



FLAME

CJC NEWSLETTER JULY 2025



*A family united in
Truth & Love*



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

DEAR CJCians



This edition of the Flame magazine is significant as it captures CJC in a milestone year – how CJCians celebrate CJ50, the intellectual pursuits of CJCians in its 50th anniversary year as well as the voices of the 50th and 51st batches of CJCians.

The CJ50 celebrations brought back students from the “yester-years”. Regardless of whether they are the Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials or Gen Zs, all are united in their common schooling experience at CJC where they learned to discover themselves, others, the universe and God, and where they experienced love and learned to love, and through it all, living and growing the CJC Spirit. The enthusiastic response of the alumni to come back for the celebrations speaks volume of the relationships that they have forged with their teachers, peers and the college. CJCians, have you forged strong relationships with your teachers and peers, with whom you would celebrate CJ100 together?

Embedded within the joyous celebration of CJ50 is the affirmation of the achievements of CJCians in learning and living out their mission. The seed of their mission is planted and nurtured through the process of learning and discovery of self, and their relationship with others in the community, within Singapore and beyond. The availing of opportunities remains a key driver in our CJ Education and your keen interest in learning would stand you in good stead to discover your passion and mission. CJCians, have you taken up any of these opportunities and found your interest?



Regardless of the era that we grow up in, societal trends would influence how we live and we, in turn, determine societal trends. The stories from the Editorial Club reminded me of the times I too spent at libraries and cafes, though libraries were libraries and cafes were cafes and not a mix of the two during my younger days. I am particularly interested in the review of burgers as they count amongst my favorite foods. I am happy to share some trivia here - I always try a burger or two by MacDonald's, KFC or any local burger restaurant when I am overseas, just to compare how different they are from what we have in Singapore. In my recent trip to Xinjiang, I tried burgers at four different restaurants and am very happy with my choices!

Wishing you an enjoyable moment, reading this Flame Magazine, with your friends, at a library café whilst savouring some burgers!

In Veritate et Caritate!

MRS WOO SOO MIN
PRINCIPAL



EDITOR'S NOTE

This year, CJC entered a new chapter of its story — the 50th anniversary. For half a century since its founding in 1975, CJC has been more than just a place for learning for students, alumni and teachers; it has turned into a vibrant community where meaningful friendships are forged, the values of truth and love nurtured and where the dreams of every student take flight. Hence, to celebrate this golden milestone, this issue of Flame will feature a special “Milestone Moments” segment in lieu of the CJ50 festivities. We invite you to re-live each moment in its entirety: from the Thanksgiving Mass and Commencement Ceremony, Food and Funfair, College Day and finally the eventful Homecoming Dinner!

Personally, the CJ50 Food and Funfair article is my favourite. It takes me back to all the exhilarating activities in school, like the rides and Dunking Station, and also the Experience and Game Booths that were set up by our very own CJCians. Like most of my schoolmates, this day was a highlight for me as we were able to share our beloved college with our friends and family, and just have a day filled with fun and food!

This edition of Flame also contains the usual itinerary of Academic Excellence articles, including valuable study tips and tricks from our top scoring J3 seniors, and an exclusive look into the annual CJC-NJC ELL Symposium. And lastly, how could the issue end without some Editorial Club pizzazz? In our final section, we have compiled a range of articles that is sure to enrapture your mind! From rating libraries and cafes in Singapore to a deep dive into the internet's favourite phenomenon: brainrot, I have no doubt there will be something for everyone to ponder over.

As we are just past the midpoint of this exciting year, we hope that this issue has helped capture all the wonderful memories made. Here's to another 50 years of learning and growing!

LIEW ENXI PRESIDENT, CJC EDITORIAL CLUB

TEACHER EDITOR

MS ALEXANDRA HOFBAUER

STUDENT EDITORS

LIEW ENXI (2T01)

GEMMA LIM (2T06)

SAW KEEDOH MARCUS (2T06)

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDIT

CJC FILM, SOUND AND VIDEO SOCIETY

CONTRIBUTORS

PARK SIEUN (1T01)

LETICIA WAN XI XUAN (1T03)

SOH SI YI, CRYSTAL (1T04)

TAN JIA QI NIKKI (1T04)

CHIN ZHI XUAN (1T05)

RACHELLE TAN SHU JIN (1T05)

LOKE JIE LE JOSIAH (1T06)

YANG WEIAO (1T29)

ENG JIN SWEN (2T03)

LOI ZI YI ZOE (2T03)

NG YONG XUAN JAEDEN (2T03)

EMMA NG (2T05)

RYAN CHONG KOON SENG (2T05)

POH SHER LYN ALAENA (2T06)

SAW KEEDOH MARCUS (2T06)

TRISHA CHAN NING XI (2T06)

JONAH ONG TSI KIAN (2T08)

JONATHAN BENOIT LIM ZHI-TENG (2T09)

FAITH NG KAIXIN (2T20)

VEERAMAHENDRAN AMIRTHA (2T20)

EOGHAN MULYADI (2T27)

IMOGEN BELLA CHOI YUN SIU (2T29)



MILESTONE MOMENTS: CJ50 SPECIAL



50TH ANNIVERSARY THANKSGIVING MASS & JC1 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

By: Eng Jin Swen (2T03), Loi Zi Yi Zoe (2T03), Ng Yong Xuan Jaeden (2T03),
Ryan Chong Koon Seng (2T05) and Trisha Chan Ning Xi (2T06)



The annual Commencement Ceremony signifies the start of a new year – a chance for us to officially welcome the new JC1 students into the college. It was extra special this year as it was held with our 50th Anniversary Thanksgiving Mass commemorating "A Family United in Truth and Love". Former CJC Principals, alumni priests, and members of our School Management Committee and Family@CJ Parent Support Group came together as a family to thank God for His abundant graces over the past 50 years and prayed for His continued providence in the coming school year and beyond.

His Eminence, Cardinal William Goh celebrated the mass and graced the occasion. Cardinal Goh's homily was special as he shared how living out our motto "In Veritate Et Caritate"- in Truth and Love - builds a stronger community, both within and beyond our college walls. This is the foundation on which our college has stood for for 50 years.

With prayers for divine grace and protection, His Eminence then blessed the new Heritage Gallery and Student Recreation Centre – affirming and celebrating both our past, and our dedication to growth and new beginnings.

With the close of the mass and benediction blessing, we came to another memorable event – as aptly quipped by Sophie O' Hara, President of the 50th Student Council, "What's a birthday celebration without cake?". His Eminence, Principal Mrs Woo Soo Min, College Chaplain Rev Fr Shaun Lim, former CJC Principals, and past and present members of the School Management Committee cut a birthday cake – offered generously by CJC alumnus, John Yap, founder of Awfully Chocolate – as the auditorium sang Happy Birthday.

In a cherished tradition, the new JC1 students received their college pin from the current JC2 students, signifying the passing of CJC's flame from senior to junior, marking a poignant transfer of CJC's heritage and aspirations.

A reception held at the end of the ceremony brought the college community together in fellowship and celebration. The canteen was abuzz with enthusiastic reunions and some students had the chance for an informal engagement session with His Eminence, Cardinal Goh. He encouraged them to continue to build themselves and the community, emphasising that young people must find their place in life and live with enthusiasm and dedication.

This meaningful celebration set the perfect tone for our golden jubilee year - a harmonious blend of tradition and renewal, gratitude and aspiration. As the college embarks on this milestone year of festivities, the warmth and unity displayed at the Commencement Ceremony echoed the very essence of what it means to be part of the CJ family: a community bound together by Truth and Love, honouring its past while embracing its future with hope.





