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*For The Students By the Students*

The Rising Times is a student centered newspaper which aims to provide students with intellectually engaging news, op-eds, and student pieces of art and literature. The Rising Times aims to be the student voice in our community, offering thought provoking content and fierce discussion.

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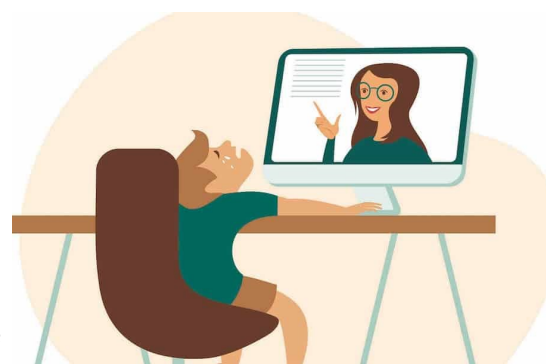
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**How Virtual Learning Affects Students**

Due to the pandemic, students around the world need to conform to virtual learning until a vaccine is found. Most students think of virtual learning as being stressful because they have a hard time learning through a screen, and would prefer attending school in person. Other students though prefer virtual learning as it is an opening for them to cheat with a much lower chance of getting caught. According to Harvard Business school, cheating causes stress and leads to the loss of confidence in yourself. I'm sure very few of us enjoy living a stressed life with a lack of self-confidence. This is one of the many reasons why virtual learning is not more beneficial for a student than traditionally attending school. Another problem that affects the students is the fact that online, it is much easier to be distracted. Some students play video games while in class as they are able to do so without getting caught, while their teachers are struggling to get them to grasp the information being taught.

Another problem the students and school both need to worry about is the internet. Some students are unable to participate in a class or join the class because the internet in their homes is not working. Likewise, at the school, the teachers will often face connection problems due to the amount of traffic being sent to the internet from all of the teachers simultaneously hosting an online class. At RSA we were able to make sure students get the opportunity to come

to the school twice a week so they can have the traditional learning experience. The virus keeps getting worse and worse and there is not much we can do but



wait for a vaccine in order to return to our normal everyday lives. It is very overwhelming for some students to join as many classes as they do every day through a computer without having at least a couple of days where they can attend school the way they're used to attending. Also, virtual learning compared to in-person school reduces student success and progress in

college. For example, I am more of a visual learner. I learn best when I am in a school setting, and there is a teacher face-to-face with me, teaching. Who knows how long this will continue for though so what can we really do? The most we can do now is put in the effort to do the best that we can in order to succeed. Like always, let's listen to our doctors who say, "The only thing we can do is wait" because patience is a virtue.

By: Mohamed Abed, 10th grade

**Trump is Dumped**

The most anticipated election in recent history has been underway for almost a week after election day, but finally, we have a president-elect: Joe Biden. With a whopping 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232 and a record-breaking 81 million votes to Trump's 74, Joe Biden will serve as the 46th president of the United States. Something this election taught many- your vote really does count, especially in swing states. With four states being won by Biden by less than 15,000 votes, these key battlegrounds were the reason he won as without three of these states he would have reached 269 electoral votes leaving him 1 shy of winning the presidency and ultimately losing to Donald Trump. These smaller margins, that these states were decided by, show how every vote matters in the political world. With roughly 5 million voters submitting ballots in Georgia, if just 12,000 of those people didn't vote the election forecast and how close it was would look completely different as Biden would've lost 16 electoral votes from that state alone. "The lust for power, for dominating others, inflames the heart more than any other passion", a wise Roman politician, Tacitus, once said. 2000 years later, this quote is still evidently true. Immediately after Joe Biden was elected into office, President Donald J. Trump tweeted claims of fraudulent, unsigned ballots being dumped in Biden's favor in certain swing states such as Georgia, ultimately saying that the election was stolen from him. His claims, which were sent on Twitter with a note from Twitter themselves saying his

