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SPOT-IT

By Vivian Miller, kindergarten

Spot-It is a very fun game. First I'll tell you how I learned it and then I'll tell you how to play it.

I learned it from my brother Nicholas. He got it for a birthday present. He never played it until one day I asked, "Can we play Spot-It?"

We first played it when he was 6 years old and I was 4. He still can beat me because he's practiced for a long time. But I beat him sometimes.

He told me you have to see the shapes on each card and match them. The names of some of the cards are ladybug, dolphin, ghost, hand, igloo, fish, crab, tree and yinyang.

There are two different ways to play. One way is: someone flips over two cards and you try to match the shapes. Whoever matches it gets one of the cards. Whoever has the most cards at the end wins. If you say the word in Spanish you get both cards. I've learned delfin, pez and cangrejo.

The other version is where everyone gets one card and there's a deck in the middle and whoever matches it first gets that card.

My favorite picture is dolphin because it's blue, and blue is my favorite color. If I could make my own Spot-It game I'd make all the colors — red, blue, yellow, green, pink.

I like Spot-It because it's good for your eyes, and it's about matching shapes. Because I practice a lot, my age doesn't make a difference. I feel good when I beat a person who's way older than me.



Spot-It cards by SFFS kids

THE CLOWN DOLL

By Tobias Watters, kindergarten

There was a girl named Lucy who was 5 years old. Her favorite color was pink so she wore pink all the time.

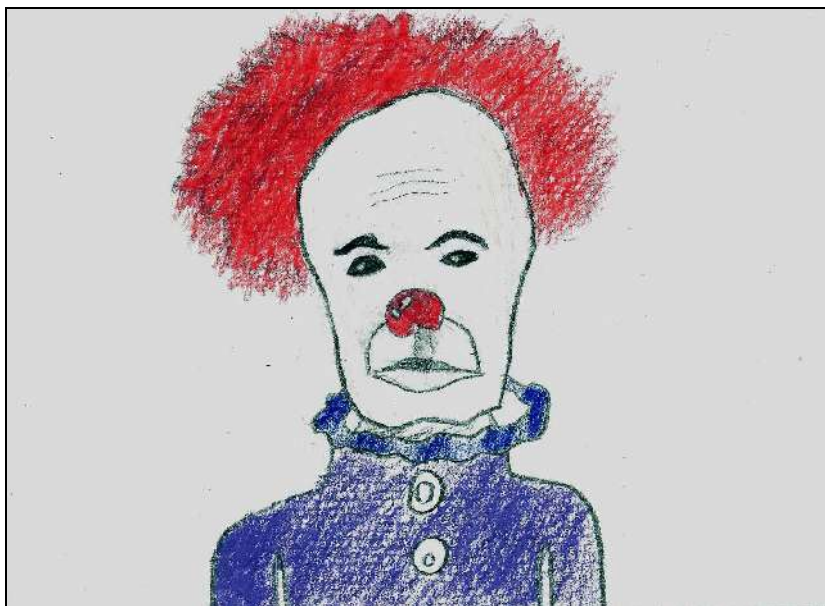
She went to a toy store with her mom and said, "Mommy, mommy, I want that clown." It was a clown doll with red cheeks and white teeth and funny eyes. She loved the clown because it was so cute. The toy owner said to never leave it in the kitchen. Lucy didn't know that all the clowns at the toy store were magical.

They were made by a magical toy maker who was evil.

Her mom didn't let her take toys to bed because they might make her stay up. One night she was playing with the clown in the kitchen and left it there, and she went to bed. It was 11 o'clock and everyone else was sleeping.

The clown grew into human size so it could walk up the stairs. Lucy heard someone coming slowly up the stairs. She didn't come out because she was too afraid.

The clown went to her baby sister's room first. This is where it gets a little scary. The clown just touched the baby, the room froze, and the baby got killed.



Alex Perry, 3rd grade

Then it went to her parents' room and crept into the door. It touched her dad and her mom, and their whole bedroom turned into ice and they couldn't breathe. It went into her brother's room, touched him — dead. It went into Lucy's room. She saw it and screamed, but no one heard her. The clown touched her — dead.

When the people died, they rotted and an angel smelled them. So he came down from a cloud and tapped the clown with his magic wand, and the clown disappeared. The angel melted the ice, and everyone came back alive again. The weird part of the story is that everyone except Lucy was already asleep, so they didn't even know they were dead.

FISHING IN HAWAII

By Maya Jain, 1st grade

I went to Hawaii for Christmas break with my mom and dad and my brother Logan. We have a house on the big island. We go four times a year.

There's a golf course with a pond, and it has a lot of fishes. My brother Logan and I went fishing with a guy named Brendan who knows all about fish. It was the first time I fished but it was the third time my brother had fished. I was too little and I was in my mom's stomach the times when Logan went.

We used bread for bait. Brendan told us that you would know when the fish came because you would feel a big tug on your fishing rod. I said, "I'm way too tiny for this. I'm going to fall in the lake."

When I felt the tug, Brendan helped me get it in. It was a

milkfish. My fish was maybe 5 feet long. I caught one and my older brother Logan caught three. They were humongous. It was super hard to pull them in. It was like the Super Bowl: one team would win and one wouldn't — the fish team or Logan's team.

We released all of them, but we first got to hold them and take a picture. They can stay out of the water for 5 to 10 minutes. You have to throw them back at the golf course.

There are two pools in Hawaii where we usually go. The Seashell Pool is salt water and the Canoe Club is chlorine. I'm pretty good at swimming because I take classes at La Petite Baleen. Oh, and just to mention: fishes are very good swimmers.

In April I'm going to Hawaii again. This time we'll go fishing at a special pond where you get to keep the fish. I want to go scuba diving, but you have to be at least 7. In April I will be 7. I want to see dolphins and seals and Giants fish. They're black and orange like the San Francisco Giants, so my brother calls them Giants fish.



