ABOUT THE COVER PHOTO

Fatima Al-Janahi, Class of 2019

On the afternoon of 15 February 2017, my family and I went to have a walk in AlWakra Souq. This souq consists of old houses that had been restored in order to revive the Qatari culture and heritage. While we were taking a tour around the souq, one corner attracted me. There was a huge old opened door that was made out of wood, and behind it there were small houses in the same neighborhood. It reminded me of our old neighborhood, when I used to hang out with my neighbors in the streets and play football with them under the hot sun. So I got my phone out, and I took a photo of that corner, and I added my touch by editing the photo and making it black and white. I chose this photo to submit for the cover photo contest for Best Writing 2017 because I feel that I belong to it as it reminds me of one of my stages of life.

Fatima Al-Janahi, a Mechanical engineering student at Texas A&M University at Qatar.

Design and layout by Salma Hamouda.
Dear Readers,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the fourth volume of our annually published anthology of writing created by the engineering students at Texas A&M University at Qatar. *Best Writing 2017* showcases a wide representation of our students’ various interests. The volume in your hand is the result of reviewing the greatest number of submissions we have received so far in this series: 168 pieces of art submitted by 70 engineering students! Upon submission, the pieces were reviewed by at least three of the 15 members of the *Best Writing* Committee who selected 48 pieces for publication in this volume, which were then edited and arranged by the two co-editors. The best *Best Writing* Committee has been buoyed by the continued enthusiasm expressed for the publication of this series - especially from the nearly 15 percent of Texas A&M at Qatar undergraduates who submitted either a photograph or a piece of writing to be considered for publication this year, but also from the dozens of other students who attend the literary reading each fall along with faculty, staff, family, former students, and members of the administration who believe in the mission of teaching future engineers how to communicate more effectively. This series has also served as an ambassador of sorts, showing readers back at our main campus in College Station the kinds of writing our students do and the various issues that haunt them or interests they plan to pursue.

Five years ago, we began this project as teachers in search of a way to share the wonderful pieces that our “poet-engineers” write. We wanted to celebrate students’ literacy journeys by garnering for them an audience celebrating students’ literacy journeys as well as garnering for them an audience beyond the requirements of a course or the confines of a classroom. We firmly believe that all writing is rhetorical and that the “best” writing in the academy has a rhetorical purpose beyond pleasing the teacher or getting a good grade! We are proud of the fact that many of the pieces in this volume are the result of best practices in the teaching of writing which “present[s] students with diverse rhetorical situations, a variety of disciplinary and professional genres, and assignments that ask for self-reflection and require feedback from peers, the instructor, and/or the tutor during the composing process” (Melzer, 2014, p.112). In short, we want our students to know that the writing they do matters, and that writing for wider and varied audiences is part and parcel of becoming a more rhetorically aware and thus more effective writer.

As the theme of this year’s volume implies, *writing gets things done*. If you include texting, emailing, photographing, designing, presenting, and archiving as forms of composition (and you should, because we, as writing scholars, certainly do!), then most of us spend more and more of our days in some stage of composing. In their textbook *A Guide to Writing as an Engineer*, David Beer and David McMurrey (2014) told the story of an engineer who calculated that all the writing he and his team did to build the B-1b bomber weighed more than the airplane itself! We at Texas A&M at Qatar have interviewed recent alumni working in the engineering industry, and they spend an average of one-third of their workday on writing tasks.

We write for many reasons, but nearly all of these involve the impulse of one human being to connect with another. We write to make sense of our world - both to understand and to be understood. We write to entertain and complain, to make ourselves and others laugh and cry - and sometimes at the same time! We write to name that-which-is-holding-us-back or keeping us down; we write to learn, to experiment, and to pave the way for change; we write to resist growth or to record growth or even deny any growth has occurred at all; we write to tell the stories that have-yet-to-be-told, and we write to prepare the way for the we-who-has-yet-to-be. We write to climb ladders, to pay homage, to get a paycheck, to persuade a teacher to change a grade or an employer to grant a promotion. We write to express our hopelessness and also to claim our right to hope. We write from both the scars and the wounds, our lies and our truths, our best moments and our worst tragedies. We write because it is the humane thing to do in spite of the inhumanity we may perceive.

To celebrate the student writers in this volume, please thumb through all of these pages to notice the array of issues capturing the attention of our poet-engineers in the 2016-2017 academic year. You will come across timely pieces and our worst tragedies. We write because it is the humane thing to do in spite of the inhumanity we may perceive.

In their textbook *A Guide to Writing as an Engineer*, David Beer and David McMurrey (2014) told the story of an engineer who calculated that all the writing he and his team did to build the B-1b bomber weighed more than the airplane itself! We at Texas A&M at Qatar have interviewed recent alumni working in the engineering industry, and they spend an average of one-third of their workday on writing tasks.

We write for many reasons, but nearly all of these involve the impulse of one human being to connect with another. We write to make sense of our world - both to understand and to be understood. We write to entertain and complain, to make ourselves and others laugh and cry - and sometimes at the same time! We write to name that-which-is-holding-us-back or keeping us down; we write to learn, to experiment, and to pave the way for change; we write to resist growth or to record growth or even deny any growth has occurred at all; we write to tell the stories that have-yet-to-be-told, and we write to prepare the way for the we-who-has-yet-to-be. We write to climb ladders, to pay homage, to get a paycheck, to persuade a teacher to change a grade or an employer to grant a promotion. We write to express our hopelessness and also to claim our right to hope. We write from both the scars and the wounds, our lies and our truths, our best moments and our worst tragedies. We write because it is the humane thing to do in spite of the inhumanity we may perceive.

To celebrate the student writers in this volume, please thumb through all of these pages to notice the array of issues capturing the attention of our poet-engineers in the 2016-2017 academic year. You will come across timely pieces discussing politics, art, and education, written about places like Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Qatar, and even “Trump-nation.” If you read more deeply, you will sense students grappling with difficult concepts such as the costs of globalism, racism, and humanitarianism, or the right use of resistance. Whether in the form of poetry or prose, you will see these writers asking difficult questions, and sometimes even proposing products that would provide solutions to a particular problem you may have, such as “How much coffee should I drink today?” or “When might I benefit from a lighter-weight bullet-proof vest?”

The writing studies scholar Deborah Brandt (2015) said that “because writing unleashes language into the world, it engages people’s sense of power and responsibility” (p. 162). In a YouTube interview (2012), she added that “writing is not only the work of our time, it is the hard work of our time.” This year, we invited staff and faculty along with students to contribute the hard work of writing through a new section, “Open Letters,” in the beginning of this volume. While some of these letters contain humorous passages, you can practically feel the emotion, like steam, rising from these pages. Indeed, expressive writing has great cathartic value, not only for the writer, but sometimes for the reader, too. We are grateful to the dozen or so students, staff, and faculty who took the time and assumed the responsibility - after finding the power and the courage - to risk speaking for more than themselves.

But most of all, we would like to thank you, dear reader, for holding this volume in your hands, for treating it tenderly, and for returning to it again and again. Our wish for you is that the words in these pages stir the writer within you, and that you, too, can find a time and place to share your writing with the world.

Sincerely,

Mysti Rudd and Amy Hodges
Best Writing Committee Co-Chairs
References


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors of this volume, Dr. Amy Hodges and Dr. Mysti Rudd, wish to acknowledge all of the students who submitted their writing for review – even those whose pieces were not selected for this particular volume. Without all of your contributions, the fourth volume of *Best Writing* by Texas A&M University at Qatar students would not exist, and we honor the courage required to share your writing with the world.

We also want to acknowledge the *Best Writing* Committee, made up of the following students, staff, and faculty:

Midhat Javiad, Class of 2018
Ghada Al-Haroon, Class of 2018
John Crisme, Class of 2019
Adel Mohsin, Class of 2018
Zain Raza, Class of 2017
Ahmad Alrchid, Class of 2017
Hassan Al-Mazrooei, Class of 2017
Sherry Ward
Kelly Wilson
Deanna Rasmussen
Shauna Loej
Erlinda Caerlang
Dania Jalees
Vanessa Lina

We appreciate all of your contributions of time, talent, and taste!

Special thanks to Dr. Troy Bickham for funding this year’s volume through the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Initiative. And an EXTRA special thanks to Olena Snitko, whose dedication to supporting *Best Writing* is matched only by her passion for learning and sharing new languages. Check out her open letter on page 27! We couldn't have completed this project without both of you.

We would like to thank the talented student photographers who provided photos for the following pages:

Kenana Dalle (1, 34, 58)
Ahmed Al-Nowfal (102)
Maeen Swileh (128, 210)
Aldana Al-Naimi (6)
Fatema Al-Neama (228)
Yazan Barghouti (164)

The *Best Writing* Committee is proud to publish your artistic expressions.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Prologue:** What Writing Can Do  
3-4     Ghadeer Al-Haddad

## 1. Writing can do whatever you want it to do

7-8         Aalaa Abdulla, A Message to My Heart  
9-10        Michelle Salvosa, A Birthday Message to My Son  
11-12       Shauna Loej, The Toolbox  
13-14       Michael Telafici, An Open Letter to My Father  
15-16       Ghadeer Al-Haddad, A Mother’s Letter to Her Son  
17-18       John Crisme, To My Dearest Cup of Coffee  
19-20       Warrier Warrior, An Open Letter to Anxiety  
25-26       Adam Curtis, Open Letter to President Young in Regard to his Response to the United States’ Travel Ban  
27-28       Olena Snitko, An Open Letter to a Language Learner  
29-31       Erlinda “Beth” Caerlang, To My Past Self

## 2. Writing can open doors to the past

35-37       Abdulla Al-Tamimi, Sand  
39-41       Mohamed Amara, Becoming Me  
43-44       Suhaim Al-Qurani, A Lifelore  
45-49       Abdul Sattar AlKhala, My Country, My Fight  
51-52       Syeda Akhter, Is Rebellion the Answer?  
53-54       Saeed Binnoora, The Prophet  
55-56       Suhaim Al-Qurani, To My Country

## 3. Writing can inspire our dreams

59-60       Midhat Javiad, Elemental  
61-63       Hadeer Hassan, A World for the Dreamers  
65-66       Doaa Awad, Work, Faith, and Strength  
67-70       Abdulkarim Mohamed, Writing My Future  
71-72       Ahmed Al-Nowfai Al-Tamimi, To the First Face I Saw When I Opened My Eyes  
73-75       Aisha Al-Naemi, Connections  
77-81       Skander Helali, Fernando Botero: The Art of Deformation  
83-84       Samozai Mansoor, Ode on a Vegetable Dumpling

## 4. Writing can carry us home

87-88       Samozai Mansoor, Cages  
89-92       Maeen Swileh, Arguing and Talking Makes Better Writers  
93-96       Rashid Al Heidous, Chapter 3 of When You Miss the Station  
97-98       John Crisme, The Anxiety & Misery of Unrealised Quintessence  
99-100      Mohamed Hazam Hussein, I’m Staying Home

## 5. Writing can create communities

103-104     Abouelkassim Becetti, My First Day in Aggieland  
105-107     Ola Omer, The Fire Inside  
109-115     Sarah Alnouri, A Favorable Meeting  
117-119     Abdulla Al-Tamimi, An Aggie in Qatar  
121-124     Seif ElGazar, The Hidden Rules of Football  
125-126     Nadim Wahbeh, Enemies: For a Second

## 6. Writing can advocate for change

129-131     Omar Hasnah, Make a Change Wherever You Are  
133-138     Muhammad Kamil, Using Humanitarian Engineering to Aid Syrian Refugees  
139-142     Anonymous, Love is Stronger Than Death  
143-154     Nadim Wahbeh, Banksy: An Image Worth a Million Words  
155-158     Aisha Al-Naemi, The Humanization of Trump-nation: A Discourse Analysis of Interviews with Trump Supporters  
159-161     Skander Helali, Zombie Lives Matter

## 7. Writing can engineer designs

165-171     Aldana Alnaimi, Why Aren’t More TAMUQ Students Majoring in Petroleum Engineering?  
173-177     Amira Abouhadid, Research Proposal to Test Zeolite Coating of Magnesium AZ31B  
179-191     Abdallah Shaat, Dana Al-Shemairi, Joanna Mahfouz, Muhammad Farooq Zia, Muna Al-Sulaiti, Ola Omer, Market Feasibility Study of the Caffeinator  
193-198     AlAnood Al-Jaber, Doaa Awad, Mareem Daey, SpectaKelar: The Scientific Synonym for the Composition of Spectra and Kevlar  
199-207     Hamda al Naimi, Fatima Hassen, AlReem Al-Dosari, Noora Al-Kuwari, CyberDo: Statistical Modeling and Analysis Results in Optimizing a Current iPhone Mobile Security App

## 8. Writing can light fires

211-213     John Crisme, To What’s Expected  
215-216     Mr. R, Who Are You?  
217-220     Mohammad AlMohannadi, Think with Your First Language  
221-222     Suhaim Al-Qurani, Love is Always a Way to Elevate Our Heart  
223-226     Amera Jama, My Anger is My Motivation

## 9. Writing can say goodbye (parting words from seniors)

229-230     Kelly Wilson, Dear Class of 2017  
230-232     Muhammad Ghufran Rafique  
232         Bilal El Assadi  
233-234     Muhammad Zain Raza  
235         Omar El Hassan  
236         Fathima Faizeen  
236         Maryam Al-Awadi
DEDICATION

To Texas A&M at Qatar students, faculty and staff whose passion for writing and courage to share ideas creates a community that benefits all of us!
What Writing Can Do

Writing preserves history from being lost. Saves the unknown or a captured boy. Affirms the execution for the rule of the thief, the criminal and the oppressed. Writing sometimes ignites problems and wars.

It gives us life when it comes to us in a form of a thank-you note, a motivational word, a contract of employment or termination of work. When we fail, it gives us a new chance to start again, to rewrite, to understand better, to succeed. It gives us hope when the assignment is almost due.

It is the will of the dead which is often not implemented. It is the books that fill the libraries and no one reads them. It is the plant design, the process description and the safety rules that protect the people’s lives, production and business. It can be when the teacher explains, and if he is not writing, then the lecture is boring.

Writing can show how determined you are when you propose your ideas and how patient you are waiting for them to emerge. It’s a way of communication, a tool that speaks with no voice. Writing can be a piece of art; a painting and the creative part of life. It is the explosion, the images of the past, present and the future that we look forward to with fear and excitement.

It is the feeling, the revolution against silence. It is me and no one else because I’m selfish and because I’m not selfish. It is the imagination, the dream and the reality all at once. It is something that doesn’t resemble anything else. It is that recurring dream that never ends. It is the stories that should be told.

Writing is a fulfillment. It is the longing that doesn’t go away. It is the meeting that doesn’t come, it is the words that are not said. It is when sympathy wins over indifference.

Writing can be challenging; it doesn’t give us satisfactory answers and doesn’t take us to the end of the road, yet we write and we can’t deny that writing gives us enough space to express, to search, to improve and to change.

Ghadeer is studying chemical engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar. Ghadeer decided to study abroad at College Station in Spring 2017 where she enjoyed discovering Aggieland, learning about different cultures and people. This experience made her see some things from a different perspective and helped her realize that difference is something beautiful.
writing can do whatever you want it to do
My dear Heart,
I no longer believe in you.
From now on I will follow my mind—
at least no one will call me emotional because of You.
I will leave You behind to die,
I no longer need You.

Although You are still young,
I won't give You the chance to survive.
This is the first decision
my mind makes without You.

My soul fled away
and left me behind.
I no longer collect things nor moments,
I no longer take part.
I will merely pass by
to say
Goodbye

Aalaa Abdallah is a mechanical engineering student. She is working to establish her own start-up, while trying to find her way in the world of YouTube. A good cup of coffee and a classical piece of music makes her happy. Aalaa loves reading, tennis, and Leonardo Davinci.
To my son, Miguel Antonio,

Seventeen years ago when I first held you in my arms,
I knew things wouldn't be the same again.
I would be tied to motherhood all my life,
a life full of responsibilities and strife.
I would have the least possible time for myself
for every moment would be about you.

As I showed you life's beauty, wonders and adventures,
I had to let you see too what the world may hold for you.
It was a struggle putting life in equilibrium,
learning lessons myself, as I was teaching you.

If one would ask me now what I thought were the best moments of my life,
most of them were with you.
You were my sunshine after every storm,
my light in my darkest nights.
I thank God you grew up into a person I've wanted you to be,
strong but with a gentle heart.

As you turn seventeen today,
looking like a young man yet still a baby to me,
you may have outgrown my lap,
but you will never outgrow my heart.
I love you always and forever, my Miggy,
you will always be my baby...

Your Loving Mom

Michelle is a Program Coordinator in Human Resources. She is a mother of two boys. She likes to believe that she's artistic and that she can show her creative side by writing some of her noblest thoughts. She hopes to be able to write a book about her life's journey or about the joy of motherhood. Back in the Philippines, she had a short stint in writing news articles and documentaries for her city's newsletter. Aside from writing, she is also passionate about reading novels.
Dear Daughter,

Go off on your own now – go and remember, you’ve got everything it takes to make it out there. When you are alone one day, reflecting on your family, your life – you might need to hear those words. I know I needed to hear them – many times. Just before I left home, my mother gave me a book of quotes and inspirational stories to help lift me up when I needed it, but what really helped were the positive “go get ‘em” words my mother inscribed on the inside cover and the comfort of looking at her handwriting. That was all I needed to make me feel that all was fine in my world.

My mother had high hopes for me leaving our small town and so did I – but above everything else, I was thrilled to be moving away from that small town to the big city where everything was new and anything was possible. I bet you can relate even though you grew up in a much different way. There was something missing in my life just like you said you are missing something too. I want you to find it. That is what mothers want for their kids – to find ways to make their children happy. It is in the unwritten manual of motherhood. You will understand one day.

As for good advice, I guess I could easily echo the wise words of my mother – to “get an education” which was always followed emphatically by “and stay away from the boys.” I did both, maybe less of the latter but the seed was planted to always keep my focus on my studies. I trust that you will decide what is important to you, but make sure boys are number two!

I will say, however, and this may surprise you, that you have a rather large toolbox you must take when you start at your new school. The toolbox is big and heavy, but I think you can make space for it in your new room. You are probably curious about what’s inside and why you didn’t know about it. Everything in the toolbox is yours and contains what you need going forward. I have placed everything inside for you when you were busy learning to swim, playing soccer, doing your homework, learning to cook and bake, playing computer games and being a big sister to your brothers. It wasn’t too much work for me. I loved every minute watching you grow into the loving, focused and quietly confident young woman you are today. Don’t forget to open your toolbox as soon as you leave – maybe on the airplane when you are alone and sad or after your first day of classes when you are full of doubt about what you are doing there or maybe when you meet a boy – well then, just remember what my mother said!

Love,

Your Mother

Shauna Nearing Loej grew up in the small town of New Waterford, Nova Scotia, Canada. She does miss her small town despite her longing to leave but does not regret for one second the leap that took her to the many new and wonderful places of the world including Doha, Qatar, where she currently resides. Aside from her role as head chef and driver to her four children, Shauna is a Writing Consultant at Texas A&M University at Qatar.
An Open Letter to My Father

Two of my earliest memories, or ideas, or statements, were things you said about books and knowledge, and it's probably well beyond the time that I acknowledge them.

The first was when you told us that "all the knowledge in the world is contained in books." Maybe not literally, and maybe as yet unwritten, but at five or six years of age, I took that to heart. So, on hot, humid, New Jersey summer afternoons, I would walk to the Roselle Park Public Library, breathe in the smell of air conditioning and paper for a moment as I opened the door, a scent of possibility, of learning, and head downstairs to the children's section. There I came across a series of books, one on each state, and read through them that summer, and I remember saying, "I'm going to see all those places."

Well, I haven't been to 50 states, but am a pretty close to having been to 50 countries, and I have you and our little public library to thank in large part for that sense of curiosity about the world.

The second idea you instilled in me was "work with your brain so you don't have to work with your back all your life." When I write that, I immediately see the tap water running black beneath your hands as you washed them after a long day of fixing boilers and air conditioners. And, obviously, I took that to heart as well, and now, just two generations after your grandparents who could speak only slow, broken English and who could write virtually none, I make my living, halfway around the world, teaching English.

Now that you don't read so much, because you are tired, or sick, or the book feels too heavy for your wrists, I think it's a good time to acknowledge that debt, and to be thankful for the upbringing, the education, the intellectual curiosity and the leisure time available to me, so that one of my favorite things to do on a weekend or evening is sit in a comfortable chair and enjoy a book.

And add, just a bit, to that always incomplete but always growing knowledge of the world.

Michael Telafici an Instructional Associate Professor at Texas A&M University at Qatar.
Life is not rosy like you see it, my young boy, and your dreams will not all come true. You will not be a pilot, or a police man or a construction worker like you want. You will be what people around you want. You will not get all you wish and want. You will get what you don't want and you will have to love it. You will not love me a lot, my son, you will not need me as you do now. You will grow up and days will make you forget me. You will grow up and not need my hands or lap. But I will never forget you. You might come and visit me and remember me sometimes, just to not feel guilty and return my favor. You will not call me every day, you will not cry and ask me to feed you, you will not ask me to buy you a toy from the store, or to give you money or a candy from my bag.

You will meet lots of people, each will take part in your life, you will love a different person, who will share the life with you. You will have a different family and maybe some children. You will be busy with them and your work. I might get old, become weaker, need you more, lose my health, be alone swinging my chair like how I was swinging your bed to sleep. You will come to help me some days, but you will get frustrated with me and your respect to me might get lower with days. You might leave me and visit me with the rains. You might wait for me to leave this life, so you feel comfortable. I will leave one day and then you will feel comfortable, you will take my money and everything I left. You will bury me with your hands, your hands that were reaching for me to carry you as a child. You will bury me and bury your grief and then turn your back to my grave and return to complete your life. You will feel sad for my leave for some days but you will quickly forget. You might hang my picture in your house walls or might throw all my pictures to not feel pain. But I will leave while I'm sick in the bed waiting for you to come to see me for the last time, my dear son. You will come, sit next to me knowing that I'm leaving this life. We will hug, say goodbye to each other, and I will leave.

Ghadeer is studying chemical engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar. Ghadeer decided to study abroad at College Station in spring 2017 where she enjoyed discovering Aggieland, learning about different cultures and people. This experience made her see some things from a different perspective and helped her realize that difference is something beautiful.
To My Dearest Cup of Coffee,

I remember the days when you were just a figment of my fantasies. Curious, I have always wanted to get to know you, but you seemed too far to reach for. I had heard great things about you; stories that my grandma would tell me about how sweet you are, how good you smell, how warm you make people feel, and how you always make those close to you feel at home. You seem to have it all. My mum would tell me that I wasn't ready for you yet; that I was still a child.

They all say that...

"You're too young for this! You're too young for that!"

Everything to keep me away from you...

...but gone are those days.

I am eternally grateful for the day when I was grown up enough to see you eye to eye. I will never forget the euphoria when I finally had you within my grasp; not reaching, but holding you by the hand and thinking to myself, "That cupboard can't keep you from me any longer." They told me that I wouldn't like you, let alone become emotionally attached to you. Some said you were bitter and not as good as I was told you would be.

Look at us now!

Never have I had any ounce of regret for letting you into my life. You were always there for me, the good times and the bad. You stayed up with me all night through all the school work. You had my back and made me feel warm and cozy inside when she left. I've always had you by my side during cold mornings and stormy nights. My day is never a good one without you in it. Yes, there have been a few rough patches in our relationship. Sometimes you were a bit bitter and cold; not really the welcoming sort, although there were times when I forgot to value your presence. If there is one thing I feel I must tell you, it's this:

I am very sorry for cheating on you with tea and hot chocolate...

I know, I know, I was in the wrong. I just could not overcome the temptation at the time. I felt like I was weak as a man for not standing strong for my convictions. I am not trying to make excuses for my actions, and I know that I must have caused you hurt, but know this:

I love you.

More than cupcakes and scotch, and you know I mean that. I hope you can find it in yourself to forgive me so that we can start fresh; free from all the stresses and worries that this decaffeinated world might bring.

With all the love that I possess,
John Caffeine

john is an engineer in the making, a closet poet, and a lawyer wannabe. A mechanical engineering student who has a penchant for drifting mentally throughout the day, he fell in love with poetry after watching "Dead Poets Society" during the winter of 2014. He fancies the works of Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, and Lord Byron, to name a few. When not reading or writing poetry, he usually spends his time reading up on J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium, re-watching the whole Star Wars saga (all eight of them), and shouting at the telly while watching Manchester United, Green Bay Packers, or New York Yankees games.
An Open Letter to Anxiety

I still remember the day I dropped that class. For the second time. Oh, how stupid I felt! I wanted the ground to open and swallow me whole. It took me a while to want to work on my confidence again. “Was I not as smart as my peers? Where did my confidence go? Where did my passion disappear to?” This is an open letter to anxiety. Thief of confidence, destroyer of dreams, source of unnecessary worry.

“I am smart, I am loved, I am hard working, I am safe” ... this is the current morning routine as I stare at the stranger in the mirror, wondering if leaving my room is worth the effort. The Q-drop is printed and on my right. “I cannot do this anymore,” I say to myself as I sigh deeply and get ready to wear my happy mask to yet another day at university. At the back of my mind, I know I want to get through this. Anxiety, this one is for you.

Anxiety, thief of my joy, worry attached to my success, You have stolen my hope and drowned my passion, You shrink me and suffocate me with distress, What did I ever do to you to make me feel any less?

Anxiety, you make me sad, you make me cry, You take my breath away, and make me shy, I crave help but I fear to ask, What did I ever do to you to make my happiness a tedious task?

Anxiety, today I wrote about you, My throat is dry, and I still fear you, But I have gained an ounce of confidence, And with it I will fight you, just one question again I ask, What did I ever do to you in the past?

To anyone fighting anxiety, you are not alone...

Signed, Worrier Warrior
An Open Letter to My Former Colleague

Dear Former Colleague,

How are you? It has been a long time since we met, but you are always in my thoughts. For what I am today and for showing me the way I must choose in my life, IOU.

About four years ago, I stood at the crossroads of my life wondering what direction my life was taking. It was you who set me off on the right track, and right track it is, I know now.

Over the years I knew you, you were the official correspondent of the department and your writing life took off at around 8 a.m., when you took over your desk.

From a practicing public health person, I had moved to your department to be a clinical epidemiologist. Very soon, I had to take up writing jobs as were handed over by you. Job descriptions being in their very primitive stage at that time, you were the one who handed over responsibilities and tasks to every new appointee to the department. Every thread and every noose was in your hand. Not a paper moved or door rattled without your knowledge. Because of your constant presence in the office at all times and even sometimes until 8 pm every day (even though the work day ended at 3 pm), you had ample time to assess every new employee and see what they could develop into. Your positive nature helped people like me realize what we were capable of, and we were pushed to our limits to fulfill our tasks as handed over by you, with a small smile and a little giggle, which over the years, I have come to identify as your trademark. I developed my writing skills solely because of you and for that I am infinitely grateful.

About three years after I joined the department, I was set on the path of creating policies for the research ethics and compliance wing of the department. You handed over the task to me with your trademark smile and even though I was hesitant to take it up, you encouraged me to go for it and I did. Creating policies and regulations is like setting limits for what people can and can not do. Needless to say, in the process, I created not a few enemies, the more I wrote. But through it all, you stood by me and prodded me to go forward, until we had the entire policy book ready. Now it was ready to go for review to the Ethics Board. There, except for one policy on publications and publication ethics, every single other one got axed into oblivion.

Disappointed I was, but you encouraged me to take up my pen once more.

My next task was to write for the departmental newsletter. Here I was in my element. I wrote about the current situation and the future plans for the department. It was like putting on paper my own life visions and goals. The clarity that this process brought, gave me insight into what my own life should be.
Having created policies on research ethics, I had become quite knowledgeable about ethics myself, and I decided this was what my direction should be. I set myself on the task of getting certified in research ethics through a formal process. I was pleasantly surprised to find that you were writing the exam yourself and that you wanted to share my study material. I would like to credit my certification entirely to you, my colleague.

One research ethics meeting I attended of which I was the coordinator, I was unaware that the agenda of the meeting had changed at the last moment. Imagine my surprise when I found a researcher at the meeting, whose proposal I had reviewed the last week. I got an earful from him for my comments and also was put on the firing line by almost the entire board. I thank you that through this meeting and your role in it, I was able to muster courage to speak up for myself and what I believed in. I never knew I had it in me, until this meeting brought out unknown facets of my nature that were so hidden among societal norms and what culture and society had shackled me under. To you, my dear colleague, I am grateful for peeling off my inhibitions and letting my inner self free.

Soon thereafter, I decided to return to my own specialization of public health medicine. An application to a master’s degree program in a top ranked university in the US gave me an opportunity to set foot back into the world of medicine, and for this I am indebted to you. Without you, I would not have had the courage to give up my very lucrative job in the institution and tread down “the road less travelled” literally.

I am now who I am mostly because of the various challenges you put across my path as I worked with you. I scaled so many mountains because of these challenges and became a stronger me, entirely because of you. I am now on a campaign against work place bullying and in fact, any sort of bullying, and I use my writing skills to create awareness of this very prevalent work place ill. Soon I hope work place bullies will not need to be bullies anymore and can be rehabilitated in the very same work place where they once wreaked havoc and where they now can work with no insecurity. I believe bullies are people who have gone through a lot in life and a lifetime of living cowed down under authority has turned them into bullies, which is their mechanism of fighting back against those in society who once bullied them. Through understanding and love, work place bullies can be brought back to the normal work place and allowed to work in ways that will make them happy and others more accepting of them.

My dear colleague, I am now a champion in my own life, and at least three fourths of this achievement I owe to you.

You might never have received a letter like this before, but I think you need to know how important you have been in my life and what changes you brought in me.

With warm regards,
Your ever-grateful former colleague

---

Anjum John’s job description involves reviewing research proposals and helping researchers in their grant submissions. In this capacity she has been employed by Texas A&M at Qatar since November 2014. For about three years now, she feels that her writing has come to a standstill. She thinks that creative juices still move around her system, but they have found no vent. She appreciates the opportunity provided by the Best Writing Team, for it has helped her channel her muse and let go of some of her pent-up emotions, which were looking for an outlet.
Dear President Young,

Thank you. This thank you is long overdue considering the many impactful, positive contributions you have made to Texas A&M since I arrived here. However, with such events now occurring, your words and promises bring me to tears.

I chose to come to Texas A&M as an outsider, someone having grown up completely unaware of the university's existence until the recent years. I was quickly attracted by its traditions and educational excellence, though the spirit of the 12th Man drew me in differently. The quiet, overwhelming sense of community had a somewhat mystical, intrinsic pull on me, something I could never ignore when considering other college options. At no point when finalizing my decision to matriculate into A&M did I feel a fervent rush of unbridled emotions. While I was excited at the prospect of coming to Aggieland, I avoided the anticipated tidal wave of self-doubt because A&M simply felt like the correct decision.

Now in my sophomore year, I have matured into a better person. This isn't to say I started here as a bad person, rather that the culture at A&M allowed me to explore who I am and nurtured my curiosity to learn about others. A&M is a vast melting pot of many different nationalities and cultures and this unique setting forced me to question biases and existing opinions I held regarding those who lead different lifestyles.

In an attempt to further my understanding of others, I applied and was accepted to the Texas A&M Qatar campus, where I am currently with 11 other wonderful students from main campus. Though we have only been here for four weeks, we have already cultivated friendships with people from all across the Middle East. While it is difficult to listen to the atrocities some face in their home countries, it is both humbling and encouraging to know that we hold the potential to educate them on American culture while they educate us on their own cultures.

I am happy to be American. I am happy that there are safety nets that exist that protect myself and my family. However, I cannot blindly pontificate that I am “Proud to be American.” Pride is something earned by investing yourself and devoting yourself to a higher order. As a nation, we are failing in renewing the investments that make those words resonate. While some have invested in some way, many of us have not. The “seeds of democracy” are sown from the tree in which they fall, and as Americans it is our duty to nurture that tree that each of us as citizens compose. In doing so we can stand before ourselves and know that those words burnished in our hearts still ring true with integrity. Let us be “proud to be American” because in a time where terror sought to strip us and make us fearful, we stood united and unwavering.

Thank you for choosing to uphold our Aggie passion for acceptance and for using your voice to stand up for those who rely on people like you to act as a beacon of hope.

Thanks and gig ‘em,
Adam Curtis

Adam Curtis is a sophomore electrical engineering major from Northeast Pennsylvania. With the hope of developing his international competency, Adam applied and was accepted to participate in the semester exchange program that occurs between the College Station and Qatar campuses. While in Qatar, Adam developed close friendships with his classmates as well as professional relationships while working for Help Desk in the Information Technology department. Adam thoroughly enjoyed his experience in Qatar and is considering the possibility of working abroad after graduation.
Dear Language Learner,

First of all, I would like to say that I feel you. I know what a struggle it is to learn a new language, I know how embarrassed and unconfident you are when you can't find a word to express yourself or how you are afraid to make a mistake and sound incorrect. Despite the fear, be brave enough to start a new journey of learning a language because, believe me, the final results are worth it. In a couple of months or years (depending on your persistence and efforts), you will become a better person; a new language will open for you a new world, the world full of knowledge, opportunities and even wonders. I don't want to bore you with undeniable advantages of speaking several languages in the modern world, but I want to share my story and leave for you the right to decide.