tweets were refuted by reliable sources, were coming in for days, and even weeks after the election results were officially announced. He did say though, with many people worrying about a rough transition of power, that if his legal battles in the Supreme Court are unsuccessful he will concede the election when the electoral college confirms the results in January. The electoral college was set to confirm it on January 6th, but this was abruptly stopped when Trump supporters, coming from a protest held by President Donald Trump surged into the Capitol building. This led to the representatives in the electoral college, trying to confirm the results of the election, being evacuated from the Capitol where tear gas was released from both sides of the clash, and the FBI says they found "suspicious packages". Later that night though, the results were confirmed, and President Donald J. Trump confirmed with a statement and video posted on Twitter that he will cooperate to achieve a smooth transition of power. The transition of power set to be complete on January 20th, less than two weeks from now. Our president confirming cooperation puts many Americans at ease, but 2020 taught us that anything can happen at any given time. So until January 20th, the most we can do is hope our democracy prevails and that our current president sticks to his word of losing that title in 11 days.

By: Yusef Haddabah, 12th grade



## NBA Finals Recap

The Los Angeles Lakers recently faced the Miami Heat in the 2020 NBA Finals. The Lakers were ultimately victorious after a hard-fought 6 games. Miami was clearly overmatched in these Finals, but this was expected as practically nobody expected them to even make it out of the East. The dynamic duo of LeBron James and Anthony Davis was too much for the Heat to handle. Especially with the loss of Goran Dragic and Bam Adebayo in just the first game. Surprisingly, the Heat, who are coached by a defensive-minded head coach, Eric Spoelstra, struggled primarily with their defensive play. There is one thing that this 6 game series taught us about the Heat though—they're on the come up, and they're coming up fast. Not only did it show that they are a championship-level team, but it also made them a destination in free agency especially because most of their key players, such as Tyler Herro, are younger players. With a record of 14-7, they were considered the underdogs throughout this year's Playoffs. This was also obviously beneficial to the Lakers in every aspect, coming out victorious over 29 other teams. This will definitely also make them a destination in free agency for any ring chasers. After the season, the Lakers front office got straight to work call-

ing several free agents' phones. As of now, they have acquired Montrezl Harrell who won the Sixth man of the year award last season after losing Dwight Howard. Losing a key role player in Rajon Rondo, they quickly replaced him with Dennis Schroder who was the runner-up for Sixth man of the year. The Heat have also made a couple of good trades and have a bright future holding the 20th draft pick in the upcoming 2020 draft. One of their free agency losses though was Jae Crowder, an NBA veteran who can space the floor out and a top-tier defender in the game. They replaced him with Small-forward Maurice Harkless though, who is also known to be a good defensive player who can knock down three-point shots when space is there. The Lakers won the 2020 finals, but the future isn't looking brighter for many teams than it is for the Heat. The young Tyler Herro, Duncan Robinson, Bam Adebayo, and veteran Jimmy Butler are a scary sight, especially as these younger players get closer towards the peak of their careers. This takes nothing away from the Lakers though, having a top duo in LeBron James and Anthony Davis, and a more than solid group of role players surrounding them. Can we see a rematch between the two teams on the same national stage in 2021? Only time will tell, but one thing we do know—we have an exciting season ahead.

By: Jameel Abed, 9th grade

## Hybrid Learning Vs. Virtual Learning

In this present time, students are taking online classes more than we've ever had before. Of course, none of us can't really do much about it because of the risks and the situation the entire world has been put through over these last nine months. Online school definitely is great, and it's much more relaxing than sitting in a classroom all day, but the purpose of school is to be engaged and grasp as much information as possible. Being home, a student is just in a more relaxed state which very well leads to less focus. Also, it is more than obvious that being on a computer all day will lead to nothing but distractions. On the other hand, teachers are less likely to be more engaging to their students when face-to-face contact isn't present. To fully understand what your teacher is teaching, you need to have complete focus and full understanding on the information at

hand, and that is just very difficult when a student must learn off a screen. Even during this pandemic, two days of school of in-person learning is actually an option some students have and should take into con-



sideration. Being in school for half of your school-week is much more beneficial than sitting at home and looking at a screen. In school, your teachers and peers are actually there, and when you are in a classroom a student generally feels more engaged and excited to learn.