Lucas Perry, 3rd grade

CHRISTMAS IN MARFA

By Olivia Chaiken Hamilton, 2nd grade

Last year we went to Marfa, Texas for Christmas. To get there, we flew to Phoenix, then took another plane to El Paso, then drove to Marfa. It's in a desert. We have our own house that has a pool. In the deep end we spend most of our time practicing water shows. We throw things on the bottom and we jump down and get them.

We were there with my best friend, Amelia. She lives in Oakland. She has a little brother named Sammy and two dads. She came to Marfa on Christmas Eve at dinnertime. Her dad Brian cooked. They are building a house in Marfa, and we call it the barn. We ride our bikes there. We can ride them almost anywhere because there aren't that many cars.

This Christmas one of my presents was a necklace from Moonlight Gemstones. I chose a Marfa plume agate for my necklace. I think it really looks good on me. The guy who owns the shop, Paul, took us out crystal collecting at an enormous piece of open land. It was the same place where the stone in my necklace was from. We found a lot of crystals, and most of them were agates. They were pretty much everywhere on the ground, but Paul showed us what we needed to look for.

Our neighbor next door has lots and lots of cats. My favorite animal is a cat. They often come and visit our backyard. I've been asking for a cat for a very long time. I have a cat now. I got it last November 2nd. It's still a baby. Its name is Milo.

Our house has a swing set and monkey bars, and a swing on one of the big trees. There's a library in Marfa where we check out movies and books, and a place near the library called the Food

Shark where we go to eat lunch. We usually bring our own lunch, like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, because they have tables and they don't mind.

My favorite place in Marfa is the Chinati Art Camp. They have cats there, you can play in the snow, and you do really cool art projects. I made a monster out of a mixture of water and flour. Once it dried, I painted it and put a stick on the back so it could stand up. It was the first time it snowed in Marfa when I was there.

We usually go Marfa in the summertime too. I like it better in the summer because you can go to more places. We go in the pool more because it's warmer, and we ride our bikes to Frama. That's an ice cream place. Its name is a word scramble of Marfa.

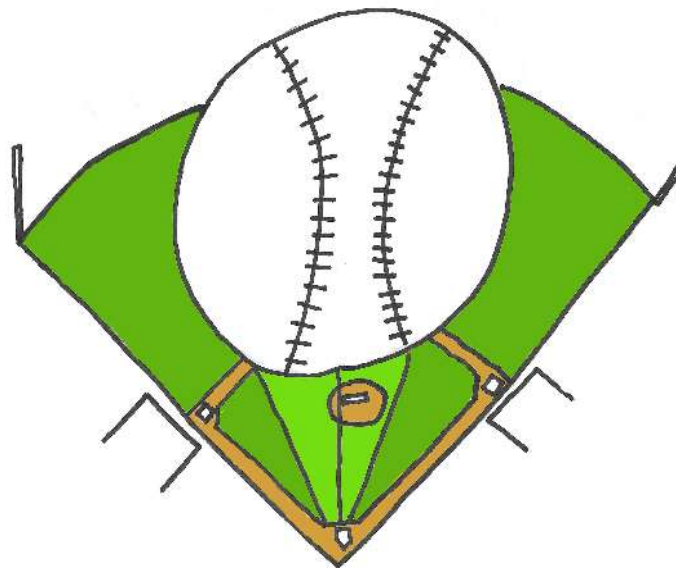
If Amelia's house is finished this summer, it's going to have a great kids' space where I can go and sleep. It would be a new experience, so I'd feel excited.



Owen Aguirre (7th grade) & Adelaide Tranel (2nd grade)

HOME RUN!

Story & picture by Kai Seidel, 3rd grade



"Go get 'em Kai," said my dad.

The dirt was blowing in my face. I stepped into the batter's box.

The pitcher wound up and threw the baseball. The center fielder was not paying any attention! He was picking at the daisies.

"I should hit it to center field," I thought. There was no time to think. The ball was hurling faster and faster. I found myself swinging at a low pitch in the dirt. I heard the crack of the bat. I tried to find the ball in the dark blue sky.

I found it. It was deep, deep to center field! I was almost at third base when the center fielder threw the ball in. It was a pretty good throw: it went right to the catcher. I slid hard into home plate. My team was waiting anxiously for the call. The umpire shouted, "Safe!"

My team piled onto me. I felt sooo good. We eventually won the baseball game 16-10.



Ella Chen, 1st grade

BELOW THE ICE

Story & picture by Alex Perry, 3rd grade

Alex skied down the mountain and breathed in the scent of the pine trees.

Everything was peaceful. He spotted a cluster of dark blue puddles of water seeping through the cracked ice. He longed to investigate and decided to stop and take a peek. As he got closer there was a quick flicker in one of the bigger puddles, creating a growing ring of tiny waves. He supposed it was a fish. As he slowed down he covered his mouth with his neck warmer so his frosty breath would not come out.

He surprisingly skidded on the ice and one of his skis fell off. The screeching of the wind echoed through his ears as he fell on his back and slid down the hill in a tumbling heap of snow. His

body was twisted up. He was trying to stop, but it didn't work. He managed to take a glimpse of the puddles only several yards in front of him.

He heard the icy ground crunching beneath him as he plunged into pitch black water. All his consciousness streamed from him as he felt the deathly chill of the water. He tasted the saltiness of it in his mouth. He was drowning. It would be the end of it all. He couldn't manage getting his ski off, so he desperately tried swimming toward the surface, which already seemed miles overhead. He could feel the thick wall of ice on his palms. He slowly climbed it with great difficulty. The coldness threatened to freeze him to the core until his death.



