



FROM HARRIET TUBMAN TO UKRAINE, WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS HAVE RESISTED OPPRESSION THROUGHOUT HISTORY



Original Illustration by Kit Mills

ASHLEY KISER • age 14 and INDYKIDS STAFF

Throughout history, there have been many resistance movements, but not all come across as they seem. In fact, notable resistance movements have actually been led by women. From Harriet Tubman in the 1800s during slavery to Centa Herker-Beimler during World War II and the Zla Mavka today in Ukraine, these resistance movements have revolutionized the idea of who can resist, and most people don't even know about them!

Born into slavery, Harriet Tubman never got to live a free childhood. On Sept. 17, 1849, when her owner died, Tubman knew it was her only chance to run to freedom. So she fled. She went through the Underground Railroad, a group of people who helped enslaved people flee in the South.

Tubman strongly believed that slavery was unfair, and she wanted all Black people to have freedom as well.

After her own escape, Tubman used the Underground Railroad to secretly travel back and forth to free slaves.

The Underground Railroad had to stay a secret from authorities, and she had to be on the lookout for slave catchers who could catch them and send them back to slavery. Tubman was able to save about 70 people from slavery, according to The Real News Network.

Just like Tubman fighting for enslaved people's rights in the South, women were key in the fight against the Nazis during World War II, but hardly anyone knows of these women today. As stated by KidsKonnnect, resistance movements "fought in secret, often at great personal risk, to protect their communities, gather intelligence, and sabotage the enemy."

One very strong woman who resisted the Nazis in Munich, Germany, was Centa Herker-Beimler, writes Worldcrunch. At age 24, she handed out leaflets against Nazi control so she could spread the word that Nazi control wasn't OK. The Nazis caught her, and she was imprisoned and sent to a concentration camp for almost four years. In 1941, when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, even though

Herker-Beimler had already faced consequences for speaking out against the Nazis, she continued to fight. She tried to create a group based on anti-fascism, which means being opposed to dictatorship and nationalism. Unfortunately, she was sentenced to another seven months in prison. When she was released, she went to help forced laborers in Penzberg, Germany, writes Worldcrunch.

Despite this activism, after the war, she fell silent and went back to her private life. Even though not many knew of Herker-Beimler, she was determined to spread the word about the Nazis and resist Nazi control, as were other forgotten women members of the White Rose student resistance movement, also led by women.

Another powerful resistance movement began on Feb. 25, 2022, when Russia captured a city in Ukraine called Melitopol, causing thousands to flee and setting off resistance movements across the country. On the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a group of close

friends came together with the idea to create a women's resistance group. Thus, the Zla Mavka movement was born, according to Worldcrunch. The Russian army didn't expect women to be activists, so they mostly focused their attacks on men.

Sadly, conditions in occupied Ukraine became harsher, as the Russian army blocked access to news, started bugging phones and doing more surveillance. These women kept on secretly resisting Russia's control, putting up flyers and spreading the word, Worldcrunch reports. Zla Mavka believes that Ukraine is its own country and that people should not be controlled, but should be able to live in their own country freely.

Though these movements have spanned centuries and countries and have many differences, in the end all of these women have had one thing in common: They lived in rough times and didn't back down. They found a way to advocate for themselves and fight for peace and justice.



NewsBrief

Youth Are Helping Protect Immigrant Communities

BERNADETTE ZUMOFF • age 11



Photo by Lorie Shaul for Flickr

Across the United States, many people live in terror of Immigration, Customs and Enforcement (ICE) agents. But youth are responding. Throughout the country, residents are working together to warn people about ICE and protest its presence within the community. People are getting close to ICE and recording their interactions, while others are patrolling their neighborhoods. In October, NPR spoke to 17-year-old Ivan, who is a part of an all-volunteer group called Patrulla Popular in Chicago. Ivan goes out at 5 a.m. to patrol his neighborhood and to warn people about ICE. Ruby, an adult volunteer for Patrulla Popular, tells kids who are helping, “When you see somebody and you see a car or something suspicious, you should do a break of a whistle,” meaning a soft series of whistles. “If you see somebody being detained, the whistle is long, as loud as you can,” she told NPR. In Oregon in December, students at Hillsboro High School organized a protest against ICE and raised \$40,000 for immigrant families, according to KGW. People who were not students at Hillsboro also protested because they wanted to show their support. The Department of Homeland Security said that youth should not be worried about ICE and its actions. Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin stated, “Children should be in class learning and having fun with friends. These students are only afraid because of fearmongering and lies being spread by agitators, sanctuary politicians, and the media,” according to KGW. But across the country, students have not found this to be the case. In Minneapolis, which has become a center of ICE activity and violence since an ICE agent killed American citizen Renee Good on Jan. 7, schools had to temporarily shut down because of ICE in order to protect students. Lila Dominguez, a student in Minneapolis who wrote an article for her school newspaper about Good, has experienced the fear and uncertainty of school closures and ICE agents on school grounds. “I was just very overstimulated, and not really sure what to do in that moment for the people that I was with, or the people outside or my family,” she told *The Guardian*. *IndyKids* spoke with climate and immigration activist Gabriela Roque about protecting immigrants’ rights. Roque said that young people can stand up to racism and discrimination by ICE by calling lawmakers and telling them they think it is wrong.