By: Ghaleb Awawda, 11th grade

## How to Stop Procrastinating

There's a list of assignments all due at midnight, but still, you find yourself mindlessly scrolling through social media and doing everything but your work. We've all been there. Procrastination is something that we all struggle with and is often the



cause of late or rushed assignments. But fortunately, it is something we can overcome and work towards preventing. First of all, don't beat yourself up for procrastinating; according to the American Psychological Association (APA), up to 95 percent of people procrastinate to some degree, and you shouldn't feel guilty or ashamed for being one of them. A common misconception is that people procrastinate because they are lazy, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. There are many other reasons for procrastination. People procrastinate because of fear of failure, lack of motivation, feeling overwhelmed by assignments, perfectionism, being distracted, and more. If you find yourself procrastinating, ask yourself why? The key is figuring out why and

then overcoming that struggle. A tip to preventing procrastination is to make a to-do list, starting with your biggest assignments first. If you start with the easy, small tasks, then you're more inclined to leave the more time-consuming ones for later and ultimately feeling overwhelmed by them. Another tip is to minimize distractions. When starting a task, be sure to commit to it and get rid of any distractions. Turn off your phone, find a quiet place, try your best to stay focused, and get your work done. Lastly, be sure to promise yourself a reward for when you're done. It will motivate you to finish and help you get through your assignment. Implementing these tips when completing work will likely leave you submitting your assignments early leaving you a clear mind and schedule.

By: Manel Boualdja, 12th grade

## The Importance of Reading

Often, many of us look at reading as a chore; something boring you have to do for school and would never do in your free time. On the other hand, you might be one of those people who've realized how amazing and beneficial reading truly

ing after a long day. If you read a book about Islam or the prophet Muhammed's (peace be upon him) life, good deeds can also be something you can gain from reading. Now I know what you might be thinking—“but I've tried reading, and



I simply don't enjoy it". Yes, I once had that mentality too, and I used to only read when it was for school, but that was before I figured out genres enjoyed reading. There are hundreds of literary genres and writing styles out there. It's important to figure out which you're interested in and enjoy the most. You might enjoy poetry, non-fiction, fantasy, mystery, action, etc. You might even enjoy multiple genres! So go to your nearest library or bookstore and pick out a book that you think would interest you; you can't be guaranteed that you will or won't like it, but it's always worth a try.

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By: Layan Natour, 12th grade



## 2020 Recap

2020 has been an interesting year, to say the least, so here's a rundown of significant events that have occurred in each month-

### > January:

- To kick off the year Covid-19 existed, mainly abroad, but there were not too many cases in America, so most Americans didn't expect for it to reach the level of a pandemic resulting in a lack of fear of it.
- Australia was having an abundance of wildfires causing many animals and people to lose their homes and even their lives.
- At the end of January, the basketball legend Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gigi Bryant died in a tragic helicopter crash.

### > February:

- By February, there were less than 50 reported Covid-19 cases.
- Following President Donald J. Trump's impeachment, he was acquitted by the US senate from charges of abuse of power and was able to remain the sitting chief in power.

### > March:

- At the beginning of March, there were now about 160,000 positive cases
- By the end of the month, there were another 24,500 cases which caused schools and all non-essential businesses to temporarily be shut down.

### > April:

- By the end of April, Covid-19 passed 1,000,000 cases in the US and the death toll increased by 58,360.
- Ramadan started on April 23rd.

### > May:

- An innocent African American man, George Floyd, was murdered by a police officer causing a series of Black Lives Matter riots all over the country.
- Murder hornets were discovered in the USA, somewhat causing a national scare over them.
- After a month of fasting Muslims celebrated Eid Al-Fitr and were not able to pray the Eid salah in the masjid due to Covid-19.

### > June:

Half-way through an eventful year, and while most were hoping for a better second half, things got worse-

- BLM riots continued and protestors began looting places such as Walmart, Target, Best Buy, some small businesses, and many more.
- Joe Biden was officially elected as the presidential candidate from the Democratic Party.

### > July:

- In July Eid Al-Adha was celebrated, but again, Muslims were unable to attend and pray at the masjid as it was still closed due to Covid-19.
- BLM protests are still continuing.
- At this point, almost all states uplifted or were lenient with quarantine restrictions, and almost all malls, restaurants, and shopping centers were opened to the public.
- President Donald Trump shows up wearing a mask for the first time in public.