CJ50 **FOOD & FUN FAIR**

By: Poh Sher Lyn Alaena (2T06), Jonah Ong Tsi Kian (2T08) and Imogen Bella Choi Yun Siu (2T29)



Catholic Junior College was pulsing with excitement as staff and students in blue added the final touches to their preparations for the CJ50 Food & Fun Fair. Organised to mark the college's milestone birthday, the CJ50 Food & Funfair was certainly a highlight of the school year. The celebration served to create everlasting memories for students, staff, alumni, and the public, and to strengthen ties both within the school community, and outside of it.

As the time to open the event to the public neared, the anticipation was high as everyone waited for the winning shot that would dunk our Principal into a tank of cold water. As the sound of our Principal being dunked reverberated through the school grounds, cheers were met with the sound of confetti poppers, and the CJ50 Food & Fun Fair officially began. In the blink of an eye, our beloved school field, which has witnessed fifty years of learning and laughter, transformed into a vibrant festival ground, where the spirit of celebration replaced the usual rhythm of academic life.

Amidst the blasting music, crowds gathered around the food stalls, which were tempting the crowd with their mouth-watering treats. The warm, savoury aroma of pizza and burgers wafted through the college, drawing in hungry fairgoers eager to satisfy their stomachs. The Over The Hill satay stall, manned by a family of CJC alumni, attracted mountains of people as they dressed in Satay Man garb and rang bells, calling upon onlookers to taste the tantalising smell that wafted through the hot air.



The main attraction, the Meteorite ride, provided a breathtaking view of the entire fairground at its peak, while it sent riders screaming with joy as it twisted and turned at exhilarating speeds. From the simple ones like the Gyrospin to the challenging Rodeo Bull, these rides did not fail to entertain and create wonderful memories among current and past CJCians and their loved ones.

As the animated chatter of the bustling crowds gradually filled the air, the mesmerising voices of our very own CJCians echoed throughout the school, courtesy of the engaging and seamless rotation of performances executed by our student and alumni bands. "At the same time, the harmonious teamwork displayed by our students in manning and promoting the games was met with a passionate eagerness from the public to give their best in the simple but thrilling activities innovated by the students.

Meanwhile, at the auditorium, the CJ50 Marketplace was overwhelmed with activity, as student representatives from various classes prepared an array of snacks, household items, and handmade crocheted items. In true marketplace fashion, the hustle for the items ensued as soon as the prices were lowered, with crowds of people clamouring for the opportunity to buy the coveted items in the final moments of the carnival, emptying the tables.

The joyous occasion was a window into the sense of community and camaraderie that has characterised life at CJC over the years. As students, staff, and visitors came together to celebrate our school's golden jubilee, their shared enthusiasm and dedication created something truly special – a reminder of how this institution has been more than just a school; it has been a home to generations of learners for half a century.



"I ALMOST ATE EVERYTHING" JAEDEN FROM 2T03 WAS EAGER TO SATISFY HIS HUNGER, RELIVING THE HANG OUTS OF HIS SCHOOL DAYS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

"THE HIGHLIGHT FOR MY FAMILY AND I WOULD BE GOING DOWN THE ENTIRE ROW OF GAME STALLS ON THE FIELD AND ATTEMPTING 1 GAME AFTER ANOTHER. IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE HOW CJCANS ARE VERY EXCITED TO INTRODUCE THEIR GAMES AND HAVING PEOPLE PLAY!"

- MR MARK LI, JC2 YEAR HEAD



50TH ANNIVERSARY COLLEGE DAY

By: Josiah Loke (1T06) and Chin Zhi Xuan (1T06)

As we gathered for our 50th Anniversary College Day, we were reminded of the college's legacy and the cherished values that have guided our community for fifty years. The boisterous chat between a teacher and an alumni, reminiscing about the past and embracing the precious memories they have shared; the fervour of JC2 students, waiting to be immersed in the grandeur of such a momentous occasion – such vitality imbued the atmosphere of the school foyer before the ceremony.

The momentous occasion began with a grand procession. In a distinguished manner, the alumni teachers, and Principal and Vice-Principals, strode towards the centre of the auditorium and lined up according to their years of graduation. A mixture of pride and gratitude permeated the air as they were greeted with warm applause.

Thereafter, words of wisdom and faith were imparted unto us during the opening prayer by our College Chaplain. We were reminded of our mission as vessels of God, that Christ called upon us to be one collective body. A valuable part of the CJC journey is having communion and love with one another, and being reminded that God is love.

Our Principal, Mrs Woo then spoke about building a generation in Truth and Love, and building every CJCian to be a Thinker with a Mission and a Leader with a Heart. This is exemplified through the achievements of CJCians reflected by their vocations, and the impact of CJCians reflected in various sectors of society: Public Service, Law, Healthcare, Academia, Journalism, the Arts, Entertainment, Social enterprise, Military and Defence, Sports, Education and Catholic Priesthood. Mrs Woo was proud to experience the values and achievements displayed by the students.



The Guest of Honour (GOH), Professor Tan Tai Yong (Class of 1979), current President of the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), then gave his address. He gave a revelatory sharing on the current measure of what success entails in this advanced world, where time and tide wait for no man. We should define success on our own terms, and redefine it as we grow. We should pursue deeper purposes, and not just transient things.

The most lively and eventful segment of the awards presentation ceremony began shortly after Professor Tan's address. Students, staff and teachers strode up to the stage with ecstasy and fulfillment. Laughter, smiles and handshakes were exchanged between the award recipients and presenters – an extravagant display of heartfelt emotions weaved into a simple yet profound gesture of recognising achievements with an honourable plaque or certificate.



Chloe Pang Kai Yi, a JC3 student who won the Outstanding Contribution Award for her time as President of the Editorial Club reminisced about how she spent most of her time studying in school, including at the Night Study programme. CJC was a place where she found her purpose and grew a lot as a person.

When asked why she chose to join the Singapore Navy, she said, “[There is] no harm in trying something new and [the job] exciting. [You] can tell others that you’re a woman but also do military related stuff. [It’s] very rewarding.”

On the academic front, Kevin Duethorn, a JC2 student who topped his cohort in H2 Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics, said, “It’s all about quality over quantity when it comes to studying.”

Mr Martino Tan, CJC alumnus and co-founder of Mothership was also present at the event. He said, “[it was] quite emotional for me when the Guest of Honour spoke about the historical context of the school.” It reminded him of his time in CJC and it also made him a little anxious about the changing world. It was also a good time for him to catch up with his friends during the Tea Reception after the ceremony.

As we celebrate 50 years of Truth and Love, these awards take on an even greater significance. They become not just symbols of individual achievement, but testaments to half a century of memories, relationships, and values that have been passed down through generations of CJCians. Each award presented today honours not just the recipient, but the enduring spirit of excellence and community that has defined our college for fifty remarkable years.





CJC 50TH ANNIVERSARY HOMECOMING DINNER

By: Ariel Tang Bao Qing (1T20) and Soh Si Yi, Crystal (1T04)

Catholic Junior College celebrated a major milestone this year, hosting its Homecoming Dinner on 30 May. The celebration saw our college welcome back alumni from across the generations in honour of 50 years of faith, friendships and fearless spirit.

