

Chris Bauer:
WTMA’s Creative
Writing Teacher

By Mae Paul

Who better to teach homeschoolers than a teacher who grew up homeschooled himself? None other than Chris Bauer, one of WTMA’s writing teachers. Chris Bauer was born on August 9, 1991, on a farm in Richmond, Virginia. As a former homeschooler, he is familiar with the to-do list of subjects: writing, math, grammar, spelling, reading, typing, and foreign languages. With his parents’ help, Mr. Bauer would slowly work his way down the list, trying to finish it by the end of the day. If it wasn’t completed sometimes, “it wasn’t a big deal.”

Mr. Bauer’s favorite part of homeschooling was the flexibility it allowed. On some days, his mother would say, “You know what, it’s too nice out to do school today,” and the family would put away the books and do fun things instead. To make up for days off, Mr. Bauer did school in the summer, which kept him out of the heat and gave him something to do during the long hours of the day. An upside of homeschooling was that he could focus on the subjects he enjoyed most (writing), but a downside was that he did not interact with many peers. Living on a farm did not increase social interactions either. Yet, he “turned out ok and not weird at all.”

Many experiences shaped Mr. Bauer, but one of his clearest memories was walking across the fields to neighboring farms with his dog Daisy, listening to music or an audiobook. Remembering these times fondly, Mr. Bauer recalls, “I think spending a lot of time outside in the woods and on the farm helped me develop an active imagination.”

Living on a farm naturally created hilarious mishaps that the family still laughs about now. One of these involved a game of Marco Polo and a deer leg. Many deer hunters lived in Richmond, and they would take only the edible meat, leaving the rest in the woods. The Bauer family dogs would find the unused meat and bring it home. The family would toss it away, hoping to never see it again. This was not the case with one particular deer leg. No matter how many times the family tossed it away, the dogs would bring it back.

Eventually, the Bauers took the hint and left it alone, even naming it “Donny the Dismembered Deer Leg.” Donny then took up residence in the yard. During a game of Marco Polo, when Mr. Bauer was Marco, his hands grasped something furry. Opening his eyes, he learned it was none other than the unfortunate Donny, sneaked into his hand by his mother. Not amused at the time, he now remembers the incident fondly and with a few chuckles.

“Fondly and with a few chuckles” is how students at the academy think of Mr. Bauer. During class, he leads engaging, thoughtful, and respectful conversations critiquing students’ work in Creative Writing and Playwriting for the Rhetoric Stage. The bulk of class is spent discussing pieces and asking questions such as: “What was confusing? What could be done to make this sentence stronger?” “What was effective?” While it may feel scary and off-putting to students to have their writing critiqued in front of the whole class, it offers valuable outsider opinions that strengthen their writing skills — and, Mr. Bauer admits, even his own work. Much like a music masterclass or dance lesson, a critique for one person can apply to all. In playwriting, scripts are read out loud because dialogue is essential to this medium. “It’s an intensely creative environment where everybody is also supportive and kind,” he says.

Mr. Bauer loves teaching, as is evidenced during his classes. He says that, though it is a lot of work, there is nothing about it he dislikes, even when his students use “cool teenager slang” he doesn’t understand.

Continued on Page 2



The Bauer Family

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the fall 2025 issue of the Well-Trained Tribune! Once again, without the dedication and hard work of our writers, this would not have been possible. A special thank you to our wonderful advisor, Dr. Gentile, for leading and keeping us on track. Given the smaller club, we decided to accept outside work submitted by high school WTMA students. Thank you to all who reached out. If your article didn’t make it into this issue, it might make it into the spring one.

Our humble paper is just one example of journalism. There are many types of journalism beyond the classic newspapers that report opinion-free current events. Yellow journalism relies on sensational, exaggerated headlines that are not based in fact. Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst were two of the most famous publishers for churning out hyperbolic, attention-grabbing stories and are known for influencing the push towards the Spanish-American War.

A more noble form of journalism emerged during the Progressive Era. Instead of wild claims created to draw attention, muckraking journalism investigated government and corporate corruption and social injustice. A famous example is Upton Sinclair’s book *The Jungle*, which unveiled the horrors of the meatpacking industry. Awareness of these injustices sparked passionate protests, which in turn led to reform.

Journalism can be honest or exaggerated. It can strive to do good (as we hope this one does) or be done for profit. Our aim is also to be fun and entertaining.

Happy reading!
Mae Paul, Editor-in-Chief

Science & Tech
The Multiverse: String
Theory’s Bold Proposal

By Maya Sharpe

... For centuries, scientists have searched for such a “theory of everything” — a single, elegant explanation that unites all the forces and particles in the universe ... **Page 2**

Opinion
Is Hijab Oppression?

By Mariam Afridi

“My body, my choice” is a slogan often used to campaign for women's rights, but what happens when these rights include wearing a hijab? ... **Page 7**

Off the Beat
The Benefits of Learning
Languages

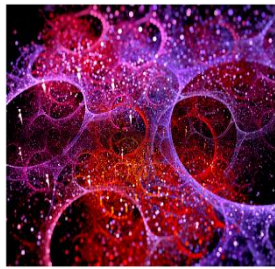
By Skye Miller and Maya Sharpe

... Learning a new language is one of the most effective ways to strengthen the brain. It enhances memory and sharpens attention ... **Page 9**

The Multiverse: String Theory’s Bold Proposal

By Maya Sharpe

What if everything you know about the universe is wrong? What if the solid ground beneath you, the light in your room, and even the gravity that holds you to the Earth all come from the same hidden source — one ultimate



Graphic by Maya Sharpe

entity behind every force, every particle, and every law of nature? If that’s true, it would overturn everything we think we know about reality and finally give us a

theory of everything. For centuries, scientists have searched for such a “theory of everything” — a single, elegant explanation that unites all the forces and particles in the universe. Over time, they’ve looked deeper and deeper: first discovering atoms, then subatomic particles, and finally, what we call fundamental particles.

However, there’s a problem. There are two types of fundamental particles: matter particles, called leptons, and force particles, called bosons. Each boson carries one of the four fundamental forces, which include the strong nuclear force, the weak nuclear force, electromagnetism, and gravity. Yet, there is no boson for gravity. We know gravity is real; we feel it every day. Yet, on the tiniest scales, gravity seems to vanish. It doesn’t appear to affect individual particles, and there’s no known particle that carries the force of gravity. This is puzzling: if we’re made of particles, and gravity works on us, why doesn’t it work on the particles themselves?

