

A screenshot of an email client window. The window has a light blue header bar with an envelope icon on the left and window control icons (minimize, maximize, close) on the right. The email content is displayed in a white area below the header.

From: a_badawi@schoolmail.com
To: carol.stewart@natmus.ac.uk
Subject: Feedback on my visit to the National Museum of Scotland

Dear Ms Stewart,

I am writing to provide you with some feedback about my visit to your museum last month. I went there with classmates from my secondary school in Austria during our school trip to Edinburgh.

On our visit, we followed the list of “Top Ten Things to See & Do”, which we got at the entrance. They were not what my classmates and I had expected. We thought that only ancient objects from Scotland would be on display. In reality, we saw many different things from all over the world, and many of them were quite modern.

My classmates and I really enjoyed our visit to the museum. First of all, we liked the architecture of the building itself because it is so bright. In addition, the exhibits were very varied. We found many of them inspiring, but our favourite was Dolly the Sheep, the first cloned animal in the world. To be honest, seeing her was a bit disturbing, but it really made me think.

In my opinion, Austrian museums could learn a lot from the National Museum of Scotland. First of all, entrance to your museum is free, which is not common in Austria. The curators of museums everywhere should also make sure that their collections feature exhibits such as Dolly the Sheep in addition to paintings and sculptures. This way, a visit to the museum is not dull for young people.

Next year I am going to try and convince my parents to travel to Edinburgh with me. I look forward to my next visit to your museum.

Best regards,
Ahmed Badawi

An Irish-Austrian celebration

(A) We live in Austria, though what I am going to write about is not an Austrian tradition, but a special tradition in my family for celebrating St Patrick's Day.

(B) St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, and on 17 March, Irish people all over the world celebrate St Patrick's Day with their families and friends. In the USA, there are parades in big cities, and in Chicago, the water of the river that runs through the city is turned green for the day because green is the national colour of Ireland. We don't have such traditions in Austria, although many people like to go to Irish pubs and listen to Irish folk music on St. Patrick's Day.

(C) My dad is from Ireland, and when I was little, he used food colouring to make green apple juice for me on St. Patrick's Day as a joke. This has now become a family tradition. He has also invented a special meal that we have every year. It is based on the colours of the Irish flag (green, white and orange), so we eat cabbage, parsnips and carrots.

(D) I like our celebration because it is fun to make the food together. We also call my cousins in Ireland to video-chat with them on St. Patrick's Day and send photographs to my aunts and uncles. Our celebration is not an old Irish tradition, but it is special, and I enjoy it every year.

(E) Many people who have moved to Austria have brought their customs with them or invented their own celebrations, just like my family. Just ask them – they will be happy to tell you all about it.

***Friends* – a TV show you can watch with your parents**

If you are looking for a TV show that both you and your parents can enjoy, I can recommend *Friends*.

Friends is an American sitcom which aired in the US from 1994 to 2004. It was enormously popular in Europe as well, so chances are your parents watched it when they were young. You can now find it on a streaming service.

Friends is about the lives of six roommates in their mid-twenties, especially their dating life and relationships. It is set in New York City, although it was mostly shot in a studio in Los Angeles, and the six main characters spend a lot of time in a café called Central Perk, just hanging out and chatting.

I would say that the plot of *Friends* is quite predictable, but the series is highly entertaining because of the excellent cast and the witty dialogue. I like watching a group of friends going through difficult experiences and fun times together, and their friendship speaks to me, although their lives are quite different from mine. There are no smartphones in *Friends*, for example! Of course, there are some aspects of the show which are quite unrealistic, for example, the fact that the people always seem to have enough money without ever working very hard. But I don't often think about that, to be honest. I have to say, though, that I don't always like the way women are portrayed in *Friends*, and I find it irritating that there is no diversity in the cast. I guess people were simply less sensitive about these things when the series was made.

However, if you get a chance to watch *Friends* with your parents, I'm sure that you will all have a good time anyway. The show is highly entertaining, which makes it a perfect choice for family movie night.

The kids are all right

Some older people believe that the 'youth of today' get into more trouble and behave more badly than they did when they were young themselves, which is why the results of an American survey of 10,000 high school students will surprise them.

The Youth Risk Behaviour Survey has been conducted regularly since the 1970s. This year, the teenagers had to answer the same questions which their parents had answered when they were teenagers in the 1990s. That way, the researchers were able to compare the behaviour of the two age groups. The results show that today's teenagers are better behaved and take fewer risks than their parents in many ways. For example, they are more likely to wear seatbelts than their parents and fight less in school. Additionally, they smoke and drink less. Furthermore, they are less likely to take drugs of any kind. Therefore, it can be said that the survey presents a very positive image of today's teenagers.

