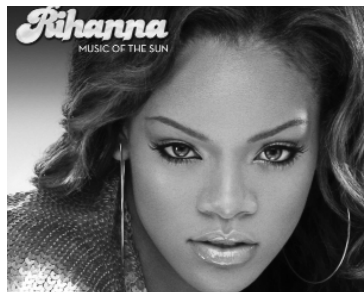
*Talk That Talk*

This cover isn't exactly bad; with her hand on her head and the "R" on the cover, it resembles *Rated R*. However, the cow print shirt and the chunky rings have got to go. Even though these trends are coming back, this doesn't mean they're good! 3.5/5.



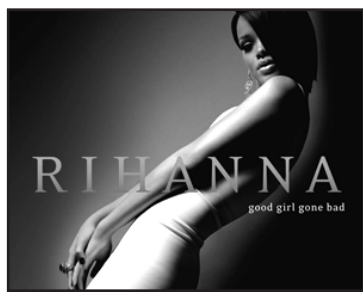
*Anti*

This cover features a depiction of Rihanna as a child. The balloon represents escaping reality, and the crown over her eyes symbolizes how power can cloud someone's values. What's really special is that physical album copies have poetry written in Braille on them. At first, I thought Roy was seriously reaching to make an "artistic" album cover, but I do like its messages, and it looks really cool. 4.9/5 (I'm saving room for that next album, Rihanna...).



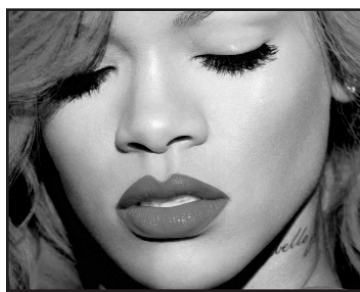
*Music of the Sun*

Unfortunately, there's not much to see with the *Music of the Sun*'s cover (unless chunky 2000s lettering is your thing). It just shows her face, and although it's not a bad photo by any means, it does not display much uniqueness. 2/5.



*Good Girl Gone Bad*

Compared to her previous albums, Rihanna's posing is more compelling, and the black and white photo draws emphasis to her vibrant blue name. The design feels clever and thoughtful, and the darker shading reflects her artistic maturity in the album. 4/5.



*Loud*

With *Loud* came one of Rihanna's most iconic eras: the red hair era. The hair is loud. The lipstick is loud. The font on the cover is in all caps... in conclusion, RiRi did a good job with the packaging on this one. 4.5/5.



*Unapologetic*

Rihanna poses simply here, but it feels impactful. The quite literally stripped down cover feels vulnerable and mature. It's more laid back, and the words on her body are a clever description of the tracks' content. 4.5/5.

It's pretty clear that Rihanna is interested in different endeavors. Regardless, her music is timeless. I'm glad to report a positive trend in the quality of Rihanna's album covers as well—although *Talk That Talk* is an outlier—which reflects her growth as an artist. It's been fun to see where Rihanna has taken her career both in and out of music, and I'm excited for where she'll go next.

## Recognizing Misogyny in Comedy

By AVNI MISHRA '23  
Spectrum Staff  
Op-Ed Article

We all enjoy funny stories and one-liners from our favorite comedians. However, when consuming content from the comedy industry, it's important to recognize the deeply ingrained misogyny that exists in this form of entertainment.

If you've ever attended a comedy show, you may notice tactless comments made towards a marginalized group in exchange for a cheap laugh. In particular, misogyny is a common topic that comedians capitalize on. Deeply rooted within comedy, misogyny has created a toxic atmosphere that denies opportunities to women. Historically, comedy originated from men showing off their wit to women. Because women were never included in mainstream comedy, audiences perceive women's comedy as different—and worse—than men's.

Misogyny in comedy enables men to avoid accountability for their

behaviour. Oppressive jokes are excused with a "boys will be boys" mentality. Instead, those who call out this misogyny are often labeled "overly sensitive." For example, Jim Jeffries, an Australian comedian, complained about equal rights for women, and even wishing that he was gay so he could punch his partner. Receiving backlash, he ranted mid-show about how his critics "are the worst." Women are expected to suppress their indignation and let male comedians make jokes at their expense. As defenders of these comics would say, they're just jokes, right?

But when these "jokes" are taken seriously, this dismissive attitude greenlights misogyny. In a 2016 study by the University of Surrey, researchers found that sexist comedy influenced men to act sexist towards women. It is this tolerance of disparaging jokes that sustains sexism on a larger scale and makes it "acceptable" in non-comedic situations.