We kicked off the festivities with the Homecoming Mass and Firebird Alumni Networking session, followed by campus tours which evoked fond memories for many returning graduates. After that, the celebrations moved to the school field, which had been transformed into a lively open air venue, complete with strobe lights, a stage and rows of dining tables.

The Homecoming Dinner featured an array of mouth watering food. Guests enjoyed everything from the huge buffet spread to food vendors selling cendol, Japanese takoyaki, satay and nacho cheese fries, just to name a few, as well as CJ's very own drinks bar. Throughout the evening, live music and entertainment was provided by the school's talented alumni bands and emcees, keeping the spirits high.

Among the many highlights of the evening were the heartfelt conversations had by alumni communities reunited with their friends, colleagues and students, all sharing stories about their yesteryears in CJC, that really impacted their lives for the better. When asked whether they still kept in touch with their JC friends, it was heartwarming to hear that most of them still did even after many decades.



One alumnus who was a part of CJ's 15th student council stated that she, "still [keeps] in contact with [her] council friends...has a group chat with them and congratulates them on their birthdays." Another remarked on the joy of coming back to "meet friends and see how they changed after 40 years." When asked if they had any advice for graduating students, many emphasised the importance of having a good community and strong friendships.

"Whatever your experience [is] in JC is not a reflection of your life," quipped one alumnus, reflecting that life will continue to change. Another gave advice on coping with the burden of school stress, stating that "it's okay to cry," and that "[the] teachers are amazing and genuinely willing to help...ask for help when you need it."

Despite the different walks of life that they came from, one thing was in common: they all agreed CJC's Homecoming Dinner celebrated not just the school's rich history, but also the life-long bonds that were forged throughout the generations of students.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

A LEVEL RESULTS TOP SCORERS



“I am thankful to God for seeing me through each day of my journey, and my family for their help every day, from making breakfast to reminding me to enjoy my education regardless of my grades. I am also grateful for all my teachers—especially Dr Lim, Mr Yang, and Instructor Sophie—who taught and supported me patiently, helping me enjoy the subjects and extracurriculars I took. I am appreciative of my friends in JC who were with me daily, doing tutorials together in the morning and after class, cheering me up when I was tired. My non-JC friends too, who despite not understanding my work or subjects, reminded me to relax and supported me until the end.”

AMELIA LOCK MUN LENG



“I would like to extend my gratitude to all CJ teachers... I have approached subject tutors of another class to consult on some subjects, and they have not only accepted my request with open arms, they were immensely helpful. Hence, thank you to every single teacher in CJC for caring for us students.”

KUAN COCO JIAMIN



“Personally, I believe I had a great work-life balance and I can attribute it to time management and studying efficiently. As much as possible, I strived to keep my study sessions productive whereby I was engaged and using my brain, instead of merely reading the lecture notes ... When I felt like I could not sit at my desk even longer, I would go for runs which I not only enjoy, but also keep me active amidst the busy exam season. I would also meet up with my friends when I felt overwhelmed, which allowed me to unwind and be able to go back to studying.”

DEL ROSARIO IGNACIO LUIS IV KATIGBAK

“I will miss the moments I had with my friends and treasure the memories made with them. Those moments gave me the opportunity to bond with my friends and get to know them better. A tip to my juniors would be to start studying and attempting past year papers as soon as possible. Prioritise your studies above everything else but remember to take care of your health!”

ELISABETH CHAN KEI YAN



“My teachers have been instrumental in helping me grow as a person. They have shown me how to broaden my horizon, view the world from different perspectives and challenge myself to think critically. Beyond helping me excel in my studies, they have helped me shape into a more confident, steadfast and caring individual. I will always be grateful for the invaluable guidance and wisdom they continue to share with me.”

CHEW JUN LIANG



DON'T JUST PASS: STUDY TIPS FROM OUR

By: Josiah Loke (1T06) and Yang Weiao (1T29)

Don't settle for less. You don't come to JC just to do the bare minimum. The prospect of meeting your own expectations for your CAs and Promos can become reality with a few tweaks to the way you revise. In this article, we have compiled and curated study tips from our CJ seniors who were part of this year's Library Club. These are not assiduous goals that you have to painstakingly work towards. These are simple and realistic steps; if you follow them, we're sure that you will see progress in your grades.



WHY YOU AREN'T STUDYING EFFECTIVELY

PROCRASTINATION

How would you rate the way you do your revision? Do you find yourself doing your work at the last minute, burning the midnight oil just to finish it? To put it simply, procrastination can be an impediment to your academic growth. In JC, Procrastination is Death. It is a pity that many students struggle with the bad habit of procrastination, resulting in lack of quality sleep and assignments left incomplete or undone. The academic rigour in JC is incredibly intense: the heavy workload, the extensive content to study and the huge jump in difficulty of the papers leave many overwhelmed. Therefore, you cannot afford to waste your time.

INEFFECTIVE REVISION

How many hours do you study a day? What does that studying usually consist of? Are you spending hours passively rereading and highlighting notes? Don't mistake activity for progress. Many students end up focusing on the number of hours they study more than what they actually learn in that time. Without being actively engaged in what you are studying you aren't really doing much for your understanding of the topic. Keep reading to learn how to avoid common pitfalls like this.

HOW TO ACTUALLY STUDY EFFECTIVELY

1 CONTENT MASTERY

Focus on understanding before memorising.

Many students nowadays tend to devour a large amount of content without first understanding what it means or how to apply it. To effectively master content and answering skills, you must prioritise understanding first. Once you have understood the content, your mind would naturally be attuned to absorbing the information.

Try teaching the difficult concepts to your friends.

This would ensure that the content stays in your head for a longer period of time. In contrast, when you simply inundate your mind with excessive amounts of content to memorise, it will easily leak out of your mind. So focus on understanding over memorising.



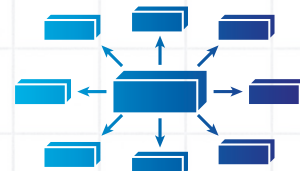
2 ACTIVE LEARNING

Create personalised mind maps and notes by hand.

This promotes clarity and reduces redundancy as our minds would be focused on the critical concepts while filtering out unnecessary content.

Use blurring.

From your memory, dump a chunk of content you want to memorise on a blank Google Document, review the content you have typed with your notes and fix the errors. Redo the entire process until you have properly memorised the content – from memory, check, correct, and repeat. Regularly revisit memorised content to keep it fresh.



Top Performers – Arts

SENIORS

3 SMART PLANNING

Review performance after exams to identify weak areas.

Time is tight, and not all students can comprehensively evaluate their papers. An efficient yet highly effective method you can use is to evaluate your exam performance in point form on a piece of foolscap paper or in your Notes app on your phone. Be critical when looking through your mistakes, and write down areas for improvement accordingly so that you are fully aware of what not to do in the future. If there are gaps in content knowledge, take down the particular topics or chapters that you need to revisit and set aside time to revise them.



Build a habit of constantly checking your progress.

This can help you discern the topics you may need to spend more time on and the ones where you're set. A suggestion is to utilise Excel Sheets or Google Documents to list out the gaps in your learning, your results for exams and quizzes as well as their dates; the number of assessments can get difficult to keep track of. This can help with your regular performance reviews making sure you are 'studying smart' and keeping you on the right path toward academic success.

Track your study sessions.

Using an app like YPT you are able to track your study time with the added benefits of minimising distractions from your phone and additional motivation if the app's gamified and social features appeal to you. However, it is still important to remember – quality over quantity. Try to be as intentional as possible with your studies and don't let the visual timer turn into another distraction.