### > August:

- At the beginning of August, Joe Biden announced Kamala Harris as his running mate.
- California was in a state of emergency due to their ongoing wildfires across the state.
- In this month, more than 20,000,000 people have tested positive for Covid-19 globally.

### > September:

- In September Joe Biden and President Donald Trump had their first presidential debate.
- Again, BLM protests were still continuing, serving as a reason that Covid-19 cases were increasing.

### > October:

- President Donald Trump tested positive for the coronavirus.
- Numbers for Covid-19 are going up and causing schools to shut down.

### > November:

- Joe Biden wins the presidential election and will be our new president in January with a total popular vote of 81,255,933.

### > December:

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorizes emergency use of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech.
- Vaccine rollouts begin to essential workers in the medical field.
- More than 317,000 people in the U.S. have now died from COVID-19 and the international death toll reaches about 1.7 million.

By: Dalia Abed, 6th grade

## PS5 Vs. Xbox

As many of us know, this year Sony and Microsoft introduced their newest consoles. They hit the market in November and sold out in seconds. The retail price on the PS5 Digital Edition is \$400 and the PS5 Blu-ray Disc is \$500. The Xbox series X is also starting at \$500. The resell price on them is high though, some being as high as \$1200! Now the real question is- which one should you get? Which one is better? First, let's compare the PS5 and Xbox series X's specs. Let's start with the console's GPU; the PS5 comes with a 12.6Tflops RDNA 1.5, and the Xbox comes with an 11.8 Flops but the same RDNA. For the CPU, the PS5 comes with an AMD ZEN 2 and 3.6Gh, meanwhile, the Xbox comes with the same AMD but runs a little

faster with 3.7Ghz. They both have the same RAM (16GB GDDR6). The storage for the PS5 is an 825GB custom SSD, however, the Xbox comes with a 1TB custom SSD. They both come with a high of 8k resolution, and a frame rate of up to 120 fps. They also both come with a 4k Blu-ray disc (when comparing PS5 Blu-ray Disc Edition). According to their performances so far, some of them have bugs and issues, with most coming from the Xbox Series X. People have reported the Xbox is glitching, keeping them unable to sign in, and many more tech-bugs. Now the time has come, which console is the better? In my opinion, after evaluating every spec and issue, I would say the PS5 is better. Now you make yours.

By: Khalid Musbeh, 9th

## Insane Advancements in AI

Only 60 years ago, computers weighed unwieldy amounts and were extremely convoluted to use. They were also extremely expensive and limited in their abilities; the most advanced AI at the time was only able to do linear functions. However, an idea sparked in the minds of hundreds of computer scientists; they saw the potential of AI and began to work to make their ideas a reality. What potential did they see in computer brains though? Well, unlike human brains, machine brains are completely inferior at doing certain tasks that involve creative thought and imagination, however, they are skilled in their ability to do simple tasks such as math. Math has no creativity involved, as it is a set of rules that one must follow. So by inputting the rules, the AIs are able to do them, and since their brains work at the speed of light, they finish much faster than humans can. A calculator is a perfect example of this. Now, programmers are able to split up complex tasks into many smaller ones, because if you look at a complicated job hard enough, it is simply a buildup of many small jobs. One recent advancement would be Adobes new product recommendation tool. This AI is able to scan an image, let's say of a book, detect key details, and find the book, or similar items available for purchase online. It scans the image, enters the image into their searching engine, and displays the