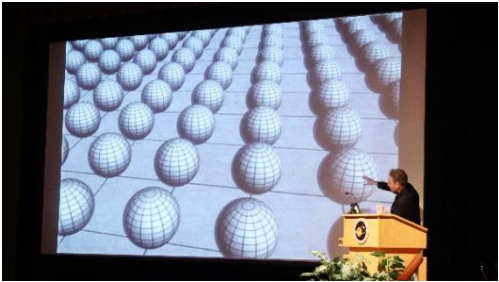
This is where string theory comes in. Instead of imagining the universe as made of tiny, point-like particles, string theory proposes that everything is made of incredibly small, vibrating strings. These one-dimensional threads vibrate in different ways, and each unique vibration creates a different particle.

Based on this theory, scientists predict the existence of a graviton — a boson carrying the force of gravity. Additionally, string theory may provide an answer to the mystery of black

holes. It is impossible to know how a black hole works, or what’s on the other side, without a quantum theory of gravity. String theory’s gravitons are the only plausible explanation right now, and if everything within string theory is applied to black holes, then the result is a “white hole” on the other side of a black hole, which could lead to other universes.

Thus, we are brought to the most fascinating concept of string theory: the multiverse. There are many versions of the multiverse, but the string theory version is known as the String Theory Landscape. The theory suggests that there could be an infinite number of parallel universes, each with its own dimensions and perhaps its own particles.

Each universe can be thought of as bubbles in boiling water. All the universes come from the same water, yet they always remain separate until they “pop” or end. Also, each bubble universe can “divide” and form another universe. This new universe is similar to the parent universe, but different in small or large ways, which could mean there is another you out there, reading these words — but you live on the moon, love Earth-gazing, and your favorite food is Mars-grown potatoes. It’s actually possible. According to string theory, anything is possible—just in other universes.



"Brian Greene 'Where Do We Stand with String Theory'" by 13winds is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

In January 2025, a scientific paper on the inevitability of string theory was published in the highly regarded journal *Physical Review Letters*. The research was done by scientists from Caltech and New York University,

specifically, Clifford Cheung, Aaron Hillman, and Grant Remmen. They found a way of proving string theory’s inevitability by creating mathematical formulas for string amplitudes and then developing mathematical conditions where including string theory in their calculations was the only way to explain the universe. Their work demonstrated that string theory was not just a theory of everything, but the *only* theory of everything.



Graphic generated by Gemini

String theory could potentially solve the problem of quantum gravity, which physicists have been scratching their heads over for years.

Despite the mathematical evidence and its extraordinary propositions, string theory faces a major problem: it hasn’t been proven. Besides the mathematical tests, there is no concrete proof, nor are there any realistic experiments that can be conducted.

Why is that? There are two reasons, one of which is their extraordinarily minuscule size. It’s hard enough to detect fundamental particles, and strings are significantly smaller than them. The other reason is that strings exist on an extremely high energy level, and to test them directly, we’d need a particle accelerator for about as long as a light-year, which is far beyond human capabilities. This leaves string theory in a strange position: it is mathematically beautiful and consistent, but still unproven.

String theory could potentially solve the problem of quantum gravity, which physicists have been scratching their heads over for years. String theory isn’t just about strings—it also involves the other side of black holes and the fascinating prospect of a multiverse.

Mr. Bauer Profile

Continued from Page 1

The beginning of class before the recording starts is often dominated by his dog and three cats, named Oz, Jack, Kaye, and Roberta (who also goes by Bobby), respectively. They live with Mr. Bauer at his home, which he recently bought in Richmond, terrorizing the house with their scratching, meowing, and barking. Jack and Kaye are “from a long line of feral [inbred] barn cats.”



Jack, Kaye, and Roberta

Their owner affectionately calls them the “Romanovs” of felines. The adoption of Jack was unplanned. Mr. Bauer met him on a trip to PetSmart, and voilà, they bonded instantly.

When not caring for his pets or teaching, Mr. Bauer is an accomplished author, with a few published books to his name — which is no small feat. He says that getting published requires a lot of patience, as it “takes a long time...First, you have to find an agent who likes your work and thinks they can sell it. Next, the agent has to send out queries to publishers. There are multiple levels of difficulty to get through, but if you really love writing, it’s all worth it.”

Besides writing, Mr. Bauer is an avid gardener, made possible by owning a house with a yard after years of living in apartments. Above all, Mr. Bauer is most passionate about teaching and sharing the wondrous art of writing.



Oz

Is Making Music Good for Us?

By Mae Paul

Playing the piano can allow you to forget school and get lost in the melodies of Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Scriabin, and other famous composers. The pianist can be drawn into the childlike wonder of controlling a room’s mood with a device they can fit inside. Good musicians learn how to sound sweet and happy, gloomy and scared, bold and scary. Music offers enrichment across the board, from muscle strength to coordination to team-building skills.

Music also has scientific and social benefits. When we play music, our brains release the feel-good chemicals, endorphins and dopamine, which are known to calm us down and lower cholesterol. The pathway the brain uses to release them is the same one used to send pain signals. So, when the brain is busy releasing these chemicals, it is harder to process pain.

Music offers enrichment across the board, from muscle strength to coordination to team-building skills.

From an academic standpoint, reading music sharpens your mathematical skills, requiring an understanding of complex rhythms, different note values, and time signatures. The study of theory forces musicians to be able to proceed through a problem step-by-step, just like in math. They quickly learn the importance of pattern recognition, helping them to learn and memorize faster and more efficiently.

To effectively memorize a piece, musicians cannot rely solely on muscle memory. They need to spot patterns, have important cues in their heads, and understand the harmonies the music is written in (which relies on pattern recognition), techniques readily applied to other fields as well.



Graphic by Mae Paul

Sitting at a piano or in a chair for hours can become tiring. Incorrect posture influences sound. All musicians must sit up straight — not hunched — or their music will suffer. Keyboardists must strike a perfect balance between relaxation in the arms, elbows, neck, shoulders, and wrists, while maintaining firm fingertips. Tensing up causes a hollow sound, whereas relaxing produces a richer, resonating sound that comes not from the keyboard but from the main body of the instrument.

Of course, the ability to move fingers quickly and accurately is just as important as good sound. Pianists and other keyboard musicians have high finger dexterity and independence. Finger independence is the ability to do different things with each finger and each hand, a crucial component of playing almost any instrument. String musicians need to keep track of what each hand is doing, as one uses the bow and the other manipulates the fingerboard. Coordinating both hands makes playing easier and more enjoyable to watch for all instruments.

Listening to music is not just an auditory experience; true maestros make it visually pleasing as well. If someone were to lift up one hand and then lift up the other five seconds

later (though both hands are playing notes with the same value), that would be technically wrong and look strange to the viewer.

Young children who learn an instrument before learning to type will most likely find touch typing easier, as they have already mastered fast finger independence and coordination and are comfortable with not staring at their hands, regardless of the crazy things their hands are doing.