From: Annalena Wressnig, Chua Li and Alexander Hanson

Subject: Suggestions for new books for the school library

Date: 18 May 2022

Introduction

The aim of this report is to make suggestions for new books for the school library based on the reading preferences of the students in upper secondary. The information is based on interviews done with 89 students. The findings and our recommendations are presented below.

Students' reading preferences

Concerning literary genres, slightly more than half of the students in upper secondary say that sci-fi and fantasy are their favourite genres, whereas approximately a third read coming-of-age novels. Only 4% enjoy crime novels most, while twice as many say that romance is their favourite genre. Less than 1% of the students choose autobiographies, making this the least popular genre. When they were asked how they prefer to read, a large majority of students voted for print rather than e-books.

Possible reasons for the popularity of certain genres

One reason for the popularity of sci-fi and fantasy could be that these books are often turned into films. Therefore, students are motivated to read the books. Coming-of-age novels are frequently assigned as class reading, which explains why this genre is read even by students who do not enjoy reading in their free time.

Recommendations

We recommend that more sci-fi and fantasy books should be bought for the library since the majority of students enjoy them. As it would be interesting for students to be introduced to genres which they are not familiar with, a library workshop could be organised in which a less popular genre, for example crime fiction, is presented. Perhaps more e-books could be bought for the library as this was suggested by some students in the interviews.

 AlexT

What being a student representative has taught me

I have been the class representative of my class for three years, and at the beginning of this school year, I decided to run for head student because I want to make a difference in the everyday lives of students at my school. It was a close election because the two other candidates were very popular as well, and lots of students voted for them. But in the end, I won.

I have learned a lot in the last eight months. Before I became a student representative, I was quite shy, and I think I have become a lot more self-confident. I used to hate public speaking, but I have found out that I'm actually quite good at it! Lots of people have told me that I'm a great communicator, and that's really nice to hear.

Students have to be able to trust their representatives, and I am always honest when they come to me with their problems. I don't always agree with my fellow students, but I try to be open-minded and respectful at all times and see things from their point of view. I hope I have been able to convince everybody that I'm a trustworthy person.

Being head student isn't easy, but my friends tell me I'm good at it. I think I'll run again in next year's election. What do you think?

From: András Fekete

Subject: Students' health and diet requirements, Gymnasium Habsburgerstraße, class 7D

Date: 13 April 2022

Introduction

The following report summarises some facts about the health and diet of the students in class 7D which might be relevant for our visit to the Old Town language school in Edinburgh next month. The findings which I present below are based on a survey of all 24 students in my class.

Health

Two thirds of all students do not have any special health requirements. However, three students have a severe pollen allergy, and the same number are allergic to bee and wasp stings. In addition, two students suffer from asthma.

Diet

The majority of students in class 7D are vegetarians, and another three are vegan. Of the remaining seven students, six reported no restrictions on their diet, and one person does not eat pork.

Recommendations

I recommend that the students who do not eat meat are placed with host families who are also vegetarian or vegan. Perhaps the students with pollen and bee or wasp allergies should not go on daytrips to the countryside with their classmates and stay at the school instead. The host families of the students who suffer from asthma should be told to remind them to carry their inhalers at all times.

Irish culture – the real deal

Many articles on the culture of Ireland irritate me greatly because they spread stereotypes about Irish people. There is just so much more to Irish culture than many people think!

For example, literature plays a big role in the culture of Ireland. This little island has given birth to some of the greatest writers and poets of our time. You may have heard of Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, and James Joyce, who is believed to be one of the greatest writers who ever lived.

Music is another big part of Irish culture. Traditional Irish folk music played on Irish instruments is known and loved all over the world. Today, many different types of Irish music exist, from old Irish songs to more modern pop and rock music. Whatever your taste in music, there's no shortage of Irish tunes!

And did you know that, although English is the dominant language in Ireland, there is another language which also has the status of an official language? Irish ('Gaeilge') was once spoken by people all over Ireland, and even today, it is the first language for people in some rural areas, the so-called Gaeltacht regions.

I hope you've become interested in Irish culture now, but don't believe everything you read about it online. There are a lot of 'Irish traditions' on the internet that really aren't traditions that we follow in Ireland. They might be Irish traditions that are followed by Irish Americans, but they aren't traditions here.