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Starbucks Workers Strike for a Fair Contract

SIANNA SANTOS • age 11

A group of Starbucks workers went on strike and refused to work, starting on “Red Cup Day” on Nov. 13, 2025. On Red Cup Day, when a customer buys a holiday drink from Starbucks, they get a free reusable red cup in return. It is one of the busiest days for Starbucks workers, which makes it a good day for striking, because more people notice if workers are not there. Starbucks workers went on strike because they believe they aren’t getting a fair schedule or fair pay. Workers are calling it the “Red Cup Rebellion.” About 3,800 Starbucks union employees went on a strike in over 130 cities in the fall. Some Starbucks locations have unionized in recent years to get more rights. Starbucks workers in Buffalo, N.Y., were the first Starbucks in the country to unionize in 2021. Since then, 560 Starbucks stores have unionized. Starbucks claims that a union isn’t necessary, because it says it pays better wages and benefits compared to other retailers. To this day, four years later, employees are still fighting for their contract. A contract, in this



Photo by sbworkersunited.org

case, is an agreement between the company and its workers to guarantee better pay and a fair schedule. The benefit of having a union contract is if your boss does something with which you and other workers disagree, you can form a protest movement, instead of working alone. “I would have imagined we would have seen a contract a long time ago,” August Code, a Starbucks employee, told CNN. New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, and over 100 other U.S. lawmakers have shown support toward the workers in this situation. In New York City, Starbucks is paying \$35 million to workers to settle claims it denied them a stable schedule. As Kaari Harsila, a Starbucks employee who went on strike in New York, told PBS News, “I sure hope that it gives Starbucks an awakening.” But in late December, many striking employees returned to work, with New York City workers ending their strike in early February, according to *The City*. While union members still don’t have a contract, workers are set to resume negotiations with management this spring.

Pets Help You, Physically and Mentally

TUCKER LUPI • age 10

A lot of us have pets, but did you know they can help with your anxiety and stress levels? According to The American Psychiatric Association, 86% of dog and cat owners said that having a pet has a positive impact on their mental health. When doing homework or other work, just sitting with, playing with, or petting your pet can help your stress levels go down. There have been numerous scientific studies that support this. The National Institutes for Health found that “When the children spent 10 minutes in a supervised group playtime with guinea pigs, their anxiety levels dropped.” Pets can also help you with your social interactions. According to *Teen Ink* magazine, “Walking a dog or playing with a cat can provide opportunities for exercise and socialization with other teens” and mentally prepare you for the future. Having a dog might also help with your physical health! Most people don’t realize this, but just sleeping with your dog can help with your “gut microbiome,” which is part of your immune system. A team of Japanese researchers studied teenagers and found that the composition of the microbiome was different in dog owners versus non-dog owners. So when you hug your dog or pet it, your microbiome can change in a good way. You

are helping yourself physically and mentally just by simply enjoying your pet. Sometimes just having a pet will make you feel calm. Having a dog, cat, or guinea pig can help you mentally with your social interactions, while dogs help physically with your gut microbiome.



Photo by Brooke Balentine for Unsplash

Trump Administration Bans Immigrants from 90 Countries

KAMILAH FERMIN • age 10

Public Domain Pictures



President Trump revoked 100,000 visas in the year since he returned to office. According to the U.S. State Department, 605,000 people got deported, and 2.5 million left on their own. A new travel ban was announced on June 5, 2025, applying to 12 countries, and it was expanded to 20 countries on Dec. 19, 2025. On Jan. 14, 2026, the Trump administration added 75 countries, suspending visas from a total of 90 countries, including travel documents from the Palestinian Authority. Most of the affected countries are in Africa and the Middle East. In early February, civil rights organizations announced they are suing the State Department because they are taking away peoples’ visas and banning entire nationalities. Efrén Olivares, vice president of litigation at the National Immigration Law Center, told NPR, “The only thing we’re asking here in this case is that the government follow the law and conduct individualized assessments of visa applicants and not discriminate based on nationality against nearly half of the countries in the world.” President Trump enacted his first travel ban in 2017 during his first term, which discriminated against people from Muslim countries. This policy affects people on the list of banned countries because many of the people there are

suffering from starvation and war. It’s important for refugees to be able to come to the United States so they can seek freedom and safety. A refugee is a person who seeks freedom and safety by fleeing to another country or state because it is dangerous for them to stay in their own country. Refugees economically benefit the United States. They contributed “\$581 billion in tax revenue between 2005-2019,” according to the International Rescue Committee. The administration justified freezing visas from these countries because they think new immigrants will steal American people’s welfare. According to *The Guardian*, “The freeze, which takes effect on 21 January, targets applicants officials deem likely to become a ‘public charge’—who they describe as people who may rely on government benefits for basic needs.” Researchers tell a whole different story and do not support this idea at all! The Cato Institute analyzed 2023-2024 data and found that native-born Americans receive much more welfare per person than immigrants—even though President Trump accused immigrants of taking more welfare. Despite this, David Bier, the director of immigration studies at the Cato Institute, anticipates 315,000 legal immigrants will be turned away in the next year, according to Al Jazeera.

President Trump Removed Venezuela’s Leader - What’s Next?