Random thoughts arose in Alex's head. He remembered all the times he went out to dinner with his mom. And all the times he went out to play sports with his dad and all the times he talked and talked for hours with his brother Lucas and watched his cat play with a toy. He remembered the first time he ate mango frozen yogurt with chocolate shavings and he tasted the creamy deliciousness as it entered his watering mouth. The first time he got a home run in baseball, all the momentum and the crowd roaring. His first time playing Handel's *Water Music*, the beautiful tones of the notes humming through his ears. The exciting feeling that he had worked hard and accomplished something. Speeding along through the ocean when he was boogie boarding and when he went crashing and tumbling onto the beach and laughing with excitement. The wind rushing into his face as he went down the steep roller coaster with his dad at Six Flags. The first flip he did off the diving board, when he landed on his back. Feeling the feeling of doing something he never thought he could do. His life was flashing before him. All these special times in his life. Life. He wanted it.

But he didn't think he could get it through all the chaos and the freezing blackness. He opened his eyes as much as possible and he saw light. Was it actually light? Could this possibly be it? Right as he took his first gasp of air he fell into a sleep he would probably never have again ...

He awoke in the hotel room staring at a burning fire in front of him with fuzzy vision. He had fresh clothes on and he could feel the leather of the armchair he was sitting in. His mom brought a steaming dish of spaghetti with his favorite sauce, tomato. He took a long sigh and slowly blinked.

MY PIANO RECITAL

By Sedi Blachford, 3rd grade

I gave my first piano recital about a year ago. It was in a performance hall in San Francisco. It was a cold, foggy day, and it was sprinkling. I walked up to the building and I was really nervous. My piano teacher led me to a seat that had my name on it. I was sitting next to a little girl in a puffy pink and black dress. My grandpa took lots of pictures of me.



Asha McGee, 6th grade

The other students walked up one by one. I waited and held my breath until it was my turn. I walked up to the big black grand piano and started my solo. I was worried that I would forget it, but it flowed from my hands like water and I remembered all the notes. My teacher stepped up to the piano, ready for our duet. I had the music that time, so I wasn't as worried, and I didn't mess up at all. We played one song from the beginner books.

I like to play piano because it's easy to make the sounds and it's fun to press the keys. I have an electric piano in our living room. It sounds the same as a real piano, it has the same number of keys, and it's weighted. That means that the keys are heavy, so it feels exactly the same as a real piano.

My electric piano has only one pedal. A real piano has three. The one on the right is called the damper pedal: it makes the notes long and connected. The pedal in the middle makes the piano softer. When I play the grand piano that my grandpa has, the left pedal doesn't work, so I don't know what it does.

Usually I practice a lot, maybe 10 minutes at least a day. My piano teacher usually assigns two to three songs. My older brother sometimes gets annoyed when I practice because he's doing his homework. He doesn't say anything, but he goes up to his room and slams the door. But my mom and dad really like hearing my songs, even if I play the same ones over and over and over again.

My teacher has a program where every time I do a good job on a song she gives me a sticker, and once I get 20 stickers I get a prize. So it feels bad when I don't get a sticker.

I like fast songs with lots of staccato — fast, sharp notes — and I like songs that are slow and flowy too. I like to sing too. There's a Canadian folk song called “Land of the Silver Birch,” and I know it really well, so I can play and sing it at the same time, which is hard to do.

If I keep up and play more and get into higher levels, I might get a real piano. It would need to be an upright piano because we don't have room for a grand piano. A real piano feels a little more real when you're playing, because you can make it softer and louder.

I want to do more with the piano. But I don't think it will have to do with my career when I grow up. Maybe it will just be a hobby that I'm really good at.



Juliana Lamm-Perez, 4th grade

DELICIOUS SUMMER DAYS IN ILLINOIS

Story & picture by Lucas Perry, 3rd grade

He got out of the car. His flip-flops made a pitter-pattering sound on the brick pavement. A tingle of excitement ran down his spine as he burst into the thick sunbeams spilling from the heavens.

Lucas sprinted toward the pool. He could hear his mom yelling behind him trying to stop him from tripping, but he refused to stop. He finally halted at the edge of the pool. There he was, eager to get into that pool. There were beautiful tall old trees around the pool. There was a good view of fields of grass and a pool deck with nice big flagstones that were hot under his feet when he kicked off his flip-flops. He could hear the soft lapping of the water at the edge of the pool.

Lucas stripped off his T-shirt and flung it onto a pool chair. He climbed down a ladder into the pool. There was a patch of shade in the deep end and glistening aqua blue in the shallow end where the sun hit the water. When he first got into the pool he had a little shock from the chilly water. But soon his body adjusted to the temperature and he relaxed. He floated on his back on the surface. It felt like a new world under the water. It was relaxing and warm and heated by the sun. He shut his eyes and listened to the eerie silence under the water.

Soon he was dunking his head and shooting hoops in the pool with his brother and some other boys. They were diving, splashing, jumping, swimming, bobbing, shouting, laughing, dunking and slam-dunking.

After about four or five hours he got out. He was soaking wet and his fingers were pruned. Then he and his brother baked in the sun on the hot flagstones like two cats.

When they left the pool they went to a hot dog place in town. He got a cheese dog and a Coca-Cola. After that they went to a candy store and he bought a large mint chocolate chip ice cream cone. It was smooth and cold. He could feel the half-liquid texture roll down his tongue into the depths of his throat. He only had so much time before the ice cream would melt. He watched as the

liquidized ice cream rolled down the cone. He slurped up the little waterfalls of shaded green. He took a loud chomp off the stub of the sugar cone. After he devoured the ice cream and the cone, he threw the napkin out in a nearby trash can.



He smacked his lips and followed his mom and brother back to their car and hopped in. As they drove home under the arching trees he laid his head back and closed his eyes. He breathed in the soft late afternoon breeze. He felt drowsy and peaceful. He felt like it had been a day. He thought about flopping into bed and curling up in his cool sheets and falling asleep.

A LITTLE PIECE OF MY HEART

Story & picture by Nikou Kangarloo-Foroutan, 4th grade

"I have bad new for you guys," my dad said, curling down his head.