Chamber music, classified as music played by small ensembles such as duos, trios, and quartets, is one of the most rewarding aspects of musicianship. It can involve a single instrument (such as a one-piano duet) or up to four different instruments. Playing chamber music requires musical and behavioral cooperation with partners. Arguments and personal differences are bound to occur; when they do, good musicians master the ability to set them aside for the sake of the music. They can loathe the partner sitting two inches away, but if they play together beautifully, the audience is none the wiser.

On a brighter note, musical partnerships can lead to friendships. An almost telepathic connection can open between two musicians as they play, instinctively responding to the other's timing. As one learns to complement the other’s musical style, both musicians grow closer, inevitably straying off topic and discussing their personal lives. Thus, music unlocks many social doors.

Playing music is an enriching experience. Musicians, especially competitive ones, learn how to forgive themselves for a bad performance or not playing the piece perfectly. Musicians strive for perfection, but perfection in music is not achievable, no matter the effort. Once a musician comes to terms with that, however difficult it may be, it makes music all the more enjoyable.

However, musicians must balance that with hard work and perseverance. Long hours laboring at an instrument, dissecting every little marking on the sheet music, bring results, while sitting down and banging out each piece once a day will not. Musicians learn how to focus, strive for better, and (occasionally) keep long hours. Such skills serve them well in school, at home, and in their profession.

Superman: A Revival of the Feel-Good Superhero Movie

By Kaitlyn Lamb

After a series of box office bombs based on DC comics, *Guardians of the Galaxy* director James Gunn was hired to restart the franchise. Released this past July, *Superman*, starring David Corenswet, introduced a new version of one of the most beloved characters in history while simultaneously kickstarting an entire cinematic universe.

The film opens with text explaining that “superpowered beings” known as Metahumans have existed in this world for three centuries, that Superman has lived on Earth for three decades, that he has been in the public eye for three years, and that three minutes ago, he lost a fight for the first time. In less than a minute, James Gunn effectively explains this universe and hooks the viewer. By skipping the origin story everyone already knows, the movie can dive right into the action and excitement.

David Corenswet is the perfect Superman,

even rivaling Christopher Reeve’s legendary portrayal in the *Superman* movies from the 1970s and '80s. Corenswet balances the retro charm of the first-ever superhero with the inherent humanity of Clark Kent, which was a bit lost in director Zack Snyder’s 2013 interpretation of the character in *Man of Steel*. While Henry Cavill, who played Superman in Snyder’s DC films, was a great casting, the movies he appeared in focused on gritty violence rather than wholesome saving-the-day. Gunn’s approach to superhero movies is the exact opposite of Snyder’s.

Where Snyder made Superman dark and serious, Gunn makes his world colorful and lighthearted, with a core message about being kind even when it is most difficult. Like in his Marvel films, Gunn balances humor with high stakes, often using upbeat music to make action scenes more engaging. Mr. Terrific, a relatively

unknown DC hero, features in one of the best scenes in the movie, during which he uses his high-tech “T-spheres” to attack enemies while a beachy tune plays with lyrics singing “fun, fun, fun.”

Superman’s love interest and fellow *Daily Planet* reporter Lois Lane’s relationship with Clark Kent serves as a moral foundation for both characters. Lois learns from Clark not to expect the worst from everyone, while Clark learns that his constant optimism doesn’t always lead to the best situations. [Erik Drost, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons](#)



Continued on Page 5

Blue by Joyce Moyer Hostetter

Book Review by Isabella Klaas

Thousands of books have attempted to do justice to the largest tragedies of World War II, and many of them have succeeded magnificently in this endeavor. However, when it comes to individuals fighting their battles against the enemy, both in Europe and in their own community, *Blue* takes home the trophy.

Blue, by Joyce Moyer Hostetter, is a historical fiction set during the 1940s polio epidemic in North Carolina. Its main character is thirteen-year-old Ann Fay Honeycutt, who becomes the “man of the house” when her father leaves to fight in World War II. As she works to help her mother and younger siblings, polio — a neurological disease that leaves the body paralyzed — breaks out, and she is faced with tragedy and hardship, making her use all of her resilience to come out on top of her circumstances.

The story is told in the first person, making it feel conversational and personal. The author develops a convincing narrative voice, even using colloquialisms and grammatical errors common in dialogue. This gives the reader the feeling of being told the story by the main character instead of by the author. Such a writing style makes the story feel more real, immerses the reader in the plot, and helps bring the characters — especially Ann Fay — to life.

The book also features strong, well-developed characters that make the story gripping and give readers a reason to care about what happens. Ann Fay and many of the characters surrounding her have solid arcs that recommend them to the reader and bring the book to a strong conclusion. The variety of dynamic, well-developed characters who still have room for growth not only improves the plot but also contributes to the story’s authenticity, making it not only a good book but also the cornerstone of a fantastic series.

Blue is the first book in the *Baker’s Mountain Stories* Series, a pentalogy told from the point of view of five characters, spanning the early 1940s to the 1960s. Each book, three of them sequels to *Blue* and one a prequel, is just as poignant as the first, describing the personal struggles of relatable characters in the context of large issues, including war, grief, veteran PTSD, and racism. Although the series deals with these heavy topics, each book ends on a high note, making it an uplifting read and causing the reader to look forward to the next.



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This book is a good read for both middle and high school students. Although it is written at a middle school reading level, much of the nuance and many of the literary devices can be better appreciated by those who have taken more advanced English classes. The book can be an enjoyable, slightly easier read for high school students. I was first introduced to *Blue* in fifth grade and liked the story immensely. Now, rereading it as a junior in high school who has taken an AP Literature class and attended Socratic seminars on classic works, I value the mixture of a simple style and metaphorical language even more. The one drawback to the reading level at which the book is written is that some mature themes, such as racism, are softened for the benefit of younger readers, which could cause confusion for readers unfamiliar with the time and social norms.

Joyce Moyer Hostetter’s *Blue* should be recommended to middle and high school students and included on lists of books to read before graduation. Not only does it illustrate an important part of history in a place often neglected by books set in similar time periods, but it also deals with the human condition and the path to healing — both physically and emotionally.

Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan

Book Review by Lily Claire Trent

Rick Riordan’s *The Lightning Thief* is the first in the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series. The reader meets the main characters of the five-book series: Percy, a son of Poseidon; Annabeth, a daughter of Athena; and Grover, Percy’s best friend and satyr protector.

Percy is yanked into a world of complete unknowns when his Algebra teacher tries to kill him. He discovers he is the son of an Olympian god and must quickly clear his name of a crime he didn’t commit. He was accused of taking Zeus’ Master Bolt, his symbol of power. Percy goes on a quest with Annabeth and Grover, his two best friends, and learns more about his father. When Percy finishes the quest and gets back to camp, Luke, another camper who had befriended Percy, tries to kill him.