NATHALIE MEDINA • age 11

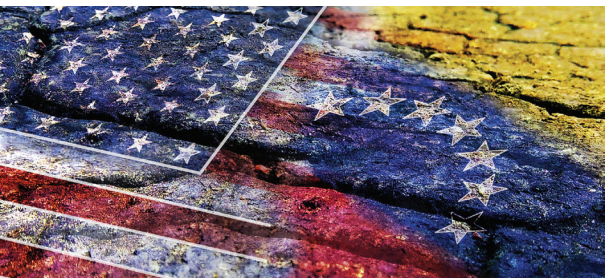


Photo by Balkan Photos for Flickr

On Jan. 3, 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump sent soldiers to capture the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife and took them to New York blindfolded. Eighty people died in the attack. President Maduro is now in New York awaiting trial. The United States claimed that Venezuela had been smuggling drugs on boats, which led to the U.S. military carrying out attacks for months in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean that human rights groups said were illegal. As of writing, at least 157 people have been killed. Leaders around the world are saying the unusual attack and abduction are illegal. Nicolás Maduro has been president since 2013. But in the presidential election on July 28, 2024, Maduro’s political party declared him as president without evidence. Delcy Rodríguez, the vice president of Venezuela under Maduro, is currently leading the country. There is confusion, and no one is sure what will happen. President Trump has said the United States will “run” Venezuela, while U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio only wants to pressure Venezuela into new leadership. Rodríguez is loyal to Maduro and thinks he is the “only president.” Some organizations have compared the situation to other U.S. invasions, like Afghanistan and Iraq,

which led to decades-long wars. Partly behind the attack could be that Venezuela has a lot of oil, and Trump wanted access to the oil that Cuba, Russia, and China have. The Venezuelan government controls its oil, and Trump wants U.S. companies to control it. Advocates have urged Congress to condemn the act and block Trump from further military actions. But Congress narrowly voted against restricting Trump’s war powers. Venezuela is in the midst of a massive humanitarian crisis. The country is facing a lack of food, and people are unable to access basic healthcare. The government is limiting freedom of speech and abusing people with other opinions. This has caused people to flee. Nearly 7.9 million have left Venezuela globally, reports the United Nations Refugee Agency. Around 764,000 Venezuelans had gone to the United States as of mid-2024, according to the Migration Policy Institute. Many were granted temporary protected status (TPS), a program that let Venezuelans and other nationalities live and work for a while with legal status. But last year Trump’s administration took TPS away from Venezuelans. Venezuelan immigrants who had supported Trump felt betrayed. As Adelys Ferro, executive director of the Venezuelan American Caucus, told CNN, “The uncertainty is huge and bigger than ever—and the desperation is something that I can’t even explain. It looks ridiculously bad for anyone to go to Venezuela right now.” On Feb. 2, Trump’s decision to take away TPS from Venezuelan was challenged by a federal court, who said the move was illegal because it remains unsafe for people to return to Venezuela.

Science Briefs

Brain Organoids Are Here. Are We Ready?

SCARLETT MORA • age 11

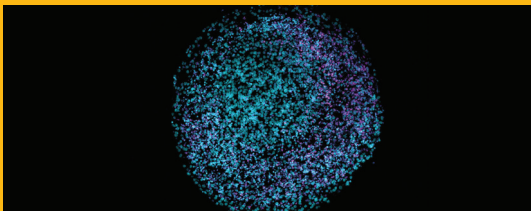


Photo by Nreis1 for Wikimedia Commons

Scientists are growing miniature 3D brains from stem cells. These are called brain organoids. These mimic the structures and function of real brains but on a tiny scale. Research using brain organoids is helping scientists discover new medical treatments, study brain development, and reduce the demand for animal testing, according to Vox. Brain organoids can mimic different regions of the brain like the cortex, retina, and cerebellum. With these organoids, researchers can learn about the formation, development, and treatment of diseases in specific individuals. For example, researchers are looking at Alzheimer’s disease in organoids in order to understand where the disease is in the brain and then work to cure it. There are ethical concerns about brain organoids: Is it OK to place human organoids in an animal’s brain or a computer system for research? Can organoids feel pain? Are they aware of themselves? Who, if anyone, should control this research? These are questions that have not yet been answered. We are still learning about organoids and don’t yet know what they experience, if anything.

All About Microplastics

ALISHA ALI • age 11



Photo by European Commission (Lukasz Kobus) for Wikimedia Commons

Microplastics are really, really small plastics that are in the air, your house, in the ocean, lakes, and mostly everywhere. We care about microplastics because they can harm our bodies and our health, though some scientists say that the threat of microplastics is overblown, according to *The Guardian*. Microplastics are created from polyethylene, a very strong plastic that can last many years. Drinking bottled water in plastic water bottles increases microplastics in humans. To avoid microplastics, you have to be careful to not microwave your food in plastic containers. Some kinds of kitchenware can increase microplastics, like plastic silverware and plates, as well as nonstick pans. Other products that can be high in microplastics are makeup, tea bags, and even some toys. They are also harming a lot of sea animals because of the waste that gets thrown into the ocean. Some scientists are working on ways to fix this problem. For example, *IndyKids* covered the example of a Spanish scientist, Federica Bertocchini, who discovered that wax worms can bite plastic and dissolve it. Mussels could also be a tool to filter out microplastics, according to *Fast Company*. According to the experts, we should be concerned about microplastics because they’re not safe and not good for our health.

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indykids.org!

Can “Comfort Creators” Help Us?

AIDA CEPEDA • age 11

There are around 4.8 billion social media users around the world, and they spend an average of approximately 2.5 hours a day using it, according to FHE Health.

Some positive impacts of social media are that you can find communities online that you can't find in your region. You can also find tons of new information if you need to learn how to do something, like how to install your bookshelf.

One way that people can use social media in a healthy way is by following influencers who are actually mental health professionals, or who talk about mental health and use social media in a positive way.

“Comfort creators,” or online creators whose content provides people with comfort when they are sad, can help people with mental health.

“To me, a ‘comfort creator’ is someone whose content brings people comfort, peace, relaxation, or other feelings of happiness,” Alayna Saunders, a 21-year-old student, shared with *The New York Times*. “By watching a video, you are able to take your mind off of whatever may be occupying it and change the emotional environment you are in.”