As a result of this disparity, the comedy industry constantly denies

women opportunities because they are less respected. According to the Morning Consult, women hosted only 29.9% of episodes in Saturday Night Live, one of America's most-watched comedy shows. About 50% of sketches have majority male casts as opposed to 25% of majority female casts. Local comedy bars do not fare any better. About 38% of comedians are female nationwide. The lack of representation means a handful of comedians must represent the entirety of female comedians.

However, not all hope is lost, as major comedy shows and stand-up bars are considering and implementing ways to support female comedians, including women-only nights in comedy bars. Gradually, more and more female comedians bring light to problems in the male-dominated industry: Hannah Gadsby called out Louis CK, a comedian with multiple sexual misconduct allegations, for returning to shows with little to no consequence. Simply acknowledging these problems exist can do strides for women in comedy.

## Love Doc: BTS Season

By JULIA KUANG '22  
Columnist  
Off-Topic Column

Hello friends! I hope summer was a swell time... ripe with steamy summer flings and lovey-dovey drama! Unfortunately, school is back in business—but on the bright side, school is a catalyst for... LOVE <3. Bring on the new friendships, relationships, stress, and all the other juicy things that make school a strange combination of absolute misery and excitement. While in school, remember kids, hugs, not drugs!

Q: Is it inappropriate to hug multiple significant others at once for longer than 30 minutes in public?

Nah boo, you do you. In fact, keep at it. It's a bold, powerful statement. Don't be afraid to declare your everlasting love to the world. Watch out though—if you hug for too long, your body might deteriorate, and you'll collapse on top of your partners' brittle skel-

etons.

Q: Is it weird to hug an anime body pillow while thinking they are my one true love 4eva?

I respect that, and I respect you. 2D characters are admittedly much more reliable and likeable than real people sometimes. Do what makes you happy. Live, laugh, love <3.

Q: How do you ask for hugs without making it seem awkward?

Trick question: just don't ask for a hug. Ask for something obscenely out of proportion instead, like a bazillion bucks, immortality, your parent's love (JK JK), or even... a date? After that, a teensy little hug is like nothing in comparison. 100% guarantee this will work, but if it doesn't... well, that's YOUR fault, not mine.

Well, that concludes all of the questions I have energy to answer for now! Thanks for tuning in, and I'll catch you next issue ;)

With lots of love,  
Dr. Kuang

## BookTalk: Are These Recommendations Worth the Hype?

By KERA MATTHEWS '24  
Spectrum Staff  
Off-Topic Article

Ah, TikTok. The platform that has everything from cringy dancing to random memes to book reviews. In true Gen Z fashion, many teens have turned to TikTok for the hottest book recommendations. And while BookTok was poppin' for a while, the same disappointing book now keeps poppin' up on my For You page. As a book influencer myself, I've started to lose faith in these so-called "BookTokers." To protect my fellow bookworms from the dreaded fate of having no books to read, I will present my own opinion on

some trendy books.

*A Court of Thorns and Roses* series - Sarah J. Maas

Synopsis: The first installment is loosely based on *Beauty and the Beast*. It follows protagonist Feyre, who murders a wolf and is whisked away to serve punishment in court. When Feyre discovers that a curse has been placed on her land, she embarks on a quest to break it.

Thoughts: Although the first book is absolutely worth the read, the rest of the series was lackluster. In the second book, the author reverses two characters' story arcs: Feyre's love interest grows selfish and a former antagonist takes his place, his wrongdoings

forgotten. The writing felt lazy and unoriginal, though the author redeems the plot with chemistry-filled relationships and fascinating world-building. 7/10.

*The Invisible Life of Addie Larue* - V.E. Schwab

Synopsis: Addie Larue makes a deal with the Devil and regrets it for the rest of her life. Though immortal, she is cursed to be forgotten after every encounter. However, one day in a bookstore, a man named Henry remembers her name, changing her life forever.

Thoughts: This book paints an incredible story about Addie's life, and her every encounter is descriptive. The story, told from

two perspectives, was easy to follow, and I felt like I learned a lot about Henry even though he was a secondary character. Addie's two significant relationships are fluidly recounted, conveying an overarching lesson about how ungratefulness can affect one's life. My only complaint is that the beginning was very slow, and the book is much more character-driven than plot-driven. 9/10.

*They Both Die at the End* - Adam Silvera

Synopsis: One September, Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emerio learn that they will both die and decide to spend their last day together despite being total strangers.

Thoughts: This was a heart-breaking but adorable and quick read. It teaches the importance of living every day to the fullest, but in a more relatable way. Mateo and Rufus are polar opposites, yet their healthy connection carries the story. It was also nice seeing queer Latinx protagonists for a change! However, it was frustrating that the story's side characters felt like plot devices, written solely to further the story. 8/10.