I grew up in a small town with post-Soviet vibes in the air where speaking foreign languages was so rare and at the same time totally useless. Can you believe that I was about 12 years old when for the first time in my life I saw a foreigner? Sounds unrealistic if you take into account what a globalized world we live in nowadays. Anyway, that was the reality of my childhood. My first foreigner was an English teacher from the States who volunteered to come to my town and teach us for a year. She was so different from all those people I used to see around that I had a feeling like she was a creature from another planet. At that moment of my life, I realized how diverse people were around the world and that I knew nothing about them. Internet wasn't popular and accessible at that time, so I saw languages as a tool to discover the unknown yet so beckoning world. I was spending a lot of my spare time memorizing new words in English and French, reading all the foreign books I could find in the town, participating in all linguistic competitions which eventually helped me to build a strong character and a desire always to win. Thanks to learning languages I became ambitious, thirsty for new adventures, and craving knowledge about other cultures and nations. Being able to express myself in another language was bringing me the feeling of euphoria and satisfaction. I knew I had a gift that I didn't want to waste, so when thinking about my career, I decided to follow my passion no matter what.

So what language was next? With my linguistic background, it would be logical to opt for Spanish, German or Italian, but I decided to challenge myself and started my journey with Arabic. Until now I don't have a clear answer why Arabic, but I know for sure that it was one of the best decisions in my life. To be frank, Arabic wasn't my love from the first sight. I spent nights crying and wondering why I was torturing myself with this weird writing that looks like drawings rather than letters, and my throat was hurting from unusual sounds I was pushing myself to pronounce. Nonetheless, I didn't want to give up on a halfway. And I'm glad I didn't. Arabic language helped me to dive into a drastically new world and culture, meet interesting people who taught me important things and changed me, learn valuable life lessons and finally comprehend that hard work and enormous efforts always pay off.

When I look back at my life, I realize that languages played and keep playing an essential role in my growth as personality. Speaking languages broadens my mind, helps me to find common ground with people from various backgrounds, makes me tolerant and understanding. Following my passion changed my life for better and made me the person I love to be. I don't say a new language will change your life too, but what if you give it a try?

All my best,

Olena

Olena is a restless dreamer “made in Ukraine.” She currently works at Texas A&M at Qatar serving as a Learning Lab Coordinator in the Liberal Arts Program. Her passion for languages and cultures motivates her to discover the world with her own eyes. She enjoys deep conversations with interesting people from whom she can learn something and who can encourage her to achieve new goals. For Olena, writing is a way to relive good memories and release stress.
To My Past Self,

I've been thinking about you lately and how you were able to weather the storms of life making you who you are today. I've realized that it's been quite a long time since I talked to you heart to heart. Maybe you thought I have completely forgotten all about you and all the plethora of things you taught me so I could survive this very challenging and oftentimes very complicated and cruel world. So, here I am writing you a letter to let you know that I have not erased you from my memory. In fact, I would like you to know that I have cherished every moment that you made me understand how to live joyfully even with vicissitudes, limitations, and imperfections in my life which have rendered me faithless and hopeless at times.

I know that your life growing up was not at all easy. I know that some of your encounters with people were truly devastating. Do you still remember one incident in your teenage life when a mean woman bullied you? Oh, I hate and love that episode. She sneered at you and corrected you heartlessly after you sheepishly said a sentence with a subject-verb agreement problem. Do you recall the sentence you uttered? Well, I don't, but I can perfectly visualize in my mind the scene following that humiliating incident. You went home downhearted and utterly shamed. I won't forget how you managed to bear that moment by simply crying. You felt like you were the dumbest person in the world. I know you were struggling to learn the English language at that time. Your only wish was to have some people around you who could show you some real compassion while you were figuring out how to use it sensibly. I also know that you carried that offense for quite a while. You eventually learned that forgiving her is the high road to happiness and peace. Instead of hating her, you used that experience as an inspiration to learn the language seriously. You might have noticed some improvements on how I use the language now, but please don't be fooled; I am still struggling to the point that I could mess up even a simple self-introduction in meetings.

How about the lesson you taught me about crying? There were lots of occasions when I saw you weep because of extreme sadness when your life seemed out of place. But there's one that I consider my favorite. I remember vividly when you were going through rough times because you had to take care of your only child who had cerebral palsy. His mental and physical limitations evoked in you the purest love of your being a mother. I know that period of your life was an emotionally and physically draining one. I can't blame you if you had fits of rage from time to time. Oh, just when you thought that things were falling into place, you lost your beloved son while he was sleeping beside you on the night of April 24, 2004. I could still picture in my mind the shock on your face when you discovered that he was not anymore breathing. That year he died dragged you into the pit of depression and melancholy. I witnessed how you sobbed almost ceaselessly because you couldn't comprehend why God had to take him away from you. Not only that, I saw your pillows soaked with tears because the longing was so unbearable that your only defense was to cry, and cry, and cry. Well, you might think that those days were over and that I stopped shedding tears because it's
been almost 13 years now. But let me tell you this: I still cry, maybe not anymore as often as you did, but I cry every time I miss him which means most of the time. But don’t worry about me; I can now handle this situation with greater hope and fortitude. I have somehow mastered the art of crying by letting my tears flow unimpededly and profusely whenever I need to. I have come to understand that crying purifies not only my eyes but also my soul, making me whole again.

You see, all these pains and sorrows did not go to waste. You taught me to love unconditionally, to be patient with others’ faults and weaknesses and to wish that others would have the same love for me by overlooking my imperfections and dents somehow.

Oh, my dear Past Self, how time flies. You’ve been gone for years now. Yet our temporal distance has never been an issue with me because I’ve never outgrown you, your patience to see me grow and mature, and your teaching moments. All of them have inspired me to be your better self. Thank you so much for being such a great and loyal companion all these years, my most massive influence.

Sincerely,
Your Almost Better Self

Erlinda "Beth" Caerlang is currently employed as a Writing Consultant at the ASC. She has been a teacher for more than 20 years now. From time to time, she writes to help her cope with life’s challenges and to escape from the humdrum of her life. Her most favorite pastime is writing her Facebook status. She enjoys being with students and hopes to help them discover the power of the pen not only as a form of self-expression but also as a potent tool to inspire others.
writing can open doors to the past
For a long time, I wanted to write a story about “her.” I had this character I created in my mind, made her story and all her struggles, and as I developed, that character developed with me. While writing this piece I learned that my mind can roam endless kingdoms that only lie within it. Writing can be a form of expression, and just like any form of art, I can express myself with a story. This piece of writing is how I wanted that story to begin.

Sand

Where can I begin?

My land, my beautiful home. I remember only glimpses of it. We lived between the ocean and a forest, in a small village that I can't remember its name, if it had any. You could hear the soothing wind telling you stories, the beautiful birds showing their colours and singing their melodic tone, the waves clashing to the wood of the port. It was... my home.

I had a mother, a father and a brother who loved me and I believe I loved them too. My father was strong to say the least; his shoulders were broad, he had a thick beard and walked with both an axe and a sword. My mother was gorgeous! Father used to say that he was lucky to have a loving woman like her. She had brown eyes like wood and long brown hair to go along with it. My brother was good, I believe, but he cried. You see, he was a baby, I don't remember much about him.

And I, I was “unique” as mother put it. My green eyes were never seen before in my family tree, my face was soft, and yet not quite gentle, my black hair was long and always braided into a crown, as mother commanded. I was ten, and people in town said I was the living proof that no one is perfect. Don't get me wrong I was beautiful, it's just that fate isn't one of my closest friends. I didn't cause much trouble, and when I did, I troubled people who deserved it. Like once I broke a bully's arm... and both of his legs, scattering his pride and whatever remained of his dignity. He was a troubling man; just because you are old doesn't mean you have to bully children. As for the boat accident, do you truly believe that a ten-year-old little girl can cause a cannon to automatically shoot at the gunpowder storage room located on top of the hill causing a chain reaction allowing a boulder to roll and sink a ship? Well, if you do, thank you, but you can't prove anything since you have no evidence.

A good life, that's what it was. Until they came. “We come from Azerda in peace; we carry vast knowledge, gifts and delicious foods,” That is what they announced when they came in their black and silver ships.

We barely had visitors in our small port, so we were fools who honoured them, gave them shelter and nourishment for the few days they stayed. A day before they said they were leaving, they gave everyone food from the land they came from. We all ate without questioning. I went home to the cosy wooden hut we lived in. I walked in and collapsed.

I woke up outside the hut with my hands chained and my legs tied with a rope. I lifted my head to see the flames consume all: my house, my family, my home. I was dragged, I screamed and shouted for anyone, “Save them! Save them!” A man then butted my head with the pommel of his sword. I heard my brother cry, then my eyes shut once more.

I woke up chained, my hands and legs smothered by metal. I could barely manage to stand. I tried to get loose of my bonds but with no use.

“Come here,” a man in heavy armor shouted.

I walked to him slowly as I dragged my chains. He forced me into a carriage crammed with other children and locked it. The carriage reached the port. They laughed and pointed, those Azradians who found joy in our suffering. We had welcomed them with open arms, let them into our homes, placed them first as honoured guests, and they betrayed us. They were slavers, hiding from the authorities in our little town. They found that we were few and helpless, and blinded by their desires, they burned our homes, stole what they can steal and
us too – what remained of us – as slaves.

They made us walk in lines to the ships. I heard cries, shouts and screams, yet my head was always facing the ground. I walked into the mossy hull of one of the ships where we would reside until they gained profit off us. I was with a few kids and an older couple in the hull.

Hearing a man signalling departure, I tried to find a crack in the wood some way to see my home for it might be my last time. I did, and then I wished I was blind for I saw the remnants of the burned homes, the once blue sky turned black with smoke. They had destroyed it.

I fell to despair and cried; I had no home, no family, nothing at all. I am, for the first time ever stranded, fully alone.

What seas?

Abdulla Al-Tamimi is an Aggie at A&M in Qatar.
MOHAMED AMARA

This piece was my first piece to write for English 104. I wrote only 500 words in my first draft, and it was little compared to other classmates who wrote more than 1000 words. After I sat with the professor, I wrote my second draft which was longer, but it didn’t have enough details. So, I added more details in my third draft, such as incidents and stories that happened to me. After finishing my last draft, I realized that this is the best piece of writing I have ever written in my life. Writing this piece actually helped me discover myself, including the many qualities that I had and the specialties that make me different than others. It made me literally discover the person I am today. I believe that this essay will never end; I plan to keep adding more paragraphs to it as I proceed in life. And I hope this piece will make people remember me after I die.

Becoming Me

She had that nine-month-old baby in her abdomen when she was with my father in Pakistan. She was in Karachi, the most populated city, and in the middle of the crowdedness, my mother felt me kicking, and she knew that it was time. So my father had to fly her back to the United Arab Emirates, specifically Abu Dhabi, and she was escorted to the nearest hospital directly from the airport where I was born. Sometimes when I think about it, I kind of feel bad for all that I made my mother go through. I mean, am I really worth that pain and suffering? Maybe, but one thing I am sure about is that I can never pay my mother back. One of my goals in life is to give back, and to be grateful and thankful to those who were the reason for my existence.

I grew up in Abu Dhabi, the heart of the United Arab Emirates, where you can find all different kinds of nationalities: the grocery guy was Pakistani, my teacher was British, my coach was Egyptian, and my neighbor was Sudanese. Abu Dhabi had a huge variety of cultures which played a big role in building my character. I can understand many languages, eat different kinds of food and explore many traditions. Therefore, I am capable of living under any circumstances and in any country in the world. Abu Dhabi was basically the whole world in one small city.

In all my stages, I studied in private schools. They were way more expensive than government schools because they offer better-quality teaching. The teachers were more experienced, the curriculum was adopted from Western countries, and the building and facilities were more convenient for learning. My parents had to pay a lot in order to give me the best education possible. But honestly, I don’t agree with all of that. I don’t mean that I don’t appreciate my parents’ effort in trying to give me the best education experience, but I believe that the process of learning depends more on the student himself, the effort he gives and the dedication towards learning he has.

I grew up studying and competing with kids who were older than me. The regular age to enter kindergarten was four and the age to start the first grade at school was six. But I didn’t go to kindergarten at all, and I started my first grade at school at the age of four and a half. I remember the first day of school; I was a week late because I didn't want to go in the first week, I was so scared and I wasn’t excited like the other boys were. I entered the class, and surprisingly they were having a spelling test. I didn't know how to write anything, so I froze on my seat, with a shock on my face and the drops of tears bouncing in my eyes. After a couple of minutes, the teacher noticed that I wasn't writing anything, so she approached me and asked, “Why aren't you writing?” I didn't reply because I was scared, so she kept repeating the same question, but I didn't say a single word. She took a red pen and wrote a big zero on my notebook. At that moment, I burst into tears, ran out of the class, went to my older sister's class, and spent the rest of the day with her. I know that the teacher might seem wicked and bad to you, but after I was told her story, I felt sorry for her; she had lost her only son in a car accident. That incident changed her from the nice woman she had been to the heartbroken, dark and constantly sad woman she was. From that I learned not to judge anyone before knowing his or her story; every single one of us has a story, and based on that story we act in certain ways.

When I went back home from school that day, I told my father that I won't go back to school ever again. Instead of convincing me to go back, my father took me out to get ice-cream. It was my favorite ice-cream store in the city. I can still remember the flavor I chose, citrus. He even gave me the chance to choose as many toppings as I wanted. After eating that cone, he asked me, "Who is stron-
ger? You or the boys at school?” I replied, unconsciously, “Of course me!” Then he said, “Then prove it!” Since then, whenever I faced any challenge in my life, all I had to do to overcome that challenge is to remember these words of his.

Going to school was like hell to me; students always used to make fun of me, calling me names and picking on me. I don’t remember a classmate who was younger than I was. (Even now I am the youngest student in my university batch). I was always smaller and shorter than the others. I remember one day in fifth grade when my classmate came up to me during the break, and as usual he started making fun of me in front of his friends. I couldn’t stand it, so out of anger, I threw myself at him. You might think that I am saying that I beat him, and I wish I could have, but due to the size difference, he beat me badly. I went back home that day with bruises all over my face.

Because of that incident, my father signed me in a karate club so I could learn to defend myself. In the beginning, I didn’t like it because it was hard for me. The work we used to do was challenging, and the language barrier made me hate it even more. It was a Chinese club, and the coaches only understood English. However, with time I got used to it. I developed an interest in this sport and became so obsessed that I watched karate movies all the time. Bruce Lee, the fighting legend, was one of my idols. I managed to become one of the best members in that club and was promoted to the “ Legendary Class,” where we learned how to use ninja weapons, practicing the “Kobudo Art.” This stage of my life gave me the physical and mental strength I have today, building my self confidence and trust. And since then, no one could ever bully me again.

I know you might think that it was difficult, and you probably feel bad for me, but to be honest, it made me who I am. Being bullied built that tough, competitive, stubborn personality I have today. Although I was always younger and smaller than others, I aimed to be first, to come on top of my classes, and to be the best at everything I do. But to make that happen, I had to give double the effort compared to the others. Being that kid was an eye opener to me; it helped me find myself. I knew that I had to be the stand out from the crowd, and by that I mean going the extra mile to prove that I am one of a kind in personality, skills and dedication, and to embrace my individuality. With that I had to risk failure, but I won’t step down from the challenges.

Mohamed Amara is an HBKU student studying computer engineering.
النفس صنها وأحكم اللي تقوله
أن كنت صادق صلَ وأقطف ثمرها
والمرجلة قدم لها ما تطوله
وعزي لمن درب المراجل جهلها
وعزي= الحسرة على شخص ما

A Life
Howdy! My name is Abdul Sattar AlKahala and I am a petroleum engineering sophomore at Texas A&M at Qatar. I am an international student from Amman, Jordan but originally from Syria! I lived there for 14 years of my life then moved to Jordan because of the ongoing crisis. I started writing this piece in response to an English assignment of “Why Am I Here”. This piece talks about my move from Syria to Jordan and all the difficulties I faced to end up here at Texas A&M at Qatar. I have never looked back at that experience till now because I feared opening old wounds if I try to remember the past, but with the encouragement of my professor I engaged heads on with this challenge and took a trip down memory lane! Hope you enjoy this journey!

My Country, My Fight

Back home, I was a mediocre student who didn't appreciate the life I had nor the money my parents spent. I was a kid who was only interested in finishing the school day to go back home to play on my PSP and lie to my parents when they asked if I did my homework. However, uncontrollable circumstances forced me to change.

I was in bed at 10 p.m. on a Sunday in 2010 when I heard a distinct sound in the distance. I pulled the covers up, foolishly thinking they would save me from the danger that I thought was approaching. After a couple of tense minutes, I could make out what the sound was: a massive group of people in what appeared to be a revolution calling for “freedom.” Little did I know that the fear inside me was about to take over the entire country and throw us back into the days where electricity and water were a rarity and safety was a privilege only few had access to.

I had been living in my house for all my life; I had never left it for more than a month, and I had never thought of leaving it. Syria is the country where I belong, Syria is where this tragedy has struck; Syria is the mother whose own children are foolishly fighting against each other to make their ideals the leading party of the nation; Syria is the country where I was born and whose passport I hold, and the country that I love but was forced to leave due to the actions of its ignorant citizens.

The move to Amman wasn’t an easy one; after all I had lived my whole life in Syria and the danger of the unknown was scary. The first week in Jordan I spent all my nights sobbing and crying with the hopes of going back to Syria; this caused me to feel empty inside. The people in school would make fun of my Syrian accent which they considered feminine compared to their Arabic dialect, and I didn’t bother making friends there because I thought they would never understand me nor become like my close friends I had left back in Damascus.

One night during that first week, I was in bed ready for sleep, but I was feeling thirsty so I walked to the kitchen to pour myself a drink. On the way, I passed by the living room when I heard my mom talking to my dad. I stood in my place instantly three meters away from the door at an angle such that I was hidden from them. She was standing with bills in her hand, tears about to fall from her eyes, as she said, “Mamoun, if you can’t afford the same school he was at in Syria, we can move him to a cheaper one.” My dad’s reaction is still stuck in my memory. He was sitting on a chair looking at the papers on the desk in front of him scratching his head, and then he stood up and turned to my mother and said, “My dad didn’t have money when he was working, but he put most of his income on my education because he knew how important education is and it’s to his effort that I am where I am now, and I want to give my son that same opportunity.” He then walked up to my mother, took the bills away from her and said, “I will handle it.” After I heard that reply, I ran to my room and my eyes started to water.
tearing up because I realized how stupid my pain and moaning was compared to the effort my dad was putting in to allow us to live a normal life in Jordan. At that moment, I decided to turn that sadness into determination; I changed those late-night hours crying into late nights studying, and finally I opened up and started accepting the Jordanian people and the country itself.

Within a month from that commitment, I had transformed. I started using the Jordanian accent, going out with my Jordanian friends, and getting the grades I felt proud of and more importantly, that would make my dad proud. Sometimes I would feel like a traitor to my country because I became accustomed to my life in Jordan and did not fight to go back to the country that raised and fed me.

Three years later, I was a senior with a great GPA, an even better SAT score, and a mentality set towards university. On a gloomy day in September, I was talking to my Syrian friend in a café in Jordan near the highway with the sound of the cars passing by when he said, “Both my student visas to the US and Germany were rejected for the simple fact that both embassies couldn't 'Authenticate that he was a peaceful citizen.’” The moment he uttered that sentence, I felt a shiver down my spine and a sickness that can't be described. I excused myself and hurried to the bathroom where all I did was stare at the mirror. It was a rundown bathroom that clearly had seen better days with the walls' reddish paint scratched off and the sink with water dripping slowly from the faucet. Millions of ideas where running into my mind, like ripping up my passport because I believed that being stateless is better than belonging to a country that all it has done was torment me. All these ideas and thoughts lead to a moment of anger and shock in which I punished the wall with my bare hand, not caring that a young boy was standing near me, watching me fracture three fingers of my right hand. I immediately regretted my action because the frustration didn't go away. Nothing was solved. Instead I had to awkwardly go back and face my friend, then go back home and explain to my mother how I acted so foolishly and hope she would agree to drive me to the hospital.

Regardless of my friend’s news, I decided to apply to three universities in the U.S. as well as Texas A&M here in Qatar. Initially I had high hopes of getting in TAMU-Q because both my sisters studied here in Qatar at Georgetown and Carnegie Mellon to be specific, and I thought that the residency won't be a problem; however, on 7 February my university counselor (who was also my math teacher) called me to her office. While walking there, many ideas popped into my head regarding the important topic she wanted to talk to me about; I thought she wanted to talk to me regarding why I didn’t perform well in the last exam, and I thought about how childish it would seem for me to tell her it was because I was fighting with my girlfriend of three years. I calmly walked into the office ready to lie my way through this meeting, but the initial expression on her face did not bode well. She was standing near a window that overlooked a beautiful green hill with a herd of sheep grazing the field.

“Have a seat, Abdul Sattar, there is a serious matter I need to talk to you about,” she said in a somber tone I had never heard before. Many ideas started spinning in my head. Did she think I was cheating? Did I offend her in any way?

Regardless, I took a seat on a beige chair and got ready to hear the worst news. She took a seat next to me and put her hand on mine and said, “A representative from TAMU-Q came and said that they can't accept Syrian applicants due to main campus rules.”

“Oh,” I said as I pulled away from her hand and stood up, “I have to go, I'm sorry.”

That’s literally all I said; I was angry and I didn't know what to say, and I have a habit of saying the wrong things when I am mad, so I made a rational decision and ran out of the office without uttering another word. I walked around the track in the sports field behind the school trying to clear my mind; I opened my phone to talk to my mother and tell her the news when I saw a message from my girlfriend that added to my frustration, but this time I didn't make the rational choice. I said something that I shouldn't have, something that ended our relationship, a relationship that meant the world to me. In my anger, I stopped in the middle of the track; with my fidgeting fingers I typed her number and called her and asked her to sacrifice her dream of dentistry to come with me to Qatar if I got in. She replied with a simple sentence, “If you really love me, you wouldn't make me decide between my dream and you,” and then hung up. She was gone, and I was emotionally dead. I dropped the phone to the ground, and it hit the asphalt with an impact that broke the screen, but I didn't even bother to look back at it. I walked to the bus stop with tears dripping down my cheeks, and no hope for tomorrow.

On 1 April, the rejections started raining in: Princeton, Columbia, Johns Hopkins all expressed their “deep remorse” for not granting me a spot in their prestigious universities because it was “very competitive.” When all these U.S. universities' rejections came in, I reluctantly accepted my fate: that I was to continue studying in Jordan in a university with no national recognition. I was lying on my bed scrolling through my phone when a number with an international code of +974 called me, and I immediately knew it was TAMU-Q.

“Hello,” I said as I sat up on the bed with one hand gripping the bed sheet.

“Hello, Abdul Sattar, this is TAMU-Q. We have some good news. We have been fighting for your case with main campus, and we finally succeeded in convincing them to be more lenient towards your case since you weren't living in Syria.”

“For some reason you obviously don’t understand...” I thought to myself.

“Does this mean what I think it means?” I said while jumping out of my bed “Yes, you're officially an Aggie!”

I hung up the phone and ran to the living room with a smile on my face and told my parents what just happened; the tears of happiness in my dad’s eyes spoke millions of words as he stood up and hugged me. His effort and money finally
paid off. He had succeeded.

On 3 August, three days before orientation, another calamity hit: I still didn’t receive my student visa. I walked slowly to my mother’s room with a feeling that was all too familiar: something is about to go wrong. My mom was sitting on her favorite reddish-brown couch reading her Arabic novel, her face as white as I know it to be. I asked her what I should do, and all she did was hand me a phone. Agitated and scared of the answer, I called the university and asked to talk to the immigration office to enquire about my visa. “I am sorry, but it looks like the Qatar Ministry of Immigration won’t accept to process your visa. You should start considering looking for other universities, but we will try to work on it,” said the lady who I was transferred to. Surprisingly, I started laughing hysterically, a laugh that expressed my utter misery, a laugh that expressed the collapse of my status as a human being. I am a student who worked hard for four years to ensure a successful future who got rejected for something he didn’t do, something he was born with, and nobody to listen to him except his God. I was sick and tired of all the obstacles I had to face just because of my passport, and for people of different nationalities this never crosses their minds, so I decided to give up and not fight anymore and let fate do its best. My nationality had drained me of my fight and my passion to succeed.

On the third day of orientation I received another call. “Mabrook (congratulations), Abdul Sattar, you got your visa! Please book your flight at the nearest time possible.” To this day I still can’t remember the next ten minutes. All I remember was crying in my mother’s arms as she said, “God never forgets the hard work of any person. You made it my son!” That’s why and how I am here.

Abdul Sattar AlKahala is a petroleum engineering sophomore at Texas A&M University at Qatar.
American history is one of the compulsory courses all students in Texas A&M at Qatar must take. In this class, we learn about actions and decisions that contributed to molding the U.S. to what it is now. This piece is an essay response I wrote in one of my tests. We had to write about the Shay's Rebellion, which was organized by the poor farmers in Massachusetts, and what we thought of Thomas Jefferson's view regarding rebellions. Before taking this course, I always believed that we should never resort to rebellions as they cause a lot more damage than benefit. After studying several different rebellions in this course, I realized that although rebellions do cause casualties, in some cases they are necessary for the state or country to move towards a better future. My professor was pleased with my essay response, and he was the one who strongly suggested publishing it for others to read.

Is Rebellion the Answer?

Shay's Rebellion is known for the bloody encounter that occurred in Massachusetts in 1787. After the American Revolution, the states were in severe debt, so taxes were increased. Although everyone was affected, the taxes hit the poor the hardest. The poor farmers were already in debt especially due to a bad harvest, so they could not pay taxes and lost their farms. Furious at their losses, farmers took arms and marched to the state supreme court. This rebellion was led by a man called Daniel Shay. Four thousand volunteers were sent to help diffuse the situation. The militia defending the arsenal fired at the increasing mob, killing four farmers and causing others to scatter. When the volunteers arrived, they managed to stop the rebellion completely. However, the fear that this rebellion caused could not be extinguished. The attacks and harassment on tax collectors spiked.

The elite thought that their republic was at risk. They believed that if the voices of the poor started to be heard, then the power of their vote would increase. They could then vote to take the property of the wealthy. This caused many merchants and other wealthy citizens to argue about the central government and its strength. The Elite were frightened by the increase in the number of rebellions. People started to realize that the Article of Confederation was too weak. Many believe that Shay's Rebellion played a major role in shaping a stronger central government as they argued that if the central government had more power, then it would be easier to control the violent uprisings.

Thomas Jefferson, who drafted the U.S. declaration of independence, believed that rebellion is good once in a while. He believed that it keeps people or leaders in check and makes them aware that their corrupt actions will not be tolerated. Jefferson thought that it is acceptable to have a rebellion every twenty or so years and for the blood of the patriots to be spilled.

I disagree with Jefferson because I think that rebellion of any sort is not a game. People are killed, families are broken, and things are damaged to the point of economic loss. Furthermore, is this the kind of world that we want kids of the future generations to grow up in? Do we want each generation to face at least two rebellions? I believe that this will only result in raising violent people, definitely not problem solvers. Their first instinct for every dilemma then would be to start a rebellion.

However, I feel that rebellion is justified only if there seems to be no other option. If people feel that their rights, freedom, and privileges are being taken advantage of by a leader or government who is abusing their power and sacrificing their morals, then I believe that rebellion could bring a change for the better. Shay's Rebellion was an example as not only did it aid in creating a stronger nation, but it also helped in establishing a more solid constitution.

Syeda Manahil Akhter is a mechanical engineering student in her freshman year. She was born in Pakistan and moved to Qatar at a young age. She is 19 years old and enjoys playing volleyball. Manahil loves spending time with her family and sitting outside with her cup of green tea. In her spare time she watches cooking shows and makes DIY room decors.
For the last time, the Chosen One returns to his people with whom he discusses different notions about life to rectify their misbehaviors before he bids farewell forever.

The Prophet

By the eastern shore, were the people of Orshemees, once the ideal city. The upheaval of sea revealed a great ship, and on the bow was bravely standing in His white linen robe, the Chosen One. Before the blessed feet dried, the people gladdened and hedged him, though not for a promise did He descend, but for a presage. He raised his right arm, for people retreated, and said: “People of the Earth, you have enraged the skies. You have engendered perversion upon the land and upon the water. You have extirpated the life of every being. In harmony, the day and night have superseded, and when they meet, excitement, wonder, and a great ball of fire, now decrepit and deformed. The enslaved is once again crucified, and the giant bushy trees have taken root in blood. People of the Earth, you have manipulated every original, and you have disturbed the order. You have betrayed the trust, for enemies have coerced; you have ruled with injustice, for poorness has prevailed; you have fallen, for death has arisen; you have tampered with bushes, for land is arid; and you have prevented alms, for rains have ceased. The pregnant clouds will deliver no offspring, for you have done wrong in your following and in your leading.”

Then, it was time, and an old man said, “O Chosen! Tell us about leading.”

Then He replied, “People of leading, travel around, up the mountains, and down the valleys, and look for your virtuous entourage. The good are noble, their steps have no terminus by your gates, and the wicked will reside in your shades. Knock by the good rings, have the wise by your side, and march through the dark.”

A fine woman said, “O Chosen! O Beloved! Tell us about women.”

Then He put on a smile and said, “The spirit of life without whom lyres are dumb, wishes have no patrons, men are servile, hearts have no wings, and intents are ignoble. Women, delicate charm and chaste love. The preceptors of tongue, they flicker, and swords shimmer; they whisper and meadows dilate. The curved creation is the source of upright fairness. Women, the colossal wave upon which birth and demise swim, are the ship of salvation. The garment for bare, the cover for unwell, the livelihood for destitute, and the loaf for hungered. Women, soft fortress, and lofty roses.”

A poor miserable man in a pale cloak said, “O Chosen! O Judicious! Long have we bled, blood, ink, and tears, and long has our bleeding been drank underneath the high dunes.”

He raised his eyebrow in anger and responded, “Then, a second apple will be eaten, and a second sin will be committed, and repentance will not be accepted. The springs and clouds will be evoked, and the great flood will awake once again, and devour the earth. The sunlight will fade behind the sea sheets, and you will be abandoned by the enormous ark as it sails by the far away skyline. The earth will swallow the water, and you will be swallowed, and in the core, your memories will diminish. Then, from the foggy woods shall emerge the animals and rule the land, and on the rostrums shall the insects chant their poems.”

A horrified young boy exclaimed, “O Chosen! What do you command us?”

Then He said, “Justice is the scale, instituted for people, and constituted for right. In your entangled ordeals, or your flourishing contentment, it is your extolled torch. Light it, and find mercy, for it is roaming over the earth, in its humble dress, and with its gray basket in which resides the invaluable harvest, take it, and show no egoism.”

Then, for the last time, He looked at the people who were in awe of Him, and said, “People of the Earth, it is farewell. I am ascending, but my words shall find home in your minds and hearts. Plow your good land, plant it, and make your garden grow.”

Saeed Binnoora is an electrical engineering junior. “I AM, two of the most powerful words for what you put after them shapes your reality”.

Saeed Binnoora
ياالله بآمانك تمن الشعب والدار
وتحمي قطر من كل نفس شريره
وتحمي الأمير الصادق الوفي البار
اللي مع شعبه يقود المسيره
تقيم حامي الدار من كيد الأشرار
مقدم ماهاب الأمور الخطيره
قاعد السيره سيدي واف الأشرار
في عالم فيه الحقائق مريره
أمن حدود الدار من كل الأخطار
عينه على داره وشعبه سهيره
جيش الوطن يأمره آليا من عزم سار
في نصرة المظلوم يبني الذخيره
مواجهه يابن على كل مضمار
في الولاء الصادق لداره وأميره
الأمن من فضل الوالي يبير بهار
بجهود رجال الأمن ستر وستيره
الحمد لله والثناء سر وأجهار
وعنون به من كل نفس شريره
ياالله ياعالم خفيات الأسرار
أحفظ خليج المجد وأرض الجزيره
تمن: تؤمن
writing can inspire our dreams
Sometimes we must keep moving on, no matter the circumstances at hand. All of us are made of more than we think, and it’s all about the potential in us and how much of it we know. We must travel and live, like all the elements inside of us, accepting how the events in our lives have shaped us. Yes, we will fall through holes from time to time, but that does not mean it is a stamp of failure and an invitation to bash ourselves; but instead, most holes are the way out. We may not have a window or a door for every situation we are stuck in because the only way out is falling through the hole we were dreading this whole time.