A lot of young people find these creators comforting because they provide an environment that feels safe. But without knowing it, you

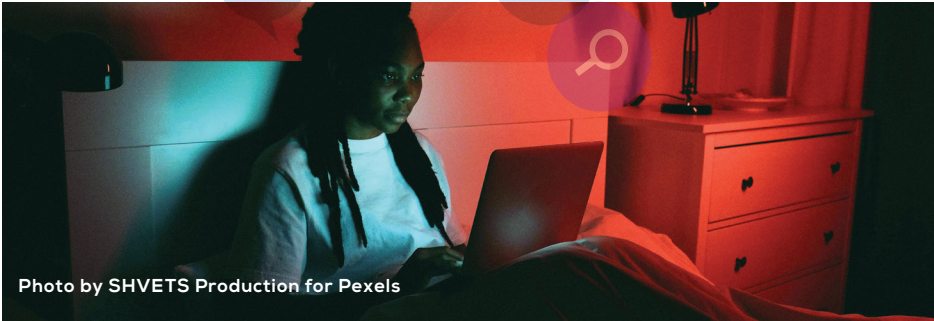
might get yourself into a parasocial relationship. It starts by wanting to know more about the creator, then starting to feel more connected video by video, and then the viewer can see them as a good friend without ever communicating in real life.

Comfort creators make you feel comforted or nostalgic, rather than mental health videos, which might provide information that makes you feel relieved or enlightened, but not comforted.

While many adults have comfort TV shows like *The Office*, more younger people are turning to comfort creators instead of shows. It goes to show how different our generations are.

Influencers can be good or bad. They can help people feel more confident, but other times you can begin to compare yourself and your body to those influencers, and you can develop body image issues or just become unhappy with your life because of these influencers. Also, people can leave racist or offensive comments, and it's hard to be authentic in just a short video.

It is important to know that there is a part of social media that is good and wants to help you, but there is also a dark side to it. Content creators can be helpful in bringing you the comfort that you might not otherwise get in your life.



How AI on YouTube Affects Children

BROOKLYNN THEN • age 11

Cheerful children clap together in a video on YouTube, but something looks off. What is it? The thing that feels “off” is what you call generative AI.

Generative AI is a machine that can create “art” or content by using already existing material. On YouTube, this type of AI is becoming more common, especially on children's channels.

The percentage of young kids and babies using YouTube has jumped over the past five years, as 60% of parents say their child under 2 watches YouTube, according to a Pew Research study. This is especially bad because some videos are mislabeled as “for kids” but might contain gory content that might scare children.

Kids can also be vulnerable to “AI slop.” The term “AI slop” refers to low-quality videos made by AI designed specifically for social media, Bloomberg reports.

Experts and parents are also concerned about babies watching AI content on YouTube because it can be inappropriate and impact their understanding of the world around them, according to Bloomberg.

Many YouTube Kids' channels are “content farms,” which use AI to mass produce low-quality content videos to attract search engine traffic, unlike in the past when children's programs were hand-picked by television network executives.

How Technology Shapes Kids' Lives

NOEL FERNANDEZ • age 11

Read the full versions of these articles on our website! www.indykids.org

Photo by Kampus Production for Pexels

We all know that video games bring a lot of people together, especially Gen Alpha kids (kids born from 2013 to present). Our parents say games rot your brains, and feel like we're spending too much time on devices. So what are the good sides of playing games, and what are the bad sides?

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, parents let their kids play on their devices 7-8 hours a day, which is one-third of the day. And almost one in four Gen Alpha children have a phone by the age of 8.

A lot of kids like short, attention-grabbing content. It is the quickest way of informing people and makes them want to watch more. Some apps Gen Alpha like are YouTube and TikTok, which are both notorious for making short-term videos.

Roblox is a popular game that is mostly used for connecting with your friends. Roblox also lets you join virtual games and make your own games. Some possible benefits of this technology usage is that it increases peer support and provides new information.

However, kids today are more physically isolated than they were in the past. Technology has changed child supervision over the years. As Eli Stark-Elster, who studies the evolution of human society at UC Davis, told NPR on the *Up First* podcast in December, “prior to the 1970s or so, there was much less supervision of childhood in physical space than there is now.”

Stark-Elster says one big reason for the change of supervision is more people living in cities and many parents feeling like it's too big or unsafe for kids to roam around and talk to strangers. Also kids might live too far from their friends, or there is a lot of traffic.

But even though parents might know where their kids are physically, they don't necessarily know what their kids are doing in their games. This leaves many parents worried.

Technology can have some downsides for Gen Alpha. It can decrease your attention span and make you lose interest in your hobbies, have behavior issues, and forget important information more quickly, according to the Anne E. Casey Foundation. And also it makes people more dependent on their devices to give them the answers instead of troubleshooting.

Stark-Elster concludes that the pros or cons of kids being online can't be judged without exploring what they are using the devices for. For example, if a kid is just doomscrolling, then that's probably bad, but if they are spending meaningful time with their friends playing games or on FaceTime, connecting with other people, then it's not so bad.

“The pattern we're seeing is YouTube videos that seem mostly engineered to get attention without necessarily having meaningful storytelling or content,” said Dr. Jenny Radensky, a developmental behavior pediatrician who's studied YouTube use in early childhood, to Bloomberg. This kind of content on YouTube is harmful for children, toddlers, and adults.

Adults are also at risk of falling prey to AI. The threats that AI videos pose for parents and grandparents is that if they aren't as tech-savvy, an AI video can look real, and if inaccurate AI medical advice looks real, there can be dangerous consequences involved.