4 MAKE YOUR STUDYING SESSION LESS OF A BURDEN

Use flexible daily plans with room for rest or change.

Some of us procrastinate because of the immense workload and content to revise, and there is an inertia to get started on our revision. To help with this, you can use the Pomodoro Technique which is proven to be highly effective. For every 25 minutes of work, take short five-minute breaks in between. This method essentially breaks down big and cumbersome tasks into short and simple ones, making the work less burdensome.



At the end of the day, you should aim to achieve balance and consistency when using the above tips for effective revision. After all, these aren't one-size-fits-all solutions nor are they supposed to be immediate cures for all the academic challenges you may face. It is unrealistic to aim for absolute efficiency in your revision. You may still procrastinate now and then, but with willpower and persistence, you can harness the potential that you have within you to achieve your best.



Top Performers – Science



CJC-NJC ELL SYMPOSIUM 2025

By Chin Zhi Xuan (1T05), Rachele Tan Shu Jin (1T05), Liew Enxi (2T01) and Poh Sher Lyn Alaena (2T06)



"From Breaking News to Viral Views: How the Language of Online Media Shapes our World"

"On 25 April 2025, the annual English Language and Linguistics (ELL) Symposium was held at Catholic Junior College (CJC), jointly organised by CJC and National Junior College (NJC). The insightful sharing of the three invited speakers enraptured the three hundred odd attendees, which included enthusiastic and passionate ELL students from five junior colleges, as well as selected secondary school students who were eager to learn more about this subject. The stage was set for Associate Professor Csilla Weninger, Associate Professor at National Institute of Education, as well as Assistant Professor Luke Lu, and to end off, Ms Amanda Chai – a lifestyle journalist at local news company The Straits Times.



Associate Professor Csilla Weninger began by analysing the tell-tale signs of misinformation, contrasting the density and factual integrity of real news with the manipulative intent often found in fake news. She introduced the concept of 'platformization', explaining how social media platforms amplify content and encase users in algorithm-driven echo chambers, which reinforce personal biases and fuel the viral spread of misinformation.



Assistant Professor Luke Lu followed with a deep dive into the digital journey of Singlish, illustrating how words like "kiasu" have adopted fixed spellings while others remain fluid, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of language. He also emphasised how the globalisation of Singlish—now recognised in the Oxford English Dictionary—speaks to the influence of Singapore's linguistic identity in online spaces.



Concluding the lineup was Ms Amanda Chai, a Style Correspondent at The Straits Times, who offered a refreshing, journalistic lens on language. She discussed the importance of balancing conversational tone with authoritative credibility in modern reporting, and addressed the challenges of engaging multi-generational audiences amidst shrinking attention spans.



After the enlightening and informative talks, students gathered their questions and directed them at speakers during an engaging Q&A session, in which they bravely stepped forward to clarify their doubts and posed thoughtful and incisive questions, demonstrating not only a keen interest in the subject matter but also a commendable effort to think critically.

Following the panel discussion, students attended the tea reception, where the atmosphere buzzed with excitement as students from the different institutions mingled freely, united by a shared passion for the English language. It was a moment where budding linguists, aspiring journalists, and language enthusiasts alike found common ground, forming connections that transcended beyond our different schools and backgrounds.

Eva Noblezada from Anglo-Chinese Junior College (ACJC) reflected, "I learnt that the digital age has led to language evolving more rapidly and that language use is directly impacted by the new needs and goals of the digital age."

Isaiah Chua Cheng Xi from CJC reflected "In just three hours, I uncovered three entire universes — one about language online, one about Singlish, and one about how we write 'news' ... It also fascinated me that the increased use of emphatics and pronouns drives fake news to spread 7 times faster than real news. Such an important point to note in today's digital age!"

Overall, the symposium undoubtedly expanded our knowledge on the critical role which language plays in online media to shape our world. Students were able to leave with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the English Language.

S RAJARATNAM LECTURE 2025

By: Veeramahendran Amirtha (2T20) and Eoghan Mulyadi (2T27)

Upon hearing Prime Minister Mr Lawrence Wong's speech about the turbulent world and how Singapore hopes to navigate it, I was struck by the extent and speed of the shifting global power dynamics. The same United States that once championed post-World War II principles — such as decolonization, free trade, and open markets — is now actively pursuing protectionism. This shift in U.S. policy seems to stem from a growing sense that it gains little from expanding its resources to solve global problems. As clearly stated by the US president Trump, the US has been taken advantage of and thus it has a large and persistent trade deficit. This made me reflect on a fundamental question: what ultimately drives a country's desire to become a global power — is it the pursuit of supremacy, or the pursuit of economic gains? These two goals often go together, but they are not always the same. A country might want supremacy to protect its economy, but sometimes it may seek dominance for other reasons — such as national pride, military influence, or spreading its values. While global powers often claim they act for the good of the world, it's worth asking whether their actions truly help others, or mainly serve their own interests.

PM Wong's speech also made me reconsider the role of globalization. Once hailed as a force that expanded Asia's economies — particularly within ASEAN, which has played a key role in Singapore's growth — and reduced the likelihood of wars, economic interdependence is now increasingly viewed as a vulnerability. Today, economic tools like tariffs have become instruments of statecraft — used strategically to protect national interests rather than foster openness.

Apart from providing an insightful update on current affairs, PM Wong also shared the steps Singapore is taking to navigate these unprecedented times. One key approach is to strengthen ASEAN unity, so that instead of hearing only the voice of a small Singapore, the world hears the more legitimate and influential voice of a united ASEAN. This collective presence enables us to express our views on global developments more effectively and help ensure that they do not spiral out of control. This is especially important for Singapore, as our stability and prosperity are closely tied to global trade and open markets. Any major disruption in the global system — whether economic or political — can have direct consequences for our small and highly connected economy. By contributing to a more stable international environment through ASEAN, Singapore helps to safeguard its own future.

PM Wong also encouraged each of us to be ambassadors for Singapore — to understand our nation's interests and to represent them confidently on the world stage. This means taking the first step to engage with people from other countries, appreciating different perspectives, and learning to communicate across cultural and ideological boundaries. In doing so, we not only strengthen Singapore's global presence but also build mutual respect and understanding in an increasingly divided world. Most importantly, he mentioned that Singapore must stand united.

As students and the people, the part we have to play is enormous, to stay productive, adapt to the changing economic landscape and to remain a strong community, supporting one another.

Overall, attending the lecture gave us valuable insights that go beyond what is available in the news or on social media. It reassured us that our government is not standing idle in the face of our size-related limitations. Instead, they are fully aware of the challenges and are actively seeking ways for Singapore to contribute to building a more stable and resilient world.



IPS SINGAPORE PERSPECTIVES 2025

Reflections by: Emma Ng (2T05), Jonathan Benoit Lim Zhi-Teng (2T09) and Faith Ng Kaixin (2T20)

Singapore Perspectives is the flagship conference of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) that seeks to engage thinking Singaporeans in a lively debate about the public policy challenges the country faces.

The theme of SP2025 was "Community". The world today is being pulled apart by myriad disruptive forces. Singapore is not immune. In the 60th year of Singapore's independence, we ask: What might bind us more strongly together as a people and a nation as we confront these challenges?