This poem is a reflection of who I am and how I choose to deal with some situations that have me caught up. I feel a deep connection with nature, just like we all do, and when I need to meditate or reflect, it’s what I go to. There is this rawness and purity to them that calls out to my soul.

**Elemental**

Some days I feel elemental,

Like the wind, travelling constantly, passing each moment. Not sure if I am time itself or just riding alongside it.

A stellar being, a **supernova** in the making; brief like the life I live, waiting to outshine the universe in the one moment I am going to be granted.

Fierce, like the force beneath the **waves**; embodying the birth of a Tsunami; mimicking the rhythm of my heartbeat.

Like **clouds** when they carry the weight of the water on their backs, mirroring the weight of my dreams on mine, not liberated until I fulfill them.

Crackling, like the **fire** that paints the air with red, yellow and orange strokes as it ignites, setting free the passion within, to roam wild.

I try to carry myself like the **skies** that, despite a storm, simply meditate and turn golden, as glorious as the trials they overcame; the inspiration, transformative.

Like **lightning**, running along my neural path, reaching the limbic system and setting a spark in the amygdala. Behold! A light show of all the things that make up my soul, all alight and sparkling like diamonds embedded on black marble.

But some days I feel empty, like the aftermath of a raided town, silent, smoky, and cold.

Like a break in the clouds, the hole I find myself falling through. Sick, like the only thing breathing is the mask I wear, the smile I choose to put on and the twinkling eyes I choose for display.

Yellow and burnt like grass caught up in a forest fire.

Like a split between my spine; yin-yang perturbed, jittery; grey falling back into black and white

Despite that, there is always light contained within the dark, and I am energy sent from above, Contained? Yes. Unstoppable? No.

Not all holes are bad beings. Sometimes a hole is the opening I fall through that carries me to the other side; like falling stars traversing through wormholes and a new beginning is revealed, once again.

Living life in a whirlwind, **Midhat J Zaidi** is best known for her immense admiration of the skies and a passion for all that lies within. In other moments, she’s a hardcore foodie and is always available for anything that entails adventure, all of which she safely puts to bed in her written journals and reflections.
This literacy narrative tells the story of the event that brought to me my love of reading. When I look at this piece, I see a journal. It is an event that happened in my life that I am so glad to finally have in writing. I also see every single detail that occurred on that day, since the description is quite vivid while still keeping an air of mystery for only me to understand.

A World for the Dreamers

It was a dazzling snowy day, one of those days that when the school bell rings, you’re just ready to pack everything up and go home to play with your neighbors. I remember clearly running to our car where my dad and brother were waiting for me. My older brother seemed to be thrilled out of his mind; the smile he wore edged from ear to ear. I thought that my father was taking us to Mont St-Hilaire since that was the only explanation that came to my mind justifying my brother’s extreme happiness. I wasn’t expecting the surprise that was awaiting me in that car. Thinking about it now, I realize how overdramatic and unreasonable I was, but every age has its own perspective. My brother announced in an exhilarated voice that my dad got him the new Nintendo Gameboy. Now keep in mind that this small electronic device seems dull compared to all the high technology of today, but back in the day that was the dream. I felt betrayed and cheated on; how could he get it for my brother? Didn’t he get detention last week? What about my great behavior? All of these questions flashed through my mind, and I couldn’t even begin with the anger that was boiling in the pit of my stomach. My dad, of course, couldn’t get my brother anything without getting me something too, so in the back of the car was a little red bag that would soon be one of my favorite bags. I can still describe what the old bag of this bookshop looked like with my eyes closed. The little tinge of blue that always seemed faded on the right and these big white bolded letters that screamed the bookstore’s name with pride. I opened this bag and found a little brown book with an eccentric, slightly unrealistic drawing of a little girl and her grandmother. I wasn’t pleased at all, since a book was nothing compared to a Gameboy.

Once we arrived back home, I was still obviously upset, so I went to my room with my book wrapped up in the thick folds of my massive winter jacket. After I opened up the curtains and sat on my cozy bed, I turned the first page, and that’s when it happened. It was like a tornado that sucked me in and kept throwing me from left to right, all these ideas, images, characters... It puzzled me that someone with only 26 letters could write something that I could get lost in, something I could enjoy and something I could use to expand my imagination. I finished and then started reading it again. It was like falling in love with a whole new world that was created for the dreamers. If anything I kept wanting more and more, so I’d finish a book and then open another; it was an ongoing process that probably financially cost my parents a ton more than if they would’ve just bought me that Gameboy!

Reading gives me the opportunity to leave my actual reality and discover a new one. It provides me the opportunity to travel around the world without actually leaving my seat. I dream of one day traveling, not to the famous cities that everyone is in love with, because I’ve been there and I’ve lost the fascination I once had. The Eiffel Tower is a lot smaller than what I expected, so is the Mona Lisa painting. London’s streets are so dull and dark, like a cloud is constantly looming on top of it, even when it’s sunny. Reading has made me interested in the little cities that have history, the ones that contain myths and secrets. The cities you don’t usually hear of in a typical conversation. I once read a book set in a small town in Mexico; I have the name written on my library billboard in my room in Canada, but I can’t seem to recall it now. Nevertheless, it was this small city that contained a whole lot of crazy stories from the past. Every street, sign, and artifact meant something, and it was put in the city for a reason. The whole book depicted the history of this place, and while reading it, I was in that location, discovering along with the heroine all those native secrets.

Reading strengthened my imagination and provided me with knowledge that benefits me in multiple aspects of my life. I am no longer this young girl who had one view of the world, the one that was forcefully fed to me in school as correct. I no longer have to believe the stories I overhear in the news because now I know the background of so many other people. I can use my mind to critically analyze the information I am getting and decide whether or not I believe it.
It humors me now when I look back at the day I didn’t get a Gameboy; I can’t believe that there was ever a period of my life when I was disappointed to receive a book since now it is the best feeling whenever I receive one.

Born and raised in Montreal, Hadear loves photography, film making, reading, baking, soccer and travelling. She is currently studying electrical engineering, while also being interested in pursuing a minor in political science. Hadear speaks three languages: French, Arabic, and English. She started learning English five years ago, when she was 14, and found it to be quite the exhilarating experience. She has always enjoyed reading, but writing is what she is really passionate about.
This is a wake up call, a journey of realization, and a lesson learned. It is addressed to every forgotten dream or an un-realized one. The piece talks about the relationship between dream and work, fear and faith, and weakness and strength. The general idea is inspired by true events and personal experiences, but not all the events actually happened.

Work, Faith, and Strength

Dream was always there speaking about her future plans, but never really working for it. Days would pass and all she would do was hope that she would get what she wanted. She felt that there was something missing; she sensed this emptiness in her guts. There were those pointless days when she would wonder the purpose of life. Until she finally realized that it really isn't about what she said she wanted to do, but actually about how much effort she put in doing it. After that sudden realization, Dream made a friend called Work.

Work was hard to understand in the beginning; Dream always wondered why Work was so demanding. She would ask herself, “Do I really have to suffer to get Work to like me? If only I could understand what he expects from me!” She then realized that his demanding personality comes from the fact that he really cares about her. After long morning and evening sessions with each other, their relationship developed. Dream and Work became inseparable. Dream would look forward to spending time with Work; suffering became her addiction. She felt that without Work her life would have no meaning.

Dream and Work decided to go for an adventure, which required a change of lifestyle, making new friends, and basically a lot of adaptation. With trying new things, Failure is a given. Since Dream had no experience with Failure, the bad days made her depressed. She thought to herself, “I feel Work has betrayed me!” The drama kept escalating day by day, and the fight happened just the night before the half-ironman that they had both been training for a long time. The last thing Work told Dream was, “I thought you had faith in me.”

Dream decided to put the fight past her and get a good night’s sleep. The next morning, she didn't feel very well. After all, her back bone was missing. She had a great swim and bike legs of the event. She felt really good during the first 10 kilometers of the run. However, with 11 kilometers to go, she felt staggering pain her quads that made her walk. She walked for 1 kilometer and ruined the pace that she had planned. With great disappointment she started thinking about all those times she would be overtaken by fast runners. She felt like all those kilometers she covered in practice didn't mean anything. She just didn't want to be the last person to cross the finish line. She knew the feeling of being last too well, having finished last multiple times. The next thing that crossed her mind was when Work told her once that she is his rock star for being able to overcome all the obstacles she has faced. He used to tell her that she is stubborn and that she would do anything she set her mind to.

With this memory, she realized that Work has always had faith in her, but she never did. His faith was what gave her the strength to keep going. Dream then started to get back to her pace, telling herself not to show weakness and that she is doing this for herself and so even if she crosses the finish line last, she knows that this is the biggest achievement she has ever done in her life. She then realized that with hard work, dreams do come true and that faith in ourselves and abilities shows how much strength we have.”

Doaa Awad is a mechanical engineering graduate in the class of 2017. Her only message is to follow your dreams and become the legend you were born to be.
Staring out the window of the bus, I am on my way for my visa medical checkup. I'm with a bunch of international students, and I can't believe I actually made it to Qatar. I enter the visa department with three other boys when the guy responsible for our process tells us to sit and wait. I think about how my journey started towards this university and my mind flashed back to the night I was studying for my Arabic exam the next day, worried if I'd actually pass.

I couldn't sleep that night, just rolling around the bed trying to find that perfect spot that you never actually find. I thought about how my senior year is going so far and where I'll apply to university next year. I finally found sleep only to be woken up in a couple of hours by the sound of airplanes. I'm not talking about the ones we normally hear and see on a daily basis. These were fighter jets, I was guessing. I heard some voices from the living room coming from the TV. My dad would normally watch WWE wrestling in the middle of the night, but this time it was definitely the News channel. Now, I know my dad watches news on a daily basis but not in the middle of the night, so I knew something was up. I tried to ignore the sound and to get some more sleep because if I went to my dad, he'll just think that I haven't slept all day and that I've been staying up all night.

Just when I am about to nod off, I hear this explosive BOOM that made my ears ring, and I swear I felt the house shaking from side to side like a stack of books about to topple down and my whole life just flashed back before me, remembering all the good and bad memories that I've been through and asking, “Was it all worth it?” and “Did I live my life to the fullest?” I get up, and right when I am about to leave my bed, another BOOM blows and shatters the windows on my room, but this one was different because it was the air pressure from the first bomb, so it didn't have that ring to it. There's a three second difference between each blast, and that's when I know things are about to get tough. I see my mother running into my room to check on me. She starts dragging me in the most panicked way and I'm thinking, “Mom, where are you going? You need to calm down.” On our way we find my father still watching news like nothing has happened. My mom starts shouting at him to get up and follow us. She ends up taking us to the basement because it's the safest place. We are in the basement for a while, not knowing when to go up. My mom is praying and my dad is calling his friends trying to figure out what's happening. My mom decides that we cannot sleep upstairs, so she sends me and my dad to get the mattresses. I can see my dad doesn't want to go to all this trouble and would rather sleep upstairs, but he is too scared my mom would flip out on him. We end up fetching mattresses and sleeping downstairs.

School officially stopped the following day, so I didn't have to worry about my stupid Arabic exam, but now I have a lot more on my mind. How will I apply for universities? More important, how will I travel? I had to put that aside for now. My relatives from Taiz on my mother's side came to stay at our house. It's much worse there than the capital here. They tried to stay in Taiz but couldn't handle it after an incident happened with their son. He was on his way to get groceries when he got shot from a misdirected bullet. The bullet grazed the left side of his stomach, so he went to the hospital, and thank God he's fine. After that they decided to come over and stay at our place.

The next few months were hell. I would hear these crazy air crazy strikes in my country because of the civil war we were in, and I was actually scared if I'll die in one of them because each time the house shook, you feel like it's your last day on this earth. When my cousin joined me at our house, we enjoyed our time together as much as we could. We would go to football matches that stopped in the middle of a penalty because a bomb just exploded, and we'd hide inside in the dressing room until the gunshots cooled down. I often ran errands for my parents since I just got my driving license and my family made the most out of it. When your parents tell you to go fill up the car, that's no hassle. But when you have to wait two days on the queue, that's where it gets a bit annoying. Gas prices skyrocketed during the war and there wasn't much gas available, that's why it was tiring to just fill up a car. Then came a shortage of electricity. Since there was no local electricity, we had to use our generator after sunset and that's the only electricity we'd have. In addition, there were no flights because the airport was...
closed, but some residents had been leaving on buses through the border. I really needed to travel in order to take my SAT and IELTS examinations as this was my senior year of high school, and it looked like my future was going to slip away from me. My mother decided we needed to travel with the bus because she was really sick, I needed to do my exams, and my five-year-old niece and ten-year-old nephew were going crazy with the sound of the bombs. So we packed our bags, got the bus tickets and visa to Saudi Arabia, and booked our tickets from Saudi Arabia to Egypt, but it didn’t turn out to be the ride we expected.

We arrived at the bus station at seven in the morning. All the commotion and people who were there made it feel like it was a busy airport even though this station was a very small one. I couldn’t believe they could fit seven buses in such a small parking area. Everybody was lining up to get on their buses, eager to get their cushioned seats. We finally got on our bus and the ride started. It’s supposedly a seven-hour ride, so I packed my laptop with movies to waste my time. I watched the first movie and the first two hours passed. It was so bad that I lost taste to watch another one. I opened the window curtain and saw beautiful landscapes; the mountain view was unbelievable and the bus swerving on the tiny road on top of the mountain made all the children just stare at their windows like they were flying. I decided to take a quick nap, only to be woken up a bit later by a checkpoint. The police officer, who seemed younger than me, entered the bus carrying his weapon that looked so silly on a body as small as his. He started checking the passports, but we all knew he couldn’t read because he was asking the passengers for their names and telling them to point where their names are on the passport. He finished checking everyone’s name, left the bus and we kept going our way. Everything was going according to plan until we reached the last checkpoint before the border.

The white lights on the checkpoint are too bright for all of us, so everybody wakes up from the glare. We reach our turn to be inspected and it’s finally the moment of truth. Instead of the officer entering the bus, he walks to the driver’s side and signals him to open the window. We were all so eager to hear what he had to say, even the children are somehow quiet. With all ease, he says, “Go back, no buses allowed,” and finishes chewing his qat. We all know he must have been chewing good qat to be so comfortable in such circumstances. All the passengers are in shock. The driver parks right away and walks out and tries to talk to him, but the officer won’t budge. So the bus driver decides to go back and stop in a pit stop, saying, “We’ll sleep the night here and try again tomorrow.” The next day the driver hears from the company’s main office that some buses have passed the checkpoint. We all get excited as we are on our way again. Fifteen minutes later we end up at the checkpoint, only for the officer to refuse us again. They tell us that the other buses were going only to Saudi Arabia for Hajj and that’s why they allowed them to pass. The passengers on our bus and neighboring buses all lose hope. The driver makes us vote if we want to stay another night and try tomorrow or go back home. The majority chooses to go back home.

On our way home in the middle of the night, the bus stops. Everybody is sleep-
فوكستي عن الهوة من لاحنا القدر مرة
وضم أساتذة القلم من راد كتب عنج
يعرف باسم صعب، حروف يتبه الحجي وانتهي بنهاية حبره....
في صغيري، كنت آغا بأن براك أحد من طلاب صفي كاملا
ذالك كنت أرسم الشمس على زاوية الورقة
وردو...

أنا احتراري باتاس بين الاثنين، الناس تشوف قمر أي قمرين كل يوم أواني، القدر من تشتاق لدوس رجول
والشمس تشيرلي قاناها وياج، آثارًا غايرة من نورج
والصاعدي ونذاع أن من نور، تتم عودة الحائم
بما استحتي حتى من الهوة تنسين عليه ببيانج
بمادلة،، بروهمش كتابة في قهر

المستقبل شباك، وبصيحة م헤دوم
يابوكيه بو جسر وبلاجسر معيد عبر
 большим شمس اللهو وغنيه الشمر
وبديج كمين الفجر على أدام الفجر
غرمي عياج بملح وسرى، لاجنا الليل
بباحة رفع من يشرد، السهر
من أشوف يامه، أحس بباحسة ضرير
ضاقت لأمرة نظر

شيقيش علي، حبيب الوصف نافص
دام وصف اللأكل جاي من بشر
باحجيا رما، قصص الف ليلة وليلتين
صح كبرت عقلي
بس بلطف بدكلي ماكبر
باحبية الله، الهجأ جواج
والبرنجي عصره كحلة ماهر
والبرنجي عمره كحلة ماهر

Ahmed Al-Nowfal Al-Tamimi is a mechanical engineering student who is originally from Iraq. He has lived in many countries, with Syria being the last country he lived in before he came to Qatar. Ahmed is currently a student at Texas A&M University at Qatar, Class of 2019. He is a street fighter, a goalkeeper, and a poet. Ahmed is very passionate about reading both Disney stories and political analytics.
Since every story needs a prominent beginning, I'll start my story when I was thirteen years old with my own coming of age (only my story displays a little less angst and isolation than Holden Caulfield's). I didn't know it then, but thirteen marked a beginning to a very long and confusing chapter in my life, one that I can't help but to look back at now and cringe. What lead this tedious and seemingly never ending era of my life was the unavoidable feeling of loneliness. I, not unlike many my age, failed to relate to the changes that were happening around me, I couldn't keep up with this new world slowly opening to me, and little by little, I found myself cutting bridges of communication with most people. So there I was, engulfed with lonesome ideas that see-sawed between becoming a revolutionist or a poet like Al-akhtal (because what thirteen-year-old isn't a delusional narcissist?).

So I started feeding the idea of becoming a writer, which was completely foreign to my family members. I felt that with my words I could sympathize with people's darker sides and connect to them in a better way. But at some point of my young teenage life I morphed from the idea of becoming a poet like Al-Akhtal to becoming an over-analyzing pessimist. I tried to distance myself from my family. Their opposing views of my interests and their tendency to place my introversion and confusion in a time of change in a box marked “only a phase” created a larger wedge between connections with my family and caused a sense of singularity. I kept asking myself “Why couldn't I have been put with one person who understands?”

In the summer of that year, I indirectly found my answer. My father had taken me to my great uncle's house to look through his collection of books to see if I might want them. My great uncle had passed away when I was five years old. My memories of him could have easily been made up through stories I had been told. Still, I decided to take my father's offer and accompany him to my great uncle's house. While looking through the books he had, I found a box of 40 to 50 Agatha Christie novels. I remember my grandfather telling me that he used to read them with my uncle when they were younger. Some books were first edition, some were newer, but all of them were tainted with a brown rimming to the pages. These books had lived before today and they will after, I thought. I grabbed the box of books and took them with me. I had never really been an avid reader prior to that point in my life, but I had never really seen books like that before in my life, and I realized they had a story to tell beyond the well-thought-out words on the pages. I spent a good part of my summer slowly but carefully looking through the stories of Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot. Although much can be said about impeccable wording of Agatha Christie, what really hooked me to the pages are words not written by her but by my great uncle.

Every few pages are noted on with scribbles and ideas of the story so far, or even just his name written in the front page of the book. I saw in a couple of books “Library of Doha” stamps on the front, clearly stolen but I never regarded it as a crime. This, ironically, was one of the deepest connections I have made with a person who couldn't be there most of my life, but appeared (in his own way) at a time where I was deeply struggling as a person. I began constructing pieces of what I knew about my great uncle by looking through details that I found in the book that felt so intimate that I only shared them with a few people, but whenever I did, I felt a little part of him come back to life in their eyes.

I began asking my father and grandfather about him and what he was like. I found out that he was a journalist, out of hobby and not pay, and that he had a passion for writing and reading from a young age. He taught himself how to read in English and always read with a dictionary in hand. He was a vibrant character who chose not to stand with the norms of society. He never married and had kids. He was a smoker, which caused him to have weakened his heart, which caused him to pass away. I can smell hints of cigarettes when I read his books. I still have a couple more books before I finish the complete collection savoring every word of Agatha’s and of my guardian angel.

I never read the books in public fearing I’d become too emotional, but when I was given the chance to travel to Italy last year (one of my favorite places), I couldn't help but to take a part of him with me. I was reading the book on a long train ride. At the end of the book he wrote “give to Mohammed” (my father). Tears welded in my eyes that brought looks of concern from my father and peo-
ple who were close by. It wasn't uncommon that he tried to get my father into novels, which he never did, because my father has not read anything beyond the bounds of “Who Moved My Cheese?” and “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” Perhaps it was realizing that a chapter in my life was closing that brought me to tears. I was able to break down the walls that I have created at the beginning of this experience piece by piece by slowly reconnecting to my family. A memory came to me, of me pointing at his book collection and exclaiming “Wow, you have so many books. Have you read them all?” He laughed and responded, “I've tried to.” I only understood what he meant later in my life.

The thought that was going through my head during the train ride was that he did give the books to my father. Much later than he wanted, but then my father gave them to me at the time I needed someone to connect to the most. I know in the end I didn't fulfill my dreams by becoming a writer or an influencer of radical change, but rather an enhancer of benign personal change by being more open to the people who influence me, and giving outsiders a chance, and not seeing changes around as impossible feats, but an opportunity for growth. I've learned that you can still learn about a person even after they're gone, if you look closely in the details of their lives. And perhaps by attempting, you can help keep their spirit alive in the best light by still looking for those small pieces that make us human.

Aisha Mohammed Al-Naemi is a freshman at TAMUQ (Class of 2020). She attended high school at Al-Bayan secondary school for girls. She grew up with three brothers and one sister. She is an Avid movie watcher, and a lover of books. She can recite the lines from Roman Holiday, You've Got Mail, and Casablanca. Her family has always displayed interest in politics, although her interest in the subject did not peak until the 2016 U.S. election. She has hope that she will be a better analyzer of Donald Trump's actions and why he won by the time of her graduation.
Since I did not choose the topic of this paper, I had to spend time researching Fernando Botero and his works. This specific assignment taught me how to properly research, identify and cite sources (APA style), and to properly format a research paper. I had no prior experience in writing these types of papers. The original piece had pictures showcasing Botero’s work and was much more detailed, but for the sake of simplicity, I edited it to be more general for a broader audience. Looking back at my work, I do feel like there are areas I could improve upon, but I am mainly satisfied with my performance.

Fernando Botero: The Art of Deformation

My work is a self-portrait of my mind, a prism of my convictions.
- Fernando Botero

Fernando Botero is an internationally acclaimed figurative artist and sculptor. He is one of the most traded and recognized artists from Latin America. His art is exhibited in international museums worldwide and follows an art-style he spent years to perfect. Fernando Botero’s success began in Colombia. He then moved Barcelona, Madrid and finally Paris where he now spends most of his time. Botero’s beginner art was frequently criticized for “lacking its own identity” as it was influenced by the works of various renowned artists such as Diego Rivera, Pablo Picasso, Francisco Goya and Diego Velasquez. As a result, Botero developed his own, unique style known as “Boterismo” (Palumbo & Bertamini). However, Fernando Botero’s newly founded style was often the subject of misunderstanding and division. To say that his work consists of drawing fat bodies would be trite, as Botero’s fundamental interest lies in form, proportionality, and volume (Sullivan & Tasset, 2000, p. 88; Gmurzynska & Rastofer, 2013, p. 12). In fact, his work deliberately dismisses emotion and character, objectifying, and materializing its subjects (Gmurzynska & Rastofer, 2013, p. 13).

Plasticity and Proportional Exaggeration

Fernando Botero’s work is inspired by his obsession with volume, plasticity, and monumentality. Botero is an abstract artist; his subjects are often portrayed as “plastic” figures. Plasticity is present in all his art pieces regardless of their nature (Sullivan & Tasset, 2000, p. 84). His art depicts objects and people in an exaggerated, bloated sense to create enhanced volume. Many artists view personality and character in paintings as a fundamental feature that cannot be excluded. Botero challenges this idea and boldly presents his work with volume as his primary interest (Sullivan & Tasset, 2000, p. 88) (Gmurzynska & Rastofer, 2013, p. 12). In some of Botero’s works, the notion of plasticity can be particularly pronounced, with certain details “melting” and deforming beyond conventional expectations. Plasticity allows Botero to defy the traditional constraints of logic and order in paintings; it represents a bold statement of non-conformity and the willingness to skew reality in a way that satisfies Botero’s artistic view.

To achieve his artistic vision, Fernando Botero’s strongest tool is proportional exaggeration (Sullivan & Tasset, 2000, p. 170). By alternating between minuscule, understated details and exaggerated, bloated features, Botero enhances the feeling of monumentality in his art pieces. Altering proportions is one of his “core” tools in implementing his art-style “Boterismo” (Editors, 2016). For instance, many of his paintings feature women with large bodies and proportionally tiny breasts. This contrast creates a visual illusion that further intensifies the aspect of volume. Besides, the sense of perception in some of his paintings is skewed, with objects expected to be far away enlarged and close objects minified. This play on perception further creates a striking sense of “bulkiness” to the canvas. Fernando invented this method of volumetric contrast by sheer accident in 1956 when he misplaced a small hole in place of what should have been a larger sound hole. This created the illusion of enhanced volume and proportions. The mishap inspired Botero and represented a “revelation” that played a significant role in his mastery of proportions.

Despite the criticism he initially received about lacking originality and a unique personal touch, Fernando Botero still applied his manipulation of proportions on some well-known paintings and portraits of famous artists. For instance, Botero re-imagined Leonardo Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa with the same Boterismo principles applied to it. The resulting figure is bulky and shows his characteristic contrast of large and understated features. By re-imagining Da Vinci’s work, Botero was able to prove that even though “Boterismo” is striking and easily identifiable, it is
still extremely adaptable. As such, his works cover a broad range of subjects of different natures and forms.

**Obsession with Still Life**
Additionally, Fernando Botero disregards the emotions and character of his subjects because of his interest in still life (Gmurzynska & Rastorfer, 2013, p. 13; Sillevis, Elliot, & Sullivan, 2006, p. 70). Fernando Botero aims to transform his subjects into “still” life devoid of character and personality (Sullivan & Tasset, 2000, p. 98). Instead, they are deformed and reshaped to express his artistic views. Fernando Botero’s inspiration for neutral, emotionless paintings comes from his admiration of ancient Egyptian statues and hieroglyphs that never seem to look at the observer and that “contemplate the void.” This feature is clearly pronounced in Fernando’s painting Una Familia (1989) and multiple other portraits. His works also include inanimate objects such as oranges, tables and animal carcasses with the same concept of volume applied to them.

Still life is a rich and diverse artistic medium where artists can express their identities more freely. Still Life art does not have to conform to “artistic norms” or logical expectations. Botero’s fundamental principle is boldly defying such norms and expectations; As such, it is not hard to see why many of Botero’s art and paintings are still-life themed. What makes Botero truly exceptional is his willingness to devolve from typical, expected proportions when depicting people by giving them qualities that prevail among inanimate objects. Fernando “objectifies” and “materializes” his subjects in a way that blurs the distinctive line between still life and non-still life art. This blend of still life elements and Botero’s art style intertwine beautifully to create a “hybrid” feel where certain still life elements and features are applied to non-still life subjects such as people and moving scenes. Also, the fact that his Boterismo art-style extends to objects as well further supports how adaptable and dynamic Boterismo can be. In addition, this flexibility also undermines the critics’ argument that Botero merely paints fat women.

**What Critics Say: Fat Women**
Despite Fernando Botero’s well-documented art style and the fact that he repeatedly clarified his intentions, many still believe that Fernando Botero’s art-style is merely drawing fat objects, predominantly fat women. In fact, these people reference that Fernando Botero once “mistakenly” described his figures as “fat” in an interview by saying “They’re fat figures, to use the favourite words” (Hilbrenner, n.d.). Interestingly, even though Fernando Botero is quite adamant on his stance regarding this issue, he does not seem to be bothered with the misguided view of some towards his motives. “Many people know me as the painter of the fat ladies, and it doesn’t disturb me,” said Fernando Botero in a recent interview from his studio in Monaco.

**Occasional Symbolism**
Even though Botero’s work is primarily about volume and proportions, some of his works do indeed portray deeper meanings and messages. His Columbian background is quite apparent in a selection of his paintings that tackle drug cartels in South American region. These paintings depict cartel leaders wreaking havoc or getting killed by security forces. Another politically charged series of paintings Botero released was his “Abu Ghraib” series where he documented the abuse of the inmates in the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison. It is important to note that even though the “Boterismo” traits are incorporated into these paintings, they are noticeably toned down to highlight the paintings’ political meaning and symbolism.

Symbolism is an important, yet mostly neglected aspect of Fernando Botero’s work. In many of his paintings, symbols of power, authority, and other abstract concepts are often embedded into his work. For instance, many of his paintings depict religious figures, presidents, and soldiers in different manners to criticize the “militarists and the morals and manners of Colombia’s bourgeoisie” (Winston, 2008). As examples of such symbolism, some of his paintings tackle social issues such as infidelity, alcoholism, and domestic violence. For instance, multiple portraits of marriages and social gatherings contain snakes creeping onto the subjects to symbolize looming infidelity and sin. Other paintings of family unions are often littered with cigarette butts and alcoholic beverages scattered on the floor to symbolize the effects of substance abuse on family life.

**Concluding Thoughts**
Fernando Botero’s art is undeniably interesting and unique. His playful manipulation of proportions and the striking volume of his works legitimately represent his “Boterismo” style. Botero’s paintings have a unique sense of still, plastic life to them that emboldens the notion of form and volume. The lack of character and emotion in his paintings does not take away from their beauty and artistic purpose. While some choose to devalue his work as “painting fat women”, that statement disregards the meticulous detail and symbolism in his paintings. Besides, Fernando’s work is not always detached from reality. Botero occasionally portrays political or social messages through his paintings despite their “still life” aspect. An example of this is his incredibly popular Abu Ghraib series (Botero & Ebony, 2006), a piece of work charged with political symbolism. He also tackled issues like the drug trade and drug cartels in Columbia through his work.
References


Skander Helali is an 18-year-old freshman electrical engineering student in the Class of 2020. He is a proud Tunisian who considers Qatar to be his second home. He loves writing about quirky and unconventional topics and enjoys satire, sarcasm and dark humor. He believes that he is often seen as silent in person, but that he is loud (sometimes obnoxiously) when he writes.
When enjoying a particularly good meal, there is always that one bite that makes you stagger for a while, makes your eyes roll up in your head and makes you just freeze, stop chewing and savor the flavors before they are gone. There is always that one bite that lingers on your tongue for just a little while longer than other bites. A bite that holds the ghosts of past bites and the promises of future bites. And in the small duration of its fleeting existence, manages to take a piece of your heart with it. This poem was inspired by one such bite and is something I whipped up during a really good lunch at the Student Centre and wrote these lines on a napkin for the chefs. The meal featured the most perfectly cooked, moist and juicy chicken, a light and delectable yellow rice with traces of coconut, and a side of the most heavenly vegetable dumplings. You probably won’t enjoy it as much as I enjoyed the actual meal, but I hope you like it nevertheless.

Ode on a Vegetable Dumpling

Oh, vegetable dumpling, sent from heaven, to grace the lunch buffet at eleven; featuring cornstarch, spice and gloss to shroud thy children in thy sauce.

Go to sleep, little rice grains, until it’s time – dream of lambs bedecked with thyme; soon, rice grains, you shall be followed by Mother Dumpling – chewed and swallowed.

Weep not, Lady Dumpling, thy brood lies calm fanned by the coconut palm; playing with the coconut shreds, mingling with the saffron threads.

Oh, revered dumpling, grant me leave, to wipe my mouth upon my sleeve; for although you’ve been kind and sweet I’ve gotta move on to the meat!

Samozai Farheen Mansoor is a mechanical engineering junior who enjoys writing both prose and poetry. She likes nature and animals very much and dreams of having a pretty little house in a quiet countryside someday. Her favorite poets include John Keats, Kahlil Gibran, John Crisme and Midhat Javiad (Yes, two of our own! Check out their work in this book as well as the 2016 edition).
writing can carry us home
This is a raw and personal poem. I haven’t used any rhyme scheme or any particularly predictable structure because I used this poem as a means to vent and did not want to feel inhibited by an outline. Some poems sound better when recited aloud than when they are read on paper. I think this is one of those poems. I’ve used anthropomorphism in some instances (the beasts, the seasons, the blood). The cages are a metaphor for people’s restrictions. When you overlay them, they build up and form filters. The cage gets smaller and smaller because I believe everybody who cages someone is caged themselves by someone else. The poem is about breaking through all of these filters, or cages, that people have built for you. I hope that you like it.

Cages

Zoos were never my happy place. I’d break down and cry after each field trip, but you told me you could relate to the animals. You told me you felt like a beast trapped in a cage. Yet, do you see? Here I am, trapped in yours! So now we’ve got cages within cages, as far as I can see and that also means my cage is smaller than yours. Is it possible to be trapped in multiple cages? Like, what, is that a thing now?

But I’m breaking free. Come December, I will be trapped in my cage no more. Ha! No. By then, I’ll be trapped in yours. Fighting my way out of yours and that of the beast who caged you, I’ll keep fighting my way outwards, one cage at a time, spreading my wings more with each escape, shedding blood, like leaves in the fall - dark; mesmerizing; eerily delightful.