In the end, encountering AI slop videos is inevitable today, but there are ways to recognize them. Firstly, many AI videos might pronounce or spell things wrong, and they can be spotted. *Parents* magazine advises that AI content can also be differentiated from original content because they usually have many inconsistencies, such as hands and eyes.



Social Media Harms Kids' Attention Spans

ESMERLIN TAVAREZ, • age 10

Are parents aware of how much time their kid spends using social media? If not, they should be paying more attention!

Social media can affect kids' ability to maintain focus, multitask and connect socially. The Guardian reported an increase of time spent on social media for children jumped from 30 minutes a day for 10-year-olds to two hours for 14-year-olds.

Social media can change the way children's brains develop in terms of their attention span. For instance, the brain feels “good” chemical dopamine when using social media. This leads to a large amount of screen time by making kids crave more screen time so they can get the same buzz or effect from it.

However, when children who use screens a lot try to have face-to-face connections, it can be harder for them because they are more used to enjoying videos than real-life social interactions. The Independent reported, “Research has shown us that teenagers and children who spend more than four hours per day on screens are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety and depression.”

In conclusion, parents and children should be aware of how much time kids are spending on social media. Some possible solutions would be to let the kids use social media, just not for a long period of time.

Automated Classrooms: The Impacts of Mandated Screen Time

SHANTY TEJADA, • age 11

Nine in 10 schools provide students with tech devices, according to the National Center of Education Statistics. However, is this worth the investment?

For students, digital schooling has not stopped, even after COVID virtual learning. In classrooms, students are often not being taught by their instructors and mentors, but by a screen in front of them.

i-Ready is an example of a digital learning software that assesses kids and gives them lessons based on their level, reported in NBC. However, this may make kids overdependent on technology and disconnects them from their teachers. The software can lower kids' attention spans, due to many of them going on other tabs or windows. Parents and teachers can't check the content of the lessons the kids are doing, causing worry about what their kids are learning. “In order to protect a private company's math problem, there's this black box of my kids' education now that I don't have access to and the teacher doesn't have access to,” said Anna Moench to NBC News.

According to Karla Estrada, a school administrator, there have been benefits of digital tools in classrooms. She tells NBC that they have contributed to test scores rising. Nevertheless, there's more to a student's experience than test scores.

For New York City public school teacher Skyler Graham, there are both advantages and downsides to digital tools. “[These tools] allow students to learn at their own pace,

access materials, and create projects and presentations without expensive items,” she wrote in Chalkbeat. For both her and her students, aimless scrolling on social media is tempting because it helps with boredom. But it can also damage their ability to problem-solve and troubleshoot.

“Because it's just like this time sucker, this attention sucker, that is so hard to resist the dopamine rush of scrolling,” Hudson Tor, who is now a college student at Parsons School of Design, told *IndyKids*.

Tor also said that for him, it wasn't until middle school that technology was more used. “I can't imagine doing a lot of things that we were doing on paper, on a laptop,” he said. “It sounds very difficult.”

Lila Byock, a parent who is concerned about digital schooling, is a vocal critic of screens in schools. She created an expanding organization called Schools Beyond Screens that demands less screen time during school and establishes networks of other concerned parents, according to NBC News.

Teaching digital literacy and screen hygiene can be necessary to tackle these problems. Technology in school can have downsides and benefits. Computing in school is a tool, not the entirety of learning.



How Manga Became Globally Respected

ENZO MCCLELLAN ROSMAN • age 11

Manga has achieved an international place in popular culture, but how did it get here? The definition of manga—“pictures run riot”—first appeared in Japan in the late 18th century. Emory University defines manga as “comic pictures,” which were popularized by the artist Katsushika Hokusai. Other countries like China and Korea have similar words representing the art style. The English translation for manga varies drastically, but it is an art style that speaks for itself. Manga originated in newspapers, with weekly releases that shaped its unique style of storytelling.



As *Britannica Kids* explains, “The stories are longer and the action is depicted at a slower pace than that of Western comic books. For example, it is not unusual for a single sword fight to spread over 30 pages.” Manga is known for having a unique “extended vocabulary” that is used to

convey meaning. Some examples include pain stars, motion lines, exaggerated expressions, and emotive wordplay. This expressive style is translated into animated adaptations of manga, called anime, which are typically produced in Japan. *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Dragon Ball*, and *Sailor Moon* are examples of famous manga which have been adapted into anime, and some have been adapted into live-action series and movies.

The unique style of manga and its anime adaptations has become very visually iconic, especially to Gen Z. Youth movements around the world have adopted symbols from manga and anime alongside other pop culture icons, such as the three-fingered salute from *The Hunger Games*. As *The New York Times* reports, there are representations of anime in Gen Z protest movements: “The pirate flag, Jolly Roger, it’s like a common language now,” said a 26-year-old Nepali protester.

Reporter Katrin Bennhold continues in the *Times*: “The *One Piece* flag isn’t just an emblem—it’s an allegory. The protagonist, Luffy, is a terrorist or a freedom fighter, depending on whom you ask.” Despite all the years that it has been around, and its growing popularity, manga is only just becoming respected as an important art form in the mainstream U.S. culture.

For example, recently the first-ever exhibit dedicated to manga in North America was held at the de Young Museum in San Francisco. “When Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, the curator of the



Photo by Bobby for Wikimedia Commons

de Young exhibit, sees manga, she sees where storytelling forms are leading. ‘I think that’s the future,’” she told Maya Phillips for an article for *The New York Times*.