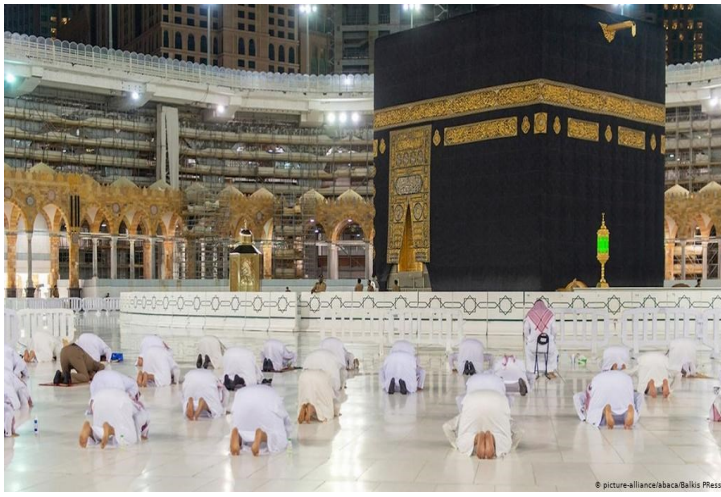
results; three simple tasks that give what many may think as a "complex" result. A more interesting AI is one made by DeepMind. The original purpose of this AI was to see if machine brains could learn to beat players in complex games, or in other words, games that were strategy based. AI was already known to be able to do this in chess but the question now was- "how about in video



games?". The video game StarCraft is a complex strategy game that requires a lot of planning and time to progress in, yet DeepMind was able to develop a learning algorithm called Alpha star. This algorithm was able to learn from other players and its own mistakes allowing it to improve every day eventually being ranked as the top player in the world. This AI, originally made to test on video games, is now used for scientific research such as Protein Folding. It is remarkable how fast technology is advancing, however, we need to be wary when creating these robotic minds because if certain guidelines are not followed they could lead to many cyber and/or physical disasters.

By: Qasem Alkhatib, 11th grade

The annual Islamic pilgrimage that takes place in the holiest city for Muslims, Mecca, is a religious duty that Muslims, who are able to complete, complete at least once in their lifetime. No matter where you live, all Muslims from across the world come together to perform Hajj. The importance and reward of Hajj are like no other, and many Muslims perform Hajj to seek forgiveness from and pray to Allah. Amid the novel coronavirus, many have been wondering how we will be able to perform Hajj this year since Hajj requires a gathering of thousands. A month prior to the date Hajj was scheduled for this year, June 2020, the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced that a limited number of people who live in Saudi Arabia are allowed to perform Hajj to ensure the safety of everyone. Before being admitted to performing Hajj, every person had to get tested and ensure they are not showing any symptoms of the virus. While performing Hajj, every individual had to remain six feet from others at all times, even during prayer. There were many necessary restrictive rules in

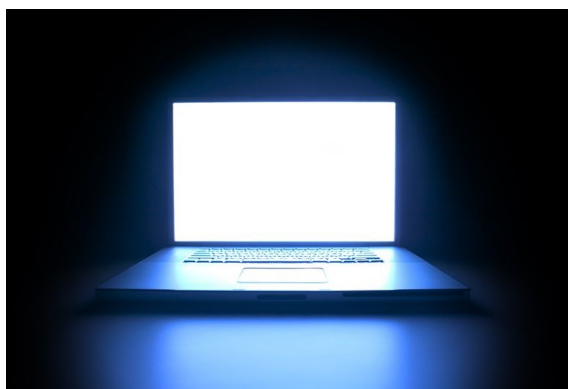


place to ensure everyone remained safe and healthy. Kissing the sacred black stone that is embedded in Mecca is a part of the pilgrimage, but was not allowed this year, to avoid the spread of germs. Personal prayer rugs and bottled water was also another rule set in place, as well as sterilizing the pebbles that were used to throw at the black stone. Last year, 2.5 million Muslims were able to perform Hajj, while this year only 1,000 Muslims were allowed in. Since Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932, Hajj has never been canceled but has had restrictions in the past due to plagues, wars, and political disputes. While Hajj has had its restrictions this year, we can all pray that Muslims from every corner of the world can unite and enjoy Hajj together next year, in a safe and healthy environment.