Call me innumerate, but I’ve never believed in infinity. So I’ll fight my way out their cages - the whole never-ending sea of them - until I can fully spread my wings again. Fighting my way out of the depressing Fall, through the brutal Winters, and into Spring again.

Samozai Farheen Mansoor is a mechanical engineering junior who enjoys writing both prose and poetry. She likes nature and animals very much and dreams of having a pretty little house in a quiet countryside someday. Her favorite poets include John Keats, Kahlil Gibran, John Crisme and Midhat Javiad (Yes, two of our own! Check out their work in this as well as the 2016 edition!).
Every student needs to read this essay because it will change their arguing abilities and improve his or her skills of writing. My ENGL 104 teacher gave me the idea to write about such an interesting topic that related my choices at the beginning of this semester to this persuasive essay. I started writing in my mind before writing on the computer; I build the idea by examples at the beginning that I saw at the university in my friends, and that gave me the power to start.

Arguing and Talking Makes Better Writers

What is better, one million riyals or two million riyals? Two, of course; this is the same idea that having two brains is better than one. Lisa Ede and Andrea A. Lunsford, in their book Writing Together found that working together was more helpful than working alone. I quote from their book: "Talk, then plays a vital role in our collaborative writing. In fact, ... talk is central to our collaboration in a way that it seldom has been for us as individual writers." "Talk is also central to our planning, which must be both more explicit and more detailed when we write together than either of us is accustomed to when working alone," (Ede and Lunsford, 2011, pp.37-38). Many will say that students have to work by themselves, not depending all the time on others. However, there are a number of reasons that make this strategy one of the most significant strategies to make our writing better by improving it with a solid statement's, strong examples, and more ways that we don't even know while learning a lot of from others. The students can accomplish all this by asking and arguing with others.

Arguing and talking with someone gives the writer ideas and other perspectives that were not possible to be discovered by the writers or how they think. Many times I face either problems that I cannot solve or new challenges or new topics I have to write about. If I'm confronted with a problem that I don't know how to solve, I go to someone who knows how to solve it. For example, if the check engine light goes on, I go to the nearest garage to help me fix it. It is the same if any student has a problem in writing, such as having a new topic that the student doesn't know anything about it or just wants to make a stronger essay or improved argument in his article by taking more effective ideas and information from people whom he trusts. There is a verse in Holy Quran that says: 

قال الله تعالى
فَاسْأَلُواْ أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِن كُنتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

(Page 322,272); this Ayah has many meanings, but one of them is that the person has to ask those who know. This Ayah gives permission that it is okay to ask, and it will make your decisions more precise and more appropriate because you are taking others' advice. Also, making two or more brains work on the same problem gives you an advantage. Asking others can give more diverse ideas than if you read about the same thing in a book or the internet; for example, if someone wrote a book and a student read that book, what the student is going to understand from that writer will be an in-depth perspective. In-depth perspective means that the student can get more details and ask about the ideas that he wants to know more about. Furthermore, a student can ask further questions in case he or she did not get the idea or wants more details. Also, others can give aspects that make a student's argument stronger, polished, and more connected by showing the student where the weakness of his or her argument lies.

Talking with others gives the student a fast way of extracting accurate information without worrying about the amount of time that they will spend in reaching the same information from other sources. Other sources like the internet may contain multiple problems or have inaccurate ideas that the student would not be able to identify. Furthermore, if the student went to someone whom he knows will help him, like a friend, teacher or someone from the family, most of the time he will get what he wants or at least the person will refer the student to someone that knows more. For example, one of my friends, Ibrahim, is writing an essay titled "Why We Should Learn to Cook." He saved time by not searching the internet; instead, he asked numerous friends, and they gave him more accurate answers and reasons to write about on his topic, than what the internet may offer. However, the student has to make sure about what he is writing from others. Asking others can help the students before they go to other sources. The same is true if any student has a problem with writing: there are teachers and friends and tutors at the ASC who are willing to help at any time.

Asking others enriches and enhances the information, as well as the quality of the writing. Talking to others can give another picture about an issue different
than what the writer thought about the topic at first. For example, if a student is not Qatari and he or she has to write about Qatari people in an essay or research, talking to Qatari people will give the student a very different picture than what student knows or would have heard about Qatari people. This happened with one of my friends, Abdullah. In many cases, the student has to ask and argue with others to get the full picture or enhance the information of their topic. For example, I argue my with mom all the time because I want to know what is correct about a certain topic. Furthermore, in some cases, talking is the only gateway to reach some information. if I want to know about my family, I have to ask my parents or someone from the family. It is the same if students are writing about a topic that discusses private information like what happened with one of my friends, Qusa, who was doing his research about an artist who was not that popular. This made Qusai try to contact the artist through social media because there was no information about him on the internet. In the end, Qusai reached the artist, and he obtained some valuable information from him that improved his piece because the information came from the artist himself.

This strategy of talking to others is helpful in the future of the engineering student. Engineers have to face a new environment in the workplace that is different than the college experience. Talking to others in the new workplace is going to give engineers an edge in the beginning of their career's journey, which is going to make their life easier. Most of the successful people that I know are good with oral communication, are friendly, and talk often with everyone. This creates a positive image in peoples’ minds. Moreover, this positive image will make the new engineering graduate welcomed in the new workplace, and talking with others will improve his or her position. Even shy students can start with any questions that they have and they will find it easy to communicate with other people because almost everyone is friendly and willing to help. There is research that found that two of the most useful skills are oral communication and written communication for graduates (Casner-Lotto and Benner, 2006). These skills were mentioned by high school, two-year colleges, and four-year colleges as vital to be successful in the workplace.

In summation, talking to friends and asking people and experts about topics gives me more ideas that were impossible to think of on my own. Talking to one of my teachers, Dr. Hodges, allowed me to improve my essay, and that was similar to what Lisa Ede and Andrea A. Lunsford found: that talking together leads to more accurate and clear ideas. The other side of this topic is that students in the end have to learn many things by themselves; if the students did not believe in themselves in the first place, then nothing will help them. I will finish this with one of my mother's sayings, “Ask, because you will not lose anything.”

References


Maeen Swileh is a Qatari guy who is currently a mechanical engineering student at Texas A&M University at Qatar. He was born in Ibb in Yemen and moved to Sana’a at the age of 4, where he studied until the fifth grade. He moved again to Qatar when he was 10 years old. Maeen is very social and open to the world. He has numerous hobbies including building computers, going to the desert, and watching movies from his very big collection. He has liked writing since he was little. His mother always encouraged him to write, so he became passionate about it.

Holy Quran: Surah: 16 - An-Nahl (The Bee)

RASHID AL HEIDOUS

This story was part of a project in my ENGL210 class. The project was to target “a community” and to study their problems and suggest some solutions. A lot of freedoms were given in that project concerning the definition of community; the professor said that it falls upon us to define it as it could range from a handful of people to millions! Also, we were given the freedom in the delivery form as the professor told us that she wants us to “surprise her.”

The first community that came to my mind was the community of food service workers as they are one of the least studied communities in Qatar. I planned to write a report about their living conditions in the country and to shed some light on whether responsible people should try to improve these conditions or not. However, things don’t always go the way we want! Ramadan was but a week away from the time I started my quest, and I believe that if you lived in Qatar for one Ramadan you would understand my point. The restaurants close in Ramadan for most of the daytime hours and are open throughout the night, but my routine doesn’t allow me much free time in the night as prayers are held for long hours and I dine at home most of these days. In short, I made the best of my situation and decided to write a novella based on the limited information that I obtained. The excerpt you are about to read is from Chapter 3 of my novella When You Miss the Station.

Heaven, Where Are You?

I’m a citizen of the state of Qatar. My name is Rashid, and I’m 20 years old. Life in our country is full of luxury as the nation prospers in the extraction of its natural resources. I’ve been born when the money evolution started in our country and thus never witnessed any suffering caused by lack of income or difficulty with getting a job. With that said, you may assume that we Qataris have guaranteed jobs; the truth is we don’t, but compared to most of planet earth, we do. We are required to get “good” grades in our senior year of high school to guarantee a job.

Long story short, life has changed many Qataris and made them develop a false feeling of security that will lead them to their doom if they don’t do anything about it. I started my life with this false feeling and, thank God, got rid of it when I became acquainted with the suffering of others who live in the same country. The story begins with the recruitment of a new tea boy in our house. My dad brought Abdulla, a tea boy from Bangladesh who came to Qatar to work for a local company that provides (mainly) the petrochemical companies with their need of tea boys and chefs. Abdulla, however, asked my dad for an extra job because his salary isn’t enough; we were in need of a tea boy at that time, and thus my father agreed. Abdulla worked for us for nearly five years. I was in grade four when he first came to work for us, and I’ve been the person to tell him about his daily tasks. I’ve spent a considerable amount of time with Abdulla and during that time I’ve learned a lot about his family, work, boss, and more about my country’s system for workers and how they struggle with living here.

Today I’m doing a field study on food service workers and their problems living in Qatar. I started my study with a field trip to a small local mall where I visited a very popular restaurant to “chat” with the workers there.

As I’m walking slowly toward the front desk of that restaurant, I notice two workers, a male, and female. Both of them are from the Philippines I assume. This is a noticeable phenomenon in Qatar to find whole restaurants (with all their branches) served by Filipinos only! I know the guy from my previous visits, but the girl is new to me.

As I approach them, I see a hint of recognition on the man’s face. I didn’t want to wear our traditional dress as it may prevent the workers from telling me the truth since I’m one of those “wealthy” people, an assumption made by many non-national citizens who live in Qatar. Although I do not want to draw suspicions to my motives behind my questions, I came to them wearing our traditional clothes and challenged my fears of not getting the truth and went to chat with them.

“Hi, sir,” said the guy with a smile.

“Hey, how are you today?” I said.
“Fine, thank you, sir. Sandwich for today?” asked the guy.

“No, I’ll get a pineapple juice,” I responded.

I noticed a glimpse of astonishment on the guy’s face. I always order tuna or chicken sandwich in this restaurant every single time; that’s why he’s surprised by my unusual order today. A lesson for you when you want to conduct a study on people you know: DON’T SHOW CHANGES!

“The price is 6 QAR, sir,” said the guy.

I paid, then marched into the topic of my research.

“How is life?” I asked, using my secret engagement question.

“Ahhh, Fine, sir,” replied the guy, but his face says otherwise.

“Are you sure it’s okay?” I asked.

“Will, sir, you know that life isn’t perfect,” said the guy with a searching look.

“So do you face any problems? I mean any problem with the company, accommodation...etc.? asked I, with anticipation.

The guy then sighed and moved closer to me from his place behind the counter and leaned on the cashier desk. “Actually, yes there are problems.” said the guy with a strong note in his voice.

“Like what? I’m sorry if this seems suspicious, but I’m working on a project for my school that aims to magnify your problems and show them to the public,” I said, looking bright from the excitement. I explained that to them because I noticed that the girl seemed uneasy with my questions and signs of worry were written all over her face.

“Oh, I see, I was wondering myself about your motives for all these questions, but since you're a regular customer, I decided to tell you. If you weren't a regular customer, I wouldn't dare to speak about it. Rather I'll pretend that everything is fine,” the guy responded.

“Ya, I saw the unease in both of you, especially in the lady behind you.”

“Oh, sir I wasn't sure...” said the girl behind him.

“Don’t worry, I understand your position and how hard and dangerous it is for you to talk,” I said. “So what's your name?”

“My name is Susan.”

“And you?”

“My name is Jeff.”

“My is Rashid. Alright, Jeff and Susan, I’d like you to tell what’s going on behind the scenes. I always suspected the ‘official’ smiles of most of the food service workers, so I want you to enlighten me about the shadows behind them.”

“Sir, you won’t include our names or the company name in your study, would you?” said Jeff.

“No, no of course. Be assured that I won’t, and if anything happened, you know that I live here,” I said, trying to give a sense of security to both Jeff and Susan.

“Ya, sir, it won't be tolerable if they found out that we've spoken to you about these things,” said Susan.

“I don't know how to give you full assurance, but I'm telling you that I won't, and I'm doing this work for you guys, and this idea came to me because of you. I met one of you a long time ago, and he told me his story and what a sad story it was. Then the man left the country for good. This story affected me and was the motivation behind my choice of topic for the school project. By the way, I'm a chemical engineering student in TAMUQ,” I said. I told them this to serve as an indicator that they can trust me as I'm sharing personal information with them.

“Sir, let me tell you this. When we came here we thought that we came to the promising land, the place where we will be able to achieve our future dreams and goals, but now all I want to know is this: Where the hell did Heaven go?” said Jeff.

Rashid joined chemical engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar in 2014 and is working hard to learn new things every day. He loves creativity, art, and science. The reason why he joined chemical engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar is that he wanted to challenge himself and move the Qatari society into new frontiers by becoming a researcher and thus paying his debts to his country's investment in him.
This is a dramatic monologue that aims to over-exaggerate the dilemmas and frustrations that college students face towards the end of the semester. This piece attempts to retell this academic conundrum theatrically (kind of like an epic).

The Anxiety & Misery of Unrealised Quintessence
A Monologue

As the semester's end draws near, I feel a sense of euphoria with a few hints of frustration and regret. The rich aroma of vending machine-coffee spilt on the library floor, the look of horror on the freshmen's faces, the ringing tunes of “I wish I did this sooner,” and “That's it, I'm f***ed either way” setting the grim university atmosphere; bittersweet. The books whisper, “I will cherish the memories and the countless moments that we have spent together.”

Even those whom you haven't touched say the same. Odd. Like a phantom, the knowledge that was bequeathed unto me slips from my grasp and cries as if calling out to me, yet fades into the abyss of post-exam realisations. There dwell answers that should have rushed forth in the past, yet cease to exist until the hour runs out. With all adversities stacked against me, I push forward to thwart the advances of a subpar GPA. Though fighting alone,

I continued on: facing leviathans in these hallowed lands called Calculus. I call upon the blessings of the divines.

“Newton! Leibniz! Gods of Mathematics, I call upon you!”

I roar as I quell through. I may have survived this beast, but the end is yet to come. I find myself at the foot of what seemed like a mountain; upon its leash inscribed “Structure controls properties,” the mantra of alchemists that invokes the mystic powers of materials science. The creature bellowed and struck there and then; hurling dark matter while wailing “VIDEO PROJECT!” One blow would have left me dead(line). Nevertheless, I stood strong.

Charged.

As the Light Brigade would have. I took a deep breath, and with a glance at my notes I cleaved with all the strength I can muster.

The battle was over.

I looked over as the carcass waned towards oblivion. With a warrior's heart filled with glorious jubilation, I marched towards the promise land. Angels cried out and sang praises of good grades, but no sooner those heavenly beings turned to harpies and impaled me through the chest. As my life flashed before my eyes, I could only look back to what was, and with every ounce of regret I had left, I spoke in the faintest voice as I hugged the earth under my feet: “My calculator was in radians…”

John is an engineer in the making, a closet poet, and a lawyer wannabe. A mechanical engineering student who has a penchant for drifting mentally throughout the day, he fell in love with poetry after watching “Dead Poets Society” during the winter of 2014. He fancies the works of Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, and Lord Byron, to name a few. When not reading or writing poetry, he usually spends his time reading up on J.R.R. Tolkien’s legendarium, re-watching the whole Star Wars saga (all eight of them), and shouting at the telie while watching Manchester United, Green Bay Packers, or New York Yankees games.
I'm Staying Home

So, I've heard a rumor that NASA has discovered another planet similar to Earth -
My sincerest congratulations, NASA.

It's like the prophecy says -
because we've waited days and days
for such news to be announced
and all we could do is gaze
amazed and crazed by such news
and we choose
to let such info be our savior out of the blues.
Think of the future, the possibilities are endless
open space and fresh air, resources tremendous,
think of the fresh lakes and water bodies that lay alone
waiting, just waiting, to be consumed by what we'd call our
home.

Oh, how the cattle will speak and thank their masters
for this gift of greener fresher grass that they sought after.
Indeed the grass is greener on the other side of our dreams,
but such is a short victory, if at all, for it's not what it seems.
Indeed a new planet is a fresh start and everybody is in woe,
but for a small planet that I've called home for long, I'll have to say no.

What of the childhood memories I've lived
and the kindness of mother, always ready to give?
What of the childhood friends and enemies
and when I learnt to forget and forgive?
How easy it was for people to sell their past for a chance
to rip home of its name,
yet not a single thought was given that though the planet is different,
we're still the same.

We're still the people who ripped the ozone layer apart,
no regrets and no shame;
we are the ones who ignored education
and said that those who didn't were lame.
We are those who blindly sought after wealth,
ripping apart our old home in the process.
Yet now that we found another, we're willing to believe
the illusion that that transfer is lossless.

So, this is my reply to those who are leaving their homes:
please, if I may,
send my regards to my friends and tell them that I have
decided to stay.
I'll find myself a partner, whose beliefs are common with mine.
We'll teach our children morals,
we'll teach them our values
and other things people have forgotten.

Because we've destroyed a planet
and kept its resources on minus and minus.
What do you call a creature that feeds on bodies till death?
A virus.

Mohamed Hazem Hussein
is a mechanical engineering student from Class of 2020. A
self-professed video game/rap addict, he was crowned "Rap God" back in high school after
beating 14 "unworthy foes." Poetry comes easily to him as he considers it to be just like rap,
which, he reminds us, stands for the words Rhythm And Poetry. According to Mohamed, the
only difference between Rap and Poetry is that rap is generated by one's anger or confi-
dence, while poetry comes from the heart and soul of one's feelings.
writing can create communities
My First Day in Aggieland

It’s 6 a.m. I wake up in a warm cozy bed in a beautiful hotel room. I had slept really well, and I woke up feeling refreshed after a 16-hour flight. I wasn’t feeling jet-lagged, and all the physical pain due to all the travelling I had done was gone. Therefore, I started to wonder how I managed to adjust so well to living in College Station within just a few hours.

I leave my room and head to the lobby to have some breakfast, and honestly I haven’t had a meal like that in a while. The food was absolutely delicious and the smiles of the people around me made my day start in a euphoric way. I ride the bus to the Reed arena to watch a basketball game and along the way, while passing through the Texas A&M campus, I see so many symbols and places like the Kyle field and the Aggie ring statue and start to feel warm inside. I was so happy and proud to finally be on the main campus of Texas A&M University. Even though our team lost, the basketball game was fun to attend since I was able to apply some of the Aggie traditions I learned while being involved in leading orientation, and so I had numerous proud moments during the game.

As the day passes, I start to feel happier and happier. Everyone around me is so nice and cheerful, especially the host students who are super friendly and kind. I loved every moment I spent with them as I learned so much from our cultural differences and their diverse experiences. Their positive energy is allowing me to adapt well.

All of these great aspects of the trip so far have made me realize that I am actually at a place that I can call home. By the end of the day, I know for sure that I belong to this place even though I have never visited it before. All of the Aggie traditions and features of the Aggie spirit that I was exposed to at the Qatar campus allowed me to familiarize myself with the main campus quickly. I finally managed to channel my passion and pride of being an Aggie through different means, especially at the basketball game.

So at the end of the day, I sit back and I ask myself this question: Why don’t I feel jet-lagged? The answer put simply is that this place actually feels like home. I managed to finally get a real taste of being part of the Aggie family. I would like to also say that the Aggie spirit is something special that once felt, will remain with you for the rest of your life because “Once an Aggie, Always an Aggie.” I can’t thank our trip leader, Ms. Erin Wehrenberg, enough for allowing me to be part of this exceptional experience. I am learning so many new things and my most important lesson so far is that if you are bonded to a place, then distance can never sever that bond no matter what.

Abouelkassim Becetti is a Texas A&M University at Qatar student working towards becoming an electrical engineer specializing in power systems. He will graduate with his Bachelor of Science in May 2019 along with minors in mathematics and physics. He is a Qatari-born Algerian whose greatest aspiration is to be involved in innovating renewable energy systems. He loves watching and playing sports. His favorite sport is football (soccer), and he also loves playing video games.
I wrote this paper to explain my feelings about my major choice and about college life in general and how it is affecting me. I think writing is the perfect way to convey such deep messages that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to deliver to people through other means.

This paper is directed to everyone: students, professors, parents from anywhere, it's simply the humble experience of a teenage girl in university and I hope, I truly and deeply hope, that it will inspire other students my age to be more open about their feelings. If they can relate to me in any way, I hope they are relieved and comforted by the fact that they are not alone.

I was very emotional when I wrote this paper and poured my heart into it. I may have cried when I wrote the last words. Writing has this magical effect of making you understand things about yourself that you didn't know existed. This is what writing this paper did to me; it made me understand how I really feel, and why I feel this way. I was very happy when I finished it, proud and relieved. It was the comfort of telling the truth.

The Fire Inside

Overflowing with emotions.

That's how I always was.

I've always felt that normal feelings are instantly magnified for me, and to feel everything in life so deeply was always my greatest blessing, but also my greatest curse.

I didn't want to live with a heart like this; it made fitting in almost impossible, like having a fire inside of me, always burning, day and night, and because I was always trying to hide it, because I couldn't show it to anyone else, it ended up burning me, and hurting me alone.

Overflowing with passion.

Yet I had to pretend to be “normal,” I had to pretend to be quiet, so I swallowed how I felt, and what I thought, and this only added to the fire inside me, burning me.

How can someone possibly belong?

“You don't give me that engineer's vibe.”

“People who apply to engineering schools are usually people who are obsessed with numbers and such, not people like you.”

“What were you thinking when you applied, Ola? Look at you, you like poems, playing the guitar, reading old books, and listening to music. For real!”

“If there is an opposite to engineering, it would be you.”

“Are you sure you made the right decision?”

The truth is, I wasn't sure, I was never sure, I would be lying if I said that I don't think about this issue every night before I sleep. I'm not confident in my decision, the doubts might eat me alive one day, nevertheless, I'm never stepping back, I'm never giving up on it, the journey does look like the opposite of me, but the destination resembles me so much it makes it easier for me to forget all the suffering in between.

Sometimes I can almost feel the fire dancing inside my chest, I can almost hear the roars of passion inside me, making me sweat, gasping for air, feeling the excitement tickling my fingertips, as if I just finished running the longest marathon to exist; if there is anything that makes me wake up every day, it will be this fire inside me.
There is nothing I respect in life more than passionate and original people, yet I suffer everyday trying to be one of them. It’s like the whole world is against you the instant you decide to be yourself, at certain moments. I look at everything around me, and it hurts me how fake it is, so fake it makes me sick, so fake it turns the fire inside me to an evil creature, a creature that will hurt me, and only me.

I never understood how to belong.

I was never able to be completely me, honestly and unapologetically. I’ve tried, but why is it so hard to be myself in this world? Why is it that every time I try, the world makes me regret my decision? Why is it so difficult, almost impossible, for people to accept me, just me?

Yet I can’t give up. I refuse to hide away behind the comforting illusions of pretending to be normal, so I will keep trying, shedding tears at moments that people will think are not special, reading books that people will think are boring, and trying to combine the impossible, engineering and my emotions, physics and art, chemistry and music. I will make these opposites work; I will prove to the world that everything is connected, and that the most creative fields we create are the ones in which both brain hemispheres are equally involved. I will try to do this, hoping that, one day, someone will pass by me, and will see the fire clearly, inside my eyes, and it will make sense to them.

Ola Omer is an 18-year-old sophomore, majoring in chemical engineering. There is a high probability that she is interested in anything you can possibly think of as her interests in life keep her motivated and inspire her to try harder and discover more things about both herself and the world.
This piece talks about how two boys became friends. They met each other through a kind act, and because of the favors they did for each other, they became friends. Even though the second guy didn't initially want to befriend the main boy, Badr, he quickly appreciated the favor Badr returned. This piece has a moral that I would like readers to think about. I would like to let others know how much it means to return a favor. Yousef, the deuteragonist, had biased view of people who came from Rimor city; he was cold to Badr at first because he thought that Badr was an average individual who would just thank him and forget about him later. However, when Badr returned his favor, he felt like he could trust him more and that even made him befriend Badr. It is important for anyone to know how much repaying a huge favor means. It could change a whole view on a person. My aim here is to make this clear: “We secure our friends not by accepting favors but by doing them.” - Thucydides

A Favorable Meeting

Summer was approaching its end, and the twelve-year-old boy made his way back home alongside his father. Their house sat amidst a wild forest that extended as far as the eye can see. The two carried buckets of fish, strolling along the grassy pathway. The simple life that the boy had lived was about to change.

“Why are you late? Badr needs to sleep, tomorrow is a big day!” a voice was heard once they opened the creaky front door.

“Sorry about that, there was a lot of good fish today. Either way, Badr,” the man turned to his son. “Go to sleep right away.”

“Yeah, I’m sleepy anyway. Goodnight!” said Badr to his parents. He rushed up the stairs and climbed in his bed, excited for the next day. Badr lay there, his head whirling with imagination for he was trying to envision the time ahead. When he was fast asleep, his body couldn’t stop tossing wildly around the sheets. He clearly couldn’t wait for tomorrow.

“BADR! Wake up, come on!” His mother’s strict voice rang through his ears in the early morning.

“AHHH!” Badr quickly jumped out of bed. He changed into his clean shirt and cargo shorts. Next, he grabbed his bags and ran downstairs, almost tripping from his excitement.

“It’s about time to get going,” his mom told him. “Do you have everything you need?”

“Yes,” Badr replied while looking around. “Where’s Dad?”

“At work,” she stated.

“Okay, well...tell him I’ll miss him and also grandpa. I should probably go now, so bye mom! I’ll miss you so much!” He said while opening the door to descend down the slate steps. His mother followed him outside the door.

“Bye!” Badr waved goodbye to his mom who suddenly brought him close to her and hugged him tightly.

“Take care, Badr,” she said emotionally, while stroking his spiky brown hair.

Badr smiled while hugging her back. “I love you mom. I’ll be back before you know it.”

The two smiled at each other one last time before Badr’s mother muttered, “Me too.” She watched her son leave until he was out of sight, then she returned home.

Badr looked around the empty streets for the bus that he was supposed to be in. He walked and walked, but there was no sign of anyone. A while later, Badr saw that the bus was moving away from the direction he was heading.

“Wait!” Badr turned around and shouted. “Wait for me! I’m here! Don’t go!”
It was too late. The bus had already left, dashing towards the next stop.

‘Why do I have to be so late...’ he thought. He stepped forward and looked ahead. ‘Do I really have to walk all the way to the airport? It’s so far away...’

The young boy walked down the paved street carrying along his travel bags on his shoulder. He continued to walk straight, thinking of how long it would take him to reach the faraway airport. He couldn’t think of any way other than running fast and asking for directions.

A few minutes later, he found himself racing an old style car, which was moving with very slow speed. Its engine made strikingly noisy sounds. Badr decided to approach the car to ask for directions about the airport.

He stood near the front headlight of the automobile which made the car stop immediately. The dusty window opened.

“Hey, you there!” the driver snapped. “Why are you standing here alone? What’s your name?”

“My name is Badr, and I missed my bus to the airport.”

“Are you traveling alone?”

“Oh, no, I’m not. Many other kids have been accepted to Evenlane other than me.”

“Evenlane! Jump in, boy, jump in!”

“Thanks a bunch!”

Every year, there happens to be a grand lottery that takes place in all the public schools located in Rimor, in which the winning students have the free opportunity to enter the popular and elite boarding school, Evenlane academy, where they are to be taught both academic and practical skills. Badr was one of the two and only lucky winners in his school. However, when the day finally arrived to depart to Evenlane, he missed the bus that was supposed to take them to the airport.

Badr sat in the car, thinking about how he missed his whole family. He also tried to imagine life in Evenlane. Would he meet nice, friendly and loyal people there? He was very optimistic and thrilled to explore Nuport, the city where Evenlane boarding school was situated. He looked out of the window then noticed that a well was placed on one of the two sidewalks leading to the crowded airport. He quickly told the driver, “Sir, I feel thirsty. Thanks for the ride, you can drop me here. I saw a well I can drink from.”

“As long as you know the way to the airport,” the driver said, stopping the car.

“I don’t think it’s very far, thanks. Bye!” Badr stepped out, his shabby brown, pocketed bag on his shoulder with another big travel bag in hand. He turned to wave one last time. “THANKS!” he yelled out to the driver’s car, which was now driving away.

He turned around and walked over to the well. It was kind of odd that it was placed there. It looked very old, partly because a few bricks seemed cracked. He peered inside. The water looked clean, but it was a bit deep. He noticed there was no bucket, so he reached out to get a drink of water but absentmindedly fell inside.

Before he knew it, Badr was already falling deep in that well. Luckily, he clung tight to a brick that was about to fall. He fixated his feet on the brick walls while trying to keep steady. His hands were slowly slipping, and he was sweating so hard. He tried to climb back up, but the bricks were all pushed inside at the same level. The brick that his hand took hold of was the only one sticking out.

He tried to push himself upwards multiple times, until his foot reached that brick. It was hard to balance because his hands and left foot were not holding onto anything. This was the end. He was on the verge of falling. But just when the brick was nearly cracking, he heard a faint voice that said: “Hey! Grab my hand!”

Without thinking, Badr quickly got hold of the person’s hand and escaped the well. To his surprise, it was a young slender-looking boy who looked about the same age as him.

Badr gaped at the boy gratefully. The boy had golden blonde hair, aqua blue eyes, a small straight nose and notably thin red lips. He was slightly shorter than Badr, and he wore a white collared shirt along with long dark green shorts and boots that went just above his ankles. He gave Badr a glare which Badr didn’t quite understand.

“Th-thank you!” Badr smiled at the boy who was still glaring. It made Badr feel uneasy.

“Um, my name is Badr. What’s yours?” Badr held out his hand for the blonde to shake. In contrast to Badr’s tanned skin, the kid had a much fairer skin tone.

The blonde turned to leave while keeping his hands in his pockets. Badr looked at him, wondering why the boy was ignoring him. Maybe because he wanted Badr to return the favor right away? Or maybe a thank you was not enough?

Badr thought it wouldn’t hurt to try again. He followed the fair boy and said, “Thanks, really! Can you tell me your name?”

The boy stopped to take a careful look at Badr. His clothes looked more presentable than Badr, who was wearing olive green shorts with a worn out yellow
t-shirt. His glare softened to a slight smile.

“You’re welcome,” he replied, carrying his cotton string bag and a black sling backpack with him.

Badr smiled as the blonde boy strode away to grab the handle of a bigger travel trolley bag that was left nearby. He followed him to the airport with many other people.

It was Badr’s first time in an airport. He had never really traveled away from Rimor, so it was a little surprising for him. The airport was so full of people that Badr couldn’t even breathe. He lost sight of the blonde boy. After squeezing in between all the people and finally catching his breath, he strolled along, smiling to himself. Badr scanned the crowded airport, pausing every now and then to stare at the screens and the packed trollies being pushed around by busy passengers.

“Ow!” he suddenly exclaimed, for someone just ran into him. He looked up to see who it was. A tall, unfamiliar boy with a sharp face, small light brown eyes and old clothes glared at him and soon walked away.

“Why is everyone so unfriendly?” Badr wondered, his eyes still on the dark-haired boy who was now heading to a certain counter which had a group of kids (roughly his own age) waiting in line. He smiled when he saw that the thick-haired blonde boy from before was there too. He was at the end of the line, standing with his belongings. The dark-haired boy who had just bumped into Badr stood behind him.

Badr rushed over to the blonde boy, who still had his hands in his pockets.

“Hey!” He waved happily.

The boy turned around. “Hey.”

“By the way,” Badr said, scratching his head. “Where are you traveling?”

“To Nuport city. I’m attending a boarding school called Evenlane Academy.”

The tall, dark haired boy glared at Badr and his new friend as he watched them talk.

“Really?! Me too! Are we supposed to wait here? Where do we put our big bags?”

“We wait in line to put them on the machine in front.”

After half an hour of waiting in line, they checked in their names with the counter and placed their bags on the carousel. The fair boy looked at his watch. “We have about two hours until the plane takes off. What do you want to do?”

Badr looked around. “Let’s explore!”

They walked around the airport, stopping every now and then to look at the items sold. They also went to stare at the food being served at the mini restaurants. As they were walking towards another area, they saw a dark, mysterious figure slip behind them. It took hold of the blonde’s small string bag and ran as fast as it could.

The light-haired boy shouted something and ran quickly after the figure. Badr followed him as he left the bus airport. They both looked around for the thief.

“There!” Badr pointed before they both started running. The person, presumably a boy, glanced back, glaring furiously.

“Do you know him?” Badr asked.

“NO!”

The thief, who had jet black hair, ran up a small nearby stone arch bridge and examined the contents of the bag. He averted his eyes from the bag to see the two friends running desperately up the bridge to catch up with him. He went out of control and accidentally dropped the bag in the river. Badr and the boy arrived just in time to see the bag sinking underneath the surface of the water.

The black-haired boy, who also looked the same age as Badr, stood up and gave both of them an impolite frown while narrowing his jade green eyes. He shrugged and walked away.

The golden-haired kid was now on the edge of the bridge, looking anxiously for his bag. Badr had a sudden idea. He started taking off his shoes. The boy stared at him with a look of confusion.

