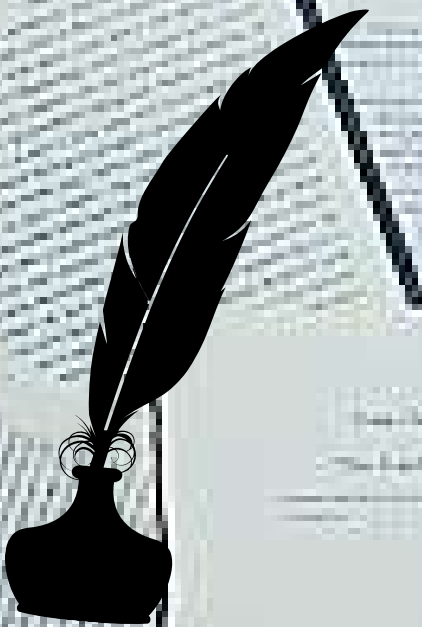




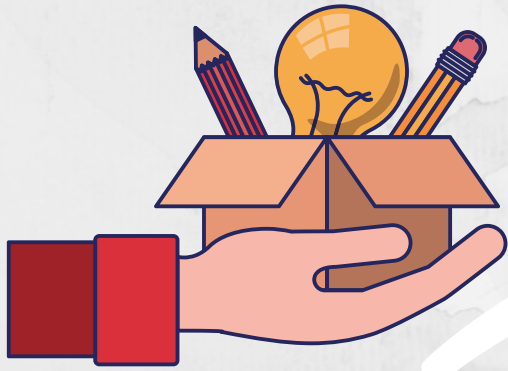
REPORTER'S SPOTLIGHT

-eBook issue 1



The Team

- **Samyuktha Chandrashekar**
- **Sthuthi Arun**
- **Daya Lakshmi Mukundan**

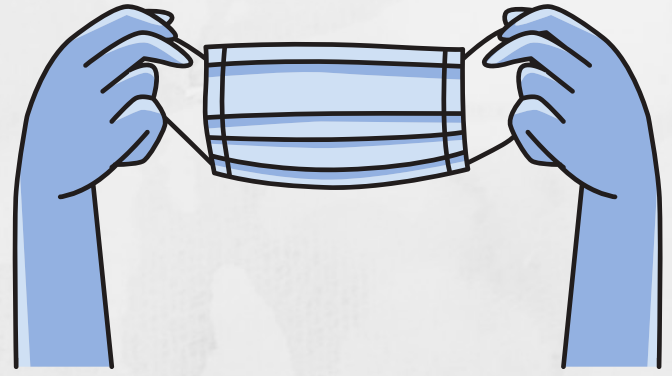


The New Normal



Mask up, People!

- Hussain Topiwala



With the daily toll of COVID-19 cases at an all-time high, India is struggling to sail through the storm. A depressing number of people have lost their lives due to the COVID-19 virus, and many more are continuing to do so. Amidst the rising cases, our desperate healthcare system has been pushed to its limits.

Vaccination is necessary to turn the tables around by achieving “herd immunity”. But in India, with an enormous adult population and a large illiteracy rate, this will take time. And the news of states facing shortages of vaccines as well as finances has just rubbed salt into the wound. In this situation, it is pertinent for each of us to take active measures and break the “boom-bust” cycle of cases. We must, firstly, begin with realizing the significance of wearing a mask.

A study last year in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene found that countries, where there was wide mask usage, had lower per capita mortality from COVID in comparison to countries that did not advocate masks. Another comprehensive study published this year in the Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) concluded that “near-universal adoption of nonmedical masks when out in public, in combination with complementary public health measures” could reduce the spread of COVID-19, provided that these measures are sustained.

Massive public gathering in recent times with only minimal people wearing masks has fuelled the fire and added on to the rapidly increasing cases. This ignorance has proven to be costly. It is in our hands now to steer the boat safely through the storm.

Thus, there must be no laxity when it comes to wearing masks. However, masks can only be efficient when they are coupled with other preventive measures such as physical distancing, sanitizing hands, etc., and compromising any one of these measures would open Pandora’s box of problems. These preventive measures may seem mundane, but they are the best alternative options that are available to us presently, and they have proven to be effective.