This book is the perfect introduction to the series for many reasons. *The Lightning Thief* has numerous action-packed moments and epic fight scenes. It is also an excellent mix of ancient Greek mythology and modern situations. Riordan balances the themes of struggle, exclusion, and family with jokes and witty comebacks.

Percy is an amazing main character because he is very relatable. He struggles with school, anger, and self-doubt in a very human way that

most main characters do not. Annabeth and Grover add to the story because they are great friends to Percy through the book’s hardest moments and are good to everyone.

Riordan balances the themes of struggle, exclusion, and family with jokes and witty comebacks.

Riordan makes the plot very engaging with unexpected twists and turns. He keeps the book moving at a fast pace while also including raw, emotional moments that add to the story. When Riordan reveals the true lightning thief, he portrays it in a way that is interesting and relevant to the novel.

This book is a well-crafted story with beautiful character arcs. At the beginning of the book, Percy is just another 12-year-old boy who gets into trouble frequently and struggles in school. At the end of the book, he has grown into a strong leader and a courageous person. Annabeth has her own share of struggles and has to learn to rely on others for help.

Overall, this book is perfect for anyone who loves adventure and enjoys reading Greek mythology. I would recommend *The Lightning Thief* to anyone looking for a beautiful story filled with compelling characters.

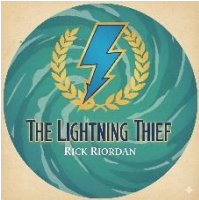


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A Test of Humanity: The Gaza Starvation Crisis

By Wania Khan

This October marked two years since the outbreak of war once more in Gaza. With the significant rise in the death toll due to the continual aid blockade and destruction of infrastructure and resources, the United Nations believed that “at least half a million people were expected to be in the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5 (catastrophe) — which is marked by starvation, destitution, and death.” One in three individuals in Gaza went without food for days. Particularly attacking the vulnerability of the children, this widespread famine and starvation crisis also caused severe acute malnutrition.

The Nakba of 1948 stands out prominently in this region’s history, prior to the events of October 7, 2023. Nakba, the Arabic word for “catastrophe,” refers to the exodus of over 750,000 Palestinians in the year 1948 from their ancestral homeland. Another term also widely associated with this, Zionism, is defined as the nationalistic political movement that sought to identify a place where Jews could come together through the process of immigration and settlement in the land of Palestine.

The Zionists persuaded the British into forming a state for the Jewish people in Palestine through the signing and approval of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. This marked the beginning of the three-decade-long British Mandate. In the words of Israeli-British historian Avi Shlaim, “Britain had no moral or political or legal right to promise the land that belonged to the Arabs to another people.” In 1948, the British Mandate ended. On May 14 of that same year, Ben Guiron declared the independence of the state of Israel. This was a major turning point in the region's history and became the root of all that followed.

The events of October 7th, 2023 marked the beginning of ultimate famine and an endless starvation crisis. Just two days later, Israel announced a “total blockade” in the region — a complete siege. No food, no water, no electricity, and no fuel. At the time, the average Gazan was surviving on only 3 liters of water per day to meet basic needs, well below the United Nations’ emergency standard of 15 liters. Two years on, the situation was even more dire, with no hope of a single droplet of clean water.

The rest of the year saw over half a million Gazans starving. These numbers were only to creep up the meter, and what followed in February of 2024 further escalated the situation. On February 29, near the coastal region of Gaza City, Israeli forces opened fire on civilians who were desperately waiting for food aid to arrive for the first time in months. The “Flour Massacre” left about 112 corpses covered in flour and over 75 people wounded.

Nakba, the Arabic word for “catastrophe,” refers to the exodus of over 750,000 Palestinians in the year 1948 from their ancestral homeland.

Numbers continued to rise throughout 2024. From March 2 to May 18, Israel imposed a total blockade, halting all entry of humanitarian aid, largely including medical supplies, into the Gaza Strip. By October, approximately 495,000 people were in IPC Phase 5, facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

The new year brought back some hope. Within minutes of the ceasefire announcement on January 19, more than 600 humanitarian aid trucks entered Gaza. Unfortunately, this did not continue for long. In March, aid delivery was suspended once more. By then, hundreds of humanitarian aid volunteers from various local and international organizations had also been killed.

The focus is now on the children for whom this has become a grim reality. In a recent briefing to the UN Security Council on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the UN Deputy Relief Chief said, “Behind these stark numbers are human lives — daughters, sons, mothers and fathers. Futures cut short, and communities scarred.” Amidst the ongoing crisis, the people of Gaza continue to endure unimaginable hardship, a stark reminder that beyond these numbers are real lives, and the world must not turn away from their suffering.

Superman Revival Review

Continued from Page 3

Their conflict and chemistry were great, but it did feel like Lois’ issues with Clark were resolved a bit too quickly. Adding one more scene of Lois contemplating the future of their relationship towards the end of the film would have made her arc slightly more satisfying.

Another standout performer is Nicholas Hoult as Lex Luthor. He conveys Lex’s jealousy and hatred of Superman incredibly well, making him both comical and genuinely intimidating. The script does not weaken him to make him sympathetic or relatable. He kills without hesitation and stands in direct opposition to Superman’s moral code and the film’s message. He adamantly refers to Superman as an “it” and an alien, an idea that quickly spreads to most of the citizens of



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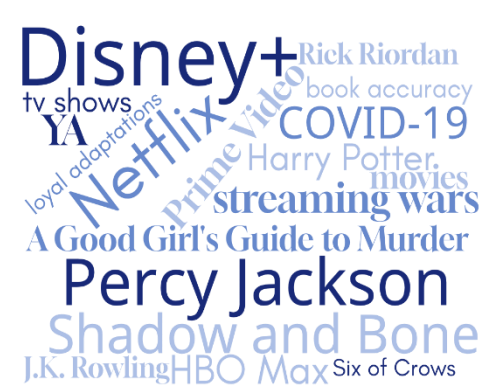
Metropolis. After facing criticism from the very people he wants to protect, Superman breaks down and says, “I’m as human as anybody...And that’s my greatest strength.”

One of the few issues with *Superman* is that there are too many characters. The film introduces the Justice Gang, a superhero trio made up of Mr. Terrific, Hawk Girl, and Green Lantern. While they are some of the most entertaining parts of the movie — especially Mr. Terrific — their inclusion leaves less time to spend on characters from *Superman* comics. The staff members of the *Daily Planet* are barely in the first and middle acts, but they are shoved into the final act with little to no impact on the climax. As someone who hadn’t read any *Superman* comics, watching the film for the first time, I didn’t know who several of the characters were but felt like James Gunn was trying to make me care about them for no apparent reason. A *Superman* film probably should have focused more on the *Superman* characters than on the Justice Gang, but including the *Daily Planet* reporters at all just draws attention to the bloatedness of the script.