“I can swim,” Badr smiled, ready to jump in the water. Badr’s rash actions surprised him and he couldn’t understand why Badr would go that far to get him his bag.

“No, don’t! You’ll drown!”

“It’s fine. I know how to swim in the deepest waters. I’ll get your bag in no time.” And with that, he dived into the water.

The boy sat down on the bricks and looked at his watch. What would he do if Badr didn’t come back? He couldn’t swim. Should he just stay in his place and wait? Why was he so concerned about Badr now?

He was suddenly scared. “No! Badr!” he stood up. “Badr! Come back! No need for
the bag!"

A few minutes of fear passed and Badr still didn’t appear. The boy was very worried so he gathered Badr’s belongings and ran down the bridge until he reached the landscape.

Badr dived deep in the water while trying to find the bag. He popped his head up to take another breath then dived back in. Badr reached for the bag with all his might. When he finally got hold of it, he swam up. “Got it!” he breathed as he drifted his head out of the water. He swam back to the shore and the boy helped him out.

“Thank you so much. You don’t know how important the things in my bag are to me. Thank you very, very much,” he said gratefully as Badr handed him the soaked bag.

Badr grinned, “No problem! I was just trying to help you because you helped me earlier.”

The boy smiled. “Call me Yousef.”

“Okay, Yousef, let’s go back to the airport!”

And the two friends walked back to the crowded airport.

Sarah is a petroleum engineering junior student at Texas A&M at Qatar. She was born in the UAE, then moved with her family to Qatar when she was about a year old. Although she is Syrian, she has spent 18 years of her life in Qatar. She has enjoyed drawing ever since she was five years old. She also likes arts and crafts like decorating objects and frames, coloring using digital programs, and of course, writing. She has written a book with her sister, Mystical Journey: A New Beginning, and has published it on a website called Wattpad.
I initially wrote this paper as part of my English 104 assignments. It began as an assignment but after a few changes I saw that this paper spoke to me. I saw a reflection of myself on that paper. It told a story about how I chose, or was forced to choose, a path for my future. It began with me contemplating every choice, then life nudging me every time and swaying me to where she commanded. Ending up here...

I love my final product and I appreciate my professor's support when I told her I was going to submit my piece to Best Writing for she provided me with all the guidance I needed. After all, I ended up as an Aggie in Qatar.

An Aggie in Qatar

When I was a kid, my parents bought cable TV (OSN), and I was introduced to the Discovery Channel. I would stay up late at night to see Physics of the Impossible, featuring Dr. Michio Kaku. I was awed, baffled by the possibilities and wonders of physics and engineering. Fair to say I was the kid who was hated by every science teacher as I used to ask about Einstein's and Newton's laws in class, in fourth grade to be specific. So of course, my teachers never paid me any attention; how can you explain relativity to a ten-year-old? I barely understand it now!
Sitting in the living room with my father at our house and my laptop on my lap, smiling every time he laughs at his phone, with an open window at my right blowing a breeze singing in my ear messing my hair, for one reason and one reason only: I am home, no matter what I wait for, if anything. I reached this point by following a few paths, voluntarily or involuntarily I reached this point as an Aggie in Qatar. There is barely a here, a now, a then; it is what I chose to make stand out and I did. HERE I am at my home, and here I will stay... or not, for who am I to impose what life can do to me? I have a single choice now: wait and see.

Abdulla Al-Tamimi believes things are unfolding for him as an Aggie in A&M.
My first draft of my literacy narrative talked about my love-hate relationship with reading and writing, and its evolution over the years. My professor liked the piece, but afterwards we had a conversation about football. It was at that time when she told me that I should make football the topic of my literacy narrative. I was surprised at first, because to me, the definition of literacy was merely reading and writing. However, after thinking about all the football strategies that players use, and the ‘hidden’ rules that no one can simply spot, I knew what my professor was talking about. This piece is something that has become extremely valuable to me. Whenever I look through it and read it, I feel like I’ve become a better writer, which is a great achievement to me. Of course, this wouldn’t have been possible if it wasn’t for the constant support from my professor.

The Hidden Rules of Football

When thinking about literacy, the first things that come to mind are reading and writing. Well, that is not a surprise because actually, they are the obvious and general definitions of literacy. We never quite get the chance to look at the ‘hidden’ ones.

I have always been passionate about football ever since I was a young boy with a lisp. My grandma used to keep me awake all night to watch Egyptian League games. This is what led me to become a fan of one of the most successful clubs in Egypt, Al Ahly. After watching football for a long time and playing it as well, I became attached to it. Because of that, I have established that football is not simple. In order to be considered a professional, one must not only know how to kick a ball and where to score, but also have a profound understanding of the game.

Football, like all other games, has a certain set of rules. For example, tackling a player without touching the ball and touching the ball with your hand (known as a “handball”) are considered to be fouls. However, these are pretty clear and obvious. Things become more complex when we talk about “offsides.” The reason for that is because it takes a little bit of experience to understand when an offside occurs. For example, when I first started playing football, I had no idea what an offside call meant. Whenever I was watching the game and saw the players stop and watch the referee pull out a flag, I was puzzled. I was frustrated because I thought that that was nonsense! With experience, I understood the meaning of an offside; it is a crucial element in football. Even though I discovered what it was, I could not apply that knowledge while playing football. As I mentioned before, offside are extremely vital and tricky in football. As a simple and inexperienced football fan, I might think that it is quite easy for defenders to know when the opposition is in an offside position. However, as I became more acquainted with the game, a question hit my mind: why do professional attackers get in the offside position, even though they actually understand its meaning? Well, the reason for that lies in the defender’s strategies; in this case, it is the offside trap. The defenders basically move forward in a line and keep the attacker behind them, forcing him to be in the offside position. The last time I checked, the offside trap was not written in the football rules. If defenders are incapable of applying that strategy, they will not get into any football team.

I have always heard people talking about the team captain when I was young, yet I did not have a clear idea of the use of one. A captain to me was just the guy who wore the number 10 jersey. When we look at the definition of the team captain superficially, he is the player with the greatest experience and usually the oldest player on the team. That is true, but then again, it’s not abundant. The team captain must have specific and unique characteristics. Some of these characteristics are hidden and cannot be easily identified or observed. Leadership is one of the most significant elements of a captain. The capability of leading the players and telling them what to do enables the captain to acquire a strong personality. We do not see this when we watch the games. I actually thought it was quite odd when a player started shouting at his teammate; I thought they were fighting! In fact, the captain shouts at his players to motivate them and increase their passion in the game. Well, some captains believe that it is enough to just give players some orders or commands in order to be a proper leader. However, most of the time that does not work. By yelling and shouting, the captain helps increase the players’ motivation and passion. It even involves the player in the game more. Therefore, the captain acts as a motivator and a leader at the same time. Passion is another indispensable aspect of the team captain. The captain has to love his team solely in order to be capable of working towards its success.
In my school football team, I was the team captain in one of our games; it was an unforgettable experience. I did not just get the ball and pass it around and run and try to score; these were just the simple and trivial tasks; communication was critical. I had to make the defenders get in position when there was a counter attack. Whenever a player makes a mistake, I cheer him up and motivate him to keep up the good work. Otherwise, the performance of the team will deteriorate and thus we would lose the game. Being a captain felt extremely different; the win was so important to me that there was no possible way of losing. I played with a lot of passion and made sure that all the team had good communications with each other. There was not any sort of rules that I had to follow while being a captain; it was just natural and spontaneous.

We usually refer to the people who sit and watch the games in the stadiums as football fans or spectators. They are the backbone of every single football team. Without the fans, any team would be like a wingless bird. I, myself, am an old fan of the Egyptian club Al Ahly. In the beginning, I thought I just had to watch all of their games and just cheer for them in order to be considered a fan. As it turns out, this was not even close to enough. Over the years my love for the team grew rapidly and I became more aware of the roles of a football fan. I did not go and search for the rules of being a football fan; it just grew on me. However, there are some hidden rules that every football fan must follow. My club had various and diverse stages, many ups and downs. Regardless of the stage, I always gave my full support to the team. Two years ago, we finished the season without any trophies; this was unacceptable and disrespectful in the name of the club. Al Ahly is known for its extensive and enormous trophy case with at least three trophies per season. Despite all of this, I did not give up on my team and believed that improvement was destined. I was right; four trophies were achieved in the next season. If everyone gave up on the team and stopped giving them support at that time, then the next season would have been catastrophic. On the whole, the fans are like the 12th player in the squad. Without this player, the team would be incomplete and will always struggle, and eventually crumble. The fans create an image for the team that they support. For example, a year ago, some football fans threw a banana on a football player; that is an absurd act of racism. As a result, the team was fined and the fans were banned from attending the next four games. Even though the team was not responsible for the acts of the fan, they were fined for their actions. In addition to this, the team's reputation vitiated. The fans must understand that they carry a huge responsibility, which is their team. Al Ahly is known for their loyal, respectful, and passionate fans because of their actions in the stadium. The last time I went and watched their game, I could not speak after the game ended; my voice was gone. The fans displayed an extraordinary poster full of creative graphics representing the team. This showed that the fans are elegant and lovable. As a result, the team gained respect from their opposition.

Strong relationships and bonds are often the result of football: my grandmother and I stand out as a great example. After watching all those games with her, we became extremely attached. We always talk to each other after any Egyptian League game, complain about the referee, throw some accusations at the coach, and congratulate each other after a massive win! She raised me till I was four and has shown me great care up to this day. My most exciting moment is when I see her in the Doha Airport arrival terminal, and a shed of tears appear on my cheeks when she is at the immigration office. I believe that our football passion and love for Al Ahly has built a strong foundation for our relationship; that is the beauty of football.

El Clásico, which refers to the game between the two Spanish rivals Madrid and Barcelona, is overwhelming and hugely popular. An amazing 65% or even more of the world's population watch this game, even if they hadn't watched football for the entire year! I do not cheer for either teams, yet it is impossible for me to miss such an important match. There is some sort of a positive atmosphere on that specific day; everyone meets up together at their homes or at restaurants and cafes to watch the match. A year ago, my friends and I were in the middle of our final exams; nevertheless, we forgot about all our studies and went out for the El Clásico gathering. Our strong desire for the game brought us together and created a pleasant and flashy ambience. It is like football repays us for the passion and love we constantly portray by bringing everyone together at an event like El Clásico.

Who would have thought that there were football literacies? We always think that football is just a game with a set of rules to follow. I have always believed that if we think outside the box and take a different look at a concept or an idea, we will be able to identify new information. Football literacy is one of the important examples in my life. Because of my strong passion for football and my great experience, it was inevitable that there has to be a deeper meaning of the game.

Seif El-Gazar, a Texas A&M at Qatar freshman in the Class of 2020, is majoring in electrical engineering. He is 18 years old, born and raised in Egypt, and has been living in Doha for the past 12 years. Both of his parents are electrical engineers and he has one sister who studies in the International School of Choueifat. His favorite hobbies are football, table tennis, and video games. Being successful is his goal, and he always aim for being the best in every situation, regardless of the difficulty. He believes that trying and failing countless times is a sign that he's on the right track.
This poem was written to show the world that our differences unite us rather than separate us. No one is born to recognize the differences in others. However, people are taught to hate, to discriminate, and disrespect other humans. No matter what ideology we live by and regardless of our ethnicity, we are all human. This poem is about a young Palestinian and a young Israeli; both are taught different stories of the conflict. Staring at each other for a second, both drift away to a peaceful world where an enemy becomes a friend. However, time passes and reality strikes back as soon as they both blink.

Enemies: For a Second

You looked at me and for a second
You forgot
For a second you forgot who we were
For a second
You forgot our roots
You forgot our struggle
You forgot what you were taught to embrace
For a second
You saw the similarities
You saw me as a human being
For a second
You put aside the hatred
You saw the bigger picture
For a second
You saw us equal
You saw me as a human
You put years of segregation behind us
For a second
You were my friend
But excuse me for blinking, my friend

Nadim Wahbeh is in his junior year of mechanical engineering. He is an international student, having been born in Bethlehem, Palestine, and living the majority of his life there. His family moved to the United States for four years (2001-2005) as a result of the Second Intifada War in the West Bank. During his time in Palestine, he became interested in writing because he found it an effective outlet for expressing his thoughts and opinions.
writing can advocate for change
OMAR HASNAH

Make a Change Wherever You Are

During the weekend I was walking with my family in Ezdan mall; however, it wasn’t like any other walk. On that day I had the pleasure of meeting Ghanim, who is one of my favorite Qatari influencers via Snapchat. I have been watching him since he started using Snapchat. Ghanim is a child who was born without the lower part of his body, so he uses his hands to walk, eat, and play. When I saw Ghanim that day, he was skate boarding using his hands, which made me fascinated to see how strong he is.

Even though Ghanim was born with a disability, he has managed to be successful in his life. His disability hasn’t stopped him, as he is continuing his studies and going to school like any other kid. In high school he was one of the top students academically. Though his disability requires him to undergo several surgeries yearly and take high doses of medication, he hasn’t stopped achieving things in his life. He made a change not only in his life but also in the lives of others, as he has inspired lots of people around the world to work hard and achieve even if they have disabilities. Thus I think that Ghanim has a tougher life and more struggles than what I have; yet I did not make change in this world like he did. It really does not matter where you are or how you were born; you always have the ability to change yourself or the things around you to make an impact in this world.

One of my main goals in life is to help as many people as I can and certainly kids who are the future. This goal started when my seventh grade teacher, Alaa Zaza, taught me that one of our responsibilities in this world is to help kids and people who are in need, such as people in Africa or even in Middle Eastern countries like Syria. He taught me that we could help these people by allowing the kids to continue their studies or through providing food and better healthcare. This could be achieved by either providing financial help to known charity groups or by going there and helping them personally.

People helping each other is a must in order to get peace and a better life. For me as a person on this planet, one of my main aims in life is to help people. And regarding the current situation, I see that Syria is the place in most need of help because of the huge number of orphans, the needy, and the refugees. All they need is a normal life like every other human being, to have shelter, food, education, and work. In order to provide a better future for their country after the war is over and to re-build their country, they need to be educated. Then, when the war is over Syria can flourish again. What makes me think about Syria is that Qatar is one of the most supportive countries for Syria, providing financial help to educate and to build shelters for refugees around the world.

Qatar has a big role nowadays in the political issues including the Syrian war. Qatar is seen as one of the fast developing countries, as it has growing structurally and educationally, as shown by the presence of top American universities here in Doha. Being born in Qatar is a blessing as it is a country that is known for achievements. Thus I think I have a chance of becoming a known person around Qatar for my good work and achievements. So my dream is to be known for something I did for my society that makes me memorable. This has been my dream since I have seen how remarkable my grandfather is and how he is leaving a stamp everywhere he goes.

In our culture in Qatar, if you are a part of a family, whatever you do gives a good or bad reputation on your whole family. This responsibility makes me keen for being that guy who gives his family a good reputation. But my number one goal is to give Qatar back everything great it has provided me: the highest education around the world with an open space to be creative. Qatar is the right place for my future and career, a place where everybody dreams of having a career. Qatar gives lots of opportunities for the employee to shine and to achieve goals with high income. Especially because I am a Qatari, Qatar gives me advantages and helps me in my career. In Qatar I can achieve more for myself and for others because of the opportunities provided to me. This will help me make my country a better place than it is right now with the help of the people and the government, which is already providing financial and moral support by giving us a reason to work. This support really has a reason behind it, as Qatar wants the people who are getting all these resources to help the country develop. So Qatar is giving people whatever they need to get an achievable country worldwide.
As an upcoming engineer who has a passion for his major, I want to become a well-known Qatari engineer for my unique work around the world. This will make my country, family and myself proud of who I am, not only for my unique work but also for the ways I use my engineering skills to help those in need. Thus I can achieve my aims in life and make my dreams come true by helping others and by building my beloved Qatar to become one of the most remarkable countries.

God created me with everything a person needs to be successful— from health to finances— unlike people with disabilities who are less in health but manage to be successful in their lives in spite of this.

Omar is a mechanical engineering freshman at Texas A&M University at Qatar.
This paper is a humanitarian crisis report regarding the refugee crisis. I wrote this report to show how engineers can develop affordable technologies to help refugees.

Using Humanitarian Engineering to Aid Syrian Refugees

The Syrian Refugee Crisis is one of the worst humanitarian crises the world has ever seen. It is a man-made humanitarian crisis that began after peaceful protests in 2011 were violently suppressed. This escalated to national unrest and a heavy civil war that has been going on since. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, families have been separated and communities have been destroyed. This war has lead to the biggest refugee crisis with 4.5 million Syrians fleeing the country to seek safer haven.

3D Printing Technology

The Syrian violence has led to loss of structure, from demolition of houses and equipment to loss of limbs and other body parts. By using 3D printing, there is hope to recover the lost. 3D printing is a new technology. It is a cost-efficient and sustainable technology which saves time. Using graphic design software such as SolidWorks, Engineers can develop the 3D sketch of the limbs and use bio-printing (3D printing) through fabrication laboratories to produce prosthetic limbs. It saves time compared to months of reconstructive surgery and skin grafts. 3D printing can also be extended to buildings. It takes only 24 hours to build a 3D house. The first laser printed house was designed by a Russian Engineer.
(Founder of Apis Cor) in which he built a 3D printed house in less than 24 hours and it cost him less than $10,000.

**Technology for Clean Water**

Refugees suffer from dehydration since they travel long distances by foot. Therefore, access to safe drinking water is vital for survival. Engineers can use innovative engineering to design purification products that can be used to get access to clean water. There are several water purifying filtration systems that are already developed by the engineering world. LifeStraw is a portable small-straw tube that can purify any water from disease-causing pathogens and bacteria. It is an affordable and user-friendly filtration system. From its design and architecture, the LifeStraw can save lives through its use.

**UV Filtration Bottles**

These containers use UV light rays for the water purification process. The process requires 2 minutes to filter any source of water. The filtration system is efficient as it removes 99.9% impurities from the water source. The filtration bottle can be used to drink clean water from any natural source of water.

**Water Purifying Bicycles**

The bicycle is an innovative, useful dual tool that can help Syrian refugees. The kinetic energy from the bike does the purification process of the water. Since the refugees travel long distances, this tool will allow the refugees to move at a greater speed with less fatigue while purifying their source of water.

**Light Energy to Improve Safety and Education**

Engineers have developed portable lighting systems that are powered by a solar battery. The lighting systems can range from solar-powered street lights to solar powered lamps. Use of sustainable energy is vital as this will cause less air pollution in the overcrowded camps. Engineered fuel-efficient cooking stoves release less gas which makes camps safer. These green-energy methods will improve the living standards of the Syrians.
Collaborative Humanitarian Organizations and Competitions
Organizations can generate humanitarian events to create a platform for innovative engineering students across the globe who can showcase their skills to design a product to aid the Syrian crisis. For example, the 3D Challenge competitions give engineering students the opportunity to renovate existing products or create new designs. ‘Hackathons’ and other technological collaborations in coding provides solutions to humanitarian problems. One example is developing an app for refugees to share their résumés in various languages with non-profit organizations to seek employment.

Tracking Devices for Families
Fleeing a disaster zone can be chaotic. The use of tracking devices can help members of a family stay together and prevent children from getting lost during travel. A personal GPS tracking device can be compact and convenient and utilized to protect valuable items since theft is common in the refugee camps. The tracker can be navigated using a simple phone application.

Social Media Platforms
In this time and age, social media is the most powerful tool for change on a global level. Social forums such as Facebook and Twitter can be used as an aid for the Syrian Refugee crisis. This social movement allows the people from all corners of the world to pressure their National Governments to ease border security and provide basic human rights to refugees. Social media allow users from around the world to gain knowledge about the Engineering applications that can act as a Humanitarian aid for the Syrians.

Zaid Kamil is a chemical engineering student, Class of 2020. He is a Sri Lankan born and raised in Oman. He wants to use his knowledge to help the underserved communities. He believes that everyone should be equally treated regardless of his/her race, gender, and social status. He also believes that future Aggie engineers will follow the path to save humanity by attending to the environment.
Love is Stronger Than Death

Media create framing concepts which most viewers follow and hence are influenced about specific situations. They are the main source of information in war situations in third world countries (due to the lack of reliable international agencies), influencing how viewers form their opinions and beliefs. During the Arab spring, media played an instrumental role in affecting the outcome of the revolution. The side towards which the media were biased usually won which demonstrates the heavy influence and power that media has (Lam). The leaders of Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya all fell mercilessly; the only country whose leader still hasn't fallen is Syria. For six years now, Bashar Al-Assad, with the help of the Russian army, managed to remain in control despite immense Western media biased towards the rebels and portraying the Syrian government as tyrannical. The Syrian government-controlled media, on the other hand, displays the war as a fight against terrorism. The conflict has caused devastating ramifications on the infrastructure of Syria, as well as on the Syrian people themselves, leaving almost thirteen million citizens as refugees (“Syrian”).

The picture below taken by Joseph Eid published in The Atlantic online magazine on February 5th, 2016, shows a newlywed couple posing for wedding pictures amongst the rubble in the city of Homs (Eid). When interviewed by photographer Meray on ABC, Eid said that he and the newlyweds wanted to show that life is stronger than death (Tan). Homs was the stronghold of rebels during the first two years of the revolution, and this picture was taken there after Assad announced the city recaptured and safe (Drury). This picture could be considered propaganda used by the Syrian government to show Syrians that life and happiness will return, giving them hope of a better tomorrow. The rhetor in this picture is the soldier from the Syrian army as he tries to apologize or beg his bride, a stand in for the audience, to accept him which is shown by his kneeling position and the bouquet of white flowers in his outstretched hand.

Eid, Joseph. Newlywed Syrian couple pose for a wedding picture, August 2012

This picture might have been published by the Syrian government to show that there is hope for Syria after all the war and fight on terrorism ends. The bride with the white dress might represent the bright future of Syria, and the soldier could be making a peace offering with the white roses as if apologizing for the damage he and his colleagues did to the future of this generation, as around 3000 Syrian kids were killed in 2016 alone and many others have no access to education (“Death”). The juxtaposition between the beautiful white bride and the ruins behind her portray the difference between Syria’s present conditions and her possible future. Her beautiful dress hasn’t been stained by the rubble and debris around her which might show that the present could be forgotten and erased by a better future. However, the absence of children, people, and family to share this beautiful occasion indicates that it is too late for the current generation to see this future. The bride has her hand on her head as if she is thinking of accepting this proposal; I believe this reflects that Syria might have a difficult time forgiving her people for all the blood from both sides of the fight that flooded her streets. The militant’s kneeling position indicates that he is in a place of weakness, and that despite all the weapons he might have, he has no
power in front of her. Moreover, the bride is wearing her most expensive jewelry and her most beautiful makeup as if she has been waiting for this day for years, just like Syria has been waiting six years for its citizens to wake up and to stop fighting each other and make peace with one another and with her, the country of Syria. The soldier doesn't have any weapons on him which suggests that the fighting days are over and that they will re-build Syria hand by hand, building bridges over the past.

The Syrian government, the rhetor in the propaganda image, is trying to use both ethos and pathos to convince the viewers that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that Syria will go back to how it used to be. Scholar Linda Timmerman discusses that pathos and ethos in her article “Rhetorical Dimensions of Teaching Effectiveness” as rhetorical methods used to convince readers of a certain topic. She defines pathos as arousing emotion within the targeted audience while ethos is persuasion achieved by appealing to the ethics of the community as well as the person's character which makes him believable (Timmerman 4-6). This image appeals to the ethics and morals of the audience as marriage photoshoots are usually done around flowers and beautiful scenery; however, by capturing this image with the destroyed city behind them, the photo portrays that the current situation in Syria is morally wrong and there needs to be a cooperative solution to end it. The image also uses pathos by capturing the couple's resilience to destruction and their hope for a bright future as they insisted on having this background to make the statement that love is stronger than death.

I relate to this image because it happened in my home country which has been taken away by force, and all I can do is watch it slip away from me. I personally interpreted this image in this symbolic way because it arose feelings of nostalgia to go back to the old times, and hope for a solution for what is going on in Syria. I want it to represent the future I described; I want Syria to go back to the way it was, I want brothers to stop fighting brothers. I need my Syria back. My Syria.

Works Cited


NADIM WAHBEH

This research paper was written in 2015 for my ENGL 104 class. Our professor required us to choose an artist to write a research paper about. The artist I chose was Banksy because I’m very familiar with his works. Banksy manages to portray his political opinion using art, especially graffiti. Banksy has managed to bring attention to the Syrian Refugee crisis, poverty, Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, and many more. Banksy continues to use art in a striking fashion, with his latest work being ‘The Walled off Hotel’ in Bethlehem, Palestine.

Banksy: An Image Worth a Million Words

When people think of the word art, then things like drawing, painting, dancing, acting, or other performing arts may come to mind. However, there is one key aspect that truly defines art and that is self-expression. Throughout time, people have found various ways to express themselves, typically through art forms. However, past art categories were not enough for some people to fully deliver a powerful message. Therefore, subcategories of art, such as street art, have emerged. Of course, with the emergence of street art, we saw the hidden talent of many artists such as Banksy. Banksy is a popular figure whose work has been known to deliver extremely powerful political and social messages. There are some people who haven’t heard of Banksy, but they probably have seen images of his graffiti work, which uses strong imagery to convey his opinion with the modern world. Banksy’s artwork ranges from Europe, to the Middle East, and U.S.A. His work has been influential and inspired many people to make this world a better place. Banksy’s disgust with the modern world had led him to highlight injustice and spread awareness throughout the globe. Despite the artist’s anonymity, many writers have published books analyzing Banksy’s works which usually carry a sarcastic and mocking tone. Furthermore, a popular figure is not popular without having haters. There are many people who believe that Banksy’s work is not a form of art, but instead, is pure vandalism. Although targeted by many people around the world, Banksy has kept doing what he’s best at. This paper will discuss how the street artist Banksy has used graffiti as a powerful and influential weapon to deliver messages to a world blinded by the truth.

“Free expression is the base of human rights, the root of human nature and the mother of truth. To kill free speech is to insult human rights, to stifle human nature and suppress truth” (Xiabo, 2012). Freedom of expression has become a crucial and fundamental human right in today’s world. Ideas, innovations, information, and opinions are among the few rights that fall under the freedom of expression. The freedom to express one’s opinion without having a government or party interfere has been one of the most contemporary and controversial issues. However, people have overcome this obstacle by finding various methods to express their opinions and help in the development of society. One of the ways that people express their feelings and opinions is through art. Focusing on the visual forms of art such as paintings, graffiti, and sculpture, the beauty of art is that it is very diverse and can be read and interpreted differently. Art has advanced with time, generating major sub-categories, such as graffiti. Graffiti, derived from the Greek word graphein which literally means ‘to write,’ has played an essential role in helping people express their opinions and views on occurrences and issues from the past to the present. Street art graffiti has emerged in recent years as an influential form of expression and a critical element in raising political and social awareness. This essay will focus on explaining how a particular artist, Banksy, succeeded in painting an occupation that includes social, political and economic struggles of a community.

With the rise of street art, talented graffiti artists have surfaced. One artist who goes by the name ‘Banksy’ has successfully caught media attention, gaining international recognition and reputation for his street art which mainly consists of graffiti. From the beginning of his career, Banksy has managed to portray his opinion in the form of graffiti, while still maintaining his anonymous identity. According to Tristan Manco, in his book “Home Sweet Home”, Banksy ‘was born in 1974 and raised in Bristol, England. Being the son of a photocopyer technician, he trained as a butcher but became involved in graffiti during the great Bristol aerosol boom of the late 1980s’ (120). Since graffiti work is considered illegal in some places such as Bristol, Banksy adopted his title as ‘Banksy’ to protect himself from the legal authorities. Banksy initially started his street art career as a free-hand graffiti artist for Bristol’s ‘DryBreads Crew’ along with two other local crew members, who managed to portray their opinion through the form of
Banksy's form of graffiti has been used to draw attention and raise awareness for political and social injustice. By being an extremely popular graffiti artist, Banksy is able to draw public attention and raise awareness through his graffiti images. One notable political issue that Banksy has managed to highlight is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the world's major sources of instabilities, which has been described as the world's 'most intractable conflict' (Munayer, p.162). Nonetheless, despite the on-going conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, biased media across the world has failed to portray the truth of this historical conflict; hence, not many people across the world are aware of the Palestinian struggle.

Being an active and non-violent supporter for the Palestinians, Banksy used his talent to reflect his views on the Palestinian current struggles. Banksy visited the West Bank of Palestine in 2005, aiming to draw public attention. Banksy was able to create nine images on Israel's highly controversial separation wall, expressing his political stance in his own, unique style. In his book, 'Banksy: The Man Behind the Wall,' Will Ellsworth-Jones described these paintings: “everything good about Banksy was on display in these paintings. They made his point about the awfulness of the wall, but they made it in a subtle way, far better than any slogan could. They were very specific to the site; they were poignant and there was no need to walk into a gallery to see them” (Jones, 2012, p.129). The images on the wall are Banksy's creative approach for raising political awareness about the dangerous conditions that Palestinian people are coping with. Moreover, Banksy used his popularity over the internet as a weapon to enlighten and raise awareness about the separation wall. For example, one way Banksy managed to raise awareness is by publishing pictures on his personal website of the separation wall paintings, which display political comments and symbolize hope, freedom, innocence, and love.

In 2015, Banksy visited Palestine once again, and Gaza in particular. Banksy wanted the world to see the true harsh reality Gazans undergo and for “those around the world to take a closer look at the real people affected by the ongoing Palestinian Israeli conflict” (Banksy, 2015). The recent war on Gaza in 2015, according to the UN, resulted in 96,000 Palestinian homes being destroyed and left 2,000 Palestinians dead (Dearden). Therefore, Banksy felt the need to highlight this injustice and raise awareness regarding the horrible situation following the Israel-Gaza war. On his personal website, Banksy notes that Gaza is often described as “the world's largest ‘open air prison’ because no one is allowed to enter or leave” and adds “but that seems a bit unfair to prisons—they don’t have their electricity and drinking water cut off randomly almost everyday” (Banksy).

One way Banksy managed to deliver powerful and meaningful political messages is with graffiti on the ruins and remains of demolished Palestinian homes (Myles). One notable work by Banksy in Gaza represents a white cat (see Appendix A). The image of the white cat is made as a statement of the world’s indifference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Describing the image, Banksy wrote on his website: “A local man came up and said ‘Please— what does this mean?' I explained I wanted to highlight the destruction in Gaza by posting photos on my website—but on the internet, people only look at pictures of kittens” (Banksy). Furthermore, to ensure that the world understands what Palestinians in Gaza have to go through on a daily basis, Banksy published a short video sarcastically promoting Gaza as the ‘ultimate destination’ (Bryant). By sarcastically “promoting all the unique and exciting things one can do in Gaza,” Banksy emphasizes the struggle, disaster, and aftermath of the war on Gaza (Lazic).

It is essential to recognize that the artwork of Banksy goes beyond the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In 2014, Banksy shared an image on his website of a Syrian girl releasing a balloon in the shape of a heart to mark the third anniversary of the Syrian civil war (see Appendix B), which has killed thousands of innocent men, women, and children. Furthermore, Banksy sided with innocent Syrians by releasing an awareness campaign for the victims of the Syrian war. By using the hashtag #WithSyria on social media, Banksy aims to spread the awareness campaign and help support the innocent victims of this conflict (Beer). Another approach Banksy took included displaying a replica model of the Syrian boat which sank in September 2015, killing hundreds of Syrian asylum seekers (see Appendix B). In his temporary theme park, ‘Dismaland,’ aimed to distress people from Disneyland’s fantasy; Banksy included “miniature migrant boats and dead bodies” (Green). The migrant boats are fully controlled by the visitors of Dismaland. In his article in The Independent, Chris Green describes this experience by saying: “In front of me, a small remote-control boat packed full of migrants starts to make its way across the water in front of the white cliffs of Dover. Their faces are permanently turned towards me as I clumsily ferry them across the pond, dodging floating bodies and steering around aimlessly. The experience is deeply unsettling” (Green). Therefore, by providing a model of the boat, Banksy emphasizes the Syrian struggle and his disgust with the world’s silence.
Banksy's artwork is not limited to political injustice; he also raises awareness of social issues. In his book *Banksy: Wall and Piece*, Banksy writes that “the greatest crimes in the world are not committed by people breaking the rules, but by people following the rules. It's people who follow orders that drop bombs and massacre villages. As a precaution to never committing major acts of evil, it is our solemn duty never to do what we're told. This is the only way we can be sure” (Banksy). One of the social issues that Banksy was able to portray is poverty. In an exhibition in 2006, Banksy included a live elephant covered in pink and gold paint (see Appendix D). By placing the elephant in a ‘mocked-up’ house, Banksy was able to raise awareness on how world poverty is widely ignored (Bowes). Not only that, but in 2006 Banksy left his mark in Disneyland after he successfully delivered a social injustice and awareness message. Banksy was able to place a dummy resembling a Guantanamo Bay detainee inside the ‘Big Thunder Mountain Railroad ride,’ causing major uproar among Disneyland officials (Carey). According to BBC, a spokeswoman for Banksy commented on this incident: “The stunt was intended to highlight the plight of terror suspects at the controversial detention centre in Cuba” (BBC). This move by Banksy captured the attention of many people at Disneyland that day, which caused officials to shut down the ride and parts of the park (Carey). Another social issue Banksy emphasizes is modern technology. In his artwork piece titled ‘Mobile Lovers’ (see Appendix C), Banksy warns people to be conscious of what they’ve been spending their time on. Brianna Johnson interprets this piece by commenting, “What Banksy is implying here is: nothing that exists on a screen in more important than what is happening right in front of us. By being constantly preoccupied, we could miss out on meaningful opportunities and connection with others’ (Johnson).