In my opinion, there should be a movement that promotes and promulgates the importance of wearing masks. These will educate the people and spread awareness. Campaigns that are oriented at the level of communities can educate people about the necessity of wearing masks and the right way to wear one. Digital technologies can be used fruitfully to foster the right attitude in people. All these steps might sound inefficient, but in testing times like these, every small step counts.

Need Of The Hour

- Mustafa Topiwala



It took something smaller than the size of an ant to take over the world; a virus. Today, this appalling disease has taken millions of lives, leaving families bereaved, children orphaned and chaos across the globe. Health has never been of importance as it is now. If I could invent something to make the world a better place, I would invent an oxygen generator.

This machine would possess the ability to use solar energy and produce refined oxygen, that could be used anywhere – from hospitals to aeroplanes to steel factories. Through this scientific miracle, endless opportunities will be available to the people. In these testing times, deficiency of oxygen in India and other countries will not be a problem. The oxygen generator could possibly save dying patients.

The production of additional oxygen could help reverse the negative effects of air pollution, helping humans and the flora and fauna to flourish. It would also help the aquatic to thrive. With the increased quantity of oxygen in the atmosphere, the general immunity levels of the people increase steadily.

Oxygen also plays a major role in aerodynamics. The invention would definitely enable planes to fly higher and farther and eventually improve the mileage of automobile engines. A study also reveals that a greater amount of oxygen boosts the evolution process. Thus, we could become smarter and happier, and get to see a variety of new, stronger animals too!

Therefore, to make this world a better place, I would invent an oxygen generator, that is not only beneficial for the environment, but for the entirety of the planet. The invention could probably make the Earth more hospitable, with cooler climates and high humidity, eliminating our need to search for another habitable planet, saving both time and resources.

Featured Image Courtesy: <https://depositphotos.com>

Exams During Tough Times

-Sthuthi Arun

With the new strain of the COVID-19 virus, the government has decided to cancel the class 10 board exams and postpone the class 12 boards.

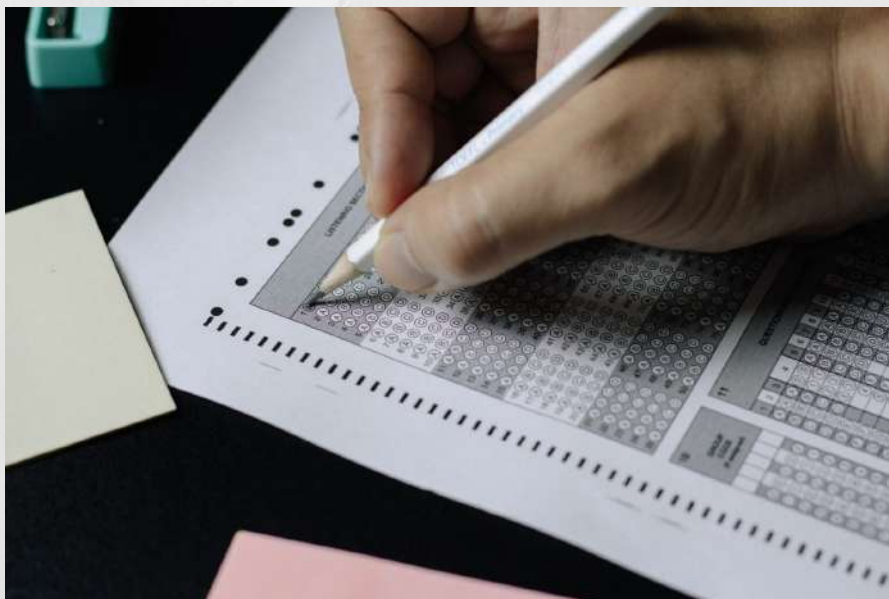
However, while class 10 students are in relative ease, it is not so with the to-be school graduates. “I don’t think it’s fair,” says Niharika, a class 12 student. “I mean, exams are important but not more than students’ lives. They could take our pre-board scores into account. or conduct an online exam instead,” she adds.

The teachers, however, are not too keen on having an online exam. “There could be a lot of cheating and malpractices,” remarked a teacher. “It’s just not scalable to track all the students using the online medium. A better option would be to cancel the exam altogether.”