The cultural place manga inhabits has an integral spot in many people’s hearts, and its influence continues to grow today.

Someday You Could Be... An Immigration and Climate Justice Activist Like Gabriela Roque!

IndyKids: Can you please tell us your name and what you do?

Gabriela: My name is Gabriela Roque, but I go by Gaby, and I work for the National Partnership for New Americans, a coalition of other small organizations, nonprofits that serve and work with and are led by the migrant community. I lead our climate and migration program.

IndyKids: How do climate change and immigration connect?

Gabriela: Climate change and migration connect because climate change is accelerating the root causes of what forces people to migrate. A lot of people don’t want to migrate. They don’t want to leave their communities, they don’t want to leave their homes, they don’t want to leave their countries.

But climate change is making it harder for people to stay in their homes, and sometimes people have to travel to other countries to get the resources, jobs, housing, and opportunities to have a good life.

Unfortunately, climate change is making some places less livable. So if you live in the coastal community, if you live in an area that is now sinking, you’re going to have to find somewhere else to live, and that might not be possible in your country.

IndyKids: What made you pursue activism?

Gabriela: Originally, I was going to become an occupational therapist. I really liked science in school.



But when I was still in high school, I got the opportunity to take a college class at my community college, and I took a sociology class, which is like the science of society. And this way of thinking about society really made me reflect upon my life and about the things that were challenging for my family and me – why my family faced racism or discrimination because they were immigrants or because they didn’t speak English.

When I learned about these systems that make the value of some people more than other people, or that make it hard for everyone to have the same opportunities, I realized that the laws and policies that shape our lives can be changed. So I started to study social movements like the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, and, of course, the immigrant rights movement.

IndyKids: What challenges have you faced in your career and current job, and how do you persevere?

Gabriela: Keeping hope alive. You know, during this time, a lot of people are afraid about the way the country is treating people that they don’t see as American. It’s very challenging to hear stories of people whose family members have experienced detention, or were deported. Those stories are really challenging to hear, because nobody deserves to go through these things.

What I find really inspiring is that even when people are afraid or have lost something, they push through by continuing to try to help, and support other people who might be going through the same thing. Community is the strength and the resilience that keeps us going.



Photo courtesy of Gabriela Roque

IndyKids: What advice would you give for kids today wanting to become an activist for causes like the climate or immigration?

Gabriela: Believe in your power. Really believe in the change that you can make, believe in your story, and believe in your voice. Sometimes I think adults get caught up in the traditions and the systems that we’ve always had, but kids really bring in a fresh perspective, this possibility that we can do things better, that we can do things differently, in a way that’s better for everyone.

I really believe in the power that kids have with their optimism, their potential to see new possibilities and new futures, and commitment to making that change possible.



Read longer versions at indykids.org!

Meet an IndyKids Reporter: All About My Life in Pakistan

AAYAT IFTIKHAR, • age 9

Pakistan is a beautiful Muslim country with wonderful people and hospitality. I live in Lahore, which is known as the “Heart of Pakistan.” It is a big city with lots of traffic, greenery, and beautiful architecture.

Pakistan is located near India, China, Afghanistan, and other parts of Asia. The capital of Pakistan is Islamabad. There is a diverse culture and friendly people. The four main cultural groups include Punjabis, Sindhis, Pashtuns, and Balochis. There are also Muhajirs. The major religion is Islam, but other religions live here, too, like Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and more, according to *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

There are four provinces in Pakistan. Each province has its own language. The national language is Urdu, but most people speak Punjabi. Pakistan has many different types of nature. It is home to many animals, like brown bears and Himalayan black bears.

Northern areas of Pakistan attract many visitors from all over the world who come to see the mountains, valleys, rivers, and chairlifts for skiing.

Our national fruit is mango, known as the “King of Fruits.” It is a summer fruit that is exported on a large scale to other countries in Asia because we have the best quality mangoes.

Our national dishes are chicken biryani, korma, karahi, sweet rice, and kheer.

One of the people I know who loves Pakistani food is my younger brother, Muhammad, who is 6 years old. His favorite food is biryani, a mixture of rice, chicken, and sometimes potato, which is very tasty.

Muhammad’s favorite thing about Pakistan is that there are a lot of cars. There are electric buses, too, which Pakistan’s government imported to reduce pollution.

One of my favourite places in Pakistan is the park near my house. We also go cycling there on bikes.

Another favourite place to visit is my grandparents’ home in Toba Tek Singh. It is a village, my father’s birthplace, and I can enjoy the fresh air. Life is difficult there because of few facilities compared to Lahore, but I still love it.

I wish every reader could visit Pakistan to see its beauty, observe the hospitality here, and enjoy its delicious food. Lots of love and wishes all the way from Pakistan to New York.