Not only did Banksy’s artistic work raise political, social and economic awareness, but it also influenced a large number of artists and non-artists. Banksy had an influence on Egypt, in particular, during the Egyptian revolution in 2011. In her book *The Role of the Visual in Political Struggle*, Link Khatib mentions that street art plays a huge role in the Egyptian revolution, saying that street art “made visual expression a key tool in political protest, catalyzing the use of street art in other revolutions that followed in the Arab world, such as in Libya and Syria” (Khatib, 2012, 299). Banksy’s graffiti carrying political messages influenced young men and women to use graffiti as a weapon of self expression. For example, one graffiti image, which was used to protest against Egyptian military violence, represents an original image of a girl in a blue bra being beaten up by the Egyptian military during a protest in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt. The image of the female protester is a clear sign of the abuse and violence of the Egyptian military; therefore, this image quickly caught the attention of Egyptian artists and non-artists, who stenciled the blue bra to symbolize the corruption and acts of violence against innocent women (see Appendix F). This style of stenciling could be seen as an Egyptian adaptation of Banksy’s style in conveying powerful messages. Furthermore, in response to the military violence against innocent people, Egyptian students took to the streets in an awareness campaign involving graffiti. The group of students used Banksy’s style of stenciled graffiti to raise awareness about violence in the region (see Appendix H). Furthermore, Banksy did not only influence Egyptians during the Egyptian revolution, but also inspired street art in Norway. An artist who goes by the name ‘Skurktkur’ adopted Banksy’s style to deliver social comments; “Skurktur’s street art is teeming with social commentary and satire, which is in keeping with the M.O. of the great Banksy himself” (Rayner). It is clear that Banksy’s unique style has been influential, inspiring people to use stenciled graffiti to raise awareness and express their social and political opinion.

Although Banky’s art is well appreciated by many people, it is not viewed as art by many people for various reasons. In 2013, New York Mayor Bloomberg criticized Banksy, saying that graffiti is not his definition of art and is a sign of decay and lost control (Wang). Bloomberg believes that Banksy is a vandal who destroys other people’s property. Furthermore, there are several people who have criticized the way Banksy uses art to deliver a message. In 2006, Banksy provoked anger after he painted an elephant to highlight the issue of world poverty and injustice. The Los Angeles Animal Services Department was first to react to this act, describing it as animal abuse. The head of the Animal Services department, Ed Boks, described this frivolous act by saying, “I think it sends a very wrong message that abusing animals is not only okay, it’s an art form. We find it no longer acceptable to dye baby chicks at Easter, but it’s okay to dye an elephant” (Boks). Although Banksy is an important and influential figure, there are some people who believe that his style of sending a message does more harm than good.

Ever since he started his graffiti career in Bristol, Banksy has been catching media and public attention with his graffiti images, carrying powerful political and social messages. Throughout his career, Banksy was able to use graffiti as an awareness weapon, which ironically has criticized the real weapon used against innocent people across the world. Furthermore, Banksy not only raised awareness, but he also inspired people to adopt his style and continue spreading the truth to the world. For example, the rise of street art in the Middle East can be attributed to Banksy, who set a great example to rising artists. Despite many people believing that his work is vandalism, Banksy has and will continue to succeed in getting more minds across the world to think about the devastation happening around us.
Appendix

Appendix A: ‘The White Cat'

Appendix B: ‘Syrian Girl with Balloon’

Appendix C: ‘Mobile Lovers’

Appendix D: ‘Banksy’s Painted Elephant’
Appendix E: ‘Banksy’s Syrian Migrant Boat Replica’


Appendix F: ‘The Girl in the Blue Bra stenciled’

http://designandviolence.moma.org/blue-bra-graffiti-bahia-shehab/

Appendix H: ‘The Girl in the Blue Bra stenciled’

http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3736/far-outside-cairo_a-graffiti-campaign-to-denounce-

Sources:


za-graffiti-fuels-social-justice/


Nadim Wahbeh is in his junior year of mechanical engineering. He is an international student, having been born in Bethlehem, Palestine, and living the majority of his life there. His family moved to the United States for four years (2001-2005) as a result of the Second Intifada War in the West Bank. During his time in Palestine, he became interested in writing because he found it an effective outlet for expressing his thoughts and opinions.
Introduction
Donald J. Trump is a person few people took seriously until he was put in a position to implement laws that terrorize millions of people inside the U.S. and outside of it. He has been considered a fascist, a racist, a sexist and practically an inhumane person by a great many people. He has proven that he works poorly with other world leaders. He passed orders that are unconstitutional, he objectifies women, he dehumanizes refugees, he corners religious and ethnic groups into hateful stereotypes, and he is a liar who sends his correspondents to attack every person who opposed him. But this piece of writing isn't about Trump; it's about the people who elected him to office. The community I chose to study is Trump supporters, or what I've recently referred to as Trump-nation. The reasons why I gravitated towards this community are my wonder and curiosity on why anyone would vote for him. Supporting him would mean supporting his racist ideals and outlandish solutions to dire problems. I took this issue personally as a young woman in the Middle East as my rights to communicate with the world are being slowly abused. I remember the exact moment the election results were announced. I was stricken with a sinking feeling, and hope was the hardest thing to find. The university was in a temporarily mute state. I spent the rest of that day looking for answers as I recalled all the hateful words that were spoken by Trump. What is my place in the world, what is the place of millions of Americans who have been discriminated against by Trump, and most curiously what drove millions of people to support him? So, I decided to interview several members of Trump-nation to get a more personal view on why they chose a man so controversial to run their country. I wanted to discover what ideals unify them as a community. This task demanded that I temporarily abandon any previous perceptions and prejudices, and to adopt an open mind-set to truly understand the stance millions of people have taken.

Methods
The list of ways Trump supporters communicate are various, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Fox news, Rallies, and websites such as alt-right and other right-leaning news sites. Although this information built a base of how I perceive Trump-nation, what would really challenge me to accept their views is personally interviewing some of his supporters. A Trump-nation member is a person who believes in most of his policies, defends them, and most importantly voted for Donald Trump. Having gone to the summer Italy trip with thirty Texas A&M main campus honor students who mostly voted for Trump, I decided to ask these people I know and whose opinions I value. What would make analyzing these interviews of my friends different from looking at other sources is that I have come to know these people and grew to like and respect them despite their political views, so I wouldn't be inclined to pass judgment so easily. The interviews took place almost a week after Trump implemented his Muslim-Ban, and I wanted to see if there was a clear difference between their support for him as a candidate and then as a president.

Findings
I interviewed three members of Trump-nation: J., P., and B. When I asked “Why did you vote for and support him?” their responses included, “He is not Hillary”; “He speaks his mind”; “He’s an outsider,” and “Not Hillary. Not Now.” P. added, “Initially I didn’t vote for him, but when it came down to him and that she-devil, I decided that someone who willingly lets American soldiers die, lies pathologically, and supports the murder of unborn children is not the person I want to run for this country.”

I believe that many had reason to vote for him due to the media’s criminalization of Hillary Clinton. Early in the race Hillary had an email scandal that was well-covered, to say the least. Trump played a significant role in this demise, clinging to this story as he rallied his supporters against her, calling her “crooked Hillary” as the crowds chanted “lock her up!”

P. ’s response brought to light the modern concerns of some Republicans who now represent Trump-nation, which is patriotic, pro-military, and pro-life. He used vocabulary frequently repeated by Trump’s supporters. An example of
that is when he called Hillary “a pathological liar” and said that she supported “murder of unborn children.” Trump spoke about both issues in various debates in opposition of Hillary's values, even stating that “with what Hillary is saying, in the ninth month, you can take the baby and rip the baby out of the womb of the mother just prior to the birth of the baby.” Making these outlandish comments, Trump has brought validation to many ideals modern Republicans believe. He made supporters like P. comfortable enough to speak of Hillary's Pro-choice stance in a matter that does not represent her actual stance.

Another reason why my interviewees voted for Trump is the language he uses as well as his beliefs. “He just says whatever he is thinking about and doesn't give you any bullshit” and “It was nice to have someone cut through the bullshit of trying to be politically correct all the time and say what's on his mind” are some of the comments about Trump's vocalism. Trump was never given the expectation of presidential behavior; he was the outsider who spoke his mind. His outgoing vocalism is what set him apart from the rest of the Republican candidates. Although some language that Trump uses is considered vulgar, Trump-nation sees him as someone who is brave enough to cross the border of “political correctness” set in the modern world. People have argued that political correctness is an attack on freedom of speech that is targeted towards white people, which Trump-nation is overwhelmingly composed of. I should mention that my experience with these students showed that they have a significant level of understanding when it comes to political correctness. Though they are politically expressive and right-leaning, when it comes to the Middle East, they spoke around me in a manner I wouldn't find offensive. So did Trump actually express what they are afraid to say? And if so what makes them reluctant to express it themselves to people like me?

Not only do my interviewees find Trump's language compelling, but they also favor the policies he presents as an outsider and business man. “Initially my support was based off the idea that Trump would be the best wrecking ball to break the Republican establishment, [with] which I had serious ideological differences,” said J. His ideas of Trump breaking the Republican establishment mirrored that of other Trump-nation members. The idea that the Republican establishment stance might have gotten weaker than it used to be came in 2013 when Republicans collaborated with Democrats on an immigration reform bill that would give unauthorized immigrants a rode to legal status. This came with backlash from a majority of Republicans, causing a gap of mistrust in Republican leaders as a majority of Trump voters were polled to believe that most illegal immigrants working in the U.S. should be deported. This was opportune for Trump when he ran in 2015 as a Republican outlier, and he gained enough supporters in the primaries to become the Republican nominee for president even with party leaders speaking out against him. As an arguably successful business man, Trump is an outsider to politics; in his supporters' views, he has not yet been tainted by the slump of a politician's aura. Most perceived his policies as great and believed he tackled what hadn’t had light shone on it before. Donald Trump might present an opportunity to members of Trump-nation of building a stronger, new Repub-

lican power with ideals that represent modern Republicans. J.’s personal belief in wrecking the establishment is explained by his belief that there will be chaos at the beginning, but in the end, results will show themselves, thus illustrating the idea that the ends justify the means.

Conclusion
My experience interviewing Trump supporters to better understand Trump-nation has been mentally challenging. I was put in the shoes of three white male millennial Trump supporters. I was forced to see a perspective I didn't believe existed, that the seemingly privileged can feel unheard. Apparently, the main issues bringing Trump supporters together were a hate of Hillary, Trump's vocalism, and the fact that he is a political outsider. However, the true and underlying reason is that many people had felt unheard and betrayed by their establishment for many years. Donald Trump arrived with Republican grounds perfectly fertile for him to plant his campaign. He gave controversial beliefs a ground to stand on.

By putting myself through this experience, I was better able to sympathize with Trump voters and understand why they chose him. Ironically, what made me so against Trump-nation is that they refuse to see the underprivileged perspective, but there I was not wanting to experience theirs. Where anger once fueled me after the election results, this anger is now replaced with an understanding of the situation and how Trump-nation was unavoidable. I am nowhere closer in calling myself a Trump-nation member than when I started this experiment, but at least I was left with clarity of why things took their path in the election, and why many came to support him. A question now lingering in my mind after my interview with Trump-nation is this: “Though hope for the best and mostly good intentions for yourself and country drove you to support Donald Trump, do you still support him after he has proven his incompetence in Office?”

Aisha Mohammed Al-Naemi is a freshman at Texas A&M at Qatar (Class of 2020). She attended high school at Al-Bayan secondary school for girls. She grew up with three brothers and one sister. She is an avid movie watcher, and a lover of books. She can recite the lines from Roman Holiday, You've Got Mail, and Casablanca. Her family has always displayed interest in politics, although her interest in the subject did not peak until the 2016 U.S. election. She has hope that she will be a better analyzer of Donald Trump's actions and why he won by the time of her graduation.
I had complete freedom when writing the Zombie Lives Matter piece for my ENGL 104 class as there were no restrictions. So this piece represents my style quite well outside of class.

Zombie Lives Matter

Since the early nineteenth century, *zombie*, a term of West African origin, has made multiple appearances in movies, novels, and mythology worldwide. Zombies are “reanimated” corpses that may appear lifeless or unconscious. Some African religions even attribute these creatures with witchcraft (Oxford, n.d.). It is well-known that the media is an effective tool to set stereotypes and prejudices in the minds of our societies. Among other minorities, zombies are a victim of this media machine. They are often portrayed as repulsive, horrific critters in movies and cartoons; they are killed and mutilated with no feelings of remorse. Although most people advocate this violence and support the cleansing of any zombies should they appear, this barbaric view must change. Zombies have a right to live and should no longer be massacred mindlessly. In fact, there are even times when you should feel guilty for killing zombies!

Opponents of zombie rights claim that they are inhuman entities that no longer have a sense of “self.” Therefore, they see no harm in killing them and disposing of their corpses. Moreover, they claim that whatever potential human component that remains in such a creature would rather be killed than live trapped as a zombie. Despite the convincing nature of these arguments on the surface, we need to be careful and think twice before killing zombies. Their innate humanity is undisputable. Zombies, by definition, are diseased and deranged humans. No matter what harm zombies cause, and no matter how repulsive they may seem, they used to be living, breathing people. Imagine having a family member who turned into a zombie; would you mercilessly kill them with no regard to their original identity? Additionally, admitting that zombies may have some little human touch left and calling for their death is outrageous. No matter the consequences or the situation, human lives should not be taken lightly.

Opponents also state that historically, humans have made bold decisions to eradicate any possible threat to our existence. Furthermore, they claim that human lives have been ended before for less ideal reasons like world wars and political conflicts. Therefore, the opponents allege that no matter how many zombies are killed, they still represent a threat and should be treated as such. This flawed analogy is partly caused by videos games and movies that have virtually desensitized us by stripping us of the guilt for all the violence we would commit in a zombie apocalypse. Killing another human whatever the reason, zombie or not, should still provoke a feeling of guilt. Horrible events like world wars and the unnecessary deaths of hundreds due to political instability should never be treated as a pretext to kill countless others in the name of “eliminating threats.” Additionally, opponents of zombie rights argue that zombies will never have any function or use in our societies. They state that zombies will always behave violently and will not be able to be adequately tamed or contained. This argument, however, disregards the plausible fact that zombies may be curable. Killing a zombie kills the person it used to be, which strips them of any chance of recovery. If a potential treatment was to be discovered, zombies might be able to return to their ordinary, human form. As such, killing zombies is, in all practicality, killing sick, struggling humans. It should be seen as no different than killing cancer patients or terminally ill people. It is unethical to dismiss the sick and elderly because they have no “function in our societies” and as such the same analogy applies to zombies.

Finally, opponents often state that zombies are unpredictable beings that may attack people or their private property. As a result, people are entitled to protect themselves and what they own from aggression and abuse. Opponents claim that protecting your property is a red line and even perfectly healthy humans face dire consequences for trespassing or assault. While this is true, zombies, unlike normal people, do not consciously control their actions; as such any harm they may inflict upon us is a result of their illness and killing them for “self-defense” is still killing an innocent, deranged being. It is understandable that people feel uneasy about this, but critical thinking and rational thought in this situation is necessary.
It is time for people to re-evaluate their views of zombies. Zombies should be seen as vulnerable entities begging for help, and not as dangerous killing machines that should be eradicated mindlessly. While opponents of zombies make relevant and valid claims about their unpredictable and violent nature, we should think rationally and reasonably without letting emotion take over. In the off-chance of a zombie apocalypse, people should show restraint and put their efforts into developing a cure or at least a better understand of the condition of the zombies. Quarantining and isolating zombies is an alternative solution that doesn't come with the moral and ethical dilemmas of killing them. It is critical that we handle this situation wisely! This is our chance as a species to redeem ourselves from the horrible atrocities we committed towards minorities in our dark past.

References

Skander Helali is an 18-year-old freshman electrical engineering student in the Class of 2020. He is a proud Tunisian who considers Qatar to be his second home. He loves writing about quirky and unconventional topics and enjoys satire, sarcasm and dark humor. He believes that he is often seen as silent in person, but that he is loud (sometimes obnoxious-ly) when he writes!
writing can engineer designs
Through working on this paper I gained the skill of analysis after I collected data from different sources such as interviews, surveys, and statistics and put them in a harmonic way that would make sense to readers. Likewise, I acquired the skill of revising and formulating sentences in a way that hooks the readers. Finally and most importantly, at the end of working on this paper, I was able to come up with a strong conclusion, out of more than one source, that includes great solutions and recommendations aiming to increase students' enrollment in the Petroleum engineering major at Texas A&M at Qatar. Conducting this research was a new and unique experience for me. I really enjoyed working on revising this paper to this extent. I think having such a coherent result made me more confident about myself and my writing skills.

Why Aren't More TAMUQ Students Majoring in Petroleum Engineering?

Introduction
Qatar's economy depends primarily on energy resources and crude oil in specific as a source of income; one of Qatar's achievements regarding this field is joining OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) in 1961 for its production of oil (“Organization”). In 2015, Qatar's production of oil was 1,531.80 barrels per day (“Qatar”). However, in the last two years the world oil market witnessed a drop in oil prices, leading to a drop in the world economy. Concurrently with this economical issue, another problem occurs in the educational sector regarding the petroleum field in Qatar. At Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ), where petroleum engineering is offered as a major, the number of students enrolled in petroleum engineering, after the drop in the oil prices, has decreased to 14.2% in 2016 (“Texas” 2).

This paper investigates the connection between the decrease in the number of students majoring in petroleum engineering currently at TAMUQ and the oil prices. In this research, I studied the reasons why students at TAMUQ are moving away from petroleum engineering. The chief reason behind doing this research is to gather student perceptions about why more students aren't majoring in petroleum engineering. I approached my topic by analyzing results gathered from surveying TAMUQ non-petroleum engineering students and faculty members of the petroleum department.

Methodology
I used two methods of collecting data: survey and interviews. I recorded the results of why more students here at TAMUQ are not becoming petroleum engineers by surveying non-petroleum students. In addition, I interviewed Dr. A and Dr. R, two petroleum faculty members at TAMUQ.

Survey
Students were asked to answer a 10 question survey that consists of 8 multiple choice and two short answer questions. The 3-minute survey for non-petroleum engineering students was sent by my ENGL104 professor via E-mail to non-petroleum engineering TAMUQ students. The survey was created using Survey Monkey website as it is free, easy to use, and very helpful when analyzing results. The survey was targeted for non-petroleum engineers, who represent the majority of TAMUQ students.

Interview with faculty members
Requests were sent to faculty members via E-mail in order to set a time for the interviews. All the interviews were conducted in the petroleum department in each member's office. Each interview was video recorded for review and to clarify the professors' points of view. All the faculty members were asked the same 5 short answer questions to see how similar or different were their points of view.

Results
Demographics of Survey Respondents:
Within 48 hours of sending the survey, 100 responses were received. Receiving 100 responses out of a total of 463 undergraduate students is nearly equal to a 22% response rate which is great. The percentage of female versus male participants was found to be nearly equal, 49.00% and 51.00% respectively. This ratio means the sample size is representative of the larger student body which is of 43% female and 57% percent male (“Texas” 2).
The targeted survey respondents were non-petroleum engineers; thus, I decided to exclude petroleum majors as participants because they are already convinced that petroleum engineering is the best major for them. As seen in Figure 1, the largest category of students surveyed are majoring in mechanical engineering (39.39%), followed by electrical and chemical engineering, 31.31% and 29.29% respectively. This result seems logical from the make-up of the whole student body, as there are more mechanical engineers than petroleum and chemical engineers. According to official enrolment data (“Texas” 5), there are 27% of students majoring in chemical engineering, and 13.4% are majoring in petroleum. These official statistics show that the survey sample is representative of the entire student body of 463 students.

Awareness of Engineering Majors at TAMUQ

I intended to find the link between student’s awareness of work done by engineers in their major and the work done by petroleum engineers. According to the data collected, survey respondents show more familiarity with the work associated with their own major than petroleum engineering (see Figures 2 and 3). Those numbers were expected, as they justify the reason why more students are not majoring in petroleum. However, what was not expected is to have such significant percentage of unfamiliarity of petroleum engineering (21%).

An interesting inference can be observed about why students aren't becoming petroleum engineers: “Awareness.” This led me to conclude that there is still room for education. If there were more awareness and outreach activities, then those 21% percent students who felt unfamiliar with petroleum engineering might have become petroleum engineers. Because of the unclear methods used to convince people to join petroleum, students may feel hesitant, uncomfortable, and confused which would lead them to move away from petroleum. This gap between the percentage of unfamiliarity between petroleum engineering and the other engineering courses offered at TAMUQ now makes sense. If students were more educated and directed to the details of petroleum engineering’s wider picture, then they might change their mind about majoring in petroleum and therefore more students will get enrolled in petroleum engineering yearly. However, students are also suffering from lack of awareness when coming to minoring in petroleum engineering. Based on the survey result, the majority of students (53.00%) are not aware that petroleum engineering is offered as a minor. The issue of awareness is a significant problem that contributes to the decrease in the number of students who get enrolled early. Petroleum engineering enrollment is decreasing yearly by about 1% (“Texas” 3) which is considered a remarkable difference within such a small community.

Why Few Students Are Majoring in Petroleum Engineering at TAMUQ

By asking respondents about the main reason they are not majoring in petroleum engineering, I provided various multiple choice answers to identify the most and least popular reasons. According to the data analyzed, 28% of students were concerned about the job opportunities, which was expected regarding the dip the economy has witnessed due to the drop in oil prices. Even though the high percentage of this answer seems obvious, I wanted to have a solid evidence of it before progressing as it represents a significant portion of the sample. Surprisingly, the percentage of students who picked “lack of awareness” was 9.18 %, which I considered significant because students were not willing to put effort in knowing what the petroleum major is about. If only those students were curious
Discussion of Results
Survey respondents commented repeatedly about “lack of awareness” which made me ask “Why?” I came up with a more specific version of my original research question, asking “Why are students suffering from a lack of awareness regarding the petroleum major in specific, rather than the other majors?” My hypothesis is that students are interested in visuals more than complicated words arranged in a PowerPoint. Students are hooked by watching experiments and real life situations which is hard to show in a petroleum major. Other majors tend to let students experience part of what they are going to master after graduating from college, either by experiments or by other visual aids. For instance, when I had my orientation here at TAMUQ, the petroleum department was given about 10 minutes to introduce their major, which is in my opinion not enough. However, for other engineering majors such as chemical engineering, the faculty were given about an hour and a half to show the freshmen an appealing chemical reaction where they were able to create clouds all over the room. Well, that cannot happen in a petroleum field as students will not be able to try even 1% of what petroleum engineering is about due to the locations that are remote and very specialized. Therefore, students cannot make sense of things that they have never seen or experienced; thus, they decide to step back from majoring in petroleum engineering and choose a clearer field.

However, after concluding that are students suffering from a lack of awareness of the field of petroleum engineering, I decided to find a solution by asking “How can we work on increasing students’ awareness about petroleum engineering and make them feel engaged?” and to suggest solutions that might help. One of the solutions I came up with is to provide students interested in joining TAMUQ with professional field trips before joining the university, such as visiting the reservoirs in order to bring petroleum engineering alive. In addition to that, the university might create activities such as requiring students to find clues about petroleum engineering and finally have the answer to a question which is related to petroleum, perhaps providing luxury gifts for the winners. By doing so, the students might feel motivated and encouraged to receive those fancy gifts and at the same time, the awareness of petroleum engineering major will become higher. Therefore, the number of students enrolled in a petroleum engineering field might increase.

Conclusion
After analyzing survey results and students’ perceptions behind their choice of not being a part of the petroleum engineering community, I was able to uncover the reasons behind their choices. I am happy now that I have reached my aim which is to understand students’ reasons of aversion to majoring in petroleum engineering, so now I can work on raising awareness so there are no more misconceptions about the petroleum engineering field. I believe Dr. A who is now spending his twelfth year of teaching at TAMUQ, when he says, “Oil industries goes through cycles. Recently oil companies are having cut backs and layoffs; thus they aren't hiring anymore. However, I am sure that the cycle is going to come back up and in two or three years, and petroleum engineering will become again the most attractive major.” And he added proudly, “I have seen this a number of times.” I would like to persuade the other students who feel that they are lacking awareness or are undecided between two majors to choose petroleum engineering because the oil prices will recover again most likely before

Petroleum Engineering Aspect

When I asked survey respondents if they have ever considered petroleum as a major, I expected to receive a higher percentage of students who will say no, and as expected this percentage was equal to 67%. In this question, I was more concerned about students who say no. When I further read the comments, I found out that what I have uncovered earlier was all related and logical. Students were suffering from lack of awareness, lack of interest and finally fear. I won’t go into details with lack of awareness and interest as I already mentioned these issues earlier. Instead, I will focus more on students’ fear. Students think of petroleum engineering as a limited field that is controlled by a single market that has no future with few job opportunities. Therefore, they tend to change to another engineering major such as chemical as chemical engineering students claim that petroleum does not really satisfy their interests and they believe that taking chemical engineering covers a broader range of work opportunities including those in the petroleum industry. Thus, they moved away from petroleum engineering.

Fig. 4: Respondents’ consideration of petroleum as a major.
they would graduate. I want students to feel comfortable and excited to join our discourse community and be a part of it.

Even though the petroleum engineering scope opportunities are less, overall, the opportunities are good. The field is full of interest once you dig deeper in its content. Regarding the financial aspect, petroleum engineers are historically among the majors best paid after graduation. It might seem to students that choosing a petroleum field is a risk. However, Dr. R, who has twenty years of experience in the oil industry, and Dr. A both agreed that good students will never face problems or be under the pressure of being released. So the decision depends on you and how you want to think about petroleum engineering; if you believe in your skills and your knowledge, then you will never have to even think about being fired.

Works Cited


Aldana Alnaimi is pursuing a bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar. She graduated in 2015 from Alleman Independent School and joined Texas A&M at Qatar the following fall.
This proposal was written for MEEN 489 Research Method and Experiences under the supervision of my professor. Writing this proposal has taught me how to organize tasks over an extended period of time and how to concisely promote an idea.

**Research Proposal to Test Zeolite Coating of Magnesium AZ31B**

**Introduction**

The inevitable global shift towards reducing energy consumption and environmental waste necessitates the use of light weight degradable materials. Industries are increasingly relying on magnesium alloys because of their low density, outstanding specific strength, sound damping capabilities, biocompatibility and high-machinability. [1-3] These properties deem magnesium alloys ideal for substituting heavier metals with lower degradability in various orthopedic, cardiovascular, electronic, aerospace, aviation and automotive applications. [4-6] For instance, substituting steel with Mg AZ31B in automobiles has led to 10% reduction in vehicle weight and consequently a 7% reduction in fuel consumption and 20 kg reduction in carbon dioxide emission. [7] Similarly, biomaterial researchers have shifted their attention to integrating magnesium alloys in medical implants.

Magnesium alloys are optimum for medical implants because they readily degrade and dissolve in the human body with low toxicity, and their mechanical properties match cortical bone tissue. [8-10] However, the alloys' most desirable property, their high corrosion rate, is a double-edged sword. Mg AZ31 orthopedic implants often degrade before the healing process is complete. [11] Coating magnesium alloys with zeolite may increase the alloys' lifespan.

Zeolites are non-toxic microporous aluminosilicates. They are a collection of three-dimensional tetrahedron solid structures made of either [AlO4]-5 or [SiO4]-4 ions connected by oxygen atoms [12,13] as shown in Figure 1. These three-dimensional tetrahedrons can be arranged into numerous polyhedral formations and rings [14], as shown in Figure 2, which makes them flexible solid structures and ideal for coating purposes.

Zeolites coatings are emerging as an alternative environmentally friendly coating for metallic substrates. Dense zeolite coating by in-situ crystallization vastly improved the corrosion resistance of metallic substrates such as steel and aluminum alloys in acidic, neutral and basic mediums. [15-18] Meanwhile, high-silica-zeolite coating of titanium alloy orthopedic implants reduced its release of toxic Al and V ions, increased its corrosion resistance and matched the mechanical properties of the bone. [19] Therefore, there is room to believe that zeolite coating can slow down the degradation of Mg AZ31B implants to the desired rate.

**Objectives/Significance**

The objectives of this study are the following: 1. Determine the mechanical properties of Mg AZ31B; 2. Coat Mg AZ31B with zeolite; and 3. Determine the effect of the zeolite coating on the alloy's corrosion rate. The properties of Mg AZ31B under zeolite coating formed by in-situ crystallization have not been tested nor analyzed before. The closest research effort reported on the incorporation of HA-Zeolite to Mg AZ31 through powder metallurgy technique which enhanced the alloy's mechanical strength and elastic modulus. [20] However, in-situ crystallization offers uniform coverage of complex geometries. The coating reaches confined spaces due to its low viscosity. [21] Therefore, results from this project should lead to further diversifying the applications of Mg AZ31B.
Methodology
In order to meet the objectives mentioned above, the following tasks will be performed.
1. Carry out hardness and tensile tests on Mg AZ31B: the hardness of the coating and the ten coated samples will be determined using Hysitron Ti Premier nanoindenter. MTS Insight 30 kN tensile tester will be used to determine the tensile strength of the samples.
2. Synthesize zeolite coating suitable for Mg AZ31B by in-situ crystallization.
   a. Substrate Pretreatment: pretreatment of nine 2cmx2cm Mg AZ31B samples will be done by ultrasonication in acetone.
   b. Zeolite Coating Synthesis: hydrothermal in-situ crystallization will be used to synthesize the zeolite coating solution. The solution will be similar to that synthesized for titanium alloy implants19. Tetrapropylammonium hydroxide and tetraethyorthosilicate will be added dropwise to 325 mesh aluminum powder dissolved in sodium hydroxide solution and deionized water while stirring. The solution will be left to age at room temperature for 3 hours while stirring.
   c. Coating Deposition: the samples will be suspended in the coating solution by nylon wire, as shown in Figure 3, then be placed in Tuttnauar autoclave 2340M-B/L at 175C for 24 hours followed by rinsing with deionized water and overnight cooling at room temperature.
3. Perform immersion tests on the coated samples: the samples will be immersed in 3.5% sodium chloride solution at 37C and their respective weight loss will be used to determine the corrosion penetration rate (CPR). The hydrogen evolved during corrosion will be measured as well.
4. Microstructural Observations: the microstructure of the coating and its bonding with Mg AZ31B will be studied using Zeiss Axiovert 40 MAT optical microscope. Changes in the coating due to corrosion will be studied using Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM).

Analysis of the Collected Data
Tensile strength, percent elongation, percent reduction in area, resilience and yield strength will be calculated from the stress-strain curve obtained from the tensile tester. The hydrogen evolution and weight lost by the samples during the immersion test will be analyzed using Microsoft Excel in order to determine the corrosion penetration rate (CPR).

Timeline/Milestones
The following timeline describes the work distribution and the expected deliverables over the eight-week project.

References
Amira is a chemical engineering senior who has lived in Qatar for 10 years. She enjoys painting and reading.
This market feasibility study for the Caffeinator was done in order to determine the extent and nature of the market reception of the Caffeinator if it were manufactured for sale. The study involved gathering data on caffeine consumption, flavor preferences and methods of taking coffee (i.e. buying from a vendor or making homemade coffee). This study also considered how easy it is to obtain coffee for regular consumers. We collected information on how this process can be made easier and smarter through the use of a smart coffee machine.

This study and the ensuing report is intended for potential investors who would like to invest in this product and design. Also, this paper in conjunction with the Problem Statement report that contains the initial design of the Caffeinator, is a basis on which further improvements can be made to the design and functionality of the Caffeinator.

Market Feasibility Study of the Caffeinator

Caffeinator is a smart caffeine intake system that calculates the optimal caffeine level for the individual consumer and then dispenses coffee at pre-planned (scheduled) timings. The need for such a system arose due to problems such as overconsumption of caffeine, addiction to caffeine and unavailability of a smart caffeine system. The Caffeinator constructs a database for each of the users’ biodata (e.g. age, daily calorie intake, physical exercise routines) and then with the help of a pre-programmed algorithm, calculates an optimum concentration of the caffeine desirable for the user.

A problem statement report was submitted earlier to discuss the need, functions and design of the suggested Caffeinator. Multiple designs were made and were evaluated according to a set-criteria. The design sketches can be found in Appendix A. A preliminary web market research was also carried out to determine the feasibility and predict the market reception of the Caffeinator.