By: Fehmieh Mansour, 12th grade

## How Blue Light Affects Our Health

Did you know that the average American now checks their phones 96 times a day? We use devices that disperse blue light every day for many different reasons. Some use it to keep in touch with family and friends, while others, especially now, use it for school or work. Regardless of the reason, the blue light that comes from digital devices can affect our health. Spending too much time looking at a screen can lead to digital eye strain, fatigue, dry eyes, bad posture, etc., all of which can lead to a negative impact on one's health. Without proper care, being exposed to an excessive amount of blue light can even affect one's sleep. A few things a person can implement on their day-to-day basis, to ensure blue light does not affect their health, are managing the amount of screen time a person has a day, screen



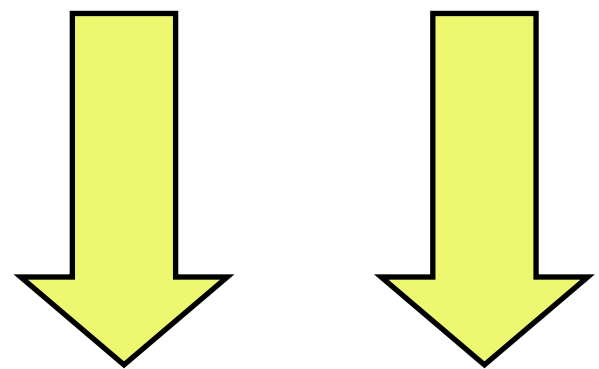
filters that are used to shield the blue light, yellow-tinted glasses, anti-reflective lenses, and more. Blue light is not the only thing a person should keep in mind, but also how staying on a phone screen for extended periods of time can lead a person to isolate oneself and not spend time around family or in the outdoors. Time management is a good method to avoid spending hours on a screen, as well as making sure you take some time out of your day to walk outside. Reducing and managing the amount of screen time you have a day, and taking the safety measures necessary to shield your eyes from blue light can help prevent the many harms blue light can bring to one's health.

By: Malak Mansour, 9th grade

The NFL playoffs are set to start today, Saturday, January 9th, and boy are we in for some good ones! Starting the day, the first matchup we'll see will take place between the MVP candidate, Josh Allen led Bills, and the veteran QB Philip Rivers led Colts. This is an interesting matchup to watch especially because of the offensive powerhouse that the bills have become this year with the addition of Stefon Diggs, and the lockdown defense the Colts have become under defensive guru Matt Eberflus. This game will take place at 1:05 PM and will be nationally televised on CBS. The second matchup of the day will take place between the 6th seed Rams, coming in with its superstar filled defense being led by DT Aaron Donald and CB Jalen Ramsey ready to face the Russel Wilson led Seahawks with an emerging star in receiver D.K Metcalf. The two games these teams have played this season both ended with different results as they split wins so this game will serve as a playoff tiebreaker between the teams. Kickoff is set for 4:40 PM and will be nationally televised on Fox. The next game will be between the soon to be Hall of Fame QB Tom Brady led dangerous Bucs offense and the NFC East division champion Washington Football Team. A week after stealing the Giants' playoff hopes and division title the football team could be motivated and ready to play. Nonetheless, the Buccaneers, with its countless stars on offense, are heavy favorites to win this game. This game is set to start at 8:15 and will be nationally televised on CBS. After Saturday, we will have three teams advancing to the divisional round, but on Sunday we'll find out

the three teams that they will be facing through 3 more games. The first one is a match-up between a team led by a young bright player in the former MVP Lamar Jackson, and he will be looking to beat the 2000 yard-rusher Derrick Henry led Titans. Look for a high amount of points to be scored in this game starting at 1:05 and being nationally televised on ABC. The second matchup will feature a struggling Bears team with Mitchell Trubisky at quarterback and a ferocious Saints offense with a hungry trio in Brees-Kamara-Thomas. The Saints are heavily favored to win this game, though upsets do exist, and definitely occur. This game will be nationally televised at 4:40 and will be on CBS and Nickelodeon. Yes, Nickelodeon. They will feature a version of the game that is more likely to incline children as viewers as the theme of it is Nickelodeon related. The players will have googly eyes at times, and the endzones will be given special effects to look like slime. The last game of the playoff week will take place between an up and coming Browns team with Baker Mayfield at QB and a struggling Pittsburgh Steelers who have lost 4 out of their last 5 games after starting 11-0. The Browns though will be without their starting pro-bowl guard Joe Bitonio and Head Coach Kevin Stefanski at the game though, as both tested positive for Covid-19 prior to it. The Steelers are favorites to win this game. Who will we see victorious and playing next week from these 6 games? The only way we can find out is by tuning in and watching! Speaking of predictions The Rising Times is having a contest!

