

# Headlight

Written by the students of Marblehead High School for our school and community

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## Midterm Fright

**Shanna Smith**

Reporter-in-the-field, Junior

The end of January marks the most daunting part of the semester: midterms. For newcomers to the school, midterms seem like an impending nightmare. However, veterans of past midterms know they are not as intimidating as they seem.

The tests are meant to cover everything from the first half of the year, and thus are less in-depth. This plays to the students' advantage. Making sure to understand big concepts while just glancing over the details is a good strategy. Getting bogged down in the little things can be detrimental to successful studying.

Don't cram! There's plenty of time between now and midterms. It's important not to sit down the night before and begin studying. Science has shown that your retention of the information is much better when you spread studying out over intervals.

Some habits that seem strange really do work. Rereading old notes right before going to sleep is a great remembering tool and subconsciously allows ideas to sink in. Another great technique is having a parent, friend, or sibling "test" you by reading out words and asking you to give definitions. Verbally reviewing subjects also helps retention. I have also found that I usually discover that I know the material a

lot better than I thought I did, which eases my nerves.

A strategy that many people seem to shrug off is breakfast. Some students blow off breakfast on a regular basis. However, on midterm days it is essential to eat a balanced breakfast. My suggestion would be something with protein in it that covers at least three food groups. There's even extra time before school on those mornings, so eat before you take your first test. Sleep is also integral, to prevent those silly mistakes that trip us all up. Eating a good breakfast, combined with a good night's sleep, can be the difference between remembering an answer and making a careless error.

A final thing to consider while studying for midterms is that it will not be the end of the world if you don't do as well as you'd hoped. If you studied for a good amount of time and put in effort, you did the best that you could; and that is all your teacher is asking for. Even if you do not do as well as you wished on a midterm, life goes on and you will still get into college. Think of it this way: midterms are roughly 20% of your quarterly grade. This means that the midterm for one course is 0.21% of your overall high school GPA. In other words, one midterm does not determine the rest of your life. Happy studying!

## An Editor on Editorials

**Dan Rosenberg**

Editor-in-Chief, Junior

This week, I've decided to write a column about writing columns. It seems like an odd topic to choose, but I think an open dialogue between readers and writers is very important. After all, without reading, what would be the reason to write? As a teenage newspaper writer, columns are really the only way to express my opinions in a public forum. I'm not really suggesting that our society is ageist, but how often do you see a teenager on television, or see an article by teen in a major newspaper? That's why, for me, the medium of a school newspaper is so important. Everything that's not news is just opinions, and sometimes I think it would be refreshing to hear a young adult opine about the world around him on a national stage, but that seems unlikely.

The hardest part of writing a column, oddly enough, is not finding a topic, or the actual writing, rather it's filtering ideas and writing through the proper lens. Writing for a school newspaper is very different than writing for a worldwide publication. I have actually been very impressed by how unrestricted the writing for Headlight is allowed to be, however there are some topics which I,

as a young adult writing for my school, like to avoid. To be perfectly frank there are some things that a student writing team have no business weighing in on. It was a tough decision for me, as a journalist, but I made the decision that the Newtown massacre was something that as a young adult, with little life experience, I had no business writing on. Sometimes silence is the best response to something of great magnitude.

An editorial is such a unique piece of writing because it is written on two different levels. On the one level, it provides a way for the reader to peer into the mind of the writer. In the case of the school newspaper, it gives people who may have less interaction with young adults than others a way to understand teens, and our modus operandis. But an editorial is written on a second level as well. It's written for the writer himself. There is a lot of happiness that comes from expressing one's opinions, and having others experience them and listen to them. For me, just being able to have the chance to share my thoughts on a myriad of subjects is a great joy. And so, I hope that you, the reader, get as much joy from reading this as I did from writing it.

## A Missing Necessity

**Emily Bitar**

Special to Headlight, Senior

Hunter S. Thompson once said, "Walk tall, kick ass, learn to speak Arabic, love music and never forget you come from a long line of truth seekers, lovers and warriors." It is extremely fitting that Thompson would group learning Arabic with walking tall and kicking ass. Learning to speak Arabic means tearing down barriers, revealing truth, and dedicating oneself to one of the most difficult tasks with one of the most rewarding outcomes. Arabic is the official language of over twenty countries and it is also an official language of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the African Union (Why Learn Arabic?).