Need for Data Analysis

The data analysis was carried out to determine the market feasibility of the Caffeinator. All forms of this primary survey were directed at gathering information which would give us an idea of how the Caffeinator would be received in the general market. This data analysis required several qualitative and quantitative data, which would give us different forms of information. The quantitative data acquired helped us in estimating the preferable price for Caffeinator, consumption of caffeine and expenditure in buying coffee. This data was also further analyzed with the help of graphs and bar charts which gave us a clearer picture of how the data fits the target demographic. The qualitative data obtained was from interviews and survey questions. This data gave us some more valuable, subjective insights to the consumers’ caffeine consumption habits.

The modes used for gathering data were as follows: TAMUQ Email Survey, Costa Coffee Shop Survey and Staff interviews.

Methodology

TAMUQ Email Survey

The website SurveyMonkey.com was used to construct a survey about caffeine intake. The survey was sent to students from different universities and we received a total of 137 responses. The questions of the surveys were mainly very short Yes or No questions or multiple choice. We made sure that the questions are precise and served the direct purpose, to help us come with an approximation of the number of coffee cups that people consume in addition to how caffeine affects their health.

The survey included the following seven questions:

- Approximately how many cups of coffee do you consume per week? (give a number)
- How do you usually get your coffee?
- Do you keep track of how much caffeine you consume per day/week?
- How long does it take you to make your own coffee?
- In the past, have caffeine affected your sleep pattern?
- What price range do you think is reasonable for a smart coffee machine?
- What type of coffee machine do you have?
Costa Coffee Survey

The Costa Coffee Survey was aimed at gathering the data directly from a coffee vendor. For this purpose, the local coffee shop, Costa Coffee, at Texas A & M Engineering Building was chosen. Costa Coffee at TAMUQ was the best choice because a majority of its customers are the students of Texas A & M University, our target audience. The outlet is situated on-campus which makes it much easier to access, and the staff is familiar with our group members. The data gathered from the staff at Costa Coffee was mainly quantitative. Our group members took photos of the daily sales register of Costa Coffee at the end of a working day with their full permission. The sales registers included the numbers of cups sold and the total earnings, both weekly and monthly. The questions asked from the staff at the shop were the following:

- How many cups of coffee do you consume daily?
- What desired effect (or effects) do you hope to get from caffeine consumption? Pick all that apply.
  - Energizing effect
  - Use as just a hot drink
  - Relaxation effect
  - Flavor
- How do you find our design of the Caffeinator?
- Do you have any suggestions/feedback to our design of the Caffeinator?
- What is your preferred unit cost for the Caffeinator?

Interviews

Another method we used to collect data was conducting interviews around the campus. A number of people were interviewed who consume caffeine in their drinks. People were representatively selected around the university and interviewed. Each interview consisted of seven questions, which were:

- What type of hot drink do you often drink?
- How many cups do you consume per day?
- How do you feel after drinking your hot drink?
- Why do you drink this hot drink?
- What do you think of our design?
- Would you like to add anything?
- What price would you give our caffeinator?

The total number of interviews conducted was five: 1 female and 1 male student, 1 female and 1 male professor, and a female librarian of TAMUQ. The questions were asked from each person and their answers were recorded.

Results

TAMUQ Email Survey

Altogether, 137 respondents filled out the survey conducted by our team through email among the TAMUQ members. The first question was an inquiry on the respondents’ frequency of coffee ingestion. It was found out that 11% of the respondents didn’t drink coffee, 52% of them drank one to five cups per week, while 18% of the participants drank 6-10 cups per week. The percentage of more regular consumers was 16%, who reported their consumption at more than ten cups weekly. Three percent of the respondents left this question blank. A more apt picture can be conveyed by the pie chart shown below in Figure 1.

The second question was directed towards the preferred way in which the consumers get coffee. 39% of the respondents make their own coffee i.e. by using hot water and powdered coffee beans. 42% buy coffee from a café while 19% use a coffee machine.

The third question of the survey, which is in fact the most important one, asks the participants if they keep track of their caffeine consumption or not. 77% of the respondents don’t keep track of their caffeine intake while 23% replied that they do keep track of their caffeine levels.

It was found that 49.5% of the respondents spent on average, 1 – 3 minutes making a cup of coffee while 31.6% spent 3-5 minutes. A minority of 10.5% replied that they spent less than a minute in preparing a cup of coffee. Some respondents (8.5%) spent more than five minutes on a cup of coffee. Over half (59%) of the consumers reported that their sleep patterns were not affected by caffeine consumption while 41% of the respondents replied in affirmative.

Additionally, some questions were directed towards the coffee machines and the respondents’ preferences. The most favored price range for a coffee machine was found to be $100 - $300, followed by a price range of $300 - $500. The bar chart in Figure 2 shows this more accurately.
Most (64\%) of the respondents reported to have no coffee machine while 18\% of the respondents have an espresso machine.

**Costa Coffee Survey**

The photos of the sales registry taken at Costa Coffee gave us some valuable data. The data was in the tabulated form and quite massive. Moreover, the data obtained is of two types, weekly and monthly. It is also important to note that as this data is time dependent, it can fluctuate over the following weeks and months due to student attendance, semester breaks, exam schedules etc. The bar charts are included here, in Figures 3 and 4 that summarize all the data that was obtained.

The bar chart in Figure 3 shows that on a monthly basis 895 small cups were sold, followed by 645 medium cups and 122 large cups. This shows that smaller cups are more favored by the consumers. The weekly sales are also representative of the monthly sales, in that it follows the same pattern of sales in terms of the cup size. If the numbers on the chart are processed, it can be calculated that a total of 1,662 cups is sold monthly. However, the total cups sold on the weekly basis are 665.

The bar chart in Figure 4. depicts the total cost of cups sold at Costa Coffee, both on a weekly and a monthly basis. In a month, QAR 12530 is spent on small cups of coffee while for medium and large cups, it is QAR 4480 and QAR 450, respectively. The costs of weekly sales follow a closely similar pattern. In order to further estimate the average price of a cup, the following table includes the monthly values from the previous two bar graphs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Number Sold</th>
<th>Total Cost [QAR]</th>
<th>Average Price per Cup [QAR]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>12530</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>10320</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2196</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen from the information in Table 1 that a small cup costs on average 14 QAR while medium and large cups cost on average 16 and 18 QAR, respectively. Although, there is only a 2-riyal difference between the prices of different sized cups, the variation in sales is considerable.

Interviews
First, most people drink their coffee in the morning to energize themselves or to make them relaxed, and the average number of cups that people drink is 3 cups. Also, some of them prefer to have another source of caffeine intake which is by having tea in the afternoon and evening.

Table 2: Daily number of drinks reported by the interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of caffeinated drink per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of cups: 2.6 (≈ 3)

Second, each interviewee had different reasons of consuming caffeinated drinks. The bar graph in Figure 5 shows that people do buy caffeinated drinks to stay sharp and awake. Often, caffeinated drinks are drunk as energizing agents by the consumers, in hopes of increased focus and dexterity at work.

Around 50% of the interviewees reported that they use coffee as a hot drink i.e. to alleviate feeling of coldness and warm the body. Another 50% gave flavor as a reason for their caffeine consumption. 38% named the most common effect of caffeine as staying focused, sharp and awake. A minority of 13% reported that coffee makes them feel relaxed. When asked regarding the design of the machine, people were generally pleased with the Caffeinator design. They also commended us on its smart and user-friendly interface. The most important response was that all of the interviewees were willing to buy a coffee machine of this design and showed themselves as potential customers in future.

Some suggestions were added from the interviewees that they would like to see in our project:
- It would be useful to have a coffee machine that offers you the best type of coffee that you should drink regarding the amount of caffeine level that has been consumed.
- From the phone application, the user can overwrite the amount of additional caffeine intake that the user wants to take and add additional feature to the machine when making tea.
- Making the Caffeinator machine ground the coffee beans automatically.

The average price of the Caffeinator as suggested by the interviewees is $433, and the bar graph in Figure 6 shows each person’s preferred price.
Analysis of Results and Discussion

TAMUQ Email Survey
A large number of students (137) responded to our interview, as compared to a normal survey completion strength of just forty to fifty students. This is an indication that the subject appeals to the interest of the student population, which frequently complains about workload, stress and sleeping schedules. It is important to note that the majority of students of TAMUQ who participated in the survey, drink a cup of coffee on at least one day of the week. 34% of the students are regular consumers who consume at least one cup daily. 39% of respondents make their own coffee. Usually, this process is not calibrated and measured, as is done by a smart system. Therefore, it is very likely that the consumers are not keeping track of their caffeine consumption. Moreover, those 42 percent of the respondents who buy their drinks from vendors are not aware or careful of the caffeine concentration in their drinks. This shows a need for an awareness campaign among the students, educating them that caffeine is a drug and should be treated like one (i.e. overconsumption is harmful). This hypothesis is further supported by the survey result for the question, ‘Do you keep track of how much caffeine you consume per day/week?’ A staggering 77% replied with a no on this question. This shows that a smart coffee machine is not redundant, as a significant population (34%) drinks coffee and 77% of that population keeps no check on their caffeine levels. A majority of students spend more than a minute in preparing coffee. With Caffeinator, the preparation time would decrease to zero and students, who are always running late, won’t have to lose their time in making coffee.

The data in Figure 2 shows the desired price ranges of Caffeinator given by the students. This data is tabulated in Table 3 to give an estimated desired price for our Caffeinator design. Moreover, the data from the interviews (Figure 6), showing the preference of the staff members is also included to give a more uniform estimate. The price range from Figure 2 is converted to a mean value for the sake of calculation. The result is a weighted average price in US dollars. The weight to price categories is given according to the frequency or number of people in a category.

Table 3: Estimated Preferred Price of Caffeinator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Students or Staff Members</th>
<th>Average Price [USD]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Preferred Price [USD]:</td>
<td></td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimated price of the Caffeinator system in our design report is around 500 USD. The survey shows that the preferred price range by the consumers is $344. Hence, a difference of approximately $150 exists between the desired price and the estimated price of the Caffeinator. Moreover, this design would help the consumers in maintaining their sleep patterns, as a large group reported that caffeine consumption does affect their sleep patterns. Therefore, with further modifications and use of more economical options, our design is perfectly viable for the current market.

Costa Coffee Survey and Interviews
From the data gathered by our group members from Costa Coffee and the Email survey, the feasibility of the Caffeinator can be estimated in a more detailed manner. The data in Table 5 is aimed at estimating the number of months it would take a consumer to cover the cost of the Caffeinator. The groups of students are listed in terms of their consumption percentages (From Figure 1). For the number of cups, the upper bound is considered in the estimation as we don’t have the distribution of students within the range. For the ‘more than 10 cups’ range, the estimated value considered was 15 cups. This is because it is uniform and consistent with the other increments between the categories. The estimated price of Caffeinator used is $500, which was the price established in our design report.

Moreover, the same estimation is also done for the staff members who were interviewed. However, it is known that only five staff members (librarians, professors etc.) were interviewed, and this estimation might not portray the information for the general staff population. Hence, it might have considerable error. The data used is taken from Table 2. The average price of the cup is estimated on the basis of sales distribution data from Costa Coffee survey (From Figure 3.). Monthly data is used instead of weekly data because a longer period of time ensures a more uniform data. Table 4 shows how the average price of a cup was estimated for the whole population. It is a weighted average.

Table 4: Average price of a cup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Cup</th>
<th>Number of Cups</th>
<th>Price [C/EUR]</th>
<th>Price [USD]</th>
<th>Total Price for the cups [USD]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>2838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1562</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted Average price of a cup [USD]:</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hence, in estimating the time required for covering the cost of Caffeinator, the average price of a cup, used is $4.14.

Table 5: Estimated Time required to cover up the cost of a Caffeinator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Students or Staff</th>
<th>No. of Cups per month</th>
<th>Total Average cost per month [USD]</th>
<th>Number of months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>165.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>248.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>372.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average number of months: 4.4

The information given in the last column of Table 5 shows the estimated number of months it would take for a consumer, belonging to one of the four categories, to cover the cost of a Caffeinator. Even if running costs of the machine are kept in consideration and added as an additional month to the estimated time, the longest time would still be only seven months. Coffee machines, once bought, stay in a household for much longer than seven months. This is because home appliances are usually discarded when they become obsolete or are broken beyond repair. The Caffeinator is much durable in these terms, as its smart and futuristic design is far from being obsolete in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the maintenance service guaranteed to the customers would ensure that it stays in operation for an extended time period.

For staff members, the Caffeinator is the cheapest option and bears the least cost in the longer run. They can cover the cost in just about 1 month (or 2 months if the running cost of the Caffeinator is considered). An average time period of 4.4 months was also calculated and put in the last row of Table 5. This is a weighted average, meaning it is based on the number of members in each category.

From the interviews we came to know that staff members on average consume more cups of coffee than the students. We found that people are making their own caffeinated drinks at home, and none of them have a smart machine that will make the process of making caffeinated drinks easy and fast at home. People highly recommend that our Caffeinator machine have the additional feature of tea selection, which we considered before for our machine. From the responses received in the interviews, it is safe to establish that a more reliable and receptive consumer population is the staff and teachers of the academic community. This is an important result as it would help us in streamlining our design further to cater to the needs of a much diverse audience.

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this study was to determine caffeine consumption patterns and preferences related to it, in order to estimate the feasibility of the Caffeinator design. The key conclusions from our study were as follows:

- A significant number of students and staff members of TAMUQ are regular coffee consumers.
- A majority of coffee consumers (77%) do not keep track of the caffeine concentration levels in their drinks.
- On average, staff members consume more caffeine than students. In fact, the difference in caffeine consumption of students and staff can be estimated to be approximately 200% more.
- According to the Email survey results, Costa Coffee sale report and analysis in Tables 4 and 5, the cost of a Caffeinator unit can be covered up in just 4.4 months from its purchase.
- The desired price of Caffeinator by the potential customers is found out to be $344. This is 156 USD below our estimated price range. With the use of economical material, such as recycled plastic and glass, and efficient marketing, this price gap can be bridged.

To sum up, the Caffeinator is an economically feasible market endeavor that can be undertaken by any home appliance manufacturer. Not only would this design help in curbing the health problems related to caffeine consumption, but it would also give another unique and futuristic experience in the daily life of a 21st century household or workplace.

Appendix A. Design of the Caffeinator.
Figure 8. A design sketch of Caffeinator Pro.

Figure 9. A sketch of Caffeinator Deluxe.
1. Project Introduction and Motivation

1.1 Introduction and Motivation

The proposed real-life project aims to study the differences between Kevlar and Spectra, the materials they are made up of, and their mechanical, thermal, and electrical properties. The proposed idea is to use a combination of both materials such that the hybrid, to be known as SpectaKelar, has the desired properties.

The debate on bulletproof armors started in the sixteenth century. Korea made significant milestones in making bulletproof shields in 1860. World War I and II and the increased homicide rates among law enforcement officers necessitated the development of bulletproof armors. Kevlar, Spectra, and graphene are the most common materials used in making bulletproof shields. Kevlar, Spectra, and graphene are the most common materials used in making bulletproof shields. Kevlar has quite a few disadvantages that compromise its use in making bulletproof armors. It is nondurable due to some of its features including its ability to react badly with ultra-violet light. Additionally, Kevlar can easily be corroded by chlorine and has a tendency to absorb moisture. Besides, Kevlar is relatively thick and less strong as compared to graphene and Dyneema. These features are enough evidence that Kevlar may degenerate quickly losing its guarantee as a bulletproof armor. Brief preliminary literature reviews in the same indicated area is discussed in section 1.3 with a more detailed project description in section 1.4.

1.2 Background and Literature Survey

Bulletproof vests are light armors designed to protect the vital organs of the soldiers from any injury that may be caused by projectile firearms. The debate on bulletproof shields existed at the beginning of the sixteenth century (Monteiro et al. 263). However, substantial progress started in the 1860s in Korea with the invention of a soft ballistic armor. Korea’s motivation to develop a bulletproof armor was due to the increased attacks from Western armies. The Korea’s weapon developers realized through trial and error that making garments with multiple folds of cotton could protect fighters from the firearms at that time. Unfortunately, these bulletproof clothes had a higher susceptibility to fire. At the end of the nineteenth century, the states of Illinois and Arizona used silk to make bulletproof vests which were later proved to protect one from black powder handguns. Such a vest saved King Alfonso XIII of Spain.

The first and the second world wars created a necessity of improving the personal armors further. At this time, most of the bulletproof vests developed by the US and other countries were too cumbersome and heavy for ground soldiers (Monteiro et al. 267). While in the search for light and efficient bulletproof armors, the ammunition companies developed the SN-42, a body armor designed to be used by engineers and tankers. Also, the American flak jackets could not stop bullets but could stop shrapnel for air crews. Improvements on the ballistic armors came at the time when the Vietnamese and the Korean Wars were being fought. However, these ballistic bulletproof shields proved impractical.

The increased homicide rates also necessitated the development of bulletproof armors. Law enforcers faced dangerous moments in the 1970s. The rates of homicide among the law enforcers increased by at least twenty deaths each year from 1968 to 1973 (Sobiek 2015). At that moment, the market did not have reliable and affordable armors to protect the law enforcers in their day-to-day operations. The development of durable and lighter bulletproof vests achieved high acceptance in security and law enforcements fields. Current research indicates that more than 3000 officers have saved their lives through the use of bulletproof vests (Sobiek 2015).
The revolution that led to the development of modern armors started in the 1960s. New technologies including the use of light, artificial fibers called aramids began at this point. Kevlar is the most common known type of aramid. It was first developed in 1965 and was used a replacement of the steel racing tires in the 1970s. Intensive research carried out at this time resulted in Kevlar being accepted and used in making different types of wearable armor including bulletproof vests. In 1976, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) approved the use of Kevlar based armors since they were practical. Kevlar 29 superseded the initial Kevlar and was later replaced by Kevlar 129 in 1988. Some years later, researchers found some limitations in relying on Kevlar alone. There arose the need to use other polymers that could avoid the challenges that Kevlar faced. It is at this point that weapon developers started incorporating other materials such as Spectra, Dyneema, and Twaron to make hybrid body armors such as Kevlar-Spectra types.

1.3 Project Description
As mentioned earlier, the goal of this project is to propose a hybrid material made from both the materials used in Kevlar and Spectra that will have the desired properties and durability. As a first step, the characteristics, properties, as well as the manufacturing process for both Kevlar and Spectra will be outlined, studied and analyzed in detail. The process will include literature review, material studying, and CES analysis. The process of material selection will be applied to determine if there is any other material that can be used. It is expected to have scenarios where multiple constraints and multiple objectives will be at hand. Therefore, tradeoff functions or penalty function will be used to assist in material selection. It is also expected that a combination of Kevlar and Spectra will give the desired characteristics. Therefore, necessary analysis will be performed on the hybrid to determine if it is the possible fit. The manufacturing process will also be discussed.

2. Objectives
The primary goal of this project is to find a way of improving the existing bulletproof vests. Some of the features of an excellent bulletproof armor include durability, light weight, and the ability to protect combatants. Also, the project intends to develop a better understanding of the available materials used in making bulletproof vests with the intention to recommend the best option. There are various materials and polymers used in making the bulletproof armors. These polymers include Kevlar, Dyneneama, Spectra, and Zylon. This project also intends to analyze the effectiveness of the different materials used in making bulletproof vest to recommend the best. Additionally, another goal of the project is finding the best and cheaper option of making the bulletproof vests so that the armor is available to the largest number of law enforcement officers. Moreover, the product aim is to make advanced Kevlar-Spectra hybrids with improved efficiency and durability as bulletproof armors.

2.1 Need for the Study
Civilians depend on police officers, guards and soldiers to protect their land and to ensure safety. Therefore, these fighters have to be equipped with the necessary body shields to save their lives in case of danger or harm. Moreover, diplomats are also in need for this protection. The shields present do not have high durability. Therefore, a higher quality substitute is in need.

2.2 Problem to be Addressed
Kevlar loses its efficiency over time, but has great strength. It is required to come up with a material that is strong as Kevlar, but is more durable.

2.3 Technical Challenges
The production of bulletproof vests faces many technical challenges. The process requires advanced technologies that may be limited due to high capital investment. Additionally, the materials needed for these processes (graphene, Kevlar, and Spectra) are difficult to find. Most of these materials are synthetic, which means that they should be prepared in the laboratory. Laboratory preparation poses another technical challenge since specialized equipment and skilled staff will be required. Cutting and shaping Kevlar is difficult and may require specialized equipment and technologies.

2.4 Cost Analysis
In most cases, the technology used in making bulletproof vests is expensive. If this project is to be industrialized, the estimated cost for making a bulletproof vest using a combination of Kevlar and graphene will include labor cost, material cost, and funding for research. The cost of making the vests will depend on the manufacturer, the quality of equipment used, and other factors. Since this research is meant for a coursework, and fabrication is not one of the current goals, there are no costs for this project at the present time.

2.5 Success Criteria
Some materials can be used to make bulletproof vests of the highest quality. One of the best ways to improve the performance of Kevlar is to incorporate other polymers such as graphene. Researchers have found out that graphene has more ability to reduce the impact of a bullet as compared to Kevlar. It is a transparent sheet derived from pure carbon. Additionally, this material is light but 100 times stronger when compared to steel. Researchers believe that graphene is the strongest carbon polymer on earth. Its strength makes it suitable for use in bulletproof vests coupled with the fact that it is relatively light. Graphene is two times lighter than Kevlar. Alternatively, an ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene (UHMWPE) can also be used. UHMWPE can have a strength-weight ratio of up to 40 percent more than that of Kevlar. Current material that can be utilized with Kevlar or in the place of Kevlar is Dyneneama, the newest material with the potential to improve the performance of the current bulletproof vests. Therefore, the best option is to enhance the performance of Kevlar by using graphene, UHMWPE, and Dyneema.
3. Methodology

Rolling Kevlar produces a fiber material with a relative density of 1.44 and a tensile strength of 3620 Mpa. Kevlar’s strength is due to the many inter-chain bonds. Intermolecular hydrogen bonds are formed between the NH and carbonyl groups of the polymer (“Kevlar”). Moreover, there is an aromatic interaction existing between the adjacent strands of the polymer which gives it additional strength. These aromatic interactions are the reasons why the Kevlar is stronger than other types of polymers like spectra. Dyneema and other polymers used in making bulletproof vests are linked by van der Waals forces which are weaker than the Kevlar’s aromatic interactions. Salts and other impurities including calcium poses a significant risk to the functionality of a polymer. They should be avoided during the production process. Kevlar has a planar sheet-like structure which increases its protection. The resilience and strength of this polymer are high even at cyclonic temperatures (“Kevlar”).

Manufacturing a bulletproof vest from Kevlar happens in several steps. It occurs in four main stages including producing the panel cloth, cutting the panels, sewing the panels, and finishing the panel.

3.1 Making the Panel

This step involves the production of poly-para-phenylene terephthalate in the laboratory. The polymer forms Kevlar yarns due to its rod-like shapes that can extrude into a spinneret. The Kevlar fibers are hardened by passing them through cooling baths. The fibers are then treated with water after which they turn into rolls. Yarns produced in this process are used to weave simple patterns that interlace alternatively. When Spectra is used to make the vest, weaving is always omitted. The filaments of the polymer are instead laid together in a parallel pattern. Two sheets are aligned at right angles which create a nonwoven fabric. The nonwoven fabrics are then used to make vests.

3.2 Cutting the Panels

Manufacturers receive the Kevlar cloth from the laboratory which they unroll and arrange on a long cutting table. The amount of material needed for the manufacturing process should be laid on the table and cut at this stage. A cutting sheet is then placed on the different layers of the cloth. Staff cut the sheet to form panels which are packed in precise stacks.

3.3 Sewing the Panels

Contrary to what happens with Spectra, Kevlar panels require sewing before they are finished into vests. Kevlar should either be box-stitched or quilt-stitched. Quilt-stitching results in panels that may be hard to shift from areas that are vulnerable. Additionally, it requires a lot of labor since it is hard to make. Box-stitching is achieved through the formation of one box at the center of the vest. It is fast and requires less labor. Workers sew the clothes by putting stencils on the upper part while chalk is rubbed on areas of the panel that are exposed. Some accessories including straps are used to sew the pieces together into a finished vest.

3.4 Finishing the Vest

Standard sewing practices and sewing machines are used to sew the shells of the panels together. The panels are driven into the inner parts of the shells after which straps and other accessories are attached. This is the final step in which the finished products are packed and shipped to various destinations (“How”).

For example, to make a Kevlar hybrid bulletproof armor, a front, back and groin panels will be required. The dimensions of the panels are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Panel</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>No of ply</th>
<th>Thickness</th>
<th>Stress of the panel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back</td>
<td>(800*300)mm</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35 mm</td>
<td>f/A, 269661/24 = 1.1Mpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front</td>
<td>(500*300)mm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25 mm</td>
<td>269661/0.15 = 1.8Mpa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groin</td>
<td>(400*200)mm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25 mm</td>
<td>269661/0.08 = 3.4Mpa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

CyberDo: Statistical Modeling and Analysis Results in Optimizing a Current iPhone Mobile Security App

1.0 Introduction

CyberDo is a protection application for iPhones that we created after hearing that a virus attacked a local company’s computer system. We researched other cybersecurity applications for mobile phones and developed a plan for our app in a previous report. The main aim of this report is to show the results that we found from the interviews and the survey about CyberDo app and how we can use the analysis of our data in improving the app in the future.

1.1 Summary of Design

Below, Figure 1 shows how CyberDo will work. First of all, the CyberDo app works as a sending and receiving platform. The main function of this platform is to protect the phone from any outsider, and it does that by detecting the incoming data and forwarding it to the server. The server will analyze and check these encrypted data. Once they are checked, the server will decide if the data are authorized or not. Then CyberDo platform will receive the instruction from the server and apply the action on the phone, such as allowing the data to be inserted on the phone or showing warning messages to disconnect from any other devices or Wi-Fi connections.

Figure 2 (below) is a flowchart for the CyberDo application. The flowchart has a terminator, which is a start and an end of the mobile process. It all starts when the user receives or installs data from an outside source. The first process is about scanning the data which is intended to be installed. Then, it will move to the collecting data phase, which will collect any foreign data and send it to the server. Next, in the second process in the application, Cyberdo will compute the data to check its compatibility and security. As a result, a command is generated: yes or no. If yes, CyberDo will end the process and start to download the application. On the other hand, a “no” command delays the process and it will generate a secure order, prohibiting this data from being downloaded in the future. At the end, both of those decisions will move to a connector which is the mobile in this case.
2.0 Methods

In this report, the data were collected by two methods: interviewing and surveying. The advantage of the first method is that there was room for discussion which resulted in generating new beneficial ideas. The second method was an online survey sent by email to students at TAMUQ.

2.1 Interviewees

The first interview was conducted with a student who is studying a masters’ degree in cybersecurity at Hamad Bin Khalifa University. This student graduated from Texas A&M University in 2013, and now she is completing her studies at HBKU. Her information helped us a lot in knowing where our app can go and what features we can add to our design. Also, she gave us recommendations as she used to read a lot on this topic and she has a good background in it.

A senior security analyst from the IT department at TAMUQ was also interviewed to give his feedback about the CyberDo app. His feedback and comments were helpful as he explained and provided us with ways that can ensure how to create a fully secure app by using a pin code. Also, he provided us with some additional process that we can use to improve our app features. Using his recommendation and feedback as a technician is a way to get a result about how CyberDo app work and be introduced to the public.

A researcher from Qatar Computing Research Institute, who is working in the field of cybersecurity, was interviewed last. He was asked several questions; however, his high technical level answers led the interview to generating further explanation and discussions, which helped us in having more understanding of our topic.

Before conducting our interview, we sent a problem statement report on Cyberdo and the slides from our class presentation to them.

2.2. Survey Design

A short survey was distributed online on October 18 to develop the features and process of CyberDo. The survey was sent to Texas A&M University at Qatar students, and the result was 75 responses. We did not specify any demographic information because the survey is for all ages and genders. We have targeted the students only because it is generally known that students are phone addicts, and their work and personal things are all available on their phone. Because engineers are interested in protecting their phone and the important documents, we specify Texas A&M University students.

The survey is divided into two parts: students who have a cyber security app and students who do not. For those who use protection apps, we wanted to know their opinion on which app to use and the feature that they would like to see on the apps. This will help us to improve our design for the CyberDo app and implement a good business deal. However, for the students who do not have any protection app, we would like to know the reason behind their answer so we can attract them to our app in the future. The entire survey can be found in Appendix 1.

3.0 Results

Since global cybersecurity is both a technical and user issue, we collected results using mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) in order to frame the whole problem.

3.1 Interview Results

The first question we asked to the cybersecurity master's student, the IT department and the QRCI was what would they like to improve in CyberDo app. They suggested the features of automatic update, data encryption, and multiple protection systems that would be integrated in order to prevent jailbreaking of devices. Those features will help our app to be one of the best MDM (mobile device management) apps. The answer of the QRCI researcher caught our attention. Since the app has not been fully developed yet, he said he could not judge and needed more technical details to answer the question. This answer showed us the importance of identifying the features from a technical perspective. In the world of technology, providing one feature like a lock and password can be created by several techniques, programing languages, codes, etc. However, the programmer has to make sure when he wants to put different features together that their codes will not conflict with each other and result in a technical error.

The second question we asked is if the interviewees would actually download our app. All replied to this question with no, and then clarified his or her answer. Indeed, two interviewees agreed that they do not want to download the app because has not been adopted by a known publisher like a company, so this app would not have policies that can stop any unauthorized users or hackers to attack the device. One interviewee mentioned that the app cannot work well with all the features in the phone which can cause damage to the device. Another was satisfied with the app that he is currently using because it has all the features he needs in a security app.

The third question was about the features that the interviewees would like to have in a cybersecurity app. The first interviewee introduced the feature of jail-breaking which can damage the phone because the user can install unauthorized data in a device. Also, the company does not control the device because the user can remove the protection that the company has for the phone, which can cause them to lose data or be hacked. The second interviewee gave us more development ideas about Cyberdo's mobility feature. The third interviewee referred to the marketing aspect, which means that the client has the right to add and remove the feature they need in the app depending on the budgets they have. We
related this information to our previous thinking about client needs. Due to the fact that it is impossible to have an app that has all the protection features in the world, programmers have to pick their features carefully, based on their clients’ needs and make sure that they are compatible with each other.

In the last question, we asked the interviewees if our app idea should be adapted and introduced to the market. The first interviewee answered generally that it might have a chance in the market if the company who adapts it will improve it and customize it. The second interviewee supports this idea because the benefits of the cloud services. Nevertheless, we want to make sure that if we want to take this app into a larger scale, we need to understand that market itself. Some of the users will download this application but they need to have more features on it. As we are competing with known API interface, so we want our application to be unique than those on the market. For instance, we can’t convince companies to adapt a security app that has the same features of an already existing app in the market with the same features. We will try to have more understanding our clients and adapt their needs, so that our app can pave its way to the market.

3.2 Survey Results

The first question of the survey was about how familiar the participant was with these kind of app. Of the students who took the survey, 93% are very familiar (use it daily), 7% are familiar (use it in necessity), and no one indicated that they are not familiar with cybersecurity apps.

The survey shows that all the students know about the security apps, but not all of them have the app on their phone. As shown in Figure 3, 80% of the participants have no protection app, and only 20% have already downloaded an app.

We asked participants who used a security app to name the one that protected their phone. The most common answer was AVG Technologies app, which is antivirus and security software for all devices. Also, we asked them to list the things that they would like to change or include in those apps.

- Working perfectly, which means not slow or damages the phone. Provide VPN with less bandwidth.
- Constant IP changer
- A feature that sends notification to the app when the phone is lost so it takes certain action to protect the phone.

Figure 4 analyses the reason that some of the students don’t have a security app. Most of the students answered that their phone was “secure enough.” Those students might have the complete trust that Apple or Android has secured their devices from the viruses and hackers. However, despite the high level of security standards on their devices, gaps might be generated during some process. For example, when you shop online or surf the internet, some of the websites are actually not safe. The hacker can easily go through your phone from these types of websites and destroy or steal your important documents.

4.0 Limitations of the Study

We want to limit the support for the results of the CyberDo study to the security application that we are working on. All the analysis we have is based on the interviews and survey for the users who want to download our security application.

5.0 Discussion

To get a good business deal, the Cyberdo app needs to improve. Therefore, we conducted several interviews and a survey to develop our app’s progress and features. We interviewed three specialists on security apps: QRCI (Qatar Computing Research Institute), Cybersecurity masters’ degree student at HBKU (Hamad Bin Khalifa University), and Senior Security Analyst member (IT facility in Texas
A&M University). All the three interviewees were asked the same questions so we can compare their answers. The answers of the survey were collected, analyzed and compared to the interview results.

We used the survey and interviews to come up with a plan for developing the performance of CyberDo from the aspect of expertise in cybersecurity. This data will be used in the plan of improving the app by focusing on including and adding the following critical features in the application. These features are divided into five different categories to show how specifically to start the remodeling process.