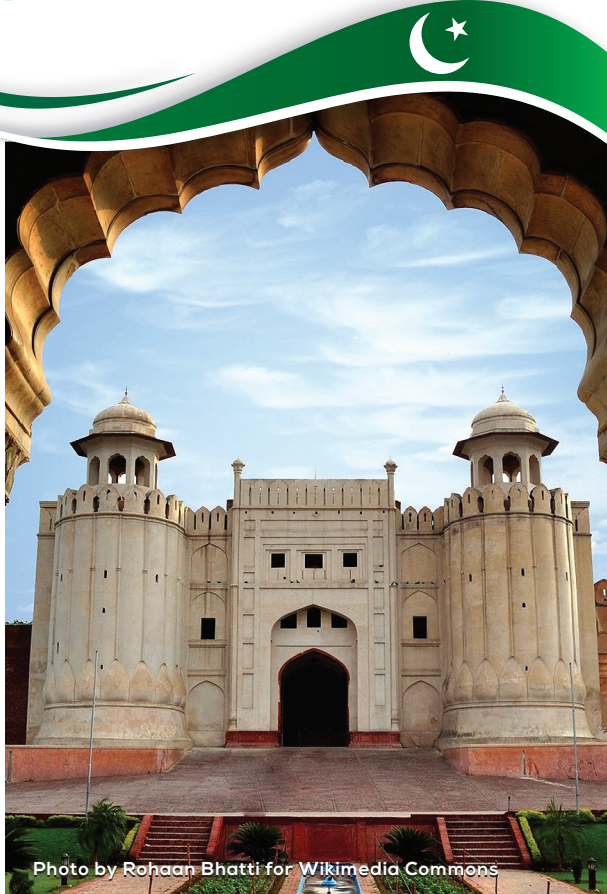


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PERSONAL REPORT

How Chatbots Put Kids Like Me at Risk

ZOE SOPHIA CARRILLO, • age 13

Recently, I have noticed that people surrounding me are becoming heavily reliant on AI. For example, my math teacher always assigns me homework generated by ChatGPT. Some of my classmates use Gauth AI for “homework help,” although they’re obviously cheating, and some of my friends message chatbots on Character AI to role-play with fictional characters. While AI can be convenient, it is much more dangerous than beneficial.

According to CBS News, when people younger than 25 constantly converse with AI chatbots, they start to lack the social skills needed for human interaction. This can interfere with the young user’s brain, since interacting with others involves constructive criticism and disagreements—exactly what AI is lacking, because chatbots are programmed to agree with whatever the user says.

Furthermore, since children’s minds are not fully developed, kids are more likely than adults to believe everything a chatbot says, as reported in CBS. For example, some chatbots may pose as “therapists,” and the user may think that they are receiving reasonable advice.

However, these aren’t the only bad outcomes of AI. Sources like Character AI, an app that allows role-playing using AI, can introduce violence and harmful substances to young users, potentially leading them to do injurious things. Sometimes chatbots impersonate real people, which can inaccurately describe the person’s character. This may harm the person’s reputation and social life.

What’s more is that AI is almost everywhere—even in children’s toys like Barbie dolls and stuffed toys,

according to CNBC. AI toys can talk, listen, and come off as educational. But toddlers need the social interaction they receive with parents and friends. This is something that an AI toy will never give to a child, no matter how open the toy is to magical adventures or how patient it is when answering questions.

As Dr. Mitch Prinstein, co-director of the Winston Center on Technology and Brain Development at UNC-Chapel Hill, told CBS News, “What’s happening is completely preventable if we had companies who are prioritizing child well-being over child engagement.”

Everyone involved with AI should understand the negative risks of it. As Dr. Prinstein states,

“Just as we set guardrails for food, medicine, and safety devices that reach young children, we need guidelines and transparency standards for AI companions.”

Character AI recently announced new safety measures, such as directing users in crisis to helpful resources and banning those under 18 to engage in conversations with chatbots, as reported by CBS News. The company has stated that they “have always prioritized safety for all users.”

Ironically, many classmates my age use Character AI, proving how these “safety measures” aren’t making that big of a difference. What safety regulators don’t recognize is that teens are skilled in finding ways around such restrictions.