I waved goodbye to my grandma and she smiled from her garage door. I sat down in the car seat and listened to my dad. I knew what the bad news was but I didn't want to hear it.

"Your hamster" — he cut himself off — "Maple has died," he said in a small voice.

I looked over to my sister Leyli. Her body was as still as a rock and her eyes were pushing out with water as she looked straight at my dad, like it was all his fault. I wanted to burst out with tears, complaining that Maple *had* to come back, but I didn't because it would've been too hard on my dad.



I shouldn't have stayed up all night worrying about her. Maybe then she wouldn't have died. I knew how my sister felt. I remembered the night that *my* hamster had died. At first I hadn't

said anything, but for the whole rest of the night I was in tears. I still missed him but I tried not to think about it. Now that both of them were gone, I couldn't help but cry.

I sat there, water flowing down my cheeks, as I thought of all the good times with Maple. Like when Leyli and I would put her in those long tubes and she was supposed to come out the other way, but instead she would just stop in the middle and fall asleep. I remembered when my dad told us that he had found her crawling outside. I smiled at my thoughts. I loved Maple so much, and now she was gone.

"But ..." my sister couldn't even finish her sentence, "she can't be gone."

I caught a quick glance at my sister before she could yell at me. She looked exactly how I had expected — her face looking worried and upset, her eyes pouring down with water like a waterfall. She pulled her knees up to her face, so her mouth was covered.

I pictured an image of my family huddled up around her, celebrating Maple's life. We would lay her down in a flower pot the perfect size, next to her favorite things so they would stay close to her heart forever. I guessed that she would be up there in heaven, playing with my old hermit crab Hermy in the clouds.

We pulled up to a halt. "Do you still want to go?" my dad asked Leyli.

"Yeah, I guess," she mumbled. She wiped her tears and pulled open the door. She had been invited to her friend's birthday party at the House of Air. I was surprised that she still wanted to go.

"Bye," my dad waved excitedly.

"Bye," she muttered, still recovering from the news.

"Bye," I whispered softly.

That day it was like a little piece of my heart had left, but there would always be room for Maple.

SURFING WITH MY DAD

By Hannah Duane, 4th grade

The winter and fall is surf season, when the waves are best. I love surfing. It always freshens your mind. I started riding whitewater when I was maybe 4. Whitewater means when the foam is rolling on the shallow water.

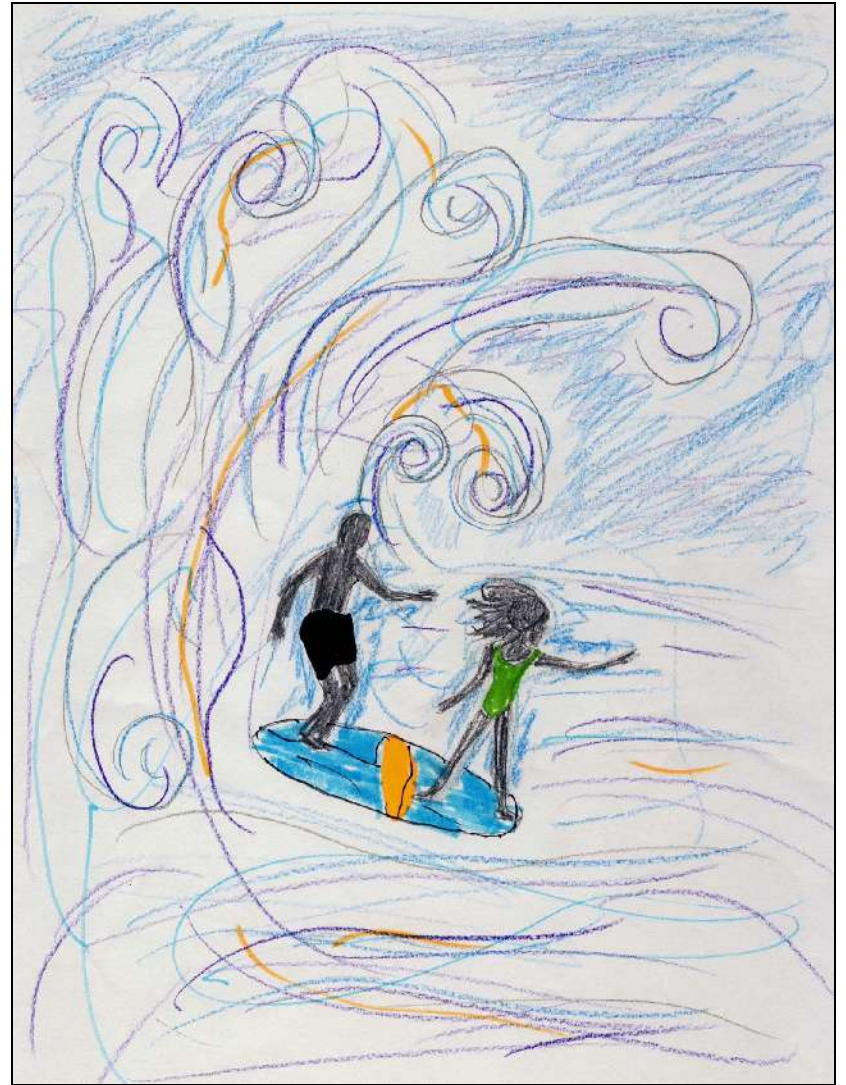
One Saturday morning last November I was a little bit bored and my sister had a friend coming over, so I didn't have anything to do. And my dad said, "You want to go surfing with me?"

I don't have my own surfboard. I ride one of my dad's. The one I use is about 7 feet long and it has a round tip. It's a long board because shorter boards are a lot harder to ride.

We went out to Pacifica beach, and it turned out to be a really great day. I got on my surfboard with my dad behind me and we started paddling out past the impact zone. That's where the waves first hit the water. You don't want to be there unless you're ready. If there's a reef, like at Mavericks, you can get killed. Mavericks is gigantic.