**Encryption**
- We will use the concept of two-factor authorization, which is having the accessing password sent to the user's device and then another password to open the app that will ensure high-security level.
- We will make the app capable to be used with or without Wi-Fi.
- We will add specific features that protect students' documents from being lost.
- We will provide a pass code that allows only the developers to access the app and edit it. It is also a way to authenticate the app.

**Remote Wipe**
- We will improve the feature of mobility in CyberDo by putting a controlling feature that can remove all the relevant data from the app if the phone is lost or attacked.
- We will use Application Programming Interface which allows for automation and service expansion for different clients who have different versions of the mobile phone to use CyberDo as their security app.

**Data Leakage Protection**
- We will include the features that will secure the data on the device, and when it connects to any wireless will produce the transferred data by using encryption feature.
- We will ensure that CyberDo as a security app will work to prevent the device from jailbreaking and from installing unauthorized apps.
- We will add a Wi-Fi network scanner.
- We will make it easy to add or remove the security option while still downloading the app.

**Optimizing**
- We will put new features that the clients might need with a certain amount of cost or even create a unique feature for them, such as yearly support and bugs fix.
- We will create a server that will do the computations of the program, while the services are being provided at the phone at the same time. For example, it would work like Gmail's server, where the emails' savings and processing are done by the server, yet emails are sent and received everywhere.
- We will fix bugs in the app.
- We will make it so that the computation of the features will not be observable by a user during normal circumstances; however, the app should generate a clear warning once something wrong happens.

**Marketing**
- We will develop the app more from marketing side, such as record a video.
- We will find a sponsor who is willing to buy our app so CyberDo can become ready for public use.
- We will communicate with more professional people on cybersecurity to improve the app.

**6.0 Conclusion**
As a result of this data analysis report, we have chosen to create a cybersecurity app with minimum functionality and in-app purchases. Users could get the app with minimum cost and once they get see its benefits, they can increase the level of efficiency by buying more features within the app itself.

We plan to improve CyberDo by working on developing the features that have been discussed previously to create the most effective MDM app. The features like encryption in CyberDo will protect the phone from the hackers who can attack the phone while connecting to the internet. Also, the data leakage protection, like the two-factor authorized feature, will protect the phone from unauthorized users who want to steal data from the device. Now, CyberDo is a security app that can be used by the public to protect their device from the attack and the unauthorized users.

**Appendix 1. Survey Questions**
1. How familiar are you with mobile phones?
   a. Very familiar (use it daily)
   b. Familiar (use it in free time or for necessities)
   c. Not familiar (rarely use it)
2. Do you use an app to protect your phone from being hacked?
   a. If yes, what are the apps you use to protect your phone?
   i. If your protection app is not working perfectly, what is the description that you would like to see on the future protection apps?
   b. If no, why not?

**Appendix 2. Interview Summaries**

Question 1. What would you like to improve in CyberDo app?

Interviewee 1: Add a feature that keeps the user's phone up to date. Prevent jailbroken devices (as jailbroken devices are one of the most damaging) from accessing company data.

Interviewee 3: Don’t know what are the features precisely, in technical perspective. So, I can’t judge.

Question 2. Would you actually download the app?

Interviewee 1: I would not use CyberDo application, I would prefer to use an MDM application that protects data and does not allow phones to be jailbroken among other features. MDM on employees’ phones are controlled by policies and rules that a company places on it.

Interviewee 2: No, because it is from an unknown, untrusted publisher, except if a company adopts the app.

Interviewee 3: No, because I have an app that provides me with the services I need.

Question 3. What are the features you would like the app to have?

Interviewee 1: I would like to add a feature that keeps the user’s phone up to date and prevent jailbroken devices (as jailbroken devices are one of the most damaging) from accessing company data.

Interviewee 2: Mobility. Easy to manage remotely (remote remove the app/data from phone). Capable of using different communication mediums with optimization (ex: wireless us 3/4G).

Interviewee 3: It depends on the client needs and the market (supply and demand).

Question 4. Would you recommend taking this app to a larger scale?

Interviewee 1: I think there is a market for this application, but it has to be improved. It could add more features that are customizable; a company could choose which features to use and which features not use.

Interviewee 2: Of course! Because of the availability of the cloud services, like Application Programming Interface (API) which allows for automation and service expansion (multiple client types).

Interviewee 3: It depends on the market and the services that the clients need.
writing can light fires
The main theme of this piece is the notion of living a life without the fear of going against the grain. It aims to contest the idea of a pre-set outlook on life where people are just going through the motions and trying their best to "tick the boxes" that society expects of them instead of actually trying something new and striving to reach their full potentials.

To What’s Expected

Daybreak
The rays gush forth and engulf my eyes
Light
Receive me into the sweet bosom of life
As the universe avows my existence

What is to become of this soul?
Who decides?
Is it you?
Men of twilight abided by the code
Set forth by those afore; now cold.
And live, they did, from womb to earth.
Though most were brave, only few were bold.

A man should as any man would,
A house of marble, stone, or wood,
A bunch of little mouths to be fed,
A warm body to share my bed.

Study!
Says those who live off of tuition money.
Work!
Says he who bosses people; that jerk.
Settle!
Like dew on leaves in the morning; sunny.
Live?
I’m afraid nobody says that, buddy.
Like marigolds gazing upon the sun;
So too must I follow the brightness
For there resides a star within myself
Slowly embracing the darkness...
...as the world watches over

These souls are celestial
From the instant it drew breath,
And like a fire, it grows in us
As it ignites love and passion.

As time chews on to put the day to rest,
The sun beckons the moon to the heavens.
It bids adieu to its evening lover

So tender
Not a sound
Perhaps, a whisper?
To the spirits set free to ride the northern lights,
To the inner children who survived to sing the songs,
To the dreamers who woke up to blaze the trail,
To the mavericks who lived to tell the tale,

Salutations!

Push forward!
Take the leap!
Risk it all!

Take none from those who want to see you fall
For nothing is worse than ceasing to live...

...and knowing that you haven't lived at all...

**John** is an engineer in the making, a closet poet, and a lawyer wannabe. A mechanical engineering student who has a penchant for drifting mentally throughout the day, he fell in love with poetry after watching "Dead Poets Society" during the winter of 2014. He fancies the works of Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, and Lord Byron, to name a few. When not reading or writing poetry, he usually spends his time reading up on J.R.R. Tolkien's legendarium, re-watching the whole Star Wars saga (all eight of them), and shouting at the telly while watching Manchester United, Green Bay Packers, or New York Yankees games.
Identity! What is identity? Is it our names? Some say yes. Is it our culture? Some shout yes. Is it our GPA? Some sadly grumble yes. To all these people, I say no. Identity is much more than our names or numbers or a bio written at the end of a Best Writing piece. Our identity is what we want it to be. It is our actions, our beliefs, and our relationships. Identity is how people will remember us when we are gone. As such, identity is ours and not ours. So be fast and be bold. Be courageous and be smart. Forgive but never forget. “Fear not for the future, weep not for the past.” Never stop improving lest your identity be lost to time as another forgotten soul.

What if people misunderstand me? What if people don't like me? What if I have no friends? To this I say, “Who cares?” Does the lion care about being friends with the deer? No, the lion does not. The lion rules as the king of the jungle irrespective of what others may say. There will always be people who misunderstand and misjudge your actions. Yet we must never stop, only by continuing our actions can we display our identity. Only by moving forward despite one’s obstacles can we can find our true self.

Are you still confused? Who am I? You ask. Those are only answers you can provide. He who faces himself, finds himself. So, go forth and conquer the world. Aim for the moon and reach the stars.

- Mr. R

Who is Mr. R? He is but a man. A man of many names. A man who is a jack of all trades yet master of none. A man with a restless soul but burning passion. A man free from the bounds of race and culture. A man who can say what needs to be said and do what needs to be done. So, who is Mr. R? An enigma personified.
All writers sometimes struggle when they are writing. Most of the time, this happens because they run out of ideas or do not know how to phrase the idea in the best way. As a result of that, each writer has his way of getting back on track with writing. Some of them find taking a break as a useful strategy and others prefer to free write. However, I have my preferred strategy that always worked for me and evolved me as an English writer: thinking in Arabic - my first language - then translating the idea to English. This made me wonder if this method worked for other writers, and I came up with the following research question: Does thinking in your first language make you a better English writer?

Every time I go to the Academic Success Center (ASC), they ask me to read my own draft out loud to the tutor. The first time I was asked me to read my essay out loud, I was shocked and asked my self why!? However, I surprisingly found myself correcting my own work along the way in terms of grammar, punctuation and much more. After reading Dr. Krystyna Golkowska’s research “Voice And Dialogue In Teaching Reading/Writing To Qatari Students,” I realized that most students do the same thing. It is a very helpful method to evolve in writing and it also helps to get a better understanding of a text, as Golkowska mentioned, “The most noticeable change was a new attitude towards reading. The students actively engaged the assigned readings and seemed to enjoy talking about them.” I will use this method on all my writing and reading assignment to get better understanding of the texts and to evolve as a writer.

I interviewed some of my friends who have English as their second language as my method to collect information about my topic. I chose this method because it will give me more detailed answers compared to a survey. I also chose to interview each one of them with his preferred language to get the most details from them. All of them chose to have the interview in Arabic, except Mohammed because English is the only language the we both can speak. I carefully chose three friends who have Arabic as their first language and one friend who has Hindi as his first language. Ali speaks Arabic and studied in an Arabic medium school, while Ahmed and Khalid, who also speak Arabic, studied in an English school. Mohammed, who speaks Hindi, studied in an English school in Qatar. I asked each one of them to give me just ten minutes of their time to answer my questions. However, some of the interviews took much longer than we expected because we were both interested in the topic and each question took us to another one without feeling off topic. I expected some of their answers, but others were shocking to me.

The first question I asked was, “Do you think in your first language while writing in English?” Ali, Ahmed, and Khalid answered “yes” immediately, but Mohammed took some time thinking and then answered “no.” Ali, Ahmed, and Khalid say that it is much easier to think in their first language because it gives them more free space to think about the topic in comparison to when they think about it in English. They feel that more ideas come to them while they think in their first language. One of them also added that before he used this strategy, he struggled to write a 500-word essay, and now he could not write less than 500-word essay because of the ideas that come to his mind when thinking in his first language. Mohammed said that he has his first language as a language of just speaking and communication with others, but when it comes to the academic level, he does not find any struggle to think in English because he is used to it since he was a little kid. When I started to think about these answers, it all made sense to me. Ali, Ahmed, and Khalid are living in an Arabic culture where they speak their first language everywhere, and all of them studied the English language in their school. However, it is completely different for Ali because there is a limited number of people whom he can speak Hindi with, and he did not study the English language as the other interviewees did.

The second question I asked was, “If you used this strategy before, do you find it useful or not?” All the answers were “yes” except for Mohammed’s. They find it helpful especially when they run out of ideas. Mohammed did not use the strategy and does not feel that it will help because he is used to writing in English since he was a little kid and he has Hindi as a language of conversation only. Ali also added that he had been a good Arabic writer since he was a little kid. He used to get a good grade on all his Arabic essays, but when it came to English,
he used to not be good at it. One time he went to his English teacher seeking help. His teacher was surprised when he saw Ali's grades on the Arabic essays. He asked him why he struggles to come up with ideas, and Ali answered that he feels like he is restricted with ideas and that he could not come up with new ones. His teacher asked him to start to think in Arabic while writing in English. In the beginning, he felt something was wrong with this method, but he started to get used to it and get better at writing in English. In the beginning, I understood Ali, Ahmed, and Khalid's responses, but I started to think about Mohammed's answer, and it was frustrating to me until I went the the ASC. My writing tutor read my essay and stopped when she reached Mohammed's answer, and she told me, “That would be my answer as well.” Since my tutor also has Hindi as her first language, this made me think about another research question: Can one person have two languages as his or her first language?

I then asked my interviewees the next question: “Is thinking in your first language your favorite strategy, or do you find another strategy more useful?” Surprisingly, all of them answered “no,” it is not their favorite strategy! Ali said that his favorite strategy is to sit with someone and start to ask him and argue with him about the topic. He said by this way he collects lots of information and perspectives about the topic and this always helped him with writing. Ahmed's favorite strategy is to drink a cup of coffee while he is writing. He added that the coffee helps him to concentrate and come up with ideas. Taking a break is Khalid's and Mohammed's favorite strategy. They said that whenever they notice that they start running out of ideas and are not concentrating on the writing, they stop immediately and take a break for half an hour and start writing with a clear mind. I believe that we are all using more than one strategy while writing. The only difference between us is how useful each strategy is and that depends on our brains. Some people struggle to come up with ideas, and others see it as the easiest task of the writing process for them.

The last question I asked was this: “Are you a better writer in your first language or in English?” Ali and Khalid said that they are better as Arabic writers—even though they do not remember the last time they wrote anything in Arabic! Ahmed was not sure about the answer, but he thinks that his level of writing is equal in both Arabic and English. Mohammed said that he was never taught now to write in Hindi. As a result of that, he is better as an English writer. I believe the answer to this question depends about how well we were taught our first language and how comfortable we are using it.

In conclusion, I always used thinking in Arabic as the way to write my English essays, and I am thinking in Arabic while writing this essay as well. It is the most useful strategy I have used because it helps me to come up with ideas and ways of writing, which is to me the main thing in writing. After I heard about the other strategies, I would like to make sure if my way is the most effective way. I would like to make writing in a second language easier for other people. I always see my younger sister struggle with her essays and she sometimes asks me for help, saying, “I do not have anything on my mind.” However, after just chatting with her in Arabic about the topic of the essay, she starts to write without any issues.

Mohammed AlMuhannadi is a Qatari majoring in mechanical engineering. He is a football player for Qatar's Texas A&M team. He likes sports in general, and he used to play volleyball for Alkhor Sport Club. He has been passionate about languages since he was a kid and therefore he was glad that he could write about something that he is passionate about.
Love is Always a Way to Elevate Our Heart

في هيمنة حُبك وفي حُب الأبيات
كتبت لي بيت ينومس خيالي

أنا سجين الحب والقوة والذات
وأيضاً سجين عيونك اللي قبالي

عبرت ب أفكارك جميع المحيطات
من جور وقت يا حسين الدلالي

يالله دخيلك يا بديع السماوات
يا عالماً سري من أول وتالي

باعظم سر النفوس الخفيات
أرحم سهير مايبات الليالي

ينومس يجلب الفرح، جور الوقت: الجفف، حسين الدلالي: كامل المواصفات

SUHAIM AL-QURANI
Some turning points in our lives define who we are and show us what we can accomplish. The experience I wrote about was one of the turning points in my life. It was a battle that I lost in the first round and won in the second one. I applied to Texas A&M at Qatar to study electrical engineering, and I wasn’t accepted. But I didn’t stop and gave myself a second chance to prove myself and gain the confidence I lost when I first wasn’t accepted. This experience was exceptional in that I etched every moment in my memory.

My Anger is My Motivation

Senior year in high school was very frustrating for me. Why? Because I used to go to school and my math teacher would ask me excitedly, “Did you get accepted?” Then I would head to my English class where the teacher asked me anxiously, “Did you receive an email from the university?” When I went home after school, I got the same annoying question from my mother. Then I received a call from my friend Aysha asking, “Did they call you?” And my answer to all these questions was, “No!” I had applied to Texas A&M University at Qatar to study electrical engineering because I was good at math and would love to make a difference and leave my mark in this world so that people will remember me, or at least remember my achievements.

Some of my friends and relatives judged my desire to have an influence on others and leave a legacy as silly and meaningless. They thought I overestimated my abilities and potential and that I will only be in Texas A&M University in my fantasy dreams. They were right about this; I did dream about being accepted.

In my senior year in high school, I planned what courses I would take in the first semester in the university. I also planned to replace my old laptop with a new Toshiba to use in the university. I used to practice in front of the mirror in my room how my reaction should be when I received a call or an email informing me that I was accepted. I used to check my emails more than ten times a day and hold my phone all the time waiting for an email or call that will make my dreams a reality.

In that same week, my classmate Fatema, who also applied to Texas A&M University, was accepted. The next day I heard that another two classmates were accepted, and I was a bit worried. Friends and family started asking whether I was accepted or not, and I did not have an answer to that question yet; all I could do was wait. I started to lose hope when I saw the worried look on my math teacher’s face when she asked for an update. My English teacher stopped asking because she was afraid that my answer would be no. My friends avoided asking me the question by not talking about the university. My math teacher asked me during class if I received a call or not. I used to sit at the back of the class, and one day 22 students turned their faces around and stared at me, waiting for an answer. I could not answer; I remained silent and nodded my head no.

A week later, I was studying for a quiz in my bedroom when I received an email saying, “After multiple comprehensive reviews and evaluations of your file, the decision has been made to deny your application for fall 2015.” I could not move my eyes from the word deny. I kept looking at it for five minutes. I could not stop my tears from falling. I was blubbering because I was angry and felt that I deserved to be there. The next day I also received an email from Carnegie Mellon University telling me that I was rejected by them too. I felt worthless and lost. I was so furious because of two things. First thing was that I proved to those who doubted me that they were right. The second thing is that the universities also thought that I was not qualified.

Two weeks after graduation from high school, I locked myself in my room and rarely spoke to anyone. I skipped meals and only ate my favorite chocolate. I did not know what to do. Should I give up my dreams or not? The next day my mother came to my room while I was lying on my bed. She sat beside me, put her hand on my head, and asked me kindly, “What do you want?”

I immediately answered, “Happiness.”

She asked me another question “All of us want to be happy but what does it mean to be happy for you?” I had forgotten that people have different views toward happiness. Happiness for me is the desire to do something I love and help someone else with my knowledge and experiences. Happiness is the pleasure
and satisfaction that I gain when I see a positive outcome of my actions and how people are affected by these actions and choices.

In the same day, I called my best friend Aysha because I was hopeless and desperate. I asked for advice, and she told me, “Don't worry; failure is not a permanent condition, and I'm certain that you will achieve your goals. Remember that if you put your purpose in a fist and punch a wall, I bet it will break the walls.” I am not sure if I still believed in my abilities or not at that moment. However, I did believe that one day things will go the way I want and even better because I learned this from my mother. Whenever things go wrong, and I stay in my room, she stands beside the door and says, “Stop worrying. Things will go the way you want. It is only a matter of time.”

To achieve my dreams and become happy, I needed to be accepted to the university. So I decided to apply again, but this time I wanted to be a stronger candidate so they would have no reason not to accept me. Usually, people do not admit their mistakes, searching for someone else to blame, but deep inside I knew the reason why I was not accepted. I did not want to repeat the same mistake because I didn't want to go through the painful and stressful experience again. I was not accepted because I did well in the first IELTS exam and thus felt overconfident. Texas A&M University wanted a higher score, and I told myself I could do it without practicing; therefore, instead of studying for the exam, I went to a party with my friends. The result was shocking for me because I got a lower score on the second exam than in the first.

When I joined the Academic Bridge Program (ABP), I received an email saying I should come to take the placement test for writing. The next day when I went to the ABP to take the exam, the instructor gave papers to us and said, “I want you to write about an experience you went through and describe how you felt.” I spent six minutes thinking about a story to fit the topic. I looked around, and everyone had already started. Therefore, I wrote about my experience and the mistake I did in the IELTS exam and how I truly regretted it.

In December when the ABP classes started, the course I struggled with was biology. I was good at chemistry and physics, but biology seemed hard for me to understand. As I said, I wanted to work harder not to fail again, so to get extra help I used to go to the office of Dr. Avril, my biology professor, at 7 am and ask her to explain concepts I didn't understand during class. Also, I used to come to the ABP at 7 am for revision whenever we had a computer test. My biology teacher pushed me hard and told me that my hard work would pay off. I did not believe that at the beginning. However, before the final exams, I received a call from TAMUQ admission telling me to come take the placement test. I went and took the test but did not care that much because there was no way they would accept me after they had rejected me only four months ago.

A week later, my friend Ahmed called me in the morning and asked me to pass by TAMUQ because he thought that he saw my name on a list, but he didn't understand what the list was about. I thought the list was just to discuss my performance on the placement test. Therefore, I went to the university before I went to my classes at the ABP. When I entered the building and looked around, I saw students coming out and in. I felt like a stranger, which made me sad. I gave my ID to the security guard and headed to the Admission's office. I knocked at the first door on my left, the office of the Director of Admissions. I gave the director my name, and she looked at a few folders and checked her computer while I waited nervously. I was looking at my fingers while nervously cracking my knuckles and felt hot even though the room was cold. I became more anxious every second I waited. After five minutes, I saw the smile on her face when she said to these words to me that I will never forget: “Welcome to Aggie Land.” I was over the moon! A moment ago I had entered the building as a stranger, but now I left the building as a student. I headed to the main gate where my brother was waiting for me, and I raised the acceptance letter to show him. He clapped his hands with a big smile that said, “Yes, you did it!”

At that moment, I realized a critical thing. I think of my journey as climbing a mountain. The road that I am taking is not straight; it is full of rocks and obstacles, but I must take that road if I want to reach the top, which is my goal. When I was not accepted to Texas A & M, I fell off the mountain, and I hit the ground. I had to take the same road again, but this time I was afraid; I did not want to get hurt or go through the same painful experience. I started climbing again when I decided to apply to the University and joined the ABP, but this time I did not notice that the top was much closer than I had imagined until I reached it.

After I had left TAMUQ admission, I felt like I was dreaming, as if none of this was happening. But it turned out that this was only the beginning. I went to the ABP to attend my morning classes, and I saw my computer teacher when I entered the building. He smiled at me and snatched the acceptance letter out of my hands to show the director. He pointed at me and said, “She is my student, and she is the first one who got accepted from the Class of 2016.” I was speechless. I went to the class, and my English professor gave us the placement test papers that we did on the first day of classes. In one hand, I was reading the paper that I wrote about my mistake, and on the other hand, I had the acceptance letter! None of this seemed real for me. By the end of the day I had a biology class, and the teacher said, “Today is my birthday, and I think that I got the greatest gift ever,” and she looked at me. I did not stop smiling the whole day, but, I did start crying when I hugged my mother, and she told me how proud she was. All the heavy weight that I carried with me during my climb was lifted off when I reached the top.

Amera Abdulla Jama is currently studying electrical engineering at Texas A&M University at Qatar and will receive her bachelor's degree in May of 2020 with minors in physics and mathematics. Amera is passionate about the work engineers do and how they solve problems facing all of us with their knowledge and critical thinking.
writing can say goodbye
(parting words from seniors)
Dear Class of 2017,

It has been one of the privileges of my life to witness your time at Texas A&M University at Qatar. In a span of four short years, I've seen so many of you transform from shy, fearful and insecure teenagers to confident, bold and ready-to-face-the-world young men and women. You have inspired me with your grit and determination. You have encouraged me with your humor and optimism.

I remember the early days of August 2013 when most of you arrived on campus. Like every freshman class, so many of you were overwhelmed by the transition to college and some of you began to question why you even said “yes” to TAMUQ in the first place. But, like revising a draft for ENGL 104, or reworking your codes for the Lego robot in ENGR 111, you stuck with it. You hung in there and saw your way through. Along the way, there were memories made and friendships formed – many of which will last for the rest of your lives. To see these relationships grow and change over time and to be invited into your sacred spaces of learning has been a joy and a gift to me. To be a trusted confidant or to have you seek out my help or advice was an honor. I learned so much more from you than you ever learned from me!

So, I want to say thank you – to express my gratitude to each of you for showing up and being brave and doing hard things as you made your way through the rigors and demands of getting an engineering degree from Texas A&M University. Thank you for taking risks and being willing to share your lessons learned. Thank you for believing in yourselves and in each other, even when the tasks at hand seemed too challenging or not challenging enough. I watched you learn and adapt and create and design and it was all so inspiring! What you accomplished in your time here has prepared you for greater and more ambitious endeavors ahead, even if those endeavors are not related to engineering. You gained so much more than technical skills, and I know this because I interacted with you and observed you and saw your curiosity unfold and blossom in ways that tell me you will make an impact wherever you are – somehow and in some significant ways.

Someday, when you look back on your time at Texas A&M at Qatar, I hope that you will remember the experiences that shaped your character and what you achieved in order to be able to walk across that graduation stage on May 4, 2017. You can trust that you left TAMUQ a much better place for those coming after you. And, you certainly left a lasting impact on me. Thank you! And good luck!

All the best,
Kelly Wilson
Manager, Academic Success Center

Thank You

---

Roses are red,
Violets are (sort of) blue,
This is not a speech
Because I felt a poem would do.

This poem may seem puerile,
And for that you must forgive me,
I waited until the very last moment,
Before inspiration had finally hit me.

Examinations are now over,
Senior design is finally done,
It was excruciatingly painful,
And I’m sure you’ll agree, not all that fun.

A shout-out to those, then,
Who helped me walk the extra mile.
The people whom I will fondly recall,
With more than just the hint of a smile.

Ali, my man, freshman year was the best,
Unless you count that terrible Calculus 3 test.
It wasn’t that great because both of us failed it,
Although we did end up passing the course,
So I guess you can say we nailed it.

Omar, I admire your tenacity and spirit,
Pushing yourself for the sake of the team.
You are, undoubtedly, one of the best team players around,
Especially when there are legends to be found.

Rand, thank you, for the time in freshman year,
In that Engineering 112 project,
When you were certainly of great assistance.
You taught me how to deal with others,
Gently and with patience.

Abdulla, thanks for all your help in that Semester from Hell,
Your work ethic will guarantee, trust me
That in life, you are bound to do well.
Mabrook, by the way, on your new job at the Royal Dutch Shell.

Tarek, I appreciate those debates … let's say,
On topics of a nature, sensitive and emotional,
That we conducted, I feel, in a manner quite rational.
Heard you joined a sorority recently, now that's exceptional.

Mahroos, your football skills have helped the school,
Win the championship, and that's pretty cool.
You're a great friend too, right down to the letter
Now, if only Barcelona (in the Champions League) had played a little better.

Lokesh, bro., I have to tell you this,
Love your taste in music, I felt you should know this.
And I guess you'll appreciate the analogy of likening
The difficulty of senior design to the difficulty of taking Virat Kohli's wicket.
It feels good to have a classmate who is an aficionado of cricket.

Byanne, thank you, for your encouragement and thoughtfulness,
Your patience to listen to my worries, and your kindness.
You helped cheer me up whenever I was down,
Teaching me to face it all with a smile, rather than a frown.

Zain, it has been an honor and pleasure debating with you, you know that,
The trophies we've won and the trips we've been on are a testament to that fact.
That adventure in Kuala Lumpur will never be forgotten,
Remember that darn cab driver? He was certainly rotten.

Ahmed, your gentle and soft-spoken nature,
Are qualities, I feel, often underrated.
Thank you for sticking it out with me in kinetics,

Your patience and help are much appreciated.

Maryam, I was touched when you said you did not wish to run,
For commencement speaker, not because it wouldn't be fun,
But because you wished to stay with the rest of the team,
The Chemical Engineering Class of 2017.

These are, my friends, only fragments
Pieces of the mosaic of memories we share,
There is a lot more that I could certainly have said,
But I was supposed to speak for only 3 minutes, so let me put this to bed.

I would like to acknowledge my professors
And mentors, and those who have assisted me.
Guided me, advised me, motivated and encouraged me.
I will remain forever indebted to you,
And so I would like to say, from the depths of my heart, 'Thank you!'

To my parents, who are here from afar,
You have been my pillars of support through all my years,
You prayers and well wishes and words,
Have helped me face my darkest of fears.
Your love and your faith and your belief in me,
Have helped me be the best I can possibly be.
It may sound soppy but it must be done,
Thank you, and I love you dad and mum.

Class of 2017, we've survived undergrad,
And that should certainly make us all feel quite glad,
But we must remember greater challenges are yet to be faced,
The vicissitudes of life dealt with and not just embraced,
I will miss you guys, and this place, I must confess,
Class of 2017, Gig 'Em and God bless.
Looking back at the last four years I spent at university, I realize that my decision to move to Qatar and study at TAMUQ was truly a life changing decision. I didn't know what to expect or what kind of experience I would get at an American university campus. Every year during my studies, I became more and more mature in the way I looked at things. I would analyze ideas and look at situations from different perspectives. I realized that university isn't only about the technical skills you learn related to your field of study, but also about the communication and critical thinking skills that we all need to proceed in life and get to where we want to be.

MUHAMMAD ZAIN RAZA

It is essential to immerse and invest yourself fully into the environment to make memories worth reminiscing over. This is true for everything including your college experience. In these parting words, I will try to avoid indulging in clichés, but when I do state the obvious, bear with me because sometimes we need to listen to the obvious repeatedly for us to realize its importance and to follow it.

The first and foremost thing you need is a reason that motivates you to come and stay at the campus every day. This can be your love for engineering, that research you want to do, or simply that friend you need to see every day. When I came to this college, for a long time I just felt like scraping by the days, coming in for classes and leaving as soon as I could. This is the worst approach a college student can have. College is not about taking classes. It should never be minimized into attending classes and doing enough to get good grades. Those classes are not the end, they are the means for having a worthwhile experience. Stick around the campus and the people as long you can, and good things will happen to you. You need to be in the college or around people in the college to have the proper college experience, and trust me it won't happen from the comfort of your room.

Secondly, always remember that TAMUQ is not an engineering school, it is a school with engineering majors. There is a big difference between both. Never assume that you cannot pursue non-engineering passions while being at TAMUQ. The college has always supported and catered to my interests not involving engineering. The problem does not lie with the college, the problem lies with students who are too presumptuous and hesitant to explore. Help is literally available to those who ask for it. Use the abundant opportunities and facilities available on campus to chase your interests, because the worst that will come out of it will be the realization that you're cut out for something else other than engineering. Whatever crazy idea you have about forming a society, researching on a topic or travelling to some program you love, just go and ask for it. People in this university will make it happen or guide you to the path that will eventually lead you to it.

Thirdly, never take any opportunity for granted. New opportunities will keep popping up frequently, but don't assume they will wait for you. Don't wait for next year to go on that summer study abroad or take that course you want. Nothing is constant and things tend to change unexpectedly around the campus. The perfect moment to start something is a mirage that will only waste away your four years. Seize the opportunity that is available today and start what you want to start no matter how inopportune the moment appears. Things will only fit perfectly when you look at them retrospectively, so there's no need to expect or predict what will be perfect in future. Most of the things that you'll consider perfect won't be a result of your careful planning and waiting for the perfect moment, they will be the product of your decision to grab whatever came your way in the moment.

Finally, please allow yourself to be silly and imperfect. You're bound to screw up things more than you expect, but that is part of the learning process. Do not try to act beyond your age and do not be harsh on yourself. For most of us, college is the last opportunity to try ridiculous and childish things. It is also the last opportunity to make friends that might last for a lifetime. Do not try to act beyond your years, because not only will you still screw up, you will also miss on this golden opportunity that won't come back. This is a cliché. but please please enjoy and live these four years to the fullest. Do not get consumed by internal or external pressures and expectations because there will be failures, including major ones, no matter how hard you try. As long as you're picking yourself up, using those failures as learning experiences, and making memories that will always brighten up your face, you will be fine.
OMAR EL HASSAN

Goodbyes suck. You leave friends dear to your heart, people you love, people you formed unforgettable memories with. These memories could be as simple as buying a Belvita cookie from the vending machine every morning with your friend. Memories like sleeping in the lab because you wasted too much time and didn’t study. Okay I might be a bit dramatic here, some people are experts at goodbyes, I am not one of those people. I never thought that I’d say this, but I might actually miss this place. I might actually miss the water coolers that are always empty, the classrooms with broken ACs, and the adventure of getting lost in this building and trying to find where I am. But most of all, I am going to miss the annoying people that I was forced to see every day for the past four years. I couldn’t wait till I no longer had to see these people, but now nothing saddens me more than the empty hallways now that they are gone. That lame guy who thinks he is funny, the “know-it-all” who thrives to get the professor’s attention, I’m going to miss all of them. Goodbyes suck, but we have to deal with them. To everyone in my batch, thank you for making these four years the journey that it turned out to be. I can’t think of a creative/meaningful way to end this blurb, so I decided to stay here for 2 more years until I can think of a proper way to say goodbye to this place. See you in the hallways.

FATHIMA FAIZEEN

Thank you to my parents for supporting me
Thank you to my brother for understanding me
Thank you to my family for believing in me
Thank you to my professors for guiding me
Thank you to my friends for being there for me
Finally,
Thank you to my classmates,
You will always be my PETE family and 122 our home.

MARYAM AL-AWADI

I feel good about leaving. I’ve learned a lot, have people I will be missing, and, ultimately, I think I did my best. Being able to close this chapter feeling good was worth the effort I put in over the last few years. I don’t usually like to give advice but, to anyone reading this, don’t settle for hindsight as your consolation prize. Push yourself while you still can. And if you don’t? Well, don’t look back after crossing the finish line. You’ll have your degree and, in the words of Edward Thomas, “now all roads lead to France,” wherever France may be.