Superman performed very well at the box office, grossing over \$353 million domestically and over \$171 million overseas. The next film in the franchise, *Supergirl*, will be released in summer 2026, with a second Superman film, titled *Man of Tomorrow*, the following year. By all accounts, *Superman* accomplished what it promised to do: kick off a new DC universe and be an excellent film in its own right.

From the Big to the Small Screen: The Shift Towards TV Adaptations of Novels

By Kaitlyn Lamb



film adaptations of books still exist, such as *The Hunger Games* prequels, it is now far more common for studios to adapt young adult (YA) books into television series.

While many of the trendsetters in YA movies were successful, the movies and their reviews worsened over time. Fans of Christopher Paolini’s *Eragon* disliked the film adaptation of his book for its painfully mediocre special effects, acting, script, and dialogue. The 2018 adaptation of *A Wrinkle in Time* received poor reviews for its focus on CGI action over character development, creating plot holes not present in the book. Having reduced the titular criminal mastermind to a cliché hero, *Artemis Fowl* is widely regarded as one of the most disastrous book adaptations in history.

After so many poorly received adaptations,
studios may worry that teenage readers
will not watch films
based on their favorite books.

Another book, *Allegiant*, the third in the *Divergent* series, was planned for two movies, but the first installment was so bad that the second was canceled. *Maze Runner: The Death Cure* was more faithful to its source material than *The Scorch Trials*, but fans of the books had already given up on the series, so it flopped. 20th Century Fox’s *Percy Jackson* movies were so devoid of the books’ charm and sarcasm that author Rick Riordan still refuses to watch them, having described the experience of reading the script as “watching [his] life’s work going through a meat grinder.” After so many poorly received adaptations, studios may worry that teenage readers will not watch films based on their favorite books.

In general, studios face a very different landscape than before. During COVID-19, people stopped going to theaters, accelerating the streaming wars between competing services. Though the box office has been steadily recovering, with a plethora of streaming services at home, studios are afraid to take chances with theaters. Why risk another box office bomb when you can release the same thing in a television format and quietly cancel it if it doesn’t do well? Several recent film adaptations have been thrown onto streaming services instead of being given a chance in theaters, such as Disney’s *Artemis Fowl* and Netflix’s two *Enola Holmes* movies.

While most complaints about older film adaptations are valid, they have become so widespread that even good adaptations are disliked if they change any details from the books. Accuracy has become equated with quality. Even if the changes make for better movies, fans complain about them to the point that the changes become the sole focus, as in the case of *Harry Potter*. Countless *Buzzfeed* and *Screen Rant* articles listed everything that the *Harry Potter* movies changed. The conversation almost always centers on their inaccuracies. In 2023, to the shock of fans, HBO Max announced that they would be making their own adaptation of J. K. Rowling’s books as a streaming series.

In the early 2000s and 2010s, popular teen books were frequently adapted into films. Series like *The Maze Runner*, *Divergent*, *The Hunger Games*, *Twilight*, and *Harry Potter* typically devoted one film to each book, aiming to attract existing fans to theaters. However, while

Production began in July 2025, and season one is expected to be released in 2027. The show is marketed as a faithful adaptation, with one season covering the events of each book. The problem is that while the *Harry Potter* movies were far from perfect, they were nevertheless extremely well done. From the sets to the music and the actors to the costumes, every aspect became an iconic part of pop culture. No matter how good the series may be, it will never live up to people’s expectations. HBO is reportedly spending \$1 billion on a “mini city” to serve as sets, prop storage, and a school for the young actors, but how can it compare to the sets of the original series?

If they change the overall design of Hogwarts, people will be annoyed, and the four Hogwarts replicas in Universal theme parks will look outdated. On the other hand, if they leave the design of Hogwarts the same, what is the point of doing the series at all? There would be no new, creative interpretation — just something we have already seen in eight movies. HBO has the impossible task of staying accurate to the books and the movies at once. Chris Columbus, who directed the first two films and served as a producer on the third, questioned some of HBO’s decisions regarding the series. After set photos of actor Nick Frost as Hagrid were released, Columbus pointed out that “he’s wearing the exact same costume that we designed for Hagrid. Part of me was like: ‘What’s the point?’ I thought everything...was going to be different. It’s more of the same.” HBO also announced that Warwick Davis will reprise his role as Professor Filius Flitwick, causing fans more hesitation about the series remake. With a world as expansive as *Harry Potter*, why adapt the same story again with the same costumes and the same actors?



Photo by Kaitlyn Lamb

Not all book-to-television adaptations are as unnecessary. After two terrible films, season one of the *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* series was released on Disney+ in December 2023, and production on a third season has already begun. Author Rick Riordan and his wife, Becky, serve as executive producers, promising to keep the show as faithful to the books as possible. While this certainly makes the show better than the movies, fans have very high expectations. It becomes harder to forgive any weak writing, awkward dialogue, or missing moments when the author himself has given his stamp of approval.

Netflix’s *Shadow and Bone* was based on the YA fantasy trilogy of the same name by Leigh Bardugo. Perplexingly, though, it was also an adaptation of her *Six of Crows* duology. *Six of Crows* takes place several years after the final *Shadow and Bone* book, with the only connections being a few characters and the overall fantasy world. The show, however, shoved three of the “Crows” into the main *Shadow and Bone* plot, making every episode feel disjointed. Netflix did this to promote a potential spin-off, which became impossible. By the end of season two, they had completed the development of several characters and their *Six of Crows* storylines, closing the door to an adaptation of the actual *Six of Crows* books. Furthermore, putting the far more interesting *Six of Crows* characters up against the trope-filled *Shadow and Bone* story made the main plot of the show seem boring and unoriginal. Netflix would have been better off adapting *Six of Crows* in the first place or cutting its plot from *Shadow and Bone* entirely. This awkward juggling of two separate books likely contributed to the series’ cancellation in 2023.

Continued on Page 7

Is Hijab oppression?

By Mariam Afridi

“My body, my choice” is a slogan often used to campaign for women's rights, but what happens when these rights include wearing a hijab? Do people's opinions change? When Muslim women choose to wear the hijab, it's suddenly seen as a problem. Some call it oppression while ignoring the fact that countless Muslim women wear it proudly. Why is one kind of choice respected while the other is rejected? Let's be clear, oppression is when women are told what to wear, whether that is forcing them to cover or forcing them to uncover. Hijab is oppressive only when imposed; when a person chooses to wear it, it becomes a symbol of empowerment and an expression of faith.