The big waves were coming toward us really fast and kept hitting us. Finally my dad said, "We need to dive under it," which means we had to put our heads flat on the board and paddle straight into the waves. We went under the water. It brushed at my ears and in my hair. It was really cold, and sand was getting inside my wet suit.

We paddled out past the breakers. The big waves were hitting us, even when we were under water. Finally we got under the wave, and I sat out on the surfboard with my dad right behind me. We watched the gulls come close to the water, taking out big salmon.



Billie Breskin, 4th grade

Then finally my dad said, “OK, we’re going to go back, and I want you to try to ride this one standing up.” A huge wave was coming, and when it hit us my dad said to hop up, which is hard because you have to do it in one hop. You’re not allowed to go to your knees or the board will flip. So I stood up and it felt like I was flying. That was the first time I paddled out past the impact zone and rode a real big wave while it was breaking.

My dad is self-employed — he’s a writer — so when the surfing is good, he’ll always go. One week in January it was really really good — double overhead almost every day — and he hardly did any work that week. Head high is 6 feet, and double overhead is 12 feet.

I would like to go surfing more often, at least twice a week. I’d like to be comfortable without my dad helping me, and to be able to stand up and paddle out by myself, and be confident in the water. When I go to college I want to go surfing with friends.

BEING BILINGUAL

Story & picture by Issey Tateishi, 4th grade

Being bilingual is hard because 1) you get a mountain of homework, 2) Japanese school (JPS) is expensive, and 3) you miss your free time.

1. The Mountain of Homework

JPS has a break in the summer, but I get homework as big as Jupiter. On the Friday before Japanese school started, I realized that I hadn’t done my four-page “what-I-did-this-summer” essay.

When I told my dad, he roared, “What?!!” It looked like he

was Godzilla and I was an ant. I ended up having a smushed head, but I finished. In this world there are people who speak six or five languages. Imagine how much homework they would have! It might be as big as the whole universe!



2. Japanese School is Pricey

Being bilingual is expensive. One time my mom was checking her bills and she yelled, “Issey, you could get four iPhones if you didn’t go to JPS for four months!” I shouted back, “Mom, who would need four iPhones?” “I would!” my mom shouted back.

I remembered that my mom is Ms. Forgetful. Once she left her credit card at a restaurant, so she got a new one. Two years later, my family went to the same restaurant and a waiter came up to my mom and said, "Is this yours?" It was her first credit card. My mom's jaw fell to the ground.

One day I was reading a Japanese comic book. They are weird because they are written backwards. Anyway, I started liking it. Then I told my mom that the comic book was way better than four iPhones. "Humph!" my mom grunted.

3. No Free Time

Being bilingual is hard because you miss your free time. For example, on Friday my mom got a call from my friend's mom saying, "Does Issey have time for a play date this Saturday?" and my mom answered, "Sorry, JPS." Another time my mom got an email saying, "You're invited!" My mom emailed back, "Sorry, JPS." I would always argue, but it never changed anything.

Being bilingual is hard, but everyone keeps telling me that as I get older, I'll be thankful. Right now, I am thankful to be able to read Japanese comic books and tell my parents this is for school!



Alamara Varughese, 3rd grade

DENT IN A CAR

By Ethan Ostrow, 5th grade

I'll always feel guilty from that time in Sports Basement. A time that a lie and a dent in a car cost someone \$400 of hard-earned money.

I was first alerted of what I had done as I came out of Sports Basement and saw the man with the furrowed brow standing at our car. His car was right next to it. He motioned at my mother to come over, gesturing to a place on the outside of his car.

"Did you make this dent in my car?" he asked my mother.

"No!" replied my mother, angry that she had been falsely accused. "What makes you think so!?"

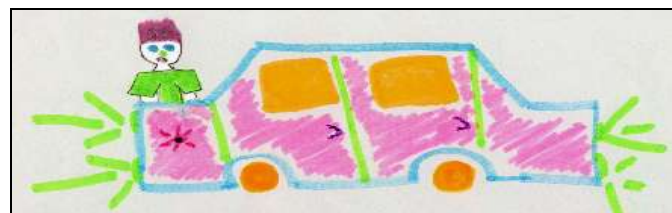
The man started running off all the possible reasons why we could have dented his car. "And your son's door could have hit the car," the man finished.

"Did it, Ethan?" mom said, anxious to get on our way.

"No," I lied. I suddenly smelled something like burning rubber.

"You are wasting our time, sir," my mother said icily. We went home. I thought I could hear people booing, like when an umpire makes a bad call at a baseball game.

Whenever I see a close miss with a car door, I feel guilty.



Rebecca Philips, 4th grade

LIFE IS HARD!

By Simon Schwartz, 4th grade

Later in life I will have to do almost everything my parents do. A few examples are doing taxes, shopping for food, and taking care of my parents. So I guess that this is just the easy part of life.

I've seen them get SUPER frustrated doing taxes. One time my mom yelled:

'JONATHAN (my dad), ARE YOU DONE WITH THE TAXES?!?!?!'

"NO!!!!" my dad yelled back.

"WE ONLY HAVE A WEEK LEFT TO DO THEM!!!!" my mom responded.

"WELL THEN YOU DO THEM!!!!" my dad shot back.

"NO YOU DO THEM!!!!" my mom said.

"OK, WE'LL BOTH DO THEM!!!!" my dad said.

"OK!!!" my mom said.

So, as you can see, as life goes on it gets A LOT harder and A LOT more stressful.

Later in life I will have to shop for food. One time I went shopping with my mom and I asked, "Mom, can we get Cheese Puffs for snack?"

"Sure," my mom said. I took the bag of Cheese Puffs and put it in the shopping cart.

"Let's go and pay and then go home," my mom said in a happy tone.