The government continues with its efforts of nation-building through initiatives, but what have Singaporeans done or can do — individually and collectively — from the ground up? What more can we do beyond volunteering or giving feedback? How do we rethink the relationships between the government and the private as well as people sectors for a fairer, stronger community? How do we halt the erosion of what we have in common, and reinvigorate the ties between individuals, families and neighbours?

The relationship between the community and the state is foundational to the functioning of a cohesive society. Communities, shaped by shared identity and values, while the state, in turn, must enable communities through policies that encourage autonomy and collaboration. A strong state is built on a strong, inclusive and bridging community. At the same time, the market and philanthropy play essential roles in sustaining community values and ensuring collective well-being. As future leaders, it is crucial to foster solidarity and empowerment, recognising that both the community and the state must work together to navigate the complexities of an ever-changing society.

OUR NOTES



OUR REFLECTIONS

IPS 2025 allowed us to reflect on the importance of community. As evident in the three panels which highlights the relationship between the community and the state, the market and the polity, IPS 2025 is calling to us to build and strengthen our communities as they act as the cornerstone in shaping Singapore. I learnt that through community which is shaped and built upon my own actions, is how the state is supported. I learnt that the dangers that Singapore faces are not mere concepts but they do have a large influence and impact the way Singaporeans act towards one another. These dangers may inhibit kindness, humility and other values we as Singaporeans pride ourselves on. Now in CJC, we should aim at incorporating concepts of solidarity, constructiveness and empowerment in the way we lead ourselves and others in truth and in love. As the future leaders of Singapore, practising, refining and developing these principles can help us prepare for the uncertain future as we can trust in our society to adapt.

Through this seminar, I learnt that a thriving economy isn't just measured by financial success, but by the impact it has on the people within it. This made me think about how the same principle applies to my school community. Just as businesses have a responsibility to the people they serve, students have a responsibility to the community they are part of.

To borrow from John F. Kennedy's famous words:
"Ask not what your community can do for you, but what you can do for your community."

It's easy to think of school as a place where we receive—lessons, opportunities, and experiences. But if I only focus on what I can gain, I miss out on the chance to contribute to something bigger. Instead of asking what my school can do for me, I should be asking what I can do to make it a better place for everyone.

This doesn't mean waiting for or needing a leadership position or an official role to make a difference. True leadership comes from action and not titles. The seminar made me reflect on the kind of leader I want to be, and I find myself drawn to servant leadership, where the focus is on uplifting others rather than seeking recognition. In my day-to-day school life, this could mean supporting my peers in their learning, taking initiative when I see problems that need solving, or simply fostering a culture of respect and responsibility. Small actions like helping a friend who is struggling, creating an encouraging environment in group work, or stepping up when something needs to be done can shape the kind of community I want to be part of.

What stood out most to me during the seminar was the idea that businesses, just like individuals, don't exist in isolation. They have the power to create meaningful change, just as students do within their schools. If companies can be driven by more than just profit, then students can be driven by more than just personal success. By shifting my mindset from receiving to contributing, I can help build a school culture where we don't just coexist, but actively support one another.

I also found it an interesting idea that national identity is not just about shared ethnicity or values, but about emotional connection to the country; this resonates deeply with me. I've always thought of myself as Singaporean, but reading about how "being" Singaporean is tied to how we feel about the nation, and how we connect emotionally with others, made me reflect on my own journey. It's not just about the labels or the traditions I've been raised with, but about my experiences and my sense of belonging to a place that feels like home, even as it becomes more complex. Likewise, the Singaporean identity is ever changing and our political system has to reflect these changes and keep up with them. Furthering our ability to fully embody our principles of inclusiveness.

BOOKTOK: **READING IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

By: Chin Zhi Xuan (1T05)

If you have been on TikTok for the past year, you probably have come across the term 'BookTok'. It was coined as a term for a community of book lovers on the platform. Reading seems to have become a trend on many social media platforms, making it seem like a fun activity to experience a life different from your own. There have even been some new newly-coined words and acronyms such as 'spice level' and DNF (Did Not Finish) to illustrate one's experiences of reading books.

However, there have also been many that have contested the value of these books. Some have criticised their intellectual value and questioned whether they are even worth reading if nothing is to be learnt from them.

A book influencer, Jack Edwards, touched on this topic on his YouTube channel. He expressed that while BookTok can oversimplify certain themes and social media can be a breeding ground for toxic interactions, at the end of the day, it still does promote reading to the masses – making it much more accessible.

Personally, I think we have to differentiate our judgments for different types of books and genres that are available to the masses. A book about Ethics cannot be held to the same standard as a Young Adult novel, for example.

Books often have an academic or intellectual connotation attached to them. It is hence no wonder that some would think reading serves purely to help one gain knowledge and not for entertainment. This is probably why so many online users seem to be against the books that trend on BookTok. These books are called 'unintellectual' and 'poor' in quality, with some going so far as to say that they are diluting the seriousness and quality of books that are being published today.

However, I would perhaps suggest a new view on the role of books – reading should not just serve an academic purpose but also an entertainment one.

Reading can seem daunting for some. We spend most of our time as students reading textbooks and notes which can be a bore for many but this does not mean it is always boring. Instead, there is absolutely nothing wrong with reading just for personal enjoyment. And authors such as Colleen Hoover and Sarah J. Maas fulfill that desire for entertaining reads that people have. Still, one cannot overly indulge in one thing. Everything in life needs to be done in moderation so I think it is worth exploring a variety of genres.

An often underappreciated genre is Classical Literature. Ironically, there have been multiple references to it in modern pop culture. One of the best examples I can think of is the modern idea of Vampires and the things we associate with them. The archetypal Vampire that we know today came from one of Bram Stoker's novels titled 'Dracula'. It is written in the form of journal entries which follows the life of Jonathan Harker as he travels to Transylvania to meet up with Dracula. It is this very book where the perception that Vampires are pasty, have sharp fangs, feed on human blood and have an aversion to sunlight emerged. These ideas have traversed centuries as the novel was published in 1897.

Apart from that, the interpretations of the Vampire have also shifted with time. 'Dracula' was simply meant to scare the audience. Little was known about him and this elusivity petrified Victorian readers as the unknown was scary at that time – a time of social and political unrest. But now, people want depth of characters and morality to be displayed. Vampires are now powerful yet conflicted in their ways and beliefs. An example would be the Cullens from the Twilight Saga who insist on only drinking animal blood as they think killing humans are wrong.

This goes to show how influential books can be even if they are not initially seen as 'intellectual', and how some books can even take on new interpretations or characterisations over time. New genres and writing styles can also arise along with changes in society.

My point is that there is a whole other world outside of the BookTok bubble. While the 'enemies to lovers' trope is the preferred choice of poison for some, it would also be good to refer to the past literary canons and different genres to see how far the written word has come. At the same time, it could also be good to know where all our modern perceptions of certain things come from. Who knows, maybe it can be your next fun fact during an Ice Breaker session!



BRAINROT: SCROLL, ROT, REPEAT: THE BRAIN DECAY YOU DIDN'T SIGN UP FOR

By: Park Sieun (1T01), Soh Si Ying, Crystal (1T04) and Nikki Tan Jia Qi (1T04)

What is “brain rot”? In 2024, “brain rot” was named Oxford word of the year. If you have been active in the digital space in the past year, you’ve probably heard of this term. It rose to prominence in recent years, jumping by 230% in usage frequency from 2023 and 2024.