Further, this could also impact the students’ careers since the exam dates could clash with college entrance exams.

Students and parents continue to urge the board to cancel the class 12 exams with the Twitter hashtag #cancel12thboardexams2021. It’s now up to the board to take action.

Featured Image Courtesy: Nguyen Dang Hoang Nhu on Unsplash



Boredom Busters

Combating Boredom Together

-Samyuktha Chandrashekar

Adults and kids face one relatable issue. Boredom! Aren't we all tired of repeating the same routine while being stuck at home? A scenario, which no one expected, is slowly setting into our daily routine and it ought to be changed!

Scorching summer in Chennai city and troublesome uninvited guests come knocking at your skin! When you put in a lot of effort into your skincare sometimes, your skin just does not care anymore. Personally, it frustrates me a lot!

1. Care for skincare?

All at the comfort of your home with a click on your phone! Home remedies are one of the most effective products, which ACTUALLY show distinct results. You can have a blast by mixing few incredible ingredients available in our kitchen. Think of peels – Bananas, oranges, papaya and what not? And yes... use those flours – Gram flour, rice flour or wheat flour with a dash of turmeric? A definite YES, but I would prefer it in the form of a Sev or Bhajiya though!

2. Volunteer

Endless opportunities across the globe! Am sure that you would find your cup of tea! Volunteer to make a change, remember that your minuscule efforts create high impacts. It can be anything you enjoy doing; Nature, music, teaching and more!

3. Mental health check –

Depression, anxiety and stress are the most common mental illnesses during these tough times. Trying hard to stay employed and many more problems linger in our minds that, we tend to forget to stay healthy mentally.

- Meditation
- Rebuilding bonds between lost friendship
- Just doing something, you love!
- ... Are a couple of feasible ways to be your brain's ultimate doctor!

4. Cook!

Don't we all remember the popular recipes, which were trending worldwide during the very first lockdown? Dalgona coffee was my fav! Let us keep ourselves attached to the essential survival skill by experimenting and creating our very own recipes! Maintaining a cookbook and photo journal of your creations would be a great memory once we get back into our busy bee routines!

Go crazy and do what you love. These unique and unexpected times should be utilized and cherished to the fullest! Let us sail towards positive (NOT covid positive) and bright times together! Do not forget that mask protects you and me.



With The Globe At A Standstill

- Medha R

The pandemic has made the entire globe to a standstill, confining all of us to our homes. People are struggling in finding a way to engage themselves without going outside their homes.

Here are some simple ways to cure your boredom!

1. Help your parents with cooking

Cooking is such a tiring job. We can be the Sous chef and work together with our parents and try out some lip smacking food.

2. Read books

Books are an amazing way to engage yourselves. Not only interesting but also improves your vocabulary, writing skills and many more.....!

3. Read the newspaper to know about the current affairs

Knowing about current affairs is important to know what's happening around you.

4. Tidy up your things and room

A room is a place where you start and end your day. So, keeping the room immaculate is a must.

5. Gardening

Gardening is a very interesting hobby to engage yourselves as it keeps you connected with nature. It is a fun activity and also develops skills like care for nature, Love for nature, responsibility.

6. Write a storybook or a comic

Story or comic writing is a fun hobby and also develops your grammar, imagination skills, creativity,etc

7. Learn a new language

Learning a new language sharpens your brain and will have amazing benefits like helping you with your communication skills

8. Exercise and keep yourself fit

In the lockdown, since we're all in our homes, people don't do any physical activities. Exercising helps in keeping you fit and healthy for a long life.

9. Start your own online blog

Starting an online blog where you are given the freedom to share your own opinions will be an amazing experience.

10. Try trending bakes and treats

Baking is a thrilling experience but just make sure you don't burn your hands in the hot oven. Let us all fight the pandemic together, Stay home and stay safe.



Overcome Boredom Creatively

- Sthuthi Arun

Boredom. We all have been there, haven't we?

That feeling of disinterest in absolutely everything. It occurs when you have a lot of energy but don't know what to do with it.

Question is, how do we overcome it?

Here are some fun and simple hacks to overcome boredom at home creatively.