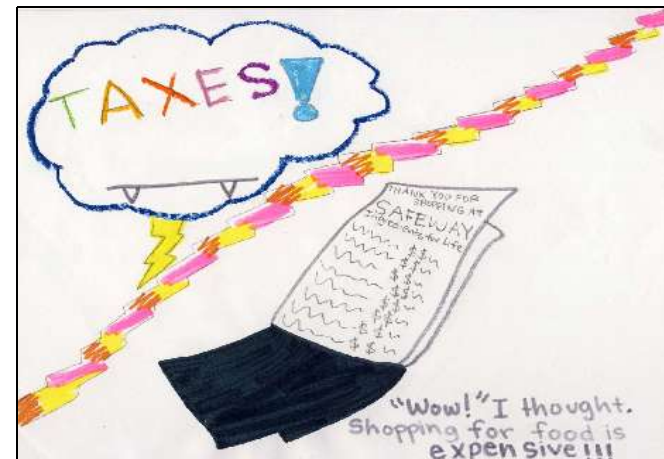
"OK," I said. We took the shopping cart up to the place where you pay and started unloading the cart.

"Would you like the receipt?" asked the cashier.

"Ummmm, sure!" my mom said. The cashier handed her the

receipt and my mom said, "Simon, can you take the receipt? My hands are full with the groceries."

"Sure," I said. I looked at the receipt. "Wow!" I thought. Shopping for food is expensive!!! That made me think that if I don't get a good job, I won't be able to afford healthy organic food, and that also makes me think that LIFE IS HARD!!!



Sophia Garcia-Meza, 6th grade

Later in life I will have to take care of my parents. I'm always seeing my dad talking to my grandpa on the phone and saying, "Do you like Smith Ranch (my grandparents' retirement home)?" Or, "Is everything working out for you?" and "Do you like where you live?"

That makes me think that because I'm his son, I will have to do that too. Worrying about your parents must be hard, so that proves my point that life is ALWAYS getting harder! So I guess I'm lucky that I'm still in the easy part of life!

SAILING

By Eloise Burtis, 5th grade

I've been sailing for the past three years at a little yacht club on the coast of Massachusetts. I go to a day camp called the Annisquam Yacht Club Sailing Camp. Annisquam is a tiny little town in Cape Ann. My grandparents live there year-round in a giant house with six bedrooms. My mom and dad and my brother Theo and I go there for eight weeks every summer. All of my cousins come. We live in one cottage and my cousins live in another cottage right across the lawn from us. My mom used to go there every summer when she was a kid.

The sailing camp is a sailing, swimming and tennis camp. I ride my bike there every morning and I ride home every afternoon. First we swim in the ocean. A bunch of kids wear wet suits, but since my brother and I are from San Francisco where the water is freezing cold, we just tough up and just wear our swimsuits. I'm a very competitive swimmer, and I'm on a swim team at the Olympic Club at Fisherman's Wharf.

After swimming, we dry off with towels, change, then go to tennis. After that we have lunch at the snack bar, and then we go sailing. I like the swimming and tennis a lot. But it's sometimes really hot to play tennis, and there are a lot of bugs that live in the clay courts, so they come up and bug your legs.

We sail for about three hours every day. We probably spend half an hour getting ready, an hour and a half on the water, and an hour putting stuff away.

The sailboat is about the size of a bathtub. It's a one-person boat, an Optimist Dinghy, otherwise called an Opty. It has one sail

and it's easy to control. You have to untie it and pull it down off the rack with a couple of friends. The rack and the dock are



Nina Redse, 6th grade

carpeted so that the Optys don't get scratched. Then you pull the sail out of the sail tube and put it into the mast hole. You tie the mast down, then pull down the boom, which is the pole that goes across the mast. You pull and tighten the boom vang, which makes sure the boom stays where it is. Then you put the sprit up: that's what keeps the sail in position. You push the boat into the water and clean it, then wait for the counselors to tell you what to do.

I sail in a bathing suit, and I wear shorts and a T-shirt over it so that I don't get sunburned. I have to wear tons and tons of sunblock because I'm so light-skinned. The counselors are very strict, and they get mad when I don't want to sail, because occasionally the water's rough and it's really windy, and I'm scared.

There's an older group of kids at the camp with bigger sailboats called 420s. They are two-person boats. Only one of the counselors who is a crazy, amazing sailor can sail a 420 by himself because it has two and sometimes three sails, and you really have to know what you're doing. Occasionally you'll need to get connected to a trapeze and hang out of the side of the boat to level it down.

What I love about sailing is being right on the ocean and feeling as if you have complete control of what you're doing. I like having all the sun, and the thrill of the action. I sail the boat by myself, but there are a bunch of other people around me. Occasionally I'll capsize, and I'll have to pull the boat back upright and bail it out.

When you first start to learn to sail, you don't even have a sail in the mast, and you just use the tiller. The counselors go around in motorboats and tow you so you can practice steering. Then you

practice just controlling the sail, while the counselor is steering. Then you start putting it piece by piece all together, and occasionally a counselor rides with you in the tiny little boat so that you feel more comfortable.

Some days when it's really windy and there's a lightning storm, we sit inside and play board games. Other days it's really dead, and we'll generally stay inside, or take a motorboat and go swimming.

Now I feel comfortable sailing by myself, except for the first time I get in the boat at the beginning of the summer. The ocean is very safe and calm, and I never go more than a mile out. The worst thing that can happen is when the boom hits you in the head. I've been hit by the boom many times. You're wearing a life jacket the entire time, so if you pass out, the counselor boats will come and get you.

I'd like to feel comfortable going out in any condition, and to teach other people how to sail. I'm pretty sure that when I'm a teenager, I'll become a counselor at the camp.



Anna Hochman, 4th grade

WHERE I'M FROM

Poem & picture by Alston McMillan, 5th grade

I am from Dad's pancakes with warm maple syrup on the weekends and my Mom's comforting hugs and burnt toast.

I am from watching my Dad fly over me in his planes and telling me stories of when he was young.