“Brain rot” is used to refer to the perceived decline of one’s psychological or intellectual state. This phenomenon is typically tied to excessive consumption of online media content, specifically content of low effort and value. Not only that, it has also spawned a wealth of ever-growing “brain rot” terms, including the likes of “skibidi toilet” and “Ohio” amongst many others. It is often said to be representative of the culture of younger generations and their tongue-in-cheek, self-deprecating humour which often contains aspects of absurdism.

Big corporations that used social media as a tool have also incorporated brain rot terms in their marketing strategies. A notable example is Duolingo, which amassed a whopping 8.2 million social media followers through jumping on trends and making culturally relevant content. Recently, they have jokingly suggested that “brain rot courses [would be] dropping soon”, meeting with mixed responses ranging from humour and engagement, to concern and horror. Due to the influence and credibility of such well-known corporations, when they make use of brain rot terms in their content, they further perpetuate and promote the common use of brain rot. This causes such crude and improper terms to slowly but surely integrate themselves into many youths’ everyday vocabulary.



Ever since the rapid rise of TikTok, even more short form content platforms and outlets have emerged, for example, Instagram reels, YouTube shorts, and so on. These platforms have quickly become the front-runners in the digital space by offering a wide variety of specially curated content to keep you, the user, hooked. Not only does this short-form format keep us constantly stimulated, it is also a vessel for the transmission of the brain rot phenomenon. The more you engage with this brain rot content, the more the app will increasingly supply you with similar types of content, and eventually your feed and main source of entertainment will consist solely of brain rot, causing you to absorb and consume an endless stream of such ludicrous content, which basically reduces your cognitive function to zero.

One recent example is the Italian brain rot memes which is, in essence, a series of surrealist, seemingly-nonsensical AI-generated images of various characters. They typically consist of strange hybrids of animals with everyday objects. A popular character from the Italian brain rot universe goes by the name of “Tralalero Tralala”, a shark often depicted wearing blue Nikes. What exactly is the meaning behind all of this? Well, the truth is, there is no meaning. Perhaps this post-ironic humour is how Gen Z copes with the events of our current age. “The sheer randomness of the meme is the point,” Yotam Ophir told the New York Times.



Another character from the Italian Brainrot trend, Chimpanzini Bananini



So, what is the effect of consuming such brainless slop? Excessive short-form content use has already been linked to shorter attention spans and rising Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnoses, especially among youths. Brain rot will only exacerbate the cognitive overload experienced by youths, potentially leading to mental fatigue and emotional dysregulation. Additionally Siân Boyle, a freelance journalist from The Guardian, said that ‘Too much technology during the brain developmental years has even been referred to by some academics as risking “digital dementia”. The National Library of Medicine has also associated brain rot with negative moods, psychological distress, anxiety and depression. These factors impair executive functioning skills, including memory, planning, and decision-making.

Ultimately, brain rot has the potential to literally rot your brain, and sooner or later maybe we will all become mindless zombies. Of course, like with every other guilty pleasure, it’s perfectly fine to consume memes and silly videos. However, moderation is key and we must be aware of how it affects us. To manage the negative effects of brain rot, we need to continue to intentionally engage in real world activities and spend time with our close ones, striking a balance between the online and offline world. Above all, we must ensure that we consume content mindfully and practise good digital hygiene, whilst still recognising that this content serves as an important outlet for youths to express themselves and build communities.



CAFÉ RECOMMENDATIONS: STUDY CAFÉS THAT ARE BETTER THAN STARBUCKS

By: *Rachelle Tan Shu Jin (1T05) and Leticia Wan Xi Xuan (1T03)*

Picture this: it's your home-based learning day, and you're desperate to clock in some productive work while sipping on an iced coffee, to escape the sweltering heat. Instead of staying cooped up at home, why not head to one of Singapore's cosy and aesthetically-pleasing cafes? These spots have been tried, tested and loved by influencers, friends, and fellow caffeine addicts, including us. What's more—they come with reliable Wi-Fi, charging plugs, and reasonable prices.

One of our favourite study-friendly areas is **Botanic Gardens**, just 5 bus stops away from Catholic Junior College, home to a number of great cafes. Whether you're looking for a spot to revise your Literature notes, or have a quiet brunch date with your friends, here are some of our best curated picks:

1 HELLO ARIGATO AT BOTANIC GARDENS ★★★★★



For those who prioritise vibes and aesthetics, Hello Arigato hits the mark. With its sleek and Japanese-inspired interior, it is also known for its delicious freshly breaded sandos, where one can experience umami flavours packed in every bite. Not to forget the viral Matcha Cloud drinks, which include the Strawberry Matcha Cloud Latte and the Coco(nut) Matcha Cloud, which is made of Uji matcha cold foam. With the frequent shortage of matcha these days, be sure to enjoy these thirst-quenching drinks while they're still in stock. There's no WiFi or accessible plugs, and the café can get pretty packed, especially during dinner hours. Still, the clean Japandi decor and natural lighting make it an inspiring environment to read or journal. Furthermore, the outdoor seating area is pet friendly, where your furry friends can accompany you on your study date, and enjoy the breeze and green space.

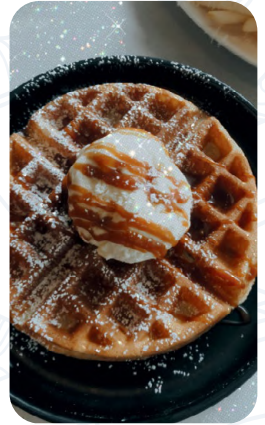


2 ATLAS COFFEEHOUSE AT BOTANIC GARDENS ★★★★★



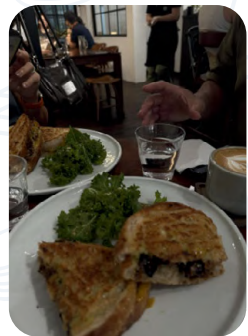
Atlas is one of the more iconic brunch cafés in the area, and for good reason—the food is consistently good and the iced coffee and matcha latte are on point. Don't forget to order its iconic truffle shoestring fries if you're craving something savoury, or the crispy golden waffles, topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and caramel syrup, if you have a sweet tooth, and are looking for a sweet treat to end off the gruelling long hours of studying. Coming on a weekday after school, you are likely to be able to find a table for yourself and your drink or a friend, and could easily spend a few hours doing productive revision. However, if you plan your visit on a weekend, Atlas is best suited for a

short visit or a catch-up over brunch with your notes in tow, due to its busyness and bustling chatter in the background. That said, if you're someone who is not affected by background noise, or can focus with your noise-cancelling headphones playing music, Atlas offers a lively but not overwhelming space to work in.



For more serene cafes with good food, here are a couple which are just around the corner...

3 POCKET BY FLIP COFFEE ROASTERS ★★★★★

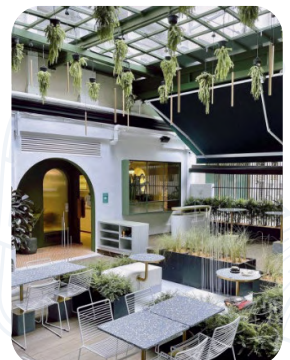


Pocket by Flip Coffee Roasters is a cosy, minimalist café along Bukit Timah Road, which is also a stone's throw away from the Tan Kah Kee MRT station on the Downtown Line. With bright, natural lighting, a communal table, and the comforting aroma of freshly roasted beans, it creates an inviting yet calm atmosphere, which is perfect for focused study sessions. Rest your eyes after long hours of staring at your laptop by sitting along the countertop tables, as you watch the baristas hand-make their specialty coffees with love. From smooth espressos to unique brews like the "Filthy" latte— they keep your energy up, while warm and hearty toasties and waffles fuel long hours. It is an oasis for caffeine lovers. Be sure to get their toasties too – perfect for a light snack which fills your stomach, but also leaves room for drinks. It's a hidden gem for students who appreciate good coffee and good vibes. However, we must caveat that the cafe is only open till 5pm everyday, and is closed on Wednesdays.