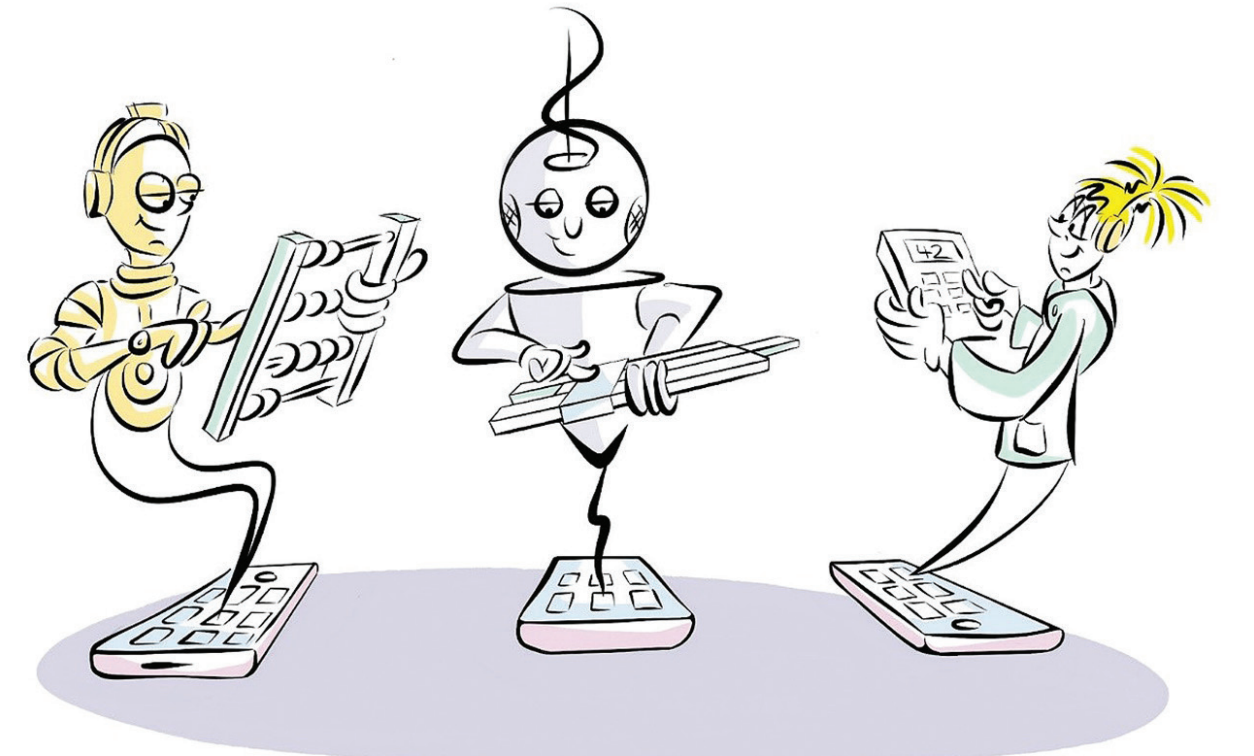


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A Snapshot of My Life

by IndyKids reporters

Who is your favorite fictional character and why?

Dustin Henderson from *Stranger Things* because he's very funny and balances the show out a lot so it's also funny and not all scary.

Enzo, age 11,
from Oaxaca, Mexico.

The Labubus from *The Monsters Big Into Energy* show on YouTube. I like them because they are cute, fluffy and cuddly and easy to hug!

Alisha, age 10,
from New York, NY.

Harry Potter, because he follows his dreams.

Tucker, age 10,
from New York, NY.

Kevin from *Freak the Mighty*. I like him because he is intelligent and perseveres.

Noel, age 11,
from Yonkers, NY.

Jude Duarte from *The Cruel Prince* book series. I like her because she is not scared at all to stand up for herself.

Aida, age 11,
from New York, NY.

Lucy Van Pelt from *Peanuts*. I mainly like her because I can see myself in her.

Zoe, age 13,
from Queens, NY.

Sofia the First because I wish I could be a princess like her!

Scarlett, age 11,
from New York, NY.

Max from *Stranger Things*, because she is mysterious.

Nathalie, age 11,
from New York, NY.

Sugawara from the *Haikyuu!!* manga series because he is the best character.

Kamilah, age 10,
from New York, NY.

My favorite fictional character is Anais Watterson from *The Amazing World of Gumball*, because my name spelt backwards would be pronounced "Anais."

Sianna, age 10,
from New York, NY.

Kitty from *The Ridonculous Race*. She's super funny and laid-back, but also a valuable teammate.

Brooklynn, age 11,
from New York, NY.

Hermione Granger from *Harry Potter*, because she is the cleverest witch.

Aayat, age 9,
from Lahore, Pakistan.

Strawberry Shortcake because I used to watch the show when I was little and she was my favorite.

Melany, age 10,
from New York, NY.

Zoe Washington from the book *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*. I like her because the book is very interesting.

Esmerlin, age 10,
from New York, NY.

Getting Wild With... Butterflies!

MELANY TAVAREZ • age 10

Butterflies are very interesting insects, but many people harm them. In total, there are 17,500 species of butterflies, according to the Smithsonian.

According to *National Geographic*, some colors we perceive in butterflies are the insect's true pigment color, such as yellow, orange, and black butterflies. But purple, blue, and white butterflies are "structural" colors, which means we see them as a certain color due to the lighting of the environment.

The vision of butterflies is really good and helps them when they migrate in the fall, says the Smithsonian. Monarch butterflies migrate to Mexico and California.

When butterflies hatch from their eggs, they become larvae. Larvae molt and eat to become caterpillars, which then go through the process to become butterflies, known as metamorphosis. Butterflies visit plants and cross-pollinate by taking pollen from one plant and bringing it to another. When a butterfly cross-pollinates with a rare species and a native species, it can help the rare species thrive.

Habitat loss contributes to butterflies becoming endangered because when they lose their habitat they have nowhere else to go. When it's too hot, monarch butterflies,

as well as other species, could die because of the heat. Butterflies are negatively affected by fire, wind, and floods.

According to the American Museum of Natural History, butterflies also lose their color because of habitat loss. Some colorful butterflies turn brown because of their surroundings. Butterflies are considered indicators of broader biodiversity trends.

Something that helps butterflies is regeneration. Plants regrowing and the ecosystem regrowing back helps butterflies live because it improves their surroundings.

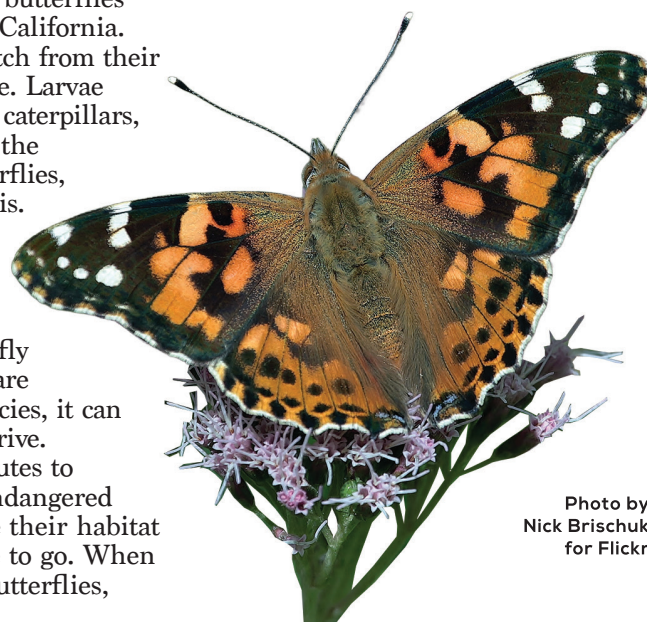


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