I am from the pine cones in the hallway carried home from Yosemite and from the blueberry sauce I make in Maine.

I am from “set the table” and “go to bed!” and from my bright green room, which I helped paint.

I am from the pictures of the day when my parents got married.

I am from my cousins (my great friends) who helped me adapt to my new school.

I am from the hope that my best friend Ella were here, to share this wonderful memory with me.



HEAVENS CORPS

By Sam Jones, 6th grade

In 2798, it is a new ice age. A company known as Heavens Corps has an unofficial grip over the government. This scene takes place in Heavens Tower, Heavens Corps headquarters ...



Clara Judd-Donaldson, 2nd grade

Jax Rastenhind didn't stop when he saw the corpse of his co-worker being wheeled down the hall. It happened all the time. Jax had no friends at Heavens Corps, in fear that they would just die. No one knew how or why they did; they just did. But he couldn't let useless questions cloud his thoughts; the CEO had summoned him.

He pricked his thumb on the blood-scan lock. "Access granted. Good day, Mr. Jax," said the mechanical voice of H.O.S.P.A. (Heavens Corps Orderable Security Program Automaton): most people called her Ms. Hospa.

"Hello, Ms. Hospa," said Jax as the elevator slid open. He stepped inside.

"To which floor may I take you?" asked Ms. Hospa.

"CEO's room," replied Jax. The room had no number.

"May I offer a bandage for your thumb?" A small container of Band-Aids popped out from the wall.

"No, thank you."

"The CEO does not tolerate uncleanness, Mr. Jax." Suddenly Jax felt it. He had felt it before. His head got hot; he felt like retching; he could barely move without being exhausted. But he held his posture.

"Yes, you are right, Ms. Hospa," he said without wanting to. He took a Band-Aid and put it on his thumb. Suddenly the feeling stopped. He rode the rest of the way in silence. When the doors opened, he was surprised to see Maximilian Hartsburn standing where the CEO's curtain usually was. They never saw the CEO: he was always behind a black curtain.

"Hello, Rastenhind," said Maximilian.

"Hello, Heartburn," responded Jax. "Where's the CEO?"

"He has business elsewhere."

“So, why am I here?”

“A boy has touched the machine.”

Jax went pale.

“What's more,” continued Maximilian, “He stole the drive.”

He tsk-tsked, “You have failed your job. Utterly. The CEO was not pleased in the slightest.” Suddenly Jax started retching. He could feel his innards turning to sludge. He could see blood and phlegm mixed in with his puke. He collapsed to his knees.

“I had to deploy mere thugs to kill the boy. Meanwhile, I will kill you,” said Maximilian. “Ms. Hospa, activate Intruder Elimination Protocol.”

“Yes, Mr. Maximilian,” the voice of Ms. Hospa came out of nowhere. Suddenly, from hidden slots in the ceiling, half a dozen high-powered laser cannons appeared, all pointed at Jax. He couldn't talk; it made him puke more. Instead, he grabbed Maximilian's leg.

Maximilian's face wrinkled in disgust. He kicked Jax hard, sending him reeling to the middle of the room. Then he calmly wiped the bodily fluids off his trousers with a handkerchief and strode toward the elevator.

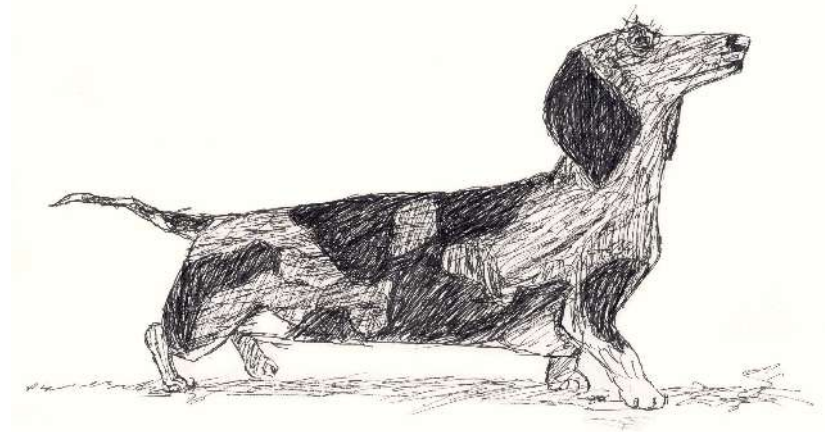
“Remember this in the afterlife, trash!” he snarled, without looking back. “As Ms. Hospa said, I DO NOT TOLERATE UNCLEANNELINESS.”

The guns fired.

MY TWO DACHSHUNDS

By Estelle Emery, 8th grade

I have two dachshunds, tiny old men that are half brothers. They love each other dearly. Their names are Augustus and Spartacus. We got them four years ago. They're piebald — black and white and brown, different from most dachshunds, which are red or brown. They're miniature dachshunds so they're pretty small.



Edward Emery, 8th grade

Spartacus is 13, which is 91 in dog years. We call him Sparty. He just sits around the kitchen in the sun and growls a lot. He likes to play with tennis balls, which he rolls under the couch, and has torn out the bottom of the couches in our house from getting underneath and not being able to get out again. So we have to get them repaired.

Augustus we call Auggie. He's 11 — 77 in dog years. He makes a lot of weird noises, and he always crawls under beds and likes to sit on your lap and stare deeply into the fire. He does a weird thing where he lays on his back and scoots his face around on the floor. At the beach, he likes to roll in worms that come up after it rains.

One time we took the dogs to the beach and there was a dead seal, and Auggie sprinted ahead and went inside the seal carcass, and rolled around in there. I had to carry him back to the car and give him a bath at home, with all the shampoo that I could find. It was gross: he smelled super bad. He had seal blood all over him. Sparty kept trying to lick him, but we didn't want him to eat all the seal innards.