4 PRAIRIE BY CRAFTSMEN AT CLUNY COURT ★★★★★

Prairie is a beautiful café with lush garden vibes and a relaxed atmosphere. Tucked away on the side of Cluny Court, few know about the existence of this cafe, hence making it an ideal place to study since it is quiet and not packed with customers. Prairie offers free WiFi and a few power sockets, which makes it student-friendly. They also have water jugs where you can top up your water as much as you wish to. The food leans toward the premium side and the prices reflect it. Although on the pricier side, the irresistible ambience is definitely a redeeming factor. If you're the type who draws motivation from beautiful spaces, Prairie certainly is a great spot to get through readings or plan your week. Enjoy a relaxed and serene experience as you dine in their outdoor area, where the backdoor of the cafe leads to a glasshouse-esque seating area; you'll feel as if you have been transported to a secret garden.



RATING AND REVIEWING LIBRARIES IN SINGAPORE

By: Imogen Bella Choi Yun Siu (2T29)

Libraries are a constant. Whether you're a reader, student, or just someone looking for peace and quiet, you can always rely on libraries for some sort of support. So I've decided to visit some of these libraries to help you decide where is best for you! I will be looking at the study spaces and collections of books available, and just the overall vibe of the libraries. For this article, I've picked 5 libraries: Central Public Library and National Library Building, Queenstown Public Library, library@harbourfront, Sembawang Public Library, and Woodlands Regional Library.

CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY AND NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING

Study Spaces: 4/5

Levels 9 to 12 of the National Library Building are near-perfect places to study. You can have your own power socket in your own cubicle, or a well-lit comfortable room if that's what you prefer, and there are quiet zones that are ideal for locking in. Unfortunately, I've been told that you have to be 21 and above to be able to book the study spaces with power sockets. So if you're under 21 and snag one of those cubicles, you're going to have to give it up if someone's booked it. But if you do go there for the sole purpose of studying, the reference libraries are where you want to go. Even though you can't borrow the resources, everyone stationed at these parts of the library is focused, creating a very ideal environment for studying.

Collection of Books: 5/5

The Central Public Library has a huge collection of books, so if you go there looking for one, you might just come out with a few more. From specialised book features to both the Singapore and International Collection, you won't just find general fiction and non-fiction books, but books that cater to your individual needs, from leisure to academic research, even coming in different languages. It has a huge kids' section which is pretty great, but we're not interested in that. Kids aside, if you're a bookworm like me, you could really spend hours perusing the books.

Vibes: 4/5

It's pure study vibes at the reference libraries. If you're looking for a more chill type of vibe, just head on down to the Central Public Library itself. (Just look out for the kids running around, which sometimes makes the place quite noisy, ironic as it is.)

Overall Rating: 9.8/10

I might be biased because I spent a lot of my childhood here, but this place is iconic. It would've been perfect if not for the downside of our age range being unable to book certain study spaces, and a lot of kids being at the library.



QUEENSTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Study Spaces: 2.5/5

Unfortunately, the study spaces at Queenstown aren't super ideal. There aren't too many tables you can station yourself at and when the library gets busy it's incredibly hard to find your own space, unless you don't mind sharing with someone. Most of these tables are located on the second floor of the library.

Collection of Books: 5/5

The selection of books at this library is great for anyone, and when I say anyone, I mean anyone. Queenstown Library has actually expanded its collection of books, and even has a section devoted to teenagers on the second level with comfy chairs you can lounge on. The second floor contains Singapore-related books also offered in multiple languages. So you can be sure that you'll leave Queenstown with a book or two. Personally, I've literally never left this library without at least one book, ever.

Vibes: 5/5

This library has major cosy reading vibes. While it may be a bit loud on the first floor because of the kids' section being there, the second floor is ideal for cosying up with a book. Its undisturbed tranquility is insanely calming; trust me, it's almost addictive and you'll never want to leave.

Overall Rating: 8.9/10

Queenstown is one of my favourite libraries, if not my favourite. I have found multiple of my most favourite books from its teen collection. I would give this a 10/10, but, objectively, the library doesn't reach that standard because of its study spaces. It's still safe to say that this library is absolutely wonderful and will not fail you if you come here for books, peace and quiet, or both of these things.



SEMBAWANG PUBLIC LIBRARY

Study Spaces: 3/5

The study spaces here are quite okay, although they are limited. There are a few high tables with power sockets that you can book, while the normal tables can't be booked, and don't come with a power socket. The lighting also varies; depending on where you sit it can be either really dim or really bright, or anything in between.

Collection of Books: 3/5

There's not a bad range of books here, but there's a lot of catering to children. The library doesn't exactly house so many books because it's relatively small. And I've been told that if you want to borrow a certain book, you sometimes have to order it from another library and pick it up at Sembawang.

Vibes: 4/5

This is another library with major cosy reading vibes. It's got a special feature that is these container-like spaces where anyone can sit down and read, which definitely adds to the library's atmosphere of comfort.

Overall Rating: 7/10

Sembawang Public Library is super cosy and great if you want to just sit and read. Perhaps it wasn't exactly made with studying in mind, but the varied lighting is better than no lighting!



LIBRARY@HARBOURFRONT

Study Spaces: 4/5

If you want to study with a view, library@harbourfront is where you want to go. Because the study spaces are facing the sea, the natural light streaming in from the large windows and the calming effect of the sea actually help reduce stress levels and improve focus, which is something we all need. However, only some of the desks in the study areas have charging ports. Otherwise, you need to get up and go to any of the charging stations located throughout the library, though these are typically for phones and tablets. And it might be hard to find seats, as the library can get extremely busy.

Collection of Books: 5/5

This library at Vivo City is huge, and has two vast and distinct sections; one for both adults and teens, and one for children. There are books you've seen everywhere and books you've literally never seen at all, so it's great if you're looking for a specific book or just wanted to find something that piques your interest. There are shelves and shelves to browse through, holding as many genres of books as you can think of.

Vibes: 4/5

The vibes here are like everything you'd want in a library, except for the crowd. With the ocean right in front of you and the best air conditioning, library@harbourfront will help you focus on anything you want to focus on.

Overall Rating: 9/10

This modern library certainly is a hotspot for people our age, be it for studying, reading, or just hanging out. Pretty much the only downside is that it can get super busy.



WOODLANDS REGIONAL LIBRARY

Study Spaces: 5/5

I think this library is very centred around its study spaces. There are tables everywhere in this library, and you can choose from individual or communal desks, and they also come with charging ports. The different levels of the library are pretty much different levels of study. I noticed that the third level was a bit noisy, but there were still quite a few people studying there, specifically in groups. So if you can focus in an environment like that, good for you. The second level was a lot more quiet, so it's definitely more suited to self-study. And because the study spaces are so good at this library, they can get snatched up fast, so if you're keen to study here, you should definitely book a space beforehand.

Collection of Books: 5/5

Did you know that this library has the largest collection of Chinese and Malay books? Well now you do. It houses adult fiction and non-fiction books in multiple languages on the third floor. Its massive children's section is on the fourth floor, together with a young adult section. I can tell you that you'll definitely be leaving this library with a book.