Overall, I have yet to find a horrible, over-hyped recommendation on BookTok, but you'll have to read them yourself before knowing if they suit your taste. At the end of the day, it's all up to you!



# Back-To-School

## The Science of ASMR

By NAKISA RAZBAN '23  
Off-Topic Editor  
Off-Topic Article

Hey boo! Are you stressed? Already behind on your school work? Then you've come to the right place: the wondrous world of ASMR. The term ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) was coined in 2010, although people experienced it long before. Since then, scientists have collected data from people who do experience ASMR to research its possible uses. So, what is ASMR, and how can it be used in the future?

Simply put, ASMR is a tingling feeling from the top of one's head to the bottom of the spine, leading to a reduced heart rate and calmer headspace. ASMR also makes your skin more electrically conductive. This leads to emotional and psychological arousal, or higher brain activity in the parts dealing with emotions, memory storage and mood regulation. Researchers Nick Davis and Emma Barratt find that ASMR's relaxing sensations allow for the alleviation of certain depression and chronic pain symptoms. Such findings suggest increased research in this field could make ASMR a prescribable experience for people suffering from various psychological and physical illnesses. But, only a fraction of the population experi-

ences ASMR.

There are multiple theories surrounding why some of us experience ASMR. First, it is possible that brain differences determine the ability to experience it. According to a study by Beverly Fredborg, Stephen Smith, and Jennifer Kornelsen, those who experience ASMR have different neurological pathways, similar to those with synesthesia. When ASMR-experiencing people hear sounds, their brains create a physical sensation associated with that sound. Another theory is that typical ASMR triggers like tapping and gentle talking mimic the womb. These sounds may bring people back to a time of stillness. Lastly, great apes experience ASMR when they pick ticks off of each other's backs, so we may have inherited this sensation from our common ancestors.

ASMR has opened the door to a new method of helping people. If you've never watched an ASMR video, give it a shot! Who knows, you might unlock your new de-stressing strategy. Some of my favorites are TingTing ASMR for some relaxing shampoo treatments, Morpheus ASMR for wholesome-grandpa-trying-to-stay-up-to-date-with-the-kids vibes, and Cooking Tree for kitchen ASMR. I love ASMR, and I hope you too can see—or feel—how magical it is!

## Underrated Music

By SAMUEL LIU '23  
Spectrum Staff  
Off-Topic Article

Tired of mainstream music or trying to diversify your playlist? Discovering new music can do it all while also supporting smaller creators. Plenty of undiscovered music exists behind the wall of industry giants like Kanye West and Taylor Swift, so here are a few of my favorite "underground" artists and songs:

*"Snorkels" - Bachyard Ghost.*

With only 10,000 plays on Spotify, "Snorkels" is a hidden gem. This laid-back tune is perfect for doing homework or lounging around in bed and can only be described as a ~vibe~.

*"Lonely" - Sugarcat.*

Combining English and Mandarin lyrics, Sugarcat emphasizes the idea of "East-meets-West." Even if you can't understand the lyrics, listening to foreign languages can boost productivity since you won't be singing along!

*"Take Me With You" - Wingtip.*

Although this song has more than three million plays, it has yet to join the pool of classic beach songs. You can't help but nod your head to this song.

*"Pool" - Dizzy Spells.*

As the name suggests, "Pool" is a great song to play as you swim or relax. With less than 10,000 monthly listeners on Spotify, Dizzy Spells is among the most underrated artists who creates music

deserving millions of views.

*"Hideaway" - Surfaces.*

This is a great song for when you're missing summer in the dreary winter months. The soft instrumental music behind a soothing voice makes this song the perfect addition to a chill playlist.

*Kid Quill: hip-hop/rap.*

With less than one-million monthly listeners, Mitchell "Kid Quill" Brown releases music that is almost always deserving of one's playlist. Before he pursued music as a career, Kid Quill used to play soccer at the collegiate level and even went to Nationals twice. Rather than stretch himself thin, Kid Quill decided to prioritize school and music over soccer and consequently left his team. Some of his best songs include "90s kids," "Small Talk," and "A Song to Sing."