Auggie has a lot of health problems. He has scratched his eyeball a multiple of times, so he has to wear cones a lot. And one time his butt literally exploded and he had to walk around in a diaper. It was sad but funny at the same time.

One time when Sparty had a cone, he wouldn't eat anything or move at all. We put him on the floor, and he just stood there. He wouldn't even sit. I painted his nails cause he wouldn't move, so he had neon orange nails for a long time, which he didn't like.

Sparty is buff, like a tiny bodybuilder. When we got the dogs, they were both overweight and out of shape because they lived in a foster home and the lady fed them people food. So we started taking them to the beach every day, and they are muscular now.

They like to walk at Crissy Field, but they're afraid of other dogs, so they always run away from us, and we have to get them again. Sometimes they're following another family that they think is us. They get confused easily, but that makes them even cuter.

HOW AMERICAN FOOTBALL BEGAN

By Will Irons, 7th grade

Once there was a group of men in the forests of Greece who had their own way to train for hunting. They used a ball of stone and helmets made of wood. They played a game in which one man had the ball and all the others had to attack him, until the ball was in the hands of someone else.



anonymous, 7th grade

This game made all the men big and strong, so they could fight better. After some years, the men no longer played the game for hunting, but for recreation.

Zeus, the king of the gods, felt pity for the men, and sent them a leather ball and plastic pads. He also created a football field with posts. The men were so thankful that they made animal sacrifices to the gods.

That is the story of how American football began. All fans of the sport now know that they have Zeus to thank for their favorite game.

sand in my bathing suit

by madeleine j. matz, 8th grade



Evie Hidysmith, 8th grade

there was once a little girl. she didn't know that there was such thing as suffering. her face was plastered with chocolate. she had friends and family and food and a house and she took it all for granted. she loved almost everything, from butterflies to pink to pizza, but most of all she loved the sea. she loved the way it crashed around her. smashing into her. pushing her over. she loved the uncontrolled power. she loved the cold and wet. she loved playing with her little brother in the surf. she loved jumping waves with her mom and swimming deep with her dad. she loved everything about the sea. everything but the sand in her bathing suit. she could tell the sea felt the same way. it ripped at her bathing suit. pulling at it. eventually it stole a piece, but only to return it when she cried.

she felt she could talk to the sea. that it would understand her. play when she wanted to play. be calm when she just wanted to float and think of the big issues in life, like whether or not it would be fun to go around and around in the dryer. one day, though, one of the last days of her time by the sea she loved, she wasn't allowed to swim. she sobbed and cried and hit, but nothing worked.

her parents just said no.

why? she wailed. why?

the water is so rough that someone drowned, they finally responded.

what's drowned? the girl asked, the new word twisting her tongue.

it is when someone can't breathe for too long in the water and then they die.

is it the sea's fault?

you could say that. they responded, looking quizzical.

the little girl ran to the window. looked out at the smashing waves that were her friends. tears laced down her cheeks. how could her friend do something so awful? now she could never trust the sea again.

now the girl is all grown up. she has learned to keep the chocolate off her face. she has friends but not as many as she did, her family has splintered some, she still has food and a house and she is learning not to take those for granted. she still loves many things, butterflies and pizza and paint and the color orange. she didn't go back to the sea she loved for years.

eventually she did. she stood on the edge of the sea that used to be her friend for a long time. c'mon, her brother said. it's cold, she begged off. she hadn't been swimming in the ocean for a long time. she did go in the water, the heat forced her to. the waves ripping at her scared her. she didn't go very deep. her brother circled around her, come farther, come farther, let's play like we used to.

but she had to tell him no. she could no longer trust the sea.

MY NAME

By Zoe A. Ferguson, 7th grade

My name is Zoe Alexa. My first name means "life" in Greek and "unique" in Japanese. My second name means "defender" in English and "protector of mankind" in Greek.

When I see the name Zoe, I see it in purple lights. Purple is the color of meditation. Purple is the color of spiritual fulfillment. Purple is the color of magic and royalty. Purple is the color of me.

When I hear my name, I hear it in water. Zoe, Zoe, Zoe; icy cold blue water running out of the faucet and going down the drain. I hear a waterfall, splashing into pools at the basin. I hear water flowing down a creek, just waiting for some little kid to dive in and go for a swim.

The number I most identify with my name is 3. There are three letters in my name. The letter Z has three lines in it. The letter E has three lines coming off of it. "Three" rhymes with Z and E and Zoe. Three is the number of my name.



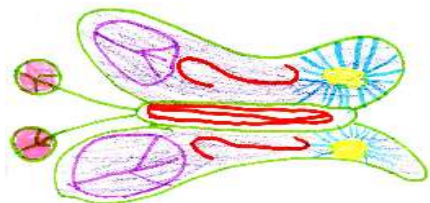
Meredith Fry, 8th grade

There is no story behind my name. My parents really liked the name Zoe, so they chose it for me. One reason that I know was a factor was that the name Zoe was relatively uncommon. That has changed since they named me. Now it seems like I am meeting more and more Zoes. There are a lot of Zoes my age or a little bit younger or a little bit older. I guess all of our parents were thinking the same thing: Zoe isn't a very common name, yet it is still a nice name.

I think I will name my daughter Zoe. All of the Zoes I have met have been slightly insane, crazy, wild, and funny. I guess that is just something about my name.

I think my name is one of the best names in terms of the amount of nicknames that come off of it. I go by Zo, Zozo, Zizzle, ZZ, Zoaster, Zazzle, Zizzle Zazzle Zoom, and tons of others. At school, most of my friends and a lot of my teachers call me Zo. Before I went to San Francisco Friends School, my main nicknames were Zizzle, ZZ, and Zozer. Those are still the names all of my friends and family outside of school call me.

My family has always called me just Zoe, rather than Zoe Alexa. I actually wish that I could've told them when I was little that I wanted to go by Alexa or Lexi, but they chose to just call me Zoe. My purple name suits me very well.



Janie Baker, 2nd grade



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