Vibes: 3/5

100% study vibes, definitely. Courtesy of the range of study spaces to choose from. But it can be noisy with all the kids, which definitely harms the little bubble of concentration you're in, whether you're reading or studying.

Overall Rating: 8.5/10

It's the largest regional library in Singapore, and it has a cafe, which is absolutely wonderful. It's safe to say Woodlands Regional Library is an outstanding choice to visit, to either read or study or both! It's just that there's a downside with the kids and their noise.

Whether you're cramming for exams, searching for your next favourite book, or simply seeking a peaceful spot, Singapore's libraries have something for everyone. From the iconic National Library Building's academic atmosphere to Queenstown's cosy reading nooks, each space brings its own unique charm. Despite their individual quirks, these libraries are lifesavers for us students trying to balance study and leisure. So grab your laptop and give these libraries a visit – you might just find your new favourite spot.

"I TRIED A NEW BURGER EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK"

By: Saw Keedoh Marcus (2T06)

Don't lie: you love burgers. Even if you don't, surely there's at least one burger that you're really into? Burgers are a common menu item in many Western restaurants, fast food or fancy. Needless to say, Singaporeans today are spoilt for choice when it comes to burgers: there are simply too many options! I'm no exception...

...which is why I went out of my way to try and review one fast food burger from five different fast food restaurants, over the course of a few weeks. After all, I needed to satiate the burger cravings I've been having. I might have set myself back on my weight loss journey, but who else can resist the temptations of a burger?

SHAKE SHACK



When Shake Shack first opened at Jewel Changi in 2019, it became an instant sensation. Queues of people snaked around Jewel as people were dying to try out the world-renowned Shack Burger. Thankfully, Shake Shack has since expanded its operations in Singapore to more than ten outlets and, as someone who has only tried Shake Shack once, I was curious about what it had to offer.

After school, I headed to Shake Shack's Bishan outlet. It wasn't particularly crowded on a Tuesday evening. When I got my burger, I was thrilled to see layers of vegetables stacked on top of the smashed beef patty. When I took my first few bites of the Shack Burger, my taste buds were greeted with the salty savouriness of the beef patty and the leafy freshness of the vegetables. The sauce complemented the burger well and, all in all, it was a decent burger.

The combination of the flavours really elevated the experience of eating the Shack Burger, but I found the patty itself to be somewhat lacking. Maybe it's my preference for fatter patties rather than smashed ones, but the patty didn't stand out which definitely affected my enjoyment of the burger.

VERDICT: GOOD FOR A ONCE-IN-A-WHILE TREAT

When people talk about the best burger in Singapore, One Fattened Calf frequently comes up in the conversation. Is it for good reason? I'd heard people gush about their burgers constantly and this made me curious. Do they have a secret ingredient in their burgers? Have they unlocked the secret formula to cooking the perfect burger? My interest was at an all time high when I made my way to their only store at one-north.

Admittedly, the first thing that caught my attention when I walked into the restaurant was the price. \$16.50 is a diabolical price for a burger, and my wallet was crying out for mercy when I was making the purchase. But I chose to make an exception for the OFC Cheeseburger. When my meal finally came, the aroma from the burger... My mouth was watering, and I didn't know whether it was my sheer anticipation for the burger or that fragrant, slightly buttery smell wafting my way.

I think the main takeaway from the burger was just how juicy and sweet it was. The beef patty, whilst not the highlight for me, was still quite delicious and juicy, and the caramelised onions, I have to proudly say, were just about the tastiest I've ever had. They complemented the burger so well: the salty, umami undertones of the patty mixed with the sweet, tasty onions – perfection. For its price, the burger still wasn't the hardest hitting, but I'd love to have it again! When my wallet is full, that is.

VERDICT: QUITE PRICEY, BUT GOOD NONETHELESS

ONE FATTENED CALF



Charcoal buns are an untapped institution, and I'm glad that Ashes Burnnit are embracing the charcoal bun. While not exactly a fast food place per se, Ashes Burnnit is a hawker franchise selling predominantly burgers with charcoal buns. I had eaten there before, but it had been such a long time since and I forgot how I felt about the burgers. This was the opportunity to re-spark my obsession with them.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, I had to bring my order home, but that didn't detract from the burger's taste. The soft crisp of the burger bun and the sweet cheesy sauce brought me straight to heaven – it was that good. Unfortunately, the patty wasn't the best I've had. Much like the Shack Burger, the Ashes Cheese Burger had a smashed beef patty. The patty I had was not as juicy as I hoped it would be, and in fact was quite chewy and dry. Of course, the rest of the burger made up for it, but the burger would have been a definitely 10/10 with a good patty.

Still, for \$8.40, the Ashes Cheese Burger is largely good value. Its size is respectable, and if you're a fan of smash burgers, you should definitely consider Ashes Burnnit.

VERDICT: GOOD, BUT COULD BE EVEN BETTER

ASHES BURNNIT



MCDONALD'S



Oh, McDonald's... perhaps the most ubiquitous fast food restaurant in Singapore, and maybe the entire world. Most Singaporeans know what McDonald's is, and they definitely also know what the McSpicy is. This Singapore-exclusive burger on the menu has been the cause of so many horror stories – in the toilet, that is. Famed for its spicy patty, the McSpicy has become a mainstay in Singaporean food culture: that's how much we love our McSpicys.

This time, I decided to be a bit more adventurous and got the Double McSpicy. Two times the patty, two times the spice. Just writing this makes me feel the absolute heat of the chicken in my mouth... Anyways, I bought a Double McSpicy meal for a little over \$10 at an outlet I had never been to before.

People have often said that the quality differs depending on the store. The Double McSpicy I had wasn't that bad, but I've tasted much better ones. The patty was dry, and so was the burger in general. It's a lucky thing I'm a sucker for McSpicy mayo, so that definitely helped. Still, I've got to give it up to the Double McSpicy for its spice. I would have liked to say that I had gotten used to the McSpicy (and I've eaten way, way spicier food), but whenever I took a bite out of it, I teared up a little. In summary, though, while the Double McSpicy I ate could have been better, it's still a GOATED burger.

VERDICT: I LOVE THE SPICE

Firstly, I would like to thank the Philippines for coming up with Jollibee. I used to be confused about the hype behind Jollibee, but after trying them out, I totally get it. I'm a full-time Jollibee promoter. Their menu items are scrumptious, and they barely miss with their chicken. Just think of juicy, tender chicken, the meat peeling so effortlessly from the bone...

When Jollibee started advertising their Spicy Chicken Sandwich, I just knew I had to be there to try it. Jollibee outlets near where I live are hard to come by, but the longer travel time to Jollibee is worth it, I'll say. I ordered their Spicy Chicken Sandwich meal for just above \$9, and you'll know why I think it's a worthy price. And, yes, I consider this sandwich a burger. If it has buns, a patty and lettuce, it's a burger, isn't it?

When I got my burger, I was not ready for the explosion of spice that befell my mouth when I took a bite. The chicken was hot, fresh and juicy, and the sauce was tangy and spicy hot! The vegetables gave the burger a nice kick, and the soft buns topped off what was perhaps the best burger I've eaten! The symphony of flavours and spice made me fall completely in love! I still dream of the Spicy Chicken Sandwich now and then, and it's all thanks to Jollibee.

VERDICT: THE. BEST. BURGER. EVER.

JOLLIBEE