- **Writing**

Just write to your heart's content. It could be a journal, a story, or just a small paragraph. Whatever it is, keep writing.

- **Bake a cake**

Baking cake can be simple and does not necessarily need an oven. There are plenty of recipes online to try out. It can be really fun. And delicious too!

- **Doodling**

Doodling doesn't necessarily have to be drawing or painting. In fact, doodling is one of the most easiest form of arts. You just draw what comes to your mind. It doesn't matter if the outcome doesn't look nice. Just remember to have fun!

- **Photography**

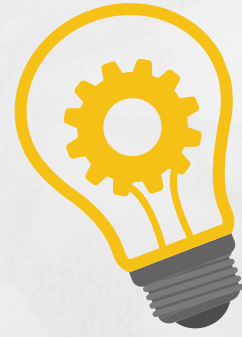
Grab your camera and get clicking! Photography is a cool way to passing time. It could be nature, the sky, the sunset, the list is endless. Try it!

- **Make a poem or song**

Composing a song can be really fun. Who knows, you could be the next great poet! You could also learn playing an instrument, say guitar or keyboard. It's really the experience that matters, not the outcome.

These are some hacks to overcoming boredom. Hope you found this helpful!

Creative Corner



Wish for a power to change people's mind

- Mustafa Topiwala

If I had one superpower, it would be to change people's minds. Not in an imposing way, but rather in an influential manner. Disease, poverty, and hunger afflict the world, and there are conflicts raging around the globe, in addition to environmental challenges. While the human race struggles to tackle these impediments, our only habitable planet is collapsing.

This calls for serious action. I would use my ability to change people's minds to make them realize that in such a global katzenjammer, they can come out and help. They can lend a helping hand. The only way we can survive is to help each other.

We can prosper only by supporting one another. And "helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person." I would change the minds of world leaders to persuade them to work for public good and not personal gain. I would bring a change in people's thoughts that wars, pandemic, and global warming are not the problems of a single state, country or continent. It is not 'his' problem, or 'their' problem to face. These are challenges that beset all of us; it is 'our' problem.

Using this superpower, I would also have also stopped major historical disasters. In 1865, I could have warned Abraham Lincoln and deterred him from attending any play. The repercussions of this move would have probably weakened the racial-discriminatory system in the United States. Likewise, my powers could have convinced Mahatma Gandhi of not visiting Birla Gandhi's House, and he would not have been shot. A few decades later in 1933, I could have changed German President Paul von Hindenburg's mind, and he then would not have appointed Hitler as the Chancellor, saving millions of lives and preventing an enormous chain of grave human rights violations from taking place.



Image credit: carvinaudio.com

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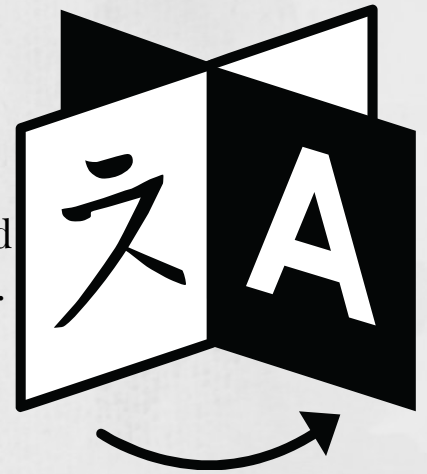
My superpower could initiate a butterfly effect of positive changes. It may help produce a utopian world that could actually exist. Where we humans too will exist collectively and are not divided by barriers of religion, language, race, etc. Where are thoughts are not based on selfish wants, but produce selfless actions based on other's needs? And ultimately, I would use my superpower to reform, for the right thoughts stimulate the right actions.



Wish For A Linguistic Superpower

- Daya Lakshmi Mukundan

I wish I had the superpower of Omnilingualism; or being able to speak, understand and write in any language. Language gaps lead to forgetting the past and being disconnected from one's culture. Even now, rich cultures and folk tales are being forgotten due to language gaps between the people of the world.



I would especially like to decipher the Indus Valley Script, as we know that they were very advanced in life for their time, and learning about their discoveries could help us very much in our current point in history. Another script I would like to decipher is the Cretan Hieroglyphics.