By: Yusef Haddabah, 12th grade



## Contest:

Email [TheRisingTimes1@gmail.com](mailto:TheRisingTimes1@gmail.com) with your prediction of the two teams that you think will make the Super Bowl, the team that will win, and the score at the end of the game. The winner of this contest will receive \$50! Send your predictions in before Thursday, January 14th, to be eligible to win.



### Untold Facts of History

Have you ever wondered about whether or not there is more to the story? Well, here are some of the many interesting and unfamiliar tales of History that you may or may not know of:

**The Olympics Used to Award Medals for Art:** From 1912 to 1948, the Olympic Games held competitions in the fine arts. Which stretched out to a variety of creative arts like literature, architecture, sculpture, painting, and music. Before the art events were removed, about 151 medals were awarded.



**The Titanic's Possessor Never really Said the Ship Was "Unsinkable":** If you have seen James Cameron's iconic 1997 film, you may be disagreeing with me, but what if I tell you that the owners never said that it could NEVER sink; "the population as a whole were unlikely to have thought of the Titanic as a unique, unsinkable ship before its maiden voyage." (Historian Richard Howells)

**Cleopatra Was Not Egyptian:** Despite what you may know about Cleopatra, the last queen of Egypt wasn't born in Egypt. As best as historians can tell, Cleopatra VII was Greek.



**The First Face on the \$1 Bill Was Not George Washington:** Believe it or not, the first face to be printed on the \$1 bill was Salmon P. Chase, who was the secretary of the treasury at that time as well as the designer of the country's first banknotes.

**Paul Revere never deliberately Shouted, "The British Are Coming!":** It may be documented in your local history textbook, but actually, it was found to be false. The initial operation implied to be calm and stealthy since British troops were covering up within the Massachusetts farmland.



By: Amina Mohdi, 11th grade

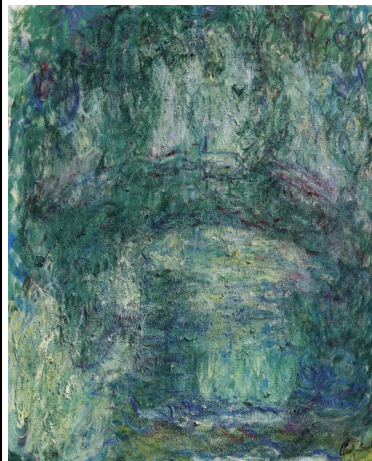
### The Rising Times Topics

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- HEAT
- PROCRISTINATE
- PLAYOFFS
- HAJJ
- BOOKS
- CHIEFS
- LAKERS
- VIRTUAL
- PLAYSTATION
- LIGHT
- XBOX
- HYBRID
- FINALS
- TRUMP
- COVID

### Famous Paintings

*The Japanese Bridge*



Claude Monet was in his late 70's when he began to go blind. He had serious cataracts and admitted to being able to see "less and less", as he told a journalist in early 1912. Painting was a part of Monet's life, and as hazardous surgery was, he went through with it in hopes of restoring his vision. Three operations later, and the artist's sight was restored, but with the side effect of adversely altering his perception of color. Which is why many of Monet's latest paintings, such as this one, look like one huge spot of color. Although this painting was supposed to represent the Japanese bridge, due to Monet being color blind, many see it as an abstract painting.

*Shapes of Fear*

This portrait, created by Maynard Dixon, represents the Great Depression. Four cloaked faceless figures huddle together, as the muted tones of their long brown robes blend with the barren ground. When Dixon painted this image, the country was in the grips of the Great Depression, and a widespread poverty and struggle. Dixon sought out to capture the aftermath of the economic collapse through his art, by not only representing the anxiety and despair of the nation, but his own worry and dejection. By creating "Shapes of Fear" and expressing himself through art, Dixon explained it as a way of freeing himself from the constant emotions that were too overbearing to handle.



By: Fehmieh Mansour, 12th grade

### What Do You Think?

If you're interested in writing for The Rising Times or have any suggestions and/or topic ideas you would like to see in our next issue

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