The hijab is a headscarf worn by many Muslim women as a sign of modesty and religious commitment. It typically covers the hair, neck, and chest. Muslim women usually begin wearing the hijab around puberty, in the presence of *non-mahrams* (a man that a woman could potentially marry). The basic requirement in Islam is that a woman dress modestly, covering her hair and body. As long as these criteria are met, the style, color, and fabrics can be changed to the woman's liking.



Image generated by Gemini

Islamic modesty does not only apply to women — it starts with the men. Chapter 40, verse 30 of the Quran (the central religious text of Islam) states: “Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their chastity.” This was intended to promote respect for women and discourage objectification, putting an end to leering and inappropriate behavior. Only after that came the mandate on women: “And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity, and not to reveal their adornments.” Hijab for both men and women is not just a dress code; it is the entire attitude of restraint and respect for both genders.

In Chapter 33, Verse 59, the Quran says: “Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way, it is more likely that they will be recognized ‘as virtuous’ and not be harassed.” This was revealed in a time when women were regularly harassed in public — especially in pre-Islamic Arabia, where they were often treated as property, subhumans, and commodities. The hijab was introduced not to erase women, but to elevate them — to grant them safety, dignity, and social respect.

The Prophet Muhammad made it clear how women should be treated. In his final sermon, he said: “Do treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers.” These aren't the words of someone promoting oppression — they're a reminder of equality, mutual respect, and compassion. Islam should not be blamed for something humans have misunderstood.

Of course, some women are required to wear hijab in certain countries, the most prominent being those that also do not allow women to go to school. But that's not Islam. The same religion that's blamed for oppressing women also produced scholars, like Nana Asma'u bint Uthman, a scholar and expressive poet, and Aisha bint Abu Bakr, the Prophet Muhammad's wife, who was a renowned expert in medicine, poetry, and mathematics. *Islam* obligates seeking knowledge upon *every* Muslim; it's some governments that don't.

Ironically, some secular countries are just as restrictive. France has banned hijabs in sports, claiming it is to preserve secularism and neutrality in public spaces. But this reasoning is flawed because it effectively penalizes women for their religious expression. This ban means that Muslim women who want to compete at the Olympics can't — unless they remove their hijab. In the name of “liberation,” they're excluded.

The hijab was introduced not to erase women,
but to elevate them — to grant them safety,
dignity, and social respect.

Some may argue that the hijab is unsafe to wear during some sports, but from personal experience, I can say that that is untrue. While it would be unsafe to wear layers of unpinned fabric during some sports, such as swimming, if proper caution is taken and the right attire is worn, there is nothing inherently unsafe about it. Moreover, many popular sportswear brands have introduced sports hijabs, worn by many successful athletes like Tina Rahimi and Safeya Al Sayegh. In fact, Nike has sponsored Ibtihaj Muhammad, a Hijabi fencer, which shows that wearing hijab is not an obstacle to athletic success. By wearing hijab while participating in sports, these influential women have proven that it is possible to do so safely, given the right resources.

In the U.S., where 61% of women identify as feminists, 69% of Muslim women report discrimination. In a shocking New Jersey case, a teacher forcibly removed a student's hijab, saying her hair was beautiful and did not need to be covered. That's not empowerment — it is asserting the importance of uncovering versus covering.

Feminism is to support all women's choices (clothing-related or not), but too often, it is supported until someone puts on a hijab. If a woman decides to wear less, it is liberation, but if she decides to wear more, it is oppression, which speaks to a deeper problem: the double standard that Muslim women encounter daily. The hijab is not just a piece of fabric, nor is it something to be labeled as oppression; it is the identity, expression, and empowerment of numerous Muslim women. To dismiss it as a symbol of subjugation is to ignore the experiences of the women who wear it by choice.

As Yasmin Mogahed, an American educator, motivational speaker, and author, powerfully states, “With my veil I put my faith on display — rather than my beauty. My value as a human is defined by my relationship with God, not by my looks. I cover the irrelevant. And when you look at me, you don't see a body. You view me only for what I am: a servant of my Creator.” Her words speak to the heart of what hijab truly represents: not confinement, but liberation on one's terms. So why do we continue to let misconceptions define the realities of women who wear the hijab with pride and purpose?

From the Big to the Small Screen

Continued from Page 6

The first season of *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*, based on the 2019 novel of the same name, came out in 2024. Produced by Netflix and the BBC, the series follows British high schooler Pip Fitz-Amobi's investigation of a disappearance — and suspected murder — that occurred in her town five years before. While the series was well cast, the screenplay contained many problems. Characters were combined and cut at random, creating confusion for viewers who had read the book and making the plot weaker for those who had not. The books are so good because of the captivating mystery that Pip unravels, but the show makes her far less competent. Instead of Pip diligently searching for clues, in many cases, the characters readily admit to their crimes and tell her the information that she needs, disrupting the pacing by revealing plot twists much earlier than in the book. Characters fight and turn on one another far too early in the season, before the viewer has time to understand their relationships.

The trend of streaming TV shows based on books doesn't seem to be slowing down any time soon. Amazon Prime is producing a series based on YA “romantasy” *Powerless* by Lauren Roberts. Jennifer Lynn Barnes' *The Inheritance Games* is also being adapted into a show for Prime Video. In 2020, Neal Shusterman announced that one of his dystopian novels, *Scythe*, was being adapted into a movie. In 2024, he said that Peacock was reworking the script into a television format. Clearly, studios prefer this type of project over films.

While the movie adaptations have appealed to a wide audience of dedicated readers and the general public, the streaming shows focus on just the die-hard fans. However, by allowing themselves to use lower budgets and cancel series at the first sign of disinterest, studios have made it harder for themselves to do what they promised: stay completely accurate to the books. Series like *Shadow and Bone* and *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* suffered from their mishandling of the source material, while the first season of *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* was more harshly criticized because of its commitment to the books. No matter what the showrunners do, these series cannot live up to the books and, in the case of *Harry Potter*, not to the movies, either.

Earned: Should Donald Trump Receive the Nobel Peace Prize?

By Isabella Klaas

Donald J. Trump is one of the most, if not the most, controversial presidents in American history. He has been convicted of over 70 felonies but is now serving his second term in office. He has been the target of four assassination attempts, and yet he and his agenda move forward stronger than ever. He is loathed by many Americans but loved by many more. And now he has been nominated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. The natural question is, does Trump deserve this award?



Donald Trump speaking at CPAC 2011 in Washington, D.C. "Donald Trump" by Gage Skidmore is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

The Nobel Peace Prize, established by Alfred Nobel in his will, is to be awarded to the people who have "done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." More simply, it recognizes contributions to the reduction of arms held by countries, cooperation between nations, the creation of organizations dedicated to peace, and human rights.