As a result, Arabic-speaking countries are fast growing markets with abounding opportunities for both natives and foreigners. There is an extremely high demand for Arabic speakers from the western world. Unfortunately, because very few schools offer this language, a minute number of Americans speak it. If American high schools offered Arabic as a language, this problem will be solved, the youth will have abounding career opportunities, and intercultural growth and understanding with the Arabic-speaking world will flourish. There is a clear necessity; American high schools need to offer Arabic.

The Middle East, where most native Arabic speakers reside, is a rapidly increasing market. The Arab region, with its hastily growing population, provides a huge export market for goods and services. With a GDP of over 600 billion dollars annually, this region also has much to

offer the world market. In order to do business effectively, one must understand the language and culture of the people with whom one hopes to negotiate and conduct trade (Why Learn Arabic?). In addition, conflicts in the Middle East, such as the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, are constantly bubbling up. Imbroglios like that are easier to approach and work through when more Americans learn the common language of the Middle East, Arabic. Without a common language, many language barriers arise and create irreversible damage. The American high school system needs to recognize the endless opportunities presented to students by offering Arabic as a language course. Relatively few Westerners ever venture to learn Arabic. With the growing importance of the Middle East in international affairs, there is thus an extreme shortage of workers in the West who are versed in Arabic language and culture.

Those who study Arabic find careers in a variety of fields: journalism, business and industry, education, finance and banking, translation and interpretation, consulting, foreign service and intelligence, and many others. Only one percent of the United States' 12,000 FBI agents have any knowledge of Arabic at all, and this includes those who know only a few words (Why Learn Arabic?). Knowing Arabic provides many opportunities to reach new markets and find new business partners. Furthermore, the United States government has designated Arabic as a critical language. Any language for which more trained speakers are needed than are available may be considered critical. A main reason for the inadequate number of Arabic speakers is American high schools simply do not offer the language. Because so few Amer-

icans study this language, someone who is well-trained in Arabic has a skill that is very precious in the job market. An increasing number of high-paying jobs are available for those with advanced, graduate study in this language. The sooner high schools start offering Arabic, the sooner students are set on a more lucrative and prolific path for their future (Branner).

Learning Arabic in high school not only increases one's understanding of the language, but also enhances one's understanding of the Arab culture and social mores. In addition to having limited exposure to authentic Arab culture, Westerners are presented with one-dimensional, negative stereotypes of Arabic-speaking peoples through the news media, Hollywood films, and other sources. At the same time, events in the Middle East constantly affect one's life as an American citizen. These mendacious images have inculcated mistrust and miscommunication into our minds. Those who learn Arabic gain deeper insights into the cultural, political, and religious values that motivate the people in the Middle East (Why Should I Learn Arabic?). High school is the ideal time in one's life to begin the journey with Arabic. By doing so, one learns the truth about the Arab people at a young age, before ill feelings and assumptions that Arabs are inimical can be made. People who know Arabic bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between countries and help to avoid intercultural conflict (Why Learn Arabic?).

One may think that offering Arabic as a language in high school is too costly to achieve. However, the overwhelming financial support to implement Arabic learning courses is clear when one looks closer. The United States government is

in full support of teaching Arabic and, therefore, provides many grants and scholarships to do so. The National Strategic Language Initiative, instituted in 2006, promotes the learning of Arabic among Americans through numerous scholarships and supported learning opportunities. These include support for language courses from beginning to advanced levels, study abroad programs, intensive instruction opportunities, teacher exchanges, and professional development (Why Learn Arabic?). Under this program exists the high school student focused exchange program known as National Security Language Initiative for Youth, which provides merit-based scholarships, sponsored by the State Department, to students interested in learning less commonly studied foreign languages overseas (NSLY-Y). The United States government generously encourages Arabic becoming more commonly taught among American high school students.

Arabic is an absolutely beautiful language that is spoken by many throughout the world. When people endeavor to learn Arabic, they realize its astounding intricacies and expand their horizons. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of American Arabic speakers. With the Middle Eastern markets quickly escalating and an increasing number of American-based companies needing Arabic speakers, the obvious answer is for American high schools to provide an Arabic language course. When an American high school offers Arabic, cultural barriers are broken down, a whole new level of understanding is achieved, new friendships are made, and "asses are kicked."

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