*Blanks: indie/pop.*

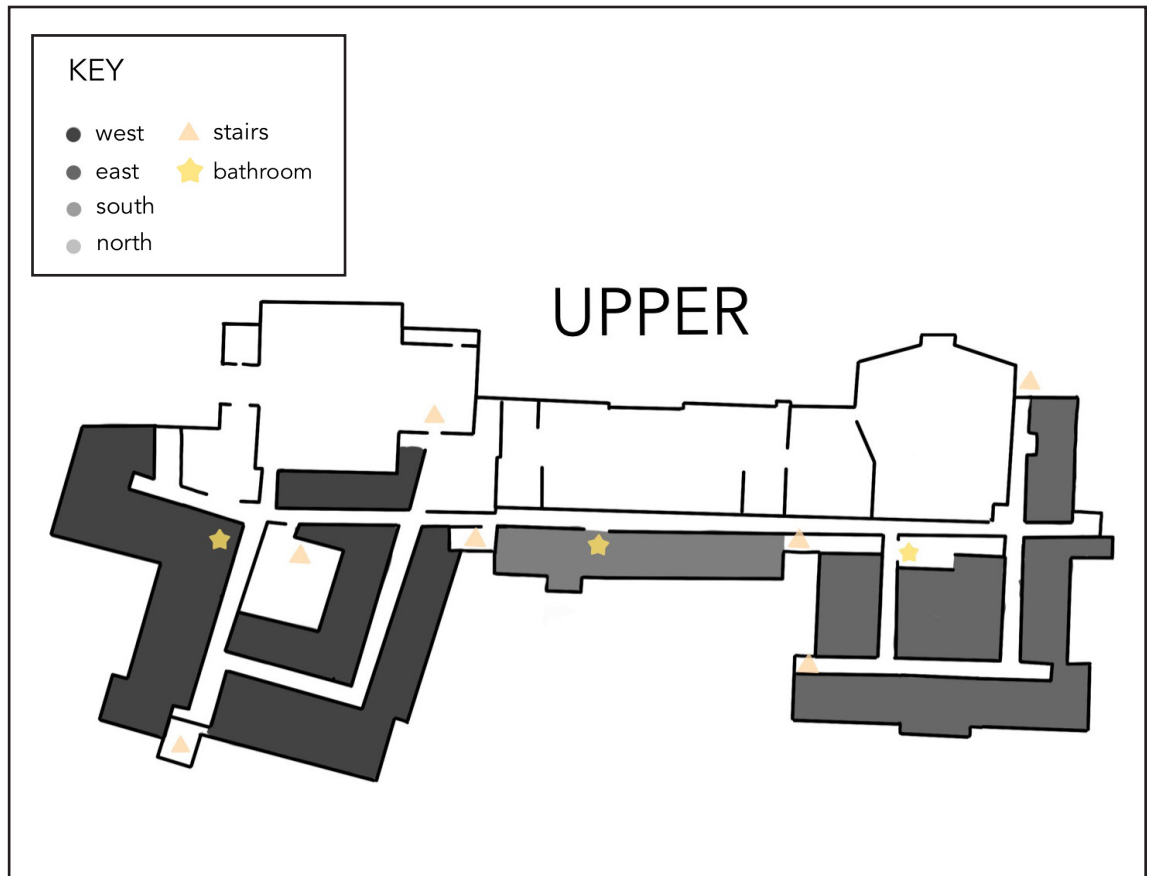
Creating under the name "Blanks," Simon de Wit is a twenty-four-year-old musician from the Netherlands. His popularity spiked after his remix of "Mine" by Bazzi went viral in 2018. His original song "Higher" is a great bop to play in the car.

Use the Spotify app to scan the code below! Go to the "Search" tab and click the camera icon. Scan away!