In the first year of Trump's current presidency, he has overseen the resolution of no less than six conflicts. These include the conflicts between Israel and Hamas, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Thailand and Cambodia, India and Pakistan, Egypt and Ethiopia, and Serbia and Kosovo. The most well-known of the conflicts, the one between Israel and Palestine, began on October 7, 2023, with an unprovoked attack by Hamas on Israel and dragged on for nearly two years, claiming thousands of lives and escalating into what is known as the "Twelve-Day War" with Hamas.

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and was given the prize ten months into
his term.

On June 24, 2025, Trump facilitated and announced a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, taking the first major step made by any leader toward peace in this conflict and ending the war, and in early October, brokered a peace deal that included the release of the remaining 20 Israeli hostages and 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Although the results of Trump's peace deals in other conflicts are not as well known, these are similar to the one involving Israel and Hamas and have had just as much impact.

Several objections have been raised, but none are significant enough or hold enough validity to impact Trump's merit. Although some question Trump's part in these peace negotiations, the fact is that he was, to some extent, involved in all six, regardless of attempts to split hairs and lessen his impact. Others are in doubt of how long the peace secured will last, especially in regards to Israel and Hamas, but many Nobel Peace Prize recipients are awarded the prize before the long-term effects of their efforts have been felt, such as Barack Obama, who was nominated 205 times in the 11 days before the nominations closed — before he even took office — and was given the prize ten months into his term.

Some believe that the aid that Trump has sent to Israel is a stumbling block to his receiving the award; however, the similar financing of Ukraine in the Russia-Ukraine War by the Biden administration was lauded by American citizens with little or no objection. The only difference is that Trump has succeeded much more in bringing the Israeli-Hamas conflict to an end than the Biden administration had in terminating the war in Ukraine.

Awarding Trump the Nobel Peace Prize is not simply a dream of a few hardcore Trump supporters in the United States. He has received nominations from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Cambodian Prime Minister Manet, and the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, all of whose countries are involved in the conflicts Trump resolved. Not only do the leaders of these nations believe Trump deserves this award, but so do the civilians whose lives he has impacted.

The Nobel Peace Prize was conceived to be
awarded to the person who
... has done the most to advance peace and
fraternity among nations

After the resolution of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict, 2500 Cambodian Buddhist monks carrying posters bearing Trump's picture and the words "Thank you! Mr. President" held a peace march, during which Dr. Yorn Seng Yeat spoke on behalf of "70,000 Cambodian Buddhist monks," saying that they "are whole-heartedly supportive of our Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet for nominating [Donald Trump] for the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of [his] historic contribution in advancing world peace."

So I ask you, does President Donald Trump deserve the Nobel Peace Prize? The Nobel Peace Prize was conceived to be awarded to the person who, in a given year, has done the most to advance peace and fraternity among nations. Trump has ended six conflicts across the globe in the past year, preventing and ending the suffering of millions and earning their gratitude. These deeds beg the question: if Trump is not worthy of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, who has done that which is necessary to deserve it?



Photo by Anastasiya D on Unsplash

Chocolate Pinwheel Cookies

By Maya Sharpe



Makes about **50-60 cookies**
Takes **4 hours**, including chilling time

Ingredients

- 3 cups of all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 cup room temperature unsalted butter (or salted butter, but don't put any salt)
- 1 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate chips
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
2. In another large bowl, beat the butter with an electric mixer for about 3 minutes until light and fluffy. Add sugar and beat for 2 more minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then mix in the

- vanilla. Add the flour mixture and beat on low speed until a smooth dough forms.
3. Split the dough into two equal parts. Shape each into a 4x4-inch square. Wrap one square in plastic wrap and set aside.
4. Melt the chocolate chips in the microwave or a double boiler until smooth. Mix the melted chocolate into the second portion of dough until evenly combined. Shape it into a 4x4-inch square and wrap it in plastic wrap. Refrigerate both dough squares for at least 30 minutes.
5. Cut each dough square into four equal strips.
6. Roll one vanilla strip between two sheets of parchment paper into a 6x7-inch rectangle. Do the same with one chocolate strip.
7. Remove the top parchment from both and place the vanilla dough squarely on top of the chocolate dough. Peel off the top parchment. Trim edges to make a neat rectangle.
8. Gently roll the layered dough into a log, starting from the long side. Wrap in plastic wrap.
9. Repeat steps 6-8 with the remaining dough strips to make four more logs.
10. Refrigerate the logs for 1 hour. Occasionally, roll them gently to prevent the bottom from flattening. After the hour is done, freeze for at least 2 hours (or up to 3 months).
11. Preheat oven to 350°F (or 175°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
12. Slice each log into about 12-15 cookies, about 14 inches thick. Place them 1 1/2 inches apart on the sheet. Bake for 9-11 minutes, until the vanilla dough turns slightly golden.
13. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool.
14. Enjoy!

It improves problem-solving and multitasking abilities. Studies show that multilingual individuals often outperform monolingual individuals in tasks that require focus and adaptability.

The mental exercise of switching between languages strengthens neural connections, keeping the brain agile and resilient. Research also suggests that multilingualism can delay the onset of dementia-related conditions such as Alzheimer's disease by several years. This cognitive reserve acts as a protective factor, helping the brain maintain function longer into old age.

Language learning also supports academic success. Understanding how different languages work deepens comprehension of grammar, vocabulary, and communication in general. Students who study additional languages often show improved reading comprehension, creativity, and even mathematical reasoning.

Beyond the brain, multilingualism enriches the heart. It fosters empathy, tolerance, and respect for other cultures by providing a deeper understanding of different perspectives, traditions, and lifestyles. It expands the learner's worldview, reduces prejudice, and provides meaningful connections with people of diverse backgrounds, both locally and abroad.

A variety of professional paths can be opened by knowing more than one language. Multilingualism gives a significant advantage in the global job market and can increase employability and salaries. It also provides valuable language skills for community workers, international business, and customer service. Individuals who know more than one language are more likely to be selected for promotions and specialized jobs.

YouTube Xiaomany (also known as Arie Smith or Xiaoma) is a video producer, financial analyst, and experienced software engineer. He has over six million followers on YouTube and around one million in China. Xiaoma grew up in New York City, speaking English, and is now fluent in Mandarin and Spanish. He has studied more than 15 foreign languages and, although not fluent in all of them, has learned enough to achieve adequate vocabulary and pronunciation. Millions of people watch his videos, which show him connecting with people from diverse backgrounds by speaking to them in their languages. He also has language courses on his website, including his very first Chinese course, "Street-Smart Chinese," which thousands of students have learned from and enjoyed.

Imagine a person who never studies another language, or even their own. Without exposure to other languages, they might lack empathy for people from different backgrounds and miss opportunities for meaningful communication. Professionally, they may face barriers in a globalized world in which multilingualism is often a key advantage. In contrast, those who study languages develop open-mindedness and adaptability—qualities that enrich both their personal and professional life.