Alternatively, there are many languages in the world that are slowly dying out, and they take their stories along with them. The Cherokee language in North Carolina, USA is one of these languages. It has only about a thousand known speakers. If I could know this language and teach it to others, it wouldn't go extinct as its speakers die out.

There are several vulnerable languages, such as Kurux in Jharkhand and Tulu in Karnataka. If they are not preserved, they will go extinct in a few hundred years.

If I had the superpower of Omnilingualism I could communicate with everyone and add to my personal knowledge of the world, as well as break down language barriers to make the past and everything that comes with it public knowledge.

If I Were A Talking Flower...

- Maitreyi Aravindan

We all imagine being something that may be real or non-living. At times, we say “I wish I were a talking animal” or “I wish I were a snowflake wandering through the skies”. We often come across poems where the poets compare themselves with nature or a thing like maybe trains, snow (non-living) or trees, sun, flowers (nature). Have you ever thought about how it would be to live as a speaking flower? Here are my thoughts:

If I were to be born as a speaking flower, I would enjoy it as I love to be with nature. When I live like a flower in a place where there are only trees, grasses, flowering plants, rivers and lakes with pure air and plenty of rainfall, I would love it!

I can sing with happiness and joy. If an enemy comes, I will be able to scare them away (as I can talk), all the plants and trees near me can be my friends.

Most of all, all of us can create awareness and tell humans how we feel when they kill and destroy nature. We are also a source of food to animals. If they kill us, then the animals will not get food, and hence, they too will die.

If all the things in Nature could talk, we the humans can also have friends to play in Nature!



It's We; Not Me!

- Samyuktha Chandrashekar



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with a team” – -Anonymous

Collaboration; Learning is unstoppable and I think that collaboration allows you to experience different thoughts and start accepting them. The world is rapidly changing, a few of the most essential skills are the 21st-century skills and collaboration / teamwork is one of them.

Personally, I am a gregarious person and love to socialize; these opportunities increase fun up a notch while working together. It exposes you to different environments and makes you open and broad-minded!

Learning with a cheerful and dynamic group of people increases creativity. The almost fused bulb lights up with versatile ideas while chattering away with my peers. Various unique ideas together boils into the best dishes and outcomes possible! Sometimes, competing ceases the ideas bank and makes you thirsty to win. At times, competition fuels up the determination to try something and it also turns into a joyful healthy competition.

However, most of the time, it becomes self-centric and not tend to miss out on what others have to say about it.

Don't forget! Progression should be together as a team. Motivation by the other peers gives a slight nudge to cross the finish line as a team. Trust me! The feeling of achieving or at least trying together cannot be explained with just words:) Ending this off with my fav quote! Teamwork makes Dreamwork

Compete For Individual Performance; Collaborate For Team Activity

- Maitreyi Aravindan



Many people prefer teamwork that is collaborating, as when there are more people, the work or game gets easier. But, when you play a competing or an individual game, you feel it harder.

I perform better in an activity when I perform with all my friends as a team. As the saying goes “Teamwork is Dreamwork”, working as a team is always better than doing it alone.

I can give you an example to support what I’m saying. When my friends and I play together, we play girls against boys, such as Basketball or Cricket. However, we also play individual games like Chase and Catch, where we chase and catch each other. It becomes a hard challenging game as only one person will have to catch everyone.

Of course, I would also say individual competition is good in some cases like a running race or a big contest as it helps us to learn to have confidence and also helps us to cross challenges individually.

To conclude, teamwork is good for activities where it becomes a harder job to do alone and to demonstrate your capabilities, like games such as Football or Basketball. Same way, individual competition is necessary for building confidence and willpower in yourself, for example in a music or dance competition.

The Techno-World



Are Gadgets Replacing Our Grannies?

- Medha R



From my personal experience, gadgets do take away family time.

Why?-

Gadgets have become a necessity due to the pandemic. They are used for school, work and for educational and learning purposes but it also causes a lot of distraction.

I have been using gadgets within a limit and I don't engross myself in them but still, they tend to take away family time.