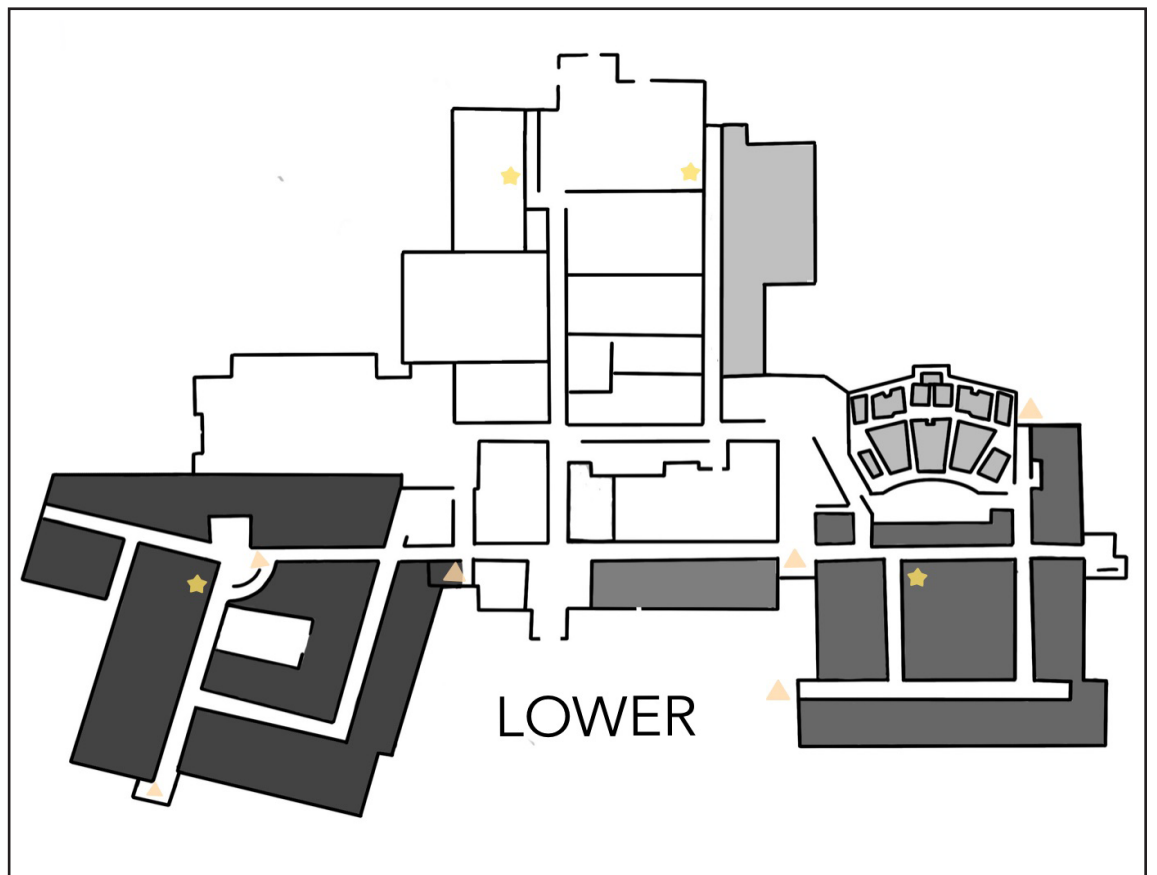
Quick note: The code can only function with Spotify, it won't work with a camera or typical methods of scanning a QR code.



Underrated Music



Map of ABRHS' second floor  
SPECTRUM STAFF



Map of ABRHS' first floor  
SPECTRUM STAFF

## Local Trail Recommendations

By ANDONI ZERVOGLOS '22  
Spectrum Staff  
Off-Topic Article

As you probably know, summer is over. If you aren't aware, it's alright; this is definitely news to a lot of us. But while school has officially started, seize these last few days of warm weather by visiting the local trails in this guide!

### Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge

Owned by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Assabet River Wildlife Refuge occupies the towns of Hudson, Maynard, Sudbury, and Stow, and borders the Assabet River. The land is a beautiful mix of forests, marshes, and... abandoned bunkers! Though all the bunkers are welded shut (believe me, I've checked), you can walk up to them and marvel at the remnants of governmental military action so close to home. The bun-

kers were built to store ammunition after the land was seized by eminent domain in 1942. Later, laboratories used it for hazardous waste disposal before it became a state-owed cleanup area in 1980. In 2000, the clean land was given to the FSW. These fifteen miles of trails provide a bright atmosphere, contrasted by the looming bunkers along the way. You can find a trail head on White Pond Road, just off the bike path.

### Delaney Flood Control Site

A personal favorite, the Delaney Flood Control Site comprises a sprawling 577 acre plot of land in Bolton, Harvard, and Stow. The main attraction—the Campbell Dam—is right by the boat-ramp parking lot in Harvard. Originally built to circumvent flooding, today, it borders a stunning open field next to a lake surrounded by a man-made ridge. There are also some woods with many trails and loops, though they aren't marked very well, so I recommend down-

loading a map beforehand.

### Lime Kiln Quarry

Everyone knows how ugly geodes look before they are cut open—this plot of land in Bolton is a similar gem. The entrance is an overgrown dirt lot located off Route 117. But as you head into the extensive marked trail network, you realize the full extent of its beauty. The trails feature hills, caves, and even some old lime quarries and a kiln for those willing to explore.

### Oak Hill

Oak Hill, a large parcel of land off Harvard Road in Littleton, includes six miles of hills, bluffs, and chasms. Lookout Rock is a 475 foot bluff that faces east, and the view is incredible!

Trails are all around us, and they offer a lot to marvel at. No need to travel a long way to experience the world's beauty: there's so much to explore close to home!