The Benefits of Learning Languages

by Skye Miller and Maya Sharpe

Language is one of humanity's oldest and most powerful tools. Early humans developed spoken language tens of thousands of years ago to cooperate, share knowledge, and build communities. Over time, as societies grew and interacted through trade, migration, and conquest, languages evolved and influenced one another. Ancient peoples like the Greeks and Egyptians were multilingual, using different languages for trade and diplomacy.

During the Middle Ages, Latin served as the language of education and religion across Europe, while local languages continued to develop and diversify. Being multilingual was a mark of education and prestige. Scholars, merchants, and travelers often spoke several languages to communicate across regions. During the Renaissance, the study of classical languages like Latin and Greek was considered essential for intellectual growth, while exploration and colonization introduced new languages and cultural exchanges around the world.



Today, there are over 7,000 languages spoken worldwide. Approximately 43% of the world's population is bilingual and 17% multilingual (able to speak two or more languages). In an interconnected world, the ability to communicate across languages is more valuable than ever, bridging cultures, fostering understanding, and opening doors to countless opportunities.

Learning a new language is one of the most effective ways to strengthen the brain. It enhances memory and sharpens attention

The Importance of Ballet for Athletes

By Dorothy Slater

Everyone, including athletes, wants to improve at their craft in any way they can. Some of the greatest athletes of our time have gotten to where they are through ballet training. Eddie George, a former football player for the Tennessee Titans, admitted that many of his peers take ballet classes. Athletes of all kinds can benefit from ballet by strengthening flexibility, speed, balance, coordination, and more.

Flexibility is a major asset for athletes and dancers, especially ballet students. Elongating and stretching your muscles can prevent injuries by activating muscles that aren’t often used in normal strength-training methods. Performing these unfamiliar movements makes athletes less prone to sprains and tears, which is a significant advantage in high-impact sports like football, rugby, and martial arts.

Balance is another significant benefit of taking ballet. Ballet dancers require immense core strength for turns, leaps, leg extensions, and even basic steps. Every movement — from a simple plié to a complex *fouetté* — requires total control of the body. To turn successfully, one must keep their ribcage closed, their hips over their knees, and their arms strong. Athletes who train in ballet learn to land gracefully, turn quickly, and remain centered, which significantly benefits performance on the field. Whether it’s dodging a tackle or pivoting mid-play, that kind of agility can make or break a game.

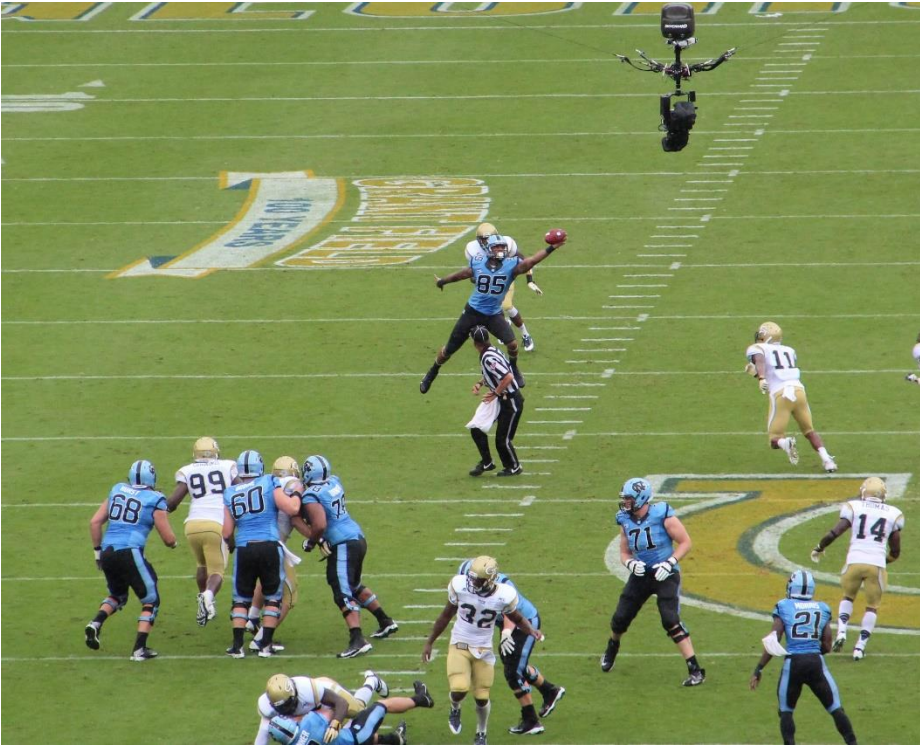
Eddie George wasn’t alone in recognizing ballet’s power. Herschel Walker, a former NFL player for the Dallas Cowboys, New York Giants, and Minnesota Vikings, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, former governor of California and professional boxer, also trained in ballet to improve their athletic performance. These legends understood that ballet builds strength in a different way — through control, precision, and endurance. It’s not just about brute force; it’s about mastering your body to do what you want.

Ballet dancers have to focus on keeping their core engaged, relaxing their shoulders, extending their arms and legs, moving to the music, maintaining turnout, and anticipating the next step, and much more — all at the same time. This level of multitasking sharpens the brain and improves body awareness, which is essential for athletes who must react quickly and remain focused under pressure. Dancers often learn long combinations after being hastily told them only once and then are expected to memorize and execute what the teacher said. This trains the brain to absorb information quickly and execute it with precision. Athletes who struggle to remain mentally alert during games may benefit from this type of training. Ballet forces you to be present, to stay in the moment, and to give your full attention to every movement.

Ballet also enhances speed by strengthening and stretching fast-twitch muscles, which support explosive movements such as kickoffs, sprints, and jumps. The jumps you see in ballet may look light and effortless, but they require tremendous power and reflexes — skills that directly translate into sports where quick reactions are key, such as tennis and squash.

Endurance is also built through ballet. Classes are long, combinations are fast, and the physical demands are nonstop. Dancers must remain engaged, focused, and ready for the next move at all times. Sometimes the brain works just as hard as the body. This kind of stamina is invaluable in sports where fatigue can lead to sloppy mistakes.

Finally, let’s not forget the aesthetic side of ballet. Ballet helps sculpt the body in a way that’s both powerful and graceful. Athletes who train in ballet often find they move more fluidly, recover faster, and feel more in control of their bodies. The next time you see a football player leap into the air to catch a pass or a tennis player twist mid-sprint to return a serve, remember they might just have a few ballet classes under their belt. As Eddie George said, “Some of the greatest athletes in the world are on the dance floor.” Maybe it’s time we all take a closer look at the power behind the pirouette, which seems, from a glance, a simple, easy move.



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