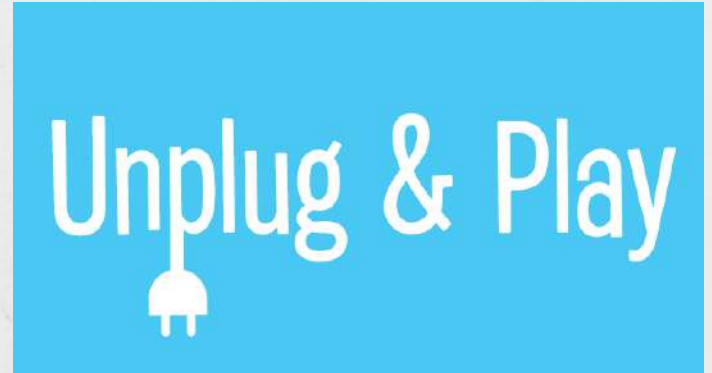
Nowadays, even our elders are glued to gadgets like TV and Smart Phone. Due to that, interaction with our elders is reducing.

The only silver lining is that due to the advent of technology many grandma stories & once upon a time stories are available in podcasts, vlogs, blogs. Only if we listen to the stories from our own elders there will be an emotional connection as they regale stories with love and affection for us.

Gadgets have the strong ability to replace our relation with elders because of that we have to endeavor our best, to spend time with elders.

Set screentime limits

– Sthuthi Arun



Imagine this scene. It's eight in the night, and instead of spending quality family time, you surf the internet. From one page to another.

Finally, once you've come out of your trance, you look up at the clock, and it's been an hour!

This situation is normal in almost every household. Using smartphones is not wrong, but it can be brain-numbing if not used for the right things. The person-to-person interaction has just vanished in the last five years. We all use chatting applications like Whatsapp and Facebook nowadays. It's all fake emojis instead of genuine feelings, and fake smiles instead of real ones.

Children now look at their screens all day, rather than going out there and discovering and learning new things. Video games have replaced actual sports, and online encyclopedias have replaced books.

The screen also emits harmful UV radiation, and can greatly affect eyesight. While technology cannot be totally cut out, it can be controlled. Screen time limits can be set, and families can adopt a policy of digital sunset after a certain time, say six in the evening. But if not, technology can consume us all. As the saying goes, "Technology is a useful servant, but a dangerous master."

Screen-free family time needs to be prioritised

- Hussain Topiwala



With our lives becoming technology-dependent by a new degree every day, our screen time has increased exponentially. Where earlier we used to spend about 2 hours a day in front of our screens, this figure has skyrocketed today. Our primary activity of each day is sitting idly in one place and being glued to electronic gadgets. This not only negatively impacts our physical and mental health but also distances us from our loved ones and damages our relationships.

It is true that gadgets are now necessary more than ever. With everything being held online, gadgets are a boon to us. However, this does not justify us overusing them.

A study conducted by Lenstore this year found that screen time has increased by 76% during the pandemic.

This increased screen time has adversely impacted personal interactions among people. Most youngsters today are finding it very hard to communicate with others, making them feel lonely and depressed. People are not able to find time to do the things that they were able to do earlier as long hours of TV and games have filled up their schedules. There has been a drastic reduction in the family time that people used to spend together.

According to me, screen-free family time needs to be prioritized to strengthen bonds with our loved ones and spend some quality time with them. A large chunk of screen time can be reduced to do a variety of other activities such as reading, writing, or gardening. Every evening, I dedicate at least an hour of my time to my family by spending time with them. This not only keeps me away from my gadgets but also makes me more optimistic in these dire times.

“Why have anyone around if your phone is more entertaining? The people in your presence either chose to be around you, or you wanted them to be around you. Don’t disrespect them. Value every moment. When they are gone, they are gone forever.”



Note From The Team

The three of us that worked on this eBook had loads of fun making it, though we had a limited amount of time. We figured out how to collaborate in harmony and communicate easily. We were present to back up each others' mistakes and the experience has been very fruitful.

In the process, we figured out more about teamwork and how fun it can be if you put in the right amount of effort. Although we didn't know each other before, this experience and obviously still have not met one other in person, we worked well together and came up with an end product we all like. We've learned to increase our working speed and efficiency, as well as having made new friends.

After much hard work and determination, we are proud to present to you – **The Write Track Season 2: eBook Issue 1.**

- Team eBook 2021